CRESTVIEW — Hannah Sevy's utensils are a blur as she rapidly carves an ornate basket or nest from a cantaloupe, and then transforms a red apple into a feathered bird.

She completes the centerpiece with cabbage blossoms, radish flowers and striped potato accents before garnishing the arrangement with kale.

"This kind of stuff is something I can do for a job," Hannah said, displaying a basket that 10 minutes ago was a melon.

She's well on her way to do just that. The Crestview High School senior will attend Keiser University's renowned Center for Culinary Arts this fall, having won a $10,000 scholarship to the Tallahassee campus.

She placed first in the Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association Educational Foundation's 14th Annual ProStart culinary competition March 5 and 6 in Orlando.
The result has changed her life, she said.

Hannah planned to attend the University of West Florida for a year, get a job, save money for tuition, transfer to Keiser and eventually open a bakery. With her scholarship, she can start pursuing her culinary arts career a year earlier.

Winning the competition wouldn't surprise Hannah's mom, Julie Sevy, boyfriend Chris Rigney, and brothers Braeden, 12, and Tayler, 20, who frequently benefit from her skills.

"I cook dinner a lot," Hannah said. "My boyfriend's, like, over every night to eat."

"She's pretty darn good," Crestview High culinary arts teacher Paula Knight said. "She worked pretty darn hard to win that scholarship."

Hannah praised Knight and the school's ProStart-accredited program.

"I can't imagine schools that don't have a culinary program at all," Hannah said as she tidied up after creating a melon basket. "It makes me sad. I can't imagine not doing this."

Email News Bulletin Staff Writer Brian Hughes, follow him on Twitter or call 850-682-6524.

Copyright © 2014 http://www.crestviewbulletin.com — All rights reserved. Restricted use only.