



Photo by Cory A. Thompson - Asst. Arts & Features Editor

Culinary student Donnie McGann and cooking coach Michael Gentry discuss tricks of the trade.

Local chef teaches vegetarian cooking

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Five minutes into the cooking class, blood flowed into the slaw. The crimson mixed with the fleshy-purple interior of the vegetable and the laughter at the irony of a class called "Everyone Cooks."

Donnie McGann, a foster kid turned culinary student, noticed the gash first. He laid down his project, baked apples stuffed with raisins and cherry butter, and gestured towards the scars on his own hands.

"Wounds of the kitchen," he said. "If you don't think about cutting your fingers then you won't. You'll get the hang of it."

An Asheville food enthusiast named Michael Gentry, better known as the "sustainable gourmet," hosts the event, which drew community members and culinary students to the UNC Asheville despite January's bitter cold.

Gentry set up stations complete with ingredients and recipes for students to create dishes independently while he roamed and answered questions. As soon as Gentry walked away from the

slaw station, disaster struck.

His advice helped. Two hours and one blue bandage later, with the help of Gentry and his small team of instructors, a class comprised of students and community members alike produced 18 vegetarian dishes, including a miraculously blood-free turnip, celery, apricot and ginger slaw.

McGann and Collin Morton, a fellow student, attended "Everyone Cooks" as a field trip through the Eliada School of Trade Arts, an Asheville culinary school. The program teaches cooking to young adults who aged out of the foster care program. **Donna McCrain, their instructor,** accompanied them.

According to McCrain, cooking provides a secure future for those in jeopardy of being left behind by the system.

"We give our students the opportunity to be outstanding citizens, get great jobs, do internships, go off, get married and keep passing the love," McCrain said. "It's a big circle of love, eventually."

At the stove, community members of all ages worked alongside Eliada students.

Kathleen Cantwell, a recent transplant from Chicago, said she

has been searching for a satisfying vegetarian cooking class.

"Michael is helpful without breathing down your neck," Cantwell said. "It's a good balance. I don't need vast instruction on how to slice a tomato."

In the case of one community member, exotic ingredients led to confusion about what exactly she was cooking.

"This recipe is called spicy pickled celery," said **Amy Kemp, a community member who took the class.** "I'm not sure what makes it spicy."

After the cooking was finished, Gentry led a discussion on nutrition and food availability.

"As we eat well today, we build tomorrow's health," Gentry said. "When you look down at your plate and see all the colors of the rainbow, then you know you're getting all the nutrients you need for a strong body."

For one student, the best type of food is the food on her plate.

"I'm an opportunist." **Helen Sutherland, a participant,** said. "I eat what I'm served."

Classes are held in Sherrill Center Room 346 every Tuesday from 6-8:30 p.m. with a cost of \$25 a session.

Diversity enthralls exchange students

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For international students studying at UNC Asheville, the city offers a little piece of everything.

With so many colleges and universities around the world, international students said they observe the diversity Asheville attracts.

Maija Puupponen, a Finland native said she settled upon Asheville because she heard nothing but good things. She also said she had a friend from Finland who studied at UNCA last year who loved it.

According to **Lindsey Goff, an international exchange student,** Asheville did not rank as her first choice of university. After doing a little research on the town and university; however, Goff was excited to start her studies here.

"I like that it is a small school in a very artsy and unique town," Goff said.

Emine Ak's, an international student from Turkey, said the diverse restaurants and music shops in the downtown area of Asheville caught her eye.

Ak also said she loves the fresh air and is not used to it because due to a larger population in Turkey, more pollution impacts the country.

Although according to university statistics, only 3,600 students comprise the school's population, exchange students said they feel UNCA offers many opportunities to study abroad on its campus.

International students from across eight countries, which include France, Denmark, Korea and Canada, said they even enjoy the cafeteria food provided in Brown Hall.

"I love the dining hall and food," Ak

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