

NATIONAL CULINARY REVIEW

EARN WHILE YOU LEARN

ACFEF APPRENTICESHIP
PROGRAMS GROW NATIONWIDE

Chaos
Cooking

2024 ACF Large
Chapter of the Year

Spotlight on
R&D Chefs



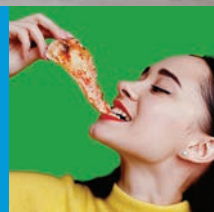
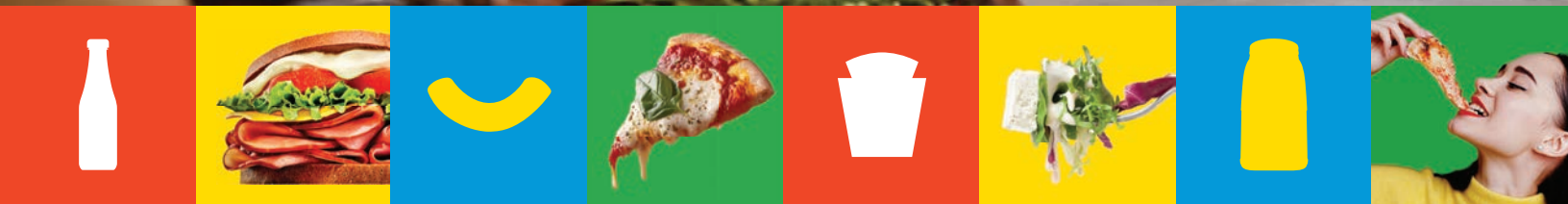
NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2024



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RECOGNIZING THE CURRENT AND ACTIVE ACF CHEF MEMBERS WHO ARE FEATURED AND QUOTED THROUGHOUT THE PAGES OF THIS ISSUE



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Classical vs. Modern

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ACF Chef Profile

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Pastry

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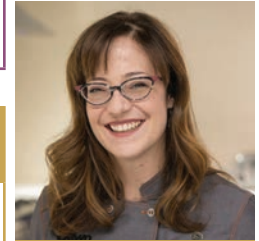
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Segment Spotlight

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| President's Message | Un Mensaje Del Presidente |



As the year rushes by and the holidays rapidly approach, it's hard to believe we're already in the final stretch of 2024! With so much happening in our busy kitchens and personal lives, I want to encourage each of you to take a moment to slow down, savor the season, enjoy baking and make time for the ones who are near and dear to you. It's essential

to cultivate a healthy relationship with ourselves while also treasuring the connections we share with family and friends. Check in on your loved ones throughout the year. In our fast-paced industry, it's easy to feel overwhelmed and isolated, so staying connected is key.

This issue is packed with exciting content! We're featuring a deep dive into the world of apprenticeships — a time-honored tradition that remains one of the most rewarding paths to culinary excellence. Read on as ACF members talk about their respective apprenticeship programs, highlighting the value they bring to both mentors and apprentices alike.

Additionally, we're thrilled to spotlight the Greenbrier's newly ACF-approved apprenticeship program. The Greenbrier has long been a pillar of culinary education, and now as an ACFEF-approved apprenticeship program, is set to inspire and shape the next generation of culinary leaders.

On the food side, November brings us the exciting world of Culinary Mashups, this month's ACF trend. From blending global flavors to reimagining classic dishes, chefs are pushing the boundaries of creativity and innovation. You won't want to miss the inspiration this article offers for bringing fresh ideas to your menus! Looking ahead, we also offer a sneak peek at our 2025 ACF Trends Report, a forecast of the upcoming shifts and innovations that will shape the culinary landscape in the year ahead. From technology to sustainability and the ever-evolving tastes of our guests, this report offers valuable insights to prepare you for what's to come.

Also in this issue, we're proud to profile the Epicurean Club of Boston, winners of this year's ACF Large Chapter of the Year Award. The Chapter Close-Up highlights the dedication of the Boston chapter members to education, community outreach and professional development. In this issue we also celebrate our 2024 ACF Chef of the Year as well as the 2024 ACF Pastry Chef and Student Pastry Chef of the Year — chefs who exemplify the best of our profession.

As we near the end of 2024, it's a perfect time to reflect on what has been a year of change and growth. With new initiatives, newly accredited programs and a community that continues to innovate and elevate our industry, I am confident that 2025 will bring even greater success. Don't forget: Award applications are due in January — this is your chance to be recognized for the incredible work you do!

Wishing you all continued success and a wonderful holiday season ahead. Let's finish this year strong and prepare for a future full of opportunity and achievement. Have a safe and memorable holiday season!

Chefs, I got your six,

René J. Marquis, CEC, CCE, CCA, AAC
National President, American Culinary Federation

A medida que el año avanza rápidamente y las fiestas se acercan, es difícil creer que ya estamos en la recta final de 2024. Con tantas cosas sucediendo en nuestras cocinas y vidas personales, quiero alentar a cada uno de ustedes a tomarse un momento para bajar el paso saborear la temporada, disfrutar de la hornada y hacer tiempo para sus seres queridos. Es esencial cultivar una relación saludable con nosotros mismos y, al mismo tiempo, valorar las conexiones que compartimos con familiares y amigos. Esté atento a sus seres queridos durante todo el año. En nuestra industria de ritmo rápido, es fácil sentirse abrumado y aislado, por eso mantenerse conectado es clave.

¡Este número está repleto de contenido emocionante! Presentamos una inmersión profunda en el mundo de los aprendizajes, una tradición consagrada por el tiempo que sigue siendo uno de los caminos más gratificantes hacia la excelencia culinaria. Siga leyendo para aprender como los miembros de ACF hablan sobre sus respectivos programas de aprendizaje, destacando el valor que aportan tanto a los mentores como a los aprendices.

Además, estamos encantados de destacar el nuevo programa de aprendizaje acreditado por la ACF de The Greenbrier. The Greenbrier ha sido durante mucho tiempo un pilar de la educación culinaria y ahora, con la acreditación de la ACF, su programa va a inspirar y dar forma a la próxima generación de líderes culinarios.

En cuanto a la comida, noviembre nos trae el apasionante mundo de los Culinary Mashups, nuestra tendencia mensual de la ACF. Desde la combinación de sabores globales hasta la reinención de platos clásicos, los chefs están superando los límites de la creatividad y la innovación. ¡No querrá perderse la inspiración que ofrece este artículo para aportar nuevas ideas a sus menús! De cara al futuro, también ofrecemos un adelanto de nuestro Informe de tendencias de la ACF 2025, un pronóstico de los próximos cambios e innovaciones que darán forma al panorama culinario en el año que viene. Desde la tecnología hasta la sostenibilidad y los gustos en constante evolución de nuestros huéspedes, este informe ofrece información valiosa para prepararlo para lo que está por venir.

También en este número, estamos orgullosos de presentar al Epicurean Club of Boston, ganadores del premio ACF Large Chapter of the Year Award de este año. El primer plano del capítulo destaca la dedicación de los miembros del capítulo de Boston a la educación, la extensión comunitaria y el desarrollo profesional. En este número también celebramos a nuestro Chef del año 2024 de la ACF, así como al Chef pastelero y al Estudiante de pastelería del año 2024 de la ACF, chefs que ejemplifican lo mejor de nuestra profesión.

A medida que nos acercamos al final de 2024, es un momento perfecto para reflexionar sobre lo que ha sido un año de cambio y crecimiento. Con nuevas iniciativas, programas recientemente acreditados y una comunidad que continúa innovando y elevando nuestra industria, estoy seguro de que 2025 traerá un éxito aún mayor. No lo olvide: las solicitudes de premios deben presentarse en enero: ¡esta es su oportunidad de ser reconocido por el increíble trabajo que hace!

Les deseo a todos un éxito continuo y una maravillosa temporada navideña por delante. Terminemos este año con fuerza y preparémonos para un futuro lleno de oportunidades y logros. ¡Que tengan unas vacaciones sanas y memorables!

Chefs, los quiero,



René J. Marquis, CEC, CCE, CCA, AAC
Presidente Nacional, Federación Culinaria Americana

NEWS BITES

ACF Culinary Team USA

Following two rounds of tryouts for the 2028 ACF Culinary Team USA (held in September at Johnson & Wales University in Providence, R.I., and in November at the Freestore Foodbank in Cincinnati), the following ACF chefs were chosen:

ACF Chef Dave Blackburn

Chef Blackburn is the Chef de Cuisine at the Fieldhouse Restaurant at Saucon Valley Country club in Bethlehem, Pa.

ACF Chef Jake Costantino, CCC

Chef Costantino is sous chef for FLIK Hospitality

ACF Chef Shannon Catalde

Chef Catalde is executive sous chef at Duquesne Club in Pittsburgh

ACF Chef Chase Grove

Chef Grove is a chef-instructor at the Institute for the Culinary Arts at Metropolitan Community College in Omaha, Neb.

ACF Chef Danielle Hughes, CSC®

Chef Hughes is a Chief Culinary Specialist with the United States Coast Guard stationed in Manhattan, N.Y.

ACF Chef Lionel Hughes, CEC

Chef Hughes is the executive chef at Dunwood Country Club in Macon, Ga.

ACF Chef Paul Jensen, CEC, CCA

Chef Jensen is the executive chef for Big Sky Resort in Montana

ACF Chef Anthony Jung, CEC

Chef Jung is executive chef at the University of Massachusetts Amherst/UMass Dining

ACF Chef Michael Lamping, CEC

Chef Lamping is executive chef of Dallas Athletic Club in Dallas

ACF Chef Jared Masters

Chef Masters is executive chef of the Greenbrier Sporting Club, White Sulphur Springs, W.V.

ACF Chef Chad Schoonveld, CEC

Chef Schoonveld is a professor at Brookdale Community College in New Jersey

ACF Chef Maxwell Smith

Chef Smith is a recent graduate of Johnson & Wales University in Providence, R.I., and head chef at LeBaron Hills Country Club in Lakeville, Mass.

ACF Chef Yudel Torres, CEC, CEPC (Pastry)

Chef Torres is a chef-instructor at the Culinary Institute of New York at Monroe University

Managers:

ACF Chef Raimund Hofmeister, CMC, AAC (Senior Advisor)

Chef Hofmeister is the foodservice director for The Pines at Davidson, a senior living community in North Carolina. A native of wine country in Rhineland Pfalz, Germany, Chef Hofmeister graduated at age 17 from a three-year culinary apprenticeship and hotel school in Germany and went on to work at five-star hotels throughout Europe, South Africa and the U.S. He worked for the Westin Hotels for 20 years and later established the Los Angeles Culinary Institute in Burbank, Calif., for which he served as president and CEO for eight years. Chef Hofmeister also founded the Las Vegas Culinary Institute and served as its academic director for four years. He's a longtime ACF judge and past advisor for ACF Culinary Team USA and ACF Culinary Regional Team USA, having won multiple gold medals at the Culinary Olympics and other international culinary competitions.

“We are humble and accept the challenge to build the best ACF Culinary Team possible. I was encouraged to see the raw talent at the first tryout and look forward to our second tryouts. The management team sees promise in our ACF chefs and will nurture and develop the team into something of which we will all be proud.”

– ACF Chef David Turcotte, CEC, AAC

ACF Chef David Turcotte, CEC, AAC (Manager)

Chef Turcotte is the executive chef and owner of AK Food Consulting based in Petersburg, Va., specializing in culinary training and introducing cutting-edge healthy products. As a retired sergeant major (SGM) for the U.S. Army, Chef Turcotte has served tours in Afghanistan, led culinary training at Fort Gregg-Adams in Virginia and once held the lead enlisted position at the Military Culinary School for the U.S. Armed Forces. Chef Turcotte was a member of the 1996, 1998 and 2000 U.S. National Military Culinary Olympic Teams and has won multiple medals from international competitions over the years, including dual gold medals at the 1998 Culinary World Cup in Luxembourg. He has also served two terms as ACF competition chair.

ACF Chef Alan Neace, CEC, AAC (Assistant Manager)

Chef Neace is a culinary instructor with the Midwest Culinary Institute at Cincinnati State Technical and Community College in Cincinnati, where he also develops curriculum and coaches and manages the school's student culinary competition team, which has won numerous medals. He earned an associate

degree in applied business from Cincinnati State Technical and Community College and a bachelor's degree in business management from Franklin University, Columbus, Ohio. Chef Neace has led several properties as executive chef, including J. Thomas Catering Inc., Cincinnati; Coldstream Country Club, Cincinnati; and Hilton Hotels Corporation. He has amassed more than 30 ACF- and WACS-sanctioned national and international culinary competition medals.

