

## Connolly: ‘We Survived’

*COVID brought challenge and change, with more to come*

By Miles Shaw  
College Hill Writer

During the pandemic, SCCC has faced the issues and struggles that all other schools had to overcome as well.

All schools had to move to remote and hybrid learning and change the way that academic material is taught to students. SCCC is no exception due to the fact that it too had to move online with hybrid classes, slowly opening up to in-person classes in smaller student groups.

To accomplish the goal of reverting the college experience back to what it was before COVID-19 will not be without its challenges.

In efforts to get in-person



Sign of the times: In a normal semester, at 9:15 a.m. on Mondays, the upper parking would be full, with late-arriving students hustling to class. But that’s not now.

College Hill photo

learning available to everyone who desires it, president of SCCC, Dr. Jon Connolly said that the college is able to reduce the risk of COVID-19 on campus by upgrading and changing facilities and practices.

“We handled it as well as we could have,” said Connolly. “We survived through spring and summer classes.”

He talked about how the college fared through the COVID lockdowns in 2020 and to this day. He said the

college is going through adjustments to better its position during the pandemic.

Connolly explained how the classroom and laboratory buildings on the property had fortunately received a ventilation upgrade that greatly reduces the risk of spreading COVID among a small group of students. This upgrade occurred about five years before the pandemic struck the college.

He said that due to the

upgraded ventilation system the classrooms and laboratories receive three air exchanges every hour meaning that a group of around six students are exposed to little risk of exposure to the airborne virus.

Connolly did extensive research and tests of the ventilation system by himself. He said that in the beginning of COVID-19 he knew that the virus was spread through the air much more than through

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Sign on door says it all: No spectators allowed as Lady Skylanders basketball team hits a two-pointer.

College Hill photo

## Spring sports season mixed coping with competing

By Paige McCarrick  
College Hill Writer

As the weather is getting warmer, the SCCC Spring sports season is coming to an end. It has been unforgettable and there are a few aspects that can be looked back on in this first active sports season with COVID-19.

John Kuntz, athletic director, offered an overview of the season, saying a season with COVID was “a little bit of a disruption.”

Some important changes and differences that were in place during the Spring required “taking a pause for

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# Spring Concert 2021

## *A New Experience for Musicians and Audience*

The Spring 2021 Music Recital brought students and faculty together during these difficult times. Shown in the photos are members of the SCCC Music Department rehearsing for the Spring Recital. The recital is comprised of instrumental and vocal music. It is presented in a series with an introduction leading to each performance. It can be viewed on the college website at <https://sussex.edu/musicrecital>.

College Hill photos



Jonathon Rosendale playing the clarinet- Fantasy Piece Op. 73 No. 1 (Schumann)



Above Photo (Picture Order): Mr. Philip Lid, Zach Schroeder, Jonathon Rosendale. Paul Arvary, John Cristiano, Alexis Borowic, Sitting: Dr. Debroah Gianuzzi



Zach Schroeder playing the piano- Prelude, Op.28 #4 (Chopin)



Alexis Borowic singing Piece By Piece (Clarkson)



John Cristiano singing Pur dicesti, o Bocca Bella (Lotti) while Dr. Debroah Gianuzzi plays piano



Paul Arvary singing O Isis und Osiris from The Magic Flute (Mozart)

# Showcase of student art can be viewed online

By Kelsey Calabrese  
College Hill Writer

Every year, Sussex County hosts a festival to showcase the artwork of more than 1,000 local students from grades 7 through 12. The festival is hosted every spring but this year things look a little different due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This year, the festival is hosted in a digital format.

The festival highlights different variations of art from the students and can range from creative writing to painting to live theater performances. The artwork is available to be viewed by the public but also up for critiquing from professionals.

The Festival has been held since 1969 and was established to encourage students to explore their potential and show off their skills. However, it was not until 1989 that SCCC hosted the event.

The festival contains works from more than 1,000 students from eight schools in the area that register for the event, which are: High Point Regional High School, Hopatcong High School, Lenape Valley Regional High School, Newton High School, Pope John XXIII Middle School, Sparta High School, Sussex County Tech-

nical School and lastly, Wallkill Valley Regional High School.

The festival went live March 16 at [www.sussexcountyteenarts.com](http://www.sussexcountyteenarts.com) and is still up for viewing. In a usual year, there are about 20 schools that participate.

