

Women Who Move the Valley: Women in Food

Written by By Melissa Larsen Photography by Abby Stevens Location: The Emerald
Wednesday, 09 January 2019 10:50 - Last Updated Thursday, 24 January 2019 14:09



Lori Hashimoto, Owner/Chef of [Hana Japanese Eatery](#)

Instagram and Twitter: @hanajapanese

I chose this as my career because *I wanted my family—who have been in the culinary arts for their lifetime—to have a venue to do the food that was near and dear to their hearts.*

I hope my greatest contribution to the Valley culinary scene is *creating food that people remember and making them comfortable with Japanese food.*

Eating is what I love most about what I do. *Working with a new generation of restaurant employees* is the biggest challenge.

I separate myself and my brand from others in this field by *making Japanese food approachable to the novice and challenging for the adventurous.*

I draw inspiration from *my peers in this industry.*

My New Year's resolution is *the same as everyone. Eat healthier, spend more time with friends and loved ones and create a more peaceful environment for myself.*

My greatest advice to share with young girls is *you can do anything you want. Just work hard and keep going!*

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Photo credit: Food Network

Julia Perugini, Self-Taught Baker and Owner of [Julia's Cookies](#)

Instagram: @juliascookiesnyc

Twitter: @juliascookies

I chose this as my career because *I wanted to have a job that makes me happy. I believe that when you do what you love, you are happier and overall successful.*

I hope my greatest contribution to the Valley culinary scene is *[representing] our Valley [on the] Food Network and in two national competitions.*

Getting creative and sharing my creations is what I love most about what I do. *Keeping up with new techniques and what is trending* are the biggest challenges.

I separate myself and my brand from others in this field by *making sure people can see my personality through my creations and by embracing my Brazilian roots.*

I draw inspiration from *colors, situations and people, or just from the desire to make delicious things.*

My New Year's resolution is *dedicate more time to create my online classes and tutorials.*

My greatest advice to share with young girls is *do what you love and to always try new things because if you keep trying, you will learn more and, by learning more, you are a step closer to being successful. Be yourself, create your own material and content, and people will appreciate your truth.*



Helen Yung, Co-Owner of [Sweet Republic](#) and Ice Cream Chef

Instagram and Twitter: @icecreamchef; @sweetrepublic

I chose this as my career because *I wanted to make food that makes people happy.*

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I hope my greatest contribution to the Valley culinary scene is *opening people's minds to what ice cream flavors can be. My motto has always been "flavors have no boundaries but balance is key."*

Addicting customers to our ice cream is what I love most about what I do. *Staffing* is the biggest challenge.

I separate myself and my brand from others in this field by *creating unexpected ice cream flavors*.

I draw inspiration from *the seasons, local produce and my travels*.

My New Year's resolution is *to reduce screen time and increase in-person face time*.

My greatest advice to share with young girls is *to have confidence and focus in pursuit of your dreams*.

Jan Wichayanuparp, Co-Owner of Sweet Republic and Ice Cream Hustler

Instagram and Twitter: @mondocrispy; @sweetrepublic

I chose this as my career because *ice cream can make any day a little sweeter*.

I hope my greatest contribution to the Valley culinary scene is *inspiring other career changers to pursue their culinary passions so that the food scene in the Valley continues its upward momentum of greater diversity, talents and deliciousness*.

Sharing in customers' milestones as they celebrate with our ice cream is what I love most about what I do. *Providing skill developments and growth opportunities for our highly talented staff* is the biggest challenge.

I separate myself and my brand from others in this field by *making each trip to Sweet Republic a unique experience and taking our customers on a taste adventure from regional American flavors such as Southern sweet potato pie to the far-flung region of Southern China with Sichuan chocolate ice cream*.

I draw inspiration from *Arizona-grown products, my readings and traveling*.

My New Year's resolution is *to prioritize moments of daily joys*.

My greatest advice to share with young girls is *to raise your own bars, to not be afraid to fail and, most importantly, to recognize how strong you are as you stand up after falling*.



Emma Zimmerman, Owner and Business Manager of [Hayden Flour Mills](#)

Instagram: @haydenflourmills

Twitter: @haydenflourmill

I chose this as my career because *I love working with my dad and building a family business. Plus, the products we make are delicious, and I'm pretty food-obsessed*.

I hope my greatest contribution to the Valley culinary scene is *providing a high-quality, super-flavorful ingredient that's grown in a way that's good for the soil and the body*.

