

Turkey time

Kettle Moraine class helps WCTC students cook meals for those in need



Ashley Haynes/Freeman Staff

Kettle Moraine High School students Jared Karcher (left), Cody Jones (center) and Carson Harris mash potatoes at Waukesha County Technical College on Wednesday.

By Ashley Haynes
 ahaynes@conley.net.com
 262-513-2681

PEWAUKEE — A certain group of Kettle Moraine High School students will be able to show off their cooking skills during their respective Thanksgiving dinners thanks to the practice they got Wednesday afternoon at Waukesha County Technical College.

KM students in the International Cuisine course teamed up with WCTC culinary students — for the first time this year — to prepare turkey dinners for those in need.

While this is KM's first time joining WCTC in these efforts, this annual event has been spearheaded by WCTC instructor Chef Jack Birren for the past eight years.

"People underestimate the impact that food has on people's lives," Birren said. "If my students and I can bring back memories for someone from a meal they enjoy, that it so powerful — especially during the holidays."



Chef Jack Birren (right) demonstrates how to cut a turkey while Kettle Moraine High School student Alyssa Manley (left) watches Wednesday afternoon.

See **DINNERS**, PAGE 7A

Dinners

From Page 1A

Nicole Krickhahn, a student in WCTC's Hospitality Management program, explained that teaming up with KM students was actually part of their coursework in the Food Preparation course.

Classes started at 8 a.m. Wednesday morning for WCTC culinary students so they could do all of their prep work and make sure the kitchen was ready for KM students.

All the traditional fixings, including turkey, mashed potatoes and gravy, cranberry sauce, biscuits, stuffing, vegetables, and pumpkin pies were prepared.

The fully cooked meals were then packaged, cooled and frozen to be given to recipients with instructions on how to reheat.

"I love volunteering and giving back, especially to students in need. So today, we're making 25 separate meals and 20 of them are getting donated to WCTC students. I love WCTC because everybody understands that there's all different students," Krickhahn said.

Five of the meals were donated to the KM students. Families in need within KM's elementary schools have been selected to receive the meals.

Kettle Moraine High School culinary arts teacher Elyse Pett said bringing one of her classes along to help Chef Jack and his students plays into a larger effort to teach students about empathy and inclusion, called #KMKind.

"Food is so culturally everywhere. We eat food at funerals and it goes through all those emotions and so to be able to teach the kids (that) it's not just food, it's the memories that are tied with it and being able to give that to somebody is a huge thing," Pett said.

The Thanksgiving meal project gives students insight and hands-on practice into what it takes to cook large quantities of food, including 50 pounds of Yukon Gold potatoes.

"My goal in the classroom is to slowly transform and create a pathway for people who are interested in the culinary field, and it's easier to do that when you get that buy-in from everybody ... to be able to have events like this and places to go where they can really be hands on," Pett said.