Chef Brian Willis (Business Manager)

Chef Brian Willis brings a wealth of experience to his role as Business Manager, with a career spanning over two decades in the food service industry. Currently, he serves as a Senior Customer Care Representative at Givaudan Flavors. Chef Willis trained under Chef Neace at the Midwest Culinary Institute at Cincinnati State, where he honed his culinary skills. He also played a pivotal role as the local team manager for the 2008 and 2012 Culinary Olympics and the 2010 Culinary World Cup teams, contributing to their international success.

ACF Culinary Team USA First-Round Tryouts: Commentary by the Host

By **ACF Chef Ray McCue, CEC, AAC**, associate professor, Johnson & Wales University, Providence, R.I., and ACF vice president, Northeast Region

The excitement was intense as chefs gathered for the highly anticipated ACF Culinary Team USA tryouts at JW in September. Months of planning culminated in a seamlessly executed event, displaying not only the talent of our chefs but also the dedication of our organizing committee.

From the outset, meticulous preparation ensured that everything went smoothly. JW student volunteers arrived early to set up, welcoming the competitors with energy and enthusiasm, and allowing chefs to focus on what truly mattered: performing their best.

One standout aspect of the day was the emphasis on teamwork.

Recognizing the physical demands of the tryouts, judges ensured that competitors had ample time, nourishment and support. We also set up hydration stations in every kitchen to ensure that chef competitors stayed hydrated during the six-hour competition.

The tryouts allowed chef competitors to demonstrate their abilities. Coaches and judges were on hand to observe, providing valuable feedback and fostering a sense of camaraderie among the chefs.

The atmosphere was electric, filled with the sounds of determination and the spirit of culinary sportsmanship. As the day progressed, it became clear that this event was not just about individual performance but about building a team of chefs united by their passion for culinary and pastry arts.

As the tryouts ended, participants left feeling inspired and motivated, eager to take the next steps in their journeys. The successful execution of the day is a testament to the hard work and collaboration of everyone involved — from the organizing committee to the student volunteers, judges, and of course, the competitors themselves.

In summary, the ACF Culinary Team USA tryouts were a resounding success, marked by excellent preparation, community spirit and a commitment to the future of the ACF. I look forward to seeing how these talented individuals continue to grow and excel in their pursuit of representing our country on the world stage.

Monroe University Student Team Wins at World Junior Chef Championship



A junior chef team from the Culinary Institute of New York at Monroe University, consisting of **ACF Chefs Gabriela Grande, Cheyenne Hamilton** and student chef **Melina Sosa** (featured left to right), coached

by **ACF Chef and Competition Chair Frank Costantino, CEC, CCA, CCE, CEPC, AAC**, represented the U.S. at the World Junior Chef Championship with 15 other countries competing. The team won “Best Dish of the Day” on Day 2 for a New England clam chowder, prepared in classical form and in a modern, deconstructed version with ragu of clams, potato puree and clam-based sauce plated in a tasting format. “I think the team did exceptionally well given that we had a limited time to prepare and the fact that the majority of the dishes the team had to prepare were Asian-inspired,” says Chef Costantino. The team prepared 160 dishes in four-hour cooking windows over the course of four days. The event drew hundreds of spectators.

NEW: ACF Baking & Pastry Task Force

ACF has launched a new Baking & Pastry Task Force, which includes **ACF Chefs Melissa Trimmer, CEPC, AAC** (chair); **Christopher Teixeira, CEPC** (Central); **Brian Peffley, CEPC, CCE, AAC** (Northeast); **Jennifer Heide, CEPC** (Southeast); **Chrissy Marie Jensen, CEPC** (Western); **Greg Matchett, CEC, AAC** (board liaison). “We’re excited to share that we’ve been having some truly productive discussions about enhancing the presence of pastry within the ACF,” says Chef Trimmer. “After listening to feedback that there has been too little pastry representation, ACF leadership had the idea to form an ACF Baking & Pastry Task Force, and we quickly got to work. We’ve gathered some of the top Certified Executive Pastry Chefs from each region, and together, we’re meeting regularly to build momentum. Our focus is to promote the support and education of pastry chefs and bakers across the organization and the country. This team will advise on pastry-related topics, including recommendations for future ACF National Conventions, MasterCraft Summits, trade shows and educational opportunities. We’re looking forward to the exciting possibilities ahead as we work together to elevate pastry in the ACF.”

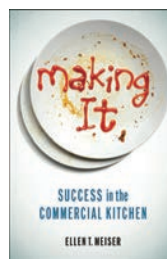
Gilbert Sidella Earns Lifetime Achievement Award



ACF National President René Marquis, CEC, CCE, CCA, AAC, presented **Chef Gilbert James Sidella Sr., CEC, 84**, with a lifetime achievement award during the first round of tryouts for the ACF Culinary Team USA in September at Johnson & Wales University in

Providence, R.I. Chef Sidella has been an ACF member for 51 years as an active member of and former education chair for the Connecticut Chefs Association. Chef Sidella worked at the Country Club of Waterbury in Connecticut; he also served as executive chef at Waterbury Hospital during the 1970s and ‘80s, during which time he received multiple awards for his culinary work, including judges’ awards for the best pastry and best poultry dish at the prestigious annual Connecticut Chef’s Culinary Art and Food Exposition. He also taught adult culinary education classes at Kaynor Technical High School in Waterbury and oversaw the foodservice program at Fairfield Hills Hospital in Newtown, Conn., during the ‘80s and ‘90s before his retirement when the facility closed.

Read This!



Making It: Success in the Commercial Kitchen

By *Ellen T. Meiser, Ph.D.*

The restaurant industry is one of the few places in America where workers from lower-class backgrounds can rise to positions of power and prestige. Yet with more than 4 million cooks and food-preparation workers employed in America’s restaurants, not everyone makes it to the high-status position of chef. What factors determine who rises the ranks in this fiercely competitive pressure-cooker environment? The newly released book (Rutgers University Press) by Meiser, a professor of sociology at University of Hawaii at Hilo, features interviews with several ACF chefs and as well as a close and personal look at how knowledge, power and interpersonal skills come together to determine who succeeds and who fails in the high-pressure world of the restaurant kitchen.

Salut



ACF chefs with the U.S. Navy held an Adopt-a-Chef culinary training aboard the USS Constitution in Boston in October. The training was conducted by **ACF Chefs Erica Chin (CSCS)**, leading culinary specialist who oversees the USS Constitution galley kitchen; **Gloria M. Cabral, CWPC®**, **CCE, AAC**, a baking and pastry instructor and active trainer with the Navy; and **Jeremy J. Andersen, CEC**, senior enlisted aide to the superintendent of the U.S. Naval War College.

The **ACF Chefs of Northwest Indiana** hosted the second annual Taste of the Farm event at Fair Oaks Farm in Fair Oaks, Ind., featuring samples from more than 30 local and regional chefs, including multiple ACF members, and raising more than \$15,000 for the chapter and Northwest Indiana No Child Hungry. More than 150 guests attended the event, which also showcased presentations from **ACF National President René Marquis, CEC, CCE, CCA, AAC**, **Celebrity Chef Art Smith** and **Farmer Lee Jones** of The Chef's Garden in Ohio, who highlighted the importance of sustainable, farm-to-table practices and collaboration among chefs, farmers and community to promote local food systems and healthier eating.



Congratulations to the ACF chefs who won awards at the WorldChefs Congress in Singapore in October:

- President's Medals: **René Marquis, CEC, CCE, CCA, AAC**, **Bill Sy, CEC, AAC, HOF**, and **Rico DiFronzo, CEC, CCA, AAC, HBOT**
- Lifetime Honorary Members: **Charles Carroll, AAC**, and **Chris Koetke, CEC, CCE, HAAC**
- Lifetime Honorary Judge: **Alex Darvishi, CEC, AAC, HOF**
- Escoffier Award: **Ferdinand Metz, CMC, AAC, HOF, HBOT**
- Certificate of Appreciation for Contributions to Worldchefs: **Vanessa Marquis, CEC, AAC**

The **ACF Pikes Peak Chapter** will be donating \$5,000 to create a permanent exhibit at the Colorado Springs Pioneers Museum to showcase historical photos, materials and awards collected by **ACF Chef Siegfried O. Krauss, CEC, AAC**, one of the chapter's founding members and a curator of the chapter's history since its creation in 1976. The CSPM will digitally archive all of the pictures and text, which the chapter will post on its website (cspm.org).



The **ACF Tampa Bay Chapter** hosted its annual awards dinner in September. **ACF Chef Geoffrey Blanchette, CEC, PCEC**, won the chapter's Chef of the Year Award; **ACF Chef Vincent Pesce Jr., CCC**, won the Educator of the Year Award; **ACF Chefs Kareen "Coco" Linton and Vince Blancato** earned the Professional Member of the Year awards; and the Legacy of Support Award went to the Fort Harrison Hotel and Partner of Year went to Southern Ice House.

In Memoriam

Chef Louis Danegelis was an ACF member since 1988.

ACF Chef John Aukstolis was a chef-instructor at Johnson & Wales University's College of Food Innovation & Technology. A JW faculty member for nearly 30 years, Chef Aukstolis received many awards during his tenure, including Outstanding Service Award, Teacher of the Year Award, and most recently in 2024, the CFIT Citizenship Award.

ACF Chef Hilmar Jonsson, AAC, was the former vice president of Worldchefs.

ACF Chef Joseph E. Eidem, CEC, AAC, HOF, former president of the High Sierra Chefs Association and a Western Regional Chef of the Year, was an active ACF member since 1983. He served as executive chef at the VA Medical Center and executive chef/director of nutrition services at Renown (Washoe) Medical Center in Reno as well as executive chef/director at Arrowhead Regional Medical Center in Colton, Calif. He also served as western regional director for R&R Enterprises and as a coach for Don Miller & Associates.

ACF Trends

Introducing our November trend, part of ACF's first-ever Trends Report launched this year, plus a forecast of ACF's 2025 Trends.

By Amelia Levin



Island Onigiri (above) (credit: Joe Kramm) and Curry Tofu Bowl (below) (credit: Onbrand Production) at HAAM in Brooklyn, N.Y.

NOVEMBER CULINARY MASHUPS

Fusion has been around forever, but it might have been the infamous cronut that brought the kitsch and the fandom. Today, we're focused more on "cross-cultural cooking" — as referenced in af&co.'s 2024 Hospitality Trend report — or "chaos cooking," another term used by industry research outlets and trends experts to describe the mashing up of ingredients, flavors and traditions from global cuisines. In this new world of culinary mashups, chefs are drawing from professional experience and personal backgrounds to create dishes, menus and full restaurant concepts that combine elements from one or two cuisines at a time. Korean tacos and Rubeen egg rolls got the ball rolling; now we're seeing Vietnamese-Cajun, Mexican-Mediterranean and Jewish deli-Cuban mashups, plus more applications of Wafu cuisine combining Italian and Japanese flavors. This new realm of "chaos cooking" has also included a wave of fun ingredient combos like chicken bacon ranch and mango habanero, the latter of which has seen an increase of 83% in menu inclusions over the past four years, according to third-party research firm Datassential. Turn to p. 20 to read more about "chaos cooking" and culinary mashups happening around the country.



Kanpachi Ceviche with pickled red onions at Fort Oak in San Diego touches on Raw Fish Rave and Pickles Galore, two ACF trends for 2025 (left); The Vegetable Renaissance trend is on display in this salad with beets and pomegranate seeds at Fort Oak (right) (credit: Trust Restaurant Group).

FORECASTING ACF'S 2025 TRENDS

We've connected with trends experts, research firms and other industry partners to source this list of macrotrends for next year. Stay tuned for deeper dives into these monthly trends in upcoming issues of National Culinary Review as well as through our webinars, social media and other digital content.

Soulful Soul Food: Chefs infuse classic recipes with modern twists, delivering a comforting yet innovative dining experience.

Global Pizza Renaissance: The pizza scene is undergoing a renaissance like never before, from classic Neapolitan to bold Chicago-style, Detroit, New Haven, Roman, Californian and beyond.

Sustainability and Kitchen Electrification: Though the debate continues, more companies are going gas-free with newly built kitchens to reduce carbon footprints.

Culinary Tech Integration: The kitchen of the future features AI-powered innovations and bigger tech stacks than ever before.

