

MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

IMPORTANT NEWS ABOUT OUR SCHOOLS & STUDENTS

SUMMER 2012

Celebrating the Class of 2012

Montgomery County's Class of 2012 is headed to great places! On average, about 7,700 students graduate from the county's 21 public schools each year and nearly 75% of graduates pursue post-secondary education at a two- or four-year college or university. In fact, more high school graduates than ever before are planning to continue their education – seven out of 10! Montgomery County students are also among the most successful college students. Pennsylvania ranks 7th in the nation in the percentage of full-time college students who complete their bachelor's degree.*

Thousands of other students each year are successful in finding full-time employment after graduation, while others serve in the military.

Average SAT scores of 1,564 (math, writing, and verbal combined), compared to a statewide average score of 1,473*, earn Montgomery County students entry into some of the country's top colleges and universities, including the Ivy Leagues. The 2012 graduates plan to attend a number of Pennsylvania colleges and universities, as well as others around the country, including Pepperdine University, University of South Carolina, McGill University in Canada, U.S. Naval Academy, University of New Haven, Georgetown University, and Johns Hopkins University.

The most popular educational programs that students plan to pursue in college include business, art, education, nursing, criminal justice, biology, chemistry, and computer technologies.

Students who are moving into the work force plan jobs in fields of culinary arts, cosmetology, machinery, automotive, landscaping, construction, farming, and day care.

**Source: PA Department of Education*

Montgomery County School Districts

Abington
Cheltenham Township
Colonial
Hatboro-Horsham
Jenkintown
Lower Merion
Lower Moreland Township
Methacton
Norristown Area
North Penn
Perkiomen Valley
Pottsgrove
Pottstown
Souderton Area
Springfield Township
Spring-Ford Area
Upper Dublin
Upper Merion Area
Upper Moreland
Upper Perkiomen
Wissahickon

This publication is produced by a consortium of 21 school districts and the Montgomery County Intermediate Unit (MCIU).

Commencement Celebration



Pottsgrove School District Commencement - Photo by M. Weber



Spotlight on Montgomery County's Best and Brightest

We are pleased to spotlight the valedictorian or other exemplary student(s) from each of the 21 Montgomery County public school districts and four career-technical schools. Enjoy reading about the academic and extracurricular accomplishments of these talented young men and women. These students, like thousands of other Montgomery County public school students, are examples of the superior education provided through our public schools.

Andrew J. Brenner Abington



Andrew J. Brenner finished high school with a 4.58 GPA out of a possible 4.60 and completed a total of 13 Honors courses and 10

Advanced Placement (AP) classes, including three out of the four offered AP Sciences.

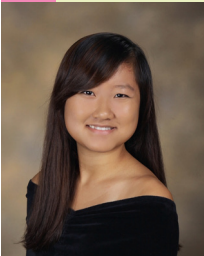
He received several awards his senior year, including the Science Department Award, U.S. Marine Corps Scholastic Excellence Award and the President's Volunteer Service Award (Bronze).

Andrew excelled in a number of extracurricular activities, including varsity soccer team (serving as captain his senior year) and Friends Against Alcohol and Drugs. He also became an Eagle Scout in December 2010.

Andrew's guidance counselor commented that "Andrew is the definition of a leader. He has provided Abington Senior High School with intelligence and wisdom well beyond his years, something that will leave a mark on our school when he graduates."

Andrew will attend Johns Hopkins University in the fall with a proposed major in Material Science and Engineering.

Eun Hye Grace Park Cheltenham



Number one in the graduating class of 2012, Eun Hye Grace Park was President of the National Honor

Society, President of Spanish National Honor Society, President of Asian Student Association and President of International Buddies.

Born in Korea, Grace came to the School District of Cheltenham Township at eight years old. While at Cheltenham High School, Grace was a member of the girls indoor and outdoor track teams and was actively involved with the Key Club. Additionally, Grace completed coursework during her freshmen, junior and senior years through Arcadia University, Manor College, and Harvard University, as part of the CHS Dual Enrollment Program. She holds the following distinctions: Phi Beta Kappa winner, AP Scholar with Distinction, National Merit Finalist, and Taiwanese and Seoul University Alumni Scholarships recipient.

In her spare time she plays violin and practices tai kwon do and yoga. Grace will be attending California Institute of Technology to further her studies in math.

