

Classroom cooks try real world recipe at Cape Coral school

Oasis Charter offers a culinary program

By JL Watson • jlwatson@news-press.com • May 21, 2010

Order up.

Oasis Charter High School culinary teacher Jethro Joseph has put his students to work in the kitchen. Executive Chef "J" Catering Services opened at the school and is now available to paying customers throughout Cape Coral.

"These kids are our future chefs," Joseph said. "They're really exciting to work with."

The Oasis culinary program is in its first year, and it launched when Oasis High School opened last August. Since then, Joseph has taught middle and high school students the art of cooking healthy - and often how to cook gourmet meals.

His class has a waiting list. High school students who have excelled in the class make up the staff of the new catering business.

"The food we put out is amazing," Joseph said. "I order very high end dishes. I train the best students to be in charge."

The menu includes specialties from grilled chicken and crab cake sandwiches to Joseph's signature blue crab and roasted corn chowder. Students have already catered several events, including the Lighthouse Award for teachers.

Cape Coral council member Bill Deile recently sampled the sauteed chicken with a red pepper coulee and rice. The students are scheduled to cook at the Deile house later this year.

"Every time I've eaten their food, I've been impressed," Diele said. "They make fantastic meatballs."

Students started cooking the first day of class and, with just a few weeks left before the end of the

school year, they know the difference between brulee and borscht.

Oasis High sophomores Krista Guerrieri, 16, and Jennifer Mann, 16, will take lead roles in the catering business. Both come from families where food often takes center stage, and the two are considering partnering for a food business when they complete college.

"This is a great opportunity," Guerrieri said.

Guerrieri has decided to make the kitchen her career, and with two years of high school left, she is already weighing whether to attend Johnson and Wales in Miami or Le Cordon Bleu in Orlando or Miami.

Guerrieri said she isn't nervous about taking orders from the public and coming up with meals on the go.

"We did a seven-course meal here in 90 minutes," she said. "We did everything and made it work."

Mann, who cooks but spends much of her time on customer interaction and team management, said that part of the allure of working with Joseph's catering company, is getting to be creative while getting paid.

"We've actually created stuff based on what we have in the kitchen," Mann said. "Krista has a great garlic bread that everyone likes, and I do a shrimp scampi."

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Joseph is eager for his students to get started. They are taking orders now for outside jobs and are hoping to cater large events on weekends or this summer.

"There is nothing these kids can't cook," Joseph said.



Oasis Charter High School sophomore Krista Guerrieri, 16, uses a torch to finish of creme brulee desserts during her culinary class at the school. (jl watson/news-press.com)

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School catering

What: Executive Chef "J" Catering Services

Where: Oasis Charter High School, 3507 Oasis Blvd.
Place an order: 770-6008, 770-0136 or gourmetchefontheho@yahoo.com

Orders must be placed one hour in advance. Delivery is available for orders of \$25 and more.

Lunch specialties:

Blue crab and roasted corn chowder: \$3.50

Crab cake sandwich: \$7.95

Shrimp and crab fettuccini: \$8.95

Fresh catch of the day: market price

Grilled chicken sandwich: \$5.95

Organic salad: \$8.95

Dinner specialties:

Bruschetta: \$5.95

Island star crab cake and garlic aioli: \$16.95

Filet mignon: \$17.95

Gulf shrimp scampi: \$14.95

Other food is available and the team can create some dishes upon request. Call or e-mail for details.

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