

# Sugar Plum visions

News from Sugar Plum Bakery

Spring 2015

## Computer donation opening windows

**I**t wasn't that Sugar Plum lacked student computers. It just lacked good student computers. Like many of us, individuals with disabilities often find computers an easier, more enjoyable way of learning and interacting with information. Unfortunately, our computers were original to the computer lab itself, which was built in 2004 through a generous grant from KOVAR.

When TowneBank employee T.J. Maroon took his first tour of the bakery late last year, he noticed the need for a computer lab upgrade. T.J. offered to go to his company for help, and in November, TowneBank delivered three refurbished PCs. Board member Doug Wilbourne has been busy getting the computers set up to accommodate specialized software. Individuals from our Medicaid Pre-Vocational Program and Transitions Program will be the primary users.

The software being installed includes games to promote math and money skills (important for working retail), and scenario-based programs where users can practice workplace etiquette and communication. There will also be applications to teach sight words for job-related reading — from recipe names to safety terms like “fire extinguisher.”

TowneBank's donation has served as a catalyst to revitalize the rest of our computer lab. As our program has grown over the years, more people are using the computer lab space. We're working to add storage and reorganize the space to be more user-friendly.

What's next for the computer lab? Tablets are a big priority, reports Executive Director Patricia Rakes Clark.



*Longtime Sugar Plum employee Cindy Romero tries one of the new PCs.*

Special thanks to:  **TOWNE BANK**  
*The Best Bankers. Hometown Banking.*

“Some people can't work a keyboard and mouse well, so they find a tablet easier to use,” she said. They're especially helpful to individuals who are nonverbal. She hopes someone will feel moved to donate a set of iPads for the bakery workers, even if the donor is not technology savvy: “While a lot of us tend to overthink it, many people with disabilities naturally adapt to using these tools.”



### Golf Classic set for April

It's time to reserve your spot and/or purchase a \$150 hole sponsorship for our 2015 Annual Golf Classic, which takes place:

**Tuesday, April 28**  
**Bayville Golf Club**  
**Virginia Beach**

For more information, contact  
Chuck Ferrer at [Chuck.Ferrer@kirbycorp.com](mailto:Chuck.Ferrer@kirbycorp.com)



## Our Mission

The mission of Sugar Plum Bakery is to serve the needs of persons with disabilities through training, employment, and education. Sugar Plum Bakery will promote the integration of people with mental and physical disabilities into society by helping them become independent and working, contributing members of our communities.

### Officers

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Patricia Rakes Clark  
Executive Director

## A hole new way to support our Golf Classic

Perhaps you don't — or can't — play golf. Or maybe a generous friend always covers your foursome. Or you might just want to tie your name or business to something that matters.

There are many great reasons to become a hole sponsor for our Sugar Plum Bakery 13th Annual Golf Classic, slated for Tuesday, April 28, at Bayville Golf Club. For \$150, your name will be displayed on a sign and also in our next newsletter.



As you know, the classic is our only annual fundraiser and is vital to our mission, dedicated to individuals with intellectual or physical disabilities. Whether you play, become a hole sponsor, or both, you'll be supporting a great event and great people. Thank you — I look forward to seeing you out there.



### Other Notes from the President

Enjoy getting to know our two new Transitions students through their stories below. We remain so proud of our Transitions Program, as it's exactly what we're all about. Special thanks to all of you who remember Sugar Plum in your annual giving. We couldn't do this without you.

Thad Nowak, *President, Sugar Plum Board of Directors*

## Creativity a common goal for new Transitions students

From styling hair to styling cakes, both of our new high school students have artistic ambitions. It's no wonder both Mia Sutcliffe, 18, and Nytreeia Whitehurst, 17, chose Sugar Plum as their desired workplace for Transitions.

By partnering with this job experience program through Virginia Beach City Public Schools, Sugar Plum trains teens in three distinct areas of the bakery: production, decorating/design, and retail. Mia and Nytreeia both underwent a formal interview with Sugar Plum staff — which in itself is critical preparation for the workforce — to be selected for these positions.

