



Chef Nicole Gaffney Teaches A.C. High School Students to Cook at Stockton's Campus Kitchen

Stockton Center for Community Engagement Helps Feed Area Families

For Immediate Release; with photos on [flickr](#)

Monday, September 29, 2014 "Food Network Star" contestant

at Atlantic City High School, where she teaches, creates, and leads a team to prepare meals for area families. She uses fresh ingredients.

She helped to launch the Stockton Center for Community Engagement's fifth year of Campus Kitchen project, in collaboration with the Atlantic City Board of Education, Atlantic City High School and Sodexo, which provides food services to Atlantic City schools. The local center is affiliated with the national Campus Kitchens project.

The center feeds about 2,500 families from Atlantic City, Absecon, Egg Harbor Township and Mays Landing during the school year, using food donated from the Food Bank of South Jersey, other contributors. About seven-10 Stockton students work alongside five-10 high school students to cook the meals on Mondays, then plate and deliver them on Tuesdays.

Student Jessica Ryan of Freehold, NJ, has been volunteering for three years and runs the kitchen. Gaffney is teaching the students how to cook. "We're making a vegetable soup," she says. "We're using a lot of vegetables, like onions, carrots, and celery." Rona Whitehead, of Waterford Township, Stockton's activist-in-residence, also helps with the kitchen. "We chop onions."

As the region experiences the closing of casinos, many families will have to do more in their homes, said Dr. Merydawilda Colon, interim executive director of the SCCE.

Gaffney noted that "rice is good to feed a lot of people - you just add more to stretch it." She said the students smell the cumin, coriander and other spices she was using, and talked about other ingredients: "We grow the best tomatoes in New Jersey - never forget that."

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Gaffney, who grew up in Egg Harbor Township, was a finalist last month on the “Food Network Star” contest. She told the students: “Never give up. I came in third. But I’m not going to hang up my chef coat - I’m trying to get another TV show.”

“Can you husband cook?” asked Veronica Mackey, 16, a high school junior from Brigantine.

Gaffney said her firefighter husband, Chaser, who graduated from Atlantic City High School, sometimes cooks at the Atlantic C