

March 2026

THE TARO LEAF

With your kind and generous support, the Hawaii Culinary Education Foundation can help Hawaii's culinary students achieve success. Consider a donation to HCEF.

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Workforce Development Training



HCEF collaborated with the Department of Education to offer a high school culinary teachers' Baking, Confectionary, Desserts / Sauces and Creams workshop hosted by Windward Community College.

Chef Dan Swift, Windward Community College Workforce



The organization, resources, and amount of skill they displayed was amazing!

This program inspired me!

Expanded techniques and easy recipes for classroom adaptation while meeting educational standards.

The content was incredibly valuable and I hope there will be a continuation of similar workshops in the near future. Chef Dan and Chef John did an

Development Coordinator / Certified Master Baker / Certified Executive Pastry Chef, taught the day-long workshop, assisted by Chef John McGough. Teachers from Hawaii Island, Lanai, Maui, and Oahu participated.

Under the Chefs' guidance, the teachers prepared shortbread cookies, Hawaiian-style Hot Chocolate, Banana Bread, Ciabatta with Brown Rice and Furikaki, Focaccia, Dessert Sauces / Creams, and Chocolate Macadamia Nut Tarts.

HCEF supplied the teachers with reduction spatulas and cookbooks.



amazing job! This was easily one of the best sessions I have attended in years!

Chef Swift offered innovative ideas and recipe modifications to fit time constraints and culinary education standards. He focused on a systems-and-functional approach to baking with practical industry and classroom applications. Chef Swift is a HCEF Chef Mentor at Kalaheo High School. Chef McGough mentors at Radford, Moanalua and Kalaheo High.

Swift is a graduate of both the Boise State University Culinary Arts Program and Johnson & Wales University's (Providence, Rhode Island) Baking and Pastry Arts programs. He earned his master's degree in educational foundations from the University of Hawaii at Manoa. He is a certified master baker with the Retail Bakers of America and holds executive chef, executive pastry chef and culinary administrator certifications with the American Culinary Federation. Swift earned a doctoral degree in organizational leadership from the University of Laverne in California.

Special thanks to Windward Community College, Chef Dan Swift and Chef John McGough.



HCEF In Action



Castle

Hula Grill Executive Chef Paul Rivera regularly mentors at Castle High. Chef Paul demonstrated Nairagi prepared three ways: Seared Sashimi-Style, Ceviche, and Cajun Fish Tacos. Chef Paul said that it was the students first time tasting this fresh local fish and they loved the experience.

Photos culinary teacher, Jacynthia Mitchell.



Hula Grill Waikiki



HCEF Mentoring



Royal Hawaiian Sous Chef Kandice Symister mentored at Kaiser High School sharing her culinary career. Chef Kandice prepared fresh pasta, tomato and pesto sauces. Students had the opportunity to practice pasta making skills while learning culinary techniques in the process. Chef Kandice encouraged the students to practice what they learned at home using pantry staples and fresh ingredients.

Culinary Teacher, Shayne Castellano.



HCEF Chef mentors / United States Coast Guard Master Chief / Food Service



Officer Derek Johnson and Coast Guard Petty Officer Kayla Santos presented a dozen February culinary classes at Leilehua High.

The Coast Guard officers discussed culinary careers, the importance of kitchen safety / sanitation, soft and hard professional skills.

Additional mentoring classes focused on knife skills, butchery techniques, plating presentations, cheese making, and meat preparations. The Coast Guard officers demonstrated Steak Tacos with homemade Queso Fresco, handmade tortillas, pickled onions, and pico de gallo.

Master Chief Johnson prepared smoked salmon with a shaved fennel orange salad. It was the first opportunity for the students



to prepare and taste fennel. The students participated in a mystery basket challenge creating their own salmon dishes.

Culinary teachers: Brianna Souza, Deshayne Stevens and Keshawn Wright.

It was awesome to see the students engaged—they learned new techniques and asked really thoughtful questions. They were inspired by Chef Derek's and Chef Kayla's stories and want to pursue a career in the field of culinary arts . The students rated the chefs and the responses were: 10/10, 11/10, and even 100/10!





The Hawaii Culinary Education Foundation Board of Directors met Feb. 2 at MW Restaurant. Mahalo to the board members for dedicating their time, resources and expertise to make HCEF culinary education and training possible: Chef Alan Tsuchiyama, Chef Michelle Karr-Ueoka, Chairman / Treasurer Tom Mullen, Chef Matt Egami, Executive Director, Hayley Matson-Mathes, Joan Namkoong, Gary Manago, Secretary Jeanine Ogawa, and Chef George Mavrothalassitis. Meet the [HCEF Advisory Board Members](#)

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Sincerely,

Hayley Matson Mathes
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