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Gilbert chef keeps Scottsdale families well fed

BY LILA BALTMAN
GSN Contributor

Hiring a personal chef may sound like a lavish extravagance to some, but for Suzanne Muchin of Chicago, it's proven to be the winning, key ingredient to her large family's vacation success.

Whenever she and her husband, their five kids and their daughter-in-law travel to their Scottsdale vacation home, the daily highlight is sitting around their dining room table and enjoying gourmet meals prepared by Gilbert resident and private chef William Turner.

While other families in Scottsdale make dinner reservations, the Muchin family is very happy to dine in.

"I'm normally the cook in my home, but when we're all in Arizona, I want to relax and take a break, too," Muchin said. "Having chef Turner help me with the daily meal planning, food shopping and cooking is the much-needed break I need."

"We actually alternate with the cooking



Gilbert chef William Turner devotes his culinary and grilling expertise to serving up haute cuisine in private Scottsdale homes. (Special to GSN)



Turner's meals are not only gastronomical delights but have great eye appeal as well. (Special to GSN)

on a daily basis. One day he'll cook us a beautiful, casual brunch and then I'm in charge of dinner that night. And the next day, I'll take care of brunch and then he'll come over and prepare us an amazing dinner. It's become a great arrangement."

Known for his warm and friendly demeanor, charming Southern accent, ever-present backward black baseball cap and black chef's coat, Turner lives in Gilbert but cooks for clients in Scottsdale and Paradise Valley.

All of his clients quickly discover he's able to cook a wide variety of food styles and will gladly prepare any specific dishes. You name it and Turner will cook it.

The Muchins, for example, keep a kosher home, and Muchin said Turner quickly learned how to prepare and cook appropriate meals.

"He now makes a matzo ball soup that my kids adore and the kosher steaks that he grills on our backyard grill, my sons say are the best steaks they've ever had," she said.

A self-proclaimed master of the grill and meat expert, Turner proudly said, "I'll cook you the best steak you've ever had in your life."

A native of South Carolina and trained as an executive banquet chef and lead chef for upscale restaurants and country clubs, Turner admits he prefers being a private chef and working in residential kitchens.

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Four Gilbert students named Sister Cities reps

GSN NEWS STAFF

Four local high school juniors have been selected as the 2019 Youth Ambassadors who will visit Gilbert's two sister cities abroad.

The nonprofit Gilbert Sister Cities selected Jonah Call and Svannah Marshall to visit Leshan, China, for two weeks and picked Lindsey Giles and Mackenzie Goldman to visit Antrim-Newtonabbey, Northern Ireland, for three weeks.

The teens were selected following a rigorous, four-month selection process that included writing an essay, participating in group and individual interviews and interacting with Gilbert Sister Cities board members and business community members at social events.

They also had to visit local businesses to obtain donations for a silent auction and wash cars.

"With nearly triple the amount of applicants over the previous year, it was



Getting ready to visit Gilbert's Sister Cities are, from left, Mackenzie Goldman, Lindsey Giles, Jonah Call and Svannah Marshall. (Courtesy of Sister Cities)

an especially competitive process," said Greg Tilque, Gilbert Sister Cities' president.

"Observing applicants in a variety of

situations allows our selection committee to get to know them very well to ultimately determine who would not only be an outstanding host and guest, but

also generate interest in the program through speaking engagements and on social media."

To help the applicants prepare for the selection process, the organization brought in four accomplished local businesspeople to conduct an interview and networking skills clinic.

Jeff Ehrlich, executive director of Park University's Gilbert campus; Amanda Kay, financial advisor at Edward Jones; Michael Voss, dean of career and technical education instruction at Mesa Community College; and Sonu Wasu, news reporter at ABC15, discussed interview preparation, answering questions, proper attire and etiquette and how to make a lasting impression.

"The interview clinic was frequently cited as one of the highlights of the entire selection process; Applicants will be able to use the advice received and

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Teens learn safe driving at two-day workshop

BY COLLEEN SPARKS
GSN Staff Writer

Teenagers can gain the critical safe driving techniques in an upcoming program started by a Top Fuel drag racing champion after his two sons died in a car accident.

The free, national teen defensive driving program called B.R.A.K.E.S., an acronym for "Be Responsible and Keep Everyone Safe," will be held from 8 a.m.-noon and 1-5 p.m. April 13 and 14 at Chandler-Gilbert Community College on the Pecos campus at 2626 E. Pecos Road.

Doug Herbert, 51, a four-time Top Fuel drag racing champion in the IHRA division and a 10-time Top Fuel national event winner in the NHRA division, started B.R.A.K.E.S. after his sons Jon and James died in a crash when Jon was driving in North Carolina in 2008.

Herbert, who lives in Charlotte, North Carolina, said a police report showed Jon was "driving fast and was swerving through traffic."

"The reality of it is I was 17 years old before, too," Herbert said. "We did dumb things without really thinking about the consequences. That's the reason why I made my mind up I want to do everything I can to keep another parent from getting this phone call."

In 2008, Herbert's goal was initially to teach his sons' friends smart, safe driving methods. He trained 50 of the boys' friends and then got calls and letters from parents who wanted the same kind of program for their children.

The program became a nonprofit organization in 2009 and the B.R.A.K.E.S. team has trained more than 35,000 teenagers in 30 different states.

"It's therapy for me," Herbert said. "Really it's a performance driving experience. Everything we focus on is safety-related."

The classes April 13 and 14 have sold out, but people can get on a waiting list in case spots open up. Information: putonthebrakes.org



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skills practiced in interviews for years to come," Tilque said.

Johan, who attends Williams Field High School, plays on the men's volleyball team and is also a member of the ping pong club. He also plays piano and taught lessons to 17 students for three years.

In addition to maintaining a 4.0 unweighted grade point average, all of his courses taken this year have earned him credit at Chandler-Gilbert Community College.

Svannah, who attends Desert Ridge High School, is involved in activities including orchestra, speech and debate, track and field and the yearbook. Additionally, she participates in Mercy Gilbert Medical Center's Summer Volunteer Program and served as a shift leader last year.

Lindsey, who attends Higley High School, competes in school and club volleyball, and is a member of Best Buddies and National Honor Society. She plays piano and teaches lessons to 13 children. She is enrolled in several Advanced Placement classes at school as well.

Mackenzie, who attends Highland High School, plays flute in the marching

and symphonic bands, and is a member of National Honor Society and Physics Club. Additionally, she participates in the school's auto technology program and studies judo and kenpo.

Before beginning the student exchange, Gilbert Sister Cities Youth Ambassadors participate in the Gilbert Global Village Festival and receive culture and protocol training for their respective countries.

After they return, they are involved in the Gilbert Days Parade, visit schools and youth programs to share information about the program and serve as mentors for the next group of candidates.

"The experiences our youth ambassadors have throughout the year give them an even greater advantage as they enter the real world," Tilque said, adding:

"They return with broadened perspective and anecdotes that impresses admissions and scholarship committees, and they hone networking and speaking skills that helps in interviews, college presentations and the workplace."

Gilbert Sister Cities will begin accepting applications for 2020 on Sept. 1. Any junior living in Gilbert or attending a Gilbert or Higley school can apply.

Information: gilbertsistercities.com



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