

# Chefs cook up a storm in culinary competition

By Megan Voss

The competition was heated inside the kitchen at Loyalist College on Saturday, Feb. 18.

Prince Edward Collegiate Institute, Loyalist Collegiate & Vocational Institute and Ernestown Secondary School in Odessa were in a tight contest to be crowned champions at the 11th Annual Junior Iron Chef Competition.

Meanwhile, at a slightly slower but just as energetic pace, the cafeteria was bustling with activity from culinary students as well as local businesses for the Food and Beverage Show.

The cafeteria was filled with a variety of tables with small businesses and culinary students alike, proudly displaying their creations. Stores had baking and cooking utensils for sale, cheese, soap, wine tasting and other food to offer, while the culinary students served soup, lasagna, manned a make-your-own-cupcake table and worked on decorating a cake with fondant while under the stress of spectator critics.

Second-year culinary students Kerri Young and Kelli Cleave said the event is a big part of their program.

"We've had two semesters just devoted to this," Young said, adding that it is worth 30 per cent of their grade.

Along with their classmates, they planned and organized the entire show, Cleave said.

The laughter and smiles on their faces showed their pleasure with how it was all going, they were clearly having a good time.

"We enjoy interacting with people, and seeing everyone coming to an event we've been planning since September ... We made it and everyone came!"

Local vendors said they had the same feeling about the event.

Although Tanya Finestone and Nora-Lyn Veevas from Closson Chase, a winery in Prince Edward County, had never been out to the show before, they said that they enjoyed the variety of food, and watching the students.

"It's nice to support such a good event," Veevas said. "I like to get involved in the community."

Veevas and Finestone hoped that attending the show would result in more traffic at the winery.



Photo by Megan Voss

**Culinary students Cally Post and Sarah Geen work on putting a handle made of fondant on a cake shaped like a pot during the Junior Iron Chef Competition and Food & Beverage Show at Loyalist College on Feb. 18. The students spent a few hours carefully shaping the cake and fondant.**

First-time attendee Angie Crabtree said she also enjoyed herself at the show. "It's all great," she said while savouring a bite of an Earl & Angelo's crêpe. "I like finding out about other restaurants that I didn't know about – it's very informative."

# Advocates spreading the word about medical marijuana

*Experiences shared about medical uses by PACE group*

By Kelly Michelle Gagné

It's not the typical crowd you'd expect at a meeting about marijuana.

Instead, the crowd is an older crowd, ranging in about their 30s and up, men and women, all interested in therapeutic cannabis.

People Advocating Cannabis Education – also known as PACE – are a group of participants who want to help spread the knowledge of cannabis to others, and people who have seen or experienced the medicinal benefits of cannabis through

their own experience, or through a friend or loved one.

Al Graham was at The Studio in downtown Belleville last Saturday evening. He showed a documentary film *What if Cannabis Cured Cancer* (2010), and held a Skype interview with Lynnice Wedewer, a medical professional, cancer survivor, and medicinal cannabis user.

Graham has been a PACE representative for the last five years, and is a strong believer in medicinal cannabis since his diagnosis with Crohn's disease in 2001. Graham stated numerous times that he has never needed to fill out a prescription for his disease.

"I used to think I was invincible, you know. It wasn't until I got really sick and the doctors basically told me I was first diagnosed with Crohn's disease that I realized I wasn't invincible. The disease

kicked the crap out of me," said Graham.

Graham is also a writer, and he often writes articles for the *Treating Yourself* magazine. Graham travels back and forth from Belleville to Campbellford once a month, where he hosts the PACE meetings, and attends tradeshows when there is one.

Attendance to the meetings is usually a fairly small group, but Graham does have his regulars who attend almost every meeting. This past Saturday's meeting had a bit of a bigger crowd because Graham did the very first Skype interview with Lynnice Wedewer who has a Ph.D. and calls herself an "eight time professional cancer survivor."

Wedewer, 34, strongly believes in and expressed through her Skype interview with the small crowd the power of me-

dicinal cannabis, and that it played a huge part in her survival through seven rounds of cancer, and that it was currently helping her through her eighth round.

