EXCELLENCE DAY 2014

TTHTI’s annual Excellence Awards Day was held on Thursday, May 15th, 2014. The event was organized as a project by the Events and Conference Management class in conjunction with the Student Services Department. This year, 43 students were recognized for achieving a cumulative GPA of 3.5 and over at this point in their academic tenure, the largest number of academic excellence awardees to date. Eleven (11) additional students were also awarded for co-curricular excellence for their participation in sport, drama and other activities, as well as for demonstrating the true spirit of the industry through their positive, professional attitude and deportment. As usual, the event began with a luncheon for the awardees with the Chairman of the Board of Governors, Executive Director and Management of the Institute, followed by the Mr. & Ms. TTHTI Pageant, at which the awardees were the guests of honour.

The pageant contestants paraded in their choice of Ethnic Wear and Professional Wear and the Talent round yielded a high standard of entertainment and humour. Rashaad Baksh and Rhianna Barran, both full-time Culinary Management students and Academic Excellence awardees, were crowned Mr. and Ms. TTHTI respectively. Entertainment was provided by soca artistes 5-Star Akil and Syo.

Prizes for the winners of the Iron Chef competition held on April 24th, 2014 in the categories of Culinary, Bar, and Baking & Pastry were also distributed at this ceremony. TTHTI wishes to extend its sincere appreciation to the following organizations for their contribution towards the success of this event:

Tres Belle Cosmetics, Kiss Baking Company Ltd., Nestle Trinidad Ltd., Blue Waters, A.S. Brydens Ltd., Cold Stone Creamery, El Pecos, Mr. Rango’s Cookhouse, Everlasting Vows, Flower Image and Gift Shop, Another Idea Limited, Mr. Wayne Richards.

SPORTS AND FAMILY DAY

TTHTI’s Sports and Family day was held on May 17th, 2014 at St Anthony’s grounds. There were many activities that took place on the day which included races such as three-legged, sack race, eating race and tug of war to name a few, as well as, pre sports events which included treasure hunt, aerobathon, small goal football and flag party.

Face painting and a bouncy castle catered to the entertainment of children present at the sports and family day. Overall, the green house Minerva, was successful.

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TTHTI’s Hilltop Fitness Center Produces Junior Body Building Champion

Mr. Perry Jerome, Manager of the Hilltop Fitness Center located on the campus of the Trinidad and Tobago Hospitality and Tourism Institute (TTHTI), Chaguaramas, has been in the body building industry for thirty years. He is an experienced body building judge, both at the national and international level and boasts of being internationally certified in the field. He holds many titles: Certified Fitness Trainer with the International Sports Sciences Association (ISSA), Vice President and Chief Judge of the Trinidad and Tobago Bodybuilders Federation (TTBBF), International Federation of Bodybuilders (IFBB) Judge, Technical Committee Chairman of the Central American Caribbean Body Builders Federation (CACBBF), and Figure and Bikini Coach. This combination of experience and certification has contributed to him being an effective trainer with the ability to produce incredible results in competitive events.

Most recently, Mr. Jerome has been the trainer for Vanessa Hill, who placed 1st and overall in the National Junior Body Building Championships; Jaime Lee Phillips who placed 2nd in the Bikini category and Ken Simmons who was a placed 1st in the Men’s physique competition. Jaime Lee and Ken were on last year’s CCABBF team and it was through this opportunity that Mr. Jerome began working with them. Vanessa Hill contacted Mr. Jerome about her interest in training with him and two months ago, she decided to compete.

Mr. Jerome shared that preparation for a competition such as the National Junior Bodybuilding Championship requires determination and commitment with his team training at the Hilltop Fitness Centre at least five days a week, comprising weight training and cardiovascular exercises in the morning, followed by further cardio exercises in the evening. He stressed that diet was also very important for their success, explaining that a strict diet with a balance of proteins and vegetables and few supplements was recommended. In addition, in order to control their fat and calorie intake, the trainees themselves had to prepare all the food that they consumed.

Overall, a combination of commitment, training and skill, has led to their success in the National Junior Body Building Competition 2014. We congratulate Mr. Jerome on his successes and wish him and his charges continued luck in future competitions.

