

In The News

STUDENTS COMPETE IN CHEF'S CHALLENGE

(October 16, 2013) - Culinary arts students, with the help of Child Nutrition Services managers and industry professionals, competed Oct. 11 for a chance to rewrite the menu in high-school cafeterias. The event, called the Chef's Challenge, pitted teams from five Newport News Public Schools against one another. Each team included cafeteria managers and a New Horizons culinary arts student from an NNPS high school. Students from the Culinary Institute of Virginia and a guest chef from a local restaurant rounded out the team. Teams had a half-hour to strategize about the two dishes they would prepare.

The competition was sponsored by RD Fresh, a Florida company that produces refrigeration dehumidifiers. Produce Source provided fresh produce that teams could incorporate in their dishes.

The competition took place at Menchville High School. The teams began at 10-minute intervals and each team had a designated preparation area and convection oven. The teams shared use of industrial steamers and cleanup areas. They had an hour to prep and cook before serving their creations to the judges.

The dishes were judged on flavor, appearance and overall experience. Judges included RD Fresh owner Steve Gerson, members of the School Board and City Council (Shelly Simonds and Bert Bateman), New Horizons teacher Tonya Ward, a Culinary Institute of Virginia student and Travis Brust, Executive Chef of the Williamsburg Inn.

Finally, it was time to present the trophies. The Menchville team was runner-up. The Warwick team's teriyaki dish was declared the winner. RD Fresh presented a banner to hang in the school cafeteria. Cathy Alexander, executive director of Nutrition and Wellness, said both dishes were likely to appear on school menus. She and the other competition organizers were already talking about a head-to-head challenge with Hampton schools, and with South Hampton Roads schools.

