



Dunbar Vocational Career Academy's team — Crystal Poindexter (from left), Devuante Shanklin, instructor Peggy Banks and Tylnesha Davidson — add peach relish to tostadas with blackened tilapia at Thursday's competition for Chicago public high school students. | CHRIS SWANSON/SUN-TIMES

Student chefs create healthy school fare

'COOKING UP CHANGE' | 75,000 kids can try winners in Jan.

BY DAVE NEWBART

Staff Report/Photos by Chris Swanson

The team of six chefs — sporting embroidered white jackets and chef hats — huddled around a plate, as one tried delicately to balance two broccoli spears next to a malden cup of rice.

Another stood by with a rag and wiped up every errant fleck of sauce. After several attempts, a chef added some carrots and then placed some tasty morsels of chicken on top.

Despite the attention to detail, these were not chefs at Chicago's culinary hot spots, such as Ucharlie Trotter's Le Buckford, but rather students at Englewood Academy High School. They came from one of 15 Chicago public schools that competed Thursday night in "Cooking Up Change," a contest sponsored by the Healthy Schools Campaign, a Chicago group.

While the chicken stir fry entrée didn't win, Englewood did take third place in the dessert competition for their sweet po-

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lito cheesecake.

The overall winner for an entrée was Chicago Vocational Career Academy, whose student chefs made Red Beans and Rice with Smothered Apples and Carroted Carrots. The dish will be served to 75,000 high school students in January.

"This makes you feel good about what you eat," said Kevin Williams, 17, who wants to study nutrition in college.

Other winners included Prosser Career Academy, which served Turkey Ham Mulligan's Grouse with a Veggie Medley Fico de Gallo and the Applied Arts Science and Technology Academy, which made Super Duper Regio Pizza using low-fat cheese and vegetables.

Students and teachers said the competition was challenging because they were limited to ingredients already served by the schools' dining service. In addition, the dishes could have no more than 900 calories, with less than 30 percent of those calories from fat. There were limits on sodium and cholesterol, and the dishes had to contain 4.5 milligrams of iron and 18 grams of protein, among other nutrients. And each dish had to be made for less than a dollar.

Students at Collins High School took broiled chicken strips — already served for lunch — and turned them into Red Hot Buffalo Chicken Tender Salad. They added a mild hot sauce, cucumbers, peas and a light ranch dressing and served it with baked tortilla chips with a dash of canola oil.

"Everybody is always eating hot junk food," said student chef Keron Marks, 18. "We cut down the calories and made it healthy."