

## **Chef to School Series: Reflection**

*Please prepare a personal reflection on this installment of Pinkerton Academy's "Chef to School Series." You must include, but are not limited to, a reflection of your strengths, struggles, learning moments, and goals moving forward. In addition, reflect on what you learned from this experience, how these experiences will help prepare you for your future both inside and outside of the restaurant and hospitality industry, and what you want to learn more about?*

This Chef to School Dinner was a lot of fun. Before we began working on this project, I had no idea how much grocery stores marked up food prices. Now I know what a restaurant pays for ingredients and how to use those prices to make sure the restaurant can cover its costs by using the right food cost percent to mark up the prices and make money.

Through this experience, I thought I was relatively strong and happy with my performance. I learned that I can be a good communicator and also how important teamwork is in the restaurant industry. In class we usually work independently or in pairs to make a recipe or create a dish. In this event, we all worked to the one big common goal of having a successful dinner and make sure all of the guests were happy and well taken care of. I also learned how to shuck oysters and got to try some new foods that I probably would never get when I go out to eat with my family or friends.

In this event, I also was able to highlight some things I would like to work on. I found that one of my biggest struggles was consistency of my knife cuts. Before this year I never knew how to use a chef knife, so I am still new to it. I know I need to work on becoming a bit faster while not sacrificing the quality of my work. Proper knife cuts are important to make sure things cook evenly, and when they are consistent that look really nice on the plate too.

For the next Chef to School Dinner, I have a few goals. I want to make sure I do all I can to increase my prep time. It's kind of crazy to see how fast our chef instructors and guest chef work, and I want to work on getting to that level and think it will happen as I gain more experience and confidence in the kitchen. I also want to gain some experience in the Front of the House, too. This event wasn't my Front of House rotation, so I look forward to gaining that experience next time and learning that aspect of the industry.

This event was a lot of work and I was pretty exhausted by the end of the day. That being said, it was a very valuable experience. I saw the passion of the guest chef and my instructors, and it is inspiring. This event helps me have a better understanding of what a day in the life of a real chef is like and what to expect. I also was able to see why professionalism, teamwork, and work ethic are so important and how learning those skills can translate to almost anything job or career I choose.