

WHAT'S COOKIN' GOOD LOOKIN'?

WANDO SENIOR FINDS A RECIPE FOR HIS FUTURE LEGACY

BY GREYSON WEBB



Porcher photographer f. jeffries

Young **Byrone Porcher** would stand next to his grandmother as she hummed in a savory smelling kitchen, cooking the buttery fried chicken that Porcher would one day be preparing himself at multiple national cooking competitions.

"Back in the old days, even though I'm not that old, when I was living with my grandma, she kind of took the wheel with cooking because we didn't have much, so she would cook and learned to cook with whatever she had in her cabinet," Porcher, 12, said. "I don't know if you know what Spam is, it is the nastiest thing on earth, but I got used to eating it for eight years because she had to work with what we had. She taught me everything I know... and it's all recipes she made herself."

Porcher grew up surrounded by culture with a Rastafarian father and a Samoan mother. Both ethnicities have distinct dishes and cuisines that Porcher has naturally taken on himself because of what once was a necessity for Porcher's ancestors became a passion as he was raised in the remnants of his family's culture.

"Growing up around culture helped me understand what certain cultures ate, how they ate it and why they ate it. You could look at my Rastafarian side, my dad's side, where all they had back in the day to eat

was jerk chicken, rice and corn bread," Porcher said. "That's what my great grandmother grew up eating because that's all they had when they were brought down here as slaves from Jamaica. Since that's all they grew up eating, they passed the recipes down the line, but they tweaked everything as they went."

Porcher's grandmother grew up as the youngest of around 20 siblings, so cooking was a skill that became essential to her. His grandmother is now 97 and has a caretaker

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that makes most of her food, but Porcher does not want the legacy of his grandmother to end. He plans to open a restaurant and serve her recipes which he can recite by heart.

"She has a cooking book about that thick," Porcher said as he pinched his fingers to show about three inches, "It's an old cookbook that she has sitting at her house and I use that and have memorized everything out of that book for the last four years."

With his introduction into cooking, Porcher furthered his education in

completing the culinary classes Wando offers and now in his last year at Wando, he is a teacher's assistant for Chef **Bill Twaler**.

"This is a starting ground for them. Students can learn basics, this helps them learn things like what to do in the front of the house as well as the back of the house... All of these things teach the students what they need to know to get their foot in the door and to go on into the real world to work for big companies such as Wild Dunes—that's where I work now—but this is where I started. Everything I do there, I learned here first," Porcher said.

Porcher is now at the point where he is about to receive a college education in culinary and finally pursue the job that he described as being everything to him, but it is the education of his grandmother that will always remain with Porcher and his cooking.

"My grandma taught me how to makes these things called Charleston Chews, which are like brown sugar brownies. The first time I made them they came out terrible, I mean those things were bad, but as you learn and memorize and practice these recipes you will improve, you know by the third or fourth time I made the Charleston Chews, they came out perfect," Porcher said. "My grandma told me I had a natural talent for making them even though I messed up the first time and that's what cooking is about."

54%

What type of
eater are you?

Constant Grazer

Midnight Snacker 16%

Stress Inhaler 15%

Picky Picker 15%

360 students surveyed



photographer f. jeffries

PERFECT POURING: (above) **Kaziah Coakley**, 10, watches classmate **Shaniya Sanders**, 10, as she pours batter into a bread pan and reflects on her previous experiences in the kitchen. "My worst experience was when I almost burned down my kitchen trying to make cookies... I forgot to turn off the oven," Coakley said.

MIXING IT UP: (right) **Taylor Carvajal**, 10, smiles as he cracks the final egg into his culinary creation. "In culinary arts we make a lot of food, obviously, we use a lot of fresh ingredients, and we really try to build our knowledge and learn new things. Under the guidance of Chef, it's really helpful and I'm super excited to be in it," Carvajal said.



photographer f. jeffries

SPICY



FLYING FLAMES: (inset) Chef Bill Twaler teaches Jacob Breiting, 11, how to properly cook with fire. "Culinary is a program at Wando where we start to learn essential skills in the kitchen, so just communication and basic cooking. We also have programs that run through Wando, so Pro-Start and there's other opportunities that allow students who want to explore the hospitality field in general," Breiting said.

photographer f. jeffries



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CULINARY COMRADERY: (above left) Spencer Price, 10, watches as her fellow classmates, Kaziah Coakley, 9, and Avery Williams, 10, create the pumpkin bread mix. "If you're looking to try something or wanting to get out there, just come into culinary with an open heart and put all of your effort into it," Price said.

BATTER UP: (left) Shaniya Sanders, 10, laughs as she tastes the remaining gooey pumpkin bread batter and thinks about how she began cooking. "When I was younger, my grandma would put me on a stool and would let me stir things and would guide my hands," Sanders said.

WEIGHING TO PERFECTION: (left) Zhen Lin, 11, weighs the batter to a perfect amount and recalls a difficult dish he made. "One time I was doing a dish, it was an Asian curry, and the dish was kind of hard to make, but I made it for the first time and didn't think that it was that hard," Lin said.

MAYA ANDRADE



"I like to bake sweets because it's fun to eat them while they're being made. You don't have to wait till the end because you can eat the dough."

TIFFANY MORGAN



"My dad is Italian and I've been cooking with him since I was little and I had always wanted to do the culinary program since I was in middle school, and I finally got here and joined the class."