

## Felicity School Culinary Program



What can be better than Chicken Marsala on a Monday? How about Fried Plantains on Tuesday (based on a special family recipe!) and custom omelets mid-week on Wednesday? Perhaps we can round out the week with exercise on Thursday and mango smoothies on Friday? Well.... What if it is delivered to your classroom by students! How can you not smile?!

This was a typical week at Felicity School this past summer with the culinary arts program we founded in 2019.

Since our establishment, Felicity School has always celebrated accomplishments and birthdays with food, but since moving to the Berto Center (the former home of the Chicago Bulls), we have been able to continue to celebrate milestone events, but also create new and fun celebrations as well. In moving into our new facility, we acquired a restaurant quality, industrial kitchen that we were not sure how to leverage with our students. Now, two years later, our school staff continue to be impressed with the enormous change the addition of a restaurant grade kitchen has done to the culture of a school, the positivity of students, the growth of opportunities for students, and the ability to create authentic and experiential learning.

Virtually every student at Felicity has expressed interest in cooking and the culinary arts, so our staff responded with classes, additional equipment, curriculum opportunities and other kitchen-based experiences. We were able to develop passions for some kids, while creating positive outlets for students to be creative, learn experientially, and accept responsibility. All

students utilizing the kitchen have enrolled and completed kitchen safety course, and play an active day to day role in what we prepare each day.

Always looking for ways to improve an already popular and successful program, we began to wonder how Felicity could take our culinary programs to the next level. We found our answer in The ROCKS Group. The ROCKS Group, founders of 5 established restaurants around the north side of Chicago, sat down with Felicity school faculty, staff and students to brainstorm on how to better take advantage of a commercial kitchen in our community, and how make better and mutual use of the kitchen equipment at The Berto Center. After creatively thinking about the possibilities, a partnership formed. Working with the Village of Deerfield, Felicity and ROCKS were able to apply and receive approval for zoning to become a carry out restaurant. As part of the agreement with the village, ROCKS and Felicity will be able to share resources, people, and skills while modeling effective teamwork between organizations, and on top of this, provide a high quality carry out options for families using our facility at night, using Felicity students in key roles in preparing meals for our community.

The results will be plentiful for Felicity, ROCKS and the community at large. Benefits for the Felicity community include:

- A new established restaurant will be in the area for people to enjoy
- Additional options will be for families who have athletics play at North Shore Sports and Wellness whether practicing during the week or competing on the weekends
- Tremendous opportunities for kids
  - Current jobs and career development
  - Work experiences across many skills
  - Experiential learning- We will be able to tie activities in the kitchen to augment our curriculum in the following
    - Cooking
    - Accounting
    - Marketing and Advertising
    - Budgeting, forecasting, inventory
    - Science of cooking
    - Proportions
    - Life Skills
- ROCKS will try to replicate success with the changes to carryout services they did in the city to this area, and hopefully provide Felicity students the training and experience that will allow them to seamlessly integrate themselves in the food service industry upon graduation.

Please celebrate our newest student endeavor as we continue supporting high-quality teaching, learning, and life skills development!