



**PUTNAM COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

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[www.putnamcountyny.gov/health](http://www.putnamcountyny.gov/health)

A PHAB-ACCREDITED HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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COMMISSIONER OF HEALTH

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Thirteenth Annual Food Operator’s Seminar Held;  
New Expo with Food Industry Vendors Helps Draw Record Crowd**

Brewster, NY— A record crowd of nearly 200 attendees—chefs, caterers, owners, food establishment operators and other food industry representatives—were in attendance for the Thirteenth Annual Food Operator’s Seminar and Expo on April 23. For the first time, the event featured an expo with food industry vendors, displaying their products and services. The jam-packed event offered a “one-stop” opportunity for food operators to learn about the latest dining trends, enhance their business skills, and improve their bottom line. At the same time they were able to visit with vendors, see products first-hand and learn about the latest services available to make their facilities run as smoothly as possible.

“This event surpassed all expectations,” said Michael J. Nesheiwat, MD, the Commissioner of Health. “We work year round with all our food operators, with this event we advanced those efforts to a higher level. Public health is about building community partnerships—it is fundamental to the way an accredited health department operates. As our public health sanitarian Shawn Rogan who oversees the PCDOH’s food industry program has said many times, ‘When our restaurants succeed, we all benefit,’ and I certainly agree.”

Shawn Rogan, who together with event coordinator Jane Meunier, oversees the Food Operators Seminar and Expo, thanked his colleagues for their ongoing success in changing Putnam’s food-licensing culture from one historically viewed as regulatory, to a more supportive

relationship in which the goal is improving quality and problem solving. “We have more in common with food operators than you might think. We are both service-based operations,” said Mr. Rogan. “This event helps us strengthen our working relationships and it is our residents who ultimately benefit.”

Vendors were not the only newcomers to the event. Public health professionals from health departments in the surrounding counties of Westchester, Orange and Dutchess County also attended. They were interested to see how the event was planned and to study how they might coordinate a similar event in their own county.

The event also offers an opportunity for the health department to recognize food establishments for lifetime achievement, distinguished performance and operational success in the past year. Health Inspectors Commendation Awards went to George Seitz at the Arch Restaurant and another to David Humphreys of Wandering Dave’s Fork in the Road, both in Brewster in the Town of Southeast.

The 2019 Lifetime Achievement Award went to Joseph Iebba, from Nicola’s Italian Restaurant in Philipstown. The department’s highest and most stringent honor, the Commissioner’s Gold Award for operational excellence was presented to James and Patricia Turco who own and operate the Ice Cream Studio in Lake Carmel, Town of Kent.

Commissioner’s Gold Awards also were awarded to Patrick Rodia from the Carmel Central School District and Cathy Ashe from the Brewster Central School District. These awards recognized nine specific schools. Food service director at Mahopac High School Rob Campisi, from Aramark, won for the first time. The remaining eight were repeat winners: Matthew Paterson School, ten times; John F. Kennedy Elementary School, eight times; Kent Primary School, seven times; and George Fischer Middle School, 6 times. Carmel High School and Kent Elementary School both won for the fifth time. Brewster High School brought home the gold for the fourth time and Henry H. Wells Middle School won gold for the third time.

The mission of the Putnam County Department of Health, nationally accredited by the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB), is to improve and protect the health of the Putnam County community, composed of nearly 100,000 residents. Core services include community health assessment, disease surveillance and control, emergency preparedness, environmental health protection, family health promotion and health education. For more information, please visit our County website at [www.putnamcountyny.com](http://www.putnamcountyny.com); or visit our social media sites on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/putnamhealth](http://www.facebook.com/putnamhealth) and Twitter @PutnamHealthNY.

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### **Complete Award Listings**

#### **Commissioner's Gold Awards**

Carmel High School, Patrick Rodia  
Brewster High School, Cathy Ashe  
George Fischer Middle School, Patrick Rodia  
Henry H. Wells Middle School, Cathy Ashe  
John F. Kennedy Elementary School, Cathy Ashe  
Kent Elementary School, Patrick Rodia  
Kent Primary School, Patrick Rodia  
Mahopac High School, Rob Campisi, Aramark  
Matthew Paterson School, Patrick Rodia

#### **Health Inspectors Commendation**

The Arch Restaurant - George Seitz  
Wandering Dave's Fork in the Road - David Humphreys

#### **Lifetime Achievement Award**

Nicola's Italian Restaurant, Joseph Iebba

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