

The recipe for a viral video

Woman behind Mia Stav Cakes discusses her baking career, social media

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BROOKFIELD — Mia Stavropoulos never received any formal training, but that hasn't stopped her from amassing nearly a quarter of a million followers across her social media platforms. When she began her business, Mia Stav Cakes, baking was nothing more than a fun pastime.

"It started as a hobby and all of my friends told me I should make an Instagram and that they wanted to order from me," Stavropoulos said. "I had just seen videos of people doing cake decorating and I was like, 'I think I can do that.' ... This just ended up being my creative outlet."

To start, she whipped up artfully decorated cakes in her home kitchen and focused on growing her Instagram account dedicated to the business. Over time, her customer base and online following blossomed into the thousands. With some money saved, she moved into her own commercial kitchen space in Brookfield and began documenting her everyday life as a baker and cake decorator on TikTok.

"I've always been a big consumer of social media," Stavropoulos said. "Once I discovered people doing cake stuff there, I was like 'I think I can do the same thing.' I

grew my Instagram first — just being really consistent about posting and keeping up with trends. Then, once I got on TikTok, one of my first videos blew up."

It was in July 2021, shortly after she opened her new commercial kitchen space, that one of her videos went viral on TikTok. The video features Stavropoulos narrating a day in her life as she unboxes chocolate, assembles some cakesicles (cake pops shaped like popsicles), and cleans up her workspace. So far, the video has been viewed 4.5 million times and has more than 400,000 likes.

Stavropoulos found that her online audience enjoys the true-to-life aspect of her content. "People just love to see the behind the scenes," she said. "I found it really helps to be real and show the behind the scenes and your fails. All that relatable stuff really attracts people."

Greater reach

Since then, her videos range from tens of thousands of views to millions. Stavropoulos has a dedicated following of more than 231,000 on TikTok and 23,000 on Instagram. Each day, she posts content about her life as a baker and cake decorator, informational videos, and the occasional Q&A. She says that her social-media presence has attracted new interest in her business.

"It's definitely brought new customers and a different kind of customer," Stavropoulos said. "It's a lot of people who are up with the trends and they want what they see on TikTok, so that's really cool."

Stavropoulos notes that she has clients coming in from Madison, Chicago, and Minnesota who want one of her tasty treats. "I have people that will say they're coming



Mia Stavropoulos owns and operates Mia Stav Cakes, a cake baking and decorating business in Brookfield.

into town or they planned a trip just to be able to order a cake from me," she said. "I am so thankful for that and I can't believe it when people show up and they say 'I drove three hours.' That's just so cool."

Because of her large following, Stavropoulos notes that she doesn't need to do any other marketing for her business. Every time she bakes and decorates, she films a video. Once a week, she compiles the footage, edits it, and records a voiceover for content on her social media platforms. Stavropoulos dedicates four to five hours each week just for creating content.

But not all of the people who want to try her product

need to commission a cake. So, in order to reach this part of her audience, Stavropoulos hosts pop-up shops a few times each year.

"My retail space is not a normal retail space. I don't have normal retail hours. I just do custom online orders," she said. "But once in a while I'll do a pop-up where I have a normal bakery setting where I have smaller goodies for sale just for people to come and shop if they don't have big events they need cakes for. They can still come and support me and grab little treats."

Stavropoulos schedules her pop-ups seasonally. She typically hosts an autumn pop-up in September, a holiday pop-up around Christmastime,

and a winter pop-up around Valentine's Day.

Cakesicles tend to be one of her best-selling products at the pop-up events. Otherwise, Stavropoulos reports that "right now, people are really loving the vintage piping cakes."

These cakes feature lots of frilly piping and small details, oftentimes in bright or pastel colors. Vintage piping cakes tend to be topped with a few strategically placed maraschino cherries with long stems.

During the wintertime, Stavropoulos can turn out up to 12 cakes per week. During the summertime, which is wedding season, she averages about three or four cakes.

Out of all the cakes Stavropoulos has made during her career, one sticks out as her favorite. A client commissioned a wedding cake with the words "till death do us part" inscribed on the side of each tier.

"It's kind of edgy but still very classic with all the white (details)," she said.

Though she loves the artistic side of the business, Stavropoulos says being a one-woman operation can be difficult sometimes. "The most challenging is balancing every part of (the business), because I do it all by myself. I have to balance the emails and the finances and the baking and the shopping and the preparing and the social media. It's really just finding a balance of all those things and keeping track of everything in every area."

But, she wouldn't have it any other way. The flexibility and freedom that comes with running Mia Stav Cakes on her own is something Stavropoulos doesn't envision giving up. Looking forward, she'll just keep producing creative cakes and viral videos.

