



L'ÉCOLE
CULINAIRE



STUDENT & ALUMNI NEWS

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Graduate Spotlight

Ashley Schuster Kempf – L'École Culinaire St. Louis

In the midst of cramming for the LSAT and submitting law school applications Ashley Schuster Kempf hit a quarter-life crisis. She'd watched her then fiancé, now very well fed husband, trudge through two years of law school with a growing stress level. Was this her fate as well? Would she be chained to a desk pushing paper in a self-inflicted work place purgatory? The idea was horrifying to Schuster Kempf. So she asked herself, "Self, if you won the lottery and could spend the rest of your days doing the exact thing that lit up your soul, what would that thing be?" Within seconds the answer was crystal clear. She would cook.

Schuster Kempf always fancied herself a skilled foodie, but was realistic in her goals. She realized that without proper training a quality restaurant would not hire her. However, she had some reservations about leaving her university for a career college. She had to ask herself some serious questions. Could she take the leap? Was she ready for the real-world challenges that a career college had to offer? Finally she concluded that she didn't have much to lose and in the worst-case scenario she would be well fed every day for almost two years. So she dove in headfirst and to her amazement L'École Culinaire was exactly the thing she'd been searching for.

L'École Culinaire stresses the importance of a well-rounded individual. Although she learned a great deal in the cooking labs, Schuster Kempf also learned valuable interpersonal skills. A career college like L'École Culinaire has the added benefit of hands on, one-on-one instruction. "Every chef I encountered there mentored me in ways

I had never experienced in a crowded university lecture hall," said Schuster Kempf. "This not only reinforced the concepts I was learning in lab and lecture, but also served to boost my confidence as an aspiring culinarian."



Beyond evolving in her art form Schuster Kempf also graduated from L'École Culinaire with an incredible sense of empowerment. She was equipped with eight nationally recognized certifications that ranged from expected food-centric subjects like cost control to big picture ideas such as human resource management and supervision. Despite the fact that previous to culinary school her resume was rather short on food experience, she landed a job at a premier fine dining establishment and was steadily promoted, eventually running the entire culinary line. "I've now ventured off on my own taking the skills I learned in the kitchens and classrooms of L'École Culinaire to follow my passion and watch as my dreams come to fruition," said Schuster Kempf. "I wield knives and sling hot pans for a living now, and in my book, that beats pushing paper any day of the week."

Graduates, have your success story featured! Send your story to alumni@vatterott-college.edu.

Retention's Efforts to Assist Students with Finding Local Apartments

L'École Culinaire Memphis

"My commute to school is too long." "I don't have the gas money to get to school." "I want to get a new apartment, but I cannot afford the security deposit." Many students at L'École Culinaire in Memphis have come to the Retention department on campus with these and many similar challenges. The curriculum at L'École Culinaire is very demanding and may not allow some of our students to work full-time.

The Retention department at L'École Culinaire in Memphis has been working to establish relationships with apartment complexes in the community. We have contacted several leasing offices in the area, and we now have a listing of twelve local apartment communities that have special offers and discounts for our students. Some of the apartments in the community have waived security deposits, while others will allow co-signers for our students.

L'École Culinaire St. Louis

As a Retention Specialist, one of our core responsibilities is to assist our student population in areas of need. When a student expresses a need, such as housing, the Retention department at L'École Culinaire St. Louis is able to refer him/her to several helpful housing resources that are posted internally on the Retention Board and/or externally. As an internal resource, the Retention department posts weekly housing lists from reputable sites such as Craigslist,

Many of the locations also have special discounts on their floor plans.

The students at L'École Culinaire in Memphis can make an appointment with the Retention department and we can give them a listing of apartments with contact information, general rates, and specials offers. The student must call the apartment complex of choice and let them know that they are a student at L'École Culinaire and interested in the apartment community. They will then need to ask for current offers and rates for that specific apartment complex.

The Retention department at L'École Culinaire in Memphis is dedicated to assisting our students with the resources and tools that they need to graduate. We are hoping to build more relationships in our community and to ensure the success of our students.

HUD and Apartment Guide. As an external resource, we have teamed with organizations that will assist with down payments and delinquencies. These organizations includes Better Family Life, United Way, Catholic Charities, HDC and Housing Assistance, Inc.

