

Minnesota Les Dames d'Escoffier Annual Report 2018-19

President's Report – Audrey Nelson

This has been an outstanding year with a successful DAME IT! event earning over \$25,000 for scholarships, grants and support of Urban Roots. Our monthly meetings have featured strong programming with a variety of topics and venues. Our membership numbers are healthy at 52 members. Being president has really given me a chance to understand the broader workings of our local chapter as well as the International organization and the other chapters through bi-monthly calls. However, what I've really enjoyed is the chance to get to know many of you better. It has been an honor to serve as President and am looking forward to next year as Joan Donatelle takes over the leadership of this talented group of professional women.

Vice-President Report – Joan Donatelle

The Minnesota Chapter of LDEI had a very robust year. As president elect, I attended the majority of the monthly meetings and all of the board meetings. I supported the President whenever necessary on conference calls. I also attended all of the webinars. Whenever needed, I lent a helping hand to all of the committee chairs and fundraising efforts. As the primary member to develop the board Slate of Officers for the coming year, my focus was to engage and invite newer members. We were successful in gaining first time board members for 50% of our board. As a chapter we continue to support Urban Roots, increased our scholarships and grants.

Secretary Report – Kristen Olson

- Attended and took notes at each of the board meetings this year.
- Provided documentation of the discussions and decisions made by the MN LDEI Board.
- Edited and resubmit board meeting minutes as needed for approval by the board.

Treasurer's Report – Marilyn Tauscher

Our fiscal year runs from October 1 – September 30. The bullet points below reflect our financial summary **as of August 31, 2019**. The final budget and any additional updates as of September 30, 2019 will be presented to our board for the 2019-2020 year.

- Total Revenue
 - Income generated was \$43,128.10. This was primarily due to membership dues, program registrations and proceeds from our 2019 Dame It! Fundraiser.
- Total Expenses
 - Total expenses through August 2019 were \$43,997.16. Our main expenses included program expenses, dues to International, LDEI conference expenses, Damelt! expenses, donations to Urban Roots, Scholarships and Micro-Grants.
- Dame It! Fundraiser, March 31, 2019
 - Income was \$32,999.58 and expenses were \$6,280.02 for a total profit of \$26,719.56

- Donations
 - We awarded \$9,000 in scholarships to three worthy young women, \$1,972 in Micro-Grants and \$8,000 to Urban Roots for their summer cook internship program and to help equip their outdoor kitchen.
- Assets
 - We are in a good financial position with \$27,869.82 in our checking account.

Advisor Report – Janice Cole

It was an honor to be the advisor for this year’s board. President Audrey Nelson did an outstanding job of keeping our organization running smoothly and her enthusiasm and attention to detail helped keep the board and committees on track. I initially met with Audrey before the annual meeting to turn over information pertinent to the position of President and I attended most of the board meetings. I was also available for any questions or discussions that came up throughout the year. The chapter has been very lucky to have Audrey’s expertise as our group continues to expand its scope. The emphasis on programming this year has been particularly good. I look forward to seeing where the chapter is headed in the next few years.

Dame It! Dollars Micro-Grants – Janice Cole

The micro-grant committee gave out three grants this year for a total of \$1,500.00. The first set of grant recipients were notified in February 2019. For the second set of grants we changed the requirement for submission of the application from a specific date to a rolling application. Unfortunately, we have had no response to that announcement. Part of the issue of giving grants has been getting the information to the chefs and workers we were intending to target. We added Foodservice News along with other local groups to the list of announcements for the grants but so far it hasn’t generated any applicants. We have found that the group we are targeting is less likely to be on the computer searching for grant opportunities and therefore a discussion on how to reach the targeted recipients is in order. Also, there has been discussion of raising the amount of money available for each grant and that will be something that the new committee may want to pursue. The committee members Barb Strand and Joan Semmer have been excellent in supporting this new endeavor and have been fair and impartial in voting the award of grants.

Fundraising Report – Ingrid Gangestad

The Minnesota LDEI Board, committee members, attendees and vendors claim Dame It! 2019 a wild success. With increased attendance, smart planning and execution, profits increased \$5000 from 2018. Members gave from their time, talent, pocketbooks and network to make this the biggest event in recent chapter history.

Here are a few of the statistics the chapter can celebrate:

- More than 240 tickets sold, up from 200 in 2017.
- Following on the success of 2018, we continued the Cake Walk, Spin-the-Wheel and Wine Pull.
- All guests received a Dame It! wine glass to use for sampling throughout the event and to take home. This reduced rental costs and contributed to the value to our attendees.
- This was a zero-waste event with all vendors providing compostable serve ware.

- New this year was a 15-Minute Wine School conducted by Dame Nikki Erpelding.
- Swag bags were reimagined to provide chefs with items hand-selected for them. Student chefs also received a separate swag bag, while 200 other swags were packed with fabulous items for attendees.
- Nine new and 11 returning vendors in food and beverage participated.
- Over \$10,000 in Silent Auction Sales, up from \$7000 in 2018. The success of the silent auction was due in part to the fabulous donations curated by our members, as well as increased ticket sales for more people to be bidding on the items.
- Net income more than \$25,000, up from \$20,000 in 2018.
- Dame It! has raised awareness in the chef community and has brought new members to the chapter.

