

Super Junior Chefs

Uncovering culinary skills at the first ever CapitaLand Hope Foundation Kids' Food Fund Junior Chef Cooking Competition

Issue: Nov 2012



Budding young chefs in the making, deep in concentration and eager to learn from their team leader Sharon Sng

Delicious aromas wafted through the swanky ToTT cooking studios and at a glance, one would be surprised to see that most of the chefs at work were children! The atmosphere was electrifying as they sliced, chopped and sizzled their way to win a title in the first ever CapitaLand Hope Foundation (CHF) Kids' Food Fund Junior Chef Cooking Competition. 30 children beneficiaries from Food from the Heart were selected to take part in the competition as a way of celebrating Children's Day.

Mr Tan Seng Chai, Deputy Chief Corporate Officer of CapitaLand Limited, said: "The CapitaLand Hope Foundation Kids' Food Fund Junior Chef Cooking Competition is a fun, creative platform for children to learn about food nutrition. We hope to equip the underprivileged children with simple culinary skills and educate them on how accessible and tasty nutritious food can be. These children will then be more encouraged to eat better, grow healthily and have a better head start in life. This is in line with CapitaLand Hope Foundation's focus on supporting programmes for the shelter, education and healthcare needs of underprivileged children in Singapore and overseas."



Chefs ahoy for the CapitaLand Hope Foundation Kids' Food Fund Junior Chef Cooking Competition

The children were divided into 10 teams with each led by a CapitaLand staff volunteer. The teams had befitting yummy names such as 'Team Marshmallows' and 'Team Hotcakes'. They dived right into an intense discussion after a quick introduction on kitchen rules and were guided to plan the menu for a balanced diet. A flurry of activity ensued after the discussion time was up because it was time for some real action.

"I learnt how to mix vegetables into the dishes so that it is more nutritious. Before this, I did not like to eat vegetables, but now, I like it because the recipe tastes nice," said Amirul Hikmah, Primary Six student from Xishan Primary School.

Fellow schoolmate Kymalie Foo enthusiastically added, "I learnt how to choose nutritious ingredients when cooking and also decorate and display the dishes. I will cook the dishes for my family on special occasions in the future!"

Master Chefs with a Heart



A helpful booklet memento for students packed with cooking tips, kitchen rules and food nutrition

Just as excited were the staff volunteers from CapitaLand. Armed with the mission to teach the children about nutrition and food safety, some team leaders also made the effort to impart simple culinary skills to them.

Sarah Seet, Senior Manager, Investment & Asset Management, CapitaMalls Asia, said: "To prepare the kids for the competition so that only minimal supervision is required, I prepared step-by-step instructions accompanied by photographs as reference for the recipes planned. More difficult steps which required the use of knives were also demonstrated to the children beneficiaries so that they know how to work safely in the kitchen."

Another team leader, IT Manager of CapitaMalls Asia, Ethan Quek, enjoyed his first-time volunteering experience thoroughly. "It's double-edged: it's fun and we are imparting a skill that will stay with them for the rest of their lives," he said. "I am very proud of my team, regardless the outcome!"



Team leader Sarah Seet (left) sharing recipes which she tried and tested on her own young kids. Team leader Ethan Quek (right) shows that man can cook too!

Presenting... Super Junior Chefs!

As the clock ticked down the last seconds of the two-hour culinary showdown, the junior chefs scurried to make final adjustments to their masterpieces.

The children beamed with pride as they presented their winning creations to the panel of judges comprising Mr Tan Seng Chai, Deputy Chief Corporate Officer of CapitaLand Limited; Ms Tan Bee Leng, General Manager of CHF; and volunteer chef Vivian Pei.



The mouth-watering dishes that got the judges cracking their brains

Dishes were assessed based on nutritional value, creativity, tastiness, how economical the dishes were and teamwork. Ng Zi Heng, Primary Six student from Boon Lay Garden Primary School exhibited the best culinary skill and bagged the Master Junior Chef medal, in addition to the Yummy Junior Chef team prize he won. Elated and lost for words, he simply managed, "I had a lot of fun! And we made these dishes with heart."

Together with his team mates from Team Muffins, led by staff volunteer Lynette Tee, Vice President of Finance, CapitaLand Limited, they prepared a delectable spread that consisted of Rainbow Fried Rice, Golden Pond and Soup of the Day. "It was quite an experience teaching the kids," said Tee. "On the whole, I left the cooking to them but still guided them along. They were a bit stressed because it was a competition, but they still had a lot of fun."



Ng receiving the Master Junior Chef award from volunteer chef Vivian Pei (left) and Mr Tan Seng Chai, Deputy CCO, CapitaLand Limited (right)

"I am extremely happy and proud of my whole team because they worked very well together and really enjoyed themselves," said staff volunteer Sharon Sng, Senior Vice President of Corporate Finance, CapitaLand Limited, who led Team Cheezel to win the 'Creative Junior Chef' team prize. "I am very impressed with the children; they took the initiative to chop and clean up after every dish. Education is important but so are life skills like cooking!"

Cooking up a Storm for a Good Cause



Mr Tan Seng Chai, Deputy CCO, CapitaLand Limited (left) presenting the cheque donation to Mr Anson Quek, Executive Director of Food from the Heart

At the end of the exciting competition, Mr Tan presented a S\$100,000 cheque donation to Mr Anson Quek, Executive Director of Food from the Heart.

For the third year running, CHF's donation will enable 100 children from Xishan Primary School and Boon Lay Garden Primary School to benefit from a year's supply of nutritious food. Under the Kids' Food Fund programme, students from needy families can expect to receive a monthly goodie bag containing rice, cooking oil, canned food and other basic food items.

“With CapitaLand Hope Foundation’s continued support, the children can continue to receive their nutritious food supplies. I believe the nutritious food supplies will not only lighten their family’s financial burden, but also provide the children with adequate nutrition to help them in schools and grow to their potential,” said Mr Anson Quek, Executive Director of Food from the Heart.

As the event wrapped up, the children finally had a chance to tuck into the fruits of their labour. From the look of pride and satisfaction on their faces, it would be a Children’s Day they would remember for a long time to come.



An educational day of fun and laughter that culminated with the presentation of the cheque for Food from the Heart