



## Culinary Arts Training (CAT) Program

*Cathedral Kitchen*

In February of 2009, Cathedral Kitchen launched its first job training initiative—the Culinary Arts Training (CAT) program. Our CAT program targets residents of Camden and surrounding areas who are unemployed, unskilled, homeless and/or at risk of homelessness. There are no tuition costs to enrolled students; textbooks, study materials, chef uniforms and shoes are provided by CK. CAT students are recruited from Volunteers of America residential facilities (including halfway houses), Camden County's One Stop Career Center, referrals from other Camden nonprofits, as well as our dinner guest population and the general population. The CAT program operates twice per year for 17 weeks and includes instruction in various cooking and baking methods, food safety and sanitation standards.



During Week 1 of our very first class, newly enrolled CAT students, staff and community supporters gathered for the program kick-off in February of 2009. The students are pictured here with Jonathan Jernigan, their Chef Instructor (far left), and Food Network celebrity chef 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 the first two weeks, students complete two weeks of training in ServSafe food safety and sanitation standards and receive their first chef uniforms. Pictured with the students is CK's longtime cook, Clyde "Pop" Jones (on right) who served as a role model/mentor and inspiration for them before his retirement in 2009.



Executive Chef Jonathan Jernigan is the primary instructor for the 17 week program. CK's Sous Chef Linda Christianson teaches several classes and mentors the students throughout the program.



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The CAT curriculum introduces students to hands-on instruction in knife skills and basic cooking techniques.



More than 20 guest chefs participate in various segments of the program each semester. Here Chef Mark Smith from Tortilla Press and Tortilla Press Cantina teaches students about cooking with locally grown produce. There are also demonstrations on healthy cooking, vegetarian and vegan cuisine.



Throughout the program, CK's conference room is turned into a classroom for life skills workshops taught by life coaches Donna Meyer and Kathleen Cashman.



Each semester, Chef Richard Reiss of Elijah's Promise Culinary Arts Program teaches the students how to prepare lamb in a variety of ways on what is called "Lamb Day". Following the lesson and hands-on instruction, the students display their creations and discuss with Chef Richard all they have learned following the preparation of their assigned recipe. Chef Richard also teaches a class on mother sauces and the small sauces later in the semester.



Students put to work what they learned from Chef Richard about stocks and sauces.



Chef Audhild of Wegmans conducts a lecture on fish fabrication; later in the semester she teaches classes in bread baking and on pie baking.

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Chef Nunzio Patruno of Nunzio Ristorante Rustico in Collingswood offers instruction in chicken fabrication.



Chef Kahlil of Abundant Harvest Catering continues the lesson on chicken fabrication with a "chicken cook off".



Chef Kevin Kramer of Capital Grille in Cherry Hill teaches a beef fabrication class and brings the restaurant's signature cuts of dry-aged beef to prepare.



Of course, the meat fabrication lessons would not be complete without Chef Jonathan's pork class!



Students learn the art of pastry creation from Chef and Master Baker Kathleen Pearce of Rowan University. Here Chef Kat demonstrates how to fill cream puffs with homemade pate choux.



Chef Marie Stecher of The Restaurant School in Philadelphia teaches the art of cake decoration.

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Students go on several field trips that have included a visit to Wegmans in Cherry Hill (pictured here) and the Sysco Food Show.



Students divide into teams to compete in a cooking competition, showcasing their newly acquired skills to judges from the culinary field. Each of the teams presents their meal to the judges, comprised of an entrée plus vegetable and starch side dishes using only ingredients found in the kitchen. Here judges from Nunzio Ristorante Rustico, Wegmans and Tortilla Press Cantina evaluate and give feedback on each dish.



The program also includes a catering segment. In the fall session we incorporate our annual fundraiser, Harvest for Hunger, held at the Collingswood Grand Ballroom. Students assist in food preparation the week prior to the event and then butler hors d'oeuvres and serve guests at food stations at the event. In the spring students cater and serve at CK's volunteer recognition event.



Financial literacy 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 present William Gonzalez and his classmates with financial literacy certificates upon completion of the 10 workshop curriculum. Staff from both Susquehanna and PNC Banks collaborate on the financial literacy curriculum segment taught during the program.



During the last several weeks of the program, students participate in internships at various restaurants and food service establishments, including Seasons 52, Tortilla Press, Abundant Harvest Catering, ARAMARK, and Nunzio Ristorante Rustico. Pictured is Thomas Wescott from our first class who interned under the supervision of Executive Chef Anthony O'Neill at Seasons 52.



As of the end of 2010, 71 students completed the program over its first two years of operation, with approximately 75-80% of each of the four classes becoming employed in the culinary field.