

Back in the kitchen again

By Ron Karten

Smoke Signals staff writer

After two days on the culinary roads of Seattle, eight Grand Ronde middle and high school students came home July 14 to prepare an appetizer and dessert of their own.

For the second year running, Tribal Youth Education and Wellness programs co-sponsored a camp to nurture the inner-cook in its students.

This year, the group visited the Culinary Arts program of Renton Technical College, the Steelhead Diner, the downtown Seattle Sheraton Hotel kitchen, Pike Place Public Market, Le Panier French bakery and The Cheesecake Factory on their adventure.

"I liked it," said Tribal member Dakota Rock, a sixth-grader in his first year with the program. He remembers the Oreo cheesecake best, but also enjoyed oysters for the first time, both raw and cooked. He called the raw variety "squishy."

Tribal member Codie Haller, the only student back again after the first culinary trip, remembered the tour through the Sheraton Hotel kitchen.

"It was separated into the cold side and the hot side," she said.

At Pike Place Public Market, "They tried stuff they had never seen before, and brought some of it back home," said Tribal member Kristy DeLoe, the Tribe's Food Service coordinator and a chaperone on the trip.

Among those things, she named garlic spears, broccolini, scallops, figs, champagne grapes and dried raspberry bananas.

Haller remembered an Asian fruit she tried, but couldn't remember the name. "What was the spiky thing?" she asked.

"Lychees," said Molly Matthews, Youth Education K-12 Program manager.

Matthews and DeLoe, a 2003 graduate of the Culinary Arts pro-



Photos courtesy of Kristy DeLoe

Front row from left, Tribal members Heyaza Brien and Dakota Rock and second row from left, Tribal members Zoey Holsclaw, Abby Bobb and Rilee Mercier, Chef John Fisher, and Tribal members Kayla Grijalva, Koana Leno and Codie Haller have their photo taken during a visit to the Culinary Arts program at Renton Technical College in Renton, Wash., as part of the Culinary Arts Camp offered by the Tribal Youth Education and Wellness programs. Fisher is an instructor at the college.



Tribal member Kayla Grijalva cuts red potatoes for a potatoes and ham au gratin dish she prepared during the Culinary Arts camp.

gram at the Art Institute of Seattle, guided the students through this year's experience. Matthews grew up in a restaurant family.

"The coolest thing for me," said DeLoe, "was when they presented (their dishes) to their families, things they had made in their chef

coats. They were so proud."

Among skills picked up at the Renton Culinary Arts program, said Tribal member Kayla Grijalva, was the way to hold a potato and a tomato while cutting.

"I really like the school because it's hands-on," she said.

Haller remembered how they boiled the tomatoes before skinning them.

"That's poaching the tomato," said Matthews.

Everyone was impressed with the demonstration showing how to "break down a chicken," in DeLoe's words, "and do a supremed breast, so that the breast is completely cleaned with the wing bone still attached."

A student at the school showed Grand Ronde students how to

"break down" onions, tomatoes and carrots.

Another lesson started at the Dollar Store, said DeLoe. Because presentation is such an important part of food preparation, they took the students to the Dollar Store to pick plates that would show off the food they were making.

"They learned how to present a plate properly," she said.

The experience also included kitchen safety, shopping, tasting and experiencing. It was as much about the city of Seattle as the culinary institute. It was as much about finding a career as enjoying a diversion.

"We really got to try a lot of new things," said Grijalva.

"I didn't know that Seattle had such a big variety of foods," said Haller. "At Pike Place, we picked out things to try. It was a great opportunity."

"One thing I learned," said Grijalva, "is you only need a GED plus pass a couple tests to become a chef."

"There are a lot of possibilities for jobs (with this education)," said Haller.

Culinary arts are only a start of the field trip offerings at the Youth Education Program, said Matthews. A group including Dakota Rock recently went to see a live performance of "The Lion King" as a theater experience. Groups have been to museums large and small. They've been exposed to Tribal arts, from carving to basket weaving. The Oregon College of Art and Craft introduces students to different media every year. This year, it will be fiber, shell, bone and stone.

"It's amazing that we are able to offer all this," said Matthews. "And it's especially nice to be able to offer programs that range in size. Some are for 100 kids and others focus on 10. They were so willing to immerse themselves and to try new foods."

The group included Tribal members Rock, sixth-grader Heyaza Brien, eighth-grader Haller, eighth-grader Zoey Holsclaw, eighth-grader Rilee Mercier, seventh-grader Grijalva, eighth-grader Abby Bobb and sixth-grader Koana Leno.

"This week, for four days, they were truly chefs-in-training," Matthews said. ■

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