TTHTI’s Hilltop Fitness Center is open to the public from 5:00 am to 9:00 pm.
MEDIA LAUNCH OF “COOKING WITH CONFIDENCE FOR ALL OCCASIONS”

On Friday May 3, 2013, TTHTI held a media launch to introduce its first cookbook “Cooking with Confidence for All Occasions”. In her opening remarks, Dr. Patricia Butcher, Executive Director first took the opportunity to describe how the production of the cookbook was a dream come true for her since for many years, she wanted TTHTI to produce a cookbook but the project was always postponed for one reason or another. She was happy that Mrs. Michelle John, Programme Head, Culinary (Theory) accepted the challenge of making that dream a reality.

One of the many positives that Dr. Butcher highlighted was the nutritional facts and the health benefits of the local foods and spices used in the cookbook. Another important factor she emphasized was that “Cooking with Confidence” mirrors the culture of Trinidad and Tobago and by extension, the Caribbean, in that it is a melting pot of various ingredients from various cultures. Lastly, she revealed that “Cooking with Confidence” can now be found in various bookstores in Trinidad and Tobago such as Rik Booksellers and Ishmael M. Khan, to name a few. Dr. Butcher expressed her interest in making the cookbook an international household name and that a second edition is in the making.

Company Director, Mr. Kevin Kesreb highlighted the importance of the photographs depicted in “Cooking with Confidence” since they create a visual appeal. He also stated that the production of a cookbook by TTHTI has now made the institute complete since cooking is the cornerstone of TTHTI. The next step, he suggested, should be making “Cooking with Confidence” an e-book that can be sold on Amazon.com, thereby opening up the market internationally.

Executive Sous Chef at the Hilton Trinidad and Conference Center, Chef Otley Alexis, provided an expert’s critique of the cookbook. He expressed his delight that TTHTI had produced a cookbook by Trinidadians for Trinidadians as well as that the cookbook reflected the fusion of cultures that is Trinidad and Tobago. Through this fusion, “Cooking with Confidence” was making an attempt to create a culinary identity for Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean at large. His main criticism was that the cookbook was long overdue and should be viewed as a base or beginning of future projects from TTHTI.

Lastly, Minister of Tourism, Senator the Honourable Gerald Hadeed in his address, made reference to Trinidad and Tobago’s identity and how we can always showcase it in the same way that is done by “Cooking with Confidence”. He linked the production and purpose of the cookbook to the need for us as locals to develop content for our country and keep the industry alive by creating niche markets for the children of our nation, thereby keeping hospitality and tourism alive in Trinidad and Tobago.

A ‘soft launch’ of “Cooking with Confidence for All Occasions” took place at the institute’s signature event A Taste of Carnival 2014 held on Carnival Friday on the grounds of the TTHTI campus. The cookbook is also available at Mohammed Bookstores, Book Specialists and Paper Baseid (located at The Normandie Hotel).

SIDC PARTNERS WITH TTHTI FOR “CATCH OF THE WEEK”

This event, a collaboration between TTHTI and the Seafood Industry Development Company (SIDC), was held on April 7, 2014, at TTHTI’s Hilltop Restaurant. It was hosted Rianne Edmond, Project Assistant, SIDC and Heather John, Marketing and Customer Service Manager, TTHTI with the aim of showcasing the array of species of seafood offered by the SIDC.

In her opening remarks, Executive Director Dr. Patricia Butcher expressed her excitement about the collaboration and her hopes of increasing local seafood dining as a preferred dish. She elaborated that by exposing TTHTI’s students to the different types of seafood dishes and their method of preparation, the public’s knowledge about seafood would increase and so would their interest. She also explained that the four types of fish prepared for the occasion - Silver Salmon, Cro-cro, Caviale and Tilapia - were prepared by Chef Kwesi Selvon and his students. Anticipation about future partnerships was also expressed by Dr. Butcher with reference to possible collaboration and seafood sponsorship for TTHTI’s Iron Chef Competition.

Mr. Kannick, SIDC Director, who spoke on behalf of the Chairman, Mr. Brian Baig, highlighted the importance of educating the country about seafood knowledge, as well as supporting entrepreneurs in fish production. A key project that Mr. Kannick discussed was learning how to grow seafood species in house and encouraging tilapia farming, by offering training and development. He clarified that the creation of these projects was to facilitate shortcomings in the seafood industry happening on a global scale and trickling down to Trinidad and Tobago.