Dreaming up new food products made out of our flours and grains is what I love most about what I do. *Turning those ideas into a shelf-ready product* is the biggest challenge.

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I separate myself and my brand from others in this field by *growing and milling grain varieties that no one else has into accessible baking products that even the most challenged of cooks can enjoy.*

I draw inspiration from *walking through the wheat fields. In the spring, the wheat stalks are often taller than I am, and you can just get lost in them.*

My New Year's resolution is *wear more colorful clothes and bold earrings!*

My greatest advice to share with young girls is *there are no mistakes—just opportunities to learn.*



Hazel E. Arce, Co-Owner of [Toasted Mallow](#)

Instagram: @toasted.mallow

Twitter: @toasted_mallow

I chose this as my career because it *allowed me to open up my creative side without being stifled by corporation guidelines. I am a true entrepreneur. I flourish best when I am able to unleash the creative beast in my brain without any restrictions!*

I hope my greatest contribution to the Valley culinary scene is *to provide and create happy memories when visiting our location.*

Creating and designing is what I love most about what I do. *Having the time to do all the creative things I have in my brain is the biggest challenge.*

I separate myself and my brand from others by *creating a look and feel that is unique to our product. I want to communicate happiness, fun and excitement around our brand that will resonate with every age.*

I draw inspiration from *all the cartoons I watched as a kid and from my father who always made it fun to be a kid.*

My New Year's resolution is *to keep doing what I'm doing. I'm grateful for every year that I am allowed to be a business owner of such an amazing, fun place!*

My greatest advice to share with young girls is *ignore those that don't believe in your dreams. You don't need them to succeed as long as you believe in yourself and keep your dreams a priority. As my mom always said: "You are the greatest gift. You have to take care of yourself. Everything else will follow."*

Tricia Arce, Co-Owner and Marshmallow Magician at Toasted Mallow

I chose this as my career because *it made people happy when they ate my creations, and it was my therapy after my grandmother's passing. Through marshmallows, I still feel connected to a person who was a big part of my life.*

I hope my greatest contribution to the Valley culinary scene is *creating a memorable experience to share and talk about with loved ones for years to come.*

Marshmallow smiles are what I love most about what I do. *Getting known nationally* is the biggest challenge.

I separate myself and my brand from others by *creating the first-ever S'mores Bar and creating marshmallow nostalgia.*

I draw inspiration from *the customers and new dessert trends.*

My New Year's resolution is *to be better than I was last year and to have a little more fun.*

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My greatest advice to share with young girls is *do it! Don't let words of others stifle your desires to becoming great in the world.*

Toasted Mallow is a Gilbert-based shop specializing in handcrafted marshmallows.



Shandee Chernow, President and CEO of [CertiStar](#)

Instagram and Twitter: @certistar; @shandeeamber

I chose this as my career because *I needed a way to be able to safely go out to eat. Food allergies affect me every day, so it was something I spend a lot of time thinking about. The problem of food allergies in the culinary industry wasn't being effectively solved, so when a solution came to mind, I had to make a career change and start the company, CertiStar, in order to try to make a difference.*

I hope my greatest contribution to the Valley culinary scene is *to help save lives and make people feel more comfortable and welcomed with their dining experiences.*

Taking the food allergy stress away from both restaurants and diners is what I love most about what I do. *Trying to reach as many people as possible each day* is the biggest challenge.

I separate myself and my brand from others by *addressing all food allergies and attacking the problem from the hospitality angle rather than from the consumer angle. Any food can cause an allergic reaction, so we had to make a product that addressed that and didn't expect chefs to make any changes to their existing menus.*

I draw inspiration from *other women entrepreneurs and from the kids who have to tackle these issues every day.*

My New Year's resolution is *to start and finish a journal.*

My greatest advice to share with young girls is *to align what you study with what you love. And to take business or economics classes, whether you love it or not, because at some point that knowledge will serve you well.*

CertiStar is a technology that is on a mission to improve the safety and dining experience of those vulnerable to food allergens.

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Jennifer Russo, Owner and Executive Chef of [The Market Restaurant + Bar by Jennifer's and Jennifer's Catering](#)

Instagram and Twitter: @themarketbyjen

I chose this as my career because *there is no better way express my creativity than with food and wine!*

I hope my greatest contribution to the Valley culinary scene is *to let my love for food shine through every bite.*

Making every meal a special occasion for my guests and clients is what I love most about what I do. *Juggling as a single parent of my fabulous son, Cooper, and owning the restaurant and Jennifer's Catering* is the biggest challenge.

