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Jonathan Koop, 24, Worcester: Co-owner, S&K Valet

By Shelly Schweizer

Since he was sixteen, people have handed their car keys to Koop. The Dallas native worked as valet through high school and college. After graduating from college, he came to Worcester, taking a job managing the valet parking service at St. Vincent's Hospital. He met co-worker Danielle Spring and last year, they decided to strike out on their own. "We thought, we can do this, we know enough people in the city," says Koop. They own Worcester's only valet parking company in a city where parking spaces are at a premium. They manage 40 employees and have the hottest names in the Worcester restaurant scene as clients. "It's creating a better dining experience," says Koop. By easing the parking crunch in tight spots like Shrewsbury Street and the Canal District and the worries of those reluctant to venture out on a snowy night or to an unfamiliar neighborhood, Koop's creating jobs and peace of mind. "With valets out front, there no worry about parking around a dark corner. You can have the valet take care of your car and you know you're going to be safe." In 2007, S & K plans to add more Worcester restaurants to its client list and take on restaurants in neighboring cities and towns as well. Also in the works is branching out to offer their valet services to hospitals and hotels.