



PRESS RELEASE
November 12, 2009
For Immediate Release

For More Information Contact: Lynda Utterback, Executive Director
National Ice Cream Retailers Assn.
847/301-7500

Queen City Creamery & Deli Wins Promotion of the Year Award

The 22nd Annual Promotion of the Year Award was presented to Terry & Rick Michels, Queen City Creamery & Deli, Cumberland, MD at the National Ice Cream Retailers Association 76th Annual Meeting held at the Chaparral Suites Resort, November 4-7, 2009.

A total of seven Association members submitted entries for consideration of the award. The other six members were Colorado City Creamery, Colorado Springs, CO; Double Dip, Lebanon, Ohio; Four Seas Ice Cream, Centerville, MA; Henry's Homemade Ice Cream, Plano, TX; Mercurio's Mulberry Creamery, Kittanning, PA; and Spring Dipper, Mammoth Spring, AR. Summaries of all of the promotions were printed in the November/December 2009 issue of *The National Dipper Magazine*.

The goal of the promotion was to increase sales, bring in new customers and make money for non-profit organizations. The plan was to invite non-profit organizations to develop a unique sundae, promote sales amongst their members, and earn monetary rewards for their sustainable efforts over a 6-week time period.

Terry and Rick are great fans of the reality show, *Survivor*, and thought it would be fun to develop a promotion based on the show's mantra of "Outsmart, Outwit, Outlast". We called the promotion Survivor Sundae: The Holy Wars. The idea is that six non-profit groups would create a unique sundae and develop a strategy that would enable them to sustain sales of that sundae for six weeks running. The number of sundaes sold was tallied each Monday morning and the lowest selling sundae each week was eliminated. The organization would receive \$1 for each sundae sold, a \$25 bonus for each week they were the top seller and an elimination consolation prize, which increases each week as well. So there was a great incentive to stay in the contest as long as possible.



We ran this promotion in the fall for the last five years, with moderate success. But this year we made two changes, resulting in amazing success. First of all we changed the time of the event from fall to late winter (February 15 to March 22). Secondly, we invited church based youth groups to participate, rather than charity groups whose members were adults. We sent out invitations to 24 different churches in our community, all denominations. We only wanted six participants and surprisingly, exactly six responded. We invited them to send an adult sponsor and a committee of three from each group to a general information meeting, where we explained the program and gave them the parameters of creating their sundaes. Additionally, a representative from each group was asked to be a “Celebrity Dipper” for one hour the first Sunday of the competition.

It was such fun watching the kids create and name their sundaes, and they were so enthusiastic that they wanted to “Celebrity Dip” every Sunday afternoon. So we made up a weekly schedule for them, with their times increasing as groups were eliminated. The contest took off with a bang, selling 96 Holy Wars Sundaes the first day. We sent out morning e-mail challenges to the adult sponsors, telling them of the previous day’s sales for each group, so everyone knew where they stood each day, except Sundays. This was the day where numbers could change drastically. By the end of the first week, we sold a total of 386 sundaes. And remember, this is February.

All of the groups’ members ranged in age from 12 to 17, and even though some congregations were large, each youth group had only 6 to 15 members. Each group was told they could advertise any way they wanted (at their own cost) to increase their sales and the results were very creative. Not only parents and grandparents, but the entire congregation became involved, with the pastors reminding members from the pulpit to be sure to stop at the Creamery to buy their Survivor Sundaes before they went home. Parents were printing and distributing flyers, kids were in costumes on street corners around our store flagging in customers, and signs were posted in churchyards telling everyone to buy their sundae. Our store was decorated with a jungle theme as well, and our staff was eager to explain the contest to people from out of town or anyone who was unaware.



Sundays were truly wild and crazy days as the kids hustled their sundaes to anyone who walked in the door. We even had customers ordering and paying for sundaes and not actually taking them, just so their kids would get credit. The pastors were ecstatic that their youth groups were finally getting some support and recognition from their congregations.

At the end of the six weeks, we held an awards ceremony, handing out plaques and checks to all participants. The local newspaper was there to photograph the winners and wrote a huge article about the contest. The winning sundae was called “Gimme Gimme S’more” and totaled 534 sales. It was also the top seller for three weeks. Other sundae names were Hard to Resist Temptation; Chocolate Raspberry Heaven; Gaffy’s Sundae Sin; Eternal Joy and Lazy Sundae. So in addition to the sundaes sales dollars, this group took the Grand Prize of \$200 and a \$75 bonus, which gave them a total of \$804. All in all we sold 1,379 sundaes and gave away \$2,088. We had countless new customers in the store who bought much more than ice cream sundaes. And we have lots of churches asking if their youth groups can participate next year. In comparison to the same time period last year, our ice cream sales doubled, and total sales were up 25%, giving us a great jump start for the season. Plus, we contributed to some very deserving and struggling programs and had a great time doing it.

The National Ice Cream Retailers Association is a trade organization whose members are in the retail ice cream; frozen custard; gelato; frozen yogurt and water ice business. The members of NICRA are located all across the United States, Canada and several other countries. They operate hundreds of stores and have estimated annual sales in the millions of dollars. They employ thousands of full-and part-time employees. Since 1933, NICRA has helped hundreds of ice cream and frozen dessert entrepreneurs get started and prosper.

###