



**Sault College Media Release
For Immediate Release**

Student Cooks Up Bronze Medal in Ontario Skills Competition

(Sault Ste. Marie, ON May 11, 2017) – Sault College student, Lydia Rodgers, found her love of cooking while studying in the Culinary Management program at the College – a passion that led her to third place in the Culinary Arts scope of the recent Ontario skills competition – post-secondary. The event, which took place last week, is Canada’s largest skilled trade and technology competition!

Lydia, a graduate of the Culinary Management program and recent graduate of the Business Management program at Sault College, applied to compete in the competition. Lydia was selected by the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development to represent the North for the post-secondary culinary competition, which allowed her to demonstrate her skills and passion for cooking.

Lydia worked tirelessly to prepare for this exciting event. Competing against 25 individuals, Lydia was tasked with creating three dishes – an appetizer, entrée and dessert – each containing a mystery ingredient.

“I was told what the mystery ingredients were one week before the competition and had some time to figure out and test my dishes with my chefs,” says Lydia. This time provided Lydia with the opportunity to perfect her award winning dishes – a shrimp and scallop mousseline appetizer, pan-seared red snapper for an entrée, and bread and butter pudding with caramel application for dessert!

The intense competition saw Lydia and her competitors complete each dish within a set amount of time in addition to the five minutes allotted for plating each dish. The competitors and their dishes were then judged based on several criteria including: sanitation, presentation, taste test, time efficiency, and an interview component.

“This experience was incredible. I was honoured just to be there and participate alongside so many other talented individuals,” says Lydia. “Being a part of this competition has helped me to build my skill set and has certainly helped me become a better chef. It has given me structure and discipline while doing what I love to do,” she adds.

Lydia’s amazing accomplishment is shared with her mentors and Chefs here at Sault College. “The support I’ve received from my Chefs is incredible. They have helped me to develop my skills and have had confidence in my abilities. I could not have done it without them,” Lydia says of Sault College employees Chef Sarah Birkenhauer and Chef Jennifer Healey.

Chefs Birkenhauer and Healey were instrumental in helping Lydia achieve this milestone. “We are so proud of Lydia and her hard-work and determination,” says Sarah Birkenhauer. “She has an amazing talent and this recognition is well-deserved,” she adds.

Chef Healey adds “it has been such a great experience working with Lydia to help prepare her for this one-of-a-kind competition. She has been an exceptional student and has a true passion for cooking, which was showcased in this competition. She has definitely made us and the College very proud!”

Lydia has now embarked on a new journey beginning her career in the culinary arts. She’ll spend the next few weeks in New York cooking for an event hosted by the Community Youth Program. She’ll then begin her new job as head chef for a catering company in Stirling, Ontario. “I’ve always wanted to work for a catering company and am excited that I am achieving my goals,” says Lydia. “I couldn’t have done it without the teaching and learning I’ve gained at Sault College,” she adds.

Lydia is one of eight siblings in her family that are currently or have previously attended Sault College. “We love Sault College – it is an amazing school,” she adds.

The entire Sault College community congratulates Lydia on this outstanding accomplishment and wish her well in all of her future endeavours!

To learn more about the Skills Ontario competition, visit <http://www.skillsontario.com/competitions/post-sec>.

To learn more about Lydia and her siblings who have attended Sault College, check out this great Sootoday story by Darren Taylor, <https://www.sootoday.com/local-news/meet-six-really-nice-people-522579>.

About Sault College

The vision of Sault College is to provide a transformative life experience through empowering those who study with us to think and learn in progressive, innovative ways, including those we have not yet imagined. Sault College grants Ontario College certificates, diplomas, advanced diplomas, graduate certificates, and degrees to its graduates. The College is the largest deliverer of apprenticeship training in all of Northern Ontario. Educating over 2,300 full-time and 4,000 part-time students each year, Sault College has a significant economic impact on the community, with spin-offs in excess of \$158 million. Over \$1.8 million dollars in scholarships, bursaries and awards are distributed annually to students at the College. Located on the border to the United States and situated in the middle of three of the largest Great Lakes on the planet, Sault College is one of 24 publicly-funded colleges in the province of Ontario.

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