

Megan Moyes: Professional Cook

by Stu Rhodes

This month's edition of *Seaside Magazine* has a focus on food. We can all

think back and recall a special meal of some significance that has left us with lifelong memories. Sometimes we remember the meal because of the occasion or celebration to which it was connected, like a birthday or anniversary. Other times we may have those lasting memories because of the meal itself: the flavours, the pairings, or maybe it was the dessert that was unforgettable!

Regardless of whether those memories were etched by the meal or the occasion being celebrated, Megan Moyes wants to help create those memories. Megan is a recent graduate from Stelly's Secondary who has an unparalleled passion for cooking and a personal vision to help make people's lives happier by contributing to their dining experience and creating lasting memories of their fun times by serving up delicious food. "We all have our favourite meals, whether it's a basic 'mac & cheese' comfort food, or an exquisite culinary creation in honour of a marriage or Christmas celebration. I want to help create those meals and accompanying memories for the people I feed," said Megan.

Megan first became interested in the culinary arts when she visited Stelly's Secondary School as an eighth-grade Bayside student to participate in a YES-2-IT activity where students get to do a whirlwind tour of several different trade areas. She still remembers making the "Thanksgiving wraps" and how much they were enjoyed by everyone. She was so impressed with the experience that she went home and told her folks she wanted to become a chef, to which they replied: "That's ridiculous!"

But as her mom, Lyne Moyes, told me: "Megan is a very determined young woman. If you tell her she can't do something, she will just go right ahead and do it anyway, only she will do it HER way." And do it she did, on her own terms, as she experimented by taking more and more culinary courses each year until eventually she signed up for the the Level One Professional Cook E-pprentice program through Stelly's in partnership with Camosun College.

Megan's teacher and mentor in the Saanich program at Stelly's is Monika Gysler. She is very proud of Megan's accomplishments, which include successful completion of the very demanding E-pprentice program, winning Gold at the Regional Skills Canada competition, and representing the South Island at the Provincial Skills competition. "Megan shares her passion for cooking and life in her journey toward her career goals. She is patient and generous,

mentoring her peers as she welcomes every new challenge and hones her skills in the preparation of delicious foods," said Gysler.

Along the way Megan was snapped up by Jason Tilley as an apprentice cook for Floyd's Diner, where she worked part time while completing grade 12. This gave her a chance to put theory to practise, working in a fast-paced restaurant kitchen. Today she is working as a second-year Professional Cook apprentice with Butchart Gardens under the tutelage of Executive Chef Travis Hanson. Travis is thrilled to have Megan on board and has been a big supporter of the Saanich School District Culinary Arts program.

I'm not sure who's happier, Travis or Megan, because she absolutely loves working in the kitchen at Butchart. "They are all so nice. They know so much, and they are all willing to share and help me learn more," said Megan.

Megan is already registered for Level Two next April. Don't be surprised if you see her go for a second Red Seal as a Baker as soon as she finishes her Professional Cook training.

Take in a meal at Butchart Gardens. There is a good chance Megan will have helped create fond memories of your experience there. Bon appétit!

Contact Stu Rhodes at 250-415-9211 for more information on how to get involved as a student apprentice, or as an employer sponsor in this or any other career program in Saanich School District. View the promotional YouTube video *Jump Start Your Career* at <http://www.youtube.com/user/saanichcareers>.

