



Tamara's The Cake Guru, Oshkosh

Special Award - Sweet Success

A business starts with a wife and her husband, a passion for baking, and a desire to honor preceding generations. In a few short years, it becomes an integral member of the community, contributing to more charities than can be listed on one page, and winning an equal number of awards and accolades. Along the way, employees become family and the family grows.

As a girl, Tamara Mugerauer fell in love with cake design while watching her grandmother decorate wedding cakes in her small home. After attending art school, and inspired by her late father who had always wanted to be self-employed, Tamara opened her first cake shop in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, in 1997. She and her husband used family recipes, and help from family and friends who made deliveries and provided loans and moral support.

The business, Tamara The Cake Guru, quickly surpassed its first goal of delivering 200 wedding cakes per year. Today, the business has a second location, in Appleton, sells a range of cake products, and is on target to break the million-dollar sales mark.

One thing that makes Tamara and her business unique is her passion not only for her baking business, but also for the industry itself. She serves as president of the Wisconsin Baker's Association and generously shares with and supports others in the industry. Another unique aspect of Tamara's business is the fact that philanthropy is at the core of her business model. One of her favorite efforts is the Lady Liberty cupcakes that her young daughter began selling as a fundraiser at a little cupcake stand. Now these cupcakes are sold every day in the cake shops. All proceeds, plus donations, go to Holt International children's services to help relieve the plight of orphans.

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To say that employees are family at The Cake Guru would be an understatement. Tamara has created positions for employees' family members needing work. If an employee has difficulty in one position, Tamara will move her to a better-suited position rather than let her go. She knows the families of all her employees and has thrown fund-raisers for their specific causes and passions. She provides job leads for their family members and keeps track of where her "girls" are applying to college. Tamara's aunt handles administrative work and laundry for the business, her brother is the handyman, and her daughters do everything from marketing to making boxes (they are 6 and 12 years old!)

The judges were inspired by Tamara's commitment to treating employees as family, her leadership in the baking industry, her incorporation of philanthropy into her business model, and her successful use of social media to promote her business.

This Special Award titled "Sweet Success" goes to Tamara's The Cake Guru, of Oshkosh.

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