



PRESS INFORMATION

SOUTH EAST SCHOOL CHEF TAKES 2012 CROWN

ALISON GANN, the 2012 South East Finalist, has taken the title of **LACA's School Chef of the Year 2012**. She was voted Britain's No 1 school chef by a panel of judges at the National Final held at the Food Services Wing, Defence Logistics School, Worthy Down, Hampshire on 23 May. The Competition is organised annually by **LACA (Local Authority Caterers Association)** and is sponsored by **MAGGI® from Nestlé Professional®**.

Alison's winning dishes were: Main Course: Makhani Chicken – Makhani Chicken with Jasmine infused Rice, Cucumber Raita, Chapatti Flat Breads and Apricot Chutney followed by a dessert of Kashmir Pineapple Pudding – this is a traditional dessert found in the Kashmir region. It consists of Pineapple with a Baked Custard. Alison used **MAGGI® Rich & Rustic Tomato Sauce** in her main course and the **Nestlé®** product she used in her dessert was **Carnation® Condensed Milk Light**.

Alison (41) is employed by Chartwells for East Sussex County Council and she is based at Claverham Secondary School, Battle, East Sussex. She has worked at Claverham for seven years and the food service she provides is close to her heart as her children attend the school. They are often her harshest critic giving her daily feedback on the quality and standards they and their friends demand. She also helps run a 'ready, steady, cook' type event for children in addition to cookery demonstrations, food tastings and healthy eating assemblies.

In addition to a passion for food Alison also has a passion for travel spending her summers camping around Europe indulging in regional cuisine. In her spare time she is the lead singer in a band. Her bubbly attitude and winning personality endears her to everyone she meets and she is a true ambassador for school catering.

The winner of the Highly Commended Main Course prize was **Mark Holmes** from Abraham Guest Academy, Wigan. He is employed by Metrofresh at Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council. His winning main course dish was Guests Chicken – Chicken Breast

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filled with Mushroom, Beetroot and Baby Spinach, served on a crisp Potato Rosti with Sticky Carrots, Pea Puree and Café au Lait Tarragon Sauce. Mark used MAGGI® Demi Glace, MAGGI® Chicken Bouillon and Nestlé® product, Carnation® Condensed Milk Light in his dish.

The winner of the Highly Commended Dessert prize was **Karen Broom** from Eckington Secondary School, Sheffield. Karen is employed by Edwards & Ward for Derbyshire County Council. Her winning dessert was Banana and Caramel Pudding – a hot Banana and Caramel Sponge Pudding with Cheerios® and a Toffee Sauce. The Nestlé® products Karen used in her dessert were Cheerios®, Carnation® Evaporated Milk Light and Carnation® Caramel Sauce.

The Marketing Certificate of Merit went to **Emma Williams** from Sir Thomas Picton Secondary School, Haverfordwest. Emma is employed by Pembrokeshire County Caterers. This award is made to acknowledge the creativity and efforts put into the display tables produced by the Finalists as a backdrop to their dishes. Service Counter Marketing is one of the eight judging criteria in the Competition. Emma won this category for her highly creative, fun and inspiring Caribbean themed table display.

The 10 School Chef of the Year 2012 National Finalists, came from across Britain and all work at the frontline of school catering, with first hand experience of the challenges of feeding both children and young people. Demonstrating their cooking skills as well as how healthy and creative school meals are, is important to all the School Chefs. This is why they feel taking part in the School Chef of the Year event is such a great opportunity to show just how much school meals have changed for the better.

This annual competition really puts their preparation, cooking, creativity and presentation skills to the test. Each entrant was required to produce, in just one and a half hours, a healthy balanced two-course meal comprising of a main course and dessert that would appeal to eleven year olds in school. A maximum of £1.50p was allowed for the cost of a single meal (i.e. main course and dessert) for one child. Competition sponsor, MAGGI® at Nestlé Professional® included an extensive selection of its products in the competition basket to help contestants' enhance the creativity of their menus such as a choice of MAGGI® Rich & Rustic Tomato Sauce, MAGGI® Gravy mixes and new MAGGI® Mash, as well as MAGGI® Béchamel Sauce, and MAGGI® Demi Glace Sauce too. The Finalists were required to incorporate one of the MAGGI® products in their main course and any Nestlé® product in their dessert.

Chair of the Judging Panel at the 2012 National Final was Justin Clarke, Food Development Chef for MAGGI® at Nestlé Professional®. Also on the Judging Panel was a professional chef judge (WO1 Jon Gray, British Army Culinary Arts Team, Food Services Wing, Defence Logistics School, School, Worthy Down, Hampshire), a local authority catering professional (Kathleen Jones, Local Authority Caterers Association), a leading dietician (Jasmine Challis, British Dietetic Association), the 2011 School Chef of the Year, Louise Witterick from Solihull and an 11 year old boy and girl (Katy Davis and Charlie Black from South Wonston Primary School, nr Winchester, Hampshire).

Commenting on the culinary standard within the Competition, **LACA National Chair, Lynda Mitchell** said: “Through LACA School Chef of the Year Competition, we can send a clear message to Head Teachers and Governors of all schools, as well as to parents and young people, about how important it is for all schools to adhere to one set of Nutritional Standards for food provision. Our talented front line staff need their continued support in order to ensure high quality, nutritious school meals as well as tasty, highly creative and appealing dishes. These meals can make a major contribution towards altering eating habits, changing diets and decreasing obesity levels which in turn, research has shown, will help children and young people to improve their academic and physical performance”.

Nestlé Professional®, Managing Director Neil Stephens added his congratulations to Alison Gann. “School Chef of the Year is more than a competition. It’s a showcase for the often unsung heroes who dedicate their working week to feeding our children and in many cases, are instrumental in improving diets and eating habits. Alison has demonstrated in her recipes that nutrition, health and wellness can go hand-in-hand with tasty dishes that will appeal to the younger generation. It is our responsibility as an industry to continue to support initiatives that play a significant role in helping safeguard the health of the next generation.”

On winning the national title of School Chef of the Year 2012, **Alison Gann** said: “I was so proud to have won the national title. With the standard in the Competition being so exceptionally high, I felt it was an achievement in itself to compete with such a talented group of people. All of this just goes to prove what a good job school chefs do, day in, day out, up and down the country to provide tasty, nutritious meals for millions of children”.

“I am fortunate to have a great team within my employer, authority and school, all of

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whom have backed me and helped me throughout the Competition. I hope that this achievement will also serve to reassure parents everywhere about the high quality, balanced and tasty meals that are provided, not only in my school, Claverham Secondary Community College but across the length and breadth of the country. My employer Chartwells, my Local Authority East Sussex County Council, my school, my colleagues and my students are all absolutely thrilled and honoured by this success. I am looking forward to an exciting year as the new School Chef of the Year 2012”.

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