The Vegetable Renaissance: Veggies continue to take center stage on plates and on menus amid ongoing

support for regenerative farming and sustainable sourcing.

Chinese Regional Cuisines: From spicy Sichuan dishes to savory Cantonese dim sum, chefs continue to explore the diversity of Chinese cooking.

Pickles Galore: Pickles are having a moment, from classic dills to those with funky flavor combos as chefs look to preserve the bounty of a seasonal harvest.

The Spicy Revolution: Heat seekers don't have to look far and wide to find spice and sauce inspiration with bold flavors from around the globe.

Raw Fish Rave: Sushi, poke and ceviche are stealing the spotlight as chefs spotlight sustainable sources from the sea.

Nourishing Beverages: There's an increasing front-of-house focus on beverages that not only complement food but also offer health benefits. From gut-friendly kombucha and antioxidant-rich teas to nonalcoholic cocktails and zero-proof beer and wine, these options allow customers to sip smarter while enjoying nutritious choices.

BUILDING LEADERS

How the decades-long, newly ACFEF-approved Greenbrier Culinary Apprenticeship Program trains the next generation of leaders in the industry // By Amelia Levin



The Greenbrier has one of the longest-running apprenticeship programs in the country, dating back 67 years to 1957. It's also seen as one of the most competitive and comprehensive programs in the country, lasting three years and producing an alumni base of more than 300 graduates, including countless ACF chefs, some

of whom have gone on to become Certified Master Chefs, work at top fine-dining restaurants and resorts around the world, launch major businesses, hold top leadership positions in the industry and — in the case of **ACF Chef Bryan Skelding, CEC** (above) — return to the legendary resort to carry on its strong legacy as executive chef since 2013.

That's why we (and Chef Skelding) think it's pretty big news that the program became ACFEF-approved for the first time in October.

"We see a lot of value in being a bigger part of the ACF," says Chef Skelding, a longtime member. "It will help us add a little more structure to the program and recruit more applicants, just to name a couple benefits."

To officially be recognized as an ACFEF-approved apprenticeship program, Chef Skelding says he didn't have to make many changes to the program as it was already in compliance with ACF guidelines. "We did incorporate a few more ACF elements into our handbook, such as marketing materials and scoring sheets and some other cool tools, but fortunately, we didn't have to reinvent the wheel."

Chef Skelding, who first worked for a season at the Greenbrier in 2002, returned two times after that: once as saucier and later in 2009 with **ACF Chef Rich Rosendale, CMC** (also a Greenbrier alum), after then West Virginia Gov. Jim Justice bought the bankrupt property. Chef Skelding served as executive sous chef under Chef Rosendale, then executive

chef. The duo revived the resort's reputation, doubling the number of restaurants at the property and restarting the famed apprenticeship program started by the late, legendary **ACF Chef Hermann Rusch, AAC, HOF**.

Apprentices are paid and typically work nine-hour shifts, five to six days per week, rotating among the property's eight restaurants so they get a taste of just about every operation under the sun, from breakfast to steakhouse to fine-dining institution, catering, casual dining, seasonal and retail.

First-year apprentices will review fundamentals and by the second year, they're "jumping on the line," Chef Skelding says. Second-year students also learn menu writing and must complete a three-course menu to move onto their third year, when they must complete a seven-course menu to graduate.

Outside of kitchen work, apprentices meet each day at noon for educational sessions, demos and other instruction. These sessions may cover anything from knife sharpening to the business of culinary, coffee tasting and even CPR training, as well as plenty of demos on making fresh pasta, pates and charcuterie, whole fish butchery, plated desserts, egg cookery and much more.

While apprentices work in all Greenbrier kitchens, they'll spend a lot of time in the apprentice kitchen, affectionately referred to as the bunker. It's housed in a literal bunker built in the late '50s as an emergency Cold War fallout shelter and relocation facility for Congress and dignitaries from Washington, D.C. Though the bunker was once closed off in secrecy, it's now open to tours and features windows that allow guests to see into the action. Apprentices also enjoy family meals and can work on their own projects in the bunker.

"We have about 20 areas total with food and beverage service," Chef Skelding says. "It takes 200 culinarians to make all the 14 kitchens operate. That's why we often look for apprentices who have some experience or who have completed culinary school — we're more like graduate school. But I hire more on work ethic and attitude."

Apprentices are selected via an application process that starts with a resume and often a recommendation from another graduate or culinary leader in the industry.

“We’ll do a phone interview, and if that goes well, invite [the applicant] to come stay with us at the hotel and stage for a day or two,” Chef Skelding says. “They will meet with me and as many current or graduated apprentices as they can, and we’ll explain a lot about the program because it’s a very rigorous and extensive program that’s not for everyone. We find we have a much higher success rate if we are able to give [applicants] all the information they need to decide about moving forward.”

What makes the Greenbrier’s program more challenging than others, in Chef Skelding’s view, is the three-year commitment and more remote location in the hills of West Virginia, away from family.

ACF Chef Hunter Gentry, a recent Greenbrier apprenticeship program graduate and current Greenbrier chef de cuisine, wasn’t intimidated by the remote location since he’s from Hawaii. “I also like a challenge,” says Chef Gentry, who found out about the apprenticeship program while studying at the Culinary Institute of America at Greystone in Napa Valley, from Chef Skelding’s same mentor, **ACF Chef Thomas Wong**, an instructor there, who’s also from Hawaii.

“I have learned so much over the last few years and become much more proficient at the fundamentals of cooking,” Chef Gentry says. “I also enjoy being in a place where everything is

very seasonally based; that’s different than in Hawaii where we have access to fresh produce year-round.” Though Chef Gentry has enjoyed learning more about Southern and Appalachian cuisine, he returned to his roots, serving up a Hawaiian-influenced, 11-course menu for his graduation featuring pate en croute with Hawaiian pickled mango mustard and an elevated macaroni salad with macadamia nuts.

“I’ve been able to really work on my craft and continue pursuing challenging goals here,” says Chef Gentry. “I have enjoyed the continued learning and now being able to pass on what I’ve learned to the new apprentices.”

Chef Skelding agrees when it comes to that legacy of giving back and mentorship. “We’re always trying to continue Chef Rusch’s legacy and stay relevant as the industry changes,” he says. “The ACF has such a great, structured model for education, a passion for all things culinary, and [the organization] also promotes understanding the business aspect of cooking as well as just being a good human and participating in community service — these are a lot of the same things we also promote, so we’re thrilled to be aligned with that mission and part of the organization in a bigger way.”



Clockwise from left: ACF Chef Brian Skelding, CEC, executive chef, The Greenbrier, with other resort chefs and apprentice graduates; recent Greenbrier apprenticeship program graduate and ACF Chef Hunter Gentry’s Hawaiian-inspired titiyas with braised oxtails, red rice and lomi lomi prepared for his final tasting menu; Greenbrier apprentices in the bunker kitchen; Chef Gentry at his graduation ceremony in January; The Greenbrier’s newly designed medal for apprentice graduates.



A WORLD OF FLAVOR IN PORK



New sensory science research into the optimal flavor compatibility of pork may provide some clues as to why pork complements fruits and vegetables so well.

A sensory analysis commissioned by the National Pork Board shows that pork has 111 unique flavor nuances, while pork fat has around 30 flavor nuances, highlighting versatility in flavor and texture of cuts and preparation methods. Some of pork's world of flavors includes sweet, fruity and floral tones, clove, hazelnut and mushrooms. Pork also hits on all the basic tones including sweet, salty, acidic, umami and kokumi.

Flavors Embrace Cross-Cultural Tastes

While lean pork was described as having the most umami, both lean and

high-fat pork fat also contained a new flavor called kokumi, which is a Japanese word to describe "rich taste" or "delicious"; it's a taste sensation different from the basic five taste attributes.

As such, the sensation people get from eating pork is rich, full of body and complex, and that could be one of the key reasons why pork is best served with everything across many different cultural tastes.

In fact, pork is one of the most widely eaten meats in the world, according to research conducted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in March 2024. Pork also fits into many different cultural cuisines through a wide variety of delicious recipes that provide a key source of high-quality affordable protein and underconsumed nutrients that are well positioned to meet global protein demand.

For pork inspiration and recipes, check out go.pork.org/acf.

Above: Asian salad with grilled pork chops (Credit: National Pork Board)

ACF Thanks Our Loyalty Partners



THE 2024 ACF LARGE CHAPTER OF THE YEAR: THE EPICUREAN CLUB OF BOSTON (MA041)

By John Bartimole

"Our main focus is giving back." **O** ACF Chef Tim Foley, HAAC, president of the ACF Epicurean Club of Boston, summarizes the heart and the mission of the oldest chefs association in the country, which was recently recognized as the 2024 ACF Chapter of the Year (large chapter category) at the national convention in July.

"The goal of the Epicurean Club of Boston is to educate, connect and create a community of like-minded individuals looking to help further themselves and their business," Chef Foley says, reciting the official mission. "Our vision is to help culinarians by providing opportunities for business growth, learning and establishment in the restaurant industry."

Indeed, ACF's longest-running chapter, founded in 1894, prides itself on giving back to the profession, young culinarians, the community and to its members.

The chapter's reach extends beyond the Boston area. "We like to work with chapters in Cape Cod, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Maine; it's all about increasing fellowship with and for our profession," says Chef Foley, a corporate chef for Core Foodservice.

Boasting more than 190 members, the chapter holds 10 meetings per year, each of which offers educational and networking opportunities. "The majority of us are senior chefs and educated by European chefs," Chef Foley says. "However, we are getting more and more talented American chefs, and we do have an exciting group of young culinarians. What's encouraging is that I see the same passion in them as I do in our senior chefs. This is not a job, it's a career. And if you're not into it, you're out of it."

Chef Foley notes that with the chapter primarily located in Boston, "that provides us with a lot of resources, sponsors and members, being a bigger

Board of Directors

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city," he says. "And our members are passionate. For example, all of our recent past presidents of the chapter are still involved. The only one still living who is not involved is in his 80s and living in Vermont. The continuity that that leadership provides is great, and it makes a big difference in our ability to serve."

Chef Foley particularly notes the involvement of many of the chapter's sponsors, including Dole & Bailey, Costa Fruit & Produce, Sterling Silver Premium Meats, John Nagle Co., Paul W. Marks Co., TriMark, Smithfield Culinary, Montilio's Baking Co., Kettle Cuisine, Schweid & Sons and Piantedosi Baking Co. "Our sponsors are always there for us and help our involvement in the community," he says.

That involvement has manifested into a variety of community-themed events. For example, in June, the chapter hosted the annual Jimmy DiMarzio Scholarship Golf Classic for the 21st year. The sold-out event, held at Sandy Burr Country Club in Wayland, Mass., raised more than \$19,000 in



Clockwise from left: ACF Chefs and Epicurean Club of Boston board members Rico DiFronzo, CEC, CCA, AAC, HBOT (secretary), Jim Connolly, CEC, CCA, AAC, Denise Graffeo, CEC, AAC, HOF and Tim Foley, HAAC (chapter president), accepting the award for 2024 ACF Chapter of the Year (large category) at the ACF National Convention in Phoenix; ACF Chef James DiMarzio, CEC, AAC, a past chapter president; ACF Chefs (front row, from left) Foley, John DiSessa, CEC, AAC, DiMarzio, Steve Lawrence (back row from right) Rory Gallagher, guest chef, Steve Cooney, Anthony McCauley and Angelo Diaz during the 2024 Annual Golf Scholarship Outing; Chapter members and local high school students at a Krusteaz cupcake bakeoff; ACF chefs from the Leon Roberge Chefs Competition bringing together the ACF Epicurean Club of Boston, Cape Cod Chapter, Rhode Island Chapter and The Professional Chefs of New Hampshire.

scholarship funds for young culinarians. Over the past two-plus decades, the chapter has raised more than \$200,000 in scholarships, doling out six \$2,000 scholarships just this year.

The Leon Roberge, CEC, AAC, Spring ACF Culinary Competition is another example of the chapter's focus on community involvement and education. The competition focuses on sustainable food and encourages students to compete. "Our goal is to try to mentor the students, increase their knowledge and give them a taste of what culinary competition is all about," Chef Foley says.

During the holidays, "We help with My Brother's Table, a social services organization that feeds those at the homeless shelters," Chef Foley says. "This takes place the day before Thanksgiving, and last year, we prepared 1,700 meals. For Christmas Eve, our chapter made 65 hotel trays of lasagna and 800 meatballs. Our chefs love to be involved."

