

# RESORT REPORTER

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## FEATURE

# DISNEYLAND RESORT CELEBRATES HISPANIC LATINX HERITAGE MONTH



STEVE LIMONES, CENTER, PERFORMING IN "A MUSICAL CELEBRATION OF COCO" AT PLAZA DE LA FAMILIA IN DISNEY CALIFORNIA ADVENTURE PARK IN 2018.

## How 'A Musical Celebration of Coco' Helped this Cast Member Find Pride in his Heritage

By Kyleigh Johnson

Raised in a Spanish-speaking home by parents who emigrated from Ecuador to northern California, Steve Limones and his family quickly assimilated into American culture. "Growing up, I thought, 'I have to be like white people' because that's what I knew," Steve said about his experience going to a Christian private school in a predominantly white community. "I would get embarrassed if I had to speak Spanish."

Steve knew from a young age that his ultimate dream was to sing, act and dance as a performer at Disneyland Resort. When he went to study musical theater in grad school, Steve's Latino background became more front and center. "My professors didn't know where to place me," he said as he recalled being cast in standard Hispanic roles, instead of roles that were traditionally represented by white actors.

While he worked at Disneyland through college and later acted professionally after grad school, Steve jumped

at the opportunity to perform at Tokyo Disney Resort, where he eventually met his husband, James. Back in the states, Steve was cast in Disneyland Resort shows like "ElecTRONica" and "Mad T Party," and later became part of the iconic barbershop quartet, the Dapper Dans. "In a lot of ways, it felt like my childhood dream came true."

While Steve's dream may have come true, it wasn't until he was cast in "A Musical Celebration of Coco" that he experienced an awakening. "A Musical Celebration of Coco" is a festive and colorful show that tells the story of the Disney and Pixar film with music, dance and authentic costumes, offered at Plaza de la Familia in Disney California Adventure park.

"To see a full audience of Latinos — some of them crying, some of them nodding in agreement when I talked about Dia de los Muertos... [as part of the show] ... it's a real authenticity that the audience has a deep, emotional connection to," Steve said of his first time performing the role.

That moment represented a pivotal shift in Steve's perspective. "I started to see that being Latino was actually very

special," Steve said. "To see that I come from a culture that is so rich in tradition, life, family, art and music...I finally understood what it meant to be proud of my heritage."

From that moment forward, Steve wore his heritage as a badge of honor. "My Spanish-speaking was kind of a superpower," Steve said. "It was something that allowed me to be unique and different." After being inspired to learn more, Steve and his husband even began celebrating Dia de los Muertos by setting up an ofrenda, or a home altar that displays photos and special objects to honor loved ones who have been—and will forever be—part of their lives.

Now when Steve thinks of his heritage, especially during Hispanic Latinx Heritage Month, he wants to continue the conversation. "In a lot of ways, it's about inclusivity," Steve said. "The fact that we recognize this month raises awareness and allows people to ask questions so we can better understand and learn about different cultures and peoples, and embrace the areas in which we are all alike."

Hispanic Latinx Heritage Month is celebrated now through October 15.

Disneyland Resort cast members are recognizing the month with events, panel discussions and storytelling about Hispanic and Latinx culture, representation and allyship.



STEVE WITH HIS YOUNGER TWIN BROTHERS AND GRANDFATHER, PAPA HUMBERTITO, IN ECUADOR.

## COMMUNITY

### Support from Disneyland Resort Helps Bring Anaheim Housing Project to Life

Disneyland Resort President Ken Potrock was on hand for the grand opening of a permanent supportive housing community for some of Orange County's most vulnerable residents. The Disneyland Resort donated \$5 million in 2019 to help revitalize the nonprofit Orange County Housing Trust (OCHT), dedicated to increasing the supply and availability of permanent supportive and affordable housing units. One of the projects OCHT provided "last-mile" funding to complete is Buena Esperanza, which converted the former Econo Lodge motel into a Spanish-styled, two-story studio apartment community for veterans and homeless individuals with mental illness.

"We are excited and proud to play a part in this incredibly important work that is helping those who face homelessness in Orange County," Ken said. "The Disneyland Resort has been a part of this community for more than 66 years — Anaheim is our home and we are committed to supporting our neighbors by continuing to invest in long-term, meaningful ways."

