

# OPP NET HERALD

Opportunity Networks Newsletter

## In this issue:

- Learn about the Maple Syrup Process
- Jobsite Spotlight
- Jamie's Culinary Corner
- Spring Weather Hacks
- Break-A-Thon and Meat Bingo!
- And Much, Much More!



That's a Tasty Meatball!  
More on Page 5

*"I really enjoy making my own money and getting a paycheck"*

*-Josiah*

*Learn more about our jobsite at Maple Ridge!*

## Editors

- Andrew
- Skyy
- Ryleigh



Spring Weather Tips on Page 8 --  
Check Those Dryer Vents!!

**BREAK INTO A FUNDRAISING ARTICLE!! Pages 2 and 4**



Learn all about the process of making maple syrup! Page 3, 8 and 9

# Bellami Dance

By: Shawn

As a program, Opportunity Networks has been attending Bellami Dance as a form of exercise. Every week participants from all three offices meet there and do “jazzercise.” The owner and main instructor, Suzanne, loves to see us and pushes us to our limits while exercising. Whenever the music comes on everyone will excitedly start dancing and moving to the beat. Suzanne will show the moves that are choreographed and mostly everyone will copy her, but sometimes I have moves of my own, and she encourages me to reach my potential in my moves just as she encourages everyone else.

At Bellami Dance, Suzanne actually instructs the fitness program Shine Dance. Shine Dance Fitness is a fitness format organization that derives from Hip-Hop, Jazz & Ballet. The difference between Shine & normal Jazzercise is that Shine is an uplifting & encouraging positive fitness experience, while Jazzercise is a more structured form of dance fitness, and doesn't give the freedom of creating different choreography. Shine, as an organization turned 9 years old, and nationally was being celebrated. Another instructor, Amber, was the main organizer of the celebration class. She came up with the choreography for the dances being taught and was the one to front run the class. Suzanne decided that she would charge for the celebration class, but wanted to donate the proceeds to different non-profit charities.

Though the fundraiser was only created in January of this year, Suzanne has been eager to keep it going for years to come. The two different charities that she has graciously decided to donate the proceeds to be us over here at Opportunity Networks, and a Cancer non-profit called Pink Revolution, who assist families with financial support and chemo care packages. The total amount that has been raised and split is \$500, which to some may not be a lot but for the benefit of others any amount matters. She chose these two organizations to donate to since she works so closely with them both.

# A Day Trip to Ben's Sugar Shack

By: Margaret and Liz

Imagine you're traveling to New England in the beginning of fall, the leaves changing color, the pumpkin carvings and the start of the maple syrup craze for the season. There are many different maple syrup companies in New Hampshire; the most prominent maple syrup company is Ben's Sugar Shack. Ben's Sugar Shack has 5 different locations around New Hampshire to visit and find out all of the information on the process of making maple syrup on the free tours they offer. The specific Ben's Sugar Shack we attended was their location in Temple, NH. There is an extensive process in order to make maple syrup. The sugar shacks sell a majority of maple products and become well known during the early spring season.

The Maple Syrup process consists of tapping the trees during the early March season to collect the sap, boiling the water out of the sap, and filtering the boiled sap until it turns into syrup. After it is turned into syrup it is graded and packaged to put on their stores shelves. Before

the trees get tapped for the season workers will go around the property and test the equipment to make sure there are no complications. The season starts in late February and trees are tapped for 6-8 weeks until late March. Sugar Maples and Red Maples are the two main trees for tapping. Red Maples produce less sugar content in the sap than Sugar Maples but the real contribution to



how much sugar is in the sap is the weather in which the sap flows out of the tree.

Spout buckets and pipeline tapping are the two ways of collecting the sap out of the trees. Fifteen spout buckets are put out in a year, the buckets will collect one gallon of sap. All other sap is collected through the pipeline taps. The pipeline tubes run from tree to tree a mile long going down hill. Workers will go around and check the tubes to make sure animals haven't chewed through the tubing. There are about 28,000 taps in total. The sap travels through a vacuum system and the sap is collected in a big 1,500 gallon vat that gets emptied everyday. It takes 40 gallons of sap boiled down to make one gallon of maple syrup.

