

CCSF Culinary Arts

Bakery Internship

with Noe Valley Bakery

Michael Gassen had a tough time growing up. "My father died when I was six and from then on, our family were never sure where our next meal was coming from. We were living in a rough neighborhood and I knew I was going to become a casualty, or a statistic, or something." Michael's friends were dropping out of school and having kids at sixteen and he felt he had to make a change. "I got a job mopping floors in a bakery and became a baker's helper. Then I went to college, and the rest is history!"

"MAKE YOU BETTER THAN YOU EVER WERE"

These experiences drove Michael to go to school, work hard and make a better life. Now he owns and manages the business he created 23 years ago, the Noe Valley Bakery, and is driven to help others with support and mentorship. "I can relate to what everybody's going through since I've been through everything myself. It's made me a more compassionate employer. If you intern here I'm going to make you better than you ever were, so when you leave you're not making just a lateral switch. You're going to jump ahead of people who've only gone to school because you understand what it really takes to work."

NOE VALLEY WELCOMES CCSF STUDENTS

Michael is delighted with the interns coming from CCSF. "Once I saw the quality of students coming from CCSF's culinary program, I thought 'how many can I have?' They've been so good! They're always focused and more grounded in reality than students from other schools, and because of that they'll be much more successful."

CCSF GRAD AND FORMER NOE VALLEY INTERN: SARRINA FLORES

Sarrina Flores was an intern at the Noe Valley bakery during a busy time for the business. "It was hectic! They'd just opened another bakery and all the production for the new store was happening with us." Thankfully, what Sarrina learned at CCSF helped a lot. "For instance, every recipe had to be weighed; not measured with cups and spoons. My mentor told me very few of their interns knew how to do that. It definitely gave me an edge."

A VALUABLE REAL-LIFE EXPERIENCE

And there was plenty more Sarrina learned from working at the bakery. "I was there twice a week, in at 6am, out at 2pm. It was heavy production and to a tight deadline. We'd bake the cookies and cakes for the day, and make the batters, cake mix and whatever else for the next day. You have to get stuff out to a certain deadline so I developed strong time management skills. It was definitely a valuable real-life experience." After CCSF, Sarrina transferred to San Jose State's Hospitality, Tourism and Events Management program. She's also landed a job at the events center on campus. "The places I've worked, my background at CCSF, it all put me at the top of the application stack. It was definitely beneficial."

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Intern for Noe Valley Bakery