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## CAST LIFE

# Haunted Mansion Holiday Gingerbread House 'Memorializes' 20 Years with Monstrous Mansion Mash-Up

By Lisa Greathouse

A chill went down Graphic Designer Tim Wollweber's spine when he realized two Roman numeral "X"s for the eyes of zombie gingerbread men would perfectly "skelebrate" 20 seasons of Haunted Mansion Holiday and its creepy centerpiece, the Gingerbread House in the mansion's ballroom, which debuted to guests this month.

"It's so fitting, isn't it?" Tim chuckled. "I love to think about all the double X's we're placing everywhere. In fact, we're calling the house 'EXXhumed Delight,' since we basically dug up references to the past 19 years of gingerbread houses to create this one."

Dead-icated fans of the attraction, which pays tribute to "Tim Burton's *The Nightmare Before Christmas*" every Halloween Time through holiday season, will no doubt devour the details in this year's gingerbread house and its nods to past years. It's easy to spot 2009's Scary-Go-Round House, 2015's Gingerbread Card House, 2014's Gingerbread Zombie House and Tim's personal favorite, the Giant Man-eating Wreath House from 2005, but other creepy contributions are more, uh, subtle.

"Looking at it from the point of view of

Jack [Skellington], it felt like we should go down to our gingerbread graveyard and dig up all the pieces we love," Tim said. "And we wound up putting together this really fun, bright, obnoxious memorial to 20 years."

After designing the house on paper and then creating a computer 3D model, Tim's partners in Fabrication created the understructure, while the Entertainment Technical Services team worked on animated elements, like the independently moving (and treacherous) arms of the man-eating wreath and snake that keeps trying (and failing) to eat the gingerbread zombie.

"We use a combination of air pistons and rotary actuators that are controlled by electrically triggered valves," said Stage Technician Richard Miller. "It's complicated — and magical!"

The Central Bakery team spent hundreds of hours baking and decorating the nearly 13-foot house (the biggest ever!) in five main pieces, which were then carefully moved into the mansion, where they were assembled on the ballroom's dining table. Then, the team placed shingles and other finishing touches, "like snow and maybe a couple of hidden Mickey's," said Pastry Sous Chef Gracie Gomez.

This year, the bakery used more



than 200 pounds each of gingerbread dough and powdered sugar, about 50 pounds of egg whites and more than a pound of glitter to make the mini mansion spellbindingly sparkly. "Every year the team works tirelessly to create this masterpiece, and we have people who've worked on it every year," Gracie said. "My favorite part is getting on the attraction and seeing the house as a guest because we can see all the work that these cast members put in, in its finished glory."

And in case anyone doesn't realize that Haunted Mansion Holiday is marking 20 years, Tim designed a reminder in the pumpkin patch in front of the mansion. "It's a remembrance wreath on an easel, like the ones people would use to memorialize the dead," Tim said. In the middle is a tombstone-like representation of Jack's face with a nod to his 20 years at the mansion. "It's both funereal and Christmas-y, which is exactly what Jack would want."

## CAST LIFE

# Pluto Brings the Halloween 'Paw-ty' to Downtown Disney District

By Matt Nixon

Halloween Time is back at the Disneyland Resort, and a howling new offering has arrived in the Downtown Disney District: Pluto's Pumpkin Pursuit. Guests will search throughout the district for character-themed pumpkins, fill a game board with stickers and redeem it for a spooky prize.

"I love Downtown Disney District because every year we get to decorate it totally differently for each season," said Sara Dehghan, the Resort Enhancement team lead who managed the project. "There's a lot of space for creativity."

Sara's team was tasked with a new challenge: choosing pumpkins to be transformed into classic Disney characters. "For Goofy, we picked a taller pumpkin, Mickey is more round and Stitch had to be smaller than Lilo," Sara said. The team worked with partners to ensure each character's unique features came through on the pumpkins — from Pluto's distinctive ears and nose to

Moana's handcrafted necklace.

