

## FACES IN THE CROWD

# Chef's recipe of charisma, skills brings success

## Molly Fowler's class simplifies cooking process

By VALERIE SWEETEN

**M**OLLY Fowler, known throughout the culinary school circuit as "The Dining Diva," makes cooking look easy, even when tackling a homemade apple pie into a brown paper bag to bake.

Fowler, a Cy-Fair resident, is popular with audiences because of her recipes geared toward entertaining.

Her first book, *Menus For Entertaining*, was released in November.

David Klein, a cooking school manager at Central Market, 3815 Weasheimer, said Fowler's appeal is her humor and experience.

"She's really down to earth and doesn't make cooking hard," said Klein, who has known Fowler for five years.

"She connects with people because these foods are what they would make at home.

"It's more comfort food anything."

"She's bubbly and interested in teaching something that they can connect with."

### Success in the kitchen

Fowler, a Millard native, enjoys watching people succeed in the kitchen.

She's been at Great Day Houston for the past two years.

She also travels to Central Market locations in Texas, including Fredericksburg, Corpus Lighthouse and Beaumont.

Sharon Miller, owner of L'Allegro at 22900 Weasheimer Parkway in Katy, books Fowler at least once a month for classes.

Fowler's knowledge and vivaciousness make for a fascinating class, Miller said.

"Her research and scientific knowledge bring a lot of interest in her class."

"It's a great combination with her outgoing personality," she said.



**WHAT'S COOKING:** Chef and local cooking guru Molly Fowler, 54, teaches culinary classes at Central Market, 3815 Weasheimer. Fowler's recently published book, *Menus For Entertaining*, features party recipes.

Fowler's real talent is connecting with customers.

"There are so many repeat students because she always has new ideas and recipes."

"She explains class in a way that makes sense," Miller said.

Fowler wasn't always the cooking genius.

She graduated with an accounting degree from Texas Tech University in 1975.

She worked as an accountant in the oil and gas industry in Denver.

In 1998, Fowler left her job when she became pregnant with her daughter, Emily.

### MOLLY FOWLER

• Age 54

• **Occupation:** The Dining Diva cooking instructor

• **Community connection:** Cy-Fair resident

• **Fun fact:** Conducts culinary tours in Europe once a year

• **Quick quote:** "I love sharing a meal with family and friends. It's important to think cooking is fun. People are great to create." — *Valerie Fowler*

*"She connects with people because these foods are what they would make at home. It's more comfort than anything. She's bubbly and interested in teaching something that they can entertain with."*

—**DAVID KLEIN**  
cooking school manager

She then began looking for alternative work.

Fowler found her niche in catering in 1985.

Her friends began to rave about her dinner parties.

Her catering company, La Pizzeria, began with catering.

"I just loved cooking. I never advertised and had more business than I could shake a stick at," Fowler said.

### Catering in the classroom

While catering, Fowler began teaching at Williams Sonoma and The Seasoned Chef.

In 1999, Fowler moved to Magnolia to be close to family and friend Williams Sonoma at Willowbrook Mall for more teaching opportunities.

Classes at Rice Epicurean Market at 3108 San Felipe followed.

The joined Central Market in 2011.

Fowler, an advocate of using Texas products, has given demonstrations for the Texas Department of Agriculture promoting local farming and production and supported at the Fredericksburg Food and Wine Festival in October.

"There are things I greatly admire because I love Texas

products and believe in supporting our own small businesses and growers.

"We've got everything here from fabulous cheeses, wines or sometimes, I encourage people to look for the Go Texan logo," Fowler said.

Fowler and husband, Kevin Fowler, also host annual culinary tours in Europe and have taken groups to Italy, France and Germany.

A trip to Austria is planned for September.

The fascination with cooking has a deep hold on Fowler's heart.

"I cried when I got my book published because it was a very proud moment."

"My biggest motivation for around the table because I love when people laugh, live loud and longer so long."

"I think cooking is a real expression of love and wanting for people you care about," she said.

For Fowler's appearance schedule, go to

[www.theDiningDivas.com](http://www.theDiningDivas.com).

If you have a suggestion for a "Faces in the Crowd" profile, contact Kim Morgan at [kim.morgan@hcn.com](mailto:kim.morgan@hcn.com) or send a fax to 713-362-7352.