In March, the chapter sponsored, along with Schweid & Sons, the Blackstone Valley Technical High School Burger Challenge. "We've been doing this for the last four years," Chef Foley says. "It teaches the students how to compete in

teams of four, and we recognize those who come up with the best recipes and side dishes."

The chapter also prides itself on educating its members during its meetings. For example, in October, the chapter met at Lowell Tech High School and offered a course on "spice-ology." Another educational meeting featured a presentation by representatives from the John Nagle Co. on the safe handling of fish. Yet another meeting took place at a local brewery and detailed the art of brewing beer. And in September, the chapter met at the Fireking Baking Co., which specializes in the European art of baking bread.

"We try to get the most educational pieces we can," Chef Foley says. "We think it's important that, as chefs, we always keep learning new information and techniques."

CHAOS CUISINE

How Chefs Are Embracing the Next Evolution of Fusion Cuisine

// **By Mike Kostyo**

Chef Junnajat “Jett” Hurapan grew up in Bangkok, Thailand, moved to New York City with his family at only 8 years old, honed his craft at fine dining concepts along the East Coast, and eventually made his way to Houston, where he oversaw two renowned Thai restaurants. So when he was brought on as executive chef at Benny Chows, a Chinese/Cantonese concept in the city, he knew there was an opportunity to showcase some of his Thai culinary heritage. Alongside the traditional Chinese dishes like xiao long bao soup dumplings and Peking duck, he introduced Thai options like tom kha gai soup, shrimp panang curry and pad thai.

But he didn’t stop there. Taking inspiration from Texas and its love of barbecue, customers will also find a smoked brisket egg roll, which features brisket from Houston’s famed Truth BBQ with an Asian-inspired slaw alongside Chinese barbecue sauce and mustard sauce. He’s also become well known for his one-of-a-kind Holy Trinity Fried Rice, which also features Truth’s smoked brisket, plus char siu pork and Chinese sausage.

Chef Hurapan is just one chef who exemplifies a new generation of culinary professionals who are embracing foods and even entire restaurant concepts that showcase and combine a wide range of cuisines and ideas. At one time this was called fusion cuisine, which

later evolved into culinary mashups (think Korean tacos and ramen burgers) when “fusion” became a dirty word.

Today the preferred term may be “chaos cuisine,” a concept popularized by Eater.com reporter Jaya Saxena as a post-COVID-19, “anything goes, let’s just make fun, tasty foods” mentality that was partly a reaction to the rigidity of “authenticity” and partly a celebration of a new generation of chefs’ wide-ranging cultural backgrounds. A second- or third-generation chef may have a father from Mexico, a mother from India, a childhood spent in LA and culinary training in Japan, and a dish or concept from that chef may include all of those elements while still being authentic to them. Chaos cuisine even formed the basis of a challenge on the most recent season of “Top Chef,” where the “chefestants” were urged to “break the mold of culinary convention.”

Whether you call it chaos cuisine, new fusion, mashups 2.0 or some other inventive moniker, it’s clear that chefs are finding a newfound freedom to get a little more playful and inventive again, combining cuisines and ideas in new ways. Here are just a few examples of chefs and concepts from across the country that are embracing the chaos.



Mango-infused chicken wings at the upstate New York-based Mill and Main, which features dishes blending Italian, Colombian and Antiguan cuisines.

Embracing a Wide-Ranging Background

For chefs like Chef Hurapan, a fusion of foods and flavors is authentic to their background. The same holds true for mother-and-son chef duo **Claudia Sidoti** and **Christopher Weathered** of Mill and Main in upstate New York. They combine their Italian, Colombian and Antiguan heritage at the restaurant, which is most evident in their signature Rasta Pasta, itself a product of New York’s melting pot community. “This dish is a New York City classic amongst all Caribbeans who grew up in any of the five boroughs, specifically Brooklyn,” says Chef Weathered. “The dish was originally created by West Indians in New York who were surrounded by Italian flavor — and lots of pasta — and took their hand at it.” Chef Weathered pays homage to those roots with his own creamy, spicy interpretation of the dish, a family favorite that regularly shows up as a special at the restaurant.



The oxtail grilled cheese at Fat Fowl in Brooklyn, N.Y. (above); Mango calypso chow and curry chicken dumplings at HAAM in Brooklyn (credit: Joe Kramm) (below).



View a Cuisine Through a New Lens

Some chefs may want to celebrate or cook from their heritage or background, but they view it through a new lens — a specific diet, a particular culinary training, a commitment to buying local, etc. For **Chef Yesenia Ramdass**, that meant interpreting her own Dominican heritage, plus her husband’s Trinidadian background, through a vegan lens — a diet she embraced at 17. At HAAM (“Healthy as a Motha”) in Brooklyn, she features traditional Caribbean dishes but swaps out the meat with vegetables or plant-based alternatives, like in the Yuh Motha’s Ceviche, which features hearts of palm instead of fish, or the Bake and Shark, which uses banana blossoms instead of shark meat.

Mashups Can Be Authentic

One of the hardest parts of nailing down “authenticity” in a cuisine or dish is that humans have been moving around the world for thousands of years. If you go back far enough, most cuisines are often unrecognizable (tomatoes are native to South America, not Italy, after all). In some cases world migration has led to “mashup” cuisines that are now a central part of a country’s culinary heritage, like Chifa cuisine, a combination of Chinese and Peruvian cuisine that developed as Chinese immigrants settled in Peru to work. It’s now one of the most popular cuisines in the country.

| Main Course |

Chef/Owner Brad Wise of San Diego's Fort Oak takes inspiration from another Peruvian mashup: Peru's Nikkei cuisine, which blends Peruvian and Japanese inspirations, for his kanpachi ceviche. It features embered leche de tigre and matcha crisp plus spicy pickled red onions, avocado, radish and mint. Chef Wise isn't afraid to get inventive across the many restaurants in his Trust Restaurant Group, whether it's an Italian dish with Jewish influences (grilled broccoli with limoncello poppyseed yogurt and candied pistachio "everything spice") or Mexican and Indian flavors in his trademark wood-grilled cauliflower at the flagship Trust, with serrano aioli, curry vinaigrette, raisins, mint, black lentils and cilantro.

Have Fun, Get Weird, Make Good Food

At fine dining concepts, where customers are paying top dollar for new, unique, creative dishes, an element of controlled chaos may be inherent to the concept itself as chefs constantly look for new ingredients, techniques and ideas from around the world — and novel ways of combining them — to wow their guests. At Yingtao, a Chinese-inspired fine dining concept in New York City, traditional Chinese ingredients and dishes are at the heart of the menu, but innovative culinary techniques and global influences reimagine those foundations and transform them into entirely new experiences. The congee, for example,

is inspired by the comforting flavors of the traditional Chinese rice porridge, but the presentation is inspired by Italian truffle risotto, topped with rich ingredients like egg yolk, chanterelles and uni.

Yet, at the end of the day, many chefs will say that it's the flavor that matters. **Archana** and **Mohit Nagrath**, owners of San Jose's fast casual desi Contemporary, start with their Indian heritage, but take inspiration from dishes and cuisines from around the world for adventurous, bold dishes and cocktails. The menu includes options like Baingan Bharta Bruschetta, taking a North Indian dish of fire-roasted eggplants, onions and tomatoes and putting it on toasted bread with goat cheese. There is a Gujia Empanada with garlic mushrooms, cottage cheese and green peppers, while the Kulcha Chalupa Tacos have earned plenty of attention, filling the Indian flatbread with either creamy butter chicken or vegan chickpea pindi chole, topping it all with peppercorn vinegar onions and guacamole.



Island Onigiri (above) (credit: Joe Kramm) and Curry Tofu Bowl (below) (credit: Onbrand Production) at HAAM in Brooklyn, N.Y.

The dishes are bold, exciting, inventive and proudly a little chaotic — but, more importantly to both the team and customers, delicious.

FOUR CHAOS CUISINE DISHES TO KNOW

MATCHAMISU

The Concept: Azumi, a modern Japanese concept in Houston

The Chef: Chef Jackie Surter is the corporate pastry chef for Atlas Restaurant Group. She knew that Houston — one of the nation’s most diverse cities — needed a creative culinary mashup for the new concept.

The Chaos: Japan meets Italy in this dessert, which takes inspiration from tiramisu. For Chef Surter’s mashup, she soaks sponge cake in matcha instead of espresso, layering it with a mascarpone mousse and passionfruit jam inside a Masu box, traditionally used to serve sake. It’s all finished with a final sprinkle of matcha powder.



OXTAIL GRILLED CHEESE

The Concept: Fat Fowl, a “new age Caribbean” concept at the Dekalb Market Hall in Brooklyn, N.Y.

The Chef: Chef/Founder Shorne Benjamin

combines his Caribbean background (he discovered his love for cooking in his grandmother’s kitchen in St. Lucia) with his own “new age” interpretations and twists.

The Chaos: While much of the menu is vegetarian, the meaty Oxtail Grilled Cheese has gone viral, combining a classic American comfort food (given a premium twist by using gouda) with wine-braised oxtail (a Caribbean favorite) and housemade tomato jam to bind it all together.



‘BHEL’ HUMMUS

The Concept: Ema, a Mediterranean restaurant in Chicago

The Chef: Chef CJ Jacobson has always viewed Mediterranean cuisine through his own light, California-inspired style of cooking.

The Chaos: After spending time with his wife’s family in India and appreciating the country’s street food culture, Chef Jacobson was inspired to create this riff on Indian bhel puri, featuring pineapple, avocado, pomegranate, tamarind, crispy rice and mint chutney.



KIMCHI RICE BALLS

The Concept: Kothai Republic, a modern interpretation of Asian cuisine that uses local ingredients in San Francisco

The Chef: Chef Sung Park is a San Francisco

native with Korean heritage who uses his own background, self-taught skills and the ideas of his entire kitchen staff to craft new-yet-nostalgic dishes.

The Chaos: Kothai’s kimchi rice balls are a take on Italian arancini, swapping in flavors and ingredients like house-made kimchi, bacon, sharp cheddar and aioli.





SEACUTERIE SENSATION

Chefs are swapping meat for marine life when building trending boards today // By Lauren Kramer

While charcuterie boards have been a menu staple for years, their seafood equivalent, seacuterie boards, are just beginning to gain momentum. Rich in omega-3 fatty acids, they offer a healthful, innovative alternative to their meaty cousins, which can be heavy in saturated fats.

“Seafood is delicious and nutrient-dense, packed with protein and other nutrients,” says **Jenny Shea Rawn**, a registered dietician based in Boothbay, Maine. “Depending on the species, it offers omega-3 fatty acids, which are essential for brain and heart health.”

A seacuterie board is a stunning way to display a variety of healthy seafood options, says Rawn. “They can be created on any budget, can be extravagant or understated, and can be pulled together in minutes once your seafood is prepped and ready to go.”

Some chefs go all out on their boards, featuring lobster tails and caviar, while others use it as an opportunity to showcase the great options in canned seafood these days. When **Executive Chef Michael Nelson** of GW Fins in New Orleans assembled his first seacuterie boards, he used swordfish and tuna to create mortadella, andouille, pepperoni, chorizo and bacon.

Executive Chef Gunter Weber of Proof of the Pudding, an Atlanta-based catering company, picks something steamed, something raw, something marinated and something grilled for his boards — a selection that allows for different flavors, textures and colors.

“For one particular board, I grilled heavily spiced Caribbean lobster tails and served them with some mild flavored, tender, sushi-grade tuna,” he says. One of his favorite seacuterie items is salmon tartare made with a mixture of raw and smoked salmon and garnished with red peppers. He adds additional color and texture by featuring fried wontons, sliced cucumbers and a variety of sauces.

Color variety is a great way to make your board attractive. Rawn suggests lemon wedges, pickles, capers, cheese, crackers, edible flowers and leafy greens. “For the seafood items, think about lobster, shrimp and oysters on the half shell, canned seafood such as tuna, octopus and sardines, grilled oysters, scallops and clams, tuna tartare, crab dip and lobster salad,” she says.



Tips For Building A Great Seacuterie Board

from Executive Chef Gunter Weber, Proof of the Pudding, Atlanta

- 1. Keep it cold:** Place seafood atop a bed of crushed or mini ball ice and sprinkle with rock salt to encourage a slower melt.
- 2. Jazz it up:** Add fresh herbs, lemon wedges and little bowls of unexpected condiments, dips and tartare.
- 3. Build it big:** The fuller the board, the better. Start with the bigger items and fill the empty small spots with lemon, hot sauce or herbs and other garnishes like caviar or fish roe, pickled onions, fresh cucumbers or seaweed salad.
- 4. Sauce it right:** Try sauces like remoulade, sriracha mayo, soy dipping sauce, or more traditionally, Tabasco sauce.
- 5. Add crunch:** Add texture to your board with hearty crackers, saltines or fried wonton crisps.