The team also got to choose where to safely place each pumpkin — making sure to show off their best angles in the most appropriate areas for the characters they represent. For instance, Mrs. Potts is brewing outside Starbucks East, Princess Tiana is playing at Ralph Brennan's Jazz Kitchen and BB-8 is hiding out at *Star Wars* Trading Post. Resort Enhancement cast members will continue to check on each pumpkin nightly to make sure they always look their best.

"I'm extremely proud of my team," said Sara. "I can't wait for our guests to find these pumpkins and enjoy the transformations into Disney characters."

Pluto's Pumpkin Pursuit is available through Oct. 31, while supplies last. Guests can join in on the fun by purchasing game boards with stickers (\$9.99) at select merchandise locations, including World of Disney, Disney's Pin Traders, Disney Home, The Disney Dress Shop and WonderGround Gallery. Guests can redeem their game boards at World of Disney or Disney's Pin Traders.



RESORT ENHANCEMENT TEAM LEAD SARA DEHGHAN SHOWS OFF TWO OF THE THEMED PUMPKINS.

EDITORIAL

# Disneyland Resort Honored to Present Family of Fallen Marine with Tribute

By Lisa Greathouse

*Of all the proud moments I've had as a Disneyland Resort cast member, perhaps the proudest was having the privilege to share this story about how the resort helped to honor Marine Cpl. Hunter Lopez earlier this month.*

Alicia and Herman Lopez remember how much their son Hunter loved all things *Star Wars*, even telling his parents before he deployed that he wanted to be buried with the lightsaber he built at Disneyland park in November 2019.

Less than two years later, 22-year-old Marine Cpl. Hunter Lopez has been laid to rest, one of the 13 U.S. service members killed in the attack at the Kabul airport in Afghanistan on Aug. 26.

His parents intended to honor Hunter's request, "but I just couldn't find the courage to part with the lightsaber he built," Mrs. Lopez said through tears. So the Lopezes, along with their 18-year-old son and 17-year-old daughter — just six days after Hunter's death — drove from their home in Indio to build a replica of the lightsaber Hunter had created in Savi's Workshop in *Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge*. And this one, built by his entire family, would be buried with him.

"As we walked into Disneyland, the marching band was coming out onto Main Street [U.S.A.] and started to play a *Star Wars* song," Mrs. Lopez recalled. "We don't know if it was Disney magic or whether it was Hunter, but either way it felt good knowing he was there with us."

A friend of the couple, both of whom



MARINE CPL. HUNTER LOPEZ.

work for the Riverside County Sheriff's Department, helped arrange for the family to build the lightsaber privately at Savi's, followed by lunch at the membership restaurant, Club 33, to which the friend belongs. As soon as Club 33 Member Services Coordinator Rex Roberts heard that the family would be coming later that day, he advised a few resort leaders to see what else they could do, given Disney's legacy of honoring military service personnel, veterans and their families. Members of SALUTE — the cast member Business Employee Resource Group (BERG) that supports veterans and members of the military — connected with Dan Hughes, vice president of Security at the resort.

"We took the American flag that was flying over Disneyland and quickly had it framed and created a plaque, so we could present it to the family," Dan shared. In the space of 90 minutes, he

was on his way to Club 33. "I said, 'Your son's sacrifice means the world to our country and also to us at Disneyland, and it's our honor to give you this token of our appreciation,'" Dan recounted. "Mrs. Lopez broke down in tears and said, 'My son loved Disneyland,' and the whole room got choked up."

Mrs. Lopez said later that the family

"Hunter Pooh." But *Star Wars* was his passion, she said. "He'd dress up as a Jedi for Halloween, he knew all the movies, all the lines — even the background characters." Mrs. Lopez laughed as she recalled that when she was pregnant with her second child, then-5-year-old Hunter asked if he could name the baby "Uncle Owen" after the character Owen Lars, who appeared in several *Star Wars* films. They agreed to keep the name Owen, and laughed as they explained to Hunter why they'd have to drop "uncle." In fact, Owen had enlisted in the Army just hours before the family received a knock on the door from casualty notification officers about Hunter, who had wanted to follow in his parents' footsteps in law enforcement with the Riverside County Sheriff's Department.

At Club 33, 13 glasses of champagne were lined up on the service counter on the day of the Lopez family's visit as a tribute to all 13 service members lost last month.