At the end of the launch, both parties, TTHTI and SIDC, expressed excitement about their collaboration and the “Catch of the Week” event, as well as the future projects that could be implemented and executed as a result of this partnership.
LUNCH TIME CAREER TALKS

Charting a career path in the hospitality sector is a daunting and challenging one. There is often a ‘disconnect’ between students’ perception of the industry and the reality. The Trinidad and Tobago Hospitality and Tourism Institute (TTHTI) has long been recognized as the main academic body for hospitality study in Trinidad and Tobago, and as such, the hosting of these career talks sought to leverage our positioning with influential industry partners and engage them to aid in a more holistic student experience.

The students of the Events and Conference (ECM) Diploma class and their lecturer, Ms Jala Bernard, collaborated with the Trinidad Hotels, Restaurant and Tourism Association (THRTA) to produce five (5) Wednesday lunchtime brown bag sessions, where students were given the opportunity to hear from industry leaders on, not only their thoughts of the industry but their expectations of employees. Students were exposed to the correct work ethic and attitude needed to climb the career ladder to success in the hospitality industry. The student experience was vastly enriched through the sharing of valuable information that cannot be found on any curriculum or classroom.

The objectives of the Conversations were to:
1. Build professional networks
2. Bridge the gap between TTHTI and the industry
3. Expose students to industry professionals
4. Provide students with an insight into their chosen fields
5. Provide a platform for the students to learn about employability skills and job-specific technical skills for the industry

Industry experts formed panels representing the event, culinary, restaurant and mixology sectors of the industry. Panels were as follows:

EVENTS AND CONFERENCE
Moderator: Ms Heather John (Manager, Marketing and Customer Service)
Simone Sant-Ghuran – Founder/Manager Director of www.trinidadweddings.com, Wedding Planner, newspaper columnist, magazine editor - Trinidad Weddings Magazine (TW Wed-Zine)
Brian Pantin – Owner/Manager, Absolutely Fabulous (AbFab) Events
Derrick Lewis – Founder/Managing Director, Island People Mas, Eventology Conference & Expo

RESTAURANTS / CULINARY
Moderator: Mr. Delano Ribeiro (Programme Head, Food and Beverage Department)
Joe Brown – Chef/Owner, Jaffa at the Oval
Leslie Ann St John - Business Development Manager, Aoli Restaurant
Sabrina Rosales – Owner of Sabrina’s Chutneys, Former Sous Chef, Batalimanzelle Restaurant, Culinary Team Member (3 years)
Adrian Cumberbatch – Sous Chef, Hyatt Regency, Trinidad, Culinary Team Member (2 years)

GENERAL MANAGER’S ROUND TABLE
Moderator: Mrs. Louann Chi-Alves (Executive Director, THRTA)
Hasseil Thorn – Managing Director, Cara Suites Hotel & Conference Center
Russell George – General Manager, Hyatt Regency, Trinidad
Pam Lawrence – Owner/Manager, Forty Winks Inn
Nicol Khelewan – General Manager, Courtyard by Marriott

MIXOLOGY
Moderator: Mr Raakesh Madoo (Food and Beverage Lecturer)
Raymond Edwards – Chief Mixologist, Angostura Limited
Raymond Chalmers – Wine Brand Manager, Hadco Limited
Danyel Jones – Owner/Managing Director, Martini Makers

ENTREPRENEURSHIP & INNOVATION
Moderator: Mr Ian Alleyne (Entrepreneur/AB Facilitator)
Amanda Drew – Event & Meeting Manager, Drew Manor, Santa Cruz
Valmiki Maharaj – Manager/Designer, Tribe&Wise Carnival Band
Renaldo Robertson – Owner/Director, EAT 888 – Restaurant Delivery Service

Open for Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner and Brunch, Monday to Saturday until August 8th 2014!

Hilltop Restaurant
Located at the Trinidad & Tobago Hospitality & Tourism Institute, Cor. Airway Road and Hilltop Lane, Chaguaramas

Contact 634-4250 Ext 4066 for details or visit Facebook TTHTI Hilltop Restaurant.

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