

## *School Nutrition Association of South Carolina holds annual 'Chopped' competition*

**Myrtle Beach-** Teams representing school districts from around the Palmetto State all waited anxiously to hear who was crowned champion of the 2019 'Chopped' competition held on October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at the 66<sup>th</sup> Annual School Nutrition Association of South Carolina Conference.

In a dramatic moment, Ron Jones, from the SC Department of Education unveiled the winning team of Lexington One School District. The team consisted of Renee Ritter - Gilbert High School, Kelly Blevins - White Knoll High School, Angie Furtick - Carolina Springs Middle School. "I am so very proud of managers who competed and won the Chopped competition," said Sally Nicholson, Director of Student Nutrition in Lexington One.

The winning team from Lexington One battled it out for 45 minutes with teams from Aiken School District, Greenwood 50 School District and Williamsburg County School Districts. Teams were given three mystery ingredients that had to be incorporated on the plate - 100% Mozzarella Cheese from Smart Mouth Pizza, JTM Taco Meat and Doritos from PepsiCo. Teams also had access to a pantry with other ingredients.

Upon completing their meals, teams presented them to a panel of guest judges who scored them on food safety and sanitation, creativity, teamwork, taste and presentation. The judges included Peggy Barnette-Gordon Food Service, Alexia Cadle-PepsiCo, Marie Kennedy-Pro Kitchens, Jonathan Ford-JTM, and Tom Willingham-Smart Mouth Pizza. Special thanks to Gordon Food Service, PepsiCo, Pro Kitchens, JTM and Smart Mouth Pizza for their sponsorship.

School District Five of Lexington and Richland Counties, Director of Student Nutrition Todd A. Bedenbaugh brought the competition to the Conference four years ago.

*"When we started this event a few years ago, we never could have imagined how far it would come,"* Bedenbaugh said. *"It is amazing to see how advanced our student nutrition employees are and how knowledgeable they already are about working on the go with limited resources. I am so thankful to all of our sponsors and especially President of SNA of SC Sharon Hunt, who made the Chopped Contest a priority of the conference."*

*"I am so proud of all the student nutrition employees who competed and was blown away by their creativity,"* Tom Willingham, President of Smart Mouth Pizza said. *"It's not about the end product, it's about the process and the celebration that they completed the competition as a team."*

From left to right:

*Renee Ritter - Gilbert High School*

*Kelly Blevins - White Knoll High School*

*Angie Furtick - Carolina Springs Middle School*



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