

**Teen Iron Chefs of  
Urban Assembly School of Music & Art, Brooklyn, NY**

**Adriana LeRoy, Age 16, Grade 11**

I have always had a passion to cook. Since i was a little girl, I was interested in what my parents were doing in the kitchen. I've wanted to cook professionally for such a long time. So when Teen Iron Chef as offered in school last year, I jumped on the opportunity! While participating in the program, I learned a lot about health and nutrition. I realized that while there is a fruit stand right under my apartment building, I wasn't aware of the variety they offered until i learned how to cook in school. The program helped me to discover a bigger variety of fruits and vegetables that while they were always right in front of me at that stand, were unfamiliar until I learned about them. I became more willing to try new foods; now I will try anything new from various fruits and vegetables to new items on a restaurant menu! Teen Iron Chef gave me a new outlook on my future career; I am now certain that I want to become a professional chef.

**Shaniqua Davis, age 17 Grade 12**

My grandfather was a chef and I wanted to be like him, so I taught myself how to cook. I love cooking because I can do any thing with it. I can be creative and mix a lot of thing together. Cooking has improved my health a lot because If I didn't know how to cook, I would probably eat fast food everyday, which is very unhealthy. The class encourages me to try foods I would not normally eat. When I try something and like it, I try to make it on my own. I was always a fan of fruits, but now I eat a lot more veggies than before. My favorite foods to cook are roast pork, lasagna, and other full meals. Cooking will play a big role in my future because I want to become a chef.

**Jorven Thorpe, age 20 Grade 12**

I was born in Costa Rica and came to America with my family. Since I joined Teen Iron Chef last year, I have the shared the experience with my friends in learning how to cook. The class has taught me to take charge of what I eat and learn to live a better life. It also gave me a chance to cook with my family more often, especially with my mother. She was always cooking and now how I help her and tell her about what I have learned in cooking class. I'm very thankful to my friends and my teacher because they gave me a chance to work with people who I never worked with before/ I realize the value of working as a team together – whether we're cooking or doing something else! I'm very happy because I did not think I would like cooking class but I really changed my mind because, and here I am -- still doing it!

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**Malika King, age 20 Grade 12**

I really like cooking and thought I might want to become a chef. I joined Teen Iron Chef last year and confirmed that this was the career I wanted to pursue. I love everything about cooking and am curious about all dishes, ingredients, styles of cooking, etc. I am much more adventurous and willing to try new foods since taking the class. I applied to culinary schools for college and just learned that I was accepted to Johnson & Wales! Now I will realize my dream to become a professional chef!

**Sade McIntosh, age 17 Grade 12**

Food, cooking, and nutrition, are very important to me. I love to figure out what's entering my body and if its going to help me or if its not good for me. I'm kind of like an omnivore; I love to try and eat new things. It's a big part of my life!

**Samira Akhtar, age 18 Grade 12**

I'm an 18 year old who always wanted to gain experience in cooking healthy food. I really like competing with others in groups through Teen Iron Chef, and how we get the chance to taste new recipes from all over the world. It's important to me to be in a cooking class where I could have fun as well as learn new things. I have fun learning from and with my teammates, and they learn from me as well. Since I came to the US from Pakistan, I have eaten a lot of unhealthy foods. But being in the cooking class gave me the advantage of taking charge of what I eat and to learn to live a better life. Last summer, I conducted cooking demos at CENYC Youthmarkets where I taught people recipes I learned in school that use fresh ingredients. I explained to shoppers how they can improve their diet by using more fresh fruits and vegetables when they cook. It felt great to share my knowledge with others!

**Akeem Highland, Age 17 Grade 12**

As a child and as I became a teenager, my kitchen was often empty. My family is always so busy, there's never enough time to cook, or to sit and have a home-cooked meal. Fast food has become the only thing we eat. But then, in my neighborhood there aren't many options. Therefore I got frustrated with the continuous loop of the same meals being repeated. That's when I decided to take the initiative and put soul back into my kitchen -- I've become a self-taught chef!

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### **Cindy Lee, Age 17 Grade 12**

My name is Cindy Lee and I was born in Brooklyn. I first developed a passion for cooking when I was young. I always loved watching my pops cook and I wanted to learn to cook as well as he could. I love the creativity in cooking. You can always make something more than one way with a bunch of different ingredients, and it's always great to taste your creations =). I got the opportunity to work on my cooking skills in the FamilyCookProductions' Teen Iron Chef program at my school. I learned tons of new skills and as a result, I am more willing to try out more types of foods. Cooking on my own has greatly improved my health because now, I get to control exactly what goes into my meals. Something I really enjoy cooking is anything with rice. I can add whatever I want depending on what I feel like eating. I think cooking will play a great role in my future!

### **Camilla Acosta, Age 18, Grade 12**

**Length of instruction in cooking:** 4 years but, last year I got really trained and more skilled thanks to Teen Iron Chef and having a summer job with FamilyCook and Ms. Lynn, doing cooking demos in the Farmers Market.

When I was little, I was accustomed to watch the Food Network with my mom as a form of entertainment. Unlike many children at a young age, it was rare for me to be tuning in the tv to watch the power rangers when Emeril was on TV. Emeril, was why I decided to learn to cook; he was my inspiration. The way he handled everything and just added that flare to everything he prepared -- it was just so mind blowing! I wanted to learn to cook just like him so that one day when I have a husband and kids I could cook for them. The thing that really intrigues me about cooking is that you can experiment and discover how certain things don't go together and how other things do go well together. Once you are done experimenting, you can make a piece of art with it. After all, cooking is art. Now that I have learned how to cook, I tend to go for leaner, more healthier things. As a Teen Iron Chef, I learned a healthy eating and a better diet. I never had Tabbouleh before until Ms. Lynn introduced us to it. Ever since, I have been addicted! Well not addicted, but I really like it (although I cannot limit myself to only one favourite dish!). After trying unusual foods and flavors, it wanted to unravel the world and explore different foods from around the globe. I find that after the experience from Teen Iron Chef, I am eating more vegetables and more fruits other than potato chips and junk food. McDonald's is no longer part of my diet. I would really like to make exotic dishes, but, especially sashimi, like for instance a dish like Sashimi Trio (Hosea Rosenberg, Top Chef, Season 5) or maybe even Mi Quang (Quang Nam noodles). I love learning and experimenting with new foods or trying new things. I open myself to different worlds and actually touch a bit of each culture and background.