The Teen Arts Festival offered various workshops by professionals that taught breakdancing, blacksmithing, origami and even henna to anyone who was eager to learn. Unfortunately, the workshops are now closed, but there is still the ability to explore the various categories of the student's art.

The schools themselves have to gather what artwork they want to be sent to the festival which allows the student creators to attend. If a work of art does well on the critique from a professional, the artist then has the opportunity to compete in the New Jersey State Teen Arts Festival which is also being held virtually this year, June 1st to the 3rd and is available to view at [www.njteenarts.com](http://www.njteenarts.com).

NJ teen arts was also impacted by the pandemic and will offer its workshops in a virtual format on June 1-3.

The professionals that critique are all local artists and their biographies are all posted online to view as well. The judges



are provided with a check-off sheet in order to be consistent when critiquing. The intent of the critique is to encourage the students to expand on their talents; not to create a competition.

Sponsors are crucial to keep the festival alive. The school districts involved, SCCC, and donations from local patrons and businesses are largely why the Teen Arts is able to be held.

Grants from state programs are also beneficial to the program. Anyone is able to volunteer to get involved.

Additional funding is donated by the Sussex County Commissioners.

Next year's festival is being planned as an in-person, on-campus, event for March 16th, 2022, with a snow date of March 17th. Don't forget to mark your calendars for next year!

# Semester's snow softened by online learning

By Kelsey Calabrese  
College Hill Writer

Many school districts in the country have been facing this issue; the expansion of online learning due to the coronavirus has forced many schools to forfeit snow days.

In years before the pandemic, SCCC would have to evaluate road conditions when it snows across the county, because it is a commuter-only campus.

SCCC checks on possible closures in Vernon, Newton and Hopatcong because of their widespread locations.

Kathleen Peterson, Director of Marketing, said if two out of the three neighboring towns closed, then SCCC closes as

well. This past winter things were done a little differently.

Almost all of the campus was able to convert to a virtual format on Canvas Online Learning, with certain classes still meeting in person, due to the nature of the course.

The new decision for closure due to inclement weather is left for the Director of Facilities, Charlene Peterson, to make. This past winter was unpredictable with snow storms and New Jersey has seen one of the biggest snowstorms ever recorded. The storm dropped up to 35 inches in some parts of New Jersey. The college has not had to completely shut down for hazardous road conditions which left students able to have class online.

With virtual schooling being so efficient, does this mean that the college is able to save money with snow removal? Sort of. Because SCCC is situated within a state with all four seasons, the snow removal and maintenance are defined in the budgeting process each year.

Charlene Peterson, the head of Facilities, said the school has a "public bidding process" on how contractors are hired to remove debris from the campus.

Contracts with the independent contractors typically last three years. Usually work such as snow plowing or salting cost an hourly rate per storm but there may be itemized charges depending on what is needed.

A mild winter is easier on the school funds. Every year, the school sets aside about \$300,000 for the average New Jersey winter, said Charlene Peterson. The school gauges the budget in other areas to make up for the more demanding winter seasons, if needed.

If there are fewer students who commute to the college, the school could save money due to the contractors being needed for less hours per storm.

It gives the school more time to make decisions on school closures, delayed openings or early dismissals. Students are then able to learn from the comfort of their homes and not have to worry about being late to class.

# Connolly expects more change

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surfaces. In the spring and summer of 2020, most were not as definite on how the virus was spreading; if it was surface or airborne. Connolly was sure it was airborne, so he took it on himself to conduct tests of the ventilation system to determine what size classes would be safe for in-person use. To ensure the college is the safest that it can be, Connolly tested his own theories of what is safe and what is not with the ventilation and sanitation systems.

He said that the college has received lighting upgrades to UVC bulbs giving the ability to clean the surfaces and air of a room in minutes. This practice will be instilled in the near future to all classrooms, however it is already happening in bathrooms.

Connolly said he took the time and effort to make sure that all components such as the ventilation systems and sanitization practices of the college were tested and changed to make sure that they are fit to work during the pandemic. He said he found by his investigations that a class of around six to ten students is very safe to perform in person as long as there is a gap between students and masks are worn.

## Campus construction, renovations, upgrades

The campus has seen a major construction project to building A, near the first parking lot of the main entrance and right next to the college's pond.

