

Sandi Itropico

Trust yourself and be confident in your ability

Sandi has been involved in the catering industry for more than 40 years. Her passion for food and cooking and the desire to be independent developed while she was in her late teenage years. Sandi has connections to Campbelltown reaching back to her early years. Her parents moved to Rostrevor when she was three years old. She was the youngest of four children and remembers a safe, happy childhood, close to relatives, sleeping under the stars on hot nights and being treated to fish and chips and going to the local delicatessen for ice creams.

Sandi attended Stradbroke Primary School and Campbelltown High School, completing her education at Morialta High School. She started cooking for the family on the weekends when she was about 10 years old and loved helping her Nanna cook. She always knew that a career in cooking and catering was her goal. She completed a short cookery course but most of Sandi's knowledge and experience in the industry has been gained through her own practical work rather than through study.

Sandi's career in catering began by working at a range of different positions ranging from kitchen hand, waitressing and breakfast cook to Food and Beverage Manager at the Petty Sessions restaurants. While she was working in these positions, she was also developing her own business, supplying cakes and savoury dishes to the restaurants from her home kitchen.

Sandi was her own motivator; having an uncle who was a successful business owner helped her to understand that you must have a positive mindset and manage the ups and downs to achieve her goal. Sandi and her husband moved to Magill in 1999. Their home is the centre for their commercial catering business.

Sandi volunteered at her children's schools; teaching cooking lessons, was a member of the Parents and Friends Committees, fundraising, canteen volunteering and organising school fairs. She has supplied food for Camp Quality and supported her daughter's fund-raising functions for Camp Quality. Sandi believes that it is always rewarding when you are helping people or raising money for a purpose. This has also taught her children an invaluable lesson which she is proud that they now put this into practice.

Sandi believes that good food and wine, trying to rest, having plenty of sun and surrounding herself with family and friends contribute to her health and wellbeing. Positive feedback from customers, and knowing she has helped and given someone what they want is also a major contributor to good mental health.

Words of advice she may give her younger self are that "you get back what you put into whatever you do, if it's what you love it will show".

"You can always do something for someone old or young, even if you think you have no time; giving back helps your own mental health and you will feel a sense of purpose as you learn though the experience."

Celebrating International Women's Day with the 'Women of Campbelltown' project – inspiring stories of local women, their achievements and contributions to the Community.

To see the full stories visit: www.campbelltown.sa.gov.au/iwd

Thank you to the women who participated and volunteer interviewers Di Booker and Katrina Spencer.