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stores. Most markets, but not all, sell the packages for the \$15 listed on the Ptashka website.

“They are microwavable in just a minute,” reads the instructions, but I needed to give each individual *nalysnyky* 15 seconds more to eliminate cold spots. To serve multiple crepes, Jenya advised preheating the oven to 350 degrees. Brush the *nalysnyky* with a little oil and place them onto a greased or parchment-covered baking sheet pan. Bake the crepes for 20-25 minutes. “They will be very hot — thoroughly warmed up,” she said.

On Friday, the women make Ptashka’s savory crepe varieties: Mushroom and Cheese, Ricotta Cheese and Spinach, and Cabbage and White Beans. Saturday is their day for producing sweet *nalysnyky*: Cherries and Vanilla Sauce, Apples and Vanilla Sauce and one that’s especially popular in Ukraine, Farmer’s Cheese and Raisins.

“Our *nalysnyky* are made with locally sourced and natural ingredients,” Jenya said. The savory type can be eaten as is or with a little sour cream. Accompaniments for the sweet crepes might include ice cream, chocolate or caramel sauces, powdered sugar or jam.

Everyone has their favorite. Jenya’s son, Robby Schwartz, 7, often has three Farmer’s Cheese and Raisins *nalysnyky* for breakfast. (He also loves eating his Long Island, N.Y., grandma’s Jewish holiday fare, Jenya said). Her husband, Ben, is most fond of Cherries and Vanilla Sauce. Her dad, Igor Semenov, prefers Cabbage and White Beans, a more traditional Ukrainian choice. As for me, I liked Mushroom and Cheese best among the savory choices, after experiencing an initial burst of fresh, juicy flavor.

Jenya hired several professionals in creating her business. Brandon Archibald designed the Ptashka logo and container packaging. The appetizing product pictures are due to



## What are Nalysnyky?


The traditional dish of Ukrainian and Belarusian cuisine, the crepes known as *nalysnyky* (spelled in English as *nalistniki* when Russian-style) are thin pancakes in which a filling is wrapped. These fillings can include minced meat, mushrooms, jam, berries, cottage cheese and more. Farmer’s cheese, also known as curd, is the most common filling.

Source: primarily Wikipedia

the efforts of food stylist Ross Yedinak and photographer Jacob Lewkow.

Additionally, the company owner is very committed to recycling. She obtained eco-friendly coolers for delivering orders. Besides ice gel packs, the coolers include water-soluble Green Cell Foam.

As Ptashka’s realm expands, Jenya anticipates taking more days and evenings in the kitchen to make *nalysnyky* and other Ukrainian food specialties she’s yet to introduce. Additional staff would need to be hired.

“We’ll figure it out!” she said cheerily. 

## SPOTLIGHT

### JFS Receives \$25K Grant

Jewish Family Service received a generous grant provided by Oakland County and administered by the Pontiac Community Foundation.

The \$25,000 Healthy Food Access grant will go toward the agency’s food assistance program, allowing JFS to expand its food voucher distribution in order to address food insecurity in the community amid the current economic crisis.

“Our food assistance program gives those we serve the freedom and dignity of choice to purchase what they need directly from a grocery store,” says Dini Peterson, Chief Program Officer, Family and Community Services. “Community resources like food banks may not have products available to meet people’s dietary needs, for example, for those who keep kosher or require specific foods to comply with health conditions such as celiac disease and diabetes.”

Recognizing that food assistance is needed to keep community members from going into long-term financial crisis, JFS provides, along with the vouchers, case management services with a social worker. They partner with each client to develop a plan with the goal of becoming financially self-sufficient. And they help clients achieve their goals in a variety of ways, including maximizing community resources like food pantries and public benefits assistance through the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS). Last year, JFS provided food-based services to 590 households, representing over 2,200 individuals.

“We are so appreciative of Oakland County and the Pontiac Community Foundation,” says Peterson. “Their generosity ensures that our critical work of serving the most vulnerable in our community continues to impact lives.” 