CHEHALIS
SCHOOL DISTRICT

Future Chefs Take the Stage at Orin Smith Elementary

FRIDAY
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March 8, 2024

Future Chefs Challenge Promotes Healthy Eating

Elementary school students in Chehalis School District used their culinary skills to reimagine their favorite family recipe by creating original recipes in the 2024 “Sodexo Future Chefs Challenge.”

Sodexo, the school nutrition partner to over 500 school districts throughout the U.S., is renowned for its work advancing childhood nutrition, health and well-being. The national initiative, now in its 12th year, was created to get students thinking about making healthy food choices while also encouraging them to be active and creative in the kitchen.

“According to the American Heart Association, about one in every three American kids and teens is overweight or obese,” said Stephen Dunmore, CEO North America, Schools, Sodexo. “This staggering statistic demonstrates why it is more important than ever to engage youth to become advocates for their own health.”

Chehalis School District is one of 253 school districts across the country holding Future Chefs events throughout February and March. The winning student from each participating district will be considered for 40 regional finalist awards, and the selected regional finalists will vie to become one of five national finalists competing for the public’s vote on SodexoUSA.com.

GRAB
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GO
BAR
THE Foxhouse
O. C. Smith

Our 2024 Future Chefs (from left to right) Carson Bortner, Alyce Bayard, Addison Schwall, Piper Dyer, Cale Coleman, Kason Talanoa, Alayla Bramblett and Ella Smith.

Future Chefs Get a Chance to Shine

At Orin Smith, 34 students submitted healthy recipes inspired by their favorite recipes and 8 were selected to participate in the district-wide finals event. Finalists prepared and presented their creations before being assessed on criteria including originality, taste, kid friendliness and use of healthy ingredients.

This year's Future Chef finalists were:

- Alyce Bayard, 5th grade, with Bacon, Jalapeno Deviled Eggs
- Carson Bortner, 4th grade, with Disgustingly Rich Brownies
- Alayla Bramblett, 4th grade, with Taco Pasta
- Cale Coleman, 5th grade, with Spaghetti Casserole
- Piper Dyer, 5th grade, with Dad's Gravy
- Addison Schwall, 5th grade, with Grandma Caroline's Lemon Zucchini Cookies
- Ella Smith, 4th grade, with Dyer Family Chili
- Kason Talanoa, 4th grade, with Kason's Elote

On Thursday, March 7, students got a chance to whip up their recipes and share them with their families, staff and judges. Each student was paired with a food service worker who helped make sure they were safe and had what they needed.

"Future Chef day is my favorite day of the year and this year was no exception. Each of our 8 participants had wonderful recipes and had a great passion for what they were cooking. All of the food that was made was really impressive and our participants were even more impressive with their energy and enthusiasm," said Aaron Bradford, food service director for Sodexo, who was on hand working with these future chefs in the kitchen.

Elote Recipe Comes Out on Top

At the end of their cooking time Thursday, these Orin Smith students shared their creations with those in attendance, including judges:

- Chehalis Superintendent Dr. Christine Moloney
- Chehalis School Board President Alan Browning
- Chehalis Foundation Executive Director Jenny Collins
- Chehalis School District Chief Financial Officer Heather C. Pinkerton

Kason Talanoa's recipe for Elote, a Mexican corn topped with a lime mayo, chili powder, cheese and cilantro, came out as the first place recipe. Addison Schwall's Grandma Caroline's Lemon Zucchini Cookies took second place and Cale Coleman's Spaghetti Casserole took third place.

"I absolutely love being asked to be one of the judges for this special event. The pride I see in each young chef's eyes and hear in their voices as they explain what they made is heartwarming. I am always amazed at the high quality and tasty dishes they create and I believe that this experience has a positive and lasting effect on them that they will carry into their adult lives, whether they become a professional chef or choose a different career path," said Superintendent Dr. Christine Moloney of being one of the judges.

Try the First Place Recipe for Yourself

Elote (Mexican Corn)

Ingredients:
4 cobs sweet corn
3 Tablespoons mayonnaise
1/2 Lime, juiced
2 Tablespoons dried red chili powder
1/4 cup Cotija cheese
2 Tablespoons cilantro, chopped

Directions:
1. Boil corn for 7-10 minutes and lay on a flat tray.
2. Combine mayo and lime juice and spread evenly on all sides of the corn.
3. Sprinkle on the chili powder, Cotija cheese and cilantro.
4. Enjoy

In Other News ...

STEM Camp Registration Opens April 1

Mark your calendars for this year's University of Washington STEM Camp, which will be held Aug. 5-8, 2024 at W.F. West High School. This partnership between University of Washington and the Chehalis School District offers hands-on STEM activities and learning from faculty and students from the University of Washington. The camp is open to all incoming 9-12th graders in the area.

Cost is $25 per student, with scholarships available to families in need. Registration will open April 1 so plan to reserve your student's spot early. For more information, go to stemchehalis.org.

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