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PRESS RELEASE

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Photo Links/Captions: [ProStart 01.jpg](#)– Front: Carmen Krajewski; Middle: Rhonda Derks, Samantha DeVries, Sonja Schmidt, Emily Selby, Chole Holman; Back: TJ Tyndall, Elijah Erickson, Asher Burotn, Elissa Penczar

[FirstPlace.jpg](#)–Michigan Picnic menu presentation

[ThirdPlace.jpg](#)–Michigan Starry Night menu presentation

Career Tech Center students earn top spots in ProStart Invitational

MUSKEGON: Two teams of Hospitality & Food Management students from the Career Tech Center (CTC) in Muskegon participated in the Michigan ProStart Invitational, March 5-6, 2023 at the Blue Water Convention Center in Port Huron. The competition, hosted by the Michigan Hospitality Foundation, tests students' talents in hospitality skills such as cake decorating, culinary arts, knife skills, management, nutrition, ServSafe, and table top design. Both CTC teams placed in the top three in the nutrition competition with one team taking first and the other finishing third.

Placing third in the state for their Michigan Starry Night themed menu were teammates David Orr (Oakridge), Sonja Schmidt (Reeths-Puffer), Emily Selby (Western Michigan Christian), and Chole Holman (Oakridge). Their menu featured a white bean burger on whole grain bread with ranch dipping sauce, a melon and blueberry fruit skewer, and a sparkling apple juice beverage. Placing first, and earning a combined \$50,000 in scholarships for each team member, was the team of Asher Burton (Oakridge), Elijah Erickson (Holton), TJ Tyndall (Holton), and Samantha DeVries (Fruitport). Their Michigan Picnic themed menu featured carrot nuggets with white bean hummus, bell peppers and grape tomatoes with maple-orange and ranch dipping sauces, and a cherry/apple sparking beverage.

"This is our first time participating in ProStart," shared CTC Hospitality & Food Management instructor Elissa Penczar. "Several of these students have been part of an initiative to encourage the USDA to make changes to school nutrition guidelines so participating in nutrition was a perfect fit."

All four first place recipients were elated when they heard the news that they'd won.

"Leading up to the competition, we were all really nervous and weren't sure how we'd place. I was shocked, amazed, and filled with emotion when our team was announced," said DeVries.

Both teams celebrated with cheers, tears of joy, and hugs.

"This competition solidified my decision to pursue a culinary career after high school," shared Erickson.

"I have a lot of food allergies and can't eat many of the items we prepare in class. One day I hope to open my own restaurant featuring an allergen-free menu," said Tyndall.

To learn more about the Hospitality & Food Management program, or any of the fifteen other career-prep programs available at the Career Tech Center in Muskegon visit muskegonctc.org.

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