Connolly said the addition was constructed to house more classrooms as well as a lecture hall capable of holding 60 people. The classrooms in the addition, will be used for the robotics, software, and design programs. Those classrooms and workshops will have laser

cutters and 3D printers for students to use for robotics and design.

Another building that will see upgrades is the athletic center, which will receive an additional locker room for the athlete students. Connolly explained how the teams have managed to use one locker room, however, due to COVID-19 precautions the college will receive state funds to build an additional locker room for optimized social distancing. Other than the new addition on A building and the soon to be upgraded sports



Another change was conversion of cafeteria/student lounge area into a socially distanced classroom. *College Hill photo*

center, the college currently has no more plans for new construction, he said.

## Online and/or in-person learning

As noted earlier, most college courses were moved online with a few classes remaining a hybrid mix where a small number of students met in-person and had assignments online for the majority of 2020. In late 2020 the college slowly opened to in-person learning with reduced student group numbers. Connolly said that to make in-person classes the dominant form of learning again, the students will have to show interest in that type of education. To date students seem to be more intrigued with

online or hybrid learning.

Long before the pandemic, the college had around 17 percent of students taking classes online, so there was demand on that platform before COVID-19. Throughout 2020 the college had managed to uphold the best state enrollment numbers with a decrease of just five percent. This is compared to a state average of around 15 percent, with extreme cases of almost 25 percent.

Ketan Gandhi, chief financial officer at SCCC, said "During the pandemic, the college took the approach of

think ahead, with this in mind, Gandhi said, the college is currently not adding positions for new employees unless they can be reallocated from the current staffing set-up.

In-person learning has already been happening at SCCC and the numbers of classes that are on campus will only grow, Connolly said, and the amount of growth of on-campus classes will directly correlate to student demand.

He said a study taken at the college during the pandemic showed that only 35 percent of students want in-person learning, while the rest want either a hybrid, remote, or a completely online experience. So opening more in-person classes on campus can be questioned, he said.

Connolly said there will be a shift in learning, most students and professors who enjoyed in-person learning are already back on campus while the students and professors who enjoyed online classes will remain online until further notice.

Connolly would love the opportunity to see the college back to having more students in in-person classes so that they can receive the full benefits as well as the college experience.

On the subject of in-person classes, the topic of COVID-19 vaccines comes into question. When the vaccine is widely available to the public, some colleges and schools will require and prefer students who receive the vaccine to attend in-person classes.

Currently SCCC does

being prudent with its operating expenses, especially with the unknown. We did receive funds that allowed us to invest in making college safer and improving upon the IT infrastructure that resulted in better WiFi access and better remote tools for the college community.

"At the same time," Gandhi continued, "the college restrained from doing furloughs and continued with its plan to give committed raises to its faculty and administrators."

He said the college took steps to insure that the college could remain in a good position financially during the uncertainty of COVID-19.

Even with the lowest numbers of a decrease in student enrollment, the college has to

Continued on next page

# Students may work on county vehicles

*Continued from previous page*

not require students to receive a COVID-19 vaccine and will not require it in the foreseeable future, Connolly said. This will depend on if the state mandates all colleges to vaccinate their students. To date SCCC will not require a student to receive a vaccine to attend on-campus classes.

## Future of automotive mechanics program

It is now the third semester that SCCC has offered automotive classes to all students and it has undeniably seen an increase of enrollment. The automotive program includes classes such as diesel engines, brakes and suspension, the most popular being diesel.

Being the only state-run diesel program, student interest

in the automotive courses has grown so much that enrollment in the program is triple the amount in the Spring semester last year. This growth may surprise some due to the presence of COVID-19 in schools.

The diesel program is dealing with COVID-19 well thanks to proper social distancing guidelines. Projects and renovations of the McGuire buildings in Newton will continue and will hopefully be finished by next year.

The future of the program is now coming into sight, and everything is pointing at the college's diesel courses growing.

Connolly said he foresees the automotive program collaborating with local



Connolly

business and the county. He said he would like to see the program help the local county repair damaged, nonfunctional vehicles, or just to perform basic maintenance to get them operational again.

Connolly said he believes the diesel program will continue to grow, especially

if it collaborates with both business and the county to fix trucks and vehicles that would otherwise be repaired at a later date or not at all.

With the surplus of helping hands that diesel courses bring, both sides of the possible arrangement could benefit.