Kyra Hanlon Colonial



Kyra Hanlon enhanced her outstanding academic record with a variety of extracurricular and

leadership activities offered through Colonial School District, including the cross country, track and field, and swim teams, Best Buddies, the National Honor Society, Latin Club, school newspaper, Interact, Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership Program, Emergency Aid of Pennsylvania Foundation and the Archdiocesan Youth Advisory Board.

"Colonial School District has much diversity and helps every student achieve his or her full potential. There is a wide array of opportunities available to students to help them develop their skills and engage their interests," said Kyra, who will attend Georgetown University to study culture and politics in the School of Foreign Service.



Kevin Zhang Hatboro-Horsham



With a 4.0 GPA, ranking him 1st out of 425 students, Kevin Zhang has an impressive resume of academic and extracurricular achievements.

An accomplished scholar and pianist, Kevin is a National AP Scholar, Semifinalist in the National Merit Scholarship Program, Semifinalist in the USA Biology Olympiad, Semifinalist in the US National Chemistry Olympiad, 1st place winner in the Regionals, States, and Nationals for Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) Business Math, 1st place winner in the Regionals for Business Communications, Grand Prize Winner of Music-Fest's Rising Talents Festival, Gold Medalist in the Golden Key Music Festival (performed at Carnegie Hall), Gold Medalist in the National Young Musicians Showcase Competition, and Semifinalist in the World Piano Competition.

He is a member of the National Honor Society and, in 11th grade, was accepted into the University of Pennsylvania Young Scholars program. He is also enrolled in the Stanford University Education Program for Gifted Youth.

Additionally, Kevin is a student leader, founding and serving as president of Help Everyone Learn Properly (HELP), Science Club and Math Club. He also served as yearbook and school newspaper editor and tutored other students in chemistry, biology, mathematics and piano. Kevin will be attending Princeton University this fall.

Jake Soloff Jenkintown

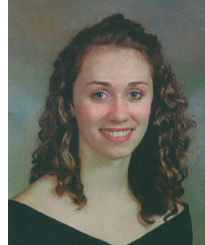


Jake Soloff, valedictorian, earned a multitude of academic achievements

including the school-wide mathematics award, Rensselaer Medal Award, Bausch + Lomb Scholarship Award, Junior Valedictorian, AP Scholar with Honor and National Honor Society Chapter President. He was active in school sports and extracurricular activities, including captain of the cross country team, jazz combo guitar, Microcredit Club, World Affairs, newspaper columnist, French and Spanish National Honor Society, Tri-M Music Honor Society and Debate.

Jake will attend Arcadia University this fall where he says he will pursue his "lifelong interest in math and continue to develop through my research in Graph Theory."

Shaina Carroll & Leora Haber Lower Merion (Harriton)



Shaina Carroll, one of two valedictorians from Harriton High School, is an International Baccalaureate academic scholar. Shaina was deeply committed to her

school community where she was a member of the crew and field hockey teams. She was also involved with the Debate Team where she served as captain, BuildOn (a youth service organization), and the Science Club.

Shaina will attend Rice University in Texas where she plans to explore the sciences and wants to study either chemical engineering or material science.

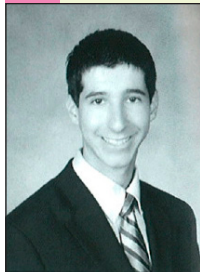


Leora Haber dedicated herself to excelling in the rigorous International Baccalaureate Program and a host of extracurricular activities. Leora was a member of the nationally ranked Harriton Science

Olympiad team and won several medals on the regional, state, and national levels. She was a member of the Science Club and the Harriton Physics Olympics Team.

Leora played soccer and ran cross-country. She also volunteered with the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty of Animals and Cradles for Crayons. Leora will attend Princeton University where she plans to study chemistry.

Daniel Friedman Lower Merion (Lower Merion High School)

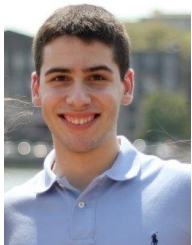


Daniel Friedman was one of the top students at Lower Merion High School with a 5.0 GPA. He received a National Merit Semi-Finalist candidacy in a highly competitive school. He is a dynamic leader, who served as president of the Science Olympiad team, secretary of the junior class, and vice-president of his senior class.

