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SSD student Katie Paquette, who receives services from SSD's Vision Department, experiences a shuttle simulator at U.S. Space Camp in Huntsville, Ala. Lighthouse for the Blind sponsors several SSD students attending camp each fall.



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## What's Happening at SSD

### Disagreement Resolution Process

9 a.m. to noon or 6 to 9 p.m., Sept. 25, SSD Central Office – Room 60

Sometimes the best way to resolve conflict is to prevent it. This training will teach conflict prevention strategies, as well as resolution processes included in many of the federal laws.

### Early Childhood Parent Training: Effective Practices for Challenging Behavior

6:30 to 9 p.m., Wednesdays (Sept. 25 – Oct. 21), SSD Central Office – Room 60

The five-part workshop offers strategies and best practices for developing rules and routines, improving compliance, addressing sensory issues, improving self-help and social skills, and developing visual supports to improve communication.

### Orientation for Parents to Special Education and the IEP Process

7 to 9 p.m., Sept. 29, SSD Central Office – Room 57

The field of education — and particularly special education — can seem a veritable alphabet soup. SSD provides an orientation to help unscramble the jargon and acronyms and provide an overview of how special education services are provided through SSD. Special emphasis will be placed on developing an effective Individualized Education Program (IEP).

### Autism-Asperger-PDD Resource Fair

3:30 to 7 p.m., Oct. 6, SSD Central Office – Rooms 60 and 61

Local and regional experts on autism, Asperger's syndrome and pervasive developmental disorder from local and regional agencies will offer resources and support to parents.

To register for these events, call 314.989.7807 or 314.989.8552 (TTY) or register online at [www.solutionwhere.com/ssd](http://www.solutionwhere.com/ssd).



# SPECIAL EDITION



Issue 4, 2009

## North Tech Graduate Whips Up Career

Blend of Art, Science Provides Perfect Recipe for Success

Who would have thought that a love of food and cooking passed from a grandmother to her 6-year-old grandson would blossom into a lifelong passion for cooking and a career in culinary arts?

Andrew Schmitt, a 2005 graduate of Lafayette and North Technical high schools, says he remembers sitting on his grandmother's lap and watching Julia Child on PBS as a young child. The two would then spend hours in the kitchen trying to recreate various recipes.

"I look back at those years, I blink and they're gone," Schmitt said. "But I can remember it clearly. I just always loved cooking with her and watching those shows."

But Schmitt's love of cooking doesn't stop with good-tasting food that is pleasing to the eye. He has started down a path to make a career out of focusing on the health, nutrition and science behind the art form he loves.

Schmitt earned his associate's degree in culinary arts at Sullivan University in Louisville, Ky., before pursuing his Bachelor of Arts degree in culinary arts and nutrition at Johnson & Wales University, one of the premiere culinary arts schools in the country. Schmitt attended the Johnson & Wales campus in Denver, Co., and graduated this May.

He says his days at North Tech gave him a good foundation and started him on the



Andrew Schmitt, who's pursuing graduate studies in culinary arts and nutrition, credits North Tech for giving him the foundation necessary for his success.

right path to pursue his dream. As a new school year is starting, Schmitt took a few minutes to sit down with *Special Edition* staff to reflect on his time at North Tech and outline his plans for the future.

### What did you like about the culinary arts program at North Tech?

"Without North Tech I wouldn't be where I am today. It opened the door for colleges, which led me to my associate's degree, my bachelor's degree and is now leading me down the path to my master's degree. Most schools expect at least six to 12 months of kitchen experience to apply."

### How did you decide to combine culinary arts with nutrition?

"When I attended North Tech I was like every other student. I wanted to open my own restaurant. But real-world experience working in restaurants made me realize that's not what I wanted to do the rest of my life. What we eat has such an impact on our quality of life. *continued* ▶





# SSD Names Deddens Teacher of the Year

Each year SSD honors 10 teachers with the Key to the Classroom Award. The award honors teachers for their achievements in the classroom and dedication to the success of SSD students. From the 10 winners, Ann Deddens was selected to represent SSD as its 2009 Teacher of the Year.

Deddens, who teaches at Spoede Elementary in the Ladue School District, is quick to admit that teaching is simply something innate to her — it's something she was "born to do." She comes from a family of educators and thrives among the challenges that she is faced with every day.

Superintendent John Cary presented Deddens with the honor at the district's Special Salutes banquet in June. Cary said Deddens' commitment to the children she teaches is evident in everything she does.

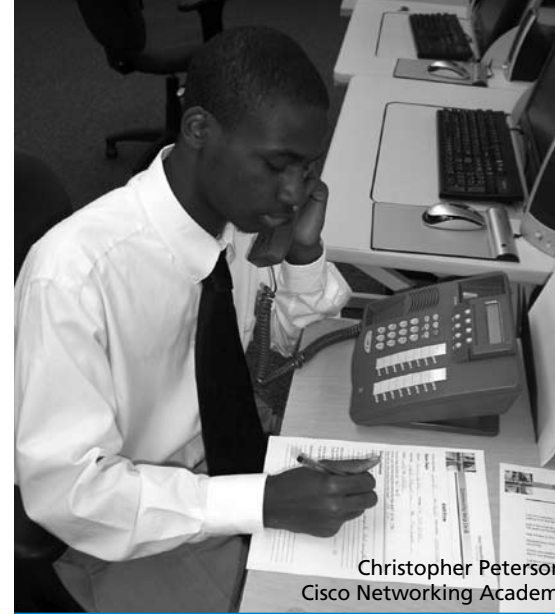
"Ann's attitude is one of advocating for children of all ability levels and breaking down mental models," Cary said. "She possesses a passion for teaching that is fueled by her belief that any child can learn and that learning is a lifelong process."