Classical

A junior chef team from the Culinary Institute of New York at Monroe University, consisting of **ACF Chefs Gabriela Grande, Cheyenne Hamilton**



and student chef **Melina Sosa**, coached by ACF Chef and **ACF Youth Culinary Team USA Coach Frank Costantino, CEC, CCA, CCE, CEPC, AAC**, represented the U.S. at the World Junior Chef Championship with 15 other countries competing. The team won “Best Dish of the Day” on Day 2 for a **New England clam chowder**, prepared in a classic and modern form. For the classic version, the team started with a traditional roux of flour mixed with rendered bacon fat and butter as the base, layered with sauteed onions and celery,

clam juice, cream, diced potatoes and freshly shucked clams for the simmer. Reserved crispy bacon, fresh thyme and parsley and classic oyster crackers rounded out the garnish.

Modern

For the modern version, the Monroe University team prepared a **deconstructed clam chowder** with a ragout of clams, potato puree and crispy bacon plated in an appetizer portion tasting format, according to competition requirements. “We decided to steam the clams open and make a velouté with the cooking liquid, finished with a touch of cream,” Chef Costantino says. “We then made a potato puree with potato trimmings from the small-diced potatoes. The ragout was served atop a little of the potato puree and then we placed the creamy sauce around it. The garnish was more crispy bacon, fresh thyme leaves and homemade black pepper oyster crackers.”

For recipes, visit acfchefs.org/recipes.



CLASSICAL VS. MODERN



A professional kitchen with stainless steel counters, a range hood, and various food preparation items. The scene is overlaid with a blue tint. The text "EARN WHILE YOU LEARN" is prominently displayed in white, bold, sans-serif font across the center of the image.

**EARN
WHILE YOU
LEARN**

APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS ARE ON THE RISE, GENERATING BENEFITS FOR CULINARY EDUCATORS, CHEF-OPERATORS AND STUDENTS ALIKE // BY PATRICIA L. FITZGERALD

"It's our obligation to educate the next generation, especially those who can't afford a brick-and-mortar education," says **ACF Chef Christopher Dickens, CEC, CCA, CCE**, corporate executive chef, Island Entertainment, and a member of the American Culinary Federation Education Foundation's Apprenticeship Committee. "I want to help people get out of jobs and into careers."

Culinary apprenticeship programs are a key aspect of ACF's multipronged commitment to building and maintaining a corps of culinary professionals who exhibit the highest standards of excellence across North America. As the nation observes National Apprenticeship Week Nov. 17-23, we celebrate the 40 current ACFEF-recognized programs that demonstrate the breadth of commitment and creativity in nurturing tomorrow's culinary leaders and provide ample inspiration on how it can be done.

THEN AND NOW

The formal practice of passing along professional knowledge to the next generation in a work environment can be traced back to Europe in the late Middle Ages, leading to early American colonists carrying on the tradition throughout this country's formative years. (Notable apprentices in U.S. history include George Washington, Benjamin Franklin and Paul Revere.) Fast forward to 1937, when the National Apprenticeship Act established the Registered Apprenticeship Program managed by the U.S. Department of Labor. Ever since, this workforce solution has evolved to encompass numerous industries and occupations. Among these are culinary and hospitality programs — and leading in this area is the ACFEF apprenticeship.

Created in 1974 by ACF pioneers **Jack Braun, CEC, AAC, HOF, Ferdinand Metz, CMC, WGMC, AAC, HOF, and L. Edwin Brown, HAAC, HHOF**, the ACFEF apprenticeship

program produced national apprenticeship standards and was registered with the labor department in 1979. An Apprenticeship Committee, composed of ACF members with direct apprenticeship program experience, regularly reviews and continually updates all aspects of the program's requirements, competencies and criteria to ensure they reflect changes in the profession. The group also vets educational institutions and foodservice properties interested in starting or having an apprenticeship program recognized by ACFEF, with students that complete the on-the-job training and classroom instruction eligible for ACF certification.

ACF provides an array of online tools to support educators, supervising chefs and students in making the most of this valuable opportunity. This includes an online portal for tracking skills and competencies, access to the ACF Online Learning Center and a national list of available programs, plus tips for starting a program.

Today, there are roughly 40 active ACFEF-recognized apprenticeship programs, and the numbers continue to rebound after COVID-19-related declines. "Every single day, we get inquiries about apprenticeship programs," says Kivi Hermans, ACF's program manager of continuing education. To help meet the growing student demand for options beyond the traditional four-year college route, ACF leaders at the national, state and chapter levels are reaching out to a variety of entities, promoting the rewards of running a program. According to Hermans, these include colleges and universities, online education providers, hotels, resorts, hospitals, catering operations, contract management companies and more.



**“THOSE MOMENTS
WHERE YOU SEE
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LOVE WITH THE
INDUSTRY I LOVE?
THAT MAKES IT ALL
WORTHWHILE.”**

**ACF Chef
Chrystal Tatum, CEC**

THE WHY OF APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS

These programs may be very different in numerous regards — years in existence, the number of apprentices at any given time, the size and scope of supervising operations, recruitment practices, benefits packages, ongoing employment opportunities and so on. But the commonalities among these programs shine bright in the “whys.” Why are apprenticeship programs worth the investment of time and effort, by both the educational/sponsoring organizations and the individuals who coordinate the program, teach classes and/or supervise students in the kitchen?

The recurring response to questions about benefits and rewards is the deep satisfaction found in seeing students grow in their knowledge and skills. “Those moments where you see the passion as someone else falls in love with the industry I love? That makes it all worthwhile,” says **ACF Chef Chrystal Tatum, CEC**, apprenticeship coordinator, Johnson County Community College, Overland Park, Ks., also pointing to the life skills that apprenticeship programs can teach. “Students are learning personal accountability.”

There are also many benefits for chefs leading apprenticeship programs or doing the instruction. **ACF Chef Cindy Komarinski, Ph.D., CCC, CCE, HAAC**, program manager, Westmoreland County Community College, Glenshaw, Pa., says she’s developed greater empathy, choosing to work with students to solve various life problems, such as the single mother perpetually late for class. Similarly, **ACF Chef William**

Racin, CEPC, a baking and pastry instructor at Westmoreland who also teaches apprentices, is learning to empower students who may come from family backgrounds that are unsupportive of their aspirations and hard work. “I am learning to recognize and help break that negative thinking,” he says.

Participation in apprenticeship programs — as a student, a program coordinator or a supervising chef — leads to lasting relationships. Many chefs and chef educators report staying in touch with their former mentors, as well as their former students. At press time, Chef Racin was making a wedding cake for a former student. “Alumni are always reaching out,” says Chef Komarinski. “Maybe they’re asking for help with a menu. Or they just want to express their thanks. One recently told me, ‘I wanted to tell you that you believed in me before I believed in myself.’”

On a personal level, **ACF Chef Doug Maneely, CEC, CCA, AAC**, executive chef, The Golf Club Company, finds gratification in the teaching process when it comes to the apprenticeship program offered by his company through Columbus State Community College. “It brings the love for cooking back. Every time I teach a new or refresher class on knife cuts, it reinvigorates me.” Much of his own culinary training doesn’t get put to the greatest use on a day-to-day basis, he says. “Working with the apprentices allows me to improve on my foundational skills.”

As a five-year member on the ACFEF Apprenticeship Committee, finishing his second term as chair, Chef Maneely also finds new ideas through site visits to evaluate other apprenticeship programs. “We are expanding our bakery program here at The Golf Club because I had the opportunity to see what other top-tier clubs were doing,” he says. “You are

passing on your passion to the next generation. Plus, it keeps all of us sharp. No one knows it all. Everyone is always learning.”

ACF Chef Donald Schmitter, CCE, CEC, agrees. After managing two apprentices through his program at Buffalo State University, he believes he’s gaining new skills in mentoring and human resource management and learning how to handle issues that affect performance. “I didn’t have to take apprentices, but I wanted to push myself further. When you teach, you master the subject even more.”

Finally, as filling positions continues to be a challenge in many communities, being an apprentice program supervising operation can be an edge over the competition. “We’re able to show prospects that working for us means getting a paycheck and a credential,” says Chef Schmitter, citing a discouraging datapoint that only one in 10 applicants for a restaurant job will actually show up for the interview. “An apprenticeship program can check a lot of boxes: getting people in the door, getting them trained and getting them trained for the specifics of your unique facility.”



A LOOK AT FIVE ACFEF-APPROVED APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS

While ACF's national apprenticeship program ensures consistency in standards and quality outcomes, individual apprentice programs — whether anchored in educational institutions or foodservice properties — are as diverse as the culinary profession itself.

JOHNSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

One of the earliest culinary apprenticeship programs in the country, and the first to be recognized by ACF, Johnson County Community College's program in Overland Park, Ks., has earned exemplary status for its apprenticeship program from the ACFEF Apprenticeship Committee. The honor is presented to programs that demonstrate the highest educational standards and program management. **ACF Chef Chrystal Tatum, CEC** (right), apprenticeship coordinator, is currently providing oversight of 100 to 120 apprentices who are at some point in their education journey. While this number is down from a pre-pandemic height of 300 to 400 students, Chef Tatum sees interest on the rise.



The school's apprenticeship program provides Certified Sous Chef-level training exclusively and works with roughly 100 different work sites across the Kansas City metro area in both Kansas and Missouri.

Chef Tatum herself is a graduate of the program, and she's witnessed how it has evolved to keep up with industry standards. "We've updated the equipment and the curriculum, teaching molecular gastronomy and sous vide — we didn't have anything like that when I was in school!" She also noted coursework in purchasing, getting the most from marketing on TikTok and setting SMART goals, as well as lessons that address mental health and wellness issues, ranging from mindful eating to imposter syndrome to positive reframing. "But the core culinary curriculum is still based on the fundamentals of French cuisine. You're going to learn how to properly peel an onion and make a stock."

Nonetheless, Chef Tatum is hoping that through her recent appointment to the ACFEF Apprenticeship Committee, she can start a dialogue about updating the required competencies to

be more reflective of today's foodservice environment. "When was the last time someone served a crown roast in a restaurant? There's also been an evolution in how meats are butchered today based on the availability of the product and how it's most often used. For example, veal has become very difficult to procure, and supervising sites may not be able to get it — yet we expect our apprentices to check off several skills based around it. Globalization is also having an impact and should be properly reflected. Look at the list of required pasta skills — there is a ton about Italian pasta but only one entry for Asian noodles."

COLUMBUS STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

ACF Chef Douglas Maneely, CEC, CCA, AAC (below), is executive chef for The Golf Club, a sponsor house affiliated with the apprenticeship program at Ohio's Columbus State Community College, which, along with support of the ACF Columbus Chapter, has earned exemplary status from the ACFEF Apprenticeship Committee.

Maneely himself is a 2010 graduate of the program, which was established in the mid-'80s.



Before ACF reduced the requirements for its Certified Sous Chef level to 4,000 hours over two years, Chef Maneely used to supervise three to four apprentices at The Golf Club: one in each year of the apprenticeship journey, keeping a "graduate" fully employed for a fourth year as a way to pay back the country club for its support of the program. "But then I'd encourage the apprentice to leave and find something new," he says. "There are a thousand ways to break down a chicken or cook eggs; go see how it's done elsewhere." Today, as finding skilled labor remains a post-COVID-19 challenge for foodservice operators, Chef Maneely is less insistent that his fledglings fly the nest if they prefer to stay on. He currently has one apprentice who has since become an employee.

One unique aspect of the program at The Golf Club, says Chef Maneely, is the flexibility afforded by the seasonal downturn. Winters in Columbus are fairly quiet, he notes. “So, it’s fun to focus on teaching skills that might be more difficult to incorporate into our menu during the busy season.” And a recent attraction for Columbus State Community College is the recent opening of a \$35 million state-of-the-art culinary arts center, which is attracting potential apprentices from all over the country.

