

New Transition Employment Program Prepares Students for Work

For young individuals with disabilities, transitioning from school to the workplace can present challenges. But, a new partnership between Sugar Plum Bakery and Virginia Beach Public Schools will help students overcome these challenges and become better prepared for work.

The Transition Employment Program, conceived by Sugar Plum and embraced by the school system, began in November with four students. They will work at the bakery during the remainder of the school year, rotating through all areas to learn job skills, such as clocking in and out, following directions, communicating with staff and staying on task.

"Sugar Plum has an absolutely wonderful reputation," said Ron Hill, a special education teacher and job coach who serves as the school system's liaison with the bakery. "This is the very first program of its type, and we're absolutely thrilled to work with Sugar Plum."

Each Virginia Beach high school could recommend a student for the program. Six students were interviewed, and four were selected based on who would benefit most.

Drew Barnum from Princess Anne said he was excited to be chosen. "I like working for Sugar Plum, and I've been really looking forward to it," he said on his second day as he cleaned the retail

counter area. Cristin Chambers, a student at Green Run, agreed as she frosted a German chocolate cake. "I'm very happy, and I'm already learning a lot," she said. "I've studied culinary arts, and I want to start my own business some day."

Quy Huynh of Landstown High also said he was excited. "It looks like it might be hard work, though," he noted, as he cleaned windows in the office.

Cliffony Wilcox of Tallwood, who also works as a second grade math tutor, said she was very happy to be selected. "It's fun, and it's nice to meet people and get to know them," she said, while working at the café counter.

"Our first day went very well," said Cindy Rios, a Sugar Plum job specialist. "We saw how the students interacted and worked, and we've identified how we can help them."

Sugar Plum also hopes to benefit from the program. When these students leave the school system next June and apply to the Department of Rehabilitative



Cristin Chambers and Drew Barnum (above) display some of Sugar Plum's sweet treats, while Quy Huynh and Cliffony Wilcox (left) clean the café counter.



Services for employment services, they will be able to request Sugar Plum.

"It takes a while to get to know clients and for them to know us. Through the transition program, we'll already have a relationship with these students and their families," explained Melissa Avery, who's coordinating the program. "We realized there's sometimes a gap between school and employment services. We want to help bridge that gap."

Be a Sugar Plum Sweetheart

We can always use more pairs of helping hands at Sugar Plum. If you have some time to donate, please call us at 757-422-3913 to find out how you can put talents into service.

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DEAR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS



When I visit Sugar Plum Bakery and watch employees like Joel Myers taking pleasure in a job well done, it's a tangible, real-life reminder of what Sugar Plum is all about. Since we opened our doors in 1987, we have been tremendously successful in providing meaningful training and employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities in our community.

Over the years, our dedicated staff members have developed innovative programs, such as the new Transition Employment Program, that enable us to help even more people. And, I must share with you that it's gratifying to know others in the community

recognize and support our efforts. Sugar Plum has an excellent reputation among the agencies, families and clients that we are privileged to work with.

I know that you, too, believe in the value Sugar Plum brings to the clients we serve. That's why you have supported us so generously in the past, and we appreciate all that you have done to contribute to our success.

At this holiday season, when giving is on the minds of many, I would ask that you consider making a year-end financial gift to Sugar Plum. By doing so, you will help to ensure that people like Joel will have an opportunity to become productive members of our community.

When you make a contribution to Sugar Plum, please check to see if your employer has a matching gift program. Many companies do, which increases the impact of your gift. Remember, we're counting on your generous support. Every gift we receive – including yours – will make a positive difference in the life of individuals with disabilities.

Best wishes to you and your family for a joyous and peaceful holiday season. Thank you.

Thad Nowak

President, Sugar Plum Board of Directors

Mission Statement

The mission of Sugar Plum, Inc. is to serve the needs of persons with developmental disabilities through employment, education, and training. Sugar Plum, Inc. will promote integration of mentally and physically disabled persons into society by helping them become independent and evolve into working, contributing members of our communities.

The organization strives to achieve this mission by:

- ❖ Operating a competitive retail bakery business;
- ❖ Providing supportive and rehabilitation services and training for persons who are severely disabled;
- ❖ Seeking community-based, competitive employment opportunities for persons with developmental disabilities;
- ❖ Advocating supported, competitive employment opportunities for disabled persons so that they can become financially self-supporting; and
- ❖ Increasing community awareness of the worth of persons with disabilities and of the importance of integrating them into our lives through education and example.

Virginia Beach Foundation Links Donors with Agencies

The concept is simple, yet the results can be profound. That's the idea behind the Virginia Beach Foundation Gift-Link program —“linking” people who have items to donate with charitable organizations in Hampton Roads that need them.

Sugar Plum Bakery participates in the 15-month old program, which is based at www.gift-link.org. “People with items to donate can go to the Web site and either search by organization or place items on the site to match up with an organization's needs,” said Ted Clarkson with the Foundation.

Clarkson provided several examples of how Gift-Link has helped local organizations. They matched a person who had a piano with Edmarc Hospice for Children, which uses the piano in its new Portsmouth facility. “The donor was so excited about being able to help that he also paid for moving and tuning the piano,” Clarkson said.

After reading an editorial about Gift-Link in *The Virginian-Pilot*, a woman from Fredericksburg whose mother was moving out of her home used Gift-Link to donate the entire houseful of furniture to Hope House Foundation.

