

Violet Gowdy
12
West Linn High School
Oregon

Baking has always been a big part of my life, ever since my mom put me on the counter when I was little to help her make chocolate chip cookies. She started teaching me to bake myself when I was nine. She said it would take a long time to truly teach me so we baked fifty bakes in fifty-two weeks. We started small but quickly expanded to more technical bakes like baked Alaska or croissants.

Over the year we spent baking, I absolutely fell in love with it. I loved being able to put ingredients together and get something delicious. I loved how baking brought people together, through the process of it or the outcome. I loved the smile it would put on people's faces when I made their favorite dessert, and I still do. To be able to make something that can spark such joy in people is a skill I am grateful to have.

After our fifty bake challenge, I started growing my business called "Baking with Violet". It started as a few orders from family friends or the local football team but now it has expanded into me having to turn down orders because I'm fully booked. Around this time I also started posting my bakes to Instagram which is now how most people contact me to place orders.

Over the past eight years that I've been baking, not only has my business grown tremendously, but I have also refined my skills greatly. I can bake almost anything if I put my mind to it but some of the very first things that I baked for an order were frosted sugar cookies for my local high school's football team. These sugar cookies slowly became my specialty as more and more people ordered them and my skills got better and better. Running "Baking with Violet" has also taught me so much about how to run a business, from talking to customers, time management, scheduling pickups, managing finances, and so much more that I know what I want to do with my life is run a brick and mortar "Baking with Violet".

In college I am studying food science with a minor in entrepreneurial business so I can understand the scientific processes that occur within baking and get more information on the technical side of running a business. From there, I'm planning on going to pastry school so I can apply what I learned in college. When I'm done with school my plan is to save up and open a "Baking with Violet" storefront. I have an abundance of ideas of how to run it and I'm so excited for the day that I will get to make those ideas come to life. For me, baking is much more than a hobby; it's a creative outlet, a business, a way to connect with others, and a glimpse into my future. It's where hard work meets joy, and I can't wait to see how far it takes me.