

## CHEFS IN TRAINING



Daily Record Photo/Shawn Savarese

Clockwise from left Morgan Thompson, Clint Morgan, Chef D-Ven Atkinson, Taylor Thompson and Rilyn Kerley slowly mix the ingredients of Wednesday's breakfast; Dutch baby pancakes. The first Central Carolina Community College Youth Culinary Camp summer session — for kids in kindergarten through fourth grade — was held this week.

# Cooking Camps Allow Kids To Create

- First CCCC Culinary Youth Summer Camp finished, second starts Monday.

By SHAUN SAVARESE  
Of The Record Staff

"The Magic School Bus" theme song hummed from a flat-screen television affixed to the wall of the cooking camp classroom in the CCCC Dunn Center at 660 E. Johnson St., Dunn.

More than a dozen children,

ages 5 through 10 years old, sat high on metal benches, bellies up to the hardwood tables in preparation for Wednesday morning's culinary youth summer camp to begin.

Some kids colored, others chatted and a few were watching Miss Frizzle and her Magic School Bus students get lost in space.

Chef D-Ven Atkinson acted as Houston to the astronauts and brought the summer campers back down to Earth.

The head chef announced the most recent winner of the cook-

ing camp coloring competition, Caroline Honeycutt. Clint Morgan and Pristah Saint-Jean won the contest on Monday and Tuesday.

Chef Atkinson, AKA Chef D, then announced what the campers would be cooking for breakfast, Dutch babies. A Dutch baby pancake is a sweet breakfast popover, sometimes called a German pancake, a Bismark or a Dutch puff.

The chef told his students that waiting for them in the kitchen were metal bowls full of flour and sugar. Also awaiting the ea-

ger — and hungry — culinary campers were measurements of cinnamon, nutmeg and vanilla, a few eggs and a bit of milk. Chef Atkinson told campers they would combine the ingredients together, mixing slowly to avoid making a mess.

"We don't want you to go home with eggs in your hair or flour on your faces," he said.

He continued his instruction, carefully detailing the moment when he would approach each young team's table in the kitchen

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In back, in no particular order, CCCC Youth Culinary campers, Caroline Honeycutt, Rilyn Kerley, Kiley Reyes, Ava Mink, Chase Tart, Cyrus Creed, Savannah Coats, Morgan Thompson, Riley Pope, Taylor Thompson, Pristah Saint-Jean, Jeremiah Myers, Clint Morgan and Rachel Swenson. Front row from left, culinary camp staff and volunteers, Yvette Sessions, Kathryn Horrell, D-Ven Atkinson and Josephine Atkinson.

## Cooking

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with a hot baking pan for them to pour the mixture in.

Excited eyes opened early Wednesday morning when “Chef D” asked the baker’s dozen cooking kids, who in each group had the most muscles.

No, the professional chef wasn’t looking for an arm wrestling opponent ... he needed to know which group member would derive the Dutch baby’s blueberry sauce special ingredient — fresh squeezed orange juice.

A few of the children looked down at their biceps, confident they had what it takes to extract the special citrus flavor flare from the halved Florida oranges awaiting them next door.

Rachel Swenson raised her hand to ask a question.

“How can we make blueberry sauce with just blueberries, sugar and water?” Rachel asked her teacher.

It was clear “Chef D” was happy to answer, saying simple fruit sauces are infused by the berry’s juices.

“The blueberries pop ... the water turns purple, then the water turns blue,” he said, adding that a simple strawberry sauce can be made in the same way.

Ten-year-old Erwin resident Chase Tart said he and his classmates were told not to eat break-

fast before cooking camp.

“We cook our own breakfast,” Chase said. “On Monday we made omelets and (Tuesday) we made chocolate chip pancakes.”

Chase shared the take-home snack menu from earlier in the week, day one peanut butter power balls, then fresh and healthy 8-ounce fruit cups on Tuesday afternoon.

According to Chase, the cooking campers made their own spaghetti and meatballs for lunch.

As camper Rilyn Kerley was dropped off to the CCCC Dunn Center at 8:30 a.m. Wednesday, her Great Aunt Paulette Kennison raved over the mini-chef’s pepperoni pizza bomb-bombs. “I hope (Chef Atkinson) gives us his recipes,” she said.

The chef was obviously excited about Wednesday’s lunch menu, shrimp macaroni and cheese.

“Who here likes shrimp?” he asked. “I love shrimp. Especially when it’s sautéed with butter and garlic.”

A few students raised their hands, some said they had never tasted shrimp and 8-year-old Ava Mink of Godwin said she has an allergy to shellfish.

Chef D was already aware of the allergy, but made note of it.

The chef and his team — culinary masters student Kathryn Horrell, his mother, Yvette Sessions, and his grandmother, Jose-

phine Atkinson — stood proudly before their class as Chef D announced afternoon snacks.

“Today we are going to be making chocolate chip brownies and tomorrow we will make two types of cookies,” Chef D said. “Maybe there will be some ice cream. If everybody listens well and there are no spills today, we might make ice cream tomorrow.” The students wiggled and giggled in their aprons with excitement as they colored feverishly on their very own custom paper chef’s hats.

In her handmade “cooking camp rocks” hat, Taylor Thompson lined up next to Rilyn to wash her hands. “Everybody wash your hands really well,” Chef D’s voice boomed on his way into the kitchen, “Get some soap between all of your fingers.”

Caroline, Rilyn, Chase, Ava, Rachel, Taylor and Pristah joined their peers, Kiley Reyes, Cyrus Creed, Savannah Coats, Morgan Thompson, Riley Pope, Jeremiah Myers and Clint Morgan all filed into the CCCC Dunn Center’s commercial kitchen.

Mrs. Atkinson stood near the team of Taylor, Clint, Rilyn and Morgan as they slowly mixed their dry ingredients. Ms. Horrell positioned herself near the stove while Jeremiah stirred up his blueberry sauce, and Mrs. Sessions did all the dishes.

After Chef D and his team

cleaned each station and prepped lunch, they presented the finished Dutch babies to the class, invoking an overwhelming “wow!”

### About Culinary Youth Summer Camps

Central Carolina Community College is offering several summer cooking camps for youth at the CCCC Dunn Center.

- The Kids Cooking Camp was for students in kindergarten through fourth grades and was offered this week from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

- Culinary Teen Cooking for ages 10-15 will be offered next week from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. It’s a class for students who share a passion for cooking and possibly a career in culinary arts. Students will prepare various items including entrees, appetizers and desserts. Lunch is included in this camp. Students must wear closed-toed shoes, apron or smock. Registration is available online until Monday, and those interested in participating can bring \$100 cash or check to the CCCC Dunn Center Monday morning, before 8:30 a.m.

To register online, visit the website [www.cccc.edu/ecd/find-classes/](http://www.cccc.edu/ecd/find-classes/) and go to the Youth Summer Camps page.

For more information on Central Carolina Community College, visit the website [www.cccc.edu](http://www.cccc.edu).