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Culinary Students Get a Taste of Apprenticeship

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 6, 2022

TRENTON – When Tony Chibaro was 15, his stepmother enrolled him in a culinary arts apprenticeship program run through his school district – without telling him. Fast forward 10 years, and Chibaro, now a sous chef, food safety manager and catering director with the Compass Group, a multi-national food service company, was back at the Hunterdon County Polytech Career Academy in Flemington, recalling how his career was launched without him knowing it, and assuring current culinary apprentices that their “sacrifice, commitment and passion” will pay off, leading to fulfilling careers in the hospitality industry.

Chibaro, 25, joined New Jersey Labor Commissioner Robert Asaro-Angelo, Hunterdon County Vocational School District staff, local employers, and 21 current culinary students at the school to cap off National Apprenticeship Week, a celebration of US Department of Labor (USDOL) Registered Apprenticeship programs, which have seen unparalleled growth in New Jersey – in numbers and variety – since Gov. Murphy took office.

“The Hunterdon County Vocational School District has been a valuable partner in ensuring students successfully transition into career paths in in-demand occupations, like culinary arts. The skills students learn here lead to sustainable careers while also helping a hard-hit industry recover from the pandemic,” said Commissioner Asaro-Angelo.

The New Jersey Apprenticeship Network – a key workforce development initiative of the Murphy Administration – was launched in 2018, Murphy’s first year in office, and NJDOL has to date invested more than \$1.5 million in grant funds to vocational schools through the Pre-apprenticeship in Career Education (PACE) and Youth Transitions to Work (YTTW) programs.

Partner school districts include Egg Harbor, and the vocational school districts in Mercer, Middlesex and Hunterdon counties. These programs are preparing high school-aged students and out-of-school youth with job skills in production technology, computer numerical control (CNC), welding, management accounting, pharmacy technology, logistics, culinary, arts, IT, welding, healthcare, manufacturing, and wastewater treatment.

Additionally, NJDOL has partnered with the state Department of Education to update the state school performance report card, a key indicator of school success, to include placements into Registered Apprenticeship programs as a positive student outcome.

New Jersey currently has 8,200 active apprentices in 1,100 programs, an 89 percent increase since the Murphy Administration began. Apprentices are active in diverse fields such as nursing, yacht building and fusion energy. At the Hunterdon County Vocational School District, a repeat grantee, 15 participants have been placed into culinary and hospitality apprenticeship programs (think future pastry chefs, food safety managers and banquet hall directors, to name a few), with 6 more students in the process of being placed on site in a commercial kitchen, and five having earned their certificate of completion.

For Michael Weisshaupt, the executive chef and food and beverage director at Fiddler’s Elbow, a private country club in Bedminster, mentoring an apprentice simply completes the circle – at 15, he started his first apprenticeship in his native Germany, and his son recently completed the Hunterdon Polytech program and is now employed in the industry.

Asked why he’s such a big believer in apprenticeship, Weisshaupt said, “It’s important to bring people into the Hospitality Industry. It’s a great trade.”

Hunterdon Polytech also offers apprenticeship programs in the electrical and plumbing and heavy equipment trades.



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Replying to @NJLaborDept

Chibaro, now 25, joined @NJDOLCommish at @HunterdonPoly where local employers and 21 current culinary students capped off National Apprenticeship Week, a celebration of @USDOL Apprenticeship programs.

READ bit.ly/3ux8PGs

2/2 #NationalApprenticeshipWeek
#NAW2022

For more information on NJDOL's apprenticeship programs, visit: apprenticeship.nj.gov.

Attachments:

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