ASHEBORO — School nutrition managers from across the state had the opportunity to participate in the N.C. K-12 Culinary Institute.

School nutrition managers Paula Trogdon and Melissa Smith from the Randolph County School System (RCSS) participated in a K-12 Culinary Institute regional workshop on July 24-26 at Hawfields Middle School in Mebane.

The institute, designed to enhance nutrition offerings, has been funded in part by a U.S. Department of Agriculture Professional Standards Training Grant received by the N.C. Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) School Nutrition Section.

“The K-12 Culinary Institute is a unique opportunity for our school nutrition professionals to enhance culinary skills and glean tools and information critical to their important roles in providing quality, nutritious school meals,” said Donna Osborne, director of School Nutrition for RCSS.

The face-to-face and online institute was developed by the NCDPI, School Nutrition Section, and Chef Cyndie Story’s K-12 Culinary Team, to meet five core objectives:

■ Improve student health, well-being and academic success through nutritious, appealing meals at school.
■ Increase participation in high quality, enticing school nutrition programs.
■ Expand capacity of local school nutrition programs to purchase, prepare and serve fresh, locally grown produce.
■ Increase consumption of fruits, vegetables and whole grain-rich foods.
■ Provide continuing education opportunities for school nutrition personnel.

The menus and recipes developed for the institute include:

■ Scratch, convenience and modified scratch products and techniques.
■ Instructions written for production amounts consistent with pack or pan sizes commonly available in school kitchens.
■ Nutritional analysis files for easy import into software programs and adjustments for standardization in Local Education Agencies (LEAs).

Planned instructional segments include topics such as knife skills, weighing and measuring accurately, preparing foods for just-in-time service, work simplification and scheduling, effective use of equipment and quality food preparation and service for a variety of meals, grains, fruits, vegetables and condiments.

The institute participants graduate as chef ambassadors and culinary specialists. These ambassadors will be prepared to teach other school nutrition professionals at the school level. Equipping school nutrition professionals with needed equipment, educational resources and skills can positively impact the preparation, service and consumption of school meals.

USDA and NCDPI are equal opportunity providers and employers. For more information regarding School Nutrition Programs in North Carolina, visit the School Nutrition Services website, childnutrition.ncpublicschools.gov/.

SERVICE WITH A SMILE — School nutrition managers Paula Trogdon, left, and Melissa Smith, from the Randolph County School System, take part in a K-12 Culinary Institute regional workshop.

Contributed photo

 Locals graduate from culinary institute

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