

# *Transitioning*

*by Charles Oram*



**Michael Oram**

Michael is now 21, so he has had several transitions over the last 2 or 3 years. Each transition has been a bit scary at first (especially for his parents), but has worked out very well.

The first big transition Michael had was leaving school. He loved school, because after being at the same school for 5 years he knew the staff well and he loved the routine of school. Michael has always enjoyed cooking and wanted to go on to study as a chef and he had done well enough at school to enroll at AUT here in Auckland to do a pastry chef course. This was a one year course that could follow on to other catering courses.

The first big hurdle was that AUT is in the central city and Michael would need to catch a bus to and from school. We went over the bus timetables with him and worked out which buses he needed to catch and which bus stops to use.

Before the course started, Penny caught the bus into the city with Michael to make sure he knew where to go. We were very nervous about Michael going into the city on his own, but he managed fine and soon got used to it. We did occasionally have to pick him up when he had too much of his course work to bring home (usually delicious cakes or other things that he had baked, so well worth the trip!).

The other hurdle was completing the course work. Most weeks the class had a 3 hour assignment in the kitchen where they had 2 or 3 things to prepare. Michael was mostly capable of doing the work, but was just too slow and needed a lot of help from the chef or other students. Having to rush the work and not being able to complete it was stressful for Michael and the chef found he was spending too much time with Michael. Early on in the course they suggested that Michael should change to doing the course as a "certificate of personal interest". This meant that Michael would do all the course work just like the other students, but he didn't have to do the written assignments (unless he wanted to - which he always did), his work wasn't marked, and when they had an assignment in the kitchen instead of trying to prepare all 2 or 3 things that they had been asked to cook, Michael would just do one. This worked wonderfully and Michael was able to continue the course and he absolutely loved it. Attached is a photo of Michael on the final presentation day of the course with some of the beautiful food that he and his classmates prepared. Each time Michael has had a big transition in his life it has been a bit daunting, but we have found that with patience, planning and plenty of help and understanding from the people involved Michael has been able to exceed our expectations.