

MAKING THE Connection TO Career Technical Education

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ST. CLAIR SHORES

Classroom to kitchen

South Lake Bistro makes adjustments to new facilities after year long hiatus

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Copy Editor

After the Culinary program was disrupted due to the construction that took over most of last year, the class is back in business as they moved into their new facilities at the beginning of the 2018 school year and officially opened to the public.

As in any year, the Culinary Program first went through the basics of certifying all of the students in the National Restaurants Associations' program, ServSafe. This allows the program to legally run The Bistro and make sure that all students can prepare and serve food safely to the community.

"We read through a book and learned about lots of different aspects about preparing safe food," says senior Trevor Bauman. "There were lots of parts like how to sort your refrigerator and freezers and the best ways to prevent cross contamination between raw meats and vegetables.

Culinary Teacher and Head Chef Darrel Shepherd makes sure to put the safety of the customers first when it comes to the preparation of food. "We know the correct and legal way to prepare food so we are confident we aren't jeopardizing any of our customers."

After preparing with the basics, it became about getting ready for the soft opening. This acted almost as a pretest for the students as it was a two-week period where they served the teachers before officially opening the doors to the public.

"We first opened the restaurant to teachers to help soften the learning curve, it gives students about two weeks to get the feel for working in a restaurant," says Shepherd.

After those two weeks, the official grand opening marked the first time the students would be serving outside customers from the community. "It was scary to just jump in to serving customers, but once you get into it, it just becomes part of the job," says senior Saphyre Reed.

The facilities have transformed the Bistro and made it much more visible and accessible to the community, but it did not happen or come without some challenges. "We had to take some time to relearn the best ways to use the kitchen, but now everything is going great," says Shepherd.

Bauman really enjoys the new areas and loves how the new restaurant feels. "The new Bistro has a modern feel and also has the big screens in the restaurant area that has a slideshow of pictures showing off different things that the class has done."

Reed agrees, and feels that the new Bistro has opened up the school to the eyes of the community. "The community gets to see what happens in the kitchen and enjoy the products of education," says Reed.

Despite learning through the process of working in the kitchen and the restaurant, the students this year have pushed the boundaries of previous years and have created a learning environment based on improvement and an open flow of ideas.

"Our students are doing an incredible job of keeping me motivated, they have a thirst for knowledge and constantly want to learn new techniques and tweak recipes to make them the best versions," says Shepard. "They keep me excited and I can't wait to come into work to see what they are going to ask me next," adds Shepard.

As a class, the students are now able to think of new ideas and together can execute something fresh. "There are times when someone has an idea to modify a recipe and together we use trial and error to come up with something new," says Reed.

With this new domain, the culinary arts students have learned to adjust from last



PHOTO BY JENNA HALL

Drizzling on the strawberry topping, seniors Hannah Lias and Logan McCrillis decorate cakes to be served to the guests.

year's temporary classroom kitchen to a large industrial sized area that not only works as a functional kitchen, but also a teaching space.

"The school district and the school board really showed how much they believe in our program and our kids by investing this great sum of money and this huge amount of space into our program. Thus far my students have really lived up to the standards that these new facilities invoke," says Shepherd.

According to Shepard, there are about 60-100 customers that come through the doors of the bistro every day. With this constant flow of customers, the students gain experience in both the front and the back of, as Culinary students refer to it, the house. Students are learning not only what is takes to wait on tables, but also to quickly prepare and time the dishes to ensure that they are served promptly.

"Timing all of the different plates is difficult because you want to make sure they get their soup before their entree and their entree before their dessert, but you also have to time the food so the plates don't pile up," says Reed.

Despite the class constantly being about balancing new tasks and old techniques the students still find ways to excel and succeed.

"Our students have a knack this year that I haven't seen before. They have a great way of communicating and dealing with our customers that really conveys how much they care about them. That smile and the genuine service driven attitude really makes our customers want to come back," says Shepherd.

