

Chamber's youngest member turns baking into serious business



Photo courtesy of Nicole Rogers

Daijua Corin

BY CAROLYN STEEVES

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CHARLOTTE — Daijua Corin runs her business like any responsible businesswoman. She attends Charlotte Chamber events, fills around 250 cupcake orders a week, makes deliveries, orders supplies and works in the kitchen to make her business a success.

Corin also attends school and does her chores. She recently turned 12 years-old.

She is the youngest member of the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce and is also a participant with the North Carolina Department of Agricultural and Consumer Services. She opened her business, Vela Delight, in January and business has grown dramatically.

"I like running my own business because I can always meet new friends and my customers are very unique," Corin said.

Vela Delight bakes for banks, corporate events, wedding receptions, birthday parties and numerous local events. She was tapped by Visit Charlotte to create cupcakes for them, featuring their new logo.

Lanelle Miller, Corin's mother, explained that Corin started baking when she was around nine-years-old.

"One day she came to me and her dad and she said, 'Mom, I want to bake' and in the past she's made

brownies and cupcakes, but she was like, 'No, I really, really want to bake,'" Miller said. Miller told her daughter to "put something together" so that she could sample her daughter's baking talents. She said Corin then made "the best cupcakes from scratch."

They shared the cupcakes with family friends, including a business associate who wanted to buy the cupcakes. Corin and her mother decided to start a legal business. Corin came up with the name Vela Delight because she, "Wanted something you could put a candle in and vela is candle in Spanish."

"Because she's a minor, the business is legally in my name," Miller explained, "But I am her professional clean-up crew," she joked. "I'll come in to look over her work space and make sure she's safe, I keep up with inventory, make sure she has the supplies she needs and make sure her station is clean."

They joined the Chamber soon after the business was formed, "We've never heard of a child being a member and the fact that this is an actual business, it was the best place to start," Miller said. "We live in Charlotte, she needed a networking group and it would be great for her home-schooling to network and learn about business."

Corin is home-schooled by Miller. In fourth grade she attended a public school, but the family moved and

the nearest magnet elementary school was far away, "Since Daijua was already a straight-A student, we figured we would home school her for a year," Miller explained, "We had no idea that this was going to turn into something."

Chamber event and baking have become part of Corin's school curriculum. Chamber events are part of her economics class and after each event she has to write a report about what she learned.

Corin has also been asked to speak about her entrepreneurial experiences. According to her mother she has spoken to Girl Scout troops, the Chamber, children at the library and other groups. Corin says going to these events and talking to "grown-ups" is "Exciting because it gives me an opportunity when my business grows to say that I have gotten some advice from people with Bank of America, the president of the Charlotte Chamber and other people."

Vela Delight currently offers around 20 different cake flavors, with 20 different cream fillings and 20 different icings.

Her favorite? "Red Velvet with cream cheese icing." 🍰

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