

# D211 POST: COUGAR PERK RETURNS FOR 9TH YEAR



*Students and teachers welcomed the return of the Cougar Perk Cafe at James B. Conant High School Jan. 26. The student run cafe is in its ninth year.*

At 5:30 on a Friday morning, a small group of students and teachers walk in to James B. Conant High School to begin cooking. These individuals are members of a student run café called Cougar Perk, which sells baked goods and coffee to faculty and staff members of Township High School District 211. On Jan. 26, the café started its ninth year.

The Cougar Perk operates every Friday through the second semester allows students to experience multiple aspects of operating a small bakery. For students to participate, they must take the practices in entrepreneurship as well as one foods class. Patti Ertl, who teaches the entrepreneurship course said she enjoys seeing the students using everything they learned.

“I enjoy seeing the kids put into practice everything they’ve learned in both the business side and the family consumer science side,” she said. “This has really become part of our culture at Conant High School.”

English teacher Heather Munao said she has seen the students work to keep the café moving forward.

“[The café] is really sustained here,” she said. “They come up with different things like coupons, specials and apps to keep in moving forward and keep it moving forward and follow the natural trajectory of a business.”



*The student run Cougar Perk Cafe returned to James B. Conant High School. This year marks the cafe's ninth in operation.*

Munao said her favorite item from Cougar Perk is the bacon quiche tart. The quiche is an item which senior Hanan Barrett enjoys to make for the café.

“The quiche is really the only savory dish we have, and I enjoy the savory stuff,” he said.

Barrett chose to do Cougar Perk because he has an interest in pursuing culinary arts through college. He said working the café provides a nice get away.

“I get to just cook for the first two hours and kinda destress to go on with the rest of my day,” he said.

Senior Dylan Toth has been a part of Cougar Perk for three years. He said working with the students and staff in the café provides a feeling of being a part of a team.

“If you don’t do a sport, it’s nice to have that team feel that Cougar Perk really gives you.”

One big change Dylan has seen this year was the addition of the [new culinary arts kitchen](#) which opened this year.

“We have a convection now which can make things much faster.”



*Senior Hanan Barrett operates the register during the semester opening of Cougar Perk Cafe at James B. Conant High School*

The increased speed is not the only advantage of the new kitchen according to culinary arts teacher Angela Drenth.

“The new kitchen has helped tremendously,” Drenth said. “Kids are practicing on industry standard equipment, so it’s preparing them for when they go out into the real world.”

Cougar Perk Café is open every Friday from 7:15 a.m. until 8:30 a.m.