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FOOD STUDENT HELPS DAD'S DIET

■ Dipna Anand got Britain's highest food technology grade. Picture: FERGUS BURNETT

Heart attack spawns new low-fat curry

by TIM STREET

SEEING her father suffer a heart attack from eating fatty foods inspired Dipna Anand to become the country's top food technology student.

The 18-year-old, who took her exams at Heston Community School over the summer, cooked up a treat with a low-fat curry to grab the top grade.

But her inspiration lay in her family's curry house – The Brilliant Restaurant – in Western Road, Southall.

It is there that her father, Julu, has toiled in the kitchens for 30 years while building up one of the best-loved restaurants in the area.

Last year, at the age of 44, he suffered a heart attack which doctors put down to the high fat content of the curries he has been eating all his life.

While Julu pulled through, the heart attack acted as Dipna's spur to turn traditional Indian cooking on its head and find a way to cook delicious curries with less fat.

"It was about the time I started my A-level project that my dad had his heart attack," she said.

"Indian food is traditionally very heavy and greasy and he was eating it every day, so I decided to make low-fat Indian food.

"I started using low-fat cooking oil and the food came out with the same flavour but with less fat, and people actually preferred it."

In fact the food has been such a hit that her father is considering putting it on the menu at the restaurant.

Meanwhile, Dipna this week went back to Heston Community School in Heston Road to pick up an award from the British Nutritional Foundation for her work.

"I couldn't believe it, I was in shock," she said of the moment when she took a phone call from the exam board to say she had got the highest grade in the country for food technology.

She is now studying hospitality management at Thames Valley University in Ealing.

Ruth Dabney, head of food technology at Heston, added: "She is an outstanding student and was always giving up her own time for the benefit of the school. We are proud of her."