

# THE ST. LOUIS AMERICAN

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IN YOUR BUSINESS



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**NWMS**  
**7<sup>th</sup> grader**

Tamia Coleman-Hawkins mixes batter for her signature chocolate chip cookies. She buys all of her ingredients with the money she makes from Mia's Treats Delight. She saves 30 percent from every sale, and she gets to choose how to use the remainder of her money.

Photo by Carolina Hidalgo / St. Louis Public Radio

## 'You're a kid. You can do it'

### 12-year-old baker/entrepreneur says that kids can be their own boss

By Marissanne Lewis-Thompson  
Of St. Louis Public Radio

When 12-year-old Tamia Coleman-Hawkins is not in school or participating in extracurricular activities, she is baking batches of sweet treats for her customers.

Tamia is the founder and CEO of Mia's Treats Delight. The Florissant native bakes brownies and cupcakes. However, her customer-requested cookies were a game-changer for her business. So far, Tamia's customers have ordered 10 unique flavors, and she's open to customizing more orders.

"That's where my chocolate chip pecan and cranberry cookie came from," Tamia said. "Me

and mom were like, 'Chocolate chip pecan cranberry — uh, OK. A little weird, but OK.'" She still makes fan favorites like chocolate chip and cookies 'n' creme cookies. Her base recipe incorporates classic ingredients like flour, sugar and lots of butter that leave the cookies

with a glazed finish. But she is keeping her secret ingredient under lock and key.

Tamia got her baking chops from her grandmother when she was just 4, but she got an itch to start her business when she was 8.

"My mom has always been telling me to be my own boss and own my own business when I became an adult," Tamia said.

Then in the third grade, Tamia took an economics class at her school where she learned the basics about having a business and dealing with money.

"I walked up to my mom that night and told her that I didn't want to wait until I was an adult

See HAWKINS, B2

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## Hawkins

*continued from page B1*

to start my own business, and I wanted to start it then," she said.

Tamia and her mother, Tamishio Hawkins, went to the store that night and purchased ingredients for chocolate cupcakes. She sold the cupcakes the same night, her first official sale.

Tamishio said she was eager to support her daughter. She said that growing up, things like financial literacy and the idea of being an entrepreneur were never suggested to her.

"It was, 'Go to school, graduate, get a job, retire,'" Tamishio said. "That's what I thought life was. So when she came to me, of course, I didn't want to tell her, 'No, you're too young.' Because I had always told her you can do whatever you put your mind to. So that kind of put me in the mode of, 'OK, I don't really know what I'm doing, but we're going to figure this out together.'"

The mother-daughter duo delivers the treats to her customers. Tamia buys all of her ingredients with the

money she makes from Mia's Treats Delight. She stashes 30 percent from every sale into her savings account, and she gets to choose how to use the remainder of her money.

Tamia doesn't have an exact figure for the dough she's bringing in. "But I can say it's enough to pay for a whole Paris trip with spending money," she said. "And that's money saved up."

When Tamia isn't running her business, she's a leader in her community. Earlier this year, she was chosen to serve on the Kids Board of Directors for the national online retailer Kidbox and even traveled to New York City for her first board meeting and a charity event. Kidbox donates new clothes to children in need for each box that purchasers keep.

"If you buy a box from Kidbox, then they will give you a list of four charities for you to pick from, and that's the charity that they will donate to," Tamia said.

Tamia said kids should not let their age stop them from pursuing their dreams and being their own boss.

"Usually it's just, 'These are the careers that you can do,'"

she said. "And all of them are just jobs that are controlled by other people. That's never entrepreneurship. So I say, 'You're a kid. You can do it. Don't wait if you don't want to.'"

However, being a 12-year-old boss is not easy without support from parents. That's why her mother said it's important to support your children and their goals.

"Help them cultivate their dreams and their aspirations," Tamishio said. "If you notice that they have certain hobbies, see how maybe you can turn that into a business. Because if they're doing something that they love, it'll never seem like work. And you never know what it's going to turn into."

Tamia primarily runs her business from her kitchen at home. She said her next move is to work from a commercial kitchen and eventually for Mia's Treats Delight to have its own brick-and-mortar location.

*For more information, visit <https://www.facebook.com/miastreatsdelight2015/>.*

*Follow Marissanne on Twitter: @Marissanne2011.*

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Photo by Carolina Hidalgo / St. Louis Public Radio

**Tamia Coleman-Hawkins puts her chocolate chip cookies in the oven. She started her business Mia's Treats Delight after taking an economics class in the third grade.**

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## Healthcare Careers

### Shauntori Nails, Registered Medical Assistant



**Where do you work?** I am the Medical Assistant Program director and instructor at St. Louis College of Health Careers.

**Where did you go to school?** I graduated from Hazelwood West High School and then earned a

Medical Assistant diploma at Allied Medical and an Associate of Applied Science and a Bachelor of Health Care Administration from St. Louis College Health Careers. I also became Registered with American Medical Technologist.

**What does a program director and instructor do?** I teach young and older adults how to perform blood draws, blood pressures, injections of medication and CPR training, and all the skills completed at a doctor's visit. I place students on externship to show off their skills to get an awesome job as a medical assistant.

**Why did you choose this career?** I chose this career because it is my passion to help patients to achieve a healthier life and to see the students I have trained in their new career as a medical assistant, while making the doctors and patients happy.

**What is your favorite part of the job you have?** The best part about this job is making a difference and showing others how to do the same, by putting smiles on all the patients' faces.

**Learning Standards:** HPE6, NH3

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# COMMUNITY NEWS

## Hazelwood School Board member hosts human trafficking workshop

Chief Program Officer for CASA and Hazelwood School District board member Cheryl Latham hosted a workshop on human trafficking on Aug. 26 attended by several HSD social workers.

Latham (center in blue) partnered with Det. Keaton Strong (center in red) of the Bel-Ridge Police Department for the workshop, as attendees learned about human trafficking from both a law enforcement and social services perspective.

They also talked about ways to recognize and address human trafficking and about resources available in the community.

The Hazelwood School District puts a strong emphasis on professional development and training of staff, as both are key components of the district's 'Hazelwood NOW' five-year strategic plan.



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# COMMUNITY NEWS

## Elementary students mark Sept. 11 with Florissant Police Department



*Photo courtesy Hazelwood School District*

Students and staff at Lusher Elementary School in the Hazelwood School District joined together with officers from the Florissant Police Department to remember the events of 9/11 on

Sept. 11. The school held a moment of silence followed by a singing of 'God Bless America.' Officers spent time visiting with students following the ceremony.