

EDUCATION

Pizza-makers the (Wild)cat's meow



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Joe Vigil (left), 16, and Julian Salazar, 17, serve the award-winning Cat's Meow Garlic Chicken Alfredo Pizza to fellow students at Central High School on Tuesday.

Central culinary students' recipe earns national award

BY JON POMPIA
THE PUEBLO CHIEFTAIN

When it comes to award-winning recipes, culinary students at Central High School are the cat's meow. Literally.

Taking part in a nationwide contest sponsored by the Dannon Yogurt Co., Wildcats in the Pro Start culinary program concocted a recipe for what they termed the Cat's Meow Garlic Chicken Alfredo Pizza.

Selected as a grand prize winner, the recipe earned the school \$4,000 worth of kitchen equipment, including a food mixer and breakfast cart.

In developing the Italian-themed formula, Central students faced stringent requirements, including, of course, use of a Dannon product, no more than five ingredients but at least two, and meeting guidelines for USDA National School Lunch and/or School



Salazar (left) and Vigil, both Pro Start culinary program students, prepare the pizza that was one of the 10 grand prize-winning recipes in the national 2016 Dannon Yogurt Co. recipe contest.

Breakfast Programs.

And, perhaps most importantly, the creation

had to appeal to the discerning taste buds of Central students, as

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the contest requires the recipe to become a regular part of the cafeteria's offerings.

That all-important taste test passed with flavorful colors Tuesday, as both the whole wheat-crust pizza and a pasta dish with the sauce rolled out during lunchtime were endearingly embraced.

Those sampling the dishes were asked to fill out a brief survey, with results overwhelmingly indicating that the pizza should be a recurring serving.

"Mmmm, hmmm, yum, yum," said Principal Lynn Seifert midbite. "I know I'm prejudiced and I bleed blue, but it's really

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good. When it comes to food, I'm always straight-up. And this is great. I'm so proud of the kids."

"Just as good or better than any other pizza I've had," added Assistant Principal Zach Odell. "Certainly this Alfredo sauce is great and it's fitting that it won a national award."

Student Kassidy Eaton concurred with her administrative leaders.

"It's good. Definitely one of the best pizzas I've eaten at school. I'm a really big fan of cheese so I'm really enjoying this. I hope they keep serving the pizza."

While the end result was both palatable and prize-earning, the monthlong creative process involved plenty of research, discussion, experimentation, tweaks and tests.

"Trial and error," said Ben Robinson, one of six team members who worked on the recipe. "The first go-around? Questionable. So we just kept working on it until we got it right."

The final concoction featured plain Dannon Yogurt, cheeses, butter, paprika "and a lot of garlic," said Nancy Cornell, Central's culinary teacher. "After a few prototypes we sent the final recipe

down to the cafeteria, and they loved it.

"So we filled out the contest forms, sent the recipe in and voila! We won."

Julian Salazar, a team member who spent most of Tuesday morning readying the pizzas for serving, said the uniqueness of the recipe likely figured into the final judgement.

"When we thought about the idea of a yogurt pizza, it seemed kind of random," he explained. "Yogurt and a pizza? It really didn't sound like it would taste good.

"But we got it together, tweaked it a little and it tasted really good ... good enough to win."

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