

## Eastside High culinary team named national finalists in NASA Astronaut Culinary Challenge

A team of students from Eastside High School's Institute of Culinary Arts (ICA) will be cooking at the Space Center Houston next month after being named one of just ten finalists in the NASA HUNCH Culinary Challenge.

Sirius Brown, Alani Cromwell, Connor Mayer and George Smith will be whipping up the Pork Carnitas Quesadilla they created at the Space Center's Zero Gravity Diner on April 16. A panel of judges, including the president of the American Culinary Foundation, will then decide which dish will be processed by the Johnson Space Center Food Lab and sent to the astronauts aboard the International Space Station.



As finalists, the students have already earned \$12,000 scholarships to Sullivan University in Louisville, Kentucky, ranked as one of the top culinary schools in the U.S. If they make it to the top three, they'll win additional awards.

"The kids are beyond excited, and when they found out they would be receiving scholarships they were especially thrilled," said Chef Pam Bedford, the director of the Eastside ICA.

Between now and the national competition, the students will have to submit a final paper and a video about their dish and the work that went into developing it. Bedford says they'll also practice cooking the dish to ensure they can get it done in the time allotted during the competition and to prepare what they're going to say to the judges.

Eastside's culinary program was established in 1995 and has about 110 students enrolled. It has a well-established record of success, with students winning many state and national awards. The program has also been recognized as one of the top high school culinary programs in the U.S.

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