

PRESS RELEASE

FutureChef winner enjoys Henley first prize with Sodexo

5 July 2017

The apprentice chef who won Springboard's FutureChef 2017 competition spent a day with the Sodexo team at Henley Royal Regatta as part of her first prize on Friday (30 June).

Katie Cooper, a University College Birmingham student who is on a placement at Michelin-starred restaurant Carters of Moseley, joined the Sodexo Sports & Leisure team preparing food for hospitality diners at the 178-year-old boat racing event after winning the competition in March aged just 16.

Sodexo has provided hospitality to around 500 guests each day at the Fawley Meadows and Temple Island areas of Henley Royal Regatta since 2013. Katie worked with chefs in both locations.

As part of her prize, Katie and her parents also visited the Sodexo executive chef at Eton Dorney, Louisa Tinkler, 26, to talk about a career as a chef. Louisa won gold in the World Skills Challenge in Leipzig in 2013 and won Sodexo Chef of the Year in 2014.

FutureChef is a nationwide school cooking programme inspiring young people to learn about food and cooking along with a competition to find the best chef in the country between the ages of 11 and 16. Katie rose above 9,000 other entrants to win.

Sodexo food innovation director David Mulcahy is head judge of FutureChef, Sodexo chefs provide mentoring to contestants across the UK.

[Watch a video of Katie talking about her experience at Henley Royal Regatta.](#)

Katie Cooper said: *"It was really nice to meet the head chef here and see how he does things. Everyone in the kitchen really knew what they were doing; they knew how to get on with it, how to get the job done perfectly, and then just carry on and do the next one."*

"If it wasn't for Sodexo coming up with the young chef academy, which I was a part of at University College Birmingham, I wouldn't do this job so I'm very grateful for that."

"If someone was trying to get into being a chef at my age, or straight out of GCSEs, then I'd definitely recommend doing something like an apprenticeship because it's the best thing that's ever happened to me."

David Mulcahy, food innovation director at Sodexo, said: *"Developing young culinary talent is absolutely crucial to the chef industry in the UK, and I'm glad Katie has enjoyed her time with the Sodexo team at a major event like Henley Royal Regatta. It's great experience for an apprentice."*

“At Sodexo we support the Springboard FutureChef competition every year with judging and mentoring at regional and national level.”

Anne Pierce, CEO of the Springboard Charity, said: *“We are thrilled Katie and her family enjoyed their time at Henley. Thank you, Sodexo, for being such great hosts and sponsors.*

“Springboard’s FutureChef saw 9,000 participants in over 600 schools take part this year. It has grown from a simple competition to an educational programme inspiring young people to learn about food and cooking as well as providing a much needed talent pipeline into the industry.”

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