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Troy woman wins lunch with Mojo and his crew

OCTOBER 16, 2008

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Sarah Mikhael of Troy and Mojo of Mojo in the Morning have a lot in common. Both are the children of immigrants who came to the United States looking for a better life. Both call their parents heroes.

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Mikhael got to share her family's story at lunch with her favorite morning radio personalities Monday at Buddy's in Farmington Hills. Mojo, who came to Detroit and Channel 95.5 in February 2000, is one of metro Detroit's most popular personalities.

Mikhael was the first winner of this year's Dining with The Stars promotion sponsored by Buddy's and the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers.

"I guess I can relate to Mojo's father's experience about coming from another country and trying to get established in America," wrote Mikhael in her winning entry.

"I was born in Beirut, Lebanon, and my parents and I came to the United States when I was around 4 years old (I'm 24 now). We had to flee Lebanon because my dad (who is a pastor) wrote some controversial books.

"If we didn't leave Lebanon, my father, mother and I would have all been killed.

"Starting all over is hard. But we made it through. My dad continued being a pastor and now has the largest Arabic-speaking church outside of the Middle East right here in Detroit. He also became a radio and TV personality on the Arabic talk show station 680 AM and on the Arabic satellite TV station," Mikhael wrote, adding that her mom received a doctorate in biochemistry from Wayne State and works at General Motors, while she has a bachelor's degree (double major) in nursing and health services administration from the University of Detroit Mercy. She is currently working on a master's degree.

Mikhael works at the Detroit Medical Center and does some modeling on the side for Lebanese ads.

"I have been playing the piano for 18 years and just started teaching it two years ago. Having said all of this, my parents are also my heroes. They went through some tough times to make life better for me and for themselves," Mikhael wrote.

Her parents left late last month for Iraq to start an English-speaking school for young children.

"It is a billion-dollar project, but they are determined to complete it. Their determination and faith is what keeps me going every day. I would love to sit down

with Mojo and the crew and see what helps keep them going throughout their life."

She got her wish.

"Sarah was thrilled with her entire Dining With The Stars experience," said Marcy Brontman of Buddy's. "Mojo, Kyra and producer Rachel arrived with Sarah ... then, Mojo's best friend appeared at Buddy's to join in the festivities. The party

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was complete when Mojo invited the limo driver, Gary, to join in, too.

"The Fred Astaire dancers performed and invited Mojo and Sarah to dance ... they were great," Brontman added.

"This was certainly a fun group and our winner was like one of the crew. Mojo, I must say, can and does light up the room, and has that 'real deal' heart to back him up. He is warm, kind and funny," Brontman said, adding that it was a pleasure to present Mojo with a \$500 contribution for Covenant House.

In addition to lunch, Mikhael was treated to a limo ride courtesy of Class Plus Limo; mini-makeover by Sebastian and Heba of I Design Salon and Spa in Dearborn; \$100 gift certificate from Reaver Diamond Co. in Southfield; and dance exhibition by the Fred Astaire Dance Studio in Bloomfield Hills.

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