



OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS AND PROMOTIONS

May 1, 2017
3:00 p.m.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Okkodo ProStart team 2nd at nationals

When Guam competes in a national high school competition over on the mainland, often our students experience the usual questions: “Where is Guam?” “Do you speak English there?” And, “What kind of food do you eat?”

Except for the National ProStart Invitational.

“When the Guam team enters the room at ProStart nationals, everyone takes notice,” said Vicky Schrage, GCC Tourism & Hospitality Department chair and former ProStart instructor at Simon Sanchez High School. Schrage noted that since 2009, Guam has been on the ProStart podium five times – twice in a row as champions.

The GCC CTE ProStart team from Okkodo High School continued that reputation today, taking second place in the prestigious 2017 National ProStart Invitational in Charleston, South Carolina. Seniors Ella Mae Tinoso, Xela Marie Olivario, Hennessy Sanchez, and Jim Mangligot again put Guam on the high school culinary map with a stunning three-course meal that they prepared in one hour – even finishing 40 seconds early.

ProStart is the career and technical education program in Guam’s public high schools that feeds into GCC’s Culinary Arts program, which produces many of the island’s amazing chefs.

The four won the local ProStart competition back in February, earning them a slot in the national competition, where Schrage’s SSSH ProStart teams cemented Guam’s reputation in 2013 and 2014 by being the only team ever to win the national competition two years in a row.

“The competition was a very challenging yet wonderful experience,” said Ella Mae Tinoso, Okkodo ProStart team captain. “This is what I’ve been wanting to do, and this competition has already opened up doors for me. We cannot thank GCC President Okada and our Guam island community enough for all the support they have given us,” Tinoso said. “They made all this possible.”

“I knew, watching this team work, that they would do well,” Schrage said of the Okkodo team. “And with Chef Peter Duenas as our mentor chef, it was an amazing combination,” she said.

Chef Duenas acknowledged his team at Meskla Restaurant, saying that they played a role in helping the Okkodo team prepare for the competition.

Chef Kennynlyn Miranda is the Okkodo ProStart instructor who has worked with the all-senior Okkodo team since their sophomore year. She was unable to make the trip, so Chef Bertrand Haurillon, GCC Culinary Arts instructor, accompanied the team to the competition.

“The team dedicated their finish to Ms. Miranda,” Schrage noted.

The national ProStart program is supported by the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation (NRAEF), and focuses on teaching culinary arts and restaurant management fundamentals through a combination of classroom and industry instruction. The four Okkodo team members walked away from the national competition with scholarships worth \$4000 each, in addition to their second place trophy.

Schrage noted that since the entire Okkodo team is comprised of seniors, they have already each earned a \$3,000 scholarship from the Art Institutes in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to further their culinary studies after high school.

“We were informed by NRAEF that the Art Institutes is awarding winners of this year’s local competition who are graduating seniors with a \$3,000 scholarship each, to further their culinary careers,” Schrage said. The scholarship is renewable for up to four years, for a maximum of \$12,000, according to Schrage.

“So being a top finisher in ProStart presents opportunities for these students,” Schrage said.

The high school team from Ohio won the 2017 ProStart National Invitational.

Photo caption:

2nd place at ProStart nationals

From left: Chef Peter Duenas, Guam ProStart mentor chef, holds Guam’s second place trophy as Jim Mangligot, Ella Mae Tinoso, Hennessy Sanchez, and Xela Marie Olivario of the Okkodo ProStart team pose with their medals, along with Vicky Schrage, GCC Tourism & Hospitality Dept. chair, and Chef Bertrand Haurillon, GCC chef instructor, after taking 2nd place in the 2017 ProStart National Invitational in Charleston, South Carolina on April 30.

###