Culinary students contribute unique seasonings in class

Sullivan’s International Cuisine course has some really authentic students! Ecuadorian Daniela Naranjo has attended Sullivan for the past year. As a high school exchange student she grew to be very fond of Louisville. Since the prospects for a good job in Ecuador are greater with a degree from the United States, her father encouraged her to return for college. Daniela has always loved cooking, which was a little unusual because her brother in her mother “only had a kitchen because it came with the house,” chuckled Daniela. Growing up, Daniela watched two telenovelas that showed, learned from various cooks her family employed, and her grandmother who taught all of her secrets as well. Before deciding to enroll at Sullivan, Daniela spent about eight months working in a small but exclusive hotel in Quito to gain more experience and make sure the hospitality industry was for her. She also continued to study English as well as some French. Anxious to get into the kitchen, Daniela couldn’t wait to get started in culinary classes at Sullivan. She plans to work toward a dual major of Business & Management as well as the Hospitality Management. A winner in every way

Left to right, students Ramon Nieves, and Daniela Naranjo collaborate on a recipe with Chef Instructor Katie Payne.

National magazine displays her talent and versatility

Valerie Stone, a senior in the Baking & Pastry Arts program, has always been willing to volunteer for special projects. She reasoned that if she put extra time, she will become better skilled. Recently, she assisted Chef Derek Spendlove, CEPC, CCE, AAC, Chair of the Baking & Pastry Arts program, with desserts featured in the Spring 2006 edition of the American Culinary Federation’s Sizzle Magazine. Quite an accomplishment from a former “college dropout!”

Valerie, from Warner, Ohio, a small town near West Virginia, had enrolled in a community college immediately after graduating from high school but dropped out after the first term. “There was not much guidance there,” she stated. “I chose Sullivan because I knew what I wanted to study, the graduate employment rate was a big factor; and its location, because I did not want to move far.” Valerie is very happy with the education she has received. “Sullivan is much more goal-oriented than the community school I tried to become a skilled baker, but I have learned more than that. I have learned about all the aspects of the business; production, marketing, management, and planning.”

Sullivan Culinary Arts student has a great drive for success

Sullivan student Amanda Meyer grew up in Texas and lived there until her ex-boyfriend shot her in the right temple with a 357 magnum. The accident rendered her deaf and blind on her right side. “Otherwise I am a perfectly functioning person,” Amanda said. “Surgeons gave me only a 3% chance of ever breathing without a respirator, and struggling with severe headaches, and still works hard.” Amanda continued, “I feel that my time here. Everyone has been so kind and helpful. “All of my chefs were very informative and helping me to bring out the best in me. I found Sullivan to be a very motivational learning environment where I feel my talents blossomed.” She continued, “I feel that my time at Sullivan prepared me exceptionally well for a successful career in the pastry field. In my last quarter, I did my internship as the chef at The Lafayette Club in Lexington, Kentucky. Executive Chef Kevin Traha, was very willing to let me be creative and use all of the skills that I learned at Sullivan.” During her internship, The Lafayette Club entered Amanda in a pastry competition held at the Radisson Hotel in Lexington. “I produced an original plated dessert for a panel of judges to review and a few hundred samples for attendees to taste. I produced a chocolate mouse mousse (pied), with a raspberry mouse mousse, a lime sorbet, and a raspberry jelly. The judges were very positive and I was offered a job!”

My job is important. “I really need to make a change.” “My family needs me.” The list could go on. Students have all kinds of life choices to make. And Sullivan University’s convenient evening and weekend Baking & Pastry Arts Program fulfills their needs. Proof of this is Mary Jo Gauck, a librarian from Northern Kentucky. For the past two years and nine months she has committed to complete her Associate of Science in Culinary Arts degree at the Louisville campus. Worth the drive

Mary Jo felt her future was worth the long drive. I visited Sullivan, which was 90 miles away from my home. I met with Admissions Officer Jim Kearfott, toured the campus and was immediately excited to attend classes here,” she said. “Learning that Sullivan University utilized the quarter system, Mary Jo stated, “was quite surprising. I was excited to find out I could start classes in less than a month!”

She liked the small classes and personal attention, too. “All of the teachers and faculty have been very informative and helpful throughout the entire year. Everyone here has been supportive and encouraging. There was no way I was going to give up.”

Hard work pays off

Mary Jo continued, “I feel that I have learned a great deal. It has taken 33 months of hard work, dedication and support to finish. I have managed to maintain a 4.0 grade point average while working 40 hours a week and attending at least two classes per week, often six hours (360 miles) a week to road to and from class. My boyfriend would come to over the holidays and never did he ask me why I was doing it. I was lucky enough to get to do my restaurant practicum close to home. Chefs Jim Gerhards and Mike Stone (owners of The Limestone) have opened “Mike and Jimmy’s Chophouse Grill” in Crestview Hills which is only 20 minutes from my house. This worked out wonderfully.”

Will continue her education

Mary Jo hopes to utilize her degree and open a bakery/café that offers catering. She plans to find a part-time job with a bakery or caterer so she can learn the skills she needs to be successful. “I just started working on my background of training online in Hospitality Management,” she stated. “If I figure it out I’m going to be running my own business, it’s a good thing to have foundational education as I can both in the field and in class.”

Throughout the last 18 months, it has been a joyful and fulfilling experience to be a part of the culinary program at Sullivan University. It gives me great pleasure to wish happy holidays to all of our students.”

Valerie Stone assisted Chef Derek Spendlove in the development and preparation of the magnificent desserts pictured above. This article featured in the Spring 2006 edition of Sizzle magazine, published by the American Culinary Federation.

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If you love doing something, no matter how late in life you realize it. If that is what your career should be. You can do what you love in your dreams came true if you take this opportunity. You love, you believe in yourself that you have a good support system at school and at home,” MARY JO GAUCK.