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## **Martin County High School culinary team places 3<sup>rd</sup> in statewide competition**

STUART — Twelve students from Martin County High School's Academy of Culinary Arts savored the sweet taste of success at the Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association's 12th annual ProStart Culinary Team Competition on Feb. 24 and 25 in Orlando.

Facing off against 46 other schools from across the state, the Martin County High team placed third overall. Team members were Erin Shelly, Andrew Archer, Mary Leggio, Teilor Wagner, Nic Gordon, Thomas Reyes, Ashley Bilodeau, Samantha Ratel, Dallas Wynne, Michelle Beckman, Taylor Lawson and Mike Brodeur.

Chef Shaun Southwick, the students' instructor, said he was extremely proud of the team in its third year of competing at this event.

"We've been more and more successful each year we've attended. This year, all four teams placed within the top 10."

The four events were: the Cracker Barrel management competition; the Johnson & Wales University gourmet meal competition; the Keiser University edible centerpiece competition; and the Coca-Cola waiter's relay competition.

Shelly, a senior, enjoyed the fruits of her labor — literally — by taking home top prize in the edible centerpiece competition. She created a work of art using a honeydew melon as the base, a papaya in the middle and a mango on top. A bed of kale circled the bottom to hide the dowel supporting the entire piece.

Upon learning she had won first place in the event at the awards banquet, Shelly said, "I started crying. I flipped over my chair." In addition to earning a medal, she received \$10,000 in scholarships from Keiser University.

Wynne, Beckman, Ratel and Lawson competed in the gourmet meal competition, preparing a meal of tomato gazpacho, seared scallops and a key lime cake. They had one hour and could use only two propane burners.

Senior Wynne said, "As a team, you really need to manage your time. You kind of go into a zone. You just have to focus on what you're doing."

Reyes was one of three members involved in the waiter's relay, which included three legs. The first relay team member set the tablecloth and plates, the second placed three settings of silverware and the third had to fold napkins in three specific ways. The team earned fourth place.

"We felt very proud," Reyes said. "The experience is well worth it."

Many of the students involved in the program intend to continue their education in this field upon graduation.