ASBURY POINTE/BUFFALO STATE UNIVERSITY

ACF Chef Donald Schmitter, CCE, CEC (below), is a culinary instructor and lab coordinator at the ACFEF-accredited Buffalo State University in New York and is executive chef for the upscale dining room at Asbury Pointe, a retirement community in western New York. The degree program at Buffalo State is in hospitality rather than culinary, making the apprenticeship program Chef Schmitter recently created a unique opportunity for the school’s students. This includes an international student who has required a number of visa-related accommodations to participate and complete the Certified Culinarian level of the program.



A former culinary apprentice who credits that experience with speeding up his own career trajectory, Chef Schmitter is committed to doing what it takes to provide this advantage to the next generation. He now has a second apprentice in the Asbury Pointe kitchen, this one working toward the Certified Sous Chef certificate, while his international student continues to navigate visa restrictions, expecting to meet his hours by spring 2025.

WESTMORELAND COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE/ACF LAUREL HIGHLANDS CHAPTER

The culinary apprenticeship program at Pennsylvania’s Westmoreland County Community College has also earned exemplary status from the ACFEF Apprenticeship Committee. The ACFEF-accredited school offers a pastry apprenticeship, one of only three such programs in the country, says **ACF Chef Cindy Komarinski, Ph.D., CCC, CCE, HAAC** (above right),



program manager, giving credit to her colleague **ACF Chef William Racin, CEPC** (left), who was instrumental in revising ACF’s standards for

pastry competencies. Today, the program attracts applicants from as far away as Washington state. Students enrolled in any of the school’s apprenticeship programs can also earn an associate degree or diploma (based on whether they earn general education credits), as well as journeyman papers from the U.S. Department of Labor. The apprenticeship programs are managed by the college, but sponsored by the ACF Laurel Highlands Chapter, where Chef Racin is president and many supervising chefs in the program are members.

In 2023, the college had 100% job placement with eight students eligible for ACF certification upon graduation. Currently, there are 20 apprentices from a 125-student enrollment in the school’s culinary arts program. “We are only as good as our graduates,” says Chef Komarinski, who can take deserved pride in the accomplishments of many alumni that have gone on to culinary Olympics teams, regional and national awards and even a certified master chef designation.

Apprentices are placed in a variety of foodservice sites, leaning heavily on area resorts, which can take multiple students and may even offer housing, which is especially valuable in rural areas. As in most programs, placement is not guaranteed; the apprentice must interview and meet the site’s own employment requirements, but Chef Komarinski finds that most pairings work out. And support from the college continues on after all the hours and coursework have been met. “We have a great career connections center,” she says. “We help students develop one resume at the beginning of their apprenticeship and then an updated one at the end. And alumni can receive free services on later resume updates, cover letters and so on.”

FLORA-BAMA

Straddling the border between Florida and Alabama, Flora-Bama is a sprawling beachfront complex with three restaurants and five music stages, managed by Island Entertainment. **ACF Chef Christopher Dickens, CEC, CCA, CCE**, corporate executive chef (opposite), leads an impressive apprenticeship and education program that goes all in when it comes to supporting this workforce solution.

Launched in 2021-22, the apprenticeship program has never lacked for applicants, reports Chef Dickens, citing an initial round of 54 interviews for 20 spots. In Alabama, 47% of high school graduates do not go into post-secondary education, he says. “In this area, that number is probably closer to 90%.” To ensure the program benefits apprenticeship candidates who are fully motivated, Chef Dickens has partnered with Rouxbe, an online culinary school, to provide a nine-month program of courses that are a prerequisite to the on-the-job experience. While Flora-Bama’s apprenticeship program pays for the online program for all participants, Chef Dickens can see which students prove worthy of further



investment. “If they progress through Rouxbe, we know these are the students that want to change their lives,” he explains.

Today, four of Chef Dickens’ original class of apprentices have reaped the rewards of the program. One has been elevated to sous chef, and the other three are in various supervisory roles. “When they started, they were in entry-level positions making \$10 to \$12 per hour,” says Chef Dickens. “Now, they are making great salaries at managerial levels.”

Along with the apprenticeship program, Island Entertainment offers additional education opportunities to Flora-Bama’s team of 1,000 employees. These include ServSafe training and programs in understanding food allergens, as well as addressing mental health. The impact is clear, he says. “We used to have 30 to 40% turnover in the back of the house. Now, it’s less than 10%.”

STARTING AN APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

ACF offers targeted advice on [acfchefs.org](https://www.acfchefs.org) and through its national office for foodservice properties and educational institutions interested in establishing a culinary apprentice program. Here are some tips for getting started, avoiding pitfalls and making the most of the opportunity.

Vet applicants for their commitment. “We try to drill this into candidates during interviews,” says ACF Chef Christopher Dickens, CEC, CCA, CCE, corporate executive chef at the Perdido Key, Fla.-based Flora-Bama, which runs its own apprenticeship program recognized by the ACFEF. “We tell them, ‘This is going to be a difficult path. If you are going to take on this program, see it through, because giving up means you’ve also taken away the opportunity from someone else.’ And in the beginning, we did have a number of people who were gone within weeks, taking all the resources we provided — books, knife kits, uniforms — with them.” While that would have deflated many people, Chef Dickens feels enormous satisfaction in the success of four candidates from the original cohort. “It gave us hope, showing what the program can do for the right, motivated candidates. We can’t want it for the students more than they want it for themselves.”

Reemphasize the value of the program. At Johnson

County Community College, ACF Chef Chrystal Tatum, CEC, apprenticeship coordinator, also sees some apprentices abandoning the education program after initial success at a work site. “Skilled kitchen staff are in such demand in this area, we’re finding many students don’t finish school. Of 50 individuals who started in the fall, we may have about 10 that actually graduate with their degree,” she reports, noting that it’s important to convey the long-term value of earning the apprenticeship certificate and an associate degree. “I tell them that they’re going to come out so far ahead of their peers. I had my first executive chef job within four years of graduating, and I know classmates who are just now getting to this point years later.”

Make sure that learning is the No. 1 priority. ACF Chef Doug Maneely, CEC, CCA, AAC, chair of the ACFEF Apprenticeship Committee, says that sometimes a committee site visit will reveal the student is being treated as a conventional employee, perhaps being assigned a single station in the kitchen, without rotating. “That’s a problem,” he says. “But in the vast majority of cases, when we point this out to the chef, the problem gets fixed before reevaluation.” ACF Chef Donald Schmitter, CCE, CEC, a culinary instructor and lab coordinator at Buffalo State University

in New York and executive chef, Asbury Pointe, builds on this point, noting that other members of the kitchen team may not understand why the student-worker gets to rotate stations or spend time on side projects. “You might field some questions and witness a little jealousy,” he says.

Recruit sponsors. As an educational institution or an ACF chapter, work to build your network of strong sponsoring houses, advises ACF Chef William Racin, CEPC, a baking and pastry instructor at Westmoreland Community College in Glenshaw, Penn. “You don’t need to get crazy with the number, but if you can find some larger operations and apply the cohort style of multiple apprentices at a single site, the program will be much more effective.”

Resist overextending yourself. “Too many apprentices are not going to work in my kitchen,” says Chef Schmitter. “They won’t get the right learning environment.” Chef Dickens agrees that it’s important to start small to ensure you have the bandwidth to provide the required training and oversight.

Get support from your local ACF chapter. Doing so allows you to tap a diverse network of young culinarians and seasoned vets. “Communicate with ACF,” says Chef Tatum. “When I started as the apprenticeship program coordinator, I’d call the office, asking, ‘What does such and such mean? What do I need to do about it?’ Ask questions. They’re there to help, and they want these programs to be successful.”

Tap into resources offered by state offices and agencies. (Find yours at [apprenticeship.gov/about-us/state-office](https://www.apprenticeship.gov/about-us/state-office)). Chef Dickens is grateful for the assistance he’s received from the Alabama Office of Apprenticeship, as well as from a local workforce development board — they’ve provided everything from advice and tips to computers and assistance to apprentices in finding reliable transportation, child/elder care and housing.

Be active with culinary programs at local high schools and career/technical centers. “Volunteer to do demonstrations so you can get your face in front of students who might become apprentice candidates,” urges Chef Dickens. And you may find a very satisfying closure of the loop: Westmoreland Community College’s ACF Chef Cindy Komarinski, Ph.D., CCC, CCE, HAAC, reports that of 15 career and technical centers in western Pennsylvania, the culinary arts programs at eight of them are led by former apprentices.

Don’t overlook opportunities to connect with the community. This is huge, says Chef Komarinski. “We get involved in events that are going to have a potential impact

on awareness of our program and future enrollment, such as a Santa’s Day event where we’re serving soup to a thousand people. Or maybe it’s a farm education event, where we can be seen by agricultural commissioners who dictate our budget.” She pays particular attention to events likely to receive press coverage and proactively arranges interviews. “We have to educate people about our apprenticeships in the context of our overall culinary program — I want a voice in that newspaper.”

Get involved with the students’ curriculum. Once the program is established, “find out what’s coming up next in the classroom and help them get ahead.” Similarly, Chef Schmitter advises finding balance in the level of support you provide. “If I hold their hand, they’re not learning an important aspect of being a chef, which is establishing processes and structures and showing initiative,” he says. “I want them to come to me, saying, ‘Hey Chef, we have a bunch of tenderloins in; can you help me with some of my skill here?’ rather than waiting for me to suggest it.”

Check in with apprentices often. Chef Racin makes a point to schedule weekly group meetings with his apprentices. “This is a two-year crash course on life,” he says. “Yes, I want an update on how their culinary skills are progressing, but I also want to know how they are doing with life. Near the end of their program, we get into issues of work-life balance and mental health, focusing on time management, grit, resiliency, perseverance, passion and leadership.”

Be honest and transparent with different entities. Don’t overpromise and underdeliver, warns Chef Komarinski. Don’t make exceptions for one student and not another, or one supervising kitchen and not another. “Stick to the standards; they are in place for a reason,” she says.



BRAIN FOOD

How one ACF chef helps memory care residents dine with dignity and get the nutrients they need // By Amelia Levin, NCR Editor

Our brains are hungry organs. So hungry that studies have shown our brains will go to all extremes to keep powering on — grabbing nutrients from organs, muscles and bones, if need be, to get the nutrients they need. That’s why individuals suffering from neurodegenerative brain diseases like dementia and Alzheimer’s often struggle with unintentional weight loss and nutrition deficiencies.

ACF Chef John Cramutola, MCFP, CDM, CFPP, knows this. He works in the senior living segment as corporate culinary director for Cura Hospitality, overseeing about 200 senior living facilities, many of which have a memory care unit. As part of his job, Chef Cramutola also oversees Cura’s signature Connections Memory Support Dining Program, which “provides memory-care team members with progressive tools that engage residents, chef-inspired culinary innovations and in person training so that memory-impaired residents can enjoy a meal with dignity,” as described in statements released by Cura. It’s a much-needed program; as of 2023, a whopping 6.7 million people aged 65 and older are living with Alzheimer’s, according to research from the National Institutes of Health, and those numbers are projected to increase as long as no cure is found.

“The Connections program is designed for individuals with some form of dementia and includes holistic elements designed to improve the health of our memory care residents that go beyond just the food,” Chef Cramutola says. “We incorporate aromatherapy, visual stimulation through photos and art and sound and music therapy to evoke familiarity and make residents feel more at ease.”

When it comes to the food, though, developing highly nutritious recipes and meals remains key. Chef Cramutola and his team must also adjust texture to make the food easier to ingest and digest for residents in later stages of disease, but also still visually and tastefully appealing.

“It’s a challenge to make sure that individuals [with neurodegenerative diseases] are given the nutrition they need beyond just plopping lumps of pureed food on a plate and serving it to them,” Chef Cramutola says. “That’s unappealing for everyone and certainly someone suffering from dementia when food is one of the last pleasures they can still enjoy. There’s so much focus on food and hospitality in independent living and even in assisted living facilities, but that ‘wow’ factor exponentially falls to the wayside when you get to skilled nursing and memory care.”

As swallowing difficulties are common symptoms of Alzheimer’s and other neurodegenerative diseases, when developing new recipes or adapting existing ones, Chef Cramutola and his team must closely follow International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative (IDDSI) guidelines for texture modification. “IDDSI has a comprehensive guidebook from beginning stages of dementia and related diseases to advanced stages and that includes international dysphasia guidelines,” he says. “That means even certain garnishes and ingredients can’t be used in our recipes and we must follow strict protocol when it comes to preparing, storing and serving purees and other foods.”

