Taste of Derby event showcased student talent
$5,000 scholarship awarded to Burger Challenge winner

Students at Sullivan’s National Center for Hospitality Studies have many unique opportunities to build their resume’s both on and off campus. Students can learn from the industry’s finest, by working alongside renowned chefs at a variety of spectacular events, like this year’s Taste of Derby. Through the Churchill Downs Incorporated Foundation, Taste of Derby raises funds and awareness for hunger relief.

Sullivan students networked with premier chefs who represented famous race tracks from across the United States. In addition to assisting the guest chefs on campus when they did their “prep” work prior to the event, students also worked alongside the chefs at the spectacular Taste of Derby event held at the Louisville Executive Aviation Hangar at Bowman Field.

**News**

**The best of the best**

While many Culinary and Baking & Pastry arts students worked in a variety of venues at the Taste of Derby, for three Sullivan students, the event provided another opportunity to display their culinary expertise. A preliminary culinary competition had been previously held on campus to determine the finalists who would demonstrate their winning dishes to those attending the event. The winners, Dawn Boyd Byrd, Jennifer Kopecky and Jeff Roszkowksi knew they would be preparing “something” else instead of the entrées they presented at their preliminary competition. The day of the event they learned they would be preparing their best hamburger recipe, a natural choice since Creekstone Premium Meats had co-sponsored the event with Churchill Downs. Competitors could bring one “special ingredient” to add to their burger creation.

**Burger Challenge**

The on-site culinary cookoff tested the mettle of the student competitors. They had 30 minutes to prepare four burgers while the judges, Cat Cora, the first female Iron Chef winner, Chef Kent Rathbun representing Abacaus in Dallas, and Brian Malarkay, from Top Chef, observed, and often interrupted the students’ creative process to ask questions. Although the lights were hot, the crowd was noisy and pressed against the cooking stage, all the competitors stayed focused as they created their burgers. After the judges tasted each burger and deliberated, an ecstatic Dawn Boyd Byrd was declared the winner of a $5,000 scholarship from Creekstone Beef.

**So, what was the competition like?** Dawn shared her thoughts.

“The competition was a hoot. I mean come on, we’re supposed to cook our burgers in 20 minutes on an electric griddle, similar to the kind my Grandma once used to toast her pancakes! One good sized burger, let alone four, makes a difference on how beautifully toasted the buns...but one grill hot side only allows room for one bun at a time, so we’ll go for round one and try not to forget the cheese. The competition was incredibly fun and I truly enjoyed my burger as chosen as the winner. Overall, I am so thankful for Sullivan, my co-competitors, the judges, and Creekstone Farms. These scholarships were a dream come true for me and an opportunity that I have been hoping for all the way through culinary school. Each one of us is incredibly grateful for all the support and encouragement we received from our teachers, friends, and fellow culinary and baking co-students!”

Left to right, Jennifer Kopecky, Jeff Roszkowski, and Dawn Boyd Byrd were the three finalists chosen for the Taste of Derby event and posed holding Churchill Downs race programs. Their chosen recipes also earned each of them tickets to the Oaks as well as having their names in the official program for the Taste of Derby event.

Left, Anna Rousell earned a gold medal for her bread sculpture.

Kelsie Newman’s Mixed Media Sculpture earned a gold medal.

Above, Halle Raymer proudly wears the silver medal she earned for her fat sculpture, The Three Fates, pictured below, far right.

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**Sullivan’s pastry team wows judges! How sweet it is!**

Dedication and hard work paid off in a big way for the six members of Sullivan’s Baking & Pastry Arts student competition team. Kenedall Knie, Jordyn Mosely, Kelsie Newman, Halle Raymer and Alyssa Taranto competed at The Midwest Culinary Institute at Cincinnati State Technical & Community College, and earned five gold medals and one silver medal. It was a great return on the students’ investing countless hours honing their skills and creating their entries.

The students amazed the competition in the categories of Bread Sculpture, Mixed Media Sculpture, Chocolate, Fat Sculpture and Cake. Judged by prestigious chefs there are only 11 Certified Master Pastry Chiefs in the United States and the competitors were judged by two of them; Chefs Kevin Gawonski, CMC and John Kinsella, CMC. Chefs Donald Miller, CEC and Albert Imming, CMPS were also on the distinguished panel of judges.

There was no better way for a culinarian to hone their craft than competing in ACF competitions. The on-site culinary cookoff tested the mettle of the student competitors. They had 30 minutes to prepare four burgers while the judges, Cat Cora, the first female Iron Chef winner, Chef Kent Rathbun representing Abacaus in Dallas, and Brian Malarkay, from Top Chef, observed, and often interrupted the students’ creative process to ask questions. Although the lights were hot, the crowd was noisy and pressed against the cooking stage, all the competitors stayed focused as they created their burgers. After the judges tasted each burger and deliberated, an ecstatic Dawn Boyd Byrd was declared the winner of a $5,000 scholarship from Creekstone Beef.

**Student on fast-track to new career**

Sullivan University’s National Center for Hospitality Studies (NCHS) has recently started, joined, and focused on new programs benefiting high school students.

For example, this year the NCHS became members of the ProStart® Program. ProStart® is a nationally recognized organization established for high school students who are interested in careers in the hospitality industry, and assists them with educational and competitive programs.

The NCHS also elected to participate in Sullivan’s Jump Start program with three free online classes open to high school students. Classes offered included Information Literacy, Hospitality Management & Supervision and Purchasing.

New students can rack up savings in the summer quarter of 2012, the NCHS provided its first Bypass Exam, an opportunity for incoming students, meeting stringent educational and practical GPA criteria, to bypass the first quarter Basic Culinary Theory and Lab classes.

Hannah Ushman was the first qualified candidate to attempt the Bypass Exam. A panel of four culinary judges took part in the practical testing and awarded a grade to the dishes. Hannah produced, an A on her theory paper and she received a perfect score in her mise en place and sanitation sections. In addition to saving time in school, she also saved tuition costs for the 10 culinary hours she bypassed. Hannah also took advantage of Sullivan’s free Jump Start program prior to enrolling, she successfully passed all three of those classes, a savings of more than $3390!

Welcome to Sullivan University Hannah, and congratulations.

Allen Almeida, Culinary Arts Chair, left, and Chef David Dodd, Director of Administration and Business Development congratulate Hannah Ushman.

More Jump Start news on page 12.

New programs benefit high school students

**In the hotel the evening before competition, Alyssa Taranto mixed icing and creating her entries.**

**Above, Halle Raymer proudly wears the silver medal she earned for her fat sculpture.**

**Kelsie Newman’s Mixed Media Sculpture earned a gold medal.**

**Left, Anna Rousell earned a gold medal for her bread sculpture.**

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