Whether designing a 10-gram balsa wood tower for Science Olympiad, or convincing the principal of the feasibility of a junior prom, Daniel has an uncanny ability to "think outside of the box" and find new, creative solutions to challenging problems.

Daniel's intellect continued to expand during his high school years. He not only mastered his increasingly difficult honors and Advanced Placement course work, but nurtured other interests including piano, culinary arts, and computers.

Ben Gastfriend Lower Moreland Township



Ben Gastfriend, valedictorian, graduated first in his class. A member of the National Honor Society, he completed 10

Advanced Placement courses, and received the Dr. David Archibald Award, Concordia Trust Excellence in German Award, and the Lion's Pride Award for service within the school. He was a familiar face to all Lower Moreland district staff since he worked year-round in the Information Technology (IT) department.

Ben will attend the University of Maryland College Park to study engineering and hopes to pursue a career in chemical engineering.

He played piano in the jazz ensemble for four years; served on the Mini-thon Cancer fundraising committee and as supervisor of the student Tech Crew.

He encourages other students to "think independently."

Kyra Hanlon Methacton



Valedictorian Yumeng Liao, described by her teachers and counselors as a "self-disciplined, motivated student with a great

personality", completed high school with an extremely rigorous course load that included 9 Advanced Placement courses, 12 honors courses, and the Gifted Seminar.

She is also a talented artist, a member of the orchestra, and the girls tennis team.

Yumeng will pursue a career in biomedical engineering at Columbia University.



Amanda Assenmacher Norristown Area



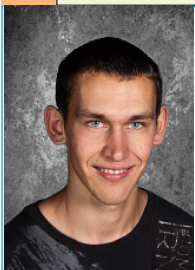
Amanda Assenmacher, valedictorian, received dozens of awards and honors during her high school career. Her academic excellence

earned her the 2011 AP Scholar with Distinction, 2012 National Merit Scholarship designation, Bausch + Lomb Award, and the Harvard Book Club Award, among many others. She sustained the Honor Roll Award for 11 marking periods.

Amanda also excelled in sports, participating in varsity swimming/diving and soccer, as well as a number of extracurricular activities, including DECA member, *Eagle News* anchor, technician and director, concert band, German Club, Mock Trial and Drama Club.

Amanda, who will attend the United States Naval Academy, plans to study political science/international relations and hopes to become a lawyer in the JAG Corps.

Mikhail (Misha) Khodak North Penn



Mikhail (Misha) Khodak, valedictorian, was the recipient of several awards due to his excellent grades. These included: National Merit Scholarship Semi-Finalist (2011), National AP Scholar (2011), Social Studies Department Award (2011), Harvard Book Award (2011), Penn State Essay Contest-Finalist (2011), American Association of University Women-Excellence in Writing Winner (2010), and the Academic Excellence Award

(2009).

Misha was also a member of the following extracurricular activities: track and field, ADAPT Organization, InfinityStat.info, Academic Decathlon, Key Club, National Honor Society, Special Olympics, and the French National Honor Society.

Misha, who will attend Princeton University and study mathematics, says that the most important thing he learned in school was "don't be afraid to test your limits."

Amy Defnet Pottsgrove



Amy Defnet, valedictorian, was a 2012 National Merit Semifinalist and member of the National Honor Society and Math

League. She also participated in the Color Guard, Quiz Bowl, soccer and spring track. She enjoys playing piano and reading.

Amy, who will attend Hamilton College where she will major in mathematics, advises other students, "Don't be afraid to try new things. Sometimes the classes or clubs that you join with low expectations turn out to be your favorites."

Abigail Dove Perkiomen Valley



Abigail Dove graduated first in her class with a number of other impressive academic achievements, including National Merit Scholar Finalist and Vice President of the

National Honor Society. Abigail was active in athletics, music and volunteer work in the community. She was awarded the PAC-10 Girls Tennis All-Conference Academic Award and enjoyed music lessons for classical guitar and piano. She also served as the co-president of the French Club and worked after school jobs.

Abigail will be attending Swarthmore College in the fall majoring in neuroscience. She says she “finds the prospect of combining the social and physical sciences incredibly appealing and would love to spend my future career unlocking the mysteries of the human brain.”

Abigail stated that the school district’s greatest strength is its career study program. “I now have an improved resume, relevant technical lab experience that I normally would not receive until well into my college years, and the assurance that scientific research is indeed the correct occupation for me.”