Whether it be their new skills, their friendly smiles, or their freshly cooked food; the new and improved culinary program is sure to bring success to the table.

ST. CLAIR SHORES

New facility brings program a new beginning

South Lake auto shop program given a fresh start this fall in a brand new facility

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With the new year came a new opportunity for South Lake auto students as the opportunity arose for them to participate in a brand new program in a different facility.

Students who planned on taking auto this school year at South Lake must now travel by bus or by their own means to the DRIVE One TechCenter in Roseville to take the class along with students from many other Michigan school districts.

At first, some students were worried that there would be no auto classes at all, but these fears were quickly resolved when they learned of the new facility that they would be attending.

"I thought they were just gonna get rid of the auto program and put me in some random class, but I'm glad they didn't," says senior Clint Kirchner.

While having the auto program located in the school in past years was more convenient, the new program gives South Lake auto students a tremendous new opportunity. "There's a lot more space and there's more things to work on. They have a lot of machines and it seems like it's definitely a better environment for auto," says Kirchner.

Compared to previous years

at South Lake, the new program gives students more educational opportunities; and the facility itself gives the students more space as well as better materials that they didn't have access to during previous school years.

"It is a lot better from what I saw at South Lake last year; There's so much more experience that you can gain from there, it's more hands on, and it's just great," says junior Julianna Torres. "It was a lot smaller there and here it's huge; We actually get to work on some really nice cars, which is really cool," adds Torres.

Senior Joshua Junious agrees and says that the new center has a large number of resources on hand so the students can have a more educating, hands-on experience.

"There, we didn't have a lot of stuff, so if we wanted to really do anything we had to work on our own cars. The new place has a lot of fun things and you get to work on some exciting stuff," says Junious.

In addition to the spaciousness of the DRIVE One Center, there are also students coming from even more schools than before, adding a larger sense of teamwork to the learning environment. "There's a lot more friends and people there; They actually teach you and show you what to do, so it's really cool," says Torres.



PHOTO BY GRACE OSMIALOWSKI

Working together, seniors Clint Kirchner and Joshua Junious move parts across the DRIVE One facility.

While the auto program was originally held at South Lake and students from both Eastpointe and Lakeshore High School came to join, now, there are students from seven different schools coming together to grow their education on their shared interest.

Not only are there more students attending the classes, but there are also multiple qualified instructors who have been working in the auto field for decades.

"I started teaching auto shop in 1965 down in the city of Detroit; I transferred out to Roseville in 1967 after the riots and was there officially until 2017 and have been at this location since then," says DRIVE One President and Automotive Instructor Paul Tregembo Sr.

The experience and skill the instructors at DRIVE One have is another important aspect of the organization that makes the



"There's a lot more experience and hands-on work here compared to how auto was last year."

— Ben Walsh ('19)

learning process much more in-depth and worth while.

According to Tregembo, if South Lake hadn't become a part of this program when they did it may not have been as successful or expanded as it has today.

"South Lake has been the anchor for the whole program," says Tregembo. "They have been very instrumental to making [DRIVE

One] doable," adds Tregembo.

The staff at DRIVE One hopes that South Lake can continue to be involved with them and hopefully take part in even more of the opportunities they offer in the future. "[South Lake] has said they want to become a bigger part of this and make it a vocational center [for their students]," says Tregembo.

One of the class's main goals is to prepare students for their future careers in the auto industry and have the certification to do so.

"The objective is that everybody goes out of here with a job," says Tregembo. "We had 100% placement of the seniors that went out of here last June and I don't think there's a single one of them not working," adds Tregembo.

Even if students are planning on attending a university next fall, this class is definitely something that can get them ready for real life.

The DRIVE One center is full of individuals who are enthusiastic about expanding their knowledge surrounding Automotive Technology.

Whether students plan on continuing schooling or a career involving auto in years to come or not, everyone who has taken part in this program has no doubt been able to learn a ton of important lessons for life. The change that South Lake's students had to face gave them a multitude of new opportunities and was certainly a change for the better.

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