

Whitesboro Senior, Culinary Arts Student, Awarded Scholarship

Sydney Yocum, a senior at Whitesboro High School and a culinary arts student at the Oneida-Herkimer-Madison (OHM) BOCES' Career and Technical Education Center, is the recipient of the Thomas Olivo Leadership Award New York State ACTEA Zone Scholarship.

The award and scholarship, which was presented to Yocum by Career and Technical Education Center Principal Mr. David Stayton at the start of the OHM BOCES' board meeting on April 12, is worth \$500. It was established in honor of C. Thomas Olivo, who was the New York State Education Department's Director of Vocational Education in 1966, when VICA (now known as Skills USA) was launched.

The award, given annually to two students from each of ACTEA's six zones, is particularly meaningful for Yocum. She is the first person ever nominated for the award by Mr. Stayton.

"I got into culinary arts because of my grandma," said Yocum, an aspiring chef. "Always watching her in the kitchen inspired me. I had no idea going into culinary arts what it was going to be like, but I just fell in love with it."

Yocum will be attending the Culinary Arts Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York in the fall. She plans on earning her Associate's degree in culinary arts and Bachelor's degree in business management from the school. After college, Yocum says she wants to be an executive chef at a restaurant and, someday, own her own restaurant - - something she's dreamed about for a long time now.

"Cooking is my outlet," explained Yocum. "Everyone has an outlet like sports, but mine has always been the kitchen. When I am in there, I guess I feel like time stops."

"It gets intense sometimes, but it is fun, too, and I really enjoy it."

During her time as a student at OHM BOCES, Yocum has also participated in SkillsUSA, a national partnership of students, teachers and industry that provides citizenship, leadership, employability, technical and professional skills training to middle school, high school, postsecondary and college students who are preparing for careers in trade, technical and skilled service occupations.

Last year, Yocum was a national delegate at the SkillsUSA Championships in Louisville, Kentucky. This year, she competed as a chef in the SkillsUSA Area 2 Regional Competition at SUNY Morrisville on February 10.

Congratulations, Sydney, on all of your accomplishments!