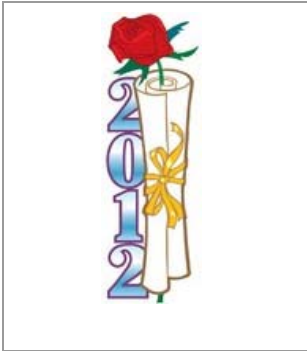




YTI grads ready for 'real world'

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Graduates at York Technical Institute's Lancaster campus are a varied bunch.

Their average age is just over 24, and the oldest is 56. And a few were not old enough for a celebratory drink after Monday's graduation ceremony.

Of the 157 graduates, more than a third came from the school's culinary arts and restaurant management program. Others will pursue careers in dental assisting, criminal justice and first response, medical assisting, medical billing and coding or pastry

arts.

Many are the first in their families to graduate from a post-secondary institution.

YTI Lancaster campus President Michael Marino shared these statistics at the graduation ceremony Monday at LCBC in Manheim.

Jennifer Gregory of the Lancaster Cleft Palate Clinic was keynote speaker.

"For some the path is brand new. For some the path is a new direction," Gregory said.

While some students entered YTI shortly after high school, others already had some life experience and are hoping to take their lives in a new direction.

Such is the case for Tina Myers, who received a diploma in medical billing and coding. She is a military veteran, and she used to work in human services. Now, she hopes to pursue a career in veterans' affairs.

Other graduates have very different careers ahead of them.

Darin Martin, who graduated from YTI's culinary arts and restaurant management program, hopes to prepare meals in hospitals and other institutions.

Edward Maynard, who graduated from the same program and received the President's Award, has already secured work in a prestigious restaurant in Washington, D.C.

No matter what their background or what they plan to pursue, these graduates will have to continue to work and overcome challenges as they travel their new paths.

As Gregory put it, "The real world can be a little scary."

Myers said she has experienced this fear. Even though her previous jobs have made her well acquainted with the "real world," she is nervous about changing careers.

The atmosphere in LCBC Monday night, however, did not reflect any of the nervousness that the graduates may have felt.

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