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ANDREW KISER PHOTOS, THE COLUMBUS TELEGRAM

Elks Country Club chef Eder Sanchez showcases a salmon dish at the club's restaurant. Sanchez started working at the Elks Country Club in November 2021.

'Adds a lot to this place'

Sanchez enjoys chef position at Elks Country Club

ANDREW KISER
The Columbus Telegram

Eder Sanchez said he never imagined he would have "the great opportunity" of becoming a chef.

However, through perseverance, Sanchez – who moved to Chicago from Mexico at 16-years-old – slowly worked his way up the ranks. Now, he's the head chef at the Elks Country Club, 5113 63rd St. in Columbus.

It all began in the Windy City.

He started working at the Hilton Hotel brand's bakery, then the purchasing department – where he would buy food and wine for the hotel—before serving several years in the kitchen, beginning with meal preparation.

He then became a line cook and sous chef before he had his chance to become a chef.

"When I started working as a cook, I knew this is me, this is my passion," Sanchez said. "I love to cook and serve people."

Sanchez – who credits his mother for his love of food – has had his fair share of experiences since then working in Italian, French, Mexican and German restaurants.

"I was grateful I worked at those different restaurants," Sanchez said. "I learned different techniques and types of food."

Sanchez would be the first to say he's had his shares of ups and downs with one



A salmon dish—paired with a red wine—made by Elks Country Club chef Eder Sanchez is on display Thursday. Sanchez has worked for French, Italian, Mexican and German restaurants.

of the worst periods coming during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Chicago food industry was "hurt really badly," Sanchez said, as several of them closed down or could only do to-go orders.

This was one of many reasons why Sanchez and his family decided to move from Chicago to Columbus. Sanchez – who has an uncle who lives in Columbus – said he wasn't exactly sure what he was going to do when he relocated with his family. But he held out hope that something good was coming his way.

"I just came with my eyes closed and (said) 'We'll see,'" Sanchez said.

In the end, it worked out. Sanchez was

hired last November to become the head chef at the Elks Country Club.

"I love this place," Sanchez said. "... Thanks to the great team and members, they gave me their friendship and support. Here, it's a little bit different than it is in Chicago because over there it's a big thing. But here it's more like a family thing. Everybody knows each other."

Elks Country Club General Manager Trista Engel said she feels lucky to have someone of Sanchez's caliber on staff.

"Everybody loves his food around here and they're so thankful that he's here,"

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Drozd captures state

Lakeview senior excels at speech team competition

ANDREW KISER
The Columbus Telegram

Lakeview High School senior Ben Drozd said he entered the speech season performing in the entertainment category for the first time on "a whim." He ended the season by winning the state title in the very same category.

On Wednesday, Drozd capped off his last year on the team with a state speech title during the final tournament of the season held at Kearney High School.

"It (winning state) shows the hard work and dedication that I put in all year really came through for me," Drozd said.

Drozd said going into the competition he hoped to go to finals but as the day went on he felt confident in his speech, thinking he could place near the top. But when he performed for the final time he said he thought he could win it all.

Speech coach Amy Eisenmenger said she was ecstatic with Drozd's last speech, adding jokingly she almost stood up and shouted for him.

"His final performance was just awesome," she said. "Usually speech rooms are pretty quiet but I just wanted to yell because I was so excited at just how great of a performance it was at finals. It was pretty flawless. ... He had a killer performance at finals."

Eisenmenger said she initially thought he would at least place in the top three so she "freaked out" when she heard Drozd's name.

"It was just awesome to have him win the whole thing," she said.

Drozd admitted he didn't have the best start to the season in entertainment. He had done persuasive speeches in previous years but he only competed in entertainment to have fun, Drozd added.

Still, he said he took the constructive criticism from the judges and coaches about his entertainment speech to heart and spent

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COURTESY PHOTO

Lakeview High School senior Ben Drozd celebrates winning state speech Wednesday in the entertainment category. It was Drozd's first year performing in the category.

CCS receives award

Business named chamber committee Agribusiness Pioneer

HANNAH SCHRODT
The Columbus Telegram

A business with humble beginnings in Columbus has grown into a local leader of animal agricultural facilities in the United States and that company – Cen-

tral Confinement Service – has been named the Agribusiness Pioneer for 2022.

The Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce's Agribusiness Committee will recognize Central Confinement Service (CCS), 23321 235th Ave., at next week's Rural Recognition Banquet, along with three other award winners.

Founded in Columbus in 1982 by Mark Gearhart, CCS started

out of the basement of the Gearhart home with manufacturing taking place in a small garage. Throughout the years, the business has expanded to include new divisions of manufacturing, including making stainless steel components for facilities. The company ventured into dairy design builds in 2000 and entered the beef housing arena in 2010.

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COURTESY PHOTO

Central Confinement Service in Columbus builds agricultural facilities nationwide. The business is being honored as the Agribusiness Pioneer during the Columbus Area Chamber of Commerce Agribusiness Committee's Rural Recognition Banquet being held next week.



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