

Saanich School District Jumpstarts Student Careers – Katrina Archibald

by Devon MacKenzie

Katrina Archibald is pursuing her dream of becoming a chef, but what makes her stand out from any other aspiring culinary artist, you may ask? Archibald has already completed her Level 1 Professional Cook's Certification – and she hasn't even graduated from high school yet!

The 17-year-old Stelly's Secondary School student gained her certification by participating in one of School District 63's specialized apprenticeship programs. These programs provide students with personalized learning opportunities to receive technical training and work as legitimate apprentices on a part-time basis while still attending school.

Archibald, who has been interested in the culinary arts since she was much younger, chose electives that related to cooking when she started at Stelly's in 2008. "Stelly's has a full commercial kitchen that serves hundreds of students each day, so the cafeteria program was a great way to start," she said.

In June 2011 as Archibald was finishing grade 11, she signed on with School District 63 as their first E-pprentice and was able to begin work towards her certification. The district's E-pprentice programs are innovative ways to provide an online means of technical training and curriculum delivery.

"The E-pprentice program is designed so that all my theory work is done in my own time through the web and all the hands-on work is done through the Stelly's Teaching Kitchen with Chef Peggy Watson and at my place of work," explained Archibald.

With Archibald as the first student from Stelly's Secondary to complete the E-pprentice program, Chef Watson has nothing but accolades for the up-and-coming chef.

"(It's been) a privilege to work with such a remarkable young woman. Katrina's commitment (to the program) and caring attitude made her a role model to her peers. Very few teenagers are prepared to give up every lunch hour ... Katrina worked and served in the kitchen every day in a leadership role," said Watson.

As well as impressing her teachers with her positive attitude and willingness to help, Archibald also impressed them by achieving the highest theory mark in her cohort

of E-pprentices on the final exam at Camosun College.

The E-pprentice program works through a partnership between School District 63, the Stelly's Teaching Kitchen, Chef Gilbert Noussitou from Camosun College's Culinary Arts Faculty and B.C.'s Industry Training Authority.

"The program definitely takes a certain type of person to complete it because it's very dependent on you finishing your work without supervision, but it was great for me because I could work it around my part-time job and sports and stuff like that," said Archibald.

She began her work experience in the culinary field at the Sidney Pier Hotel & Spa and is now working as an apprentice under the tutelage of Rita Cooney and Dale Carter at Breadstuffs Bakery and the Screaming Bird Café in Brentwood Bay.

The school district's partnership with post-secondary training institutions and ITA has allowed District 63 to be able to offer training in almost any trade to any student who is interested – all free of charge.

"We work to design a program that is tailored specifically to the individual student and his or her desired trade," said Stu Rhodes, the apprenticeship coordinator.

For more information on how to get involved as student apprentice or as an employer sponsor in any of the career or trade programs, contact Stu Rhodes at srhodes@sd63.bc.ca or 250-415-9211. For an overview of the trade training opportunities offered by the Saanich School District, view the YouTube video "Jump Start Your Career" at <http://www.youtube.com/user/saanichcareers>.

