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## **Arapahoe County youth cook up fun in culinary showdown** *4-H Creative Cooks Contest highlights nutrition, preparation and imagination*

**Aurora, Colo.** --- With television series like "Top Chef" and "Iron Chef America" taking the country by storm, it's no surprise that local youth want to join in the fun of showcasing their culinary skills and creative juices.

Arapahoe County 4-H members, ages 5 to 18, got the chance to compete for the judges' nod at the 2010 Creative Cooks contest on Feb. 13 at the Arapahoe County Fairgrounds and Regional Park.

The young contestants planned, prepared and presented a balanced menu according to nutrition values and the food pyramid. Each participant chose one dish from the menu to serve to the judges, Theresa Kollath and Pat Candelaria, who not only tasted the food, but also asked questions about nutrition knowledge and preparation. Each contestant also brainstormed a specific theme to incorporate into their menu, place-setting, centerpiece and appearance.

"There's no better way to learn a life skill than through practice, imagination and the direction of caring adults," said Arapahoe County Commissioner Jim Dyer. "Through 4-H, youth can build a foundation for a lifetime of healthy eating by learning to prepare nutritious meals and having fun at the same time."

Unique and creative entries could be found throughout the competition, ranging from Cattlemen's Café, A Fairytale Feast, Outer Space and beyond to The Restaurant at the End of the Universe.

Arapahoe County is accepting membership applications for youth who are interested in competing in Home Economics and General Projects at the 2010 Arapahoe County Fair, July 21-25. New members can explore their own interests in hundreds of project areas, such as cooking, cake decorating, gardening, fine arts, photography, sewing or dog obedience.

For more information about 4-H, please call the Arapahoe County 4-H office at 303-730-1920 or visit [www.arapahoeextension.org](http://www.arapahoeextension.org).

The winners of the 2010 Creative Cooks Contest are as follows:

Individuals:

Jr. Champion & Popularity: **Samuel Gaffney**, Aurora

Intermediate Champion & Popularity: **Breanna Osborn**, Bennett

Intermediate Reserve Champion & Popularity: **Joey Yousling**, Aurora

Sr. Champion: **Julia Gaffney**, Aurora

Sr. Reserve Champion & Popularity: **Katie Wilson**, Aurora

Teams:

Sr. Team Champion & Popularity: **Julia and Esther Gaffney**, Aurora

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**To download photos click on the link: <ftp://www.co.arapahoe.co.us/Pub/CM/Photos/4-H>**

*Photo captions:*

**John:** Seven-year old John Yousling of Aurora puts a tropical twist on his Luau Dinner Party entry in the Arapahoe County 4-H Creative Cooks Contest on Feb. 13.

**Sisters:** Sisters Julia and Esther Gaffney of Aurora took the Senior Team Champion prize for their Runway Café.

**Katie:** Senior Reserve Champion Katie Wilson, 14, created an out-of-this world menu and table-setting based off the book [Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy](#).