



Budding chefs have their cooking skills put to the test

Most of the teams competing in Bite of the Apprenticeship are students from culinary programs from around the region. This story is sponsored by Tacoma Goodwill

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SEATTLE — It's a culinary competition featuring some of Washington state's best up and coming cooks.

"Every year, the second Monday in April, the [Washington State Chefs Association](#) has the [Bite of the Apprenticeship](#). We've done it for many, many years," said Tony Parker, President of the WSCA. "It's a great opportunity for us to kind of see the young ones coming up and to help them."

Each team here will have their food judged by the public -- and by some of Puget Sound's top chefs.

Most of the food is prepared by students in culinary programs from around the Northwest. For many of them, this event will be the first time they'll serve their food to a paying crowd.

"To have the competition and to get them involved in that, and to get students and young culinarians involved were they feel that pressure is very important because without that you don't get better," said Parker.

One of the teams competing is from [Goodwill's Culinary Skills](#) program out of Tacoma.

"Culinary skills training is a 12-week job skill training program. We teach people the skills that they need to be able to get out and get a job in the restaurant or food service industry," said Jeff Pratt, Chef and Program Manager at Goodwill. "Tonight we have a team made up of current and former students."

For former student Shannon Howell, [Goodwill's culinary program](#) served up just what she wanted.

"I was looking for different culinary schools, but I have a few learning disabilities and that kind of held me back and they were a hands-on learning program and that was exactly what I needed," said Howell.

The need for trained culinary staff in the Puget Sound region has never been in more demand.

"One of the hardest things about our business right now is finding these talented young people that want to work hard in our restaurants," said [Tom Douglas](#), Chef, and owner of several Seattle restaurants. "If you look at how many restaurants are opening around our city and around our region I think this is the perfect place to get your start."

On this night, team Goodwill didn't walk away with any awards from *Bite of the Apprentice*, but the experience is sure to feed their culinary careers.

Howell said, "There's a lot of good talent here, lots of budding chefs and so I'm just happy to be a part of it all."

For more information on Goodwill's Culinary Skills program and other job training opportunities can be found [here](#).