I separate myself and my brand from others by *offering a fresh twist on the classics, wine pairings, appearing on television and being a female in kitchens for 30 years.*

I draw inspiration from *the chefs I have worked under, chefs from the world over, other great catering companies, lifestyle gurus, travel and television.*

My New Year's resolution is *to create a local entertainment show and to launch our two-year-in-the-making Napa Food and Wine experience.*

My greatest advice to share with young girls is *to know your ability, know your equality and realize just how challenging the food business can be.*



Danielle O'Day, Co-Owner and Head Chef of Sweet Dee's Bakeshop

Instagram: @sweetdees.bakeshop

I chose this as my career because *the pastry and the culinary field spoke to me at a young age. I loved that food was a tool to bring friends and family together, a cake to celebrate another milestone, or simply a coffee to unite two strangers into a friendship.*

I hope my greatest contribution to the Valley culinary scene is *offering unique pastries with novelty, creativity and care behind each one, while offering options that aid to dietary restraints.*

Being able to create, inspire and pour passion into my craft is what I love most about what I do. *The long hours of having a business* is the

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biggest challenge.

I separate myself and my brand from others by *that same novelty and passion that goes in to each and every item that comes out of our bakeshop.*

I draw inspiration from *culinary geniuses around the world, my partner and mom, and nature offering beautiful scenery and supple flavors to create from.*

My New Year's resolution is *to constantly strive for more, while stopping to smell the roses.*

My greatest advice to share with young girls is *to follow each and every one of your dreams. They will always lead you back to where you need to go.*



Photo credit: Stephanie Heymann

Courtney Francis, Co-Owner of [Good Thyme Kitchen](#)

Instagram: [@goodthymekitchen](#)

I chose this as my career because *I have had a passion for cooking for as long as I can remember. What a blessing it is to actually turn a passion into a career!*

I hope my greatest contribution to the Valley culinary scene is *to inspire people to get into the kitchen and not be afraid to try new things.*

Preparing healthy meals for my family and getting my kids involved in the process is what I love most about what I do. *Cleaning up the mess* is the biggest challenge.

I separate myself and my brand from others in this field by *cooking and creating meals that are not only healthy, but achievable and simplified for the busy person on the go. Kari and I created Good Thyme Kitchen for the sole purpose of inspiring people to get in the kitchen and make meals for their families and friends to enjoy together.*

I draw inspiration from *one of my best friends from college who taught me so much about cooking.*

My New Year's resolution is *to be present and live in the moment. Seems so simple but life can get so crazy busy these days with kids, sports, school and work that we start rushing through the motions.*

My greatest advice to share with young girls is *to stay true to who you are and always be kind. There is so much pressure with social media today that it's easy to lose sight of what is really important in life.*

Kari Backlund, Co-Owner of Good Thyme Kitchen

I chose this as my career because *cooking and creating recipes are my passions. They say that if you're doing something you love, it's not like you're really working. I think I hit the jackpot because I am truly doing what I love!*

I hope my greatest contribution to the Valley culinary scene is *inspiring others to cook at home and create family memories in the kitchen.*

Cooking with fresh, seasonal ingredients and developing recipes that are family-friendly and healthy is what I love most about what I do. *Doing the dishes* is the biggest challenge.

I separate myself and my brand from others in this field by *our message. It is simple: time spent around the dinner table with family and friends is invaluable. A home-cooked meal is an easy way to bring loved ones together.*

I draw inspiration from *my mom and my late grandma. I learned from the best! I'm from an Italian family, and I grew up spending countless hours in the kitchen with my mom and my grandma. My mom and I still cook a lot together, and now my kids join us as well. It makes my heart happy to know that they are creating similar memories with us, and I know that my grandma is looking down on us with a huge smile on her face.*

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My greatest advice to share with young girls is *don't let others determine your self-worth. Be the best version of yourself that you can be, and you can accomplish anything you set your sights on.*



Kyndra Kelly, Chef/Food Blogger of [Kyndra's Kitchen](#)

Instagram and Twitter: @kyndraskitchen

I chose this as my career because *the kitchen has always been my happy place. I've loved to cook since I was a little girl, and choosing to chase my passion was the best decision I ever made.*

I hope my greatest contribution to the Valley culinary scene is *making cooking fun and accessible to everyone, no matter how scary it may seem. I know a lot of people (especially my age) are very intimidated by cooking and baking, and sort of lost touch with the art of cooking with all of the food-delivery apps nowadays. I strive to inspire my generation and everyone else to love being in the kitchen as much as I do.*

