

CANYON COURIER

Cream of the chop

West Jeff middle schooler competes on 'Chopped Junior'

Deborah Swearingen

Wednesday, September 11, 2019

Adeline Pulioff moves through the kitchen in her Evergreen home with ease, pouring batter and flipping her crepes once each is sufficiently browned.

At 12, Adeline is already an impressive young chef, and now she has the bright blue *Chopped Junior* apron to prove it. The West Jefferson Middle School seventh-grader competed on the Food Network show that challenges competitors to make an appetizer, entree and dessert using mystery basket ingredients.

She filmed her episode in New York City in April, and it first aired at the end of July.

Her first memories of cooking came when she was 6 after her dad taught her to make Greek spanakopitas, an ode to his Greek heritage and a holiday tradition at the Pulioff home. Years later, the kitchen remains a comforting place for Adeline.

“... The kitchen is like my happy place. It just makes me feel like I have total control over my food,” she said.

While competing on *Chopped Junior*, the young chef quickly warmed up to the cameras and wasn't too intimidated by the fast pace or mystery ingredients. However, that definitely changed when she stepped in front of the judges — Chef Alex Guarnaschelli, Chef Marc Murphy and actor Bailee Madison.

“That was the most nerve-wracking part just because the judges actually got to taste my food,” she said.

Adeline may have been chopped — that's show lingo for cut — but she learned a lot and recognized that the experience was unique and something to be proud of. Undoubtedly, her mom was aware of it, too.

“It's a big deal. Not everyone gets to do this,” said Kirstin Pulioff, a second-grade teacher at The Bergens. “I was just a kid. She's ... a kid but with this extraordinary talent.

“It's just awesome to see her embrace these opportunities to celebrate that and kind of celebrate herself at the same time,” Kirstin added.



Sara Hertwig

Wearing her Chopped Junior apron, Adeline Pulioff, 12, makes a batch of strawberry crepes at her home in Evergreen

Adeline's passion pays off for everyone in her life. She frequently tries out new recipes for her family, and her concoctions are prime bribing material for her little brother. Plus, as a member of Evergreen's Scout Troop 737, Adeline's cooking is a hit on Scout camping trips — particularly with the eight girl members who get to bunk with her. The difference between what the boys and what the girls eat is blatant, Adeline said.

"They had just-add-water ramen. We had homemade vegetable soup with dumplings," she said, grinning.

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