



Cathedral Kitchen

Culinary Arts Training (CAT) Program

In February of 2009, Cathedral Kitchen launched its first job training initiative—the Culinary Arts Training (CAT) program. Our CAT program targets Camden residents who are unemployed, unskilled, homeless and/or at risk of homelessness. There are no tuition costs to enrolled students, and textbooks, study materials, chef uniforms and shoes are provided by CK. CAT students are recruited from Volunteers of America residential facilities (including halfway houses), the local veterans' shelter, Camden County's One Stop Career Center, referrals from other Camden nonprofits, as well as our dinner guest population. The CAT program is scheduled to operate twice per year.

During Week 1 newly enrolled CAT students, staff and community supporters gathered for the program kick-off in February of 2009. The students are pictured here with their Chef Instructor (far left) and Food Network celebrity chef and CK board member Aaron McCargo, Jr. (center), who spoke to the class about the qualities they would need to develop to achieve success in the culinary field.



During Week 2 students completed two weeks of training in ServSafe food safety and sanitation standards and received their first chef uniforms. CK's longtime cook, Clyde "Pop" Jones (on far right) serves as a role model/mentor and inspiration for the students.

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Week 3's curriculum introduced the students to hands-on instruction in Kitchen Skills and basic cooking techniques. Student Myisha Calli demonstrates her newly acquired turkey carving skill.



Throughout the program, as shown here during Week 4, CK's dining room is turned into a classroom for culinary fundamentals academic instruction. CAT student William Burton shares his answer to Chef Jonathan's question regarding some cooking techniques with his classmates.



One of 20 guest chefs, Richard Reiss of Elijah's Promise Culinary Arts Program teaches the students how to make sauces during Week 5. Following the demonstration/lesson, CK Executive Director Karen Talarico critiques the student's creations with an intensive "taste test."



During Week 6 Chef Audhild of Wegmans conducted a lecture on fish fabrication; later in the program she and colleague Joanna Cline taught a class in the art of bread baking.



Also during Week 6, Chef Ygnacio Elena was one of 5 senior research chefs from Campbell Soup Company's North American Food Service R & D division who shared his expertise with the students. He instructed students in the art of seafood preparation, ending with the creation of a delectable bouillabaisse.



Throughout the course, CK Pop Jones provided instruction in his own unique southern cooking, including his signature pork ribs and collard greens.

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During Week 7, Chef Nunzio Patruno of Nunzio Ristorante Rustico in Collingswood, offered instruction in chicken fabrication, demonstrating his skill as students observed.



Also in Week 7, Philadelphia's own passionate and well-known Chef Joseph Poon of Joe's Peking Duck, returned for a second visit to expand on his carving demonstration with a full day of hands-on instruction, teaching the students to carve a chicken in less than one minute. He also demonstrated how to prepare nine dishes from a single chicken.



Chef Poon (center) really got the students excited during his visit.



During Week 8, students divided into four teams to compete in a cooking competition, showcasing their newly acquired skills to judges from Nunzio Rustico Ristorante, Wegmans and Campbell Soup Company.



Each of the teams presented their meal, comprised of a chicken entrée plus vegetable and starch side dishes and any other ingredients found in the kitchen, to the judges.



The winning dish was a fennel chicken with pasta and a carved tomato—ala Chef Poon's instruction.

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During Week 9 students studied the art of pastry with guest Master Baker Kathleen Pearce of Rowan University. Here Chef Kat demonstrates how to fill cream puffs with homemade pate choux.



During Week 10 Chefs Stephen Wilson and Jill McClellan, owners of Sweet Life Bakery in Vineland demonstrated various techniques in cake decorating.



Once again, in Week 11, students put their knowledge gained during the various baking lectures and demonstrations to good use, competing in teams of four in cake baking and pie baking contests.



Life skills workshops are included as a part of the program curriculum to help our students gain economic and personal self-sufficiency. Here Josue Figueroa of Susquehanna Bank and Sheila McCray of PNC Bank, presented William Gonzalez and the other students with financial literacy certificates upon completion of the 10 workshop curriculum. Staff from both Susquehanna and PNC Banks collaborated on the financial literacy curriculum segment taught during the program.

Students also received a certificate in life skills from licensed social worker Kiyana Bass and life skills coach Donna Meyer once they completed the 12-sessions curriculum.



During Weeks 12 and 13, students participated in internships at various restaurants and food service establishments, including Seasons 52, Nordstrom's Café, Old Country Buffet, Nunzio Ristorante Rustico, McDonalds and Sodexo at their Campbell Soup location. Here Thomas Wescott works under the supervision of Executive Chef Anthony O'Neill of Seasons 52.



Our first class of 18 graduates is now prepared to obtain jobs in the culinary industry. As of graduation day, 10 of the 18 students were already employed in positions in the culinary field. The next class will run from August to December of 2009.