



Stuart Middleton crowned NACC Care Chef of the Year 2017

The National Association of Care Catering (NACC) crowned the 2017 NACC Care Chef of the Year at the national final, yesterday (Wednesday 7 June). Stuart Middleton of Meallmore Lodge Care Home, Inverness, was victorious in the respected culinary competition that seeks out the UK's best chef working in the care sector.

At Barking & Dagenham College's Technical Skills Academy, the 11 finalists from across the NACC's six regions demonstrated exceptional culinary skills, creativity and knowledge in this specialist field of catering as they produced innovative and delicious two-course menus under the watchful eyes of the panel of judges.

After 90 minutes of intense competition, Stuart claimed the NACC Care Chef of the Year 2017 title with his winning menu of *Traditional fayre with flair: Haggis, neeps and tatties* followed by a dessert of *Culloden Cranachan (A Meallmore twist on a classic)*.

The judges praised Stuart for an excellent menu and approach that delivered on taste, skill and presentation and showed clear understanding of his clientele. They were impressed by the authenticity of his dishes, his innovative interpretation of classics, the use of regional ingredients, his attention to detail, and the passion he shows through working with residents to create his menus.

Stuart Middleton said on winning: "I'm overwhelmed to have won. I didn't expect it as the calibre of the other finalists was unbelievable.

"I competed last year but I was nervous and didn't know what to expect, so I over-complicated everything. This year I simplified it. I engaged with my residents to create a menu they love and that's Scottish through and through. I definitely enjoyed the final more this year. What an amazing day!"

Peter McGregor of Perry Manor, Worcester, took second place, with Martin McKee of The Hawthorns, Aldridge, taking third place.

Stuart Middleton was also awarded *Highly Commended Main* and Martin McKee took *Highly Commended Dessert*.

Neel Radia, the NACC's national chair, said: "Congratulations to Stuart Middleton on being crowned NACC Care Chef of the Year 2017. What a fantastic achievement!

"2017 marks the 30th anniversary of the NACC and this wonderful competition has been instrumental in our ongoing and successful work to highlight the amazing culinary talent within the care sector. Care chefs have to be highly skilled and knowledgeable to cater for the elderly and vulnerable. In this very specific area of catering, as well as ensuring meals are nutritionally balanced and beneficial, they must think about catering for individual physical and emotional needs such as special diets, cultural requirements, social preferences, reduced appetites and eating difficulties caused by conditions such as dementia and dysphagia. As we have seen today, care chefs do an incredible job creating a variety of impressive dishes that are delicious and visually appealing, and wouldn't look out of place in a top restaurant.

"Every year the standard of entries and food produced by all competitors gets stronger and stronger. It was a thrilling final and every chef should be very proud of their achievements both in this competition and in their jobs every day. They are brilliant ambassadors for the care sector and we salute them all."

Sponsored by the Worshipful Company of Cooks and Premier Foods, the NACC Care Chef of the Year competition spotlights the care catering sector and the talented, qualified chefs operating within it. Entrants are challenged to create a nutritionally-balanced, two-course menu (main and dessert) that is suitable for service users in a care setting. The combined food cost for both courses must be no more than £2.25 per head based on four portions and it is to be produced in just 90 minutes.

The name of the prestigious culinary competition changed from NACC Care Cook of the Year to **NACC Care Chef of the Year** for 2017, in recognition of the culinary

excellence and professionalism within the sector and the specialist skills and knowledge demanded of and demonstrated by chefs.

For more information on the NACC Care Chef of the Year 2017 competition visit www.thenacc.co.uk

Ends

Notes to editors:

- Finalists' menus available on request

Barking & Dagenham College's Technical Skills Academy

The NACC Care Chef of the Year final will be 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 restaurant. As well as catering and hospitality, students can choose a variety of subjects including construction, plumbing, childcare, digital and IT, media-makeup, ESOL, business, hairdressing and beauty therapy.

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

For further information contact: Berenice Pretlove at press@thenacc.co.uk / 07508 146 118.