

# Main Course

Appetizer at Hannah More helps graduate plan a food service career.

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**A**aron Yaffe, a 2009 graduate of Hannah More School, credits the Reisterstown school with his turnaround from a friendless, unmotivated student to a leader with the skills to succeed both socially and academically.

Mr. Yaffe, 18, never received the individualized attention he needed in the large, anonymous setting of public school, so he switched to Hannah More in the eighth grade.

"I think Hannah More is the best thing that ever happened to us as a family, and to Aaron individually," said Mr. Yaffe's mother, Marci Kogan. "He was really having a lot of trouble in public school. He needed structure, routine and one-on-one attention, and Hannah More offered all that. ... Aaron has confidence and maturity now. He gained that at the school."

This fall, Mr. Yaffe will attend Baltimore International College of Culinary Arts. He cultivated an interest in food preparation at Hannah More, where he worked closely with its chef and culinary arts instructor, Pearline Holland.

"When I first met Aaron in 2005, he couldn't prepare anything in the kitchen beyond opening a can," Ms. Holland said. "But he expressed an interest and he stuck with it the whole time he was there."

By the time he graduated, Aaron had learned how to prepare such elaborate dishes as rack of lamb and once spent weeks creating a haunted gingerbread house from scratch.

Ms. Holland said she taught Aaron and his classmates the fundamentals of cooking and baking, but tried to give them as much free rein as possible to direct the lessons.

"When I feel like they can do the math and put everything together without blowing up the kitchen," she said, chuckling, "I let them do it, because it gives them more incentive to continue."

Mr. Yaffe's classes with Ms. Holland took place as part of Hannah More's Decker Career Technology Education Program, an optional elective that offers students practical training in one of five vocational areas: culinary arts, horticulture, automotive repair, building trade and information technology.

"The Decker program helped me make my career choice of being in the food service field," said Mr. Yaffe.

In addition to the courses he took as part of the Decker program, Mr. Yaffe volunteered to help Ms. Holland with preparing food for school events. Ms. Holland spoke highly of his work ethic, recalling that he often stayed after school to prepare meals for PTA meetings and once single-handedly baked the desserts for a school



PHOTO PROVIDED

Aaron Yaffe: "The Decker program helped me make my career choice of being in the food service field."

anniversary reception.

As a senior, Mr. Yaffe participated in the optional work/study program at Hannah More, which places students in jobs related to their career interests.

"I think, to make a well-rounded person, it's good to have the skills that are taught in these vocational programs to get the hang of the real world," said Kay Bowen, job development coach for the work/study program. She found a work placement for Mr. Yaffe at Quizno's Subs.

The program, now in its 11th year, was launched because "students needed more practical vocational training," said Hannah More development director Joan Drebing.

She noted that since Hannah More only offers the program to seniors who have already accumulated the majority of their graduation credits, it doesn't interfere with academic responsibilities. This year, 20 out of 23 graduating seniors participated in the work/study program.

"Other schools should try a similar program to help students get

work experience before leaving high school," said Mr. Yaffe. "I enjoyed working at Quizno's because I love the food service field. I learned many skills that have helped me."

After Mr. Yaffe completed the required hours at Quizno's for the work/study program, he stayed on as an employee and will continue to work there until his classes begin at Baltimore International College.

"The work/study program helped me gain control of things," Mr. Yaffe said. "I learned how to be professional, what to do and what not to do. It gave me the chance to meet and get to know people outside of school." □