



## **Saint Viator Students Treated to Evening at Charlie Trotter's**

May 3, 2010



Colleen Zitkus and Janice Guzon seen here with the Bread Chef at Charlie Trotter's.

An eight-course, tasting menu greeted students from Saint Viator High School, as they took their seats around a table in the heart of Chef Charlie Trotter's studio kitchen, at his Lincoln Park restaurant.

Their feast opened with grilled blue prawn with razor clams, and steamed Tasmanian ocean trout for starters, before leading up to tiny portions of four story hill chicken set in a caramelized onion, and 32-day aged Angus beef with toasted brioche.

And not a morsel was left.

Saint Viator was the latest high school to be invited to the Lincoln Park restaurant and studio kitchen as part of the Charlie Trotter Culinary Education Foundation's outreach to students through its Excellence Program.

Roughly three times a week, Trotter and his staff host high school students at the restaurant, as a way to expose them to new experiences --- and new foods --- while staff members describe firsthand about their commitment to excellence.

Trotter met the group right when they arrived, and he encouraged students to get ready to try new things, and to even sit beside new people.

"Our hope is to open the students' minds to new experiences," says foundation official, Christian Giles, "and to show them that, with dedication and focus, anything is possible."

Saint Viator students included Richard Hutyra, Tim Ivers, Christine Julius, Connor Ptacin, Jennifer Michalik, Maura Wolfe, Elizabeth Freda, and Colleen Zitkus; all of Arlington Heights; as well as Lauren Drolet of Inverness; Meghan Murphy of Schaumburg; Janice Guzon of Hoffman Estates; Liz Griesmaier of Cary; James Jensen and Jeremy Vivit of Mount Prospect; Janet Jozwiak of Elk Grove Village; Colleen Kenyon of Palatine; Jonathan Metzinger of Prospect Heights; and Stephanie Niro of Barrington.

"I'm relatively open when it comes to food, I like to try new things," Hutyra said. "But beyond the quality of food, I came away with this sense of excellence.

"I never knew that the preparation of food could teach significant things about life," he added.

His classmate Colleen Kenyon agreed, adding that she was surprised to hear gourmet chefs talking about working toward a sense of family and community at the restaurant.

"I'm planning to major in business," Kenyon said. "This will help me as I take away from this how much their commitment to each other plays into the success of the restaurant."

Principal Eileen Manno and Student Affairs Director JoAnne Francis accompanied the group. In selecting students for the exotic invitation, they were asked to pick those who strive for excellence in academics, athletics, and personal lives.

It was, after all, an educational opportunity, Manno said.

"Our students learned so much from the staff," Manno says, "about pursuing their dreams, working hard, and being passionate about their goals and educational pursuits."

Their visit started with a tour of the kitchen, its wine cellar and restaurant, tucked away into different rooms of a remodeled house.

During each of the eight courses, they met line chefs and staff members who encouraged students to take risks and try the different types of food, before telling them about their role in the restaurant's commitment to excellence.