Membership Report – Cindy Jurgensen and Emily Paul

The following women joined or rejoined:

Kim Bartmann – rejoined	Arlene Coco - rejoined	Lachelle Cunningham
Sarah Johannes	Eileen Mead	Amalia Moreno-Damgaard - rejoined
Marge Porter	Beth Rosendahl	Paschell Wilson – transferred Genie Zarling

As in past years, we introduced new members at their first meeting and by their photo and questionnaire in the newsletter. We gave each new member (though not the ones who rejoined) a \$25 gift card to Honey & Rye Bakehouse and a Les Dames cap. (Honey & Rye owner Anne Andrus is very supportive of Dame It! but too busy to join at this time).

With board approval we changed to *Welcoming* a new member instead of *Inviting* them to help ensure the group isn't perceived as pretentious. A majority board vote was replaced by a recommendation from the membership committee with a chance for the board to give input.

We updated the Membership Fact Sheet and Welcome (formerly Invitation) Letter.

The Nomination form is gone, replaced by an Application to be completed by the potential member, with an added section to indicate committee preferences.

We stopped using a separate contact form for local use. The required form for International, along with our application, suffices.

We switched to Google Drive to track current and new members, future prospects and lapsed members.

We revised the Bylaws to update language for Membership Chair duties, member selection criteria and the onboarding process. We created and launched a Financial Aid program offering current and prospective Dames the opportunity to appeal for financial assistance should the coming years dues pose financial hardship—our hope is that all enthused and qualified Dames have the chance to join our chapter!

The website brought in a few inquiries about joining and one request to transfer to MN from Miami.

Through occasional phone calls, email and Facebook I kept up with members, especially the newer ones, to help them feel connected to the group.

In the coming year we plan to refresh the new member questionnaire to gather even more interesting and relevant info on new members, and plan to garner from new members early on in their membership what areas of interest and skills they look to share (and glean from) the chapter.

A regret is not having a more structured mentoring of our newest members so that they feel welcome and included. Though we only lose two to three each year, concentrating on retention is important.

Emily Paul and Lachelle Cunningham will Co-Chair Membership next year so the committee will be in very capable hands!

Membership settled at 52 as of September 2, 2019. We have no cap on number of members.

Program Report – Betsy Nelson and Liz Nerud

August 2018: Betty Danger's meet-up

September 2018: Annual meeting

October 2018: Sweetland Orchard: We had a lovely orchard tour with Gretchen Perbix, owner, farmer and cider maker and got to sample their wonderful ciders and Joan Donatelle made wonderful recipes from her 'Astonishing Apples' book

November 2018: "Comfort and Joy" was our theme and we nourished ourselves with amazing food from Heather Janz aka: The Curry Diva and Dame Betsy demonstrated elderberry syrup to keep all healthy for the winter.

December 2108: No meeting....

January 2019: Keg and Case tour and dinner at In Bloom

February 2019: Henry & Son's wine shop, owner Gretchen Skedvold talked about Spanish wine and we tasted wine and Spanish foods (Joan Donatelle made Paella, Betsy Nelson made gazpacho and torta Espagnola, and we have wonderful empanadas by Quebracho and glorious cakes by Dulceria).

March 2019: Dame It!

April 2019: Pizza Toss at Kitchen in the Market. We learned how to toss the pizza dough, and all made our own pizzas and learned about Kitchen in the Market from owner/founder Molly Hermann

May 2019: Fig and Farro, we had an amazing plant-based meal and learned about food and climate change with speakers Chef/Dame Robin Asbell and Chef/Dame Lachelle Cunningham

June 2019: Picnic and Plant Walk in Theodore Wirth Park: We had a lovely meal al fresco under a gorgeous oak tree with a lovely picnic made by Dame Betsy who also led a plant walk to learn about edible plants that can be foraged for food.

July 2019: Pizza Party at Urban Roots: Chef Jametta Raspberry made some amazing pizzas with the student farmers at Urban Roots

August 2019: We had a perfect evening for a meet up at Lake Monster Brewing and had wonderful food from Peep's Hot Box, chef/owner Jessie Piene, who was a chef present at one of our first 'Dame It' events.

For Betsy and me it was a terrific year of imagining and producing interesting and informative events. We hope that all who attended enjoyed. Thank you for the opportunity to be of service to this fine group, and I look forward to planning another year of events with Amalia!

