



Lujana Winkles (center) of the Weinerschnitzel corporate office in Irvine, talks to Chino Hills High culinary arts students about interview skills. Seated to the right is Jennie Frick, a Weinerschnitzel franchisee with restaurants in Chino, Anaheim, and Long Beach.

Chino Hills High culinary students learn interview skills from restaurant industry professionals

Students in Jennell Acker's culinary classes at Chino Hills High in Chino received a crash course in job interviewing Tuesday (Oct. 25, 2016) from three representatives of the Wiener Schnitzel restaurant chain.

The event was part of the California Restaurant Association Foundation's third annual Force-in-Training (FIT) Day. The day is designed to help prepare high school students across the state for a career in the restaurant or hospitality industries.

During FIT Day, students learn skills designed to serve them for life, including putting together a solid resume, acing a job interview, and highlighting their value to a potential employer. "They also learned about professionalism, positive attitude, and work ethic – skills critical to success in any career," Acker said in a press release about the day.

“This program has been life-changing for my students,” she said. “From our work in the classroom and through events like FIT Day, it’s amazing to watch these kids be inspired to discover new passions and a world of opportunity in front of them.”

Acker, who is also Chino Hills High’s business academy’s lead teacher, talked about her own experiences being interviewed for a job. She suggested that applicants should do some research on a company before interviewing with them so they will show they have interest in the firm.

“My first job became my career,” Sandy Niles, a Wienerschnitzel franchisee and multiple restaurant operator, said of her initial job as a server at Wienerschnitzel. “That first job, you never forget it.” A first job gives a young person the skills they need for almost any job in the future because they learn the culture, rules and requirements of a workplace, Niles said.

Applicants should not only be on time for an interview, but be there early, Niles said. “That tells me you’re ready, you’re serious,” she said.

“That’s my first test (for an applicant),” said Jennie Frick, a Wienerschnitzel franchisee with restaurants in Chino, Anaheim, and Long Beach.

Bring a resume or list of accomplishments, a pen or pencil, and paper for note taking to the interview, advised Niles, Frick, and Lujana Winkles, director of operations from Wienerschnitzel’s corporate office in Irvine.

Niles suggested that students practice interviewing with friends or family before the actual job interview. “Be confident in what you are saying,” she said. Niles also discouraged students from answering interview questions with just a yes or no because that does not impress future employers.

Frick suggested smiling and speaking friendly. She said that behavior is often an indicator of how a new employee will treat customers.

“Make eye contact, look up, sit up,” advised Winkles.

“Dress appropriately, don’t show so much skin, don’t wear flip-flops,” Niles said. “You can never get back that first impression.” She also suggested sending a thank you note afterwards to the interviewer to show continued interest in the job.

“Remember that the person in front of you isn’t the only one evaluating you,” Niles said. Other employees may be asked to provide input into what they think of an applicant, she said.

“One of the worst things you can say (during an interview) is Mom and Dad are making me work,” advised Frick. She told the students it would be more impressive to say “I am working to pay for my cell phone bill, my car insurance.”

It's good when applicants ask questions of the interviewer, said Winkles. "If you want to impress someone, ask questions. You need to understand what you are getting into."

Niles suggested that teens should be ready to answer the question "what are your biggest accomplishments?" She said many applicants are stumped by that question. She said she always asks "why should I hire you?"

"This is where I want you to brag about yourself," she said. The answers to that question help her determine what an applicant will offer to customers and bring to the restaurant team, she said.

Niles asked the students what they should do if they had interviewed and had not heard back about the job. She suggested calling the interviewer to briefly re-cap the interview and express continued interest in the job. "I can't tell you how many people I've hired from call-backs," she said.

Chino Hills High is involved in ProStart, a California Restaurant Association Foundation (CRAF) program that provides introductory culinary arts training and hospitality management career exploration programs for high school students. The school also features a culinary facility where students can put their skills to work.

For more information about the 2016 FIT Day or CRAF's ProStart program, visit www.craef.org. To learn more about Chino Hills High's culinary arts program, contact the school.

