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Inmates serve up Father's Day family treat

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They had thought it was going to be a monthly routine visit to their father in prison.

But when Anne, 16, and Amy, 12, (not their real names) arrived at Changi Prison yesterday afternoon, they were in for a surprise Father's Day treat.

Their father Ken, 42, and his team had clinched the top prize in the finals of the Yellow Ribbon Cooking Competition held on May 26. A total of 12 teams of inmates from different prison institutions took part.

As a reward, the two girls got to tuck into a three-course Western meal with their father, made by him according to his team's winning recipes.

As part of the Yellow Ribbon Project's Tribute of Love Father's Day Celebrations, all 11 other finalists, including four women, were also able to invite their families to celebrate Father's Day over lunch in prison.

The inmates had been preparing for the competition since April under the guidance of chefs from the

Shatec Institutes.

Winners will get to undergo a 35-week culinary training course conducted by Shatec.

"We hope to let the inmates gain new skills to enhance their employability, which is a critical part of rehabilitation," said Ms Karen Tan, vice-chairman of the cooking competition organising committee.

"With secured employment and support from their loved ones, the chances of ex-offenders reintegrating back into society are much higher."

This was the second time that the cooking competition was held. The first was in 2007. That year's winners got to invite their families over for a meal for Mother's Day. Ms Tan said her group plans to make the competition an annual event.

She added that a Tribute of Love 2 would be held in September, when more inmates would be roped in to cook a buffet lunch together with volunteers from Lions Club of Singapore Tanah Merah.

Former offenders will help to deliver the food from the prison's kitchens to several old



ST PHOTOS: DESMOND FOO

Twelve inmates celebrated Father's Day with their families yesterday as part of the Yellow Ribbon Project's Tribute of Love Father's Day Celebrations.

folks' homes.

Ken, a former chef in a Chinese restaurant, said it was his first time cooking a Western-style meal.

He and his three teammates hope to set up their own restaurant one day.

For now, though, he is proud and contented to be given a chance to display his new skills to his

daughters.

Said Ken, who has been in prison for 11 months for criminal breach of trust and will be released next March: "As a father, I wish we did not have to meet under such circumstances. I hope that from next year on, we will get to celebrate every Father's Day outside, maybe at a nice restaurant."



Inmates preparing dishes that secured for them a Father's Day lunch treat with their families during the Yellow Ribbon Cooking Competition held on May 26.