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## Cooking for cash

**BY JEANNE HOVANEC**  
**Times Correspondent**

HOBART | Meals on Wheels of Northwest Indiana held its fifth annual Dine with the Chefs event Sunday afternoon at Avalon Manor.

The event, which included a silent auction, raffle and dinner, raised money for the new kitchen that is being constructed in Merrillville.

"This will help put a dent in what we owe to build the new facility," Melissa Castle-Kirincic, community relations director, said. "We have no more elbow room to spare in our Crown Point kitchen and the new building will give us a chance to grow."

Meals on Wheels has no choice but to grow with the demand. The Lake County kitchen makes up to 1,200 meals a day, but with increased need and an aging population, it will be forced to create more. The new facility will have a capacity of about 3,000 meals a day.

"It gets hard for families to take care of the older generation most of the time," said Castle-Kirincic. "And we like to think we offer the nutrients and physical contact that the older generation needs in order to stay in their homes and enjoy the rest of their lives."

Last year, Dine with the Chefs raised \$43,000 for Meals on Wheels, and with \$900,000 still needed to finish paying for the new facility the pressure was on to keep the event a success.

Manned in the kitchen by chef Jim Galligan, of Long Beach Country Club, the event featured 13 chefs from Northwest Indiana and culinary students from Ivy Tech College. For \$100 a plate, people could taste the best dishes the chefs could prepare, including a Hawaiian-themed fish entree and a chicken salad swan appetizer.

Galligan, who recruited most of the chefs from the American Culinary Federation Chefs of Northwest Indiana, said egos were tossed aside as chefs coordinated to create modern and fun tastes that would excite people as well as benefit the charity.

"I love doing this event," Galligan said. "They'll have to turn me out to stop me from working it every year. The chefs donate everything because when you look at the old facility and you see what Meals on Wheels is working with you know how much they need a new one."

"What the chefs do here directly affects how Meals on Wheels can do its job and when we see the numbers we got last year it really excites us and makes us want to keep coming back to help."

**[EXTRAS]**