



Humorist Sylvia Toh Paik Choo and her partner Jean-Francois Susbielle, who organised The Great Cook-Off to promote inter-generational bonding, with the Jurong Green CC champs (front row, from left) Najah Sulaiman, 14; Madam Saedah, 61; and Madam Nora, 31. The team will compete in the finals on Wednesday. ST PHOTO: DESMOND WEE

Their 'rainbow rice' wows judges

IT LOOKED good and tasted even better.

Together with her daughter-in-law and granddaughter, Madam Saedah Tahier, 61, served up a colourful Nasi Pelangi (rainbow rice) which wowed the judges and beat out the competition at The Great Cook-Off (see main story) in Jurong Green Community Centre last month.

She served the concoction of basmati rice cooked with spices, onions, ghee and pandan leaves with prawn rendang.

The homemaker wife of a shipyard worker, she said the rice was something she dreamt up in her kitchen.

"You have to first fry the rice with the ingredients, before cooking it. When it's nearly done, you have to make holes in the rice and fill it with colouring so that you get the rainbow effect."

Madam Saedah, whose late parents used to run a food stall, learnt how to cook when she was just 11. The eldest of eight children, she bashfully said she has *air tangan*, a Malay expression meaning a natural aptitude in the kitchen.

The mother of two was encouraged to join the competition by the Jurong Green CC. She tried to rope in her daughter Siti Mariam but the latter declined because she was pregnant.

Her daughter-in-law, housewife Nora Husain, 31, was more than game.

They then pulled in Madam Siti's 14-year-old

daughter, Najah Sulaiman, to form Team Family Madam Saedah.

The student was initially reluctant because she was shy, but a \$50 bribe from her grandfather sealed the deal.

Madam Nora decided to up the ante by decorating the aprons and chef hats they were given. A competent baker and cook, she took charge of the garnishing and the presentation.

Najah helped with the cutting and dicing of ingredients while Madam Saedah played the sous chef.

Nearly 10 of their friends and relatives turned up on the day of the competition to cheer them on.

Word of their triumph has spread and the Jurong Green CC is now thinking of chartering a bus to accommodate their supporters when the team faces their competition on Wednesday at the Marine Parade CC. They will be pitting their culinary skills against Team Family Jenny Chua which comprises homemaker Jenny Chua, 54, her son Leonard, 22 and her mother Madam Yeo, 77.

Asked what she will be dishing up, Madam Saedah said with a big grin: "It's a secret."

The finals of The Great Cook-Off will be held at the Dream Kitchen in the Marine Parade Community Centre at 7pm on Wednesday.