

**Case Anderson
Poggioreale in America
2023 Scholarship Program
Essay**

The warm smell of freshly baked meatballs. The sweet aroma of simmering pasta sauce. The rich flavor of tortellini soup. These I associate with visits to the house of my grandmother, Tina Todaro Anderson.

During my middle school years, I had the privilege of living only a few miles away from my grandparents' house. My siblings and I visited very often, going to help with the mowing or another task they needed done, or to just go and visit. But one of my favorite reasons to visit was the cooking.

Since I was young, I have had an interest in cooking and baking, and my grandmother helped to encourage and grow this hobby. When she was cooking, she would explain to me what she was working on and why to do it a certain way and how the recipe comes together. She would tell me about the special way she makes her pasta sauce, how she prepares the bucatini noodles, and how she rolls her meatballs and cooks them in the oven before adding them to the sauce. This last task is where I got to assist, even if our meatball rolling skills were not the best ... or consistent. And the best part of all of this cooking was the end product, delicious food. The many different Italian dishes I was exposed to expanded my knowledge and tastes for a variety of foods and made me love cooking that much more.

This encouragement from my grandmother has contributed to my present love for cooking, along with that of many other family members. I have now cooked dinner for family and friends many times and have learned many different techniques. I have even learned how to make my own noodles from scratch for fettuccini, ravioli, and lasagna. If I had not had the joy of cooking with my grandmother, or the opportunity to enjoy many Italian dishes at her house, I am not sure I would enjoy cooking Italian foods or my Italian culture as much as I do now. Being able to express my heritage in my cooking and share it with others is an amazing skill, and I will be able to do it for the rest of my life with the help of my amazing grandmother.