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Contact: Frank Juliano, GAC Executive Director, 203-622-3998
Cathie Fuhrmann, Assistant to the Director
Lynn Saltz, 203-222-8971, lsaltz@bisintl.com

Banishing Winter with Food, Theater and Art Upcoming Event at the Greenwich Arts Council is a Festival for the Senses

"It's winter, and despite last week's unusually warm weather," says Chef Nadia Ramsey of Meli Melo catering, "the lunchtime crowd needs comfort food to stay warm...mouthwatering, artful food, prepared hot on the premises. That's exactly what we plan to do for the ticket holders of Play With Your Food."

Wednesday, January 23 and Thursday the 24th marks the return of the popular Play With Your Food lunchtime series to the Greenwich Arts Council, 299 Greenwich Avenue. At 12 noon, the billing opens with Nadia's creations: Chicken with Madeira and mushrooms; vegetarian lasagna and Waldorf salad, followed by petite tarte de citron and de pomme and Starbucks coffee for dessert.

"Play with Your Food always serves the highest quality sandwiches and salads provided by many top-tier partnering restaurants," says Nancy Diamond, producer of the series, "but Nadia is an artist who insists on appeasing both the appetite and the visual senses for our audience."

The hot buffet lunch, from 12 noon - 12:30, gives the wintertime lunch crowd a chance to relax, mingle and enjoy good conversation, prior to professional actors reading one-act plays.

This season's Play With Your Food opener includes three heartwarming plays. Arthur Miller's *Grandpa and the Statue* features Norman Allen, who appeared in *Half a Sixpence* on Broadway and at the Stratford Shakespeare Theatre in

Hamlet and *Henry VI* and 9-yr old Westporter Adam Riegler, who just returned from playing Young Shreck in Disney's pre-Broadway workshop; the hilarious *Leaving Her* by Rosemary Foley features Tibor Feldman (Meryl Streep's boss in *Devil Wears Prada*); and with special permission from Neil Simon, *The Audition* takes the audience backstage in an excerpt from his Broadway hit *The Good Doctor*, with Shira Gregory who recently made her Broadway debut in *Frost/Nixon*.

A brief discussion with the actors concludes the presentation at 1:30pm.

"All the plays we present have heart," says Carole Schweid, Artistic Director of Play with Your Food, "and should stick with you long after you've gone back to your day. Nadia says her flavors also will stick with you and have as much heart!"

After Chef Nadia has packed up her chafing dishes and the actors and audience conclude the stimulating talkback sessions for which Play with Your Food has become known, the Director's Hall at The Bendheim Gallery can fulfill the final longing to see and feel the sun. Audiences can enjoy an exhibition of limited edition photographs by John F. Hill which juxtaposes the exotic beauty of Thailand against the everyday gestures of life. Spring and Summer come to life through the photographers eye. John F. Hill will share the gallery with NYC illustrator Amy Portnoy whose colorful and humorous pen, ink and watercolors are often featured in the New York Times' Metropolitan Diary.

"Indeed," says Frank Juliano, Executive Director of the Greenwich Arts Council, "The season opener for Play with Your Food is a Festival for all of the senses and a balm for the gray days in the midst of the winter solstice."

Play With Your Food is sponsored by Pat Kery Fine Arts. Tickets, \$40 and \$38 for GAC members, can be ordered by calling 203.259.1036 (Tues - Sat 12 noon - 5pm) or online at www.playwithyourfood.org. Advance reservations required.

(photo caption: At the Greenwich Arts Council, Play With Your Food volunteers, l - r: Cecilia Fernandez (GAC volunteer manager), Lois Slachowitz and Christine McIntyre with Meli Melo chef, Nadia Ramsey)

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