

WHAT'S AT THE CAT



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Culinary Cohort 6 student takeover was a HUGE success

Culinary Arts Academy cohort 6 set a new tone for Orchid Café at ConnCAT just before 2019 came to a close. For 6 weeks, students created and switched out dishes like shrimp and grits, chicken and waffles, surf and turf pasta, and jerk chicken. Patrons filled Orchid Café seats like clockwork at noon looking for the week's new menu items.

To keep the same energy, Orchid Café is now an entirely student run operation employing ConnCAT Culinary students. The ConnCORP/ConnCAT Orchid Café Internship Program is an opportunity for extended learning and practice through a six-month paid internship program.

For the month of January Orchid is serving a free breakfast to every first customer and a free baked item to every 10th person through the door. New items have been added to the menu, still offering breakfast all day. Stop by the Orchid Café at ConnCAT today for breakfast or lunch.



Blank greeting cards for Valentine's Day and Black History Month are going on sale in February featuring After-School program participants' art. The artwork has been printed on blank note cards that are perfect for thank you notes, love letters, and other personal messages. All note cards will be available for purchase in the Orchid Café at ConnCAT.

Meet the New Staff

2020 brings many new things and people to ConnCAT. While Ms. Ernesha Gatling is not new to ConnCAT she is new to the staff. Medical Billing and Coding Cohort 7 graduate, Ernesha Gatling was the first student in her cohort to earn her CPC certification, all while still in class. Moving full steam ahead, Ernesha secured a position in the field when she was invited to join the ConnCAT staff as the new Medical Billing & Coding Instructor. The new cohort will come in this January and Ernesha is ready to hit the ground running. Welcome back to ConnCAT, Ernesha.



ConnCAT is gearing up for ConnCAT Feeds

MARCH 2020

It has almost been a year since ConnCAT's first ever ConnCAT Feeds event and plans for the next event are underway. In collaboration with the Dixwell and Newhallville communities, our intent is to feed the hungry but also to create a culture of compassion and community stewardship. ConnCAT Feeds is an event created for the community hosted by the

community of students and staff at ConnCAT. On Saturday, March 28, from 12 noon until 3 pm, ConnCAT will be serving a free luncheon for those in need of a hot meal. We will also be handing out toiletry bags to guests. Donations for food and toiletry items will be collected and can be dropped off Monday through Friday at ConnCAT up until the Thursday before the event.

Photos from Winter Commencement





**Everyone tries, everyone supports,
everyone fails, everyone learns,
everyone grows.**

NO School After-School

At the beginning of the school year, ConnCAT Youth program staff worked together to revamp the After-School program. Weight is placed heavily on creating an environment where kids have a say and creativity is unleashed and nurtured. Instead of starting the afternoon with homework, students round up in a group circle and discuss news and events, likes and dislikes and personal experiences. The idea is to create an environment that is enjoyable, relaxing and supportive so that the students feel comfortable to share their thoughts and opinions.

In Graphic Arts, Ms. Gabby has taught logo design, helping students create a logo of their own. In Fine Arts, students have been exposed to abstract artists like William T. Williams and Alma Thomas recreating their own abstract pieces. In Theater, students are re-enacting the stories of the Three Little Pigs, the Wizard of Oz and Miss Nelson is Missing. In STEAM, students are using an educational programming platform called Tynker, aimed at teaching children how to make games and programs using coding. Students are learning all about desserts like crème brûlée and sweet and savoury tarts in Cook-o-logy. And in Hip Hop History, Mr. Jay is helping the students recognize and activate their voices through the creation of their own YouTube channel called Kid's Talk.

Throughout all of these projects ConnCAT students are encouraged to try, support each other, and that failure is OK because from that trying again can only lead to growth and success.



STUDENT HIGHLIGHT
HOWARD NELSON

Meet ConnCAT alumnus and Culinary Cohort 1 graduate, Howard Nelson. Nelson was unemployed and looking for a job when a friend shared the news about the possible opportunities available at ConnCAT. At the age of 28, Howard shared that one of his challenges in coming to ConnCAT was becoming a student again. Another challenge was commuting from Bridgeport every day by way of public transportation. Proudly, Nelson met his challenges with determination to complete the program and graduate with ConnCAT's very first Culinary Arts Academy cohort. Nelson worked his way through the ranks and is currently a Training Coordinator for new hires at Texas Roadhouse, an American chain restaurant that specializes in steaks. He is also an Expediter Chef, holding the responsibility to ensure kitchen orders are prepared in a timely manner. A restaurant kitchen's efficiency rests on the shoulders of the chefs and often the food expeditor. He ensures that a table's orders are completed together and on time and conducts quality control. Current Culinary student Phillip Beamon shared his gratitude for being able to work with Nelson in the kitchen. Nelson came to ConnCAT just looking for an opportunity to work, and instead seized an opportunity to be great. Cheers to Howard Nelson!