

Cleaning up after Cooking Theories & Skills class.



mixers, Groen deep-fryer, Blodgett warmers and convection ovens, huge walk-in fridge and freezer. Simply put, there isn't a better learning kitchen in Oregon. Culinary student and caterer Tiffany Rockett summed it up: "The equipment is totally awesome, and this time I really mean that word."

The building's intelligent design is a resource in itself. Its largest meeting room can seat 650 theater-style or feed 400 at large round tables, as occurred at September's inaugural (and first annual)

Harvest Dinner, when guest chef Cory Schreiber, of Portland's world-renowned Wildwood Cafe, prepared a fairly fabulous five-course dinner for 400, complemented by 400 bottles of five fine wines, all contributed by King Estate. The event helped the LCC Foundation raise \$60,000 for scholarships and program needs. Like all the meeting spaces, the big room is wired thoroughly for the latest forms of electronic communications — digital and computer — linked overhead projectors, drop-down screens, Internet ports and available

connections for phones and FAX, high-quality speaker systems, DVD and VCR players. Upstairs offices can meet needs for copying and word-processing. Technical support and audiovisual professionals are readily available.

The big room can be easily divided into smaller spaces, but eight smaller rooms can be utilized for breakout sessions or other purposes, and the tables and chairs in many are designed to allow for a variety of configurations — single desks, pairs, small groups, a large oval. Flexibility is built-in, and every room is wired for modern communication. Especially impressive is a small amphitheater-style auditorium seating up to 65 in comfortable swivel chairs, each seat with Internet connection and networking potentials. The room also offers a 15 by 25-foot pull-down screen.

Dazzling is the adjective that leaps to mind. The Center for Meeting and Learning is still in its early infancy but already booking events — a Retirees' Tea, DEQ training, meetings of Lane Council of Governments and Cottage Grove Chamber of Commerce, plus many more. Peg Allison tenders "a very gracious thank-you" to the voters of Lane County and all the individuals and organizations who have helped invent this marvelous facility. She is especially grateful to the members of the Advisory Board, hospitality industry professionals themselves, who



First-year Culinary Arts student Jesse Stafford.

had the vision to see that "food makes events" which resulted in a "first-rate ... full-blown kitchen."

For the future, Allison and all the supporters involved foresee the Center as a space that will benefit local-area businesses — restaurants, hotels and motels, recreation businesses and services — and indeed the whole community. How has the community responded so far? "Wonderful," Allison says, "they love it." And in her mind, the sky's the limit. **EW**



First-year Culinary Arts student Whitney Johnson.

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