



NEWS RELEASE

US Foods Chefs Mentor Next Generation of Nation's Culinary Talent in Los Angeles

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US Foods chefs from the Los Angeles area are helping the next generation of chefs and culinary experts head to the front of the class. Through the California Restaurant Association Education Foundation (CRAEF) ProStart® program, they are mentoring students from Westminster High School in Orange County and cheering them on to victory in a series of elite culinary competitions.

"We help restaurants and foodservice professionals keep their kitchens cooking every day, but it's even more rewarding to lend our expertise to young chefs pursuing careers in the industry," said Chef Aaron Williams, division executive chef and Food Fanatic, US Foods. "This is just the beginning of what I know will be a bright future for this incredibly talented group."

The Westminster High School team of student chefs traveled to the Healthy Schools Campaign Cooking Up Change national competition in Washington, DC on June 8 where they placed second in the country. Their winning lunch tray featured Mexican Chicken Street Tacos, Motherland Esquite and a Peachin' Empanada. The team's road to the national competition included a first place win at the group's same local competition, presented by Orange County's Kid Healthy organization and a third place win and \$11,500 scholarship for continuing education for their accomplishments in the California Restaurant Association Education Foundation (CRAEF) ProStart competition.

This year marks the first time US Foods participated in the CRAEF ProStart Competition and Mentorship program. US Foods Division Executive Chef and Food Fanatics Chef Aaron Williams and US Foods Segment Specialist Valerie Rubin dedicated hours to guiding and inspiring the team, teaching both culinary techniques and secrets to success based on their work with thousands of restaurants and foodservice professionals in the LA area and across the country.

Chef Williams joined students in Washington, DC where they put their skills to the test in the ultimate culinary battle – the national Cooking up Change competition. With limited ingredients, tight deadlines and real-life constraints, the team was challenged to create a delicious, nutritious school lunch that their peers will enjoy. Students competed with eight other high school student teams from across the country as a part of the Healthy Schools Campaign, which aims to engage students and the community in a dialogue about the critical changes needed in U.S. school meal programs.

“Being able to share our industry insights, innovative food trends and culinary passion with local up-and-coming chefs is another way we’re focused on the talent throughout our industry,” said Bill Beedie, division president, US Foods. “It’s gratifying to have the opportunity to bring what we learn each and every day working with local restaurants to Westminster High School students and celebrate their many accomplishments.”

Mentoring local high schools students is one more way US Foods is giving back to the communities it serves and providing rising culinary professionals the resources to accomplish their goals. By leveraging its roster of chefs and industry experts, the US Foods Los Angeles division will continue to play a key role in ongoing mentorship activities for young aspiring chefs at Westminster High School.

Known as the go-to restaurant turnaround guru in the greater Los Angeles and Orange County area, Executive and Food Fanatics Chef Aaron Williams is regularly tapped by local and national restaurateurs for his unique insights and menu makeovers. Focused on developing crowd pleasing menu items, he is constantly testing new products and recipes to help restaurant operators and chefs succeed. He earned his culinary chops in the kitchens of some of California’s largest sports stadiums, including the Diamond Club Restaurant in Anaheim’s Angel Stadium and the Honda Center, where he regularly cooked for top athletes and celebrities. While he is passionate about Thai, Latin and Indian cuisines, he credits his family for his specialty in Mexican cuisine.

To learn more about US Foods, visit www.usfoods.com. To see what Food Fanatics is all about, visit www.foodfanatics.com. You can also like us on **Facebook**, follow us on **Twitter** and watch our chefs in action on **YouTube**.

ABOUT US FOODS

US Foods, Inc. is a large foodservice distributor serving chefs and foodservice operators across the country. Its customers include independent and multi-unit restaurants, healthcare and hospitality entities, government and educational institutions. The company employs approximately 25,000 people in 61 locations nationwide. US Foods is headquartered in Rosemont, Ill.

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