



OJJDP FACT SHEET

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Culinary Education and Training Program for At-Risk Youth

by Sandra Susan Brunson and E. Wilburn Smith

In 1998, with support from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Johnson & Wales University's (JWU's) North Florida Campus designed and implemented the Culinary Education and Training Program for At-Risk Youth (CETARY), a 9-month, custom-designed culinary arts certificate program. JWU has one of the largest culinary arts divisions in the world. The program provides at-risk youth with specialized, hands-on education and training to help them achieve their goals (educational, work life, etc.) and become productive citizens.

Program Description

The CETARY program offers professional training in one of Miami's high growth industries—food service. The youth referred to the program are 16–18 years of age with at least a ninth-grade academic capability (candidates are tested). Each must have committed a nonviolent crime and either dropped out of high school or be at risk of dropping out. Youth are referred to the program by the 10th and 11th Circuit Courts of Florida, the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, the Florida Department of Children and Families, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service Job Corps, and the Miami Job Corps Center. The CETARY program is seen as a last chance for many of these youth before facing more restrictive sanctions in the juvenile and criminal justice systems.

Participants in CETARY are trained primarily in the art of food preparation. Students take courses such as cooking fundamentals, continental cuisine, introduction to baking, and principles of dining room services. Students also study for a General Equivalency Degree (GED) and participate in personal and professional development courses. Case management services and student employment counselors are available, and each youth's progress is closely monitored throughout the program.

Upon completion of the training program, youth are given two options: they can enter the workforce or continue their education. Students interested in entering the workforce can join a

placement initiative. This initiative assists youth in finding employment and ensures that the food service industry is aware of the CETARY program and the training it provides. Youth who choose to continue their education receive support from the JWU Admissions Office as they prepare to enter a 2-year associate degree program in culinary arts. If accepted at JWU, youth can apply for advance standing as a result of their CETARY program training. Financial assistance is provided.

Program Partnerships

The CETARY program is a collaborative effort of the Judicial Circuit Courts of Florida, Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, Florida Department of Children and Families, USDA Forest Service Job Corps, Miami Job Corps Center, North Miami Elks Lodge #1835, and the Miami-Dade Transit Agency, which provides transportation assistance.

A strong working alliance has also been formed with the Miami-Dade and Broward food service and hospitality industries. This relationship allows youth to periodically study and practice in the public service arena and offers them an opportunity for career placement after completion of the program.

Program Accomplishments

The program has recently implemented an evaluation component. However, it has already demonstrated indicia of effectiveness, such as maintaining a 70-percent retention rate. Since the inception of this program, the President of JWU has deemed the CETARY program one of the Florida campus's top community outreach priorities and, in 1999, the program was highlighted as a model in the University President's Report. Both the Florida Department of Justice and USDA Forest Service Job Corps recognize the CETARY program as a viable employment option for at-risk and delinquent youth. Other communities have contacted JWU to learn more about the program and consider replication. This program not only serves as an alternative to incarceration for

at-risk youth, but gives them an opportunity to learn an employment skill that can improve their chances to become productive members of the community.

For Further Information

For additional information about the CETARY program, contact:
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North Florida Campus
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305-892-7065 (fax)
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The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, and the Office for Victims of Crime.

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