

Sugar Plum visions

News from Sugar Plum Bakery

Spring 2018

Social butterfly learning to spread her wings

You can't help but like Lauren Masters. She's always smiling, she's never been in a bad mood, and she would rather talk about you than herself (which is only a challenge when you're trying to interview her!). But Lauren's friendly, trusting nature is what worries her mom, Tina.

"I had to make sure she worked somewhere people would look out for her," Tina said. "My husband and I have always known about Sugar Plum, and I thought it would be a safe and nurturing place for her." Lauren is intellectually delayed and has obsessive-compulsive disorder. When she graduated from the Transitions program at Princess Anne High School, she tried working at Target and some other jobs, but her disabilities made it difficult. She had trouble staying focused on her tasks and couldn't find the right balance between work and socializing on the job. After Lauren began working at Sugar Plum in 2014, Tina saw a noticeable change.



Lauren, age 36, is able to receive job training at Sugar Plum thanks in part to a state grant program (IFSP) that covers supported employment.

"The bakery offers a well-organized, encouraging environment for the young adults to learn important working skills, teamwork and social interaction in the workplace. Lauren loves the job coaches and the employees at Sugar Plum, and we feel very fortunate that she has this opportunity to work in such a caring place," she said.

Bolstered by these skills, Lauren is also holding down two other jobs: At CVS, she puts price tags on products, and at McDonald's, she cleans tables and trays. She credits Sugar Plum for teaching her how to work with customers.

"You say, 'Welcome to Sugar Plum' or 'Welcome to McDonalds!' At Sugar Plum sometimes I help people choose a cake.



I help people carry things to their car at McDonald's," she explained. Lauren said her most important role at Sugar Plum is de-panning cakes. What happens if a cake breaks in the process? "You ice them back together!"

Outside of work, Lauren's life is a soap opera. No, it isn't dramatic, but she plans her whole day around "General Hospital" and "The

Young & the Restless." She was upset when one of her favorite characters died recently, but was excited to follow an actress from the show on "Dancing with the Stars." She subscribes to several soap opera magazines and was counting down to the Daytime Emmy Awards on April 29 (she can tell you the date for all Hollywood awards shows the rest of the year).

But she doesn't spend all her free time on TV—Lauren has also been a swimmer in the Special Olympics for the past 15 years, and she even takes part in an annual Polar Plunge "with military guys!" She loves animals and wildlife, and is especially devoted to her family's four cats: Elfie, Charlotte, Luigi and Sophie. During her job interview at Sugar Plum, she was thrilled when Trish asked about her pets.

She wasn't the only one to find happiness at Sugar Plum. Lauren's mom, Tina, kept noticing a "Help Wanted" sign when she brought Lauren to work and decided to come on board, too. They both have Sundays off to spend together... for now. But Tina has bigger plans for her daughter.

"I want her to be able to cook her own meals one day, so it's great that she's getting hands-on production experience. I continue to hope she'll acquire the skills she needs to live independently when we get older, so she'll have a successful life on her own."



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 developmental disabilities into society by helping them become independent and working, contributing members of our communities.

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Cutting the Cake & Cutting a Rug

30th Anniversary Party Celebrates Sugar Plum's Impact



From the President

Just as a group of families came together 30 years ago to start a nonprofit bakery, nearly 200 people came together January 20 to celebrate how much it has accomplished. Sugar Plum Bakery held its anniversary party at the Oceanfront Hilton, drawing a crowd of clients, employees, current and former board members, and even some original founders. It was a wonderful evening with many smiles and tears, and I was touched by the incredible turnout.

Our guests enjoyed cocktails, a buffet dinner and musical entertainment. As you might expect, the desserts were from Sugar Plum—we served cupcakes and our popular Mozart cake. But, of course, everyone's favorite part was seeing the individuals served by Sugar Plum share in the fun. All of them were invited, and they certainly had some impressive dance moves!

