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Toast of the Coast: Students sizzle at culinary camp

*MARIA SONNENBERG
TOAST OF THE COAST*

Current students and recent graduates from local area high schools and even college students from Florida Tech and the University of Miami spent three Fridays of their summer vacation indulging their inner chef at Keiser University's Center for Culinary Arts Boot Camp.

When asked the reason for attending the free camp, most of the 24 participants said they always loved cooking and wanted to make a career of it.

"The purpose of the camp is to give interested students a true picture of what it means to be a culinary student and insight to careers in the culinary industry," said Keiser Chef James Missale.

From Missale, camper Dorian Grant learned how to wield a knife to make cuts such as batonette, julienne and brunoise, dicing, fluting mushrooms and how to sharpen the knives. Grant worked as a cook but is interested in advancing those basic skills to become a chef, so he's slated to start Keiser's degree program this fall.

Amanda Russell, a 2008 Palm Bay High grad and a new mom in 2009, was there with roommate Katie Arcario. The two plan to open an Italian restaurant after completing their education.

"I'm passionate about cooking, and I wanted a career where I can provide for my daughter," said Russell.

Keiser's associates' degree classes in the culinary arts begin Aug. 31. For more information, call 409-4800 or visit the campus at 900 S. Babcock St., Melbourne.