Service Report – BJ Carpenter and Diane Jackson

- Set up a meeting with Patsy and Saba at the beginning of the term to identify needs and set goals for the year
- Work with the Cook Fresh Coordinator to connect Dames for the Chef Classes with Cook Fresh interns
- Request Service budget from the MN LDEI Board
- Determine how the funds will be allocated
- Attend Board Meetings and report Service activities
- Facilitate Urban Roots participation @ the Dame It! Fundraiser
- Coordinate one LDEI meeting @ Urban Roots during the summer growing season (usually in July) for a garden tour, meet and greet with the Cook Fresh interns and pizza evening
- Communicate Urban Roots activities to MN LDEI via our newsletter and Facebook page
- Support the Urban Roots Fundraiser in the Fall by collecting wine donations for their dinner and wine wall and attendance @ the event

Newsletter – Kim Ode

The newsletter responsibility was without drama this year, although I hope that successor Nikki Erpelding will be able to bring more digital knowledge to the game. Many thanks for Dames who volunteered so many articles, from stories about their culinary travels, to recapping meetings, to keeping on top of member achievements, and more. Deadlines were admittedly a little loose; I tend to give folks the benefit of the doubt and work up until the last minute, but there is something to be said about firm consistency. I'll let Nikki decide how she wants to address this.

Also, the newsletter could be more ambitious, as I realized when Audrey forwarded some from other chapters. Some of them are from larger chapters or have a more ambitious take on covering the community, more than simply chapter members. I regarded myself as an editor of incoming copy, more than an active generator of copy, but that was a personal decision. Others may choose to be more ambitious!

The job itself: The newsletter editor compiles stories that reflect what's happened in the preceding month and what's up for the near future. The standing items are the president's message, next meeting information and the window of the board members. "Meet a Dame" is a recurring feature. Most of the stories come in spontaneously; there's little cause to tap people for contributions. As the Facebook page has become more active, there can be a sense of "people already know that" when it comes to the monthly newsletter. But being redundant shouldn't be an issue.

The work itself involves proofreading for clarity, and for typos and grammar. The copy always is quite clean, but I have on occasion tightened up some writing. But no heavy lifting!

One issue: The template developed several years ago by Kristin was not a good match for my rather ancient computer, so Deb volunteered to drop in the finished edited file, that I would send, into the

format. That seemed to work fine, but a new newsletter editor may want to/be able to do this all without such assistance — especially since we will be hiring a new administrator.

Scholarship Report – Andi Bidwell and Paula Zuhlsdorf, Susan Peters, Joan Semmer

The four members of the Scholarship Committee reviewed a record number of scholarship applications from students representing five institutions of higher learning in the area of Culinary Education. In all, eighteen applications were received, including several from graduate-level students. After reviewing the applications, the committee selected three scholars to honor with scholarships. These women are extremely motivated, talented and committed to developing expertise in the food industry. They are academic superstars, and each demonstrates a unique quality that made her stand out from the many excellent resumes we received.

The success of 2019's Dame-it! allowed us to provide each of the three women with a \$3,000 stipend. The Scholarship Committee would like to thank everyone for their hard work on the fundraiser, which made it possible for us to have meaningful financial impact on these women as they complete their educations. The committee looks forward to introducing the recipients at the September business meeting: Michelle Bascom, Ashley Briones and Claire Kalenberg.

Michelle Bascom received her calling to food while deployed in the Air Force, where she faced the same four-ingredient salad bar every day. She wants to use her culinary and nutrition degrees *“to better the lives of service members and veterans. With this combination of skill sets, I can not only advise on the nutritional quality of a dietary plan, but the flavor profiles as well. I can suggest food or cooking techniques that can be the difference between a client implementing or disregarding a dietary plan.”*

Michelle obtained her culinary degree with highest honors from The Art Institute and a B.S. in Nutrition from the U of M. She is currently working on her M.S. in Nutrition at the U of M and has participated in numerous extra-curricular activities related to food and nutrition. Her long-term goal is to become a Registered Dietitian and work at the Minneapolis VA Hospital.

Ashley Briones credits Restaurant Alma, where she worked for five years, for being the greatest culinary influence in her life. Chef/Mentor Michael Berger describes her as *“among the most intelligent people I have had the pleasure to work with in my 15 years in the restaurant. I would rank her in the top two percent of cooks I have mentored.”* Ashley excelled as a cook and enjoyed the exposure to new cooking techniques and ingredients. However, she wanted to expand her food knowledge and broaden her career opportunities. She decided studying food science was an ideal path.

Ashley is currently working on her Master of Food Science at the U of M. She has a B.A. degree in Biology, Society and Environment and a minor in Chemistry, along with a culinary arts degree from The Art Institute. After finishing her degree, Ashley plans to pursue a career in food safety or product development and hopes to one day become a consultant for small food businesses.

Claire Kalenberg grew up raising laying hens, pulling weeds from the garden, milking goats and observing beef cattle. This hands-on experience made her appreciate food and the difference it can make. *“Food is powerful and has the ability to bring people together and, in so doing, can create healing.”* While working on her B.S. in Nutrition at the U of M, Claire has developed a deep understanding of the biochemistry of food and how at the molecular level it can be utilized to create

healing in the body. *“Nourishment is something everyone partakes and thus has the unique ability to change society for the better.”*

Someday Claire would like to open her own restaurant *“with the ultimate goal of bringing people together”* by serving food family-style and sourcing ingredients from local farmers utilizing sustainable practices. To help make this dream a reality, after completing her bachelor’s degree, Claire plans to enroll in the Post-Graduate Culinary Certificate Program, through the U of M and St. Paul College.