The students would have real-world experience, while the county would have vehicles repaired much more expeditiously.

The plans for the diesel program are still under review, however that is a potential future outcome that could grow the program and help others.

# Fall Training to follow on heels of Spring season

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COVID issues.” This included athletes not participating from 10-14 days on the field if they tested positive and then having to get tested once a week.

The season was constantly changing and the biggest challenge was getting used to the protocol changes for COVID-19 and changes within the seasons schedules of various teams.

With this noted, Kuntz said “the coaches and athletes adjusted and became flexible.” It was an experience that will never be forgotten, but Kuntz put it as “a new way of athletics.”

As Kuntz had outlined in the beginning of the season, the protocols included practices in the gymnasium meant having doors cracked open and airing out the space for 15 minutes between sports, as well as having the inner doors open to the hallway allowing for fresh air to circulate.



And when the athletes were in the game, they did not have to wear a mask, but when they are on the sidelines or not doing anything, then a mask must be worn.

The athletes had to adjust to this new way, but each team got through it. And like Major League Baseball last season, there were no spectators in the stands.

With this new way of athletics, unfortunately many games had to be postponed or canceled throughout the season for all teams that were participating. Kuntz estimated that about a dozen games were canceled this season, although some were rescheduled.

With the unique season there were limited spectators allowed when the teams were playing outdoors, but no spectators were allowed for indoor sports. All of the games were live-streamed this season, even though it was not something new to athletics, which had games live-streamed in previous seasons.

When the first football game was streamed it got more than 1,100 views. The football team had a great Spring season even though it was not a traditional season. The players will have a quick turnaround and short recovery time because they'll begin practicing in July in hopes of a “normal” Fall season.

One team that did not have a lot of participants this season, but is hoping to return to a normal season in the Fall, was wrestling.

The team started out with eight wrestlers at the beginning of the season and that number

slowly declined.

One Skylanders athlete stood out: Taylan Zafis. He went to the National Tournament in Council Bluffs, Iowa on April 21 and competed in two matches. Zafis did not win either match, with scores of 12-4 and 8-1. Hopefully we'll see him back on the mat in the Fall.

Each sport had some great accomplishments this season and the plan is for all teams to go back to normal seasons as scheduled. Kuntz said he was very hopeful for a “traditional season” that will arrive this coming 2021-22 sports season.

Every team had a great Spring season and the college athletes made the best of tough situation. Huge thanks to coaches and students who participated and we look forward to what the Fall 2021 season will bring!

# Vehicle Mechanics Enrollment Tripling in Second Year

*Multiple bays in former McGuire buildings being renovated for expanding program*

**Miles Shaw**  
*College Hill Writer*

Since the spring semester of 2020, SCCC has hosted hands-on automotive classes available to all students. The automotive courses are growing, although the pandemic slowed the large goals of renovations and upgrades of the program. The automotive program includes classes such as diesel engines, brakes and suspension.

The most popular of which is diesel engines. Being the only state-run diesel program, interest in the automotive courses has grown so much that student numbers in the program are triple the amount in the Spring semester last year. This amount of growth may be surprising to some due to the overshadowing presence of COVID-19 in schools and other learning programs.

As with all classes, the coronavirus has affected the automotive program in many ways, such as rising concerns about in-person teaching and held back projects and renovations. COVID-19 is the new normal, and there are questions about how the automotive program is coping due to its hands-on style of learning and large plans for the future.

“The interest has gone up even now, however COVID-19 threw a monkey wrench at the program,” said Anthony Barbere, an automotive professor in the program. He has taught in the program since it started.

The automotive courses have been taking COVID-19 precautions seriously including mandatory mask wearing,

six-foot-plus social distancing, wash stations, and sanitization before and after. By upholding strict mandates the courses have been able to remain in person with the occasional virtual class due to erratic weather, he said.

Similarly to all of the other in-person classes, if a class has a positive COVID-19 case the school sends an email concerning that class to take the proper precautions to prevent spreading.

The diesel program would take the same approach, notifying the class of a positive case and self-quarantining for the recommended amount of time. Thankfully, the diesel program has not had any classes with a positive case to this date.

