



Bonita Unified

SCHOOL DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Bonita Unified Culinary Students Take Top Honors at ProStart Cup

SAN DIMAS/LA VERNE – San Dimas High School culinary arts students found the recipe for success at the 2022 California ProStart Cup, where they matched their culinary and entrepreneurial skills against the top high school programs in the state, taking home more awards than any other school during the competition.

San Dimas High finished in the top three in the ProStart Cup's two signature team competitions, the Culinary Cup and the Management Cup, and earned numerous accolades during the fast-paced individual condiment topping competitions. San Dimas High was the only school to place in every contest, held this spring at the Long Beach Convention Center.

"I could not be more proud of our culinary team," San Dimas High culinary teacher Nick Brandler said. "They have worked so hard, staying late, coming in on weekends, dedicating themselves to their craft. It is heartwarming to see them rewarded for their efforts. They were the last team to go and it made them nervous, but they did their best work. The culinary programs at Bonita Unified are one big family and everyone helps out and roots for each other."

The SDHS culinary team of seniors Kiley Shaffer and Noah Martinez, juniors Monica Pastor and Allison Carranceja, and sophomore Kiana Conway wowed the Culinary Cup judges with a savory three-course, Italian-themed menu that fused technical expertise with creative flair. The team's combination of raviolo al uovo, bison strip steak with scallops, and espresso panna cotta just missed taking the top honor and earned the team a second-place finish, establishing a new school record.

"I had the honor of being captain of this amazing team and watching it all come together," Shaffer said. "Our vision was to win and not just compete and it pushed us all to another level. I can't say enough about the San Dimas High culinary program. Not only have I been honing my own culinary skills, but I've also been learning management skills. The ProStart Cup was a truly memorable experience for me."

In the Management Cup, the SDHS restaurant design and concept team of seniors Sydney Tatevossian and Bryce Blaz pitched their idea for "Tate's," a proposed restaurant targeting patrons looking for low-carb options and featuring food "so delicious it feels like cheating." Tatevossian and Blaz won third place for their concept.

The second day of the ProStart Cup featured two sponsored individual contests, the Wienerschnitzel Dress Your Dog hotdog topping competition and the Loaded Idaho Baked Potato competition. Competitors had 10 minutes to prepare their creations.

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San Dimas High freshman Gabriel Costa took second place in the Dress Your Dog contest and third place in the Baked Potato contest, using the same topping combination of pesto, crispy parmesan tuile, ham and arugula. His classmate, junior Wilson Chen, joined Costa at the podium with a second-place finish in the Baked Potato contest.

“Going to this competition was the best experience I have ever had,” Costa said. “Everything about it was amazing, from watching all the people who I got to know through weeks of practice earning medals, to miraculously winning two medals myself. I just hope I can go back and do this as many more times as humanly possible.”

The Bonita Unified Culinary and Restaurant Management programs, led by Nick Brandler at San Dimas High and his wife Laurie Brandler at Bonita High, worked in tandem for the ProStart Cup, traveling to the event together, helping each other prep for the two-day competition and cheering on their friends. Bonita High also had a successful meet, finishing in sixth place in the Culinary Cup.

The Culinary and Restaurant Management pathways are coordinated through ProStart, a nationwide, two-year program that helps high school students develop their culinary techniques and management skills, providing real-world opportunities that inspire students to build foundations for their professional futures.

“Bonita Unified takes great pride in establishing programs, like our culinary arts pathway, that allow students to be creative, collaborate with others and develop relevant skills to prepare them for professional success,” Superintendent Carl Coles said. “Congratulations to all our ProStart Cup participants for their teamwork and sportsmanship, and for representing our robust culinary programs with pride.”

PHOTO CAPTION:

BUSD_PROSTART: San Dimas High School culinary arts students found the recipe for success at the 2022 California ProStart Cup, taking second place in the signature Culinary Cup competition. From left to right, San Dimas High students Kiana Conway, Allison Carranceja, Monica Pastor, Kiley Shaffer and Noah Martinez.

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