



# THE ICING ON THE CAKE

*Sophomore Sarah Fox balances a growing business with school, dance*

written by Julia Poe | photo by McKenzie Swanson

Sarah's cake pops caught the attention of Jill Machovsky, a mother at the party, who also owns Social Suppers, a catering business in Corinth Square. Machovsky offered to sell Sarah's treats at her store. This gave Sarah and her family the idea that her cake pops could become something more than a hobby.

"I've always wanted to find new ways to make money, other than just baby sitting," Sarah said. "[Machovsky] said that it would be a good way to make money, and then we got such good reactions that we decided to make it a real business and get an LLC [Limited Liability Company]."

The family decided to create an LLC for Sarah's business since their family kitchen didn't meet the necessary requirements to cater through Social Suppers. The LLC provides legal benefits and protection to the Fox family without the complications of incorporating. Sarah's mother, Sybbie Fox, described the chaotic process of attaining the LLC and acquiring inventory as a "whirlwind." After several weeks of preparation, Sarah was ready to start working on orders.

Business was very slow at first, with only a few orders trickling in a month. In the summer of 2011, however, opportunity struck. Kansas City Star writer James Fussell was writing about the newfound popularity of cake pops and wanted to feature Sarah's business in the article.

"The article in the Star really got the business going," Sarah said. "My friends and family thought it was cool, obviously. After that people kinda knew who I was and I began getting more and more clients."

An increase in orders was the beginning of a time-management struggle for Sarah between baking, school and dance. On average, she will put in 13 hours a week at Nallia School of Dance, Diamond Dance Academy and Jody Phillips Dance Company. She often spends the half hour breaks and car rides between classes bent over her laptop and textbooks in the passenger seat of her mom's car. Sarah's mom takes her from class to class and also stays up late to help her daughter finish orders. Although late nights can be difficult, Sarah finds a way to enjoy baking and creating new, unique designs for each cake pop -- even at 1 a.m.

"Those nights are just crazy," Sybbie said. "Sometimes I ask her if she's doing too much, but she's always like 'mom, don't worry, I can handle this' and just keeps on baking."

To create each treat, Sarah must first crumble baked cake, mix it with frosting and mold the crumbs into balls. The balls are then frozen solid and dipped in different candy and chocolate melts. The last step is the most time

consuming: decorations. Each of Sarah's cake pops are decorated with a unique pattern of swirls, polka dots and sprinkles. No two look alike.

Filling a typical order of one or two dozen cake pops can take anywhere from one to two hours -- an order for 180 extravagant cake pops for a wedding took three days. Although it's time consuming, Sarah loves the baking so much that turning down an order when she's busy is very difficult.

"There's some times when I just have to say no to an order because of time," Sarah said. "Around dance team tryouts, I don't do any orders, and it's the same for finals. But usually, if I have a big order and a big test or something at the same time, it's stressful, but we make it work."

As if balancing time wasn't a big enough challenge, Sarah faces another challenge: she and her brother both suffer from celiac disease, a condition that makes the siblings dangerously allergic to gluten. Unable to taste test any of her own recipes, Sarah relies completely on clients, family and friends for input on different flavors and icings. Sophomore Ali Manske is one of many friends who enjoyed taste testing Sarah's cake pops in the past.

"I love them so much," Manske said. "They're all different -- I've never seen a single one that looks the same. And they taste really good too."

Sarah's main concern when baking is to make sure that she uses different cooking utensils for gluten and non-gluten foods, and to wash her hands to avoid a reaction. She doesn't mind that she can't eat her own treats; instead, she takes joy in making art out of batter and chocolate and in providing for others.

"Sarah's never been the type of kid to complain about [her allergy] or just decide to eat [gluten] anyways," Sybbie said. "I just think Sarah gets a kick out of making other people happy, seeing them look at her work and knowing that they enjoyed it."

As a sophomore, Sarah's goals for the future aren't completely set in stone. Sarah says that she probably won't be able to continue catering in college because she won't have a properly-equipped kitchen in her dorm. However, the adventure of creating and managing Great ExpeCAKEtions has interested her in a future in business. She is uncertain of what the future holds for her fledgling business, however, Sarah is focusing on enjoying the success she has now.

"I'm not sure what I'll do with it in college and beyond," Sarah said. "But I love [my business] and already I've learned so much more than I could have at a business class at school. I'm so glad I decided to stick with it."

**SARAH'S**  
ORDERS OVER THE YEARS

180

**CAKE POPS FOR A WEDDING THIS PAST SUMMER**

40-50

**CAKE POPS FOR A WEDDING SHOWER**

900

**CAKE POPS FOR THE ROYALS OPENING**

? What is a cake pop?

*A cake pop is a ball of cake creamed with icing and dipped in more icing on a stick.*

If you would like to order from Great ExpeCAKEtions:

Go to:  
<http://www.great-expecaketions.com>