To adhere to these guidelines, but also bring more excitement to the food, Chef Cramutola and his team focus on recreating dishes that are familiar but in some pureed and soft



ACF Chef John Cramutola, MCFP, CDM, CFPP

texture form that still looks and tastes appealing, chiefly by using molds and other tools.

For spaghetti and meatballs, for example, they'll create a tasty pasta puree with butter and egg, but then pipe it into spaghetti-like strands and bake those gently for a little extra texture. They'll layer that with an extra smooth, creamy tomato sauce and for the meatballs, they'll season, cook and puree ground beef, turkey, pork or a combination and scoop the mixture into spherical molds to resemble the traditional version. For garnish, since chopped parsley can't be used due to choking hazards outlined in IDDSI guidelines, Chef Cramutola and his team will instead dust plates with powdered parsley or basil and create herb-infused oils "as a great way to incorporate some color and taste." Instead of grated parmesan, they'll dehydrate and "powderize" the cheese for safe sprinkling on top.

Plateware choices for the dishes are important, due to vision changes in dementia patients. "We use bright yellow plates in the memory care units to help the residents see where their food is on the table," Chef Cramutola says.

Handcrafted Delights is Cura's enriched snack program with nutrient-rich treats meant to keep residents nourished without the use of chemically enhanced supplements. Examples of such snacks include house-made, soft-baked cranberry-ricotta-oat bars, peanut butter chocolate mousse cups, yogurt-iced cupcakes, brownies and energy bites. These taste like traditional sweets so they're appealing, but they are also more calorically dense, fortified with vitamins and protein, and have less sugar or use natural sweeteners. These treats are paired with house-made, nutrient-dense shakes and smoothies for an extra boost.

"We'll incorporate smell therapy by baking the treats out in the open as a way to get everyone excited about the food and bring about a sense of comfort," Chef Cramutola says. Sometimes, the residents will get involved with making the energy bites, which don't require any sharp objects or actual cooking.

"At the end of the day, our goal is to avoid weight loss and help our residents get the calories and nutrients they need to maintain their health," Chef Cramutola says, noting that Cura's medical reports show that many residents have experienced significant improvement in their nutritional status since the



ACF Chef John Cramutola, MCFP, CDM, CFPP, follows International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative (IDDSI) guidelines for texture modification to feed seniors with dementia, but uses molds and other techniques to make dishes appealing (above); A selection of nutrient-dense, low-sugar desserts prepared by Chef Cramutola and his team (below).

dining program was launched. "Often, when seniors switch to purees, their nutrition takes a turn for the worse, but we've worked really hard to ensure that taste and presentation are still top notch."

HOW TO HOST A SUCCESSFUL REGIONAL SYMPOSIUM

// By Kenya McCollum

ACF Chefs Lisa Tomecek, CEPC, AAC, and Kevin Keller, CEC, president and vice president of the ACF Greater Baltimore Chapter, hosted a regional symposium last year that brought together ACF members from 15 chapters. During the Northeast Regional Symposium: A Taste of the Chesapeake, participants enjoyed a day of learning, followed by a social hour at the end. Programming featured education from local chefs, including a session by ACF Chef Rich Hoffman, CEC, CCA, AAC, who talked about bycatches of the Chesapeake. We spoke to Chefs Tomecek and Keller to find out how they put together this type of grassroots, information-packed event to encourage other interested ACF members and chapters to potentially do the same.

Q. Why did you decide to host this event and how did you decide on the topic?

A. Chef Tomecek: The ACF used to have regional mini conventions, so we thought, ‘Why don’t we have another one of those?’ We created the Northeast Symposium to kind of get all of the Northeast chapters back together, and since we’re on the Chesapeake Bay, we have just a plethora of seafood. We have lots of aqua farming, crab farms and oyster farms. Plus, there are a lot of invasive species here in Maryland that chefs have started using on their menus to compensate and kind of kill off the populations to get all of our indigenous seafood back up and running.

Chef Keller: We have the Chesapeake Bay right here, and there are all these types of bycatch and so much availability. It’s easy for us to focus on it, instead of what we’re known for, like the blue crab. There’s so much more in the Chesapeake Bay.

Q. What were some of the biggest challenges you faced as you put together the event?

A. Chef Tomecek: I think it was just making sure that all the moving parts worked together. We were very intentional with making sure we had lists of things we needed to do and who was doing what challenging things. In the beginning, it was getting corporate sponsors. I’d contacted quite a few people that we’d contacted in the past, or our suppliers and things, and post-COVID, a lot of suppliers were a little bit closer to

the vest. Some of the suppliers, and some of the people we reached out to, were unable to come through at the last minute. I think probably the biggest challenge was getting the corporate sponsorship and then using it to the best of our abilities.

Chef Keller: This industry in itself is all about networking, and we all have relationships with different people. A struggle when doing one of these things can be knowing who you can trust to your left and to your right as far as your board. We have a very strong, engaged board, which you can’t be thankful enough for because not everybody has that. They might have a board, but maybe they’re not invested as much as you need them to be or would like them to be. So that’s one of the crutches we don’t have to endure. I know that if I ask our treasurer, Michael Santos (CEPC), a question or ask him to do something, that it’s going to get done. I’ve seen a lot of boards where that’s not always the case, and that can really harm what you’re trying to do with one of these events.

Q. What advice would you give to other chapters that want to organize a similar event?

A. Chef Keller: I would start out with, on the topic of donations, you don’t know if you don’t ask. Don’t be afraid to reach out to your Sysco rep. They have funds for education for chefs, and they want to be a part of it. Something I’ve overcome throughout my years in the industry is taking that leap. The worst somebody can tell you is no. The major part of it is you’re not trying to make money per se, but you’re not trying to spend thousands of dollars putting one of these events on, and donations are key parts of that.

Chef Tomecek: Reach out as early as you can for donations. We gave swag bags to all of our presenters as a thank you for spending the day with us and sharing their knowledge, and had we reached out a little bit earlier, we might’ve been able to get more for those swag bags. The other thing I think I would tell people is that you need to be organized. This can’t happen unless you have your lists made. We created a whole spreadsheet of things that needed to be done, and then we divided and conquered. Communication is key as well.



Clockwise from top left: ACF Chef and Greater Baltimore Chapter President Lisa Tomecek, CEPC, AAC; ACF Chef and chapter vice president Kevin Keller, CEC; ACF Chef Rich Hoffman, CEC, CCA, AAC, talks about bycatch of the Chesapeake Bay during the Northeast Regional Symposium: A Taste of the Chesapeake; ACF chefs from 15 chapters gathered at a US Foods office in Hanover, Md., for the symposium; Inn at Perry Cabin Executive Chef Gregory James talks about oysters and other Chesapeake Bay seafood.

ACF CHEF JOHN M. TOMAN, CS1, U.S. COAST GUARD // By John Bartimole

“I felt like I was suffering from imposter syndrome.” That was the reaction of **ACF Chef John M. Toman (CS1)** upon being recognized as the 2024 ACF Chef of the Year at the national convention in Phoenix in July. “I had no idea I would receive such an honor. I really was overwhelmed. And I never expected it. In fact, I almost walked out!”

The truth is that Chef Toman, who serves in the U.S. Coast Guard as a culinary specialist first class, E-6, had been working in the culinary field since the age of 14 and “loved it immediately. I knew quickly that culinary is something that I really wanted to do,” he says.

Born and raised in New Jersey, Chef Toman spent his adolescent summers working in restaurants and country clubs in the Hamptons, learning his profession. He cites his work at the Mashomack Fish and Game Preserve as pivotal in his development. After graduating from the Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, N.Y., he returned to the Hamptons to work at Westhampton Beach and then to help a longtime friend open up a luncheonette.

“I helped set up everything, including the menu and working at the luncheonette,” Chef Toman says. “I did that for the better half of three and a half years, and it was fatiguing. I said to myself, ‘What’s something easier for me to do, yet still remain in this profession?’”

“At that point, I studied the military as an option,” he continues. “And I looked at all five branches before deciding that the Coast Guard was the way to go. I felt that the Coast Guard puts service above all else, and they focus on making sure you’re super efficient in your chosen job, your passion. My job and my passion is food. That’s why I chose the Coast Guard.”

The Coast Guard is known for its culinary training programs. Two years ago, two Coast Guard chefs won ACF’s most coveted awards: **First Petty Officer Danielle Hughes** was recognized as the ACF’s Chef of the Year and culinary specialist **Chief Petty Officer Troy Matthew Shaw** won the Pastry Chef of the Year title.

Chef Toman says he knows Chef Hughes well. “We refer to each other as ‘Shake and Bake,’” he laughs. “Having two ACF Chef of the Year recipients from the Coast Guard is a testament to our training. Choosing the Coast Guard was the best decision I could have made. I wouldn’t have gotten to this level without the training and opportunities the Coast Guard



gave me. I wouldn’t have been able to do what I do now in the civilian world.”

Toward that end, Chef Toman says the Coast Guard was “super supportive of me going to the ACF and competing. They support the ACF in many ways.”

One of the most profound experiences of Chef Toman’s service was cooking for the State of the Coast Guard dinner at the Capitol building in Washington, D.C. The experience was “such an honor,” he says. “We love food and to be able to do such unique, different occasions is such an experience.” Cooking for two executive-style dining rooms at the Coast Guard headquarters and serving those deployed on ships were some other perks of the job.

When it comes to his favorite meal to cook, Chef Toman says it’s simple. “My favorite meal is the meal that I can cook for someone, especially on the boat, that will make them feel like they’re home again,” he says. “I like to ask someone, ‘What’s your favorite meal?’ And then I like to cook that meal for them and the entire crew. When you’re on a boat, you’re working with four other chefs to provide breakfast, lunch and dinner for



Above: The 2024 ACF Chef of the Year John Toman, CS1, plates his winning dish, seared pork tenderloin with pork belly, sausage, corn and parsnip puree, flageolet beans, potato, apricot glaze, pickled onions, zucchini, kale and pan gravy (credit: Tavits Photography); Below: Chef Toman accepts his award from ACF National President René J. Marquis, CEC, CCE, CCA, AAC, during the 2024 ACF National Convention in Phoenix in July (credit: Robb Cohen Photography)

those on board. And if you can put a smile on their faces, making them a little less homesick, giving them a taste of home, that experience is so rewarding.”

Chef Toman’s philosophy as a chef revolves around two precepts: “I keep it simple,” he says. “I cook food the way it’s intended to be cooked. I am not a Michelin-star chef. I simply let the ingredients speak for themselves and try not to over-chef it.

“And when I design a menu, I feel as if I’m telling a story,” he continues. “I try to respect that and see that the story comes to fruition. My driving force is to make food that looks good, tastes great and puts a smile on someone’s face. So, I don’t have a favorite meal — it’s what I cook for others that is my favorite.”

Chef Toman, 10 years into his Coast Guard career, says he will give the service another decade or so before retiring from it. “At that point, I will be 46 and ready to move on, hopefully by becoming a culinary educator so I can share my passion for food with the younger generation. One of the biggest industries in the world is food, and I intend to stay in this industry for years.”



"I COOK FOOD THE WAY IT'S INTENDED TO BE COOKED. I AM NOT A MICHELIN-STAR CHEF. I SIMPLY LET THE INGREDIENTS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES AND TRY NOT TO OVER-CHEF IT."

ACF Chef John M. Toman, CS1, U.S. COAST GUARD

RISING STARS

Meet the 2024 ACF Pastry Chef and Student Pastry Chef of the Year winners

Pastry Chef of the Year

ACF Chef Erin Reed, CEPC, CCE
Pastry Chef-Instructor, Indiana
University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, Pa.
By John Bartimole



Q: How did you get into the food industry?

A: While I always liked cooking, it wasn't my first choice. I began my post-high school education at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, majoring in psychology. I didn't like that, either. But then I took a class in nutrition, and that I liked. I discovered that IUP had a culinary program, and I went into that for a full year. Following that, I pursued a degree in the advanced baking and pastry program, and I felt like I had a bit of a skill for that.

Q: How about some background on your career?

A: I've spent most of my career in fine dining restaurants, creating plated desserts, mostly in Philadelphia and Washington, D.C. Then, I got to a point in my career where I was considering a change. I had always thought that I might want to teach someday. I kept in touch with the faculty at IUP, and one particular faculty member sent me an email, asking when I was going to come back and teach. Talk about a career change. Not only did the change give me a quieter, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. schedule, I was also able to go back to the college I attended and join the faculty.

Q: When and why did you join the ACF?

