

# Culinary Students whip up Dishes for Good Cause

By LINDSEY ADKISON The Brunswick News

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Fragrant smells danced throughout the campus center at College of Coastal Georgia Wednesday. But the tempting aromas weren't trailing from the kitchen, instead they flowed from various tables set up throughout the lobby and manned by students.

Each station served up scrumptious dishes, designed and crafted by the culinary pupils themselves. But it wasn't part of their cooking-related curriculum. Instead, it was a task assigned in chemistry class and the brainchild of professor Andrea Wallace.



"This is Chemistry 1100, which is made up of a cohort of culinary arts students. And this is actually part of their service-learning project," Wallace explained. "We went to the food pantry at America's Second Harvest and they were told to pick out some of the leftover items and make recipes with them."

The chemistry element came into play, Wallace adds, as they broke down the nutritional make-up and analysis of each dish.

"They made the bio-molecular connection that way," she said.

But it was also much more than a biology lesson. By visiting the food bank and donating their time there as well, the students were able to truly understand the struggle that the organization and those they serve face.

And as the students later crafted their recipes from the non-perishable items, they discovered how difficult it can be to feed families. Of course, they were given a little extra help — \$15 to help supplement ingredients for their dishes.

Even so, Hannah Gerrett was able to better understand the challenges many are facing. But it also showed them much can be done with very little.

"I thought it was really neat and it shows you that you really can make healthy things with just four or five ingredients," she said. "'I really enjoyed this.'" For her part, Garrett opted to go with a French dish — tapenade. "It's a dip that you put on crackers and it's made from olives, capers, lemon juice, garlic and anchovies," she said, glazing the mixture onto a cracker.

Faculty and students filtered into the center to sample the various fare. In addition to the tapenade, there were also black bean meatballs, ravioli and salmon wontons, among other items. Those in attendance were able to spend \$1 per taste and vote for each of their favorite dishes. That \$1 was also donated to America's Second Harvest.

And once all the votes were counted, the salmon wontons created by Michael Mercado of Brooklyn, N.Y., that took the top prize. Even more importantly, the event raised \$186, in addition to the canned goods and non-perishable food items that were all donated to the local America's Second Harvest Food Bank. While it may seem an insignificant amount, Kalista Morton, community relations coordinator for the organization, says each dollar will make a big difference in the lives of hungry families.

"For every dollar we get, we can get five meals. We can buy food for pennies on the dollar so every dollar goes a long way," Morton said.

This was the third year the college had hosted its cook-off for the nonprofit organization. And they plan to continue the trend in the future. They also plan to consolidate the students' recipes into a cookbook and distribute it to those who utilize America's Second Harvest in Brunswick.

But more than anything, college officials hope to connect students' understanding of real-world challenges and help find solutions, says Tracy Pellet, vice president of academic affairs at the college.

"It's a very practical solution to a real-world problem. And this particular event also teaches the students about service to others and that's the heart and soul of the College of Coastal Georgia," Pellet said.