

## Culinary Arts Program



Mike Hoppe, Culinary Arts Director at Iowa Western Community College, was the speaker at the Treynor Optimist Club on May 30. He started cooking at age 17. His first job was washing dishes at Truck Haven.

Mike has worked at a variety of places before becoming employed at IWCC. He cooked at a restaurant in Millard from 1987 to 1989. The restaurant was based on Husker fans coming after a successful game. Since that was a time when the Huskers were not too successful, the restaurant closed.

Mike worked at Children's Hospital. There they had 6 kitchenettes. Then he worked at Bergan Mercy for 8 years.

Mike worked at IWCC from 1995-1997 as an Associate. In 2003 he became a Lab Assistant. In 2006 he became a full time instructor. In 2007 IWCC offered a buyout to people who had worked there a while. Two instructors left and he inherited the program.

Mike teaches students to cook for 12 to 500 people. The full two year program costs \$12K-\$14K, including knives. He usually has 60-70 freshmen and about 25 second year students. There are a lot of job offerings in the field, so some leave to work full time. Last year they graduated 15 students.

From January through April the students serve lunches from 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. They cost is \$7-\$10.

Second year students fly to Chicago each year for two nights and three days. They attend a food show with 1500 stations.

Mike says that the most important person in the kitchen is the dishwasher. Without clean dishes, no dish will be good.

When asked what Culinary Arts students need to take in High School, Mike includes Math (they need to know fractions, percentages, multiplication and division), public speaking, Spanish (many of the workers will be Spanish speaking) and computers.