



Brevard high school culinarians compete

Suzy Fleming Leonard, FLORIDA TODAY Published 3:16 p.m. ET Jan. 25, 2017 | Updated 18 hours ago

Brevard Public Schools hosted their second annual Clash of the Culinarians high school culinary competition last week at Keiser University in Melbourne.

This is a really cool event that brings together culinary arts students from across the county to prepare a three-course meal in an hour.

According to a news release from Jennifer McKee-Acevedo, a resource teacher for the county, all Brevard Public Schools high school culinary programs were invited to bring a team of four students to the contest, which took place in the kitchens of Keiser's culinary program.

The teams were judged on criteria including professionalism, sanitation, presentation and, of course, the way their food tasted.

They were given an hour to prepare:

- Puree of fresh pea soup with mint cream and potato croquettes
- Poached chicken breast with tarragon cream sauce with asparagus tips and rice pilaf
- Chocolate mousse with crème anglaise

While judges deliberated, students received a hands-on demonstration from chef Ryan Trinkofsky, courtesy of Dexter Russel knife company in their ProTour bus. The demonstration included proper handling and care of knives as well as the latest trends in the food service industry.



Melbourne High School Culinary Arts, led by chef Michael Ferguson, took home top honors at this year's Clash of the Culinarians. The student team was comprised of Nicole Dingman, Keaton Knifely, Alexis Maltese and Nikolas Simpson. (Photo: Submitted photo)

Each school participating in this year's event earned silver medals, and were separated by single points, according to the release. The overall winner for the 2016-17 school year was Melbourne High School Culinary Arts, led by chef Michael Ferguson. The student team was comprised of Nicole Dingman, Keaton Knifely, Alexis Maltese and Nikolas Simpson. The team earned a silver plate trophy to hold onto until next year's competition.

The volunteer judges included veteran chefs and community members: chef James Charland, Mrs. Mango's; chef John Delaney, Buena Vida Estates; Janice Kershaw, Brevard Schools Foundation; Patricia Longmoore, Johnson & Wales University; Richard Miller, Miller & Hurt Financial Group, chef Michelle Noble, Le Cordon Bleu Orlando; Laurilee Thompson, Dixie Crossroads and Space Coast Restaurant and Lodging Association; and chef Jim Whaples, president emeritus of the Florida Restaurant & Lodging Association.

Sponsorships for this event were provided by Keiser University Melbourne Campus, the Space Coast Chapter of the Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association, and the Cocoa Beach Hotel Association.

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