"Disneyland is all about celebration and happiness, so it's not often that we



has been annual passholders for decades and that Hunter had loved coming to the parks since he was a toddler — the spinning tea cups at Mad Tea Party were his favorite. He loved Winnie the Pooh so much as a child that his mother still called the Marine by his nickname,

see or hear this in our work," said Club 33 General Manager Luke Stedman. "But in this divisive world, when we can all come together and support something so meaningful, it's a reminder of how much pride our cast can take in what this place means to people."



DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

# Bringing a Native American Influence to Tenaya Stone Spa

By Yvonne Lee

Look around Tenaya Stone Spa and you can't help but feel the tranquil beauty of California's Yosemite Valley. Natural elements are everywhere, from the wood rounds in the flooring and décor of agate and quartz crystals to a chandelier made of old tree roots hanging in the boutique. A closer look at the design details of the spa, which opened Sept. 16 at Disney's Grand Californian Hotel & Spa, also reveals a deep appreciation and respect for the indigenous cultures of the region.

Dawn Jackson, a Native American cultural advisor at Disney, began working on the project as an Imagineer on the Story Development team. Now an associate in Corporate Brand Management, Dawn played a significant role in bringing Tenaya Stone Spa to life and continues to serve as an internal cultural resource on projects at Disney that include Native American representation. Dawn could not have imagined the cultural advisor role she would eventually play at the company when she began working in creative development at Disney Stores in 1993. At the time, Disney was working on the film "Pocahontas," and Dawn's team was developing the product lines, referencing Great Plains tribal beadwork and Southwestern iconography.

Dawn, a member of the Saginaw Chippewa Tribe, is from Michigan, and her tribe shares the same Algonquin language base as Pocahontas' tribe, the Powhatan Tribe in Virginia. "I remember thinking, 'I'm not sure we are representing the Native people of Virginia of that time period correctly in our product designs.'" Dawn did her own research and put together her own style boards for her leaders. "I didn't even know if anyone would look at them, but I said, 'this is my culture and this is what I know,' and



KATRINA MOSHER, LEFT, AND DAWN JACKSON, RIGHT, DISCUSS DESIGN DETAILS FOR TENAYA STONE SPA.

that's how it all started. That was 28 years ago, and it has just grown from there."

Dawn's role as a resource expanded to Native American community outreach nationwide while continuing to advise on Native American-related content and products at Disney, from movies and merchandise to games and now, a spa at the Disneyland Resort.

In 2018, Katrina Mosher, an art director at Walt Disney Imagineering, connected with Dawn's team while working on updates to Disney's Grand Californian Hotel & Spa; she wanted to incorporate a Native American-inspired storyline that guests would feel during their experience. As they worked together on the spa, Dawn and Katrina created a design philosophy inspired by tribal teachings on wellness and balance. "In my tribe, a life well lived means it is in balance in four areas of one's life: social, spiritual, emotional and physical," explained Dawn. The theme of the natural order of

four is represented throughout Tenaya Stone Spa: four main colors (white, red, black, yellow); four stones (white magnesite, red pumice, black obsidian, gold pyrite); four indigenous medicinal plants (sweet grass, sage, cedar, tobacco); and special signifiers to mark the four directional points of the spa: north, south, east and west.

Dawn met with various tribal contacts and friends who introduced her to contacts in the Yosemite Valley, whom she later learned were direct descendants of Chief Tenaya of the Ahwahnechee Miwok people. These relationships provided Dawn and Katrina with a deeper appreciation of the tribe's culture, which is reflected in the spa's design and décor. A Native American artist created paintings inspired by basketry patterns made of acorns and pine needles.

For instance, white magnesite, previously used as a form of currency by some California tribes, represents "earth" —

one of the four main elements. The spa's music, from a Native American singer, was selected to pay homage to indigenous musical stylings. In the center of the spa is the Tenaya Stone itself: a stone gifted from the descendants of Chief Tenaya.

Dawn hopes that cast members and Guests feel a connection to the spa's storyline and is proud of her role in shaping its authenticity. "No matter what the product is, I think we have a huge responsibility to tell stories thoughtfully and authentically because we have the ability to shape peoples' perceptions of different cultures," Dawn said. "In my Native community, one of the most respectful things you can say to someone is 'you did it in a good way.' It means you did it with a pure heart and the right intentions and approached it with respect. That's the best compliment you can give, and I want Disney to continue to do things in a good way."