To learn more about Mia Stav Cakes, visit mias-tavcakes.com or follow her on TikTok and Instagram @miastavcakes.

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Mike Davis, Mathnasium CEO, and Derek Pipkorn, Mathnasium owner, on the field before Mike's first pitch.

Courtesy of Derek & Jillian Pipkorn

Making math happen at Brewers game

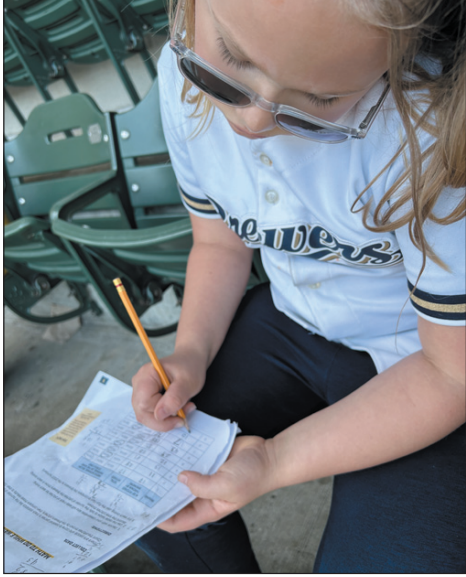
BROOKFIELD — Students on May 10 had the opportunity to apply math skills through the game of baseball. The Milwaukee Brewers hosted their fifth annual Math Day Game against the Los Angeles Dodgers, and thousands of local students got the opportunity to put

their math skills to the test by completing age-appropriate workbooks created in partnership with Mathnasium. Mathnasium offers supplemental instruction to second-through 12th grade students who want to sharpen lagging math skills or accelerate beyond

normal classroom instruction. Derek & Jillian Pipkorn, multicenter owners of Mathnasium, recently opened the newest location in Oconomowoc. There are also locations in Brookfield, Mequon, Wauwatosa and Franklin.



Bella, Tala, Emme, and Clare from 7th grade in Whitefish Bay Middle School.



Ellie Paape working hard from First Immanuel Lutheran in Cedarburg

Brookfield Central High School student receives high national honor

BROOKFIELD — Three Wisconsin students, including one from Brookfield Central High School, have been named U.S. Presidential Scholars by the U.S. Department of Education, one of the nation's highest honors for high school students. The students received the recognition for achievement in academics, arts, and career and technical education. Ananya Bhatt (Brookfield Central High School – Elmbrook School District), Ethan Mark Zentner (Nicolet High School – Nicolet Union High School District) and Saskatoon Robert Fuzz Damm (Medford Area Senior High School – Medford Area Public School District) are among 161 students from across the U.S. to receive the honor. “It is an incredible honor to achieve this distinction, and I am proud to extend my congratulations to these Wisconsin students, along with their families and the amazing educators who have supported them,” State Superintendent Jill Underly said. “Wisconsin’s three U.S. Presidential Scholars exemplify the leadership we need in our state, and I look forward to what they do next.”

A summer of food trucks planned at The Corners

TOWN OF BROOKFIELD -Lovers of food trucks and their edible fare will be able to choose from many delicious options this summer at The Corners of Brookfield when the Town Truck Food Festival returns monthly. The event will be held the third Wednesday of the month from 4:30 p.m. to 8 p.m., until Sept. 20. In addition to the variety of food trucks, there will be live music and beer served by the Greater Brookfield Chamber of Commerce. Activities will be offered for kids. Town Truck food Festival is pet-friendly. The Corners of Brookfield is at 20111 W. Bluemound Road.



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Courtesy of the City of Waukesha
Jeff and Cheryl Sment present Mayor Shawn Reilly, Police Chief Dan Thompson and Fire Chief Steve Howard with the donation.

Interstate Sealant and Concrete donates to Public Safety Memorial

WAUKESHA – On May 15, owners of Interstate Sealant and Concrete Jeff and Cheryl Sment donated \$30,000 to the City of Waukesha for a bench for the Public Safety Memorial outside City Hall at 201 Delafield St. Mayor Shawn Reilly, Police Chief Dan Thompson, Fire Chief Steve Howard, and other police officers and firefighters were presented with the donation. The Public Safety Memorial honors Waukesha’s fallen police and firefighters. The memorial will officially be dedicated on Sept. 22. For more information about the memorial, visit bit.ly/waupublicsafety Memorial.

