

Q&A with Wade Griffin, Bon Appétit's new sous-chef



STAFF WRITER

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Wade Griffin was recently promoted to a sous-chef position at Bon Appétit after working as a production chef.



Griffin

Griffin sat down with the Courier to discuss his history at Wegmans, his first meal he ever cooked and his plans for his career at Fisher.

What is your favorite thing to cook?

"I don't really have a favorite thing I like to cook. I just like to open the fridge and see what's there and then make something out of it. So it's never the same things twice. It's seeing what you have left over and then figuring out what you can make that into so that it's not the same thing it was before."

Can you first talk a little bit about your education background and work experience?

"I didn't go to school, I actually worked at Wegmans for 11-and-a-half years.

My parents told me if I didn't go on to school after I graduated that I'd have to start paying rent so that was a good incentive to go out and get a full time job at Wegmans, and the spot I went to was the kitchen.

So that was my school basically. I went in, I enjoyed cooking, I cooked at home, but I didn't have any real experience.

They trained me there and I worked with the executive chef, Jay Cohen. He's an amazing chef and so when I'd see him making something if I didn't recognize what he was doing, I'd just go over and say 'hey could you explain

this to me.'

So my first year or two in the kitchen there was like going to school. I was just learning stuff left and right because they hire a lot of talented people there."

What was your job before being promoted to sous-chef?

"I was a production chef; I worked in the main kitchen making all the main line food. And just before this promotion I moved into the middle kitchen and worked as a supervisor of the Mongolian Wok and pizza and pasta area. That was only for maybe two months before the sous-chef position came up."

What has the promotional transition been like?

"Totally different. Before, I'd come into work and there would be tasks to do and I'd just do them.

Now, I come in to work and there are still tasks to do but every couple minutes my phone rings or someone comes to get me and we need this done, or can you help me with this? Which it's nice to feel wanted and be helpful.

If someone comes to you with a problem, being able to solve it is a nice thing. It's a little more stressful than I've managed to live my life up until now but it's not horrible, I enjoy it."

How did you decide to leave Wegmans and come to Fisher?

"I moved around in Wegmans in the different departments and I found myself in the pizza shop. I felt like they were not abandoning the pizza department, but, they weren't giving it the attention it needed to be as good as it was supposed to be. If you are familiar with Wegmans, they have very high quality expectations.

I just felt like I was in this

spot and wasn't really going to go anywhere and I had 11 good years under my belt there so it was time to go somewhere else.

I didn't want to go somewhere where I just had to open a can, throw it in a pan and that's what kids were eating. I was used to Wegmans where they make everything from scratch.

So when I came in and learned about Bon Appétit and how they do things, I was relived because it was something where you could use culinary knowledge. It's an excellent transition."

Are there any changes you'd like to see made?

"The school is growing very fast, and we're expanding. But, at some point, they are going to have to expand even more and that would be nice. We keep very up-to-date, so there's really not many problems as long as we have enough room to feed all the kids that are coming in and there is enough room for everyone to eat. The tools are there to do the job; you just have to do it."

What are you responsible for/job description?

"I have to make sure that the main kitchen where we put out all the food for the main is set as well as make different items for different spots. I just need to make sure everything runs as smoothly as possible and the students get their food.

The guys in the kitchen are great cooks, and they make good food I just have to make sure everything is there for them to do that. I write the prep list, so when they come in like I use to, they know what to do."

When you began to learn how to cook, who taught you?

"I cooked at home a lot. My mom taught me the basics growing up. Jay Cohen was the first executive chef I had at Wegmans Not only was I just learning basic cooking techniques but elaborate stuff too. All the little things you don't learn at home, I learned at Wegmans."

What was the first thing you can remember learning how to cook?

"I remember when I was real little - and this wasn't even cooking - my sister and I would put carrots, pepper and water in a big kettle on the front porch of my parent's house, stir it around and then eat the carrots.

It wasn't cooking but I remember it very vividly. But cooking? I used to make French toast and hash browns. These big blocks of shredded potatoes with cheese on them, I made those a lot after school when I was little."

What would you say is your favorite thing about your job?

"Since I used to work in the production kitchen, I knew what I wanted from my sous-chef, so, my focus has been to go in and make the guys happy that are doing the job that I use to do.

But before even that, the best part is the interaction. When you're cooking food, people come to you hungry and you give them food so they are always very grateful.

Also, getting people to try something new that they wouldn't normally try and then have them like it is probably the coolest thing about my job."

What sticks out most vividly to you, or your best memory, since you've been here?

"Doing things like the burrito bar, I got to wear a sombrero. I love sombreros. But what I mean is it's a fun environment. It's fast paced and everyone's excited to get it.

Just about any time you can see someone's face light up because it's their favorite meal from home or they wrote a note on the board and they've been waiting for it. I know it's not a specific event but every time that happens it's like alright, I made even one hour of this person's day better than they thought it was going to be."

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Tourney over break

Fisher will be hosting a CYP youth basketball tournament over spring break from Friday, March 2-Sunday, March 11.

Students are needed to work the concession stand and take tickets during the tournament.

Students interested in working should contact Jennifer Campbell at jcampbell@sjfc.edu.

FCF to stage play

Fisher Christian Fellowship (FCF) will be staging the musical *Godspell*. Performances will be March 16, March 17, and March 18 in Cleary Family Auditorium.

For more information, contact FCF at fisherchristianfellowship@sjfc.edu

Research papers due

Submissions are being collected for this year's edition of the *Undergraduate Review*, a collection of research papers written by Fisher students.

Papers on any topic or field of study are welcome. Papers should be five to 20 pages, double spaced, and include a works cited page.

Papers should be e-mailed to des08827@sjfc.edu. The deadline is Friday, March 2.

Interview prep night

Career Services will be holding a Mock Interview Night for Education majors on Feb. 27, and a Mock Interview Night for all majors on Feb. 26. For more information, contact careerservices@sjfc.edu.

Security Blotter

Between Feb. 4 and Feb. 17, there were two incidents of criminal mischief on campus.

There were seven alcohol violations and four rule violations.

One car was towed for excessive parking violations.

There were also three motor vehicle accidents on campus.

The Office of Safety and Security would also like to remind students that to keep found property without attempting to return it to the owner is larceny, and possessing stolen items is a crime.

Occasionally, students are found with another person's driver's license, or one where the date of birth has been changed. Altering a license is considered forgery and is also a felony under the NYS Penal Law.

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Wednesday, February 28, 2007
Tuesday, May 15, 2007

5:00-7:00 p.m.
Schlegel Hall, Eisenberg Rotunda
University of Rochester, River Campus

To register, call Admissions at (585) 275-2771 or e-mail: admissions@simon.rochester.edu.



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