

**Background:**

Starting my own business has always been a dream of mine. Last year, I decided to put in the effort and make it official. On June 13, 2024, I incorporated Bakery23 LLC. Well, I've always loved to bake. It's something I grew up doing with my grandma, and it's a passion that's stuck with me. I wanted to do something different—not just ordinary flavors. My goal was to put unique twists on classic desserts.

For example, I have a spicy cookie that's a brown sugar cookie with red pepper flakes. Another is a sweet potato pie cookie, which tastes just like the Thanksgiving staple. I enjoy experimenting and creating desserts that are both nostalgic and unexpected.

Solution:

The support provided by the Florida SBDC at FIU through the Business Growth and Acceleration Program (BizGap) was exceptional. The BizGap project in FL-27 is funded by a grant from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and focuses on delivering hyperlocal consulting, training, and outreach to small businesses in targeted communities and commercial corridors.

Additionally, the Florida SBDC at FIU, in collaboration with the FIU Chaplin School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, introduced a new training initiative—a 13-webinar series titled “From

Kitchen to Concierge,” which focused on business growth strategies for entrepreneurs in the food industry.

One of the standout workshops was “Start Up, Start Right,” which guided me through essential steps like incorporating my business and effectively marketing myself on Instagram and other social media platforms.

I’ve also gained the confidence to step into bigger environments, such as the Starfield Five events and various networking events in Miami and Broward. This year, I plan to participate in more pop-up events and focus on expanding my brand throughout the city. I now feel much more confident and prepared to showcase my business.

From the Owner:

I have a couple of pieces of advice. First, keep going and believe in yourself. Being an entrepreneur isn’t easy—there are a lot of bumps in the road. Sometimes you’ll be profitable right away, but other times, you might need to rely on a primary job to support your side hustle. Regardless, always give it your all, even when your schedule is busy or when you feel like giving up.

My second piece of advice is to embrace what makes you unique. Your ideas might be different from everyone else’s, and that’s okay. Whether you’re creating something unconventional, like graphic design or unique clothing, there’s a community out there for you. People are drawn to originality, and being different is what will set you apart and help you succeed.

Business Owner Name: JAeysha Napier

Company Name: Bakery23 LLC

Location: Richmond Heights, FL