North Shore Bank celebrates 100 years with \$50,000 contribution to state financial wellness program

BROOKFIELD – North Shore Bank celebrated its 100th anniversary on May 17, announcing a financial commitment of \$50,000 to ELEVATE Wisconsin – a financial wellness program created by the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions and Financial Fitness Group that provides online instruction in personal finance and investment fundamentals. The financial commitment allows Wisconsin employers to offer the program, and the investment will support nearly 12,000 Wisconsin employees with access to financial resources. The commitment was announced at the

centennial commemoration event at North Shore Bank’s corporate headquarters. The event featured Lt. Governor Sara Rodriguez, Waukesha County Executive Paul Farrow, Brookfield Mayor Steven Ponto, Wisconsin’s Department of Financial Institution’s Secretary-designee Cheryl Olson-Collins, Wisconsin Bankers Association President and CEO Rose Oswald Poels and more. Gov. Tony Evers presented the bank with a commendation to honor its celebration. The bank also received a commendation from Farrow and a proclamation from Ponto.

The bank invited local officials and community partners to identify a memento to be placed inside a time capsule that will be positioned inside the corporate headquarters during renovations this summer. According to a statement, the bank contributed paper currency from 1923, and an original ledger from the bank’s first years. “We are honored that so many state, regional, local and community partners joined us to celebrate our past 100 years and look forward at the next 100 years,” said Jay McKenna, president and CEO at North Shore Bank, in a statement.

The Corners of Brookfield announces summer community events

TOWN OF BROOKFIELD — The Corners of Brookfield announced their summer events and programming schedule including workouts, art festivals, beer gardens, movies and more. For the second year, The Corners will host Arts, Crafts & Drafts. The art festival, created in partnership with Discover Brookfield and Amdur Productions, brings together more than 75 local artists, makers and artisans showcasing and selling works of art, candles, home décor, jewelry and more. The weekend-long event will take place on Saturday, June 10 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday, June 11 from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. The event will feature live music, refreshments and a youth art tent. Attendees are invited to bring their gently used wall art to the festival, where it will be donated to Amdur’s charitable partner, Chicago Furniture Bank. The Beer Garden at The Corners will also return this year every Thursday at 5:30 p.m. starting July 6 and running through Sept. 7. There will be beer from Café Hollander and live music from a variety of local musicians, in partnership with Wisconsin Music Ventures, as well as food from any onsite tenant. The Summer Movie Series will take place every Tuesday night in August. Showtime starts at 7 p.m. in Market Square with kids’ activities and refreshments. The Corners will also host complimentary fitness pop-ups with local partners including Friday Morning Coffee & Yoga with Goddess & The Baker and Vibe Yoga at 9 a.m. every Friday from June 2 through Aug. 25. On Saturday, June 3 at 8 a.m., Lululemon ambassadors will lead a Saturday Sweat at The Corners workout in Market Square with DJ Lolo to celebrate the new Lululemon space. There will be a complimentary HIIT class with Life Time Fitness during the Summer Sweat Series on June 12, July 10, Aug. 14 and Sept. 11 at 6 p.m. Donations are encouraged and they will benefit Walk to End Alzheimer’s. After the workout class, The Corners partnered with various tenants to offer special discounts to participants each day. To reserve a spot, visit <https://bit.ly/3BWHmBu>. Throughout the summer, The Corners will be partnering with a number of local fitness boutiques, including Burn Bootcamp Brookfield, Pure Barre Delafield and more. For more details, visit <https://bit.ly/3DbYHXe>.

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In the early 20th century, both European and American companies had to convince consumers to spend money on imaginative play. One advertisement included, “Wise parents select quality dolls for their girls.” The use of new materials also intrigued buyers: “Our doll’s heads are made of bisque with composition bodies.”

Commercial companies wanted not only to sell dolls but anything related to dolls. Product lines were tailored to include clothing, doll-sized furniture and additional doll friends.

Original “flat-soled” high-top shoes were removable. These antique shoes can be rare because most were lost



BARBARA EASH

Antiques

with play. In today’s market, an antique pair of button-down, kid-leather shoes can sell for more than the doll. Shoes really do make the outfit!

1.) The head, neck and blond curly hair of this antique beauty is bisque porcelain. No wonder she won a ribbon at the Chicago Regional Doll event several years ago. Never a bad hair day! **Value: \$350**

2.) This doll is from the Ideal Toy Company named “Saucy Walker.” There were no buttons or keys to wind (and of course no batteries). A child had to hold and move the doll’s arms while walking with her. **Value: \$150**

3.) “Wanda the Walking Wonder” by the Advance Doll Company, circa 1950, was a windup 18-inch doll that could walk unassisted. Both Wanda and her complete yellow outfit are in mint condition. **Value: \$275**

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