



PHOTO BY ROB BROWN

AUTHORS IN BROOKS - The Big Cook authors Joanne Smith and Deanna Siemens were in Brooks last week at the Brooks Health Centre's book fair. The pair, along with Lorelei Thomas have written The Big Cook book.

Authors find success with The Big Cook book

Rob Brown
Brooks Bulletin

For Deanna Siemens, Joanne Smith and Lorelei Thomas the idea to create a cookbook was born out of their group cooking endeavors that would see the trio cook months of meals in one day.

The idea first began in 1997 when the three got together and realized immediate families were growing. Growth, along with the hustle and bustle of life, made meal planning more difficult.

Once the idea proved to be a successful way to deal with meal planning in the midst of their hectic lives, the three began formulating the idea of a cookbook.

"We always said we should be writing these down," said Thomas.

Out of their 'big cook' days, along with a need to help their friends and others came The Big Cook book.

"Instead of being at the rink at 5:30pm and panicking about what was going to be cooked for supper, we already had it covered," she said.

"We would do all our cooking every few months in one day."

The ease of being able to open up their freezers and having a great selection of meals to feed their families each night was something they wanted to share with the world.

"We worked on the book in our spare time. Needless to say it took a while," she said.

There are 73 beef, chicken and pork recipes. Some of the recipes have been passed down to or inherited by the group, while others are their own creations. Thomas said every one of the recipes is made with ingredients found in the average family's cupboard.

"Every one of the recipes are kid and family tested. Between us we have 11 kids so that's a lot of opinions," she said. Thomas says some of their favorite recipes are Thai Chicken, BBQ Beef and Amazing Chicken.

The book was released in April of 2006. Thomas says the success of the book in less than a year has been overwhelming.

"We started in Medicine Hat, using our own community as a bit of a learning ground. We moved to Lethbridge, Calgary, Red Deer and eventually Edmonton.

The Big Cook book is

available in every Chapters location in Alberta as well as various Coles bookstores.

"We have nearly sold out of our initial printing of 5000," she said.

Siemens said The Big Cook has taken the work out of planning suppers and has given her the freedom to spend more time enjoying the outdoors and her family.

Smith has a passion for educating others about nutrition, and enabling them with the knowledge and means to attain a healthy lifestyle.

She enjoys developing and enhancing recipes and is anxious to share this life changing method with all those busy individuals.

Thomas said most weeks, Monday to Friday finds her family using the big cook meals.

Her contributions to the big cook concept were invaluable as she shared her infinite talents, endless energy and commitment to the completion of the book.

"It is reassuring to open your freezer and see 40 to 50 meals ready to go if needed."

Thomas says that a second edition of the book is planned for the near future.