

anonymous anonymous
Biddeford
LD 1554

I have been in the food industry for 18 years.

This is also adding culinary school

Since I was a little child, I was always drawn to culinary arts.

I grew up in my grandparents' kitchen, in a house where large amounts of food were cooked every day.

My parents saw that spark in me since early childhood. Fast forward to the time, I was given the opportunity to go overseas and enroll in Culinary Arts in the heart of Europe when I was 19 years old.

The training I was taught was very hard but equal to both genders and thousands of nationalities in one culinary laboratory.

Fast forward the time again; everyone who works in a kitchen dreams of coming to work at least once in their life to the United States because for outsiders, this country represents the ultimate freedom of expression of culinary knowledge. And back in 2011, I became one of those.

My testimony maybe isn't specifically about me directly getting sexually harassed but the culture that has been created in kitchens that if you have been harassed on any level its just expected or the typical "what can you do, you work in a kitchen".

I could say, the closest I have experienced is coworkers talking openly about other staff appearance, sexual orientation and culture without thinking of any consequences that will come out of it.

My objective, by sharing little of my background and childhood dream, is to understand that for some people this isn't just a hobby to work in a kitchen, bakery or bar. It is a job, a profession that should be respected as any other career and a healthy environment should be provided because for a lot of people is the only income they have to live day by day.