

Love of food and attention to detail align Transitions student for success at Kindred Kitchen

Xaphya Carden-Madden, a 21-year-old student in Lake Stevens School District's Transitions Program, had just finished learning how to make mushroom soup when she sat down for her interview for this article.

"It tasted really good!" she exclaimed with a beaming smile on her face. "We swapped the wine with vinegar and you couldn't even tell."

Carden-Madden's excitement is palpable as she explains what she's learning in the 12-week HopeWorks Job Training Program at Kindred Kitchen in Everett. As part of the HopeWorks social enterprises, Kindred Kitchen offers hands-on employment training where students work side-by-side with industry professionals and experienced trainers. They learn customer service, culinary skills and gain the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to pursue stable employment.

Brandon Adkins is the Culinary Trainer at Kindred Kitchen. He jokingly described Carden-Madden as a "foodie" and praised her for her organizational skills and attention to detail.

"Xaphya is very easy to work with and to coach," said Adkins. "She's already really good at the soft skills, and she's doing a great job of learning the technical skills of the restaurant industry."

So far, Carden-Madden is most impressed by the kitchen's commercial dishwasher. She appreciates how clean the dishes get, and has a reverence for organizing the dishes and kitchen supplies so that everything is in the right place, and ready to use.

"I am learning a lot, like how to be safe in the kitchen and how to improve my time management skills," explained Carden-Madden. "Learning food preparation is one of my favorite parts of the program."

In addition to a cafe, Kindred Kitchen offers catering services, community meals and event space. They use locally-sourced ingredients and prioritize sustainability as they work to lessen their impact on the environment.

"I encourage people to come to Kindred Kitchen," said Carden-Madden. "Have a coffee or a meal...try the soup!"

Carden-Madden is one of 15 students in the Transitions Program, which supports students with disabilities ages 18-21 with the transition from the public school system to adult life.



Xaphya Carden-Madden, a 21-year-old student in Lake Stevens School District's Transitions Program, is participating in a 12-week HopeWorks Job Training Program at Kindred Kitchen in Everett. In addition to customer service skills, she's learning culinary skills and gaining the knowledge and confidence needed to pursue stable employment. Here, she's using a commercial dishwasher.



As part of her studies, Carden-Madden learned how to prepare the ingredients and kitchen equipment needed to make mushroom soup. It was a delicious winner!

The program partners with local businesses and work-based programs to provide opportunities for job skills and independent living development.

Carden-Madden obtained her Food Handler's Permit when she was a student in Dawn Boyden's culinary classes at Lake Stevens High School. She also attended Lake Stevens Middle School and Mt. Pilchuck Elementary School.

When she's not at school or in the kitchen, Carden-Madden is passionate about her participation in Special Olympics. She has participated in the program since she was eight-years-old and medaled in baseball, basketball, bowling and swimming. She's a self-described "gamer" and likes to crochet and read.

TRANSITIONS PARTNERS

- Ace Hardware
- Early Learning Center Little Vikings
- Grocery Outlet
- Helping Hands
- Hillcrest Elementary
- Holy Cross Catholic Church
- HopeWorks
- Kindred Kitchen
- Lake Stevens Community Food Bank
- Pathfinder Manufacturing
- Providence Regional Medical Center Everett
- Renew Home & Decor
- Sahara Pizza
- Sno-Isle Tech Skills Center
- The Historic Everett Theatre
- The YMCA
- Volunteers of America

Learn more about our Transitions Program at: www.lkstevens.wednet.edu/transitions

Learn more about Kindred Kitchen and HopeWorks at: www.kindredkitchen.com and <https://hopewrks.org>