The creativity is what I love most about what I do. *I am a perfectionist when it comes to my work, so sometimes capturing the food as I see it is the biggest challenge.*

I separate myself and my brand from others because *I graduated with honors from Le Cordon Bleu and have professional training in the culinary world, in addition to just all-around loving food.*

I draw inspiration from *everything! The world and people around me are my biggest inspirations. And my mama, of course.*

My New Year's resolution is *to step outside of my box even more than I already have and travel more.*

My greatest advice to share with young girls is *don't be afraid to take the road less traveled. Chase your dreams no matter who or what stands in your way!*



Libby Lingua, General Manager of [UnderTow](#)

Instagram: @Oolalibby; @UnderTowphx

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I chose this as my career because *I am a natural-born hospitalian. I care deeply about sharing my passions with others.*

I hope that my greatest contribution to the Valley culinary scene is *proving to other women that the cocktail scene doesn't need to be male-dominated, and that us gals can shake just as hard as the guys!*

Elevating the beverage culture in Phoenix is what I love the most about my job. *I love being a part of a team that is continually pushing the boundaries.* Some of the biggest challenges are running into the guests that are unwilling to break away from the vodka and soda, or just unwilling to branch out and experience something new.

I separate myself from my brand and from others in my field by *staying authentic to my true self. I would never put out cocktails that I wouldn't personally enjoy, and I stand behind my product 100 percent. Also, I believe that I separate myself from others in this field by building up the team around me.*

I draw inspiration from *everything! Colors, textures, food, wine and, most importantly, history and culture.* My background is in design, so it's difficult to choose just one thing to draw inspiration from.

My greatest advise to young girls is *don't let anyone tell you that you can't amount to something, and stop apologizing so much, especially if you've done nothing wrong. Stand by your word and your beliefs, and don't allow anyone to tell you differently. Period.*



Laura I. Gonzalez, Chef de Cuisine of [Taqueria Centro at Omni Scottsdale Resort & Spa at Montelucia](#)

Instagram: @chefflau86; @omnimontelucia

I chose this as my career because *I love eating and being creative.*

I hope my greatest contribution to the Valley culinary scene is *to create more experiences and show how this industry has changed throughout the years with more professional chef women. Cooking defines who I am. Every single dish captures my current mood when I am creating it. I love how cooking allows me to release stress and be creative.*

I separate myself and my brand from others by *just being myself and always smiling.*

I draw inspiration from *professional female chefs who are successful. One of the former chefs [Chef Becky Windels] who I worked under has inspired me to stay motivated even though she's not in Arizona but having her on social media and seeing her success is great.*

My New Year's resolution is *to connect more with the Valley through social events.*

My greatest advice to share with young girls is *to pursue what you have always dreamt of and only you can make it true.*

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Kim Haasarud, Founder of Liquid Architecture

Instagram: @khaasarud

Twitter: @mommymixologist

I chose this as my career because *I was doing something I love. I didn't really choose it; it just evolved into a career.*

I hope my greatest contribution to the Valley culinary scene is *two-fold. For the trade (that's bartenders), teaching them that simplicity is close to godliness. Creativity is nothing without balance. For consumers, I just want craft cocktails to be approachable and fun.*

Discovery and teaching is what I love most about what I do. *Working against some people's perception of what a "bar" or cocktail is is the biggest challenge. I hope to continue to move that needle so craft cocktails and spirits are seen in the same light as top-of-class culinary experiences.*

I separate myself and my brand from others in this field by *taking a client's idea and making it approachable, replicable and operational. We love the creative process of creating drink programs, but we also look at it through a rigorous operational lens.*

I draw inspiration from *my travels. I'm fortunate to get to see a lot of what's happening in beverage around the United States and beyond. I'm constantly inspired.*

My New Year's resolution is *to get the Garden Bar in Roosevelt South open by third quarter 2019!*

My greatest advice to share with young girls is *to work hard and work smart. You are going to encounter many obstacles and failures but embrace them as learning opportunities, not unobtainable brick walls. You need to fail to succeed and be prepared in life. One of my favorite quotes that I live by is "luck is when opportunity meets preparedness."*

Liquid Architecture focuses on drink development, bar design and training solutions for large- and small-scale operations.



