

# DOUGH-IT-YOURSELF

BY LYNETTE RAHEB  
SPECIAL TO THE NEWS

INA WORD: Yummm!

Bronx preschoolers got a hands-on taste of the borough's famed Little Italy yesterday.

They made four stops on a special Restaurant Day gastronomic tour of the Arthur Ave. neighborhood.

It was a day full of wide eyes and sounds of awe as 10 students from the New York League for Early Learning's Harry H. Gordon School on Bathgate Ave. explored the amazing fare Arthur Ave. has to offer.

The special-needs students, ages 3 to 5, got into the swing of learning how to make mozzarella, fresh pasta, pizza and cookies.

The purpose of the day was to

## Special-needs kids get Arthur Ave. food tour

expose children with sensory issues to textures, smells and – best of all – tastes.

At Joe's Deli on the 187th St. shopping strip near Arthur Ave., enthusiastic youngsters jumped at the opportunity to get their hands dirty in a gigantic bowl of mozzarella cheese.

They poked it, patted it and rolled it into balls. Some crowded around the bowl anxiously waiting to get their chance, while others were apprehensive.

"It's greasy and yucky," said Shua-Stia, 4.

Anthony Rucigino of Joe's Deli led the group in making the mozzarella, skillfully mixing and stretching the cheese, to the amazement of the children.

Perhaps the most beneficial part of the day was "getting the kids out and being part of the community. They get to show off their abilities and have a good time with hands-on learning," said Janine Sozzi-Ebrahimi, who has been teaching at the school for five years.

Yesterday marked the third time Sozzi-Ebrahimi has taken her class to Arthur Ave.

After a short walk down 187th St. to Borgatti's Ravioli and Egg Noodle shop, the children were able to crank their own pasta, using a machine much larger than they were.

As owner Chris Borgatti used

the machine to show them how dough is transformed into pasta, the kids screamed "oodles of noodles!"

Back on Arthur Ave., the kids got to see the magic of cookie making at Madonia Bakery, sampling the tasty confections provided by owner Charlie LaLima.

Finally, the kids trekked to venerable Mario's Restaurant, where they got to help layer a pizza with owner Joseph Migliucci, who flipped dough in an amazing display. When the pie was done, they sat down at a table to sample the result of their labors.

The day was made possible with the help of the Daily News, and the Belmont Business Improvement District and its new executive director, Roberto Ragone.



Preschooler from Harry H. Gordon School learns to make pasta at Borgatti's Ravioli and Egg Noodle shop on 187th St. Photo by Enid Alvarez/Daily News

## EPA ripped over foot-dragging on PCB tests at schools

BY BILL EGBERT  
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

PARENTS, SCIENTISTS and officials blasted the federal Environmental Protection Agency yesterday at a hearing on whether to relax safety standards for toxins in public schools.

"We're questioning the motives behind this," said Deputy Bronx Borough President Aurelia Green. "It doesn't look like it's being done in the interest of students and school employees."

The hearing – on a proposal to change limits set in 1979 on polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) – comes after a Daily News investigation found PCBs in the caulking of several

public schools at levels thousands of times higher than what's considered safe.

When PCBs were outlawed for most uses 30 years ago, EPA regulations declared that anything with concentrations of 50 parts-per-million must be removed.

A 2008 Daily News investigation found PCB levels as high as 225,000 ppm in the caulking of several public schools.

When it proposed a rule change, the EPA specifically cited the burden that removing contaminated caulking would impose on schools. Most of those who testified said any change should be based on science and safety rather than on financial issues.

Ann Casey, a PCB expert at Northeast Analytical Labs, said that based on the latest sci-

ence, the standard should be tightened, not loosened.

"A study that I did myself of very low levels of PCB exposure in the air showed negative health effects in rats," said Casey, who has studied PCBs for 22 years.

Earlier this year, the city Department of Education reached a settlement with the EPA to do pilot studies in order to develop a plan for dealing with PCB caulk in the schools.

Several speakers blasted the EPA for trying to relax standards before studies are complete.

"This method of dealing with the problem is something we would have expected from the previous administration," said Green.

"The Obama administration is better than this." [wegbert@nydailynews.com](mailto:wegbert@nydailynews.com)

### AT A GLANCE

**CITYWIDE** — In response to budget cuts that threaten closure of 20 fire companies, including Ladder 53 on City Island, City Councilman James Vacca introduced legislation requiring the Fire Department to keep response times under six minutes in areas affected by a closure.

The bill would require the fire commissioner to provide quarterly reports to relevant Council members, community boards and borough presidents indicating the new response times for fire and medical emergencies within coverage areas affected by a closure. If response times exceed six minutes, the reports would also have to include a detailed plan for how the FDNY intends to reduce times.

**SOUTH BRONX** — The South East Bronx Community Organization, credited with helping to revive the South Bronx after the notorious 1970s, will celebrate its 42nd anniversary with a fund-raising dinner tonight.

The dinner, at Marina del Rey, will honor Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz and Community Board 2 Chairman Roberto Garcia.

Since its founding by the Rev. Louis Gigante, the group has built or renovated 6,000 apartments, and has created 400 new homes and eight senior citizen projects. Two homeless family shelters are also among its accomplishments.

**WHITE PLAINS** — A federal judge has dismissed a discrimination lawsuit filed by a white suburban firefighter.

Mount Vernon firefighter Joseph Carroll had claimed his promotion to lieutenant was blocked when black firefighters threatened to sue the city.

Judge Cathy Seibel ruled Carroll's case was a "far cry" from a New Haven case. The U.S. Supreme Court in that case ruled in favor of white and Hispanic firefighters who sued New Haven. That city had thrown out a promotion test on which they scored higher than black firefighters. **Bureau staff**

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