

## U-T San Diego

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### Student Restaurant Gets Face-Lift

Call it a soft opening.

East County dignitaries got a sneak peek Thursday at an intimate little eatery opening this fall that will feature gourmet comfort food prepared by a crack culinary team in a gleaming exhibition-style kitchen. Service is guaranteed to be hospitable and the check at the end of the meal one of the best values in town.

The community leaders were there to fete the major face-lift of the student-run Wigwam Restaurant at El Cajon Valley High School with speeches, tours and swan-shaped cream puffs. Building 400, as it is also known, is the last of a trio on the 58-year-old campus in the Grossmont Union High School District to be modernized consecutively, and houses the school's math and foreign language programs in addition to the restaurant.



Stripped to its frame in June, the 15,200 square-foot building was transformed using modern materials and methods for energy efficiency and durability. Project architect Sprotte+Watson Architecture & Planning and general contractor Erickson Hall gave the building eight new classrooms and new student restrooms.

The Wigwam is available to students interested in a future in the hospitality industry. From slicing and dicing to costing out ingredients and serving patrons, they get hands-on training in every aspect of restaurant operations.

Come this fall, they hope to do a brisk lunch and dinner business to school staff and neighborhood senior citizens who can get a complete meal of soup or salad, meat or fish, bread and dessert for about \$5.

“Over the past several years, we’ve made many campus improvements to enhance the learning opportunities available to our students at El Cajon Valley High School,” said Superintendent Ralf Swenson.

The \$2.5 million project was funded by the Proposition U school bond, the state-wide Proposition 1D and the Regional Occupation Program capital reserve funds.