Rochelle Daniel, Executive Chef at [Fat Ox](#)

Women Who Move the Valley: Women in Food

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Wednesday, 09 January 2019 10:50 - Last Updated Thursday, 24 January 2019 14:09

Instagram: rochelled8

Twitter: @rochellechef

I chose this as my career because *you get to be creative with your hands, and food brings people together and makes them happy.*

I hope my greatest contribution to the Valley culinary scene is *educating our guests and everyone around us about quality ingredients that makes for great food.*

Being creative is what I love most about what I do. *Being a chef is both physically and mentally demanding* is the biggest challenge.

I separate myself and my brand from others in this field by *never cutting corners.*

I draw inspiration from *my surroundings.*

My New Year's resolution is *to take more time for myself.*

My greatest advice to share with young girls is *pick and choose your battles, don't take everything so personally and you're strong so stay strong.*



Joanie Simon, Food Photographer and Founder of [The Bite Shot](#)

Instagram and Twitter: @thebiteshot

I chose this as my career because *I have a constant need to be creating and have been food-obsessed since I was young. It's how I bring my loves of art and food together. It also keeps me well-fed!*

I hope my greatest contribution to the Valley culinary scene is *encouragement. The world of food, especially for our amazing Valley chefs and restaurateurs, involves long hours, requires business savvy, creativity on-demand, and the ability to do inspired work even when resources are lacking. But, the work they do is vital to the culture of our state and brings hearts and hands closer together. I always strive to be supportive and encouraging and am honored to be a small part of it.*

Taking the creative ideas in my head and seeing them come to life in an image is what I love most about what I do. *Not spending all my money on new photography gear and props* is the biggest challenge.

I separate myself and my brand from others by *being fully transparent about myself and my work. Part of my business is teaching others who are learning food photography. I share everything about my process, the not-always-picture-perfect behind the scenes, and strive to make the elusive world of food photography more relatable. Visually, I love color, and in my personal work, bolder is always better.*

I draw inspiration from *the pages of the art history books from my undergraduate education at Arizona State University. I especially gravitated to Kandinsky, Matisse and Warhol and learning about color and light through their works still informs my approach to capturing images of food. As far as photographers, I love following the work of Lindsay Adler and Steve Hansen, and I can always get lost in the work of Irving Penn.*

My New Year's resolution is *to not work weekends. Building a business can turn into a 24/7 operation easily, but I want to savor the days while my boys are young and re-charge my creativity more often through intentional down time.*

My greatest advice to share with young girls is, *especially if you're an artist, know that this is the best time in the history of the world to be a creative person. What makes you unique makes you especially valuable in today's economy.*

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Wednesday, 09 January 2019 10:50 - Last Updated Thursday, 24 January 2019 14:09



Megan McNamee, Registered Dietitian and Co-Owner of [Feeding Littles](#)

Instagram: @feedinglittles

I chose this as my career because *I wanted to help my best friend who had an eating disorder.*

I hope my greatest contribution to the Valley culinary scene is _____

Connecting with moms is what I love most about what I do. *Balancing work with my own family* is the biggest challenge.

I separate myself and my brand from others by *offering non-judgmental, practical advice in a way that doesn't make people feel like they're doing it all wrong.*

I draw inspiration from *my kids. They're why I got into this in the first place, and they're the reason I work so hard.*

My New Year's resolution is *to slow down. Host more imperfect dinner parties. Be messy and silly with my kids. Go on more dates with my wonderful husband. Worry less. Eat more really good chocolate.*

My greatest advice to share with young girls is *that, yes, you can do what you love. You just have to work for it and never lose sight of your goal. Don't let anyone discourage you from following the career path of your dreams.*

Via Feeding Littles, Megan McNamee and her business partner Judy Delaware, who is based in Colorado, create online courses to help parents feed their babies and young children.



Tamara Milada Stanger, Chef at [Cotton & Copper](#)

Instagram: @tamara_stanger

Twitter: @TamaraStanger

I chose this as my career because *one day I realized that cooking was more than just feeding people food. It is art. It's a way for me to not only showcase creativity, but to also shape emotional experiences that come with smelling, seeing and tasting.*

I hope my greatest contribution to the Valley culinary scene is *representing who and what we are as Arizona. I care deeply about the culture here, as well as the agriculture, the ecosystem, and the terroir. If I can contribute anything at all, I hope it will be through education and*

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experience, introducing the world to our cuisine.

Getting my hands in the earth, foraging and fieldwork is what I love most about what I do, but actually finding the time to do it is the biggest challenge.

I separate myself and my brand from others in the field by honestly representing the culture of our state, as well as who I am in the food I present to the table.