Carly Mutter Pottstown



Carly Mutter, Pottstown valedictorian, says the most important thing she learned in school is that

“you can do anything you set your mind to. It’s important to set goals. Always stay true to yourself.”

Setting high goals for herself, Carly was the Vice President of the National Honor Society and was involved in peer mediation and student ambassadors.

A talented musician, she also participated in marching band, concert band, and clarinet ensemble.

Carly, who wants to work in early intervention, will attend Elizabethtown College and pursue the 5-year masters program for occupational therapy.

William Baugh Souderton Area



William Baugh, valedictorian, excelled in academics and music. A talented singer, he participated in

the marching band, PMEA District, Regional, State, and All-Eastern Chorus; served as treasurer of the Concert & Advanced Choir; was a student leaders for the Men’s Acapella; and played a supporting role in the high school musical. He was also active in Movement as a student leader, Youth Group, Economic Challenge, National Honor Society, National German Honor Society and Link Crew.

Baugh is attending New York University to double major in vocal performance and biochemistry. He hopes to eventually go to pharmacy school or medical school, and aspires to have a career in the medical field, as well as continue his musical studies.

The most important thing he learned in school is “to never give up. We face trials and hardships every day, and sometimes we may think we can’t go on, but we have to keep pushing to achieve our goals. Don’t look back. Keep moving forward.”

Hannah Salzer Springfield Township



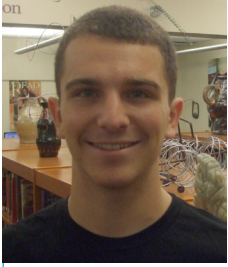
Hannah Salzer, co-valedictorian, had a very productive high school career, both in and out of the classroom. She enrolled in the most challenging courses offered at Springfield High School and performed extremely well, never receiving a grade below “A”. She completed five Advanced Placement courses by the time she graduated.

Music is important to Hannah so she incorporated those courses into her schedule. She is a talented saxophone player and was an essential member of the school’s concert and jazz bands, performing in several shows a year. Hannah was also honored with a position in the Montgomery County Band comprised of the most talented high school musicians in the county. Her love of music led her to volunteering at the Philadelphia Folk Song Society, where she was involved in administrative duties and event coordination.

Hannah was also involved in many of the school’s extracurricular activities. She was the copy editor for the school’s newspaper, a member of the National Honor Society, and a National Merit Commended Student.

In the fall, Hannah will take her talents to Wesleyan University in Connecticut.

Zachary Endter Springfield Township



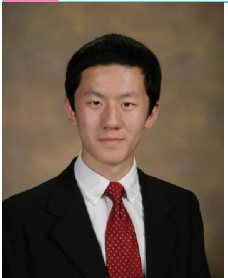
Zachary (Zac) Endter, co-valedictorian, was ranked 1st in his class since his freshman year. Zac earned that ranking while completing honors or Advanced Placement (AP) courses every year, in every discipline and he received “A”s in every course! Due to his academic excellence, Zac earned the distinction of being

named an AP Scholar. He is a member of the National Honor Society and is a National Merit Finalist. National Merit Finalists represent less than 1% of the top seniors, nationally!

On the extra-curricular level, Zac was one of Springfield’s most involved students. He ran both track and cross-country, wrote for the school newspaper, and was both photo editor and copy writer for the yearbook. Zac also served as a peer tutor and was one of four students who served on the Executive Board of the InterAct Club. In his community, Zac has volunteered at the National Greyhound Adoption kennel and at a local nursing home. He also served on the Pennsylvania Governor’s Community Service Advisory Board. As a member of that Board, Zac organized a Caring for Cancer Day at St. Mary Medical Center.

Zac will attend the University of Pennsylvania this fall.

Kevin Li Upper Dublin



Kevin Li graduated with an outstanding academic record. He completed 26 Honors and Advanced Placement (AP) courses, 8 of which he studied independently, and achieved all “A”s. Kevin achieved the highest score on 10 different AP exams prior to his senior year. Kevin has also participated in a wide-range of school activities

and academic competitions in math, science, debate, writing and German. Elected president of the National Honor Society, he is also president of the math team, co-editor in chief of the school newspaper and senior editor of the literary magazine.

