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**More Than a Cookbook, It's a Gift of Love for the Holiday Season and Beyond**

CHICAGO, (Nov. 29, 2007) – As the holiday entertaining and gift-giving season is top of mind, the answer to both can be found in a new book, *From Our Hearts to Your Table: Favorite Recipes from a Greek American Family*, by Chicagoan Dorothy Bezemes.

The spiral-bound collection of more than 200 recipes is more than a cookbook. It delightfully chronicles the memories of Bezemes' upbringing in Western Nebraska, the youngest of eight American-born children of Greek immigrants, and the many family traditions that continued among herself, her siblings and the generations to follow as they left the farm for Chicago and other American cities. It's the blending of her Greek heritage and the American rural and urban melting pot in which she's lived – both in the stories Bezemes shares and in the recipes she includes – that make this book truly unique.

For example, Bezemes explains the tradition of serving Kapama, a meal of meat and macaroni, before the beginning of Great Lent, adding that her family has Americanized the event, calling it "St. Spaghetti Day." She also writes of her mother's lovingly tended garden, underscoring the importance of quality ingredients; and the evolution of appliances from the hand-turned egg beater to today's electronic gourmet devices.

As for the recipes themselves, it's the sheer variety that makes this book stand out. For example, the appetizer section includes spanakopita (Greek spinach pie made with Feta cheese and phillo dough) as well as a BLT dip. In the breads section, you'll find Vasilopita, a sweet bread served traditionally on New Year's Day, and the story behind the tradition, along with "Best-Ever Banana Bread" a family favorite introduced by Bezemes' niece. The chapter on meats is composed of several lamb dishes, as one would expect in a Greek cookbook, but also offers recipes for Spanish rice, American chop suey, and corned beef and cabbage. Among the numerous dessert recipes you'll find both honey-laden baklava and lemon meringue pie.

Inspired to leave a legacy for her children and grandchildren, in 2000 Bezemes first assembled her family recipes and a number of others she collected, tested and personalized over the years and presented sets to each of them. Word of this gift quickly traveled throughout her

close-knit extended family so Bezemes had her original compilation printed to share with her many nieces and nephews, and their grown children. However interest in these tried and true recipes began to overflow outside of the family. It was then Bezemes decided to publish the recipes with the help of Chicago photographer Lex Alexander, the grandson of her father's sister Anna, and Alexander's wife Sue, a graphic designer, along with the support of her children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews and friends.

In her introduction to *From Our Hearts to Your Table*, Bezemes, who has survived her siblings, writes, "My heart swelled with pride from the warmth and love these recipes and memories were giving me, and it was then that I decided that before the last curtain call I would assemble all these recipes and put them in a book...So, seven years later I share these recipes with you. I hope that you will embrace and enjoy our family recipes and even my quips of personal memories. Remember the most memorable and delicious meal has one hidden ingredient in it – 'a cupful of love' – share it with your family and friends."

*From Our Hearts to Your Table* is available for \$25 plus shipping and handling. Ordering information and excerpts from the book can be found at [www.acupfuloflove.com](http://www.acupfuloflove.com).

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Photographs and review copies can be requested via email to [starr@soundsolutionsinc.net](mailto:starr@soundsolutionsinc.net).