



BONITA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

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NEWS RELEASE

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Bonita Unified Culinary Students Work to End Student Hunger at 'Taste of the NFL' Fundraiser

SAN DIMAS/LA VERNE – Bonita Unified ProStart culinary students enjoyed an opportunity to rub elbows with Michelin-starred chefs and National Football League (NFL) legends – while contributing to the fight to end student hunger – during Taste of the NFL 2026, a culinary and gridiron extravaganza held during Super Bowl weekend in San Francisco.

Taste of the NFL raised \$2.2 million for GENYOUth, a New York-based nonprofit dedicated to ending student hunger, increasing access to physical activity, and elevating student voices. The money will increase access to nearly 150 million school meals for 540,000 students in 1,000 schools across the nation.

Bonita Unified students were the sole Southern California ProStart representatives to participate, with aspiring chefs from San Dimas and Bonita high schools making the journey to the Bay Area. San Dimas High won the 2025 National ProStart Invitational championship and is looking to defend its title in 2026, and Bonita High represented California at the 2024 National ProStart championships.

At Taste of the NFL, culinary students were paired with an industry chef or restaurant group – including culinary stars Andrew Zimmern ("Bizarre Foods"), Carla Hall ("Top Chef," "The Chew"), and Lasheeda Perry ("Best Baker in America," "Sweet Genius") – to serve as their sous chefs, receiving valuable hands-on training in both front of the house and back of the house restaurant management, making this a once-in-a-lifetime training experience.

"Taste of the NFL was an amazing experience, and working with industry and celebrity chefs was a life-changing event," Bonita High junior Abby Brandler said. "I loved being in the front of the house, talking to guests, networking, while helping our chef prepare bites for NFL Hall-of-Famers. These ProStart opportunities have truly given us a head start in the industry and foundation for the future."

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San Dimas ProStart captain Kyle Yamate, who was a member of the 2025 ProStart championship team, was paired with the owners and executive chefs of 7 Adams, a one-star Michelin restaurant located in Japantown in San Francisco. Yamate, who toured 7 Adams and met their staff during a previous trip to Northern California, said he was ecstatic over the pairing.

The invitation to participate in Taste of the NFL brought with it an opportunity to visit Bay Area Michelin-starred restaurants, and meet successful BUSD ProStart alumni, like San Dimas High Class of 2016 graduate Kris Lara, who is the pastry chef at Sonoma's only two-star Michelin restaurant, Enclos. Lara previously served as pastry chef at the San Francisco restaurant Californios.

The Bonita Unified ProStart team – including Ella Carranza, Alexa Aguilera, Julian Rozier, and Salvador De Jesus Renteria Jr. from San Dimas High, and Abby Brandler and Ethan Sandoval from Bonita High – also traveled to Healdsburg to visit three-star Michelin restaurant Single Thread, receiving a tour of the farm and restaurant, as well as meeting the chefs and general manager, a former ProStart student from the San Diego area.

"The Bonita Unified ProStart Culinary program continues to grow and expand its horizons, which has given our student chefs opportunities to participate at some of the top culinary events in California, including Taste of the NFL, the Grateful Table, the Culinary Clash, all in the same year," San Dimas ProStart instructor Nick Brandler said. "Our students are talented and focused on creating culinary masterpieces, and eager to learn from the top chefs in the country."

PHOTOS:

BUSD_PROSTART_NFL1: Bonita Unified ProStart Culinary students rubbed elbows with celebrity chefs and NFL legends during Taste of the NFL 2026, a culinary extravaganza held during Super Bowl weekend that raised \$2.2 million for the nonprofit GENYOUth to help fight student hunger.

BUSD_PROSTART_NFL2: Student-chefs from San Dimas and Bonita high schools arrange a food plate while serving as sous chefs during Taste of the NFL 2026, a Super Bowl-weekend gala that raised \$2.2 million for the nonprofit GENYOUth to help fight student hunger.

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