Kevin is recognized as a world-class pianist and has performed in concerts and competitions around the world. He was accepted to Boston University’s Tanglewood Institute and the Aspen Music School and Festival last summer.

With sponsorship from Jacobs Music Co., Kevin founded a series of charitable concerts to benefit terminally ill children. He has also raised money for global disaster relief.

Kevin will attend Harvard University in the fall.

Anna Lombardo Spring-Ford Area



Anna Lombardo, valedictorian, took advantage of the school newspaper to hone her skills in writing and editing. From grades 9-12, she wrote for the sports section of *The Rampage* and became the editor for the sports section during her senior

year. She was a member of the National Honor Society and Interact Junior Rotary, a club that gives students an opportunity to participate in community service activities. She was active in sports activities, including cross country and track and field, receiving two varsity letters during her junior and senior years. She also made the 2011 PAC-10 All-League selection.

Anna will attend Pennsylvania State University, where she plans on majoring in English and minoring in business administration. She would like to pursue a career that involves her passion for writing, editing and publishing.

Patrick Staiber Upper Moreland



Patrick Staiber, valedictorian, held the rank of 1st place in his class since ninth grade. Patrick earned that ranking while completing Honors or Advanced Placement courses every year, in every discipline

and he received an “A” in every course! Due to his academic excellence, Patrick earned the distinction of being named an AP Scholar and a member of the National Honor Society. Patrick demonstrates on a daily basis his enthusiasm for learning and for being a better person. With the most challenging curriculum possible, Patrick scored a ‘5’ on all three AP tests he took as a junior and is awaiting results from the five AP tests he took his senior year.

Patrick was also involved in school activities including Media Club, Key Club and men’s tennis. He played soccer for the township team and works as a soccer referee. He also does volunteer work at his church teaching Sunday School. He is the secretary at his church and works at a local pharmacy.

Patrick will attend the University of Pennsylvania this fall.

Brian Rhindress, David Galban and Karen Hranek Upper Merion Area



Brian Rhindress, one of 3 Upper Merion Area School District valedictorians, will attend the Honors Program at the University of Pittsburgh on an academic scholarship, majoring in bio-medical engineering. He plans on a career in medicine or related field.

His academic successes include membership in the National Honor Society and Class President for 9th and 10th grades. He was also a member of the baseball team, choir, band, and Model UN.

Rhindress said the most important thing learned in school is to “work hard in ALL areas and keep your options open. You will be thankful you did.”



David Galban will be attending the Honors Program at the University of South Carolina on a full academic scholarship, majoring in mathematics. He plans on working as a mathematician or a financier with the ultimate goal of a post-graduate math degree from Princeton University.

Among his many achievements at Upper Merion, he was a member of the National Honor Society, a National Merit Scholarship Finalist, 2012 first place winner at the International Business Competition for DECA (out of 14,000 high school students from around the world), a Student Council Representative and member of the orchestra.



Karen Hranek, member of the National Honor Society, and National Merit Scholarship Semifinalist, will be attending the Honors Program at the University of Pittsburgh on a full academic scholarship this fall. She plans on earning a doctorate in bio-engineering and pursuing a career working specifically on “tissue engineering”.

Karen was involved in many high school activities that enhanced her academic and leadership skills, including Model UN, Student Council, and the Judiciary Committee. She served as captain of the varsity soccer and varsity winter track teams for four years; and as the captain of the varsity tennis and varsity lacrosse teams for two years.

Jordan Williams Upper Perkiomen



Jordan Williams, a talented scholar, musician and athlete, will attend Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in the fall to pursue a degree in Biomedical Engineering. At Rensselaer, he hopes to work on various treatments, and ultimately a cure for Type 1 diabetes, as both of his sisters are afflicted by this disease.

Williams, a member of the National Honor Society, was in the top 10% of his class all four years of high school and received the Discus Award Winner (2012), Distinguished Honors in High School, AP Scholar with Honor (2011), Rensselaer Medalist Award (2011), and Awards of Academic Achievement in a number of subject areas.

He was also a member of the Anthracite Orchestra (a symphony orchestra) and was first chair in the high school orchestra. He participated in cross country, swim, and track.

Matthew Schulman Wissahickon



Matthew Schulman, valedictorian, is headed to the Ivy League this fall. He will be attending the Jerome Fisher Program in Management and Technology at the University of Pennsylvania where he will pursue two degrees from the Wharton School of Business and from the Engineering School.

