



## **The National Association of Care Catering Care Cook of the Year 2015 is crowned**

Oliver Smith has been crowned the *National Association of Care Catering (NACC) Care Cook of the Year 2015*. The chef at Wetherby Manor care home, Wetherby, claimed the coveted title at the national final of the culinary competition.

Barking & Dagenham College's Technical Skills Academy played host to the finale of the annual competition that spotlights the skill, talent and dedication to excellence demonstrated by chefs in the care sector on a daily basis.

In front of industry colleagues, associations and media, 11 worthy finalists pulled out all the stops to impress the judges with their specially-created menus that showcased real knowledge and understanding of the nutritional and dietary needs of those in a care environment, as well as innovation and flair.

Oliver's winning menu of *pork tenderloin, celeriac purée, crispy potatoes and apple followed by chocolate mousse with beetroot* gave him the edge that clinched the top prize. Oliver impressed the judges with his well-balanced menu that tasted great and was fun to eat. He also demonstrated innovative use of beetroot in the dessert, great cooking of the pork and delivered on a nutrition front.

Oliver said on his win: "I am overwhelmed that I have won, especially within a group of such talented and like-minded chefs. The food they all produced was amazing. I absolutely loved the opportunity to meet other chefs and get an insight into what they do and their opinions. I also made new friends. It really has been an incredible experience.

"My residents have all tried my winning dishes so they will be thrilled that I have won!"

Matthew Dodge of Coombe Hill Manor in Kingston-upon-Thames took second place, with Samantha Smallwood of Sunrise Senior Living of Edgbaston taking third place.

Matthew Dodge was also awarded *Highly Commended Main*, with Paul Burch of Dukes Court Care Home, Wellingborough, receiving *Highly Commended Dessert*.

Neel Radia, National Chair, NACC, says about the national final: "What a fantastic national final. Congratulations to Oliver, our NACC Care Cook of the Year 2015. The competition

was fierce and Oliver proved that he is at the top of his game. All the finalists put on an incredible show of culinary excellence and they should be applauded for their achievements. They proved themselves to be superb ambassadors for catering in the care sector.

“Catering for care environments requires specific skills, knowledge and commitment to ensure that the dietary and nutritional needs of the elderly and vulnerable are met. Important factors such as nutrition, budget restrictions, specific dietary requirements and needs, such as dementia, dysphagia and fortification, menu planning and regulations must be understood. On top of this, they must also possess the culinary ability and creativity to consistently create great-tasting and attractive food that keeps service users excited. It’s clear from every stage of the competition that these vital skills are present in abundance in care settings across the UK.”

One of the longest-standing independent recipe competitions in the UK, the NACC Care Cook of the Year competition successfully raises the profile of the care catering sector as an exciting career choice and champions those working within it.

Open to all chefs and cooks in the care sector (both NACC members and non-members), entrants are required to create a delicious and nutritionally balanced two-course menu, main and dessert, suitable for service users in a care setting and with a total food cost of no more than £1.50 per head based on four portions.

In just 90 minutes they are tasked with producing a first-class menu that demonstrates innovation, costing ability, suitability for the environment, adherence to nutrition guidelines, great taste, and overall menu balance.

As well as the esteemed title of NACC Care Cook of the Year 2015, the overall winner received a superb prize package and trophy.

The final was held at Barking & Dagenham College’s Technical Skills Academy. Each year around 500 students, age 16-18, enrol at the Academy for technical and professional training with a clear line of sight to work. The next generation of professional chefs learn in spacious, well-equipped training kitchens, as well as learning on-the-job in the Academy’s commercial restaurant and café which are open to the public. As well as catering and hospitality, students can choose a variety of subjects including construction, childcare, digital and IT, media-makeup, hairdressing and beauty therapy.

For more information on the NACC Care Cook of the Year 2015 competition visit [www.thenacc.co.uk](http://www.thenacc.co.uk).

**Ends**

**Notes to editors:**

- The competition is supported by the Worshipful Company of Cooks

- **The NACC**

The National Association of Care Catering (NACC) is a progressive organisation representing professionals providing catering to the care industry. They are recognised by Local Authorities, independent providers, the charitable sector and Government departments as a prime source of information and opinion on all aspects of catering within the care sector and whose primary aim is to improve standards.

The NACC works with a number of partners to:

- Promote and enrich the standard of catering within the care sector, whether that catering be provided by Social Care Departments or other Caring Agencies
- Provide a forum for debate among individuals, companies and organisations of all kinds involved in catering for the care sector
- Facilitate the exchange of information, experience and expertise
- Promote the development of professional standards among those involved in catering for the care sector
- Commission research into matters relating to catering for the care sector
- Publish guidelines, policy papers and authoritative statements on all aspects of catering for the care sector

[www.thenacc.co.uk](http://www.thenacc.co.uk)

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