



APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 1, 2020.** Please include this application form with electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: County of Henrico

Program Title: Partnership Enables Students to Learn the Art of Smoking Meats

Program Category: Community and Economic Development

CONTACT INFORMATION

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Brandon Hinton

Title: Deputy County Manager for Administration

Signature: 

Program Overview

The culinary program at Henrico County Public Schools' Varina High School teamed up with a local business to teach students firsthand about the proper techniques and tips in smoking meats. The students had the opportunity to learn from the owners of the Smoke Pit Grill, local professionals who own a BBQ restaurant. The owners brought in their smoking equipment and tools and worked with the students on how to prepare smoked meats.

This was a unique opportunity for our students because it was a specialized area beyond our standard curriculum. The owners of the Smoke Pit Grill had a chance to interact with students interested in culinary professions and pass on their knowledge.

Problem/Challenge/Situation Faced by Locality

Virginia's culinary curriculum is mostly generic in the area of food preparation. Our culinary students get little exposure to more specialized forms of cooking, such as smoking meats. Having a professional team come in that specializes in smoking meats was an important opportunity for our students to get hands-on information in an aspect of "specialty cooking." The experience resulted in a collaborative effort beneficial to all involved. Henrico County Public Schools already had a great business partnership with the Smoke Pit Grill, and this program strengthened that partnership.

How Program Fulfilled Awards Criteria

This project involved the collaborative effort of a school system and local business, working toward a common goal. The willingness of restaurant owners to give their time and efforts to help high school students was impressive and gratifying. Our students benefited greatly from the project in ways that would have been impossible without the collaboration with the Smoke Pit Grill.

How Program Was Carried Out

Culinary arts is an elective program offered within high schools and technical centers in Henrico County Public Schools. Varina High School has a longstanding, award-winning culinary program with a strong tradition. The school's program is known as one of the strongest programs in the Richmond area. In order to prepare the most students for a wide variety of possible employment, the culinary program is mainly generic in nature: students learn a vast array of information, but food specializations are rarely included in the curriculum.

The school system formed a relationship with the Smoke Pit Grill as a business partner. The restaurant's location is less than 100 yards from two of our schools, making it a natural partner. When the owners of the Smoke Pit Grill heard about the culinary program at Varina, they were eager to visit and work with the students. The instructor at Varina was excited to have the professionals teach her students about the art of smoking meats, a rare opportunity for our culinary students.

The restaurant owners of the worked with the students from beginning to end, starting with raw meats and going through preparation procedures such as basting and seasoning before ultimately placing the meats in the smoker to cook.

Part of the restaurant's business comes from its food truck. One of the owners talked with students about the world of food trucks and the entrepreneurship opportunities they afforded. Students had the chance to run the food truck in a mock scenario and experience what it was like to operate such a business.

This project was completed within a day, but the relationships built from this experience will be long-lasting for both students and the restaurant owners.

Financing and Staffing

The owners of Smoke Pit Grill volunteered their services to Henrico County Public Schools and therefore, there was no cost involved in this project.

Program Results

This was a tremendously successful program for all parties involved. Smoke Pit Grill had the opportunity to train and work with teenage students who have a love for the culinary world. In addition, they were able to showcase their expertise and work with students on their specialty, which is smoking meats.

The students benefitted from this program as well. They had a chance to venture outside of their standard culinary classes and learn a specialty — smoking meats — which is not something they would have had the opportunity to do within their classes. The culinary classroom lacks the equipment necessary to cook smoked meats, and it is not something that is covered in the curriculum. Students had the chance to learn directly from professionals in the field. Conversations took place regarding the industry, the company's food truck business, and owning a business. At the end of the lesson, the students had the opportunity to taste the food they helped prepare.

Brief Summary

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Partnership Enables Students to Learn the Art of Smoking Meats
Supplemental Material