Deddens said she finds her reward in seeing a child's perspective every day and in the relationships she's been able to form with parents in helping them realize their children's potential.

A true testimony to that relationship is that Deddens was actually nominated for the Key to the Classroom award by a parent. Rebecca Goldman's letter of nomination noted that Deddens "has a natural grace that is not often seen."

Next year, Deddens will represent SSD in the statewide Teacher of the Year competition sponsored by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. ■

SSD Superintendent John Cary congratulates Deddens at the district's Special Salutes banquet.



Christopher Peterson, Cisco Networking Academy

## North Tech Offers Community Help Desk

**Computer problems?** Help is only a phone call away, and the best part is it's free!

Students in North Technical High School's Cisco Networking Academy have begun to offer a Community Help Desk hotline for residents to call and get advice regarding computer problems. Calling in for advice is a free service, and repairs, which are by appointment only, are free as well. Residents will only pay for any parts needed for the repairs.

The Community Help Desk is funded through a Star Award Grant through the Emerson Excellence in Teaching Award. The program allows students in North Tech's Cisco program to gain valuable experience working on computers as well as practice their customer service skills by dealing with the public.

The program will also take used computers for proper disposal. This service is by appointment only as well, and the students will ensure that all personal data is destroyed from any hard drives before disposal.

Residents can reach the Community Help Desk at 314.989.7704 or via e-mail at [communityhelp@ssdmo.org](mailto:communityhelp@ssdmo.org). ■

*(continued from front cover)* There's so much that can be learned and that can make a difference in nutrition and the health of the world, not just the nation. When you look at different countries and cultures and their differences in quality of life and life expectancy you can't help but draw a connection to the types of food they eat."

### Why did you choose Johnson & Wales to pursue your bachelor's degree?

"We were able to study athletic cuisine, spa cuisine, things like that. That's why I chose that program because it wasn't just cooking or just nutrition. It melds the science of the nutrition with the art form of cooking and plating (presentation)."

### How have you been spending your summer now that you've earned your bachelor's degree?

"I've been working as a chef for Camp Jump Start in Imperial, Mo. It's a 250-acre summer camp that teaches children with weight issues the skills they need to live healthier lifestyles. I've been doing menu planning and preparing meals. The kids that are there — 50 percent want to be there and 50 percent had to be pushed. But it's a great environment. We stress portion control and physical activity. The kids get one chance to go

to this camp because it shouldn't be a crutch. It's about giving them a jump start on losing weight and the life skills to stick with it."

### What's your next step?

"This fall, I begin a 10-month internship through Cox College of Health Sciences in Springfield. The program is highly competitive and only accepts 11 graduate students each year from across the country. It will be community based and allow me a chance to decide what I want to pursue for my master's degree."

### What area of culinary arts and nutrition are you leaning toward for graduate school?

"I hope to get my master's degree in either pediatrics or geriatrics. My grandmother is in a nursing home. Older people fascinate me with the effects of nutrition on their overall health and longevity. And for children, they're still growing and the effects of nutrition on their growth, health, and quality of life is so important. Teaching them while they're young to instill lifelong habits is so beneficial. Trends show that one in three adolescents in 2012 will be overweight. With that prediction, we have to do something

about it. If we start young with education we can change the future."

### What advice do you have for anyone trying to lose weight?

"I don't use the word 'diet.' I like to describe it as 'making healthy choices.' Eating healthy along with physical activity is the key to maintaining a healthy weight and a healthy lifestyle. When you go shopping, shop the perimeters of the store — the produce, the bakery, the meat, the dairy. That's where you will find the freshest items. The less processed your foods are generally the better they're going to be for you. I'm a big fan of fresh, local ingredients in cooking. And allow yourself to make mistakes. It's going to happen. Just because you eat something unhealthy doesn't mean you should throw in the towel. It's about one healthy decision at a time."

### As the new school year starts, what advice do you have for students currently enrolled in SSD's culinary arts programs?

"Keep an open mind. They set you up wonderfully with the basics of culinary arts. From there, you have endless opportunities." ■

## South Tech Earns 'Tough Tools for Cool Schools'

South Technical High School's building trades program has a few new additions in its toolbox.

South Tech recently was chosen as one of 500 schools nationwide to receive a set of complimentary tools from Lowe's courtesy of its Tough Tools for Cool Schools program. The tool kit, valued at \$600, includes claw hammers, utility knives, tape measures, hand saws, adjustable wrench sets, pliers, screwdrivers and a rolling tool chest.

Lowe's partnered with SkillsUSA for the program. SkillsUSA programs include local, state and national competitions for students in career and technical programs in which students demonstrate occupational and leadership skills. ■



Jonathan Carter, Carpentry Program

Special Edition is a publication of the Communications Department of Special School District of St. Louis County.

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