Sullivan grad is Europe-bound
First selection from Hospitality Management program

Congratulations to Tara McDaniel who is the first Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management graduate to join the culinary team at the magnificent Edelweiss Lodge & Resort in Bavaria, Germany. Used by U.S. military personnel returning to the Middle East and Afghanistan, The Resort gives them a special time with their families prior to active duty in dangerous areas.

“The job requirements/expectations are set with an extremely intense standard, and there are calls for high levels of both passion and dedication,” Tara said, adding, “I am so incredibly excited to be a part of a team that creates, prepares, and delivers, making a difference (incredibly, lastly) memories for our courageous soldiers and their supportive families.”

New position has great perks While the position holds the standard set of benefits (competitive pay, dental/medical insurance, etc.) it also comes with some pretty neat perks. Tara earns one (4-hour) vacation day and a 4-hour sick day for every 80 hours she works. “With some of the most beautiful and little luck, I’ll be able to take a trip to Paris for a few days!” The program is set up to help students get experience in the industry and in the world of traveling, they understand and expect their employees to request off for trips and do their best to accommodate them. How great is that?

For Tara, who has traveled both domestically and internationally, her new position is tailored made. “The position is simplistic: joy to experience new things and being exposed to new cultures, languages, regional food, and ideas. Not only is it personally enriching, but it’s also just plain fun. My passion for the hospitality industry stems from that passion for traveling.” While enjoying traveling, Tara will “really miss my friends and family.” And while the position is reasonably $37,000 (nervous, anxious, and stressed,” she is also “very excited about the opportunity to travel in Europe!”

Tara McDaniel is so excited about leaving for Europe later this quarter, that she’s already starting to pack! The on-campus CaterArts Conference, provided a wonderful opportunity for Sullivan students to network with industry professionals. Left to right, students Kaye Schnaus, Savannah Montgomery and Holly Burgess, with her back to the camera, enjoyed talking with Executive Chef and Sullivan alumnus, Michael Dahl, Class of ’99.

Visiting alumn shares his Sullivan experience and career insights

Once again Sullivan University was host to the International Caterers Association’s (ICA) CaterArts Conference, a continuing education program for professional catering chefs. Catering professionals from across the United States were in attendance this summer, among them was Chef Michael Dahl, who earned his Culinary Arts degree from Sullivan in 1999. The son of Army mess hall sergeant, Michael began cooking at an early age. Although cooking was his heritage, he enrolled at a Kentucky university to become a professional offices and found himself in a position in a number of kitchens while in school. But Michael found it hard to ignore his passion for the culinary arts and soon realized he enjoyed work much more than class. After he worked with said he had researched Sullivan University’s Culinary Program. “He encouraged me to join him for a meeting with a Sullivan admissions officer. I went with him the next week and enrolled.”

On the path to career success
Michael made the most of his Sullivan experience and took advantage of every opportunity to learn. “I worked at Juleps and competed on the Culinary Team. I studied hard, worked hard, attended every class, every lab and took the time I spent at Sullivan very seriously.”

Needed degree to further career “I had a blast and it was great to see how big, both in size and stature, Sullivan had grown. My vision brought back a ton of great memories. . . including meeting my wife who also graduated in 1999. ” His wife Suzanne (formerly Welsh) is currently the Director of Food and Nutrition at Bay- lor University, in Waco, Texas, and ACF. “I enjoyed my experience at Sullivan tremendously.” Suzanne shared, adding “I was able to fuse a passion for food with a degree that transcended me into a sought after career in contract food service management with Sodexo and Aramark. I have worked in multiple lines of services; higher education, business, dining and health care. I continue to seek out new opportunities to include to my repertoire of management and culinary skills. But the pinnacle of my time at Sullivan was meeting my husband of 12 years!”

Advice for current students
When asked what he would say to current Sullivan students, Chef Dahl stated, “Be aggressive. Absorb every bit and piece of knowledge you can from your time at Sullivan. Stay and earn multiple degrees, if possible . . . it is always difficult to start school again after you leave. Network! Stay connected to classmates and chef instructors . . . you never know where you may end up. Do not be afraid to jump on a job opportunity even if it means you have to move across the country. Promote and selfishly market yourself, you will have to have an edge. Stay involved with the American Culinary Federation (ACF) as well as other organizations that promote what we do.”

Chef Dahl practices what he preaches. He is currently a member of the ACF, Texas Chefs Association, International Caterers Association (ICA), and the National Association of Caterers (NACE).

Editor’s note: Follow Chef Dahl’s advice. Keep in touch with classmates and instructors by registering at alumni.sullivan.edu. Chef Dahl and his wife, Suzanne, are two of countless Sullivan alumni success stories. Share your success story or the story of an alumni you know by emailing the editor: ecomk@sullivan.edu.