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**Baltimore's George Washington Carver
Center for Arts & Technology**

**MANAGEMENT TEAM
SIZZLES IN NATIONAL
PROSTART COMPETITION**



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NEWS Foodservice Monthly

Carver Reaches New Heights With National Honors at NPSI

Baltimore's Carver Center for Arts & Technology sent its Maryland state winning ProStart management team to the annual National Invitational in Overland Park, Kansas and came home with second place honors. Instructor Bette Mullins and mentor Gail Furman (Max's Taphouse owner) led a team of seniors Eric Epstein, Elly Girbauch, Tanisha Wells, Thomas Burch and Timothy Ayd to the highest finish of any Mid-Atlantic school in the history of the event. The National Restaurant Association provides details of the competition and the national winners are noted in their story featured on page 38. The Carver culinary team finished seventh in their group.

For the Carver team, the journey to the Kansas stage of winners began in August with the selection of the team by Mullins who had extended an open try-out. One of the key criteria for building the team noted Mullins was the commitment of the members to the time and dedication that would be required to excel. After the team's selection it wasn't until October before the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation (NRAEF) released the new rules for a format change. Under the 2009 rules, the Carver team had placed 4th.

At this time the team established a weekly meeting where at the beginning they went over the rules point-by-point, word by word. These meetings continued throughout the year increasing in frequency as they came closer to the nationals. Even during the lost school days due to the winter snows of early 2010, they kept meeting at homes and Towson Center Mall to keep the work moving forward.

Teams participating in the management competition demonstrate their knowledge of the restaurant and food-service industry by developing a restaur-

ant proposal, delivering a verbal presentation, and applying critical thinking skills to challenges managers face in day-to-day operations. Their performance was observed and rated by judges from leading colleges and universities and industry professionals.

Gail Furman found experts for the Carver team to visit and interview including Jeff McCabe whose restaurant Tahina's in Owings Mills, Md. served as a model of a smart, forward thinking concept. His company Total Image Graphics proved to be an important



The Carver story board for their restaurant concept Envolver.

resource for their innovative ideas regarding marketing. Furman, who became involved three years ago when her daughter was on the team, added a sense of realism to the project based on her years of experience in the restaurant industry.

During a meeting with the Carver team, mentor and instructor at the school after their return, they spoke about their Wednesday meetings where the idea for their restaurant featuring healthy wraps emerged early. "Envolver"



The Carver team is back in their "home" kitchen after finishing second at NPSI.

was born. As the interview continued, it became clear that the effort was a collaborative one. By using a "wiki" that principal Karen Steele enabled, the team had a website that allowed them to easily create and edit any number of inter-linked web pages via a web browser. That way they all had access to the material used to source the ideas for their restaurant i.e. bio-fuels, environmentally friendly supplies, a truck run on bio-diesel, healthy menu items, energy saving LED lights, the use of sustainable bamboo and nutritionals to name a few of the ideas they researched and eventually used. They even designed the restaurant logo and had a logoed uniform shirt produced.

It was important to the team that the restaurant carried throughout the healthy mission including something for everyone including vegan dishes, innovative small desserts, and local produce.

Tanisha Wells pointed out that the concept included 14 of 17 of the top trends in restaurants they found from the annual chefs' survey conducted by the NRA.

Instructor Bette Mullins said, "I want to add how supportive the Restaurant Association of Maryland Education Foundation was in the whole process to ensure our students success." She continued, "Marshall Weston and Ladeana Litchfield provided guidance after the state finals were over by critiquing our materials to ensure the success of these students. Baltimore International College (BIC) and McCormick for Chefs sponsored the trip and both BIC and McCormick sent representatives to the nationals in Kansas.