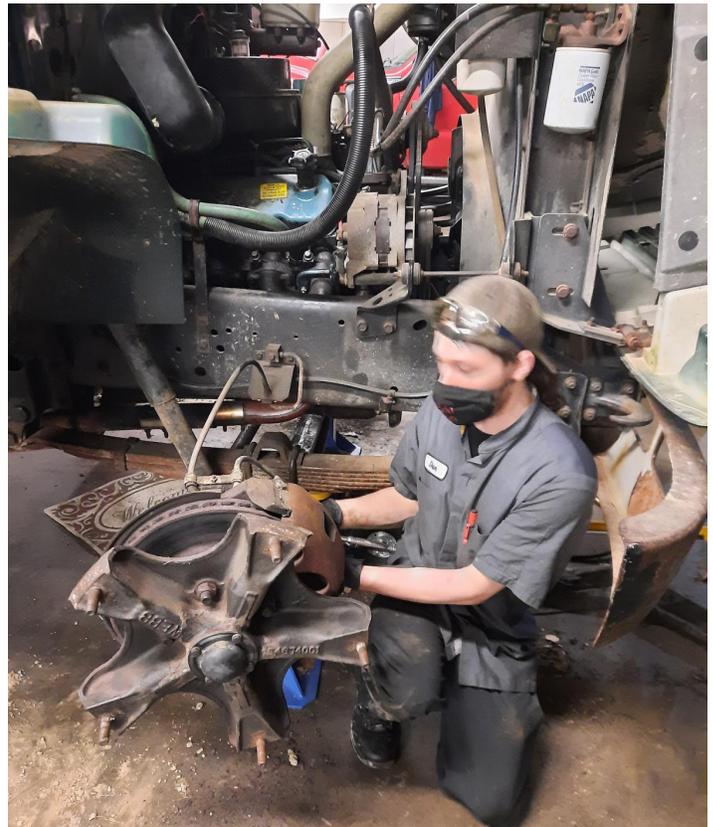
COVID-19 has affected the large renovation plans for the McGuire buildings, which house the main classrooms of the automotive program.

The McGuire site, located in Newton on Main Street, is where most hands-on classes are being held. The site was owned for many years by McGuire Chevrolet dealer, which has moved north on Route 206 near the Subaru dealership.

The building is equipped with five truck bays, each with its own truck, which have been donated, with more donations of vehicles anticipated.

Having multiple bays and trucks makes social distancing easier to accomplish as students can study in separate bays or on different parts of the truck.

The building hosts many



Student Dan Quinn gets hands-on training in the College's Automotive Mechanics program.

classes to offer students and one can take part in experiencing a running training engine, a rolling chassis, and dismantling a truck to see all of the parts involved.

The program supplies students with an extensive supply of Snap on, Matco, and other tools to use at the shop.

The McGuire buildings have and will be equipped with all of the tools necessary to dismantle and assemble a truck for learning purposes, he said.

The college is now on schedule to renovate and upgrade the building to better accommodate the growing interest and future possibilities.

Barbere said the building will see major renovations and upgrades to the electrical, plumbing and outside appearance. “This will all happen, hopefully this year,” he said.

Due to COVID-19 all renovations have been pushed back and there is no certainty when a project can be completed if an outbreak occurs or another

shutdown is mandated.

“Anyone interested is welcomed to look around to see the vehicles and buildings to see what’s up,” he said.

He said those with concerns or interests in the course are welcome to make an appointment to sit in on a class to see the protocols being taken, as long as they are masked and respect social distancing guidelines.

COVID-19 has created added difficulties for schools and colleges to overcome, such as following social distancing and adapting to different styles.

Throughout all the uncertainty and modifications to the learning system the program has seen an increase in student interest that will only grow in the coming months.

The upgrades and renovations at the McGuire site, along with a growing collection of mechanic tools and vehicles to work on, will only become more developed as student interest and applications rise.

# How SCCC students look in Stats

## Attendance status

	FA 2019	FA 2020			
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Change
Full-time	1276	55.1%	1256	57.4%	-1.6%
Part-time	1041	44.9%	934	42.6%	-10.3%
TOTAL	2317	100%	2190	100%	-5.5%

*Data on this page is taken from a semiannual demographic report, provided by the office of Associate Vice President Cory Homer. It is used to plan, direct resources and set guidelines to improve overall college quality.*

