Culinary externships: Sullivan students’ ticket to a better future!

Culinary externships put the “meat on the bone” of Sullivan’s Culinary Arts students’ education by providing them with hands-on food preparation experience in a real-world work setting. Thirty-two students from the first culinary class, which started in Fall 2005 at the Sullivan University-Lexington campus, will graduate this quarter. All these students have been placed in local restaurants to further their training. Externs work 20 hours a week for a total of 208 hours during the Winter Quarter.

Sites are carefully selected

Externship sites have to meet stringent qualifications set by Sullivan’s National Center for Hospitality Studies. The restaurants’ chefs have to be formally educated or have at least 15 years of professional experience to qualify as externship mentors. Restaurants are required to have at least three kitchen stations such as pantry, grill, and sauté, and the management must be willing to train the student in the proper techniques for each station. Students must first be given the opportunity to work several shifts, both prepping food and preparing in the kitchen as well as serving food in the dining room.

Great résumé builder

The first externship group had exemplary restaurants to choose from including the Holly Inn, Dudley’s, Jonathan’s at Gratz Park, Azur, Heirloom, Bistro La Belle, Bellini’s, Three Suns Bistro, Metropol and Giuseppe’s Ristorante Italiano to name a few. The restaurants are considered fine dining establishments covering the gamut from the formal “white tablecloth” experience to a more casual atmosphere and will make first-class references on externs’ résumés.

Enjoyed their experience

All the Culinary students gave rave reviews of their externships. Savanna Whitaker, who worked at the Crowne Plaza’s Campbell House Inn, had this to say, “Working in Banquet Services was a wonderful opportunity to get experience in large scale food operations.” While Zach Selby described his eye-opening experience at Dudley’s, Jonathan’s at Gratz Park, “I have worked in the restaurant industry before, but it was so interesting to see how different restaurants are run.” Culinary externs Emily Barnett and Teresa Shofner both gave their respective sites, Heirloom and Wallace Station in Midway, Kentucky, kudos for a great learning experience. All Culinary Arts students in their last quarter of study will be placed as externs with restaurants like those in this article. Culinary externships are the learning opportunity of a lifetime, giving Sullivan’s culinary students a ticket to a better future!

Student Brigitte Nguyen who works at Jonathan’s at Gratz Park, was invited by her boss to cook in the stage kitchen when the media coverage was taking place. She says of the experience, “It was wonderful exposure for a student. I feel so lucky to have been involved with this event!”

Sullivan University continues with its mission to give students the education they need to be successful. The students and faculty are very happy with the experience gained.

Just graduating and already employed!

The first Culinary Arts graduating class from Sullivan University’s Lexington campus began their quest for a new career in late September 2005. Now, just 17 months after they began, 32 students will earn their Associate of Science Degree in Culinary Arts. More than one-third of that class have already accepted full time positions. Although The Herald goes to press before the end of their final term, the staff wanted to recognize them and offer our congratulations and best wishes for their success.

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