



THE MAKING OF A GINGERBREAD HOUSE

Sadie Kennedy with her creation of the 1803 Gingerbread House.

Back in October, I saw an advertisement for a gingerbread house contest at the Bethlehem Steel Stacks and asked my daughters if they would be interested in entering with me. Sadie seemed enthusiastic. Clara was skeptical that we would ever do it ... something to the tune of "you'll probably never do it." Of course, that response lit a fire under Sadie and I.

One of the contest categories was to create an "Authentic Reproduction of a Significant Building in the Lehigh Valley" so we started wracking our brains. Sadie said we should make the 1803 house, right next to her school. She is familiar with the building and thought it was natural to select it. A few days later, we went over to the building and took many pictures from different angles.

We used the pictures to create measurements then to create a cardboard model. It took some time to get the ratios right and to figure out just how big everything should be.

When the cardboard model was done, we made the dough and used the model to cut out the shapes. Then we frosted the insides of the gingerbread so it would be lighter when people looked through the windows.

The next step was to make fondant to look like stones. We made several batches of slightly different colored stone fondant (using a variety of secret ingredients) to get the perfect stone color. We thought that having several different shades of stone would make the house look more realistic.

We can't over emphasize the amount of time it took to shape and lay each stone. We plunked and plunked (and adjusted and adjusted and adjusted). Sadie learned the meaning of "tedious" that week. We also had to add brick accents and details to the roof, laying each row and cutting each shingle.

The most nerve wracking step for me was trying to put the walls together. Everything fell apart a few times and a few walls cracked until I got it right. Cans and sweet potatoes came to our rescue.

By the time we were adding the last details, it was an obsession to finish it well - we had already put so much work into it that we just needed to get it right. Sadie was home with the flu the day of the deadline but rallied enough to make a snowman and little presents to go under the tree inside the building.

All in all, Sadie did about 1/4th to 1/3rd of the work, a significant number of hours for a 9 year old. We were both relieved to finish our goal and to know the 1803 House Board would like to have it at their Christmas events. I was especially happy to wipe down my kitchen after a week or so of powdered sugar accumulation .

By Sadie's mom...Courtney Call Kennedy, PE



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Sadie working on the different stages of 1803 Gingerbread House.