



Fontana Unified School District

Every Student Successful, Engaging Schools, Empowered Communities

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 11, 2026

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Fontana Unified Students Serve Up Talent and Creativity at Taste of Fontana

FONTANA, CA – Fontana Unified students from Henry J. Kaiser and Summit high schools showcased their culinary expertise and musical talents during the City of Fontana’s State of the City: Taste of Fontana event on Feb. 19, demonstrating the strength of the District’s Career Technical Education (CTE) and performing arts programs.

CTE culinary students from both high schools prepared dishes from scratch, serving a variety of savory and sweet selections for city officials and community members to enjoy throughout the evening. Guests sampled jalapeño poppers, and caramelized onion and apple tarts, along with desserts such as churro cheesecake and chocolate mousse, all crafted and presented by students.

Kaiser senior Giselle Gomez Romero, a two-year culinary student, said she was excited to see community members enjoying the dishes she and her classmates worked hard to create for a high-profile city event.

“The culinary class has taught me not only how to cook, but how to be organized, manage my time, and work as a team,” Romero said. “Seeing people enjoy something you made from start to finish is such a rewarding feeling.”

Before students step into food preparation, Kaiser and Summit budding chefs first learn about food safety, sanitation, and kitchen etiquette, earning their food handler certifications before handling ingredients. In the kitchen, students communicate constantly, calling out, “behind!” and “hot oven!” to ensure dishes are prepared safely, efficiently, and on time.

Summit junior Luke Plescia, a first-year culinary student, said the fast-paced environment strengthened his communication and teamwork skills.

“If your kitchen is silent, then it feels like something’s not happening, versus if you’re constantly talking, that means everyone is doing something to move the process forward,” Plescia said. “It’s an honor for the City of Fontana to give us a chance instead of a catering company because they are allowing us to show our abilities and what our schools are doing.”

Both Romero and Plescia emphasized that earning their food handler certification and gaining real-world culinary experiences give students a competitive edge, whether they pursue careers in the food industry or other professional fields. While Romero plans to study medicine and Plescia intends to pursue electrical engineering, they agree that the communication, collaboration, and time management skills gained through the CTE culinary program will benefit them in any career path.

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Under the guidance of their culinary arts teachers, Gilbert Ramos at Summit and Emilia Corral at Kaiser, students have participated in San Bernardino County's "Chopped" competition and other community events, further building their confidence and professionalism.

"It's always good to jump in and learn new things because it opens doors that you didn't think you would have," Romero said. "It teaches you to open your mind and it's been really helpful in my life."

While this marked the third year culinary students have participated in the State of the City, the event also highlighted Fontana Unified's performing arts programs, with Summit High's choir making its first appearance performing the national anthem. The choir previously performed at a Quakes game, the Crime Victims' Rights Week Memorial service at the Lewis Family Playhouse, and before the San Marino County School Board. When invited to perform in front of elected officials and community members in their own city, students eagerly accepted the opportunity.

Summit senior and four-year choir member Sarah Rodriguez said the experience of performing for the community makes the preparation worthwhile. Inspired by choir director Tyler Bettge, Rodriguez has even created and leads a choir at her church with her sister, applying directing techniques and vocal instruction she learned in the classroom.

"Performing for the community is such an incredible experience, and it makes all of our hard work feel meaningful," Rodriguez, who plans to pursue medical school, said. "Choir isn't just about improving your vocal abilities, but about the family we create. Even as a freshman, I felt supported by seniors who looked out for me."

In addition to strengthening vocal range and musical technique, Bettge prepares students mentally and emotionally for performances through "TED Talk Tuesdays," where students discuss topics such as stage fright, discipline, and channeling nervousness into confidence.

Fontana Unified's culinary and choir programs are two of the various CTE pathways, electives, and extracurricular opportunities available to students. From transitional kindergarten through graduation, the District provides hands-on experiences that allow students to explore their passions, build practical skills, and showcase their talents beyond the classroom.

"Events like the State of the City, where our students are invited to showcase their talents in front of city leaders and community members, speak volumes about the strength of our programs and the trust our community places in Fontana Unified," Superintendent Miki R. Inbody said. "These moments reflect not only the hard work of our students, but the dedication of our educators who prepare them to excel far beyond the classroom."

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

FUSD_TASTEOFFONTANA1: Kaiser High School CTE culinary students prepare various dishes and desserts for the State of the City: Taste of Fontana event on Feb. 19.



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FUSD_TASTEOFFONTANA2: A Summit High School CTE culinary student prepares a component to a churro cheesecake dessert to serve at the Taste of Fontana on Feb. 19. This marks the third year Summit culinary students participated in the event.

FUSD_TASTEOFFONTANA3: Summit choir students sang the national anthem during the Taste of Fontana event on Feb. 19.

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OUR MISSION: The mission of the Fontana Unified School District is to graduate all students prepared to succeed in a changing world. Fontana Unified School District celebrates learning through the development of the whole child. Our commitment to excellence provides quality education, in depth, for all students.