

RWJ Hospital chef gets professional certification

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NEW BRUNSWICK — Nicholas Mercogliano, chef at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in New Brunswick, has earned the Certified Chef de Cuisine designation from the American Culinary Federation, the nation's largest organization of professional chefs. The 21-year-old Marlboro resident is a member of Jersey Shore Chefs Association.

The federation operates the only comprehensive certification program for chefs in the United States and currently certifies nearly 9,000 professionals worldwide. Candidates for certification must have a high level of work and educational experience, and pass written and practical examinations. In addition, candidates must complete coursework in food safety, nutrition and supervisory management.

A Certified Chef de Cuisine® is a chef who is the supervisor in charge of food production in a foodservice operation. This could be a single unit of a multi-unit operation or a freestanding operation. He or she is in essence the chef of the operation with the final decision-making power, as it relates to culinary operations. Candidates must pass a written exam and a practical exam, which is three hours and covers required skills such as, preparing chicken consommé, velouté sauce and espagnole sauce. The candidate is required to prepare two portions of one chicken for the main course, using at least two cuts of the bird. For the first course, the candidate is required to prepare two portions of one flat fish combined with one of the other seafood basket components.

Certified chefs in restaurants, hotels and other foodservice operations demonstrate commitment to quality foodservice and must renew their certification every five years. The federation has awarded more than 20,750 certifications since 1973 and is the only certifier of U.S. master chefs and master pastry chefs.

The American Culinary Federation, established in 1929, has more than 20,000 members. The Jersey Shore Chefs Association is one of 225 federation chapters located nationwide. The federation offers educational resources, training, apprenticeship and programmatic accreditation. The federation also is home to ACF Culinary Team USA, the official representative for the United States in major international culinary competitions, and to the American Culinary Federation Education Foundation Chef & Child Foundation, founded in 1989 to promote proper nutrition in children and to combat childhood obesity. For more information, visit www.acfchefs.org.