Matthew’s high school achievements include Senior Class Vice President, National Honor Society Co-President, Future Business Leaders of America Class Representative and Editor-in-Chief of the school newspaper. He was also active in sports, clubs and other extracurricular activities including tennis, cross country, jazz band, choir and Key Club.

Matthew says that he “would love to work with alternative energy someday” and hopes to climb Mount Everest. He advises other students to “place trust in your peers’ ideas, because their ideas may very well be better than yours.”

Exceptional Career-Technical School Graduates

Maura Bellamy Western Montgomery Career and Technology Center



Maura Bellamy, a Spring-Ford Area High School student, completed her 3rd year at WMCTC

in the culinary program. She was selected student of the quarter several times while at WMCTC and maintained honor roll at her high school. Maura was recently inducted into the National Technical Honor Society. Maura serves as SkillsUSA Vice President and secretary. She attended SkillsUSA leadership conferences and competed in this year's SkillsUSA competition.

Maura finds time to play JV softball for Spring-Ford Area High School and works as a pantry chef at the Spring-Ford Country Club.

Graduating in June, Maura will attend Walnut Hill College Restaurant School to complete a bachelor's degree in culinary arts, leading to her ultimate career as an executive chef.

Casey Hensley Eastern Center for Arts and Technology



Casey Hensley, a Lower Moreland High School student, consistently maintained an A average throughout his two-year

Electronics Engineering Technology program at EASTERN, and was the 2011-2012 SkillsUSA School Wide PM President. He was the 2010-2011 SkillsUSA Electronics Engineering Technology Class Vice President. He received first place for Electronics Technology at the SkillsUSA District Competition held in February.

At EASTERN, Casey was the May 2012 Student of the Month. In 2010-2011, Casey served as EASTERN's student representative for the Electronics Engineering Technology Program's Occupational Advisory Committee. The committee is comprised of business professionals and industry experts that help the instructors and administration develop the most up-to-date curriculum and ensure that all tools used at EASTERN are the same tools being used in the field.

Two years in a row, Casey received EASTERN's Electronics Engineering Technology Award. He was also an honor roll student at Lower Moreland.

Casey Stranley, Crystal Anderson & Collin Jelinski North Montco Technical Career Center



Crystal Anderson (pictured on left), Methacton School District student, attended NMTCC on a full-time basis studying floral design and landscaping. She plans

to continue her education at Montgomery County Community College. Crystal received numerous awards, including multiple first place ribbons at the PA Farm Show Floral Design competitions. Crystal was also a member of the National Technical Honor Society.

Collin Jelinski (middle), a Souderton Area School District student, attended NMCC on a full-time basis studying drafting & design. Collin was also a member of the National Technical Honor Society and has participated in SkillsUSA district competitions. Collin was offered a full-time job with benefits upon graduating high school and plans to eventually further his education in the drafting field.

Casey Stanley (right), a Souderton Area School District student, began NMTCC in 9th grade as a cosmetology student but found her true interest in the welding program. Casey was a co-op student her senior year, working as a welder, which helped land her a job after graduation. Casey was also a member of the National Technical Honor Society and placed 2nd in a welding competition during the annual SkillsUSA District competition.

Matt Guarini Central Montgomery Career and Technical School



Matt Guarini, a Plymouth Whitmarsh High School student, was among the local teens who put his nose to the grindstone in Central Montco's state-of-the-art kitchen. Matt served as A.M. school and culinary class presidents and, as a testament to his talents and work ethic, he will attend the prestigious Culinary Institute of America this fall. Matt entered Central Montco during his sophomore year, "only knowing that the facility was brand new and had a phenomenal culinary program." During year two, Matt took an active role in SkillsUSA's fall leadership conference, a national nonprofit organization. His SkillsUSA involvement increased as the year progressed and culminated with his Chapter Business Procedure team's first place win at the organization's spring 2011 state championships. During the 2010-2011 school year, he was executive chef for Central Montco's Central Restaurant where he designed a French-themed, eight-course dinner for

the 2012 spring fundraiser. Last fall, he spearheaded a breast cancer awareness bake sale to benefit the American Cancer Society. Eventually, Matt said he "would love to become an executive chef at a fine dining restaurant in a city - Philadelphia or New York, preferably - or in a resort like Disney."