A: I joined the ACF right before I moved here to start teaching at IUP — my colleagues encouraged me to join. I went in enthusiastically and got my certification just a couple of months later. There are many benefits of being an ACF member. I particularly like the encouragement that is given to continue your education and to keep up with trends in food. Sometimes, as a faculty member, it's a challenge to keep up with what's going on in the industry.

Q: What are your goals for the future?

A: Well, I've found my area in teaching and I plan on staying. Big things are happening here at IUP, and I'm looking forward to being a part of it. We have a brand new building that should be completed by 2028, and that's exciting. Also, I plan on continuing to compete. I believe competing is a great way to keep my skills sharp, but also for my students to see me actually doing things in the profession.

Q: Tell us about your winning pastry entry from the Northeast regional competition.

A: It was a strawberry yogurt panna cotta paired with a citrus-almond cake, grapefruit-chamomile ice cream, citrus-fennel foam, yuzu-glazed strawberries, grapefruit marmalade, strawberry-almond crunch and chamomile crispy meringue, finished with fresh fennel fronds.



ACF Chef Erin Reed, CEPC, CCE's award-winning strawberry yogurt panna cotta with citrus-almond cake, grapefruit-chamomile ice cream, citrus-fennel foam, yuzu-glazed strawberries, grapefruit marmalade, strawberry-almond crunch and chamomile crispy meringue.

Student Pastry Chef of the Year

Allison White, CC, Schoolcraft College,
Livonia, Mich.

By Kenya McCullum



Q: What made you want to go to culinary school?

A: Due to the pandemic back in 2020, I decided I needed a change in career. I have always loved to cook. I have worked in the food industry since I was 18. I really enjoy baking treats for friends and family. I found my passion in culinary with pastries and baking.

Q: What culinary school are you going to and why did you choose it?

A: I go to Schoolcraft College in Livonia, Mich. I chose Schoolcraft because of the great reputation of the culinary arts program. I figured if I wanted to further my career in culinary arts, why not go learn from some of the best? And it's a plus that I live very close to the campus.

Q: Who are your mentors and instructors at your school? What have you learned from them?

A: [ACF] Chef Heather Moore, CEPC, is one of the best instructors I have had the opportunity to learn from during my time at Schoolcraft. Her dedication and passion for baking and pastries shows every day I work with her. She has taught me so much over the last school year. Chef Heather has been the biggest help to me while I am preparing for this Student Pastry Chef of the Year competition, and I'm beyond grateful for the experiences and moral support. She's a great chef, instructor and mentor.

[ACF] Chef Drew Sayes, CMC, is a fantastic chef and coach. I joined the salon competition team to learn more about myself as a chef and how I could better prepare myself for future career opportunities. His advice and feedback have helped me get to the point I am now. In addition, [ACF] Chefs Lisa Stanley, CEPC; Jeffrey Gabriel, CMC; and Marcus Haight, CEC, CEPC, have been the most helpful when it comes to questions, advice and taste testing for my competition practices.

Q: How did you hear about the ACF and why did you want to join?

A: I heard about the ACF through Schoolcraft. When joining the program, we were told how once we completed, we were going to become a part of the ACF. I joined earlier than my graduation due to my interest in student culinary competitions.

Q: Why should other culinary students join the ACF?

A: I think it's a great opportunity to find other ways to learn more about the culinary industry. I have been able to meet some of the best chefs at events and competitions. I think it's a great community to grow within.

Q: What are your plans for the future?

A: I just graduated in April and am ready to go wherever this career decides to take me. I would like to continue doing pastry competitions in the future. Eventually landing a job as a pastry chef in a big city is the goal.



ACF Chef Allison White (CC)'s award-winning dish: Contemporary Sacher Torte with gluten-free pistachio shortbread, apricot mousse with poached apricots, gluten-free chocolate cake, apricot glaze, candied pistachios and apricot sorbet.

A Tale of Two Corporate Chefs

These ACF members work in R&D and client relations at two major food manufacturers // **By Amanda Baltazar**

A corporate chef is slightly different from a research chef, and it's a position **ACF Chef Melissa Trimmer, CEPC, AAC**, has chosen for quality of life.

When she was in her previous restaurant position, she says, her young children complained that they never saw her. "I was in very high-end restaurants, averaging between 65 and 80 hours a week. This made being a functioning wife and mother almost impossible, so I had to make some career changes based on my priorities."

Chef Trimmer is now the corporate executive chef and senior director of culinary for Dawn Foods, a B2B manufacturer and distributor of bakery ingredients and baked goods. The company works with 22,000 independent and local bakeries in North America.

In this role she leads culinary for North America — and occasionally global clients, too. For R&D support, she creates gold-standard recipes for new products and participates in tastings.

Chef Trimmer and her team also provide marketing support, creating all products used for recipes shared with customers and the imagery that goes along with them. This includes figuring out what sorts of applications make the most sense for particular channels. "Culinary acts as the voice of the baker in marketing decision-making," Chef Trimmer says.

Chef Trimmer, and by extension, culinary, directly supports sales and Dawn's top name brands. "These are custom projects that can include





custom formulation, menu development, operations consultation, trends work, sensory work, etc.,” she says. “Basically, if they want it, we figure out how to do it.”

For event support and facilities management, the culinary department runs the Innovation Studio for North America, which houses both food scientists and pastry chefs and bakers. This studio includes a front-of-house event space, a sound stage for cooking demonstrations, a full R&D lab, a bakery, a media lab and lots of traditional desk workspaces. Culinary also runs the food portion of most events including trade shows and internal events.

Although in this role Chef Trimmer travels a fair amount, it’s less than she used to do, so she’s away from home for less time. “The toughest part is the constant education of basic bakery principles and techniques to folks who work in bakery but have zero subject-matter expertise,” she says.

Chef Trimmer collaborates with other chefs from Dawn’s customers and vendor partners. The culinary department, she says, also has a significant presence in the pastry community, spending time with the ACF, Retail Bakers of America, SkillsUSA and ProStart.

Switching to being a corporate chef was the right move for Chef Trimmer. “I love that my job is different every day and allows collaboration with folks I might have never come across before,” she explains.

Every day is different, from working events to hosting photo shoots and videography to visiting customers and attending meetings. “There really isn’t a typical day, and that’s what I love about it the most,” she says. “I enjoy the daily challenges of this position. I certainly miss the creativity and camaraderie of professional kitchens, but I don’t miss the hours.”

ACF Chef Gilles Stassart, CEC, CCA, is the associate culinary manager for General Mills and has a team of 11 people who work with him.

Every day, Chef Stassart works closely with General Mills’ customers — convenience stores, restaurants, hospitals, schools — to help them better serve their customers.

ACF Chef Melissa Trimmer, CEPC, AAC (left); ACF Chef Gilles Stassart, CEC, CCA (right).

| Segment Spotlight |



ACF Chef Melissa Trimmer, CEPC, AAC, corporate chef with Dawn Foods, leads an innovation sessions at headquarters.

“We help them create menus and new products, and if it’s a big enough customer like a convenience store chain we could create something just for them,” he says. “We work really closely with our research and development department to make sure everything we launch has that culinary lens to it — that chef know-how.”

For the most part, Chef Stassart works on baked goods, such as biscuits. These are created and packaged in the General Mills headquarters, then the client needs to bake them or finish them on-site. For bigger customers he creates entire recipe books then inputs the recipes into that company’s database.

K-12 schools are one of General Mills’ biggest areas of business. “We have a lot of products they can bake and put on the breakfast or lunch line, and it can become one component of a meal,” Chef Stassart says. “Then they can focus their energy on other things because they don’t have the labor to do it all from scratch. We’re trying to make their life easier.”

There really is no typical day for Chef Stassart. One day, he might sit in a meeting to strategize which products the team will be working on next; another day he’ll perform product reviews to make sure they’re chef quality. From time to time, he’ll help train General Mills’ sales and marketing team on basic culinary skills, to teach them about a product, how to work in a foodservice kitchen and how to talk to a chef.

Chef Stassart also meets customers in General Mills’ large corporate kitchen “to have that exposure to the customer and talk to them,” or he’ll travel to customers around the country. Someone from his team also frequently attends industry conferences to stay on top of trends. And, of course, when either Chef Stassart or his team members travel, they eat out to see what other restaurant chefs are serving and what consumers are eating.

The months when there’s lots of travel taking him away from his family can be challenging, but at the same time, he points out, “I get to work with some of the best chefs in the industry.”

He also loves nothing more than seeing products he’s created being eaten by consumers when he’s out and about. “That’s an amazing feeling,” he says.



Pepperoni pizza hand pies (above) and soy sesame brownies (below) prepared by ACF Chef Gilles Stassart, CEC, CCA, associate culinary manager, General Mills.



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NCR Quiz

November/December 2024

By Robert Penry

As of 2013, who is the current executive chef at the Greenbrier resort located in White Sulphur Springs, W.V.?

- a. ACF Chef Rich Rosendale, CMC
- b. ACF Chef Thomas Wong
- c. ACF Chef Bryan Skelding, CEC
- d. ACF Chef Hunter Gentry

Which key requirement must an apprentice at the Greenbrier fulfill in their third year to graduate from the program?

- a. Create a five-course menu
- b. Manage the entire kitchen
- c. Complete a seven-course menu
- d. Prepare meals for all staff

Which winning pastry entry did ACF Chef Erin Reed, CEPC, CCE, create at the Northeast regional competition?

- a. Chocolate mousse with fresh raspberry sauce
- b. Strawberry yogurt panna cotta with citrus-almond cake
- c. Lemon tart with coconut-lime meringue
- d. Vanilla sponge with salted caramel glaze

What has been one of the fastest-growing flavor combinations on menus over the past four years, increasing by 83% according to Datassential?

- a. Sriracha and Kewpie mayo
- b. Chipotle and wildflower honey
- c. Chile garlic and mango habanero
- d. Ginger and lemongrass

Which of the following is NOT considered to be an ACF macrotrend for 2025?

- a. The Spicy Revolution
- b. Pickles Galore
- c. Culinary Tech Integration
- d. Farm-to-Table Renaissance

What was one of the biggest challenges ACF Chefs Lisa Tomecek, CEPC, AAC, and Kevin Keller, CEC, faced in organizing the Northeast Regional Symposium?

- a. Finding a venue for the event
- b. Getting enough chefs to participate
- c. Securing corporate sponsorships
- d. Coordinating guest speakers



In what year did the U.S. Department of Labor's National Apprenticeship Act register the ACEF apprenticeship program?

- a. 1937
- b. 1974
- c. 1979
- d. 1985

Which institution's apprenticeship program has one of only three pastry apprenticeship programs in the country?

- a. Westmoreland County Community College
- b. Johnson County Community College
- c. Buffalo State University
- d. Flora-Bama

The ACEF Apprenticeship Chair, ACF Chef Doug Maneely, CEC, CCA, AAC, always recommends that programs treat students as conventional employees during their apprenticeship.

- a. True
- b. False

The Epicurean Club of Boston, one of the newest chef associations in the country, aims to educate, connect and support culinarians and their businesses.

- a. True
- b. False

Which of the following is one of General Mills' biggest areas of business that ACF Chef Gilles Stassart, CEC, CCA, focuses on?

- a. Grocery stores
- b. K-12 schools
- c. High-end restaurants
- d. Airline catering

According to registered dietician Jenny Shea Rawn, what are two benefits of seafood on a seacuterie board?

- a. High in carbohydrates and protein
- b. High in nutrients and omega-3 fatty acids
- c. High in protein and saturated fats
- d. High in sodium and fiber

The term chaos cuisine, referring to the playful and inventive fusion of different cuisines, was popularized by which media outlet?

- a. Food Network
- b. Eater.com
- c. The New York times
- d. Bon Appétit

Which ingredient does Chef Yesenia Ramdass use as a substitute for shark meat in her version of Bake and Shark at HAAM?

- a. Tofu
- b. Cauliflower
- c. Jackfruit
- d. Banana blossoms

What variety of seafood did GW Fins Executive Chef Michael Nelson use to create mortadella, andouille, pepperoni, chorizo and bacon for his seacuterie board?

- a. Shrimp and oysters
- b. Lobster and crab
- c. Swordfish and tuna
- d. Salmon and sardines

The Connections Memory Support Dining Program incorporates elements like aromatherapy and music therapy to create a calming dining experience for memory care residents.

- a. True
- b. False

See the rest of the questions, finish the quiz and earn four CEHs toward your certification on ACF's new Online Learning Center at [acfchefs.org/olc](https://www.acfchefs.org/olc).




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