Mia, from Ocean Lakes High School, entered the program because she wants to someday work in a small bakery. "I'd like to take a year off from school to work, then go to either culinary, beauty, or art school," she says. Her other interests include plants and animals.

"Mia was super-excited to work here because she likes to draw and do art at home. She wants to combine her art with baking... to learn how to decorate cakes," says Jessi Abbinante, the bakery's work experience job coach.



Nytreeia Whitehurst



Mia Sutcliffe

Nytreeia, from First Colonial High School, gives you a full disclaimer: she loves doing hair more than anything else. Cooking is a close second though — meatloaf and mac & cheese are her specialties. Nytreeia is now channeling her food and art skills into the bakery business, and has caught on quickly.

"Nytreeia doesn't need to be prompted on what to do next," says Jessi. "She's independent."

The students will be expanding their skills throughout the semester, so be sure to give them a smile the next time you stop by — and ask which treats they made!

# Our vital ingredient is you

Regular support from the community enables Sugar Plum Bakery to continue meeting its mission of serving individuals with disabilities. As always, we appreciate every gift that comes to us, and we offer sincere thanks to all of our donors. The following is a list of donors who made contributions between November 5, 2014, and January 30, 2015.

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Jake Jacocks

Stanley and Linda Samuels

*In Honor of Thad Nowak*

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## Why I Give

As a pediatrician who cares for children with disabilities, I am moved by the mission and work of Sugar Plum. It is easy to support a local organization that helps local citizens who are disadvantaged and produces an extraordinary product.

Anyone who wants to give to an organization with those characteristics should visit Sugar Plum Bakery.

—Dr. Glenn Snyders

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## Board Member Spotlight: Tim Rivas



Tim Rivas

### How long have you been volunteering?

Close to 20 years!

### Why do you stay involved with Sugar Plum?

I'm very passionate about it. I've learned that the workers are very happy people, and they don't necessarily need our help — they need guidance. They're quite capable. Sometimes individuals with disabilities are viewed as incapable of having

a life, having a family. I'm semi-retired now, but anytime I was having a bad day at work, I would just run up to the bakery, and in about 30 minutes I was feeling a lot better. There's never any shortage of hugs.

### How did you first get interested?

I have a background in food service. When I was asked to join

the board, my attitude was, "Boy, I can really help them." But when I really got into it, I realized they helped me just as much.

### How have you made an impact here?

When I first joined the board, we realized a new bakery needed to be built. The building was about ready to fall down on their heads, and it was not handicap-accessible. Then came the day I watched one of our employees, Miss Annie, come struggling up the stairs with her walker. That's the moment it was seared in my mind that we needed a new place if we were going to continue. I was a big part of getting the new bakery built, from the design to the fundraising. I also pushed to get the café put in, so there would be an additional revenue stream.

### What's your favorite Sugar Plum treat?

I'm big on the cookies! I also love a coconut cake, and I'm a fan of the Mozart, as most people are. I don't think I've ever tasted anything there I didn't like. I try to grab something almost every time I'm over there to show my support... that's the excuse I use, anyway! You could say I'm a bigger guy than I used to be, in more ways than one.

*Skills, life lessons, and confidence: fresh from the oven.*

Sugar Plum Bakery  
1353 Laskin Road  
Virginia Beach, Virginia 23451

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## *Easter Egg Cakes*



Available in large (4-5 servings) or small (1 serving), these treats make egg-cellent gifts. Yellow cake covered with vanilla icing, each egg is decorated in butter cream details. Yes, they can be personalized! Order in time for Easter.

To order a Sugar Plum Sweet Indulgence, call 757.422.3913 or visit the bakery at 1353 Laskin Road. Open Monday – Friday, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturday, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.

[www.sugarplumbakery.org](http://www.sugarplumbakery.org)

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