



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Feb. 13, 2015

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California High School Celebrates New Culinary Facility

Culinary Academy to hold 'Big Reveal' open house Feb. 20

WHITTIER, CA – California High School culinary students have been waiting all year long to use their newly renovated classroom kitchen facility to whip up new recipes, cook up sweet and savory delights and learn what it takes to be a professional chef.

Last month, the 103 students in the school's Culinary Arts Academy broke in the \$1.2 million industrial facility, which includes new appliances, baking and cooking equipment, television sets to view cooking demonstrations, cabinetry, tile floor, dish washing areas and more.

The modernization project was made possible through the District's \$75 million Measure W bond, approved by voters in 2008 to improve campus facilities.

"The kitchen is a 21-year dream come true," said Susan Sones, Culinary Arts Academy Lead Teacher and Department Chair. "I want to thank the District administration, community members and my husband, Drew, for enthusiastically supporting Measure W to enhance career and technical education for our students."

Culinary students are poised to showcase the remodeled facility and their cooking skills to the community during a "Big Reveal" open house celebration and scholarship fundraising event taking place at 6 p.m. **Friday, Feb. 20.**

The event will include a tour, light dinner with dessert and a silent auction. **The last day to buy the \$25 tickets is Tuesday, Feb. 17.** Proceeds will go toward scholarships for seniors.

"We already have a wonderful Culinary Academy in place, and this facility provides our talented students a professional setting where they have the opportunity to learn the skills and excel in this career pathway should they choose to pursue it long-term," Principal Bill Schloss said. "I invite the entire Whittier community to join us in celebrating this beautiful space."

Students had been working out of a temporary facility since construction began in December 2013 to replace a decades-old home economics classroom that contained home-style equipment.

The facility now boasts professional tools, a separate classroom where students learn the basics of cooking and a kitchen area where they prepare meals. The space also has individual rooms for refrigerators and dry storage. The laundry room includes a new washing machine and dryer purchased through a grant given by the Whittier Host Lions Club.

“This new facility is really great. It’s training me for work in a real life restaurant kitchen,” said senior Maria Vasquez, who plans to attend the Pacific Institute of Culinary Arts in Canada, hopes to own a restaurant and, perhaps, follow in Sones’ footsteps to become a teacher.

The Culinary Arts Academy has been in place at Cal High for 18 years and is graduating its 15th class this year. Each year, the three-year program enrolls a new class of about 40 sophomores, who also take a regular load of core academic subjects.

Students also participate in career training and gain weekly work experience at such places as the Presbyterian Intercommunity Hospital cafeteria and Crepes and Grapes Cafe in Whittier.

“The Academy has given me the chance to learn to bake and cook and allowed me to explore which art I like best,” said senior Jennifer Garcia, who plans to get a bachelor’s degree in baking and pastry arts from the Culinary Institute of America. “Baking has been a passion I’ve always had and I’m glad that I can get experience before I graduate.”

Ninety-eight percent of Cal High culinary students go on to pursue post-secondary education, including technical/vocational schools, community college or four-year universities, Sones said.

“Thanks to the support of our community, California High School and its dedicated educators are able to provide exceptional training to our students, who are gaining complete knowledge of the latest high-tech skills needed to pursue the culinary and hospitality fields upon graduation,” said Whittier Union High School District Superintendent Sandra Thorstenson. “I am proud of our students for their hard work and Mrs. Sones for providing the leadership to drive their success.”

Cal High is at 9800 S. Mills Ave., Whittier. To purchase Big Reveal tickets, contact Sones at susan.sones@wuhd.org, or call (562) 698-8121, ext. 3181.

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

CULINARY1: Culinary Arts Academy Lead Teacher and Department Chair Susan Sones, left, teaches her senior students how to make quiche in anticipation of a California High School event.

CULINARY2: California High School Culinary Arts Academy students test their new equipment in the newly renovated facility, which includes appliances, dish-washing areas and more.

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*The Whittier Union High School District provides all students with an engaging, quality standards-based instructional program delivered by a well-trained staff resulting in improved student achievement.
Whittier Union High School District works to achieve and maintain excellence in providing a comprehensive education for all students.*

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