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Toast of the Coast: Young chefs shine at competitions

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TOAST OF THE COAST*

The next generation of great chefs is thriving under the able leadership of Brevard County's culinary schools.

Lindsay Nastyn of Bayside High School's culinary program placed first in Family Career and Community Leaders of America District Five culinary competition last month in Haines City, while Melbourne High School's Ariel Brewer placed second. Both students carved amazing decorative centerpieces for the competition.

"Lindsey is a very talented and creative person who has incredible artistic and people skills," said Bayside chef instructor Michael Ferguson.

For Lindsey, earning top spot is an awesome accomplishment, considering her first competition was only last September at the Florida Restaurant Association Show in Orlando. She will return to Orlando on March 28 to compete in FCCLA's state competition.

"Both girls have been practicing for months," said Melbourne High School chef instructor Jennifer McKee-Acevedo.

"Some of the things the kids can do are amazing. I was never taught any of these things when I went to college. The closest I got to carving was two days with a 300-pound block of ice."

Students at Keiser University's culinary arts program haven't been resting on their cutting boards, either.

Culinary whiz kid Andrew Addleman was named a semifinalist for the American Culinary Federation's Student Chef of the Year award. Andrew's original recipe for Lemon Flounder with a Citrus Beurre Blanc will be put the test in April, when he attends the Southeast Regional Conference in Charlotte, N.C.

Hopefully, the flounder recipe will make advancing to the national competition an easy swim for Addleman.

Addleman and fellow Keiser student Drew Sanders also competed at the Robert E. Lee Memorial Competition sanctioned by the American Culinary Federation. Sanders' boneless chicken breast stuffed with chicken forcemeat, sun-dried tomato pesto and goat cheese netted him a bronze and some very nice prize goodies. Addleman won silver, which arrived with a knife kit and a cash prize of \$250.

The Keiser team of Addleman, Sanders, Cynthia Williams, Robert White III and Kyle Rhodes walked off with the bronze medal in the American Culinary Federation Winterfest Competition held in St. Augustine.

Mind you, this wasn't a wing-it kind of affair.

"Our students spent countless hours preparing and practicing for the event," said Keiser Chef Darrin Durham.

And speaking of Chef Durham. The Space Coast Chapter of the American Culinary Federation named Chef Darrin Durham as president. Serving as vice president is Keiser's Chef Marge Erixon and as secretary/treasurer, Chef Deborah Lindsay.

Know of a chef or restaurant we should feature? E-mail Maria Sonnenberg at toastofthecoast@cfl.rr.com.