*(Because of rounding, some totals may not be 100 percent.)*

## Full-time equivalent (FTE)

	FA 2019	FA 2020
FTE (total credit hr/15)	1,594	1,555

## Citizenship

	Percent
U.S. citizen	98.3%
Non-resident alien	1.7%
TOTAL	100%

## First-time, Full-time Degree-Seeking

FA 2019	FA 2020	Change
405	332	-18%

## Race/ethnicity

	Number	Percent
White	1646	75%
2 or more races/ethnicities	320	14.6%
Hispanic/Latino	83	3.8%
Black/African American	98	4.5%
Asian	34	1.56%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	3	.27%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1	.04%
Unknown	5	.23%
TOTAL	2190	100%

## First-time, Full-time, Degree Seeking by Sex

FTFT degree-seeking	Number
Male	184
Female	139
Not reported	9
TOTAL	332

## First-time, Part-time, Degree-Seeking by Sex

FTFT degree-seeking	Number
Male	21
Female	42
Not reported	2
TOTAL	65

## Class Level

	Number	Percent
Freshman	1093	50%
Sophomore	724	33%
Unclassified	373	17%
TOTAL	2190	100%

## State of Residence

	Number	Percent
New Jersey	1948	88.9%
Pennsylvania	171	7.81%
Foreign Country	37	1.68%
New York	17	.77%
Alabama	0	-
Colorado	0	-
Connecticut	0	-
Florida	3	.14%
Other	14	.7%
TOTAL	2190	100%

## Most Common New Jersey County of Residence

	Number
Sussex County	1734
Warren County	87
Morris County	33
Passaic County	31

## Sex

	Number	Percent
Female	1125	51.36%
Male	1065	48.63%
Not reported	0	0.0%
TOTAL	2190	100%

## Enrollment by Age

	Number	Percent
<18 years old	63	2.9%
18-22 years old	1486	67.9%
23-29 years old	342	15.6%
30-39 years old	166	7.6%

# Culinary class cooks for community

## In cooking for public, learning to work 'faster and cleaner'

**By Hailey Read**

*College Hill Writer*

Amidst the ongoing and unprecedented pandemic, the future of SCCC students has been up in the air.

With no guarantees as to when classes will begin again on campus at full capacity, it begs the question:

What has become of our hands-on students? How has our college managed with this loss of many in-person programs and activities?

Well, for culinary students here at SCCC, life has been anything short of average.

Just a short drive from the campus is Camp Neveda, a

beautiful lake expanse that has been the classroom of our culinary students for three years now.

With a finished commercial kitchen, and a spacious accompanying dining hall, Camp Neveda has given culinary students the opportunity to continue learning their craft during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Culinary kitchens at the college don't provide enough space to safely and effectively follow the CDC social distancing guidelines, said Martin Kester, Supervisor of Culinary Arts and Hospitality at SCCC.

Other on-campus classes, such as science labs and

theater productions, have been strictly virtual due to regulations, with some people saying the students suffered.

"The practical experience the students are gaining from this initiative is invaluable," Kester said.

"It's great to see the confidence and progress they are gaining cooking with an end consumer in mind."

The most successful part of the Culinary program is the students have an opportunity to not only prepare meals, but package, market, and sell them to paying customers in the community.

The meals sold \$20 for two people to enjoy three full courses: appetizer, entree, bread and dessert.

"Our first round of offerings booked up in hours, the second round in just minutes," said Kester.

The overwhelming success of the program, he said, directly benefited culinary students by giving them an exponential boost of confidence to not only see the community enjoy the food, but to also pay for it.

All money made from the sales goes directly back into a scholarship fund, so each sale also directly benefits our students monetarily.

The preparation of the meals is a vigorous and intense process, giving the students only eleven days in total to make enough meals for all of their customers.

Students met three times a week for 5.75 hours each session. In that time, they set



Meals are lined up and ready to go.

up prep stations, gathered ingredients for assigned recipes, and applied new techniques learned throughout the course.

Students learn to work "faster and cleaner," as Kester said. This is tactfully done for a quality learning experience.

The program is expected to continue at Camp Neveda and students are eager to continue to bring homemade recipes to our community members.

The meals prepared by the students span across many different cultures and varieties.

From French cuisine to American classics, the students are trained to cook every type of food.

"This has been a great initiative for the program and the support from the college community has been overwhelming," Kester said.

Lending a helping hand by enjoying meals prepared by our community students was a good way to show appreciation and support, and went a long way in helping them.



Breanna Maurer, who graduates this semester, helps prepare the food that satisfied many customers.