

# reviving SUCCESS

## New culinary teacher sets goal to bring back FCCLA

**A**s she waited for her interview, **Molly Gordon** rubbed her palms.

Unemployed due to the pandemic, Gordon sifted through back-up job options in her head. It was her dream to teach at a school like Wando, even though she was fresh out of college. The principal's office door opened. Gordon walked in.

"When I did my interview here at Wando, I tried to talk about things specific to me," Gordon said. "[In addition to completing] culinary school, I have a degree in food science, which is not typical to everyone."

Her dream came true. The journey began.

After she got the job, Gordon looked back on her culinary career in high school and college in order to frame her program.

Because of her interest in cooking, she had joined a competitive club called Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA), a non-profit that supports students' ambitions in their career choice.

"Through FCCLA, I had over a \$100,000 in scholarship money," Gordon said. "I've [also] won gold medals through there."

The organization holds both state-wide and national competitions in cities like San Diego and San Antonio. To attend these competitions, Gordon had to host fundraisers. As a result, she gained a new

perspective on poverty, so she now prevents food from being wasted in her classroom.

"Back in my high school, we started a food bank, and... not only did we provide food for the students, [but] also for their families," Gordon said. "So, I'm hoping to do something along the fact that... if it's edible, it doesn't go in the trash."

**"IT HELPS YOU... TO BECOME A LEADER OUTSIDE OF THE ORGANIZATION... OR TO BECOME A LEADER IN YOUR OWN RESTAURANT."**

In high school, Gordon had competed against Wando in culinary competitions, but their FCCLA program didn't last long. When Gordon realized how much the non-profit had influenced her life, she decided to make it her goal to revive the club.

The non-profit group offers many leadership positions. When **Taiye Akinjobi**, 11, learned about these roles, she realized that signing up for FCCLA would support her aspirations to become a chef.

"It helps you... to become a leader outside of the organization... or [to] become a leader in your own restaurant," Akinjobi said.

Not only does Akinjobi want to become a chef, but she also has a yearning to serve her community. She hopes that the non-profit organization will provide her with scholarship money to attend a culinary school just like Gordon.

"I decided to join FCCLA because [of] all the... good things that come behind it and the amazing opportunities," Akinjobi said. "Colleges can look at [my participation in this club]... that's what I'm really excited about."

Alongside Akinjobi, **Maggie Newton**, 10, decided to join FCCLA because of her passion for baking and the opportunity to meet other people that share a love for the culinary arts.

"The way she described it saying... there are many scholarship opportunities [and it] looks great on college applications, I just thought it'd be a really good club to be a part of," Newton said.

Gordon hopes that restoring FCCLA to Wando will allow her students to not only improve their cooking skills, but to become future leaders in their own communities.

"I just call it, like, a 'feel good club' Gordon said. "It's one thing, but then it's everything at the same time."

**Story by Evie Whitesell  
Designer Lauren Guest**



# CORONA creations

Culinary students describe the best food they made over quarantine.



**MATTHEW WHITE**

"I made lasagna for me and all of the people in my apartment building because we were all stuck there anyways so I figured it would be a nice thing to do. I use my mom's recipe but change the spices here and there to make it more me."



**SANTANA GROFF**

"I would say that the best thing I made over quarantine was steak and potatoes. I'm more of a grab and go cook, so whatever I see I can throw together and make a dish out of it."



**TAIYE AKINJOBI**

"I made a homemade red velvet cake which came out really nice. I used my step-dad's recipe because he's also a chef so it was really good."