If you have any questions or would like more information, please come see us in the Retention department.

Career Tips, Trends and Highlights

Starting Your Career Mary Weber, Corporate Director of Career Services

Getting a better job is the objective. Finishing your education for your career path is the first step. In most instances, developing the right resume is the next step. Putting together a resume is very serious business. Why? Because often it is the first impression you will make on a prospective employer. And, hopefully, after looking over your resume, the employer will grant you the opportunity to make a second impression.

What this means is that your resume is your personal marketing brochure. If you look through a magazine you will see many ads selling many products. Which ads do you respond to? For most of us, they are the ads that sell something, which meets our own personal needs. The same is true for filling a job opening. Employers look through resumes and pick the ones that best meet the needs of the job. Therefore, the formatting and content of your resume are critical.

Determining the best format and content of your resume requires answering many questions. Below is a sample of the questions that must be answered.

What resume format should I use? Chronological, functional or a combination of the two?

- The chronological resume is the one most people are familiar with. On it, work experience is listed in reverse chronological order (most recent job first).
- A functional Resume categorizes skills by function, emphasizing your abilities. A job objective is given first, followed by several sections, each discussing a different

job function. This is useful if you are changing careers and want to show how you can transfer your skills and abilities.

- A combination resume is exactly what it sounds like — it combines a functional resume with a chronological one.

Where should your educational background be placed? At the top or the bottom of the resume?

- If you are entering a new field, it should follow a summary of your skills/abilities at the top or your resume.
- If you have direct work experience in the field, it should follow your work experience.
- If you have attended college there is no need to list high school information.

How long is too long? The rule of thumb is to stick to a one page resume.

There are many ways to structure a resume. The bottom line is that you must produce a resume that will help you to get the interview. Resumes do not get you a job. What they can do is get you the opportunity to sell yourself to employers.

Are you sitting there right now thinking, wow, I need a great resume or I need to update my existing resume, but I have no idea where to begin? REMEMBER, Career Services is committed to your success and will be happy to assist you with your resume, interviewing skills, job leads, etc. **Pick up the phone and call us or stop by the Career Services Department at the Campus. We are ready and willing to assist you in your next career move!**



in focus

L'École Culinaire – St. Louis Proudly Supports Community Service in the St. Louis Area

As members of the local culinary community, L'École Culinaire prides itself on using food to nourish people's stomachs and spirits. The school has reached out to local and national organizations to assist in raising awareness and funds for various causes. These efforts allow us to enrich the community around us and to further expose our students to the value of charitable contributions. These initiatives take the shape of regularly scheduled KWAM (Kitchens With a Mission) classes that donate 50% of the proceeds to charities like American Heart Association, Juvenile Diabetes Foundation, Lydia's House, KidSmart, Cardinal's Care, Susan G. Komen, Earthdance, Lift for Life, Operation Food Search, Judevine Center for Autism and many more worthwhile charities. In addition to these KWAM classes, L'École Culinaire annually has partnered with KidSmart for the Joe Buck Celebrity Bee, Lift for Life for the Microbrew Fest and Lydia's House Gingerbread House Auction. L'École Culinaire has maintained booths at both the Cultural Art Festival in Clayton and the Taste of St. Louis where the students and staff are able to assist in creating, selling and displaying of food. By doing this, we help raise money and awareness for these organizations while our students learn to appreciate the value of supporting community efforts through their culinary training acquired at L'École Culinaire. The American Culinary Federation has been a regular recipient of our support for the Mardi Gras Event and the Wine Country Bar-B-Que where we have provided food and staffing for these fund-raising efforts for Knowledge Bowl Teams and culinary education scholarships. To further support the American Culinary Federation, L'École Culinaire annually hosts the competition salons and practical certification examinations for local culinarians looking to further develop as chefs. Furthermore, L'École Culinaire annually participates in the Wall Ball event to benefit local artists and musicians as well as sponsoring a food booth and serving as judges for culinary competitions for the Iron Fork event that benefits local St. Louis

food banks. Various Chef Instructors and students have contributed their time and culinary skills at the Eco Expo sponsored by the St. Louis Science Center in an effort to raise awareness of environmental issues. The National Kidney Foundation has benefitted from L'École Culinaire's annual participation in the Westport Chili Cook Off as well.

