

5 QUESTIONS WITH ... CATHRYN URBANIAK

Yacht club chef specializes in healthy foods

St. Clair Shores cook dreams of her own bakery

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Cooking is not a chore for Cathryn Urbaniak. For the head chef at the Jefferson Yacht Club in St. Clair Shores, it is her profession and her passion. At 21 years of age, Urbaniak -- a 2004 graduate of Warren Woods Tower High School and its commercial foods curriculum -- is head chef at Jefferson Yacht Club in St. Clair Shores. She won gold medals at a culinary competition at Macomb Community College in 2003 and 2004. She is also forging a career as a personal chef specializing in nutritious food. One of her more unusual jobs is working at private well-being retreats, led two or three times a year by St. Clair Shores psychotherapist Marla Ruhana, who is a member at the JYC. "I love cooking and everything about food, but I don't want to be in a restaurant forever," because of the late-night hours, said Urbaniak, who lives in Warren and is attending Macomb Community College, then Oakland University, to become a nutritionist. She works 30-40 hours a week and goes to school part-time. "The dream, I think, is to open a bakery one day because that is my favorite part of cooking," she said. "I like to do interesting things that I can make look as eye-appealing as possible."

QUESTION: How did you get started cooking?

ANSWER: I started at the yacht club when I was 15 as a buser. They asked me one day if I would like to start working in the kitchen. That's how my interest was sparked. I was always cooking with my mom and grandma. (When I was) in middle school, my mom was working two jobs and she would call and tell me how to cook a chicken over the phone.

Q: Can you make healthy food taste really good, like the food that's bad for us?

A: Yeah, the retreats have been great for that. I learn the different things I can substitute and still create the same consistency and the same flavors.

Q: How did you become head chef at the retreat?

A: Marla (Ruhana) is a member at the Jefferson Yacht Club. She approached me to see if I would be interested. She asked if I could do more healthy foods. I'm actually going to school to be a nutritionist, so that was right up my alley.

Q: Do you like fast food?

A: Oh yeah, definitely, but I can cook the same thing at home and know exactly what's in it and with half the fat and calories. ... I have it now and then. I try to limit myself.

Q: Is there anything you would never want to cook?

A: Chitlins. I don't think I would want to handle those. ... They're intestines.