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NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

Eastside's Pam Bedford Named National Chef Educator of the Year

Chef Pamela Bedford, director of the Academy of Culinary Arts at Eastside High School, has earned national honors for her work preparing students for success in the food and hospitality industry.

Bedford was recently named the 2021 Educator of the Year by the American Culinary Foundation. She was the only female and the only high school educator among the four finalists for the award.

“It means the world to me to be recognized as the top chef educator in the nation,” Bedford said. “To compete at that level, against post-secondary educators, was so intimidating and really fun.”

Bedford traveled to Orlando to compete at the ACF National Convention where she had to teach a 50-minute lesson on stage in front of an auditorium full of chefs and educators.

According to the ACF’s website, the Educator of the Year Award ‘pays tribute to an active culinary educator whose knowledge, skills and expertise have enhanced the image of the professional chef and who, by example, has given leadership, guidance and direction to students seeking a career in the culinary profession.’

Chef Bedford certainly fits the award qualifications. In her 14 years with the program at EHS, including four years as director, Bedford has helped hundreds of students win awards, find jobs and earn career certification.

She’s also helped them win scholarships and admission to top culinary arts colleges. Many of her former students are now working in prestigious restaurant and hospitality settings nationwide.

Bedford noted that normally she does the encouraging for her students, but this time, they were in her corner rooting her on.

“My students compete a lot, I train them to do it,” Bedford said. “I encourage them, coach them, and hype them up, and they did the exact same thing for me. It made me fight for it even harder. I could not let them down.”

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