

Inspired by Yolanda Gampp's YouTube channel How to Cake It, Emily decided to test her own culinary creativity and launched her own cake decorating business.

"I really like art but I wanted to do something that doesn't just hang on the wall," said Emily. "Cake decorating was a form (of art) that everyone seems to enjoy. I just like the idea of making something that is beautiful. I'm always excited to dig in when I'm done ... because I love eating cake, too. And, when it's gone, I get to start over again."

Initially, most of her clients were friends and family. Word spread quickly and soon the 14-year-old's masterpieces were making their way to local educators, school board staff and several Fenelon Falls Home Hardware employees. Her efforts even caught the attention of Burns Bulk Food owner Dan Burns who has been very supportive.

Everything Emily makes and decorates — cakes, cupcakes and cookies — is made from scratch; even the fondant.

"The process was kind of crazy," said Emily, who went through an extensive process of experimentation before she landed on the texture and composition that worked best. "It takes an insane amount of work but it's all worth it ... It's totally different from the store-bought ones."

Emily's efforts were recently recognized by Skills Ontario when she entered one of her creations in the 2020 competition — held virtually as a result of the pandemic — and won second place. She also sold more than 25 dozen holiday themed cookies leading up to Christmas.

Although she's enjoyed success and loves baking and decorating, Emily isn't planning on making it a career.

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"I'd love to keep doing it as a side hobby," said Emily, who encourages other youth to