

Skills' training and jobs allow personalities to blossom

Lifestyle Cafe offers developmentally disabled people a chance to learn job skills

BY JANE MILZA
ADVANCE FOOD EDITOR

Jim Anderson was more than just bored in his former job at a sheltered workshop for the disabled. He wanted out.

His disabilities prevented him from learning to read, but he knew he could do better — if he had a chance.

Angela Privitera, meanwhile, spent her days in a day treatment center. The daily routine wasn't challenging enough for her either. Given skills' training and jobs in the Lifestyle Cafe, both Jim and Angela's personalities soon blossomed, according to staff members.

Jim now is "the main grill person" in the cafe, working under professional chef Christopher DeRenzi, a graduate of Johnson & Wales University's hospitality and restaurant management program. Typical of the work done by lifestyles for the Disabled, the parent agency, staff members designed an alphabetical code — since no one can't read — to identify grill orders for him.

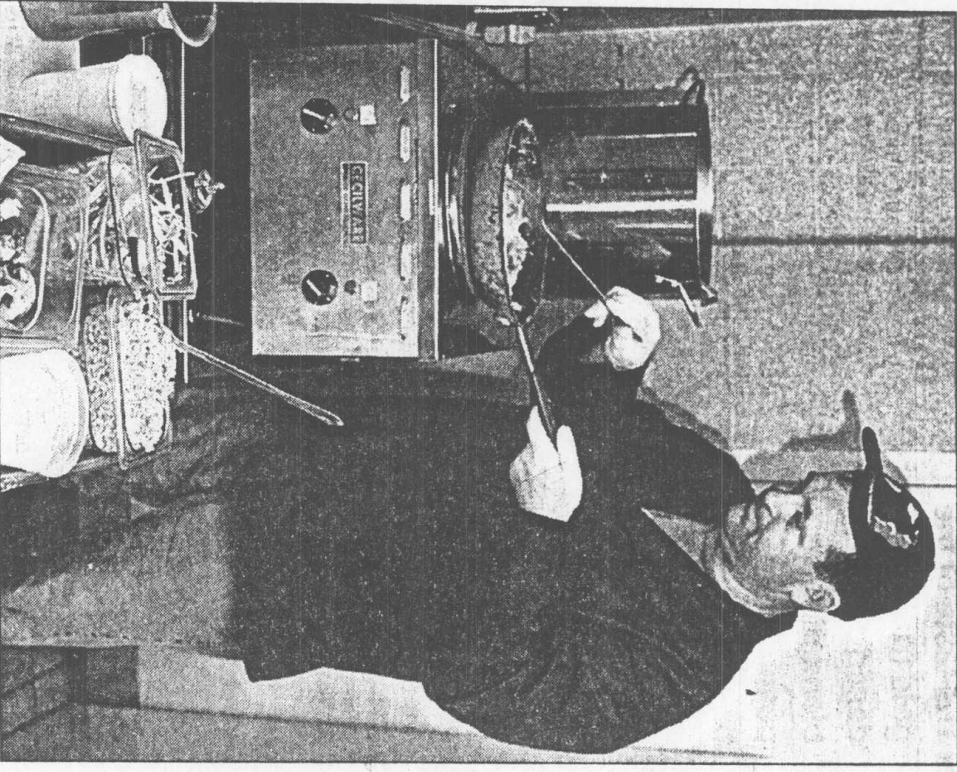
As the main grill person, Anderson, arrives for work each morning at about 7 a.m., and now has no trouble filling orders for eggs or french toast for breakfast and, with equal attention, turns out perfectly grilled hamburgers,



Angela Privitera serves a patron at the Lifestyle Cafe.

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Rotating jobs include cooking, waiting on tables, calling out order numbers and, in general, keeping the 50-seat eating area tidy and clean before the crew heads home at 3 p.m. Three times a week, a staff person escorts consumers, on a rotating basis, to neighborhood supermarkets where they buy fresh produce, replenish the cafe's perishable stock



Jim Anderson cooks in the kitchen of the Lifestyle Cafe.

summers to work in the restaurant field," said Salnaradi, who Ms. Fromkin calls the creative half of the executive team. "There probably aren't enough real hands-on training programs out there that go far enough. People hesitate to let the consumers work around a hot stove and do other work around a kitchen."

"This gives them an opportunity

the cafe, checked it out and said: "I want to retire and work here."
"Everybody was thrilled," recalled Salnaradi.

The menu, which changes weekly and with daily specials, was developed by chef Christopher DeRenzi, a Staten Islander who attended Monsignor Farrell High School and graduated from Susan Wagner High School before

on seven-grain bread that's been lathered with basil pesto and topped with bacon, lettuce and tomato.

Another favorite with cafe patrons is DeRenzi's special of yellowfin tuna served with sesame noodles and a soy dipping sauce. "In a fine-dining restaurant you'd pay \$18 to \$20," said DeRenzi. "Here, the full meal costs less than

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