

Good Morning Reader

Some challah for God, the rest for the homeless

BY ROCHEL LEAH GOLDBLATT

READING EAGLE

A baking class satisfied physical, spiritual and emotional needs Sunday as about four dozen women and girls learned how to make challah at the Chabad-Lubavitch of Berks County.

Challah is bread traditionally served on the Jewish Sabbath, which occurs at sunset Friday night and lasts until an hour after sundown Saturday.

"The mitzvah (commandment) of challah is special to women," said Chana Lipsker, one of the co-directors of the synagogue in Muhlenberg Township and wife of Rabbi Yosef Lipsker.

Each participant had a set of ingredients waiting for her when she walked in, along with a souvenir apron and basting brush.

Lipsker compared the individual ingredients turning into dough with those gathered, stating: "We're all in this together. Just like with the ingredients, each one is an individual. But when you bring them together, it's a challah.

"We need all of us to bring it together and make this."

The class learned how to make the dough and shape it into different types of braids, including one that could serve as a napkin holder.

Though some struggled to get the perfect braid, roll or knot, they viewed it as a life lesson.

"Every loaf will get better and better



READING EAGLE: TIM LEEDY

Chana Lipsker, standing at left, explains challah, a bread traditionally served on the Jewish Sabbath, during a class Sunday at the Chabad-Lubavitch of Berks County. The bread was then donated to Opportunity House.

as you make it," Susan Jacobi said. "Just as your life gets better and better."

Jacobi, a convert to Judaism, appreciated the religious knowledge imparted by Lipsker when she taught the class what challah really meant. Lipsker said challah is a small piece that is taken from the dough that is blessed and then put aside for God.

The class then took loaves of the freshly made challah and donated it to Opportunity House in Reading as part of Loaves of Love, a charity initiative.

"The best part (of the baking) is the rest goes to Loaves of Love," said Sophie Polonski-Goodman, who also won the door prize utensil set. "That's why I came."

Chana Lipsker said of the donation

to Opportunity House: "They (her husband and children who delivered the challah) were met with such joy since they had no bread tonight.

"As one worker put it, 'I realized on the way over that we had no bread and I didn't know what to do. My prayers were answered!'"

Lorri G. Oziri, vice president of development at Opportunity House, said it was wonderful to be able to make the bread and help her organization.

"It'll be gone in no time," Oziri said. "I'm honored to be a part of this piece, and I'm honored to be on the other side too."

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BY NICOLE C. BRAMBILA
READING EAGLE

UNDER HEALTH care reform, insurance plans are supposed to cover preventive services such as mammogram screenings at no additional cost.

But some women in Berks County have received a radiology bill for this screening, a fact that has one Cumru Township insurance agent fuming.

"They're all supposed to cover these mammograms," said Jay Mahoney, an agent with Gallen Insurance, which sells health, home, auto and business insurance. Mahoney, who on behalf of clients has dealt with St. Joseph Medical Center and Reading Hospital on this billing issue, added, "It's mandated by the federal government."

The Affordable Care Act requires plans after Aug. 1, 2012, to cover the cost of screenings for a number of diseases — breast and colon cancer among them — without a co-pay or deductible, if done in network. The bill for the balance comes into play because many doctors work at hospitals, not for hospitals.

"If you just assume that it's in network, that's probably an assumption you don't want to make," said Michael B. Jupina, a spokes-

Before you go out of network

Consumers are responsible for their health care network. To avoid the financial surprises that can come with receiving out-of-network care, consider these questions of your insurance and health care provider:

- How can I look up whether my doctor participates in the network?
- What doctor groups do not participate in the plans the hospital accepts?
- What will happen if my in-network provider sends me to an out-of-network doctor such as a radiologist, anesthesiologist or pathologist? Am I responsible for the additional costs?
- How can I guard against out-of-network costs?
- How can I appeal a claim?

Source: FAIR Health

man for St. Joseph Regional Medical Center. "I know that puts the onus of this working on the patient, but that's probably the best way to address the issue."

Ann Valuch, Reading Health System spokeswoman, said in an email: "Patients are encouraged to work with their insurance provider if they have questions about their plan coverage. Reading Health System is fully compliant with the ACA provisions for screening mammography."

Both hospitals contract with a single provider — J.M. Winston Radiology Associates at St. Joseph and West Reading Radiology Associates at Reading Hospital. Neither radiology provider accepts all the insurance plans the hospitals do.

Absent an in-network choice at each of the hospitals, women going for what they believe is free mammography screening could be on the hook for reading the mammogram by an out-of-network physician. It's called "balance bill" and is, in this case, the amount the radiology provider charges above what the insurance company has agreed to pay.

Lots to fix

"The laws are constantly changing and being interpreted," said Kevin Lucia, a research professor and project director at Georgetown University's Health Policy Institute as well as co-author of the 2009 report "Unexpected Charges."

[See *Some women* >>> A3]

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