

Chatting with Chef Kevin Bell

Gulfstream Goodwill Industries' new executive chef is on the move and helping to shape futures in the culinary field

By **Judy Alexandra DiEdwardo** - May 13, 2024



Gulfstream Goodwill Industries' new executive chef Kevin Bell is helping to shape futures in the culinary field.

Based in West Palm Beach, **Gulfstream Goodwill Industries (GGI)** is a nonprofit organization that aims to change lives through housing, training, education, and employment, while assisting people with disabilities and other barriers to employment to become self-sufficient. In support of this mission, GGI recently hired Kevin Bell to serve as its first ever executive chef and oversee GGI's latest social enterprise, Good Grub. The program is available to students at GGI's Career Academy Charter School (where most enrollees are special diploma post-graduates and students who deferred graduation between the ages of 16 and 21) and includes a training kitchen and catering and mobile kitchen—i.e. food truck—operations. "We discovered that smaller training spaces, like the food truck, are a better environment for building culinary and social skills and understanding the flow of food service," says Bell. "Students are then better prepared to work in a catering environment like a hotel or country club when they graduate."

PBI caught up with Bell to learn more about Good Grub and how it's improving the lives of students.



Desserts from the kitchen. Photo courtesy of Gulfstream Goodwill Industries (GGI)

PBI: What's the mission behind the food truck?

Bell: Our new 16-foot-long mobile facility takes our students out of the classroom and into the community, where they can grow their skills in a real-time work setting, in addition to cultivating this important life skill for themselves and their families. Right now, we provide weekly meals to the Lewis Homeless Resource Center, typically with four students and one instructor who prepare and deliver 70 meals. We also do select private catering events, with plans to expand.

What's cooking?

Whatever menu we're working on in the classroom that week, we'll do variations of in the food truck. We're talking pasta carbonara, chicken piccata gnocchi, brisket and Brie sliders with truffle potatoes, and honey sriracha wings with burnt-onion blue cheese dressing.



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How many students are enrolled in the four-year culinary program?

We have 12 students, but the program is growing in popularity, especially with the addition of the food truck curriculum and catering business.

I understand you just hired a recent graduate of your program as an assistant.

Yes. He's the first Good Grub employee other than myself. We're so excited for him.

What do you love most about your new gig?

I've been so blessed in my career. But, working with this population who have so much appreciation and humility, who are so grateful to learn, is an incredible experience. And then, to watch them reach their goals and achieve something they never thought was possible is priceless.



Photo courtesy of Gulfstream Goodwill Industries (GGI)

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