I draw inspiration from my friends and family. A walk in the desert with Brett Vibber on a mission to collect cactus or introducing children in the schoolyard to their first taste of heritage vegetables with Sasha Raj is enough inspiration to keep me going for weeks, if not months, with ideas of how to better myself as a chef.

My New Year's resolution is to find more time for personal growth. I recently got back into boxing, so I am working on forcing a schedule outside of the kitchen to get healthy physically and mentally.

My greatest advice to share with young girls is don't be intimidated by the culinary industry if that's what you are interested in. Arizona is home to a very large amount of successful female chefs, proving there is a future for you. We are listening, ready to share our experiences and will help you in any circumstance, so please privately reach out if there is ever a need. We want to see more women in this field.



Katie Stephens, Partner, General Manager and Wine Director at [Beckett's Table](#) and [Southern Rail](#)

Instagram: @southernrailaz; @BeckettsTable

I chose this as my career because once you fall in love with hospitality, it is hard to give it up. And once you get that wine bug, it's a beautiful pairing.

I hope my greatest contribution to the Valley culinary scene is to make great wine approachable and easier to understand. The primary goal is to demystify wine and encourage all to raise a glass.

The many people I encounter daily is what I love most about what I do. Having enough time in the day to coordinate the many facets of restaurant operations is the biggest challenge.

I separate myself and my brand from others in this field by active listening. I learn so much by absorbing information from others, it encourages growth for myself.

I draw inspiration from amazing women around me.

My New Year's resolution every year is to be joyful daily, appreciate every situation and to be kind to others.

My greatest advice to share with young girls is never underestimate the lessons learned today. These lessons will ultimately guide your journey.

Women Who Move the Valley: Women in Food

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Cachaé Ward, Owner of [Sweet Wool](#)

Instagram: @sweetwoolco

I chose this as my career because it unfolded that way. I didn't have a life-long dream spinning cotton candy, but I did have a dream of being in the culinary field. I graduated from culinary school in 2007, cooking in restaurants throughout the Valley. This gave me the creative experience and insight I now channel into Sweet Wool.

I hope my greatest contribution to the Valley culinary scene is to inspire other creatives to improve current experiences and to think outside of the box while doing so. Quality and customer service should be the No. 1 priority, always. Even more so than a culinary contribution, I consider it one to the small business community and arts as well.

The excitement and happiness others have while watching me spin and the look on their face after tasting it is what I love most about what I do. The in-between space, sacrifices and balance of a small business and everyday life are the biggest challenges. Being a new and small business, I am not in the position to rely solely on Sweet Wool for my total income, yet. There are sacrifices I need to make to pursue this dream while also balancing a full-time job to support both myself and the growth of the business.

I separate myself and my brand from others in this field by offering a unique and quality product! Traditional cotton candy is packed with artificial coloring and flavoring, and I felt this absolutely needed to change. Sweet Wool is 100 percent organic, nothing artificial. Also, our flavors are super unique!

I draw inspiration from the seasons.

My New Year's resolution is to spend time on myself, outside of the business.

My greatest advice to share with young girls is be your biggest fan, and do not look to others for validation. You never want to be dependent on other's opinions because then your life becomes about them, instead of being about you.

Sweet Wool specializes in hand-spun organic cotton candy using seasonal sugar recipes.



Raven Thomas, President and CEO of [The Painted Pretzel](#)

Instagram: @thatssoooo_raven

Women Who Move the Valley: Women in Food

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Wednesday, 09 January 2019 10:50 - Last Updated Thursday, 24 January 2019 14:09

Twitter: @RavenCThomas

I chose this as my career because *it chose me. I didn't intend on this career path, but while doing something I love, I suppose the path was naturally paved for me.*

I hope my greatest contribution to the Valley culinary scene is *to encourage other women, specifically mothers, to find the time and courage to follow their dreams.*

Making others smile and find enjoyment in my products is what I love most about what I do. *Finding a balance between family time, business and personal space* has been the biggest challenge. *I actually don't have an equal balance, and that's OK. It changes regularly based on the daily situations.*

I separate myself and my brand from others in this field by *remaining unique and not constantly monitoring what others are doing. Instead, I take feedback from what my customers like and grow according to them.*

My New Year's resolution is *to step outside of my comfort zone and accept new challenges and opportunities for growth without reservation.*

My greatest advice to share with young girls is *to not be defined or confined by others' dreams for you. Be fearless and courageous and determined to fulfill your potential. Set goals, and go for them all.*

Scottsdale-based The Painted Pretzel, which was featured on "Shark Tank," makes and sells chocolate-dipped pretzels.