

---

## PENNWEST CLARION ETS SPONSORS HANDS-ON CULINARY EXPERIENCE

Federal program guides secondary students into higher education



*January 26, 2026*

Middle and high school students enrolled in PennWest Clarion's Educational Talent Search program participated in Souper Chef II — Culinary Career Exploration & Student Cooking Competition Jan. 17 at Hand in Hand Christian Counseling Center, Grant Street, Franklin.

Souper Chef II is a hands-on culinary enrichment program and soup cookoff. Students learned kitchen safety, knife skills, food preparation techniques, teamwork and creativity while preparing their own soups from provided ingredients. They also explored culinary and hospitality career pathways and participated in a judged tasting competition with awards.

Internationally trained chef Danielle Benson, a culinary arts instructor at Venango County Vo-Tech and owner of Smoke Cantina in Franklin, taught knife skills and kitchen safety, mentored students throughout the day, and served as a judge for the student soup competition.

Connie Bradley, ETS faculty director at PennWest Clarion, said such programs highlight PennWest's commitment to engaging middle and high school students through meaningful, hands-on programming in our local communities.

"Souper Chef II not only gives students a fun and memorable culinary experience, but also exposes them to real career pathways, mentorship from a professional chef, and practical skills they can carry forward," Bradley said. "It showcases the positive impact PennWest Talent Search has in supporting youth, inspiring learning, and building connections beyond the classroom."

At PennWest Clarion, ETS serves more than 800 students a year from these school districts: Allegheny-Clarion Valley, Brookville Area, Clarion-Limestone Area, Cranberry Area, Franklin Area, Keystone, North Clarion County, Oil City Area, Redbank, Valley and Union. Connie Bradley is the faculty director at Clarion.

ETS is a federally funded TRIO program through the U.S. Department of Education, designed to identify and support students from underserved backgrounds and help them enroll in and complete postsecondary education. ETS serves students in grade 6 through returning adults who previously participated in the program and took a gap year after high school graduation, and provides guidance through the completion of high school and admittance into a post-secondary program. Participants are selected based upon eligibility criteria established by the U.S. Department of Education.

For more information, visit <https://www.pennwest.edu/community/clarion/educational-talent-search>.