Chef Instructors and their classes worked with Camp Rainbow to create lunch and dinner for 200 hundred children suffering from cancer and leukemia. In an effort to encourage future culinairians, L'École Culinaire has donated food product and scholarships to local and rural high schools. The Student Ambassadors have also aligned themselves with various local organizations by hosting toy drives and canned food drives.

On a more personal level, L'École Culinaire held a fund raiser to help a severely injured student cover his medical bills, raised money for a student who lost a house to fire and supports the efforts of individual staff and faculty members with their individual philanthropic efforts. Examples of these organizations are adoption/infertility awareness, Usher's Syndrome, PTO and the U.S. Armed Forces.

As a result of these various events and charitable contributions, L'École Culinaire has been able to donate money, time, staffing and support to organizations that help educate children, create scholarships for further learning, provide shelter for abused women and their children, provide food for those in need, raise awareness of the environment, health awareness and medical research. These charitable experiences consistently reinforce the culinary objectives of our school's curriculum, but more importantly allow the students to connect with the community and recognize the importance of using their newly acquired skills to benefit others.

Dear Jacki,
 Carl was very impressed with Jonn, Clint and Matthew and tried to give them a "real view of a fast paced kitchen experience" - he will be contacting you directly within the next week with further comments and letters of recommendations for these gentlemen.
 Thank you for sending such fantastic students.

Warmest regards,
 Nancy McConnell
 Stone Soup Cottage
www.stonesoupcottage.com

Student & Alumni News

Instructor Spotlight with Chef Darren Zesch, C.E.C.

Q: When did you decide to go to culinary school?

A: I got my first job in the industry for two reasons: I was broke and I wanted to work at a place that would feed me while I was on the clock. Once I worked for 2 - 3 years I realized I really liked working in the industry. My mom suggested I go to culinary school. I attended Forest Park Community College in 1999 and earned my Associate in Applied Science in Hospitality Studies – Culinary Arts. I was in my early twenties, and I was just starting my career.

Q: What is your favorite thing to prepare?

A: Anyone who knows me knows that I love hunting, and I truly enjoy preparing wild game.

Q: What is your favorite kitchen gadget?

A: I love the corkscrew. It opens the wine you drink, and it opens the wine you cook with. You just have to be careful to make sure you are controlled enough to save some wine for the food!

Q: What inspires you in the kitchen?

A: My family; my wife and kids. I'm also inspired by the band Slayer!

Q: What does being a Certified Executive Chef (C.E.C.) mean to you?

A: It means that you conduct yourself with the utmost professionalism at all times. It also means that you live up to a high standard everyday and that you must never deviate from those standards.

Q: Why do you like teaching?

A: I love that I get to pass on what I have learned from the industry to next generation of chefs.



Our Twelve – The First Graduating Class at L'École-Memphis

As the month of August ended, so did a chapter in twelve of L'École Culinaire students' lives. Cornelia, Jeff, Sherkenna, Melissa, Latonya, Leticia, Ian, Carolyn, Patricia, Faith, Courtney and Paul all started their culinary journey on December 8, 2008 at L'École Culinaire located in Memphis, TN. These twelve students began learning culinary concepts and training at L'École when the school was so new that federal funding was not yet available (and is now), curriculum was new to all, and the surrounding community was not fully aware of the school and what it had to offer.

The students helped mold our curriculum into what it is today by offering valuable feedback. They

helped get the word out about our school by participating in different functions, telling family and friends. Then on January 31, 2010 they completed their Diploma in Culinary Essentials and on August 29 completed their Associate Degree in Occupational Studies in Culinary Arts. They have all worked very hard to earn their respected diplomas and degrees.

On Friday, September 24 at 7pm, these twelve outstanding individuals will walk across a stage to accept recognition for all their hard work at our first graduation ceremony! This will be our first class to have graduated with their Associate Degree from L'École Culinaire-Memphis. All of us at L'École are very proud of these students and what they have accomplished thus far. The twelve upcoming graduates already have culinary related employment. From a Sous Chef of a local restaurant to a Dietary Manager at a local school, all twelve students have accomplished so much and continue to represent our school with dignity and respect.

Thank you for the leadership you have displayed, the help you have given our school, and the influence you will have on the culinary profession.

*L'École Culinaire-Memphis
Faculty & Staff*

