WR 100 N1

Food for Thought

Fall 2004

Food Demonstration Assignment

Baking with Dawn

Dawn had learned baking skills in France and worked for the kitchens of some top-graded restaurants and five star hotel before but finally chose to work in the cafeteria of Boston University as a pastry chef. We visited her in Rize Kitchen at 100 Bay State Road. She made strawberry shortcake for us and talked about her working experiences with men in the kitchen. Dawn described her work in the French restaurant as tough. She felt pressured in the kitchen because everything should be done really fast and perfect without any mistakes. French desserts are famous for their fancy and delicate appearance and taste. Every step of making the dessert has to be really careful and quick enough. However, men always move faster than women, so it’s really competitive for women to work with men in the French kitchen. Furthermore, whenever Dawn made a tiny mistake, the head chef would yell at her. Dawn said, “ I tried hard to prove myself that I am as good as other male chef in the kitchen, and also I did do better than some of them, especially those newcomers, but women were still considered as subservient (relative to men) in the kitchen.” Other reason like the generalization of “women have to take care of her family so that she cannot pay full attention to her work” also made her tough to get in in the kitchen.

Dawn started her new job in the cafeteria of Boston University after quitted from the French Restaurant. She said that she yelled at people when they did something wrong at first, but finally she learned that to be a great chef, the baking skill is not the only important thing, the other crucial points are: knowing how to work with people, trying to inspire them instead of only teaching them and being creative. Dawn is satisfied with her job in BU now, although there’s a limit budget for bakery (which is much less money comparing to that of the five star hotel). She said that now she can still make her food, innovate some new baking ideas as well as taking good care of her daughter. Dawn considers the beautiful bakery as art. This really shows her passion towards her job.