Chef’s camp receives 5-star reviews

The ‘Panther on Park’ diners raved about the students’ food and presentation.

By Gary Weckselblatt

Christopher Polk’s Advanced Chef’s Camp began on Monday. By Wednesday, the Quakertown Community High School educator had his students ready to cook and serve diners at “Panther on Park,” a pop up restaurant across the hall from his cooking lab.

“It’s crazy,” Polk said after the event, which was aired by WFMZ Channel 69 reporter Jamie Stover. “I just met these kids two days ago.”

They executed a menu that included a salad, caprese flatbread, surf & turf with vegetables and potatoes, and crème brûlée. Reviews from the district employees who sampled the cuisine said the dishes were outstanding.

“It was really impressive, pretty darn amazing what they put together,” said Terry San Angelo, an administrative assistant in the Office of Teaching and Learning. “Someone described it as good as a five-star restaurant. I’d have to agree. It was really good.”

Assistant Superintendent Dr. Lisa Hoffman appreciated that the young chefs were tasked with much more than cooking. “They were serving, and they had to explain what was on the plate. It was a whole experience for them.”

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Polk, a Project Lead the Way teacher in the district’s pre-engineering program, is so passionate about cooking that he works as a pastry chef for Crowne Plaza in Reading. He created a Chef’s course at the high school that he also teaches.

“This went really well,” he said. “It felt chaotic at times, but it was an organized chaos. Anytime you cook for someone, you’re putting yourself out there. I’m proud of them. They did well under pressure. I have a passion for this and I saw the passion in them.

“I like giving the experience to the kids. It’s really exciting that they want to come here in the summer and do this. They worked very well together. There’s no grade. It’s just for fun. We’re learning.”

Morgan Magdich, one of the campers, told WFMZ “It’s fun, but really stressful at same time, which makes it really fun, and kind of like you’re on a game show.”

On Monday, the camp’s first day, students had to make their own dough for pretzels and add a protein to the finished product. Tuesday was a food truck challenge, in which the campers made sandwiches and wraps.

The camp concluded Thursday with students baking items for parents to sample during pickup.

Stover, the WFMZ reporter, is a graduate of QCHS. Along with cameraman Adam Klein, she appreciated the students’ efforts.

On Twitter, she wrote, “I’m extra proud of these kiddos! AND impressed! I couldn’t stop thinking how much better their meal looked than what I ate last night :P ... Anytime you wanna cook--I’m free :)”

Another tweet stated: “It was nice to be back :) They have a lot to be proud about, they know more already about cooking than most adults I know! The best part was they all seemed to really love the experience. If they ever wanna bring a pop up restaurant to news sta-

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