

Farm to Fork brings culinary creativity to McNary

By BROOKLYN FLINT
Of the Keizertimes

Many people believe that good meals require expensive equipment and lots of training. However, sometimes all you need is a bit of creativity and the right mindset.

Gerald Hosler and Christopher Feskens are both teachers at McKay High School and advisors for the Farm to Fork camp program at McNary High that finished on Friday, Aug. 6th. They have been doing the program at McKay for four years prior to this one, but this time, they decided to do things a little differently.

“This year we kind of put a different twist on it with a barbecue theme cause we were expecting to still have to do the camp with COVID rules and so everything needed to be more spread out,” Hosler said.

Using a barbecue as the main method to cook things allowed for campers to be socially distanced outside. Even though it seems like this method of cooking limited their menu, it ended up sparking some creativity with what could be cooked.

“They’ve been amazed to cook pies, cobblers and crisps on the grill. They’re like, ‘wow, I never did this before’. Some kids have kind of opened up their eyes to what can be cooked on the grill,” Feskens said.

Campers have also used the grill for macaroni and cheese, scalloped potatoes, and more which they claimed gave the food a smoky flavor.

A large part of the program has also been educating the kids on where their food comes from, starting with the animal.

“A lot of kids don’t get that the product comes from an actual animal and that we need those animals in order to facilitate a lot of the things that we enjoy,” Hosler said.

They also learn the different parts of an animal and the process involved with cutting the meat and then turning that into food. They are also taught different cooking



McNary culinary teacher Wendy Bennett gives instructions during the Farm to Fork camp at McNary High School on Friday, Aug. 6.

Photo by BROOKLYN FLINT of Keizertimes

techniques based on what part of the meat it is.

Campers were able to create a main dish, side dish, a sauce to go with the side dish and a dessert. They would work in teams and were even allowed to make their own restaurant name and logo.

Once the kids finished their food, it would then be tasted and judged. A few of the campers admitted that they enjoyed the competition aspect and some would even practice their dish the night before camp.

Hosler and Feskens noticed an increase in confidence with the campers every day with the program. They

were able to watch campers learn from their mistakes and grow from them as well.

“One of the cool parts about camp has been just creating a safe space for learning to just actually organically take place,” Feskens said.

Hosler and Feskens hope to continue

the camp program in the future and if the pandemic restrictions go down, they plan to do field trips to a dairy farm or cattle ranch.

Campers left the program with a T-shirt, apron, small grill, grill kit, and stomachs full of delicious food.

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