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OCVTS Program: Culinary Arts, Brick Center – Gary Lesniak, Instructor

Student: Christopher Castellano (left)

Employer: Harrogate, Lakewood - Chef Joe Alonzo (right)

Website: harrogate-lifecare.org

Harrogate offers enhanced lifestyles in retirement living. Located in Lakewood, they are an active member of our “educational family”. The working relationship between Harrogate and OCVTS is a mutual admiration society, as evidenced by the following comments: “The culinary program at OC Vo-Tech provides an opportunity to recruit young future chefs that demonstrate knowledge and exhibit skills in knife usage, following recipes, multitasking, and working in a close team environment. The job shadowing program has given me a chance to see the students in action, observing who displays speed, and a desire to work in a busy kitchen,” stated Joe Alonzo, Executive Chef at Harrogate.

Chris Castellano, student at OCVTS and Line Cook at Harrogate said, “The program has benefited me by not only teaching me general life skills and teamwork, but has shown me just how much I love to cook and work in a kitchen. It gave me a great experience and training in a high quality restaurant kitchen.”

“We have partnered with OCVTS in their job shadowing program for over 15 years now. The students who come through that program have an edge over their peers. The culinary program at OCVTS has provided a great amount of training to their students and it is evident in their cooking skills, their work habits, dedication, and eagerness to learn. Harrogate provides an environment where the students can further develop those skills and gain some true work experience,” quoted Michelle Low, Director of Dining Services.

“For the past two years, Chris Castellano has been a student at OCVTS. In that time Chris has shown a passion for the culinary arts. He has demonstrated a good work ethic and is always ready to help and do whatever needs to get done in the kitchen. He is a pleasure to have in class. I expect Chris to do very well in his chosen field,” commented Gary Lesniak, Instructor in the Culinary Arts Program.