

Local teens taking slow road to success

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sudden out of nowhere, it kicks you in the back of the throat with some spiciness," said Liantzakis.

"There's lots of layers to it and it's not just one boring flavour. You'll find with a lot of other sauces, 50 per cent of the bottle gets wasted at the bottom of the grill when it drips off the meat and you're wasting your money. With ours, the consistency is really thick—close to molasses—and it sticks really well to the meat. There's nothing to even clean off the grill."

Under the registered company name Maple Creek Smokehouse—which is actually Liantzakis's parents' kitchen—Fuse The Flavour is currently on sale locally at McMaster's Meat & Deli, the Main St. Tea Shop and Pat's Prime Cuts & Deli.

But just getting to that stage took long hours of experimenting and research, with the smell of onions often permeating through the Liantzakis household. The duo has also drained their personal bank accounts to fund the business and won't be at the Farmers' Market the rest of this summer so they can work part-time jobs.

Friends for several years after

being classmates at Silver Creek Public School, Gilchrist has taken on the marketing side of the operation, while Liantzakis oversees the making of the sauce.

They were also able to incorporate the development of the business into the marketing course they took at GDHS this past year under the guidance of teacher Andrea Stoica, whose two children don't like any sauce on their food, but loved Fuse The Flavour.

"At the beginning we got a lot of positive feedback from quite a few people," Gilchrist said.

"We talked to our marketing teacher and she has a background in food-related business, so she let us use the marketing time in class and she changed our marketing assignments to fit the needs of what we were trying to develop with the business."

In order to begin producing and bottling the sauce for sale, a health inspector for Halton Region visited Liantzakis's kitchen, taking water samples and ensuring that the premises was thoroughly cleaned before passing inspection, a process that took close to a month.

"Safety was a big hurdle for us," added Gilchrist, who plans to pursue a career in marketing.

"We didn't realize how many precautions you have to go through to make sure things were up to standards and codes. That was a bit of a setback, but once we got through that, we knew we were ready to start ordering our bottles and labels with all the ingredients that we bought from Costco. From there, it took a few late nights in the kitchen throwing it all together."

The teen entrepreneurs plan to enter the Ribfest competition in Milton this month and another in the Ottawa area this summer to see where they rank amongst the hardcore barbecuers.

They've also contacted Loblaws executive chairman Galen Weston Jr. to try to get some advice on how to proceed.

"We want to get some sales underneath our belts first and establish ourselves before we jump into things too early," said Liantzakis.

"A lot of businesses, for instance, that you see on (the CBC-TV show) *The Dragon's Den*, they always say people get to anxious and that turns out to be their big downfall.

"You don't want to jump into things headfirst when you don't have your feet wet yet."



Patient Poppy

Touch 'N' Go Farm in Campbellville held a Lollipop Horse Show recently with a Pirate theme. Here, Lindsey Russell, 6, of Halton Hills waits as her horse 'Poppy' is judged in the good grooming class.

Graham Paine/Metroland West Media Group



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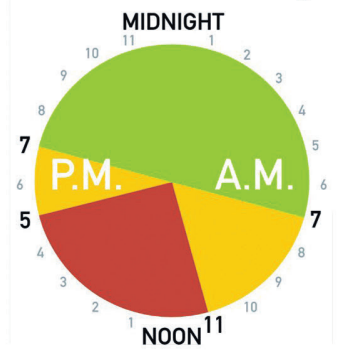
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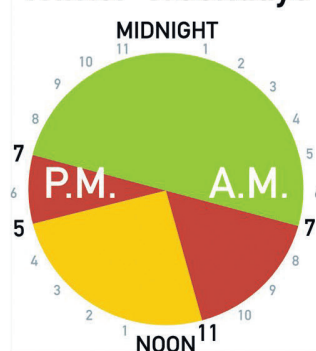
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