



Ocean County Vocational Technical School

Sharing Success Stories

Owning Your Own Business

Student: Joseph Introna

Name of Business: Joe Leone's Italian Specialties, Pt. Pleasant Beach and Sea Girt, NJ

of years in business: 19

Website: joeleones.com

Class of: 1993

Instructors: Norm Gertner and Ray DeNardo

Program: Culinary Arts

Center: Brick

Joe worked as a teenager in bakeries and had an interest in the culinary field. After moving to Tuckerton, he realized he wanted to learn more about the culinary arts. Joe credits his guidance counselor at Pinelands Regional High School, Paul Santasieri (pictured below with Joe) for suggesting he enroll in the Culinary Program at OCVTS and, as they say, the rest is history!



After twenty-five years, Joe and Paul were all smiles when they reunited at the OCVTS 20th Annual Fundraiser, Chef's Night Out. There is always a crowd at the Joe Leone's Italian Specialties table. No matter what culinary delight he serves as his signature dish, it is always a crowd pleaser!

When asked to share some "words of wisdom" about owning your own business, Joe (after nineteen years of being in the culinary business) had this to say, "Treat every day like it's your first day; always surround yourself with people who share your vision and treat others as you would like to be treated." The hundreds of patrons that frequent Joe Leone's Italian Specialties both in Point Pleasant Beach and in Sea Girt on a daily basis can agree that customers are treated like family. Pictured above is the entire Joe Leone's Italian Specialties family.

Since opening his first store, Joe has become a major advocate for OCVTS. He also welcomes our culinary students into his "world of work" by conducting tours and sharing helpful hints to future graduates. A student asked Joe what he looks for when hiring. He responded, "I look for humbled candidates who are always willing to learn something new every day. They must be good listeners who are sincere with their gestures, and can look you in the eye." He was quick to add, "OCVTS was a great stepping stone for me to take my love for baking to the professional level. It prepared me with the life skills I needed. I feel that OCVTS is an important foundation for future students. It is so essential to give students the opportunity to learn a trade and work with their hands. Choosing the food industry is great for survival because everyone has to eat!" Both students and staff heeded Joe's heartfelt words.

The Ocean County Vocational Technical School proudly touts Joe Introna as one of our success stories. We are grateful to Joe because he has never forgotten where his formal training all began. For more information on Joe Leone's Italian Specialties, be sure to check out their website.