## COOL DISNEY JOBS

# CELEBRATING THE COLORS OF THE WORLD THROUGH MANNEQUIN MAGIC

TINA BRENNAN

Role: Director, Visual Merchandising

Years with company: 24

Hometown: Pittsburgh, PA



Tina Brennan, director, visual merchandising, whose team creates the look and feel inside merchandising locations at Disney Parks, Experiences and Products, shares her insights about newly introduced mannequins with different skin tones at the World of Disney store at Downtown Disney District.

**Q. Can you tell us a little more about your role?**

A. Our goal in visual merchandising is to bring our product stories to life for our guests and our cast members. For example, experiential retail is the animation that helps engage the guests while they're shopping at World of Disney. So we look for ways to do that through our windows [and] in the interiors. We want our guests and cast members to experience that same magical moment while shopping as they do anywhere else in our parks. We try to stay aware of



what's going on outside of retail to help inform our strategies. We also spend a lot of time doing market research and understanding what's new in our industry for our guests and cast members to experience.

**Q. What inspired the diverse and inclusive mannequins at World of Disney?**

A. Mannequins and visual elements are all about trying to message to guests so they can see themselves in the product we're displaying. We knew we had an opportunity to make sure they feel welcome and are able to see themselves.

**Q. Can you tell us about the process for introducing skin tone mannequins?**

A. We worked with our mannequin vendor and explored suggested skin tones used industry-wide and took

them back to our partners — including our diversity and inclusion team, as well as members of our Business Employee Resource Groups (BERGs) — and got feedback. Our product team also did a skin tone match with our princesses to explore how we are representing our product in the marketplace based on our princess franchise. It was all about the authenticity of knowing that the colors of the world can be any of these tones and more.

**Q. Why are these mannequins so important?**

A. We want to make sure our guests and cast members see themselves in the world they live in; that's the important takeaway.

**Q. How have guests reacted to the mannequins?**

A. There has been overwhelming sup-

port. I've had people cry because they are so thankful. We couldn't be more excited to share this approach with the world, and the spirit in which people have responded has been so motivating to our team.

**Q. Are there plans to introduce more inclusive and diverse mannequins?**

A. Several years ago, we introduced mannequins with different body shapes and sizes and we are looking to include even more soon. As part of these efforts, we will reflect expanded points of view like gender neutrality and modesty dressing that features diverse ethnicities. We are also working with our accessibility BERG to authentically represent mannequins using power chairs and cochlear implants. This has been a labor of love for our team, and we are so excited about the possibilities of what this could mean for our guests.

## DID YOU KNOW?

**1. The Central Bakery at Disneyland Resort used just under 100 pounds of gingerbread dough to create the gingerbread house in Haunted Mansion Holiday.**

**FALSE**

More than 200 pounds each of gingerbread dough and powdered sugar, about 50 pounds of egg whites and more than a pound of glitter were used to make the mansion spellbindingly spooky.

**2. An all-new attraction is coming to both Disneyland Resort and Walt Disney World Resort, inspired by the fan-favorite Walt Disney Animation Studios film, "The Princess and the Frog."**

**TRUE**

More details were recently released as work continues to transform the Splash Mountain attraction. Walt Disney Imagineering and Walt Disney Animation Studios recently shared more about the inspiration behind the attraction's transformation during a visit to New Orleans.

**3. Cast members recently reopened Carnation Café at Disneyland park.**

**TRUE**

Fan-favorite offerings like Walt's Chili and fried pickles are back!

**4. The Downtown Disney District will welcome a new specialty retailer in the coming months.**

**FALSE**

Two new shops will soon open in Downtown Disney District, including Lovepop and Pelé Soccer.

**5. More entertainment offerings continue returning to delight guests, including the Dapper Dans, just in time for spooky season!**

**TRUE**



CAST LIFE

# SPOOKY MAGIC FOR CAST MEMBERS

By Matt Nixon

Disneyland Resort cast members were treated to a special “snEEK peek” of Oogie Boogie Bash – A Disney Halloween Party, exploring eight treat trails featuring Disney Villains — including the infamous bag of bugs himself — and enjoying the Frightfully Fun Parade and Villains Grove. The sold-out, ticketed event at Disney California Adventure park runs on select nights through Oct. 31.

