Helping bridge gaps with food is ?Icing on the Cake? for Baking Show finalist

Whether it's scratch-made, from following a recipe, or opening up a box of mix and following the instructions, anyone can make a cake. But do you have what it takes to make your cake look ready for prime time?

For local baker Steven Levitt, a finalist in the latest season of CBC's hit The Great Canadian Baking Show, the answer for all of you is a resounding yes ? with a few tips along the way, of course.

Next Sunday, January 30, Levitt will virtually headline Icing on the Cake, sharing cake-icing techniques in a fundraiser for Canadian Hadassah-Wizo (CHW) ? Toronto Atzmaut Chapter to benefit the patisserie program at CHW Netanya Technical High School.

At $36 per person, ticketholders will learn some eye-catching ways to ice a cake in real-time and the cake Levitt completes as part of the event will be auctioned off and delivered in person the following day to the lucky winner.

CHW Netyana offers a ?second chance to at-risk youth who have fallen through the cracks of traditional educational frameworks? with the patisserie program providing students with ?the emotional support and professional skills needed to succeed in Israel's vibrant culinary industry.

The school has also initiated a culinary and cultural exchange program with their counterparts in Tira ?where a shared passion for the art of baking fostered a meaningful dialogue and deeper connection between Jewish and Arab students and staff alike.?

?As a father [I know] when they try to pigeon-hole you into life or education and we don't all fit,? says Levitt. ?The mass will get through, but a few will be left behind. The program appealed to me, but I also noticed there was a connection, especially in that part of the world, where you're trying to bring Arab and Jewish together. I still don't understand why everyone doesn't get along as humans and if this [program] can get people to change their minds on the way the world works, and if one kid can get lifted back up after he or she has fallen, perfect ? and if I get to do it as a baker, even better!

?Music is universal but not everyone can sing. Not everyone can play an instrument, but everyone has to eat one way or another!?

As a kid, Levitt recalls his grandmother being a member of Hadassah and raising money for the cause. The idea to help build upon

this legacy, he added, is an added bonus.

It's also a chance to show off the skills he learned in the Baking Show's iconic tent.

?I had no choice but to up my game being on the show and to elevate my regular bakes,? he says. ?I always go back to the very first cake (challenge) when we had to make a pound cake. Making a pound cake is one thing, but you have to make one stand out amongst the pound cakes. [I will be showing] basic piping skills: how to make a rose or any type of flower, basic stuff I think most people would love to have so their cakes don't look wonky. I see people all the time on social media say, ?It looks lousy, but it was good,' so if I can help them make it look good and taste better, even better!?

Ahead of January 30, Levitt says he is looking forward to imparting what he's learned and also meeting whoever wins the auction for his cake. His participation in the program, however, might lead to something more.

?I have never been to Israel, ever,? he says, noting that when he was growing up he was told that ?every Jewish boy needs to get to Israel.?

?I said I would get there some day. I would love to go there because so many people I know have been and what a miraculous place it is. When I am there, [seeing the program in action] would give me something wonderful to see. To say I am part of it, even if it was just a little part, that would be pretty cool.?

For more information on Icing on the Cake, visit www.chw.ca/event/chw-toronto-atzmaut-chapter-presents-icing-on-the-cake-icing-techniques-with-steven-levitt/

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