

## Open house to explore careers in the culinary arts

**By Colleen Montague**  
*Staff Writer*

HOLYOKE – Residents of Holyoke and the surrounding communities had a chance to tour Holyoke Community College's (HCC) Culinary Arts Institute last week as part of the college's Taste and Tour open house event.

The Culinary Arts Institute, located at the former factory The Cubit at 164 Race St., opened for spring semester classes in January 2018 and features five uniquely designed kitchens, three classrooms, student lounges, staff offices, conference space, and a banquet-sized dining room. HCC was able to update their culinary arts program facility, which used to be on their main campus, after MGM

resorts announced in 2014 they would build a resort-casino in Springfield. HCC was awarded an economic development grant for \$1.75 million for the project, as well as a \$229,000 allocation through the state Executive Office's Workforce Skills Capital Grant program for equipment. The program also received additional support for the project from MGM, the city of Holyoke, U.S. Economic Development Administration, the HCC Foundation and the governor's office.

The Taste and Tour on April 11 was just one of several open houses HCC has held at the Culinary Arts Institute. They held one in April 2018 when the college held their grand opening.

*See CULINARY, page 11*

## **CULINARY**, *from page 1*

Attendees could tour the 20,000-square-foot facility, get information about courses and programs they could take. They got to sample different appetizers made by students currently enrolled in the culinary arts program alongside faculty chefs. Between 200 and 250 people attended the open house according to admissions staff.

“The idea was to invite in people from the community who may be curious about the new facility, as well as share information with anyone who might be interested in enrolling in the Culinary Arts program or taking classes there,” Chris Yurko, media relations manager at HCC, said about the event. “This year we also incorporated an open house at the adjacent Freight Farms hydroponic container farm on Race Street, so people could wander in there and see how we’re growing leafy greens all year long.” Yurko added that, according to admissions staff, many people expressed interest in HCC’s culinary arts programs.

Programs at the Culinary Arts Institute include a one-year certificate program and a brand-new two-year associate of science degree in culinary arts, as well as workforce development classes at various times throughout the year depending on the program and how long it runs. Credit courses will run on a standard semester schedule. This fall HCC will be offering 15 classes in the culinary arts, which are available in their fall registration booklet.

“The students in the programs are learning to work in a commercial restaurant kitchen,” Yurko said. “They’re learning how to cook, how to work in the front and back of the house, how to prepare and serve meals for small, intimate groups and large groups in a banquet-style dining room. Over the past year, a lot of our graduates have gone on to work for MGM.”

Additional information about HCC’s culinary arts programs is available on their website. Those interested in applying for the coming classes can visit [hcc.edu/apply](http://hcc.edu/apply), contact the Admissions Office at [admissions@hcc.edu](mailto:admissions@hcc.edu) or call 413-552-2321.