

Local Entrepreneurs Enjoy Sweet Success



(L-R Rick, Briana, Laura & Jovanna Auhing)

The Baker's Dozen Kolaches and Donuts is owned and operated by Laura Auhing. With the help of her husband Rick, Laura opened the neighborhood donut shop at 23933 Nichols Sawmill Rd. Hockley, TX 77447, in February, 2008.

The stay-at-home mom turned entrepreneur stumbled on the donut industry by accident. In 2001, while looking for a temporary part time job to make a little vacation spending money, Laura noticed an advertisement of a donut shop opening in her neighborhood. She stopped by and applied and when asked what type of experience she had in the food industry, Laura admitted to no food or retail experience. She didn't know how to bake, cook, or work the register, but was eager and willing to learn. Laura was hired and worked for six weeks, the only amount of time she was able to commit. She learned a lot about the business in the short time she worked there and was asked to come back to work when she returned from vacation. Laura initially agreed to return for only six more weeks but ended up staying on longer. Shortly after returning to work, she met the owner who took her on a journey of a lifetime. The owner continued to expand the business and took Laura with her to open new stores. Laura shadowed her and learned everything about opening new stores including licenses, permits, production, inventory, and operations. The six week agreement turned into six years. It was during this time that Laura met her husband Rick and they married in 2002.

In 2007 when her boss sold most of the stores and retired, Laura decided to open her own donut shop. Around the same time Rick's company was moving out of town and he opted to retire and invest his savings into their new family business. Understanding the importance of a good business plan, they immediately got started and sought assistance from the Fort Bend Small Business Development Center (SBDC) in Missouri City. Laura & Rick attended a workshop at the Fort Bend SBDC presented by SBA Business Development Specialist Sonia Maldonado. SBDC consultant Jesus Gomez and program coordinator Christine Collins helped Laura fine tune her business plan. "The SBA and SBDC were extremely helpful. Jesus, Christine and Sonia were very helpful and provided me with a lot of useful information," said Laura. Equipped with the knowledge, skills, and a good business plan, Laura and Rick were ready for their next step, getting a bank loan. They were approved for an SBA community express program loan for \$50,000 through Borrego Springs Bank.

"Starting and running a business is hard work. Allow a lot of time to prepare a good business plan and invest in a business that you know really well," advised Rick. Both Rick and Laura are hands on business owners and are involved in the daily operations. With that comes a sacrifice of family time. Although their daughters Briana & Jovanna

come out to help sometimes on the weekends, they haven't taken a family vacation together since they've been open. Laura already has her goals set on a new venture. She wants to eventually own a shopping center so that she doesn't have to work the long hours at the donut shop and have more time for family.

Laura & Rick recall how hard they worked the first year. In addition to the grand opening, Hurricane Ike also made 2008 a very memorable year for them. In September when the media warned the locals of Hurricane Ike, Rick and Laura heeded all the warnings and prepared for the storm. They purchased a generator and double ordered everything for the store. On the day the hurricane came onto the Texas shore, they doubled their production and moved into the store. Many people in the area lost power overnight and the next morning people were knocking on their doors at 5am. They made donuts round the clock and stayed at the store for two weeks. They were tired and exhausted but continued to stay open to help their community. Their hard work paid off when their sales exceeded their projections in the first year. These two business savvy owners buy everything in cash and when the recession hit they were able to adjust without much difficulty.

In early 2011, Rick and Laura were ready to start a second location and once again sought the help of the Ft. Bend County SBDC. In August 2011, Rick and Laura opened their second location in Magnolia, Texas with another SBA loan through Members Choice Credit Union.

For more information on The Baker's Dozen, visit one of their locations at 23933 Nichols Sawmill Rd. in Hockley, Texas or at 30326 Nicholls Sawmill Rd., Ste. 101 in Magnolia, Texas. You can also find them on Facebook under Baker's Dozen. More information about the SBA and SBDC's programs and service can be found at www.sba.gov and www.sbdc.uh.edu.