

## Mix it up

### Pillsbury Bake-Off's first gluten-free winner

**M**erry Graham, of Newhall, California, won the first Gluten-Free Award at the 47th Pillsbury Bake-Off Contest for her Herbs and Seeds Parmesan Crackers recipe. Graham created the crackers to be a versatile treat that everyone, whether gluten free or not, can enjoy.

Although contestants were allowed to prepare three batches of their recipes and submit the best one for judging, Graham was satisfied after her second try. She said the crackers, made with Pillsbury's pie and pastry dough, were "as good as it's gonna get." The crackers had crunchy edges and a tender middle and tasted like biscuits and crackers combined.

Pillsbury introduced the award this year to recognize the best gluten-free recipe using at least one Pillsbury gluten-free product. Graham received a \$5,000 prize and a Gold Doughboy statue, which featured the iconic character playing a guitar to pay homage to the contest's Nashville, Tennessee, location. Graham said she was "stunned and honored" to win the first gluten-free award, and she already knows which gluten-free recipe she'll enter in

#### GF CONTEST WINNERS

- Weekend breakfast wows
- Chocolate Chip-Banana Nut Muffins
- Lemon-Blueberry Muffins
- Peanut Butter-Chocolate Chip Waffles
- Banana-Chocolate Chip Streusel Muffins
- Cherry-Vanilla Dutch Pancake
- Savory snacks and sides
- Herbs and Seeds Parmesan Crackers
- Sesame Mini Pitas with Roasted Red Pepper Tapenade
- Amazing Doable Dinners
- Simple Spanakopita Pie
- Simply Sweet Treats
- Chocolate-in-the-Middle Biscotti
- Creamy Peanut Butter-Filled Chocolate Cupcakes
- Chocolate Chip-Espresso-Almond Bars
- Chewy Ginger Snaps with White Chocolate Drizzle
- Easy Double-Chocolate Brownies
- Decadent Chocolate Chip Cake
- Chocolate Chip Cookie Snack Mix
- Peanut Butter Chocolate Chip Cookie "Ice Cream" Sandwiches

next year's Bake-Off.

Of the 100 bakers who reached the contest finals, 16 used a Pillsbury gluten-free product as a main ingredient. Elizabeth Nordlie, president of Pillsbury USA, has a personal connection to the gluten-free line of refrigerated dough the company

introduced this year: Her mother was diagnosed with celiac disease eight years ago.

The finals began with live music, and competitors participated in a parade around the show floor, which was set up with 100 ovens and countertops. When each finalist took the long walk to submit a recipe to the judges, all the others applauded to show appreciation and camaraderie.

Most of those who entered the gluten-free competition are either on the gluten-free diet or have a friend or family member who is. They all noted how easy it is to use the gluten-free dough and how much simpler the products have made everyday cooking and baking.

Many recipes submitted by finalists are easy to make at home, including Chocolate Chip Banana Muffins, Cherry Vanilla Dutch Pancakes, Simple Spanakopita Pie and the prize-winning cracker.

The finalists' gluten-free recipes are available on Pillsbury's website, Pillsbury.com, and feature step-by-step instructions and photos. —Jennifer Harris



Merry Graham



**ANSWERS FOR CELIAC DISEASE**, the answers A, B and C are correct. Celiac disease is an autoimmune disease in which the absorbing lining of the small intestine is destroyed when a patient consumes gluten. Patients sometimes have no outward symptoms. There are currently no prescription drugs to treat the disease, and the only treatment is the gluten-free diet. Once someone begins a gluten-free diet, it becomes more difficult to get an accurate diagnosis.

**FOR GLUTEN SENSITIVITY**, the answers C and E are correct. Gluten sensitivity is marked by a noticeable reaction to the consumption of gluten, though it varies widely. Many of the symptoms are the same as those experienced by people with celiac disease. Still, the disease does not damage the absorbing lining of the small intestine and is not an autoimmune disease. Physicians should first rule out celiac disease, which they cannot do if the patient has already started the gluten-free diet. Though there are currently no blood tests for the disease, researchers are looking for bio markers that would definitively diagnose the condition.