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Lofgren, Administrators, & Aspiring Chefs Celebrate \$1 Million in Federal Funding for Culinary School Expansion at Rancho Cielo

SALINAS, CA – Today, U.S. Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren (CA-18) presented a check appropriated by Congress for a community project totaling \$1,000,000 to the Rancho Cielo Youth Campus to help expand the Drummond Culinary Academy.

“Workforce development programs matter – they help provide people with the tools they need for self-sufficiency and the chance to achieve the American dream. As such, I love seeing smart training opportunities that uplift members of our community, specifically those in underserved populations,” **said Rep. Zoe Lofgren.** “Rancho Cielo’s programs set students and families on paths to success to secure good-paying jobs in stable and growing industries. The expansion of the Drummond Culinary Academy, in particular, will help provide aspiring chefs with the knowledge and hands-on experience needed to succeed. I look forward to tasting today’s students’ food in local restaurants, hotels, and cafes in the future. More broadly, I can’t wait to see many young, industrious entrepreneurs emerge from Rancho Cielo for years to come, and I vow to continue to advocate for opportunities that facilitate economic growth for people and businesses in the Salinas Valley.”

“The impact of this funding for Rancho Cielo is enormous. It will help expand our culinary arts program, not only in the physical footprint of the pastry kitchen we plan to build, but also in our ability to offer more specialized programming opportunities and training to more students,” **said Rancho Cielo CEO Chris Devers.** “Looking at labor market data, we have identified a big need for students to train in the pastry arts, and having a pathway for our culinary students to gain those skills will give them the opportunity to earn better living wages and a distinct edge when entering the workforce. Additionally, a fully equipped pastry kitchen will let us focus on creating a microenterprise involving pastry arts in the future.”

The funding comes from Lofgren-requested Community Project Funding included in Fiscal Year 2024 government funding legislation signed into law in March 2024. [In total, Lofgren secured \\$50,095,535 for projects in the 18th Congressional District.](#) She will present checks in Santa Clara County in the coming weeks and months.

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