

Tacos lead to culinary scholarship

BY CHRIS KRIDLER • FLORIDA TODAY • JUNE 5, 2010

MELBOURNE — Taryn Ireland of Cocoa accepted a \$30,000 culinary scholarship to Keiser University in Melbourne with tears in her eyes Friday after winning the Bon Appetit Brevard contest.

The finale of the FLORIDA TODAY contest was Friday evening at Keiser, where a crowd of about 60 voted on their favorite dishes. Ireland, a recent Space Coast Jr./Sr. High graduate, made The Aunt's Tacos, a recipe inspired by the cooking of multiple aunts.

She competed against two other finalists, Francisco Abalo of Cape Canaveral, whose Chicken Liver Pate earned second place and a series of cooking classes, and Renee Durette of Merritt Island, whose Sweet and Savory Spaghetti and Meatballs won third place and a set of chef's knives.

"It's really amazing," Ireland said after a final round of online votes and the tally from Friday night's ballots determined the winners. "I just want to thank everybody who helped me get here -- my aunts, my parents, just everybody who voted for me, thank you."

Keiser students helped the three finalists cook for Friday's event, which honored Project Hunger's 2010 campaign to feed the needy in Brevard County. Project Hunger has raised more than \$185,000 so far.

Forty-five applications for Bon Appetit Brevard were narrowed to 10 semifinalists, who were filmed cooking the dishes they created. Online votes on their videos (see them at floridatoday.com/recipecontest) narrowed the field to the three finalists.

"I'm just so excited to go to culinary school right now," Ireland said. "Hopefully someday down the road, I'll own my own restaurant and be my own boss."

Contact Kridler at 242-3633 or ckridler@floridatoday.com.



Purchase this Photo

Taryn Ireland reacts Friday after winning first place in the recipe contest of Bon Appetit Brevard at Keiser University Center for Culinary Arts in Melbourne. (Christina Stuart,