POOCHES & PASTRIES

We were initially acquaintances, thrown together in a classroom for an introductory course on web development. We came to the table with both professional and personal experiences as well as differing personalities. It came to light, however, that we both had the same goal: build a great website so we could move on to the next phase of the Skills’ competition. We initially floundered around, trying to find our strengths and weaknesses. It didn’t take long for us to find those strengths, which complemented each other in a positive way. We each built different parts of the website, but we discussed those parts and were able to find common ground for a final decision. Some discussions were about minor styling issues, and some discussions were about significant issues and flaws that were found when building our website. Bouncing ideas off each other led us to work together as a team to fix any problems, to be creative individually as well as together, and to find the ability to create a website that we are both satisfied with.

Throughout this learning process, our “acquaintance” status changed to friend status. We learned and grew together because of this project. There was give and take, as well as making compromises, but we built something together allowing our strengths to build upon each other. We both agree that our website would be “less than” if we had built our own versions without working together in any way. We discovered that the creative process can be so much stronger if you can find a way to work as a team. In this case, we found that strength and are excited about our finished product.

TEAM REFLECTIONS

Melissa Mika:

I was a little nervous to work with Tim as this was my first time working collaboratively on a project of this type. Building a website is a unique experience and each creator has their own style and perceptions as to what becomes the “best” website. I was nervous that my experiences and wishes, regarding our shared website creation, would clash with Tim’s perception as to what we should create. Although I approached the process with hesitancy, it was almost immediate that our energized collaboration began. Tim was very approachable and open to listening to my ideas and suggestions. I was also excited to hear his ideas, so we began a “back and forth” exchange that began to collectively build our website. I found that our strengths and weaknesses complemented each other, and we were able to effectively work together. I realize a collaborative project comes with compromises and that is part of what makes a great team. Tim was always receptive to my ideas, but most importantly, he was respectful and helpful. He showed me things I did not know could be done and helped me when I began to struggle with something. I was heard, my feelings validated, and I truly felt part of a team. In addition, I had a lot of fun working with Tim, so the entire experience was very positive. I look forward to working with Tim again!

Timothy Drake:

When I found out that Melissa was looking for a partner, I couldn’t wait for the opportunity to join her team. This is both her first semester in web dev, as well as mine, and so it was with some anxiety that we joined the SkillsUSA competition against people we know are far more advanced than we are.

She was willing to work with me, and so I dove in with tremendous enthusiasm. Like a child in a candy store, I just wanted to get one of everything! Poor Melissa was bombarded with, “We can do *this*, and I can do *that* while *you* do this thing!” She, being of a more pragmatic mindset, helped get me centered without dampening the spirit of the collaboration. That takes talent. Feeling grounded, she provided me with a foundational website, and let me go crazy shaping it. It was like being given a beautiful picture and a paint set and being set free to change it however I wanted. I was inspired to try out different things – fading animations, split-screen flex boxes, linear-gradients. Her constant support made me want to be impressive, and I got as creative as I could while trying to keep everything very professional. She, of course, is the designer. I just built on what she built. I’d send her an update, she’d reshape it so it maintained sanity, and then send it back to me to run with it again. She has provided me with grounding, has been kind and patient with my exuberance, took my wild ideas and shaped them with practicality in mind, and has just been wonderful.