The next process in making maple syrup is boiling and evaporating out the water. The sap starts boiling at 219 degrees F. After all the water is evaporated out, the syrup will go through a filtration process. During filtration the maple syrup is classified into three different grades. The first grade is called Golden Delicate, which has the sweetest flavor and is the clearest. The next grade is Amber red, which is a shade darker and has a stronger maple flavor. The last classification of the different grades is Dark robust, which has the strongest flavor and darkest color. Ben describes most of the process himself while being on the tour, after starting this business at only 5 years old and being in the maple syrup industry for 30 years he has presumably perfected the technique and process of making maple syrup.

# BREAK-A-THON

By: Ben

The Break-A-Thon is where clients come from Opportunity Networks and the goal of the Break-A-Thon is to raise money for Opportunity Networks and Determined Martial Arts

**Who:** Opportunity Networks and Determined Martial Arts

**What:** We break 100 boards.

**Where:** Determined Martial Arts

**When:** April 27th 12-1pm

**Why:** Raise funds to support Opportunity Networks

Have you not heard about the Opportunity Networks break-a-thon? The yearly tradition is back!!

The Opportunity Networks Break-a-Thon is a fundraiser to raise money for the Opportunity Networks program and Determined Martial Arts studios. There are about 100 wooden boards for anyone who signs up to break them. The event takes place April 27<sup>th</sup> 2024. If you're interested and want to learn more check out Opportunity Networks website!

Thanks for reading about the opportunity networks break-a-thon, hope to see you there 😊

Held at the Determined Martial Arts in Amherst, NH, We have been doing the Break-A-Thon for 7 years. People can donate by scanning the QR code at Opportunity Networks website.



# Jamie's Culinary Corner: Southwest Style Wedding Soup

By: Jamie



Do you enjoy easy recipes? Do you like using your hands? Well we at Opportunity Networks have the perfect recipe for you! With only a little time (and fun) you can enjoy this tasty twist on an old favorite.



## Ingredients

- 1 Tablespoon canola or vegetable oil
- 2 medium carrots, chopped
- 2 medium celery ribs, chopped
- ½ cup frozen corn, thawed
- 2 quarts chicken stock
- 1 cup breadcrumb (we prefer panko)
- 1 envelope taco seasoning
- 1 large egg
- 1 pound ground chicken
- 1.5 cups acini di pepe pasta

**\*\*highly recommend these toppings\*\***

- Cilantro
- Cubed avocado
- Sour cream
- Tortilla strips



## Directions

1. In a Dutch oven or large pot, heat oil over medium heat. Add carrots, celery and corn; cook until tender. Stir in stock. Increase heat to high; bring to a boil.
2. Meanwhile, combine bread crumbs, taco seasoning, egg and chicken; mix lightly but thoroughly. With wet hands, shape into 1.5 inch balls. Reduce heat to a simmer; gently drop meatballs into stock. Cook, covered, until meatballs are no longer pink, 8-10 minutes. Stir in pasta. Simmer, covered, until pasta is tender, 6-8 minutes.
3. Serve with desired toppings. We can highly recommend all the ones listed above as they really meld well with the flavors. Enjoy!

**Jamie's Rating: "Like a cloudy chance of meatballs on regular, uh huh"**

# Jobsite Update: Maple Ridge

By: Justin

This Newsletter I'm writing about Maple Ridge, my other job. It is an apartment building that we clean. While there, we vacuum, clean windows, clean surfaces, and anything else that needs cleaning. We work as a team of three along with our job coach.

I sat down with my coworkers and discussed their thoughts on the job. After talking, we all agreed on three things. We all enjoy working as a team. We have seen a benefit to how good of a job we've done after we learned to work well with our coworkers. Our job coach is there to help us when we need it. The team feels more confident and less pressure because there is help there when we need it. Lastly, we all like the feeling we get when we get our paycheck. It's not the money but the independence. My coworker noted he spends on daily living costs which made him feel like any other adult. He is proud of that.

