

For Immediate Release

February 18, 2025

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Media Release

Conflict Resolution Meets Culinary Arts



Daniel Jenkins Academy

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North Charleston, SC – Things got "heated" during Daniel Jenkins Academy's (DJA) last conflict resolution seminar. The program's Chief Executive Director and seminar facilitator, Sylvia Evans, introduced a unique, yet effective method of creating connections among students in ways that inspired communication, collaboration, and the creation of "flavorful outcomes."

Students were grouped in pairs and tasked with preparing a three-course meal that consisted of a freshly prepared tossed salad, chicken and shrimp alfredo, steamed broccoli, and banana pudding for dessert.

"Infusing culinary arts with conflict resolution was a deliberate decision that I hope would yield powerful outcomes for the students and create a memorable experience they would never forget," said Evans. "It was more than even I could've imagined."

Evans highlighted several goals and impacts of the initiative:

1. Working together for a positive outcome - Many students come from environments where negative influences shape their decisions, often leading to poor outcomes. I wanted them to see that when they work together toward something positive, the results can be beneficial. The items selected for the meal were decided by the collaboration of the class.
2. Building leadership and accountability - Each cooking station had a designated leader responsible for ensuring that everyone contributed and stayed focused. This built a culture of accountability and teamwork where students looked out for one another.
3. Experiencing the power of a family meal - Several students shared that they had never prepared a meal for their family or experienced sitting down to eat together. This reality made it even more important to expose them to the emotional and social value of shared meals.
4. Reinforcing the importance of education - Cooking required the students to measure, follow recipes, read instructions, and use math skills - all essential life skills. This experience highlighted the real-world application of

education, showing that without basic literacy, math, and comprehension skills, success is much harder to achieve.

"By integrating culinary arts with conflict resolution, I believe we are not just teaching students how to cook," added Evans. "This is a creative and innovative way of equipping students with the tools to navigate life successfully, build stronger relationships, and make better choices for their future. With the right tools and support, these students will not slip through the cracks."

DJA students left the experience with positive memories, and a "taste" for more opportunities like this in the future.

"I enjoyed the fact that I was able to prepare foods that I had never cooked before, especially the shrimp alfredo," explained freshman NyQuan Campbell. "I didn't think I had the skills to do it. Now, I am willing to prepare this dish and more at home. My peers and I had a fun time; everyone respected each other, and the food was delicious."

"What I enjoyed most about cooking and dining with my schoolmates was the sense of belonging," Katredra "Kat" Cunningham, a sophomore, expressed. "Everyone was so nice and cheerful. There was so much laughter. We may not know each other well, but in that moment, we all got along and felt connected to one another. That to me, was most important."

For more information, contact the school's publicity representative, Tarikia White, at (843) 747-6609.

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About the Charleston County School District

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is a nationally accredited school district committed to providing equitable and quality educational opportunities for all its students. CCSD is the second-largest school system in South Carolina and represents a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools spanning 1,300 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves approximately 50,000 students in 88 schools and specialized programs.

CCSD offers a diverse portfolio of educational options and specialized programs delivered to the students of CCSD through neighborhood, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), Montessori, and charter schools and programs. Rich educational opportunities for students include programs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); music and other creative and performing arts; career and technical preparation programs; military; dual credit; and many more.