This year, the bash includes new trails featuring Agatha Harkness from “WandaVision” in Avengers Campus, Sid from “Toy Story” at Pixar Pier and Cruella de Vil at Hollywood Backlot.

“This event is very spooky — it’s magical,” said Tomorrowland Attractions cast member Jenna Withers. “It’s a wonderful time of the year!”

Cast members enjoyed performances of “Mickey’s Trick & Treat,” a live show with Mickey Mouse and friends, and the Frightfully Fun Parade, featuring Jack Skellington, Sally and everyone’s favorite villains. For those brave souls ready for a bewitching journey, Villains Grove provided the opportunity to explore the worlds of Disney Villains through a transformed Redwood Creek Challenge Trail.

“Villains Grove is definitely my favorite area,” said Colton Tracey, Tomorrowland Attractions. “I love the Alice in Wonderland section with the roses that light up and change colors.”

Cast in need of an extra scare had a screaming good time on Guardians of the Galaxy – Monsters After Dark and enjoyed Mater’s Graveyard JamBOOree and Luigi’s Honkin’ Haul-O-Ween in Radiator Screams – Cars Land with a twisted seasonal makeover.



“It’s very rewarding to be here!” Jenna

said. “It’s a cool perk to come out after hours, hang out with everyone, see friends and relax.”

CAST LIFE

# Disneyland Resort Disney Scholars Winners Ready to Take on College

By Matt Nixon

Photo Imaging cast member Chris Santiago was thrilled to learn his stepdaughter had been selected this summer for a college scholarship as part of the Disney

Scholars program. “We weren’t expecting it; it was some Disney magic made for us,” Chris said.

This year, 150 academic awards of up to \$20,000 each, applied over a four-year period, were gifted to graduating high school students of Disney cast

members and employees from around the world, including 11 from the Disneyland Resort.

This fall, Chris’ stepdaughter, Emmari Pureza, will attend University of California, Riverside, and major in biology with the hopes of becoming a doctor. “I’m thankful I was given the chance to apply for the scholarship,” said Emmari. “And I’m relieved because I plan to go to medical school and I know it can be expensive.”

Allison Day Doniare was also proud to be selected as recipient this year, joining a list of inspiring students who have been awarded college scholarships by The Walt Disney Company Foundation for almost 60 years. That list included her older sister, Maria Sophia Donaire, a past recipient of the Disney Scholars award; she is currently studying biochemistry at the University of California, Irvine. “My parents and sister were so happy that I accomplished something

like my sister did,” said Allison. She’ll be attending the nursing program at California State University, Fullerton, which accepts just 40 applicants each year.

Allison’s mother, Pym Test Kitchen Cashier Bernadette Donaire, immigrated to the United States from the Philippines and has always encouraged her daughters to work hard to make their dreams come true. “Disney is very good to my family,” said Bernadette. “It’s like a dream come true.”

Cast members whose children will be high school seniors in the upcoming school year can visit DisneyScholars. Disney.com for more information about the program and how they can apply for the 2022 awards this fall.

“Ever since I was little, Disney has been a big part of my life,” said Allison. “But now, Disney has gone from something I enjoy to something that impacts me in a big way and will help me through my whole life.”



CAST MEMBER BERNADETTE WITH DAUGHTER, ALLISON DAY DONAIRE, WHO WILL BE ATTENDING CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON.



PHOTO IMAGING CAST MEMBER CHRIS SANTIAGO WAS WITH STEPDAUGHTER EMMARI PUREZA, WHO WILL ATTEND UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, RIVERSIDE.

RECIPE CORNER

# Central Bakery Tour Brings Back Sweet Memories for Disneyland Resort President



By Lisa Greathouse

Disneyland Resort President Ken Potrock’s childhood was spent working in his family’s bakery business, so he felt right at home during a tour of the Central Bakery — where all of the resort’s sweets and treats are made — followed by a tasting of his family’s famous cheesecake.

