



## PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## Paramount Unified School District Student Wins Third Place in Culinary Excellence Competition

**Paramount, CA** – Paramount High School senior Jerardo “JJ” Valle’s passion for combining ingredients to create the perfect dish propelled him to a third-place finish in the sixth annual Marukan Cup of Culinary Excellence competition.

Valle earned a prize of \$250 for exceptional taste, presentation and creativity. His entrée featured gourmet chicken tacos topped with juicy peppers and pineapple, paired with roasted potatoes and a citrus cabbage slaw. Valle was inspired to incorporate a salsa from Yucatán, Mexico, after he tasted it during a trip there four years ago.

“It was really a great experience for me, and I knew that win or lose it would help me develop as a cook,” Valle said. “I would have liked to have incorporated more flavors, but there are always ways to improve your dish.”

Cerritos College hosts the yearly competition sponsored by Marukan Vinegar (USA) Inc. that has traditionally only been available to students and alumni of the college. Since 2018, high school students have been invited to compete as well.

With 60 minutes on the clock, Valle was tasked with creating a delicious and eye-pleasing entrée incorporating Marukan products. A panel of four judges selected three winners

Valle loves the way cooking brings people together and he sharpens his ability through the Food Service and Hospitality pathway at Paramount High School. The pathway offers classes that prepare students for future careers as executive chefs, in food production management, event coordination, hotel general management and so on.

“I’ve had the opportunity to know JJ for the past three years and have been able to watch him grow into a confident young leader and exceptional cook,” PHS Culinary teacher Juliette Bell said.

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“He is passionate about his future career in the food service industry, which he demonstrates by giving countless hours to prepping and practicing his knife skills and recipes. I know he’ll achieve great things in life and can’t wait to see where he goes.”

Valle plans to pursue his culinary dreams in college next year with a goal of one day opening a Japanese restaurant.

“The District would like to congratulate Jerardo Valle on this incredible achievement, his commitment to excellence is representative of the mission and values of Paramount Unified,” Superintendent Ruth Pérez said. “By offering our students career pathways, we are equipping them with the skills that will enable them to be successful members of society.”

### PHOTO CAPTIONS:

**111919\_PARAMOUNT\_CULINARYWIN1:** Paramount Unified senior Jerardo Valle celebrates his third-place finish at the sixth annual Marukan Cup of Culinary Excellence competition on Oct. 25 at Cerritos College.

**111919\_PARAMOUNT\_CULINARYWIN2:** Paramount Unified senior Jerardo Valle presented an entrée of chicken tacos, a citrus slaw and roasted potatoes with lime, flavored expertly with Marukan Vinegar, earning him third place and a prize of \$250 at the sixth annual Marukan Cup of Culinary Excellence competition on Oct. 25 at Cerritos College.

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