



ANDY LAWALLEY/POST-TRIBUNE

Hannah Wright carries a platter of food while helping serve during the 10th annual awards, installation of new officers and scholarship dinner for the Northwest Indiana chapter of the American Culinary Federation at Sand Creek Country Club in Chesterton.

# Chefs whip up honors

## Chapter honors chefs, grants scholarship, starts Web site

By SANDI O'BRIEN

Post-Tribune correspondent

Jack Mix doesn't pay attention to food trends. After 38 years in the industry, he believes people really like familiar dishes, such as pot roast or chicken and dumplings.

Mix owns Comforts Catering in St. John and primarily serves administrative offices manned mostly by women.

"Ninety-eight percent of the people (working in business offices) are gals who are working and not home cooking," he said.

Mix said he prepares a variety of dishes to meet customers' needs, but it's the comfort food people grew up with they like best.

"It takes a lot of time to cook these foods, but turkey or pot-roast gravy — if

### On the Web

The American Culinary Federation Chefs of Northwest Indiana Web site is [www.acfchefsnorthwestindiana.org](http://www.acfchefsnorthwestindiana.org).

done the right way — is one of the best things on the planet," he said.

Mix was named Chef of the Year by the American Culinary Federation Chefs of Northwest Indiana.

The local chapter of ACF recently celebrated its 10th anniversary at Sand Creek Country Club in Chesterton by honoring some of its chefs, launching a Web site and granting a scholarship.

Lisa Jackson-Austin of Gary was awarded a \$500 scholarship to help continue her cooking career. Jackson-Austin is working on an associate degree in culinary arts at

Ivy Tech Community College and runs a catering service from her home. She also volunteers for fund-raising events at which local ACF chefs prepare meals to help raise funds for the March of Dimes, Meals on Wheels and hospice.

"Cooking is a team effort, and it's fun," she said. "It's a proud moment when we see the food go out on the floor at an (ACF fund-raising) event."

Jim Galligan, who helped start the ACF local chapter, is executive chef at Long Beach Country Club. He said the 50 to 75 chefs who belong to the local chapter represent a group trying to elevate the chef's position and bring professionalism into the kitchen.

"Our goal is to bring awareness to the profession," Galligan said.

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# CHEFS

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"We also look at sanitation, the way food is prepared, proper techniques and how employees are treated. Cooking is a team effort; it's not an 'I' thing."

Just as there are many ways to prepare chicken, there are many types of chefs.

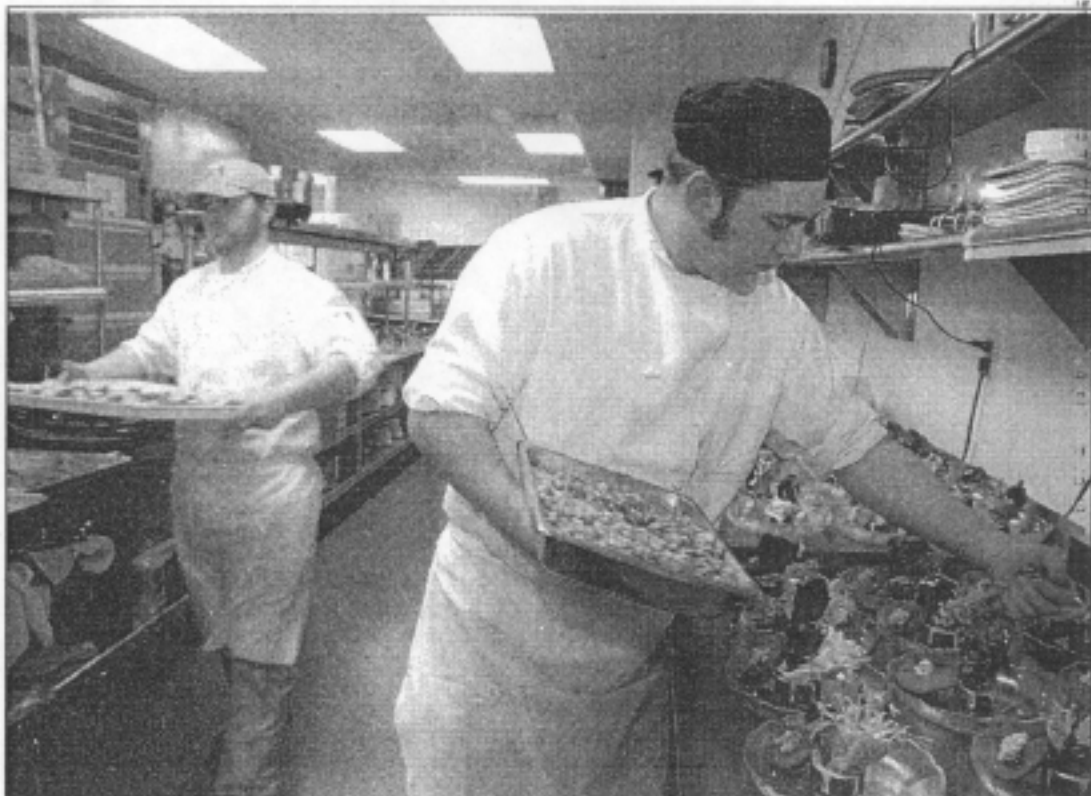
Experienced chefs from restaurants, casinos, country clubs and hotels belong to the ACF.

Galligan started his culinary career as a bus boy, then became a breakfast cook, a broiler cook and a banquet cook, before becoming a sous-chef for 10 years at Sand Creek Country Club. He became executive chef at Long Beach in 2004.

"It takes years to get to the point of becoming a chef," Galligan said.

Mix, whose son, Bill, was named Junior Culinarian of the Year, hopes people pay attention to the ACF designation.

"When people go to a restaur-



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Pantry cook Kenny Furness adds the final touch to poached pear salads before they were served to members and guests at the 10th annual awards dinner for the Northwest Indiana chapter of the American Culinary Federation at Sand Creek County Club in Chesterton.

rant and see the ACF sticker, I hope they think, 'Here's 50 or so chefs meeting standards and quality levels because they've shown the discipline of learning,'" he said.