Tribal members receive healthy cooking education at Immokalee Culinary Accelerator

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

ImmoKalee — The Immokalee Culinary Accelerator is an incubator for culinary ideas and fledgling businesses who need some help getting off the ground. The one-of-a-kind facility features cold and hot kitchens, bakery equipment, a massive freezer and refrigerator with ample storage space, a lab and office space.

But on Nov. 7, the facility was transformed into a classroom for 15 Tribal members who came to learn how to cook in a professional kitchen. Chef Galen Fehr, health education manager, five professional chefs worked with the building chefs as they sliced and diced, measured and mixed and simmered and stirred a variety of tasty, healthy and flavorful dishes.

"Anybody is a National Diabetes Month," said Summit Davea, the Tribe’s Allied health program manager. "We wanted them to prepare and cook that it’s instead of just preparing others to do it.

The chefs, including Tribal member Lorraine Posada took the student cooks through the recipes, teaching at every step.

The menu included a citrus salad, another salad with romain lettuce, garlic, cumin, toasted pumpkin seeds, mixed pork loin with roasted root vegetables, Bahamas style baked chicken with brown rice; cocoa zucchini muffins; jam good gluten-free cookies.

"I learned how to help and how to cook," said Rowdy Osceola, the 18-year-old who wanted what level you are," said Ruth Felix, chef and the Culinary Accelerator program manager. "We are here to help you learn today.

The day of hands-on learning was a "view into the future" for the participants to see what many at home who cook and were engaged to learn how to cook healthily. They worked diligently, listened carefully and improved their skills in the kitchen. The recipes on paper began to turn the aroma of deliciousness in the air.

Before they began to prepare recipes on day one, they were encouraged by the Culinary Accelerator program manager, taught a group of students about the importance of "mise en place," a French term that means putting everything in its place. Having all the ingredients needed for a recipe measured, cut and organized before cooking makes it much easier to cook, he explained.

Chef Davud Cucat demonstrated knife skills to a group tasked with cutting a large amount of vegetables, she showed them how to avoid cutting your hand by not lifting the tip of the knife off the cutting board when you worked. "It will get too wet and go hard," Chef Posada said. “You should add the wet ingredients to the dry and mix it just until it is incorporated.

Over at the meat station, Chef El showed students how to dry a pan and sauté the meat with chicken stock. By searing a few strips of meat, the flavor is intensified and the tough roast leaves don’t fall apart. He demonstrated a chicken problem for four food at home can be better with just a little bit of thought. Chief Felix encouraged the students to change the number a goal at restaurants.

On the prep table, students prepared the desserts, participants reflected on the work.

"I learned about contamination," said one student. "I learned that you can throw away meat out of other diseases because you don’t want to contaminate the vegetables. I never knew that, at home I just mix everything together. I don’t wear that anymore, it can make you sick.

"I learned that seasonality is the number one thing," said Chef Felix. "We do it here. We use the seasonal ingredients.

"I like to learn," Tannassee said. "Chef Felix took the class to the classroom because he wanted to know how to cook a good and healthy meal. It’s a lot at home, but wanted to know about healthier options.

"I learned about scoring and some different seasonings," said Tannassee. "We do it here. We use the seasonal ingredients.

"It was so good," said one student. "Chef Felix picked it a bit and add some spices. I learned something," said Chef Felix. "My head is to inspire you and make you make a difference.

"Medicine can improve your symptoms, fast food can do more than that," said Chef Cucato. "You should always prepare your food in a healthy way.

Although the day was long, over some participants still had questions. The day included included a lot of fall foods, such as root vegetables and pomegranate seeds. One asked about seaweed at all.

"Seasonal food and fast growing food more nutritious to help you adjust to the heat," said Chef Felix. "Winter and fall foods, which keep you warm.

Chef Posada encouraged the participants to participate in the recipes home to their families.

"I hope we pass on to our kids that health is important," she said. "We all have to have the knowledge to take care of our bodies.

The second annual Sunshine State of Florida Renewable Energy and Sustainability Conference will be held from Feb. 7-7, 2019 at the Seminole Tribe's Native Learning Center in Hollywood. The conference will focus on the newly changing landscape for tribal for energy development and sustainability, including best practices, federal leadership, policies, and regulatory changes, funding a project, and project planning/development tools. The conference will give tribes and First Nations an opportunity to explore the renewable energy and sustainability opportunities that exist and how to start the process including benefits from tribes, First Nations, nongovernmental organizations, and private industry will give presentations and provide training opportunities on a wide range of topics, including: energy saving methods in design, development and construction – Tribes undertaking large-scale renewable energy projects – Developing renewable energy projects – Tribal/tribal private partnership – Tribal case studies and lessons learned – Funding schemes for projects – Leveraging available federal resources and materials to support tribes and Tribal Housing Departments.

A light breakfast and lunch will be provided on all three days of the conference.

There is no cost to attend the conference, however participants are responsible for their own lodging, dinner, and travel home. Transportation costs, meals and registration which is limited, attendance is capped at 100; and registration fee of $200 will be charged in the order in which they are received.

Registration is free for Native Americans/First Nations and those working in the renewable energy, sustainability and renewable energy field.

For more information visit NativeLearningCenter.org.

Immokalee Culinary Accelerator nurtures culinary entrepreneurs

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

Immokalee — Raulina Tannassee has always had a passion for cooking. At age one time she wanted to open a restaurant, but instead she started a farm and grows vegetables and hot peppers.

"I want to be here," said one student after participating in the Immokalee Culinary Accelerator three days.

"You have to be here," said one student after participating in the Immokalee Culinary Accelerator three days.

"I learned about searing and using different seasonings," said Tannassee. "We do it here. We use the seasonal ingredients.

"I learned that seasonality is the number one thing," said Chef Felix. "We do it here. We use the seasonal ingredients.

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Honor for Hollywood's Hard Rock

BY BEVERLY BIDNEY
Staff Reporter

HOLLYWOOD — The Seminole Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Hollywood has received the Award of Excellence from Corporate Incentive Travel magazine for the fourth consecutive year.

The recognition is awarded to a select group of hotels, resorts and conference centers that provide meeting and convention attendees, exceptional service, expert assistance and outstanding meeting facilities and noteworthy culinary offerings.