

# Dished: Gelato Machines and Handmade Desserts in Senior Living

By John Yedinak

Make no mistake—senior living residents want dessert and The Mather is giving them something to rave about each day.

Meet Mary Teresi, head pastry chef at The Mather, a senior living community located in Evanston, Ill., that prides itself on keeping the menu fresh for residents, especially dessert.

It's a pretty remarkable thing considering that fewer restaurants are employing pastry chefs and even fewer senior living providers have one at their community full time.

"A lot of hotels are phasing out the pastry chefs, so [The Mather] was a good set up," said Teresi. "Plus, the sky is the limit as far as what I can create."

Walking through The Mather's kitchen, it becomes clear how much the provider cares about the desserts it serves its residents. The kitchen setup and equipment was a huge selling point for the Sofitel Hotel recruit, with a dedicated corner of the kitchen strictly for creating pastries each day.



*Desserts featured at The Mather*

## QUICK HITS:

### **Best "toy" in the kitchen –**

A high-end gelato machine—The Mather makes two sorbets and two gelatos each day.

### **Variety of desserts is key –**

Teresi went a full year without ever repeating a dessert for residents.

**Best part of her job –** "The Mather gives me 100 percent free reign creatively," Teresi says.

A path to becoming a pastry chef wasn't the original plan. Growing up, Teresi wanted to follow in the footsteps of Julia Child, the famous American chef, author, and television personality.

"I originally wanted to be a chef, but when I was asked to boil lobsters during school for class I started to rethink my career—I didn't want to kill anything," she said. "I decided to move away from that and into more savory types of food."

It turned out to be a good move for Teresi who has been baking since she was 16 years old and was already working at a bakery in order to pay her way through school.

David Kane, vice president of senior living for The Mather, raves about the pastries created in the kitchen, stressing that everything is made from scratch each day, including the gelato and sorbet.

"Everything is done by hand. The little chocolate designs on the desert are made and decorated by hand," said Kane. "This is not a convenience kitchen by any means."