“We all put our hearts and souls into all the desserts we make, so it was an honor to have him here to acknowledge our team and all we do,” Pastry Sous Chef Christina Orejel said.

During his visit, Ken donned a Central Bakery costume — he was even gifted his own personalized chef’s jacket — and got to experience the joy of pouring melted chocolate onto a fresh batch of Choco-Smash Candy Bars, one of the hit menu items at Avengers Campus. He also prepared his cheesecake recipe alongside cast members, followed by a tasting of the finished product for the entire bakery cast.

“He did great in the kitchen — and I love that he has an interest in our products and came with so many ideas,” said Executive Pastry Chef Jean-Marc Viallet. “So many people come to the resort specifically for our Food and Beverage — which is very rare for a theme park. And a lot of those items, like the Grey Stuff [Gateau], the [Jack-Jack] Cookie Num Nums, the Mickey Macaron and so many others are from the Central Bakery.” Chef Jean-Marc said even a lot of cast members don’t know about the Central Bakery, which is located near the Mickey & Friends parking structure and churns out thousands of sweet treats for the resort daily. “I have the best team and the best job in the world.”

Ken said the bakery tour brought back fond memories of the years spent helping out at his grandfather’s Bronx bakery near Yankee Stadium, where he assembled cardboard boxes for a penny apiece. Later, when his family moved to Akron, Ohio, and opened a restaurant and bakery business, they became known for their éclair pastries and New York-style cheesecake.

“I had such a wonderful time visiting — it brought back so many special memories,” Ken said. “I owe a gigantic thank you to the Central Bakery cast members who welcomed me as one of the family. It was a special treat that I will remember always.”

If you’d like to try Ken’s family cheesecake recipe at home, check this recipe!



INGREDIENTS

CRUST

- 4 cups graham cracker crumbs
- 10 tablespoons melted butter

CAKE

- 8 (8 oz.) packages of cream cheese, room temperature
- 1½ cups plus 2 additional tbsp. flour
- 2¾ cups plus 2 tbsp. sugar
- ½ tsp. salt
- 1 pint sour cream
- 9 eggs
- 2 half-pint containers whipping cream
- ½ cup powdered sugar
- 1 tbsp. vanilla
- 1 tbsp. lemon juice

LOU & HY’S CHEESECAKE DIRECTIONS (Yield: four 8-inch cheesecakes):

CRUST STEPS:

1. Stir and toss crumbs with melted butter.
2. Press equal amounts of the buttered crumbs into the bottoms of four 8- or 8½-inch round, spring-form pans. Set aside.

CAKE STEPS:

1. Preheat oven to 350° Fahrenheit.
2. In a large bowl, beat cream cheese until fluffy (ideally with an electric mixer)
3. Slowly beat in flour, and then sugar. Add salt and sour cream, and beat until smooth, occasionally scraping the sides of the bowl with a rubber spatula.
4. Add eggs one at a time, beating on low speed until each egg is incorporated.
5. Turn off mixer and stir mixture with a rubber spatula to ensure batter is evenly mixed.
6. In another bowl, beat whipping cream until slightly thickened. While beating, slowly add powdered sugar, vanilla and lemon juice. Continue beating until soft peaks form.
7. Pour ¼ of the cream cheese mixture into the bowl with the whipped cream and gently fold with the rubber spatula until incorporated. Add half of the remaining batter and fold again before folding in the remaining batter.
8. Pour batter into your crusts.
9. Bake in oven, using the following times as general guidelines: 40 minutes for a 7½-inch cake, 50 minutes for an 8- to 8½-inch cake and 60 minutes for a 9½-inch cake.
10. Cool to room temperature before refrigerating.
11. When serving, consider topping with cherry, blueberry or pineapple pie filling, along with whipped cream if desired.

Note: Always use caution when handling sharp objects and hot contents. Please supervise children who are helping or nearby.



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## A PLACE WHERE EVERYONE IS WELCOME

We'll never stop working to make sure that Disney is a welcoming workplace for all. With flexibility surrounding forms of personal expression such as gender-inclusive hairstyles, jewelry, nail styles, costume choices, and appropriate visible tattoos, our cast members are empowered to express their cultures and individuality at work.

