

Gabi Loves to Bake



Gabi shows off her final creation with baking instructor, Deb Swope.

Written by: **Sara Mullins**
Photography by: **Lance C. Bell**

Gabi Robertson, age 10, loves to cook – and, especially, to bake. So she was thrilled when offered a chance to decorate a cake like the pros at the Culinaire Café, operated by Allegany College of Maryland in downtown Cumberland.

Gabi, a student at Bel Air Elementary School, lives in Rawlings, Maryland, with her parents and her older sister Alex. When she's not baking or watching cooking shows at home, she enjoys spending time with friends and her family.

"It was awesome!" she said. "I learned how to work with fondant!" Deb Swope, an instructor in the Allegany College's Culinary Arts Program, had a two-layer chocolate cake with butter cream icing, ready and waiting for Gabi's special touch. Gabi worked with rolled-out fondant and used molds, traced patterns, and created three-dimensional shapes designed to catch the eye. Deb had several edible butterflies reserved for Gabi to place as she wished, resulting in a

cake featuring happy spring colors and whimsical shapes.

“Gabi has always taken to the kitchen,” says Lisa Robertson, Gabi’s mom. “She follows directions but then she puts in her own spin. She especially loves to bake. It’s totally fun, a labor of love.” “Gabi did a great job decorating her cake,” Deb says. “I’ve noticed a big interest in baking among 10 to 12-year-olds. It’s good interest for kids that age. They can build on their skills and decide whether or not they want to develop them in high school and beyond.”

Those interested in a culinary career can earn an Associate of Applied Science degree through Allegany College’s Culinary Arts Program. Through hands-on experience, such as work performed at the Café, they can prepare for a range of career options ranging from cooking to management.

Next fall, the College plans to offer one-year, non-degree certificate programs in baking, event management, and a culinary option. The certificates are designed for those wishing to quickly develop their skill through hands-on practice in a real life restaurant. If they wish, participants can transfer all certificate coursework toward an associate’s degree.

“Allegany College may offer baking classes for kids, possibly next year,” says Deb. If this plan comes to fruition, one of their first enrollees just might be Gabi Robertson.



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301-784-5000

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Gabi working with fondant with some help from faculty/ baking instructor, Deb Swope at Allegany College’s Culinary Arts Program.

Gabi builds her muscles while rolling fondant.

Gabi and sister, Alex, displaying the finished cake — Alex, Mom and Dad (Lisa & Guy) enjoyed helping Gabi eat her creation.