As board president, I shared a few remarks and recognized people who have been valued supporters. I noticed one young lady inching toward me as I got toward the end of my speech, and while I first thought she was just eager to resume the dancing, I soon realized she wanted to speak. So I handed the mic to her—a client named Katy McLaughlin, who has worked at Sugar Plum for six years. She told everyone that her supervisor, Regina, is a wonderful boss, and shared that one time she, Katy, was eating lunch and started to choke on a piece of chicken. She thanked Regina for saving her life. Katy then added, "My folks I work with are amazing. I like the work I do, making amazing cupcakes. I love my bakery. I love my Mom, she is important to me and brought me to the bakery party."

Needless to say, her words will be remembered much longer than mine! I do want to once more thank the party's planning committee—board members Colleen Gard, Joy Jacobson and Tim Rivas, plus staff members Trish Clark and Leah Bedell. Thank you also to the rest of the board (past and present) for their vision and tireless work. We have trained and placed over 1,000 individuals since Sugar Plum began, and that's one heck of a statistic for such a small place. It's all about the individuals we serve, and I hope that every day, their today can be easier than their yesterday.

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

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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 8, 2017, and February 28, 2018.

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Bakery sales help offset our expenses, but the reality is, our organization relies on generous financial support from donors like you. Please consider making a gift to the bakery today using the enclosed remittance envelope.

Board Member Spotlight: Ricky Anderson



Board member Ricky Anderson with his family.

How did you get involved with Sugar Plum?

About three years ago, I was looking for a way to give back and get involved with the local community. I turned to Thad Nowak, a lifelong mentor, whom I've known since he coached my basketball team when I was 10. I knew Thad was the board president for Sugar Plum Bakery, and I asked if the board might consider bringing me on as a young person with some new energy. I'm now part of a new wave of younger members.

What has been your biggest impact?

I'm responsible for anything building-related—working with the budget to plan for maintenance and repairs, such as setting aside funds for the HVAC units we'll need to replace in 2019. Of course, it's really a team effort and Trish does all the hard work. I just try to stay out of her way and provide an extra set of eyes and ears!

Why do you stay involved?

There are many great organizations out there, but Sugar Plum has such a direct impact on people's lives right here in our local area. All you have to do is walk into the bakery and you see that. Anytime I mention Sugar Plum to someone in the community, they are familiar with it and say they love the cause. It's clear that the employees love it as much as the clients. Trish is the glue that holds everything together. At the anniversary party, you could see the joy on her face. My wife and I took away such energy and positivity from that night. People were in tears. Sugar Plum is so much more than just a bakery.

What do you do in your professional and personal life?

I work for CBRE Commercial Real Estate, doing office and industrial leasing and sales. I've been there 11 years in May. My wife, Courtney, and I have been married for six years and have two little girls: Mary Wright (age 4) and Sutton (age 2).

How do you spend your free time?

I love anything outdoors (the beach, surfing, exercising) and being active with my daughters.

What's your favorite Sugar Plum treat?

It's a tie between the Mozart cake and the red velvet cupcakes. I try to limit myself to one per month!

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

Sugar Plum Bakery
1353 Laskin Road
Virginia Beach, Virginia 23451

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Vote for Sugar Plum!



**Please help us get named
"The Sweetest Bakery"**

you can vote once per day in the bakery or by visiting:

sweetestbakeryinamerica.com

As a nonprofit, Sugar Plum would benefit from the prizes and recognition that come with this honor! **Please vote as often as you can.** Contest runs March 1 to July 31, with one winner per state named. Winners will be announced on National Bakery Day: September 14.

Cakes of the month



May: Fresh Lemon. Four split layers of yellow cake with two layers of lemon filling and one layer of lemon-flavored butter cream. The cake is iced with lemon butter cream and garnished with handmade lemon-flavored white chocolate disks.

June: German Chocolate. Two layers of chocolate cake with a layer of traditional German chocolate filling. The cake is iced in chocolate buttercream icing and topped with German chocolate filling.



July: Sugar Plum Fairy

Four layers of butter batter cake flavored with a delicious blend of almond, lemon and vanilla. The cake is filled with three layers of whipped Bavarian cream, then iced in our famous vanilla butter cream.

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.

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