"Whether you can believe it or not, I just want all of you to hear my message and the power of my words and story. I know through my own experience, that cannabis is God's plant and that it is a miracle that saves lives," said Wedewer in her Skype interview.

The room seemed to be a mix of emotions. A few people walked out mid Skype interview, whereas others stayed and listened to Wedewer's interesting and powerful story.

When interviewed many asked to remain anonymous, but a regular who attended the meetings said that he found the Skype interview really interesting,

and that it helped strengthen the PACE meeting.

It's easy to stereotype those who believe in legalizing marijuana, but after attending a PACE meeting it was interesting to hear a well-fought, valid argument on medicinal cannabis. Graham said that he deals with the stereotype all the time, receiving a lot of grins and funny looks when he often wears his PACE hat and sweater.

"You just gotta smile and be happy, a happy world means a less sick world," said Graham.

If you're interested in reading up more on Lynnice Wedewer's story, you can go to [www.lynnicewedewer.com](http://www.lynnicewedewer.com) for her bio, articles and the documentary film can even be found on her site, or visit [www.peopleadvocatingcannabiseducation.org](http://www.peopleadvocatingcannabiseducation.org) for more on PACE.

# Street nurse helps with gaps in system

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One of the many gaps Roy discovered while he working as a registered nurse was that whenever a "street person" would seek a professional for help or approach an agency, "they were often are treated as second-class citizens."

In fact, this stigma toward street people is causing a lot more damage than people may realize, he said.

"A lot of people, because of the bad experiences with health care providers, are reluctant to present," said Roy. "I have seen people's illnesses get very advanced because they are avoiding the painful experiences of being rejected in an emergency room, or being treated (as) less than a complete human. That pain associated with that kind of rejection, and isolation, and stigma...has a greater impact on them than the pain of their current illness, so it's a trade-off. So people die because of the stigma, and the fear of the pain that it brings."

Kenny Leighton, a former support worker of the Freedom Centre, has worked closely with Roy and sees how his role is absolutely necessary.

"There is a guy alive because of Doug's involvement," said Leighton. "There are people who would be homeless for sure, who would be without counsellors, and without medical care, and without meds. The extra stuff that he does after, driving people to the pharmacy and things like that."

"He has had a huge impact on the street people who live downtown."

Leighton was working at the centre when he was introduced to Roy. Leighton said he saw instantly that Roy was a good man with good intentions, and the two

partnered to help the people in the area.

"With each individual, I would take them as far as I could, and then he would take them the rest of the way," said Leighton. "He would bring people to me, so it's been a real partnership."

By the constant greetings and cheerful faces that Roy encounters while making his rounds downtown, it is obvious that his role has had a lot of positive impact on the streets of Belleville. Roy wants people to see the damage having a stigma towards people with addictions, mental illness, or living on the street can have.

"So addiction is a response to pain, it's looking for comfort," said Roy. "I don't know anyone who is in moderate to severe pain who isn't going to look for a way to get rid of it. Especially if it's chronic, especially if it's a part of the picture of your daily life, and we'll all look for a way to get rid of it."

"And guess what? Narcotics are a really good way of getting rid of the pain. The brain doesn't have two centres, one for emotional and one for physical pain; the brain only knows pain. And regardless of the source, pain is pain. Anything that takes pain away, becomes extremely attractive to someone who is always in pain."

Roy works hard to help the people of downtown Belleville. He also works hard at changing the perspective that people from agencies and hospitals have toward the marginalized population.

"The dynamic is different here. I'm coming to their neighbourhood. I'm on their turf. "They won't let me get in a tough spot, and that's a lesson for all caring professions – marginalized people are generally hospitable when you meet them on their turf."



Photo by Brynn Campbell

**Doug Roy checks Nicole Taylor's blood pressure at the Belleville Freedom Support Centre.** Click here for an online gallery of photos on [qnetnews.ca](http://qnetnews.ca).