“Through Gift-Link, businesses and individuals can donate items that will help our local charitable organizations save money,” Clarkson said. “It's just a matter of matching them up, which is what Gift-Link does.”

To see how you can help Sugar Plum Bakery or other organizations, log on to www.gift-link.org.

SUGAR PLUM CONTRIBUTORS

Thank you for our new gifts to Sugar Plum Bakery received from August 1, 2005 through November 18, 2005:

Endowment

Endowment gifts received in memory of William D. Rivas:

Cathy Antos
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Special Thanks

The Rivas Family would like to thank all of the very kind friends and family who generously gave donations to Sugar Plum Bakery in honor of Bill Rivas. We are so grateful for your kind words of condolence and your generosity. Your gifts are helping to continue a mission humbly started 18 years ago to help individuals with disabilities become independent and working members of our communities. Your thoughtfulness will help to continue our quest to train, employ and promote the integration of individuals with mental and physical challenges into society. Thank you for honoring our husband, father and friend to so many.

A Gift of Honor

For the very special people on your holiday gift list, consider honoring them with a brick on the Sugar Plum patio. For only \$100, you can create your own personalized brick to honor someone special or remember a loved one. For an order form, call the bakery at 757-422-3913.



Meet the Staff – Myers Leads Meaningful Life



Joel Myers has been a familiar face at Sugar Plum Bakery since it opened. Over the past 18 years, he's made many friends and shown a true dedication to work.

Although he's a dishwasher, Joel said his favorite job is mopping floors. "The people here are nice and they help me," Joel explained, when asked what he likes most about his job.

After work, Joel stays busy with a wide array of activities. He's an avid high school football fan, claiming the Princess Anne Cavaliers and Landstown Eagles as his favorite teams. He also enjoys Admirals hockey. And, he's more than a sports fan. Joel participates in Special Olympics and plays soccer, basketball, softball and volleyball. "I'm the team captain for volleyball," he said proudly.

Joel also enjoys theater, and last year, his friends from the bakery applauded as he performed in the Virginia Arts production, "Night at the Peppermint Club."

For the past 13 years, Joel has kept company with his special friend, Paige. "She comes to see me play at my games, and we go to dances," he said. At home, Joel likes watching TV, including his favorite shows, "Sanford & Son" and "Three's Company."

Through employment provided by Sugar Plum and his activities, Joel clearly shows how a person with disabilities can lead a rewarding and meaningful lifestyle.

For your payment convenience, Sugar Plum Bakery accepts American Express in addition to MasterCard & Visa.

Hours of Operation:

Monday - Friday 7am - 6pm.

Saturday 7am - 5pm. Closed Sunday.

On the Internet

Feel free to contact us via email at sugarplumbakery@verizon.net
Also, please visit our Web site at www.sugarplumbakery.org

Sugar Plum Visions is published by the board of directors of Sugar Plum, Inc., a non-profit organization that provides an employment program for the developmentally disabled. If you have questions or comments, please call Patricia Rakes Clark, Executive Director, Sugar Plum Bakery, 1353 Laskin Road, Virginia Beach, Virginia 23451, (757) 422-3913.

Save Time with Fax-a-Lunch

During the busy holiday season, the Sugar Plum Café fax-a-lunch service is a delicious time-saver. Just fax your order, specify a pickup time, and it will be ready when you arrive.



Please call **757-422-3913** today for a menu, or check out our Web site at www.sugarplumbakery.org so your office can enjoy the tasty benefits of lunch from our fine selection of soups, sandwiches, quiche and more.



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Featured Desserts



*Sugar Plum Bakery offers a wonderland of winter treats.
Please call for pricing information.*



Cakes of the Month

- ☆ **December – Tuxedo Cake:**
Chocolate pound cake with chocolate chips, iced with chocolate and vanilla icing, decorated for the holidays.
- ☆ **January – Bailey's Triple Chocolate:**
Layers of chocolate cake filled with Bailey's flavored mousse, iced with Bailey's flavored chocolate butter cream and garnished with white chocolate curls.
- ☆ **February – Gina's Strawberry Patch:**
Layers of yellow cake with strawberry filling and strawberry butter cream icing, topped with vanilla icing and a perfect pink rose.
- ☆ **March – Raspberry Delight:**
Layers of yellow cake filled with raspberry filling and iced with butter cream icing and decorated with green shamrocks

For home or office entertaining, tantalize your guests with a Holiday Party Tray. We have large and small trays with cookies and other sweet treats, such as brownies, éclairs, lemon squares, cannoli and cream puffs. Start your day out right with a Good Morning Tray of mini-Danish, mini-muffins and cinnabites.

To order Featured Desserts or other Sugar Plum sweet indulgences, please call 757-422-3913 or visit the bakery.

It's Never Too Early for Golf

Mark your calendars for Tuesday, May 2, and plan to join us for our fourth Sugar Plum Annual Golf



Classic. This popular event has sold out every year, and this past year's tournament had even more people on the waiting list. We'd love for you and your friends to join us, so please reserve your spot now. Foursomes and tournament sponsorships are available. Please contact Chuck Ferrer at 757-226-7643 or chuckf@almarine.com for more information.

☞ In Search of Stuff ☜

The 2006 golf committee is looking for donations to support the annual golf fundraiser. Items such as gift certificates, event tickets and autographed sports memorabilia will be used for the silent auction, door prizes and in goody bags for golfers. If you can help, please call Chuck Ferrer at 757-226-7643. Thanks for your support!