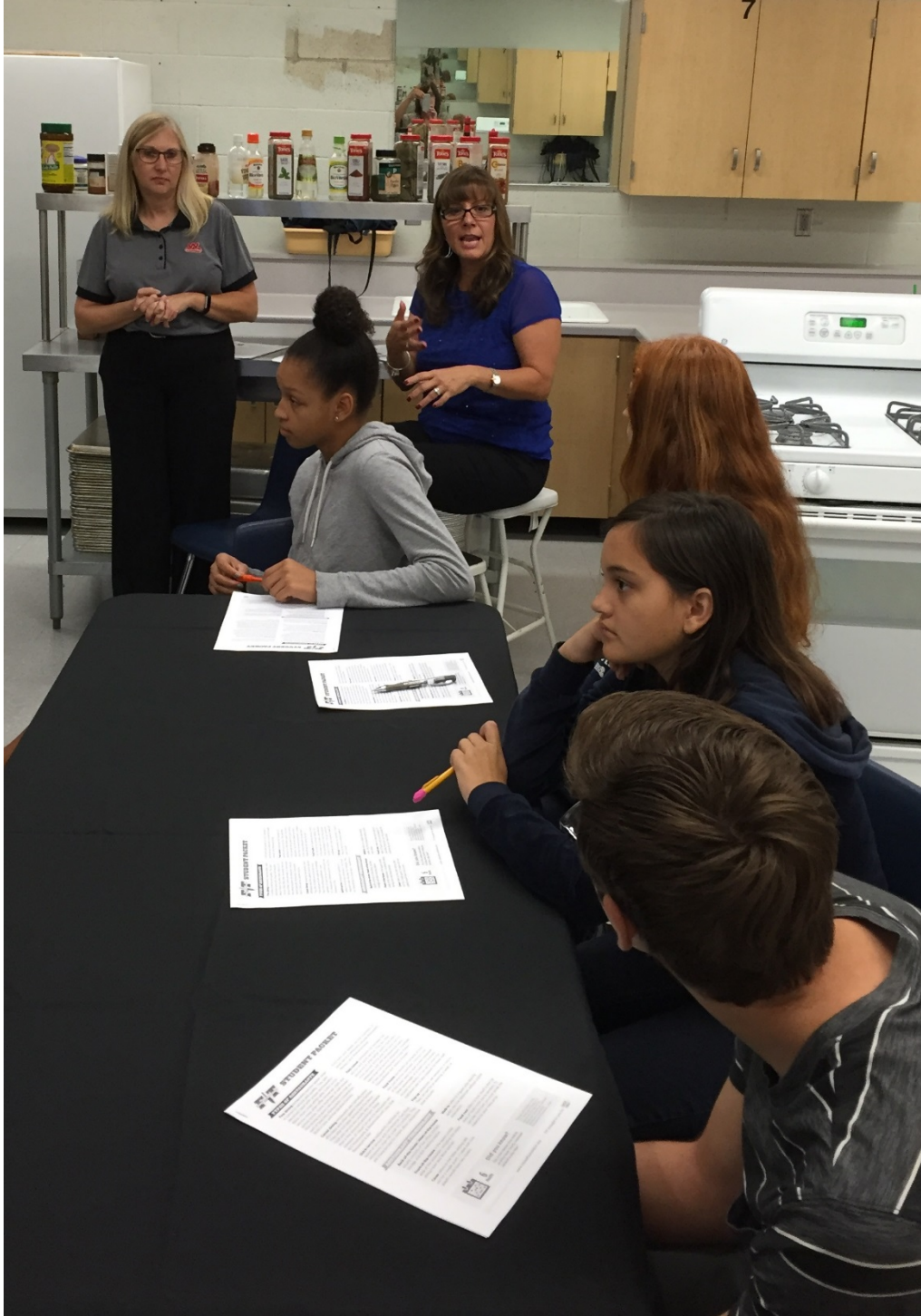
(See more photos below)



Sandy Niles (right), a Wienerschnitzel franchisee and operator of several restaurants, talks to students about the interviewing process.



Chino Hills High culinary arts teacher Jennell Acker tells students about her own interview experiences.



Wienerschnitzel franchisee Jennie Frick (right) tells Chino Hills High students what she likes to see in a job applicant. Also pictured is Lujana Winkles of Wienerschnitzel's corporate office in Irvine.