# Spring into the New Season

By: Matt

Here in New Hampshire we welcomed the 1st day of spring on Tuesday March 19th, 2024 at 11:06PM.



According to the Farmer's Almanac it looks like we are in for a cool, wet and thundery spring. We can take this to mean that strong thunderstorms are possible that come with cooler weather and heavy rainfall. But take the Old Farmer Almanac Prediction with a grain of salt because other sources claim that temperatures will be above average.

**April:** Temperatures are likely to remain above average in southern New Hampshire and well above average in the northern part of the state.

**May:** Another warmer than average month is expected in New Hampshire. The warmest spot is likely to be the upper Midwest to northern New England.

### 8 Spring Tips

1. Check your smoke alarms
2. Clean out your dryer vent
3. Replace your water, furnace and range hood filters.
4. Check pipes for leaks since the winter freeze may have damaged them.
5. Wash interior and exterior windows
6. Clean faucets and showerheads
7. Declutter, Organize your belongings.
8. Make a plan for spring cleaning such as a to do list or a spring cleaning checklist.

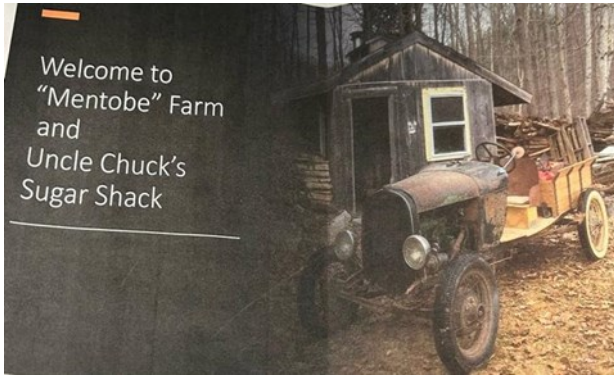
## A Family Guide to Maple Syrup

By: Keesha

My dad started making maple syrup in 1991 before I got adopted is when my dad started doing his own maple syrup at home in Chester in his little sugar shack just outside the house by the woods where he does all his maple syrup. When I got adopted in 2000 I would go out and help him bring some buckets down to the trees where he has tin buckets and whenever the buckets are full or maybe half way full I would take the bucket off the tree and dump out the sap in the plastic bucket then I would walk back to the sugar shack and dump the sap into a bigger taller plastic container and then I would keep going back and forth until I was done with the job. Then my dad would fill up a plastic pitcher and fill the rectangle part in the back until the inside of the rectangle piece is filled with sap, then my dad will turn the knob on the rectangle piece into the lower part which is the boiling pan and there's four separate sections where the sap goes.



But before he can do that he has to start the fire inside the very bottom of the boiler in the circle part. Once he's done with that he'll wait until the maple syrup is done, then he'll put a pot down on the ground



next to the boiler and fill up the pot for the maple syrup to go into while the syrup drains out of the drainer that's on the outside. After the maple syrup is complete he would go into the

house and put the completed maple syrup and but it on the stove top and turn on the burner. Once he's done he would grab

a bag filled with empty bottles and caps and he would fill the bottles with the maple syrup by using a funnel and he would pour the maple syrup into the bottle. But Now, Since he has all new equipment, he does everything differently! When I went over I helped out a lot. I helped my dad grab the sap out of the



buckets and bring them into the sugar shack. Then when the maple was done we, brought it into the house and boiled a little bit more. Then I poured the



syrup into the bottles by using a funnel I even did a mini bottle. I value having a hobby that my dad and I can share and having done it together for so long. It is cool that the hobby is something that's popular locally.

# Spring into the New Season

By: Matt



Opportunity Networks announces their 1st ever Meat Bingo! With meat packages donated by Club National participants can hope to go home with enough to pack their freezers! The Date is Saturday April 13th at 7:00PM at The Club National. The address is 127 Pine Street Nashua, NH 03060. Club National is typically a private club, although this event is open the public. The proceeds benefit programming at Opportunity Networks.