

Job skill demonstration takes the cake - or the pie

by Heidi Riley

The ability to demonstrate specific skills is important for school and for work. For example, presenting the findings of a project is often required throughout a student's academic life. On the job, you might need to give an update to a project team, make a sales presentation to a client, or pitch a proposal concept to your supervisor. This skill is important no matter what your career aspirations.

At the **Canadian Skills Competition 2009**, **Julia Riddle** from Guelph Ontario gave a pie baking demonstration that was done to perfection. She rolled through the competition and was awarded the Gold Medal in the Job Skill Demonstration category.

This grade 10 student from Centennial Collegiate Vocational Institute says that skilled trades are very important - they are the engine that keeps society running.

"Three years ago, my grandmother taught me how to bake a pie. Pie baking seems like a dying art, and it's important to keep those skills alive by sharing them with the next generation," says Julia. "During my demonstrations, I ask who in the audience can make a pie, and less than half says they can. With all the convenience food available, I feel we are losing the ability to feed ourselves.

"Making traditional food from scratch is a celebration of culture. The skills involved in making food can

be shared, and specific foods are one of the things that determines your identity."

Skills learned

"Making pies and following a recipe taught me about paying attention to detail," says Julia. "It's the little things that make a good pie - like not rolling the dough too hard, because that makes a tough crust."

This competition also taught her about organization. All the ingredients and tools needed for the demonstration had to be transported to the competition on Prince Edward Island. She even baked pies in advance to pass out to the judges and the audience. The pies were heating while she gave the demonstration. The smell of apples and cinnamon probably helped to put her over the top in the competition.

Julia did a great deal of fund raising to earn the money for the trip to PEI. She made at least 40 pies and sold them at school. "The teachers were really supportive, and I appreciate their help," says Julia.

"I made more money than I needed to cover my part of the trip expenses, and I've decided to donate the remainder of the money back to the school. The school's environmental projects need funding for a vegetable garden and for a green roof."



Julia Riddle won gold for the Job Skill Demonstration category of the Canadian Skills Competitions 2009. She made this pie during the demonstration.

Career plans

"I'm not sure what I want to do in the future," says Julia. "I don't think I want to bake pies for a living. But I liked the business aspects - selling, marketing, doing spreadsheets, finances, and management. This competition taught me many of the skills needed to run my own business. I might keep the business going, because I still have more orders to fill when I get back home. Pie baking is a skill I want to keep."

Skills/Compétences Canada offers skilled trades and technology competitions at the regional, provincial/territorial, national and international levels, as well as other awareness programs. The organization actively promotes careers in skilled trades and technologies to Canadian youth.

For more information, visit www.skillscanada.com