

Bakery is Gallup's first to RISE

Written by By Holly J. Wagner Sun Correspondent
Friday, 09 September 2022 02:46



I Knead Sugar bakery, Farmington school win technology Comcast grant

It's appropriate that a bakery would be Gallup's first winner of a RISE award.

Comcast launched the business development program during the pandemic to help small minority-owned businesses with marketing or technology help. Winning applicants may qualify for creative production and marketing services or a technology makeover, free with the possible exception of taxes and other fees.

Jacqueline Ahasteen thought her chances were pretty good last year when the program was extended to women-owned businesses, so she applied. She learned in July that her bakery, I Knead Sugar, had won a technology makeover package to take her sweet dream to the next level. The award includes computer equipment and Internet, voice and cybersecurity services from Comcast Business for 12 months.

Ahasteen has been baking since she was a teenager. After a career in computer engineering, she decided to follow her dream six years ago and opened I Knead Sugar.

"I decided to quit and start my own business because I'm not getting any younger. I had a dream to do it since I was a little girl," she said.

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When the old Gurley Locksmith building at 118 Boardman Ave. came available, she made the leap. It was a bit bigger than she first expected. Converting the building to a bakery meant a lot of renovations.

“Our equipment sat here for a whole year. We ordered it and shipped it with me thinking ‘we can finish this in a couple of days.’ It didn’t happen that way,” she said. “We had a lot of things we had to adjust here. It took us about a year to do the renovations.”

Business has been good, and the technology package will help manage her expanding business. She recently opened I Knead Sugar Tea Shop next door, where she sells loose tea, hosts princess parties and other events. She’s hosted cupcake happy hours, a cake decorating competition and a wedding expo, and she participates in Arts Crawl.

FARMINGTON SCHOOL ALSO WINS

Barbara Tedrow has been running accredited early childhood schools in Farmington for 22 years.

She and her husband started A Gold Star Academy with one school, seven staff and 65 students. Now she has three schools with 55 employees and 375 youngsters and is about to open her fourth school, so winning a RISE media package is just what she needed to attract faculty and 145 students for the new school.

The grant opportunity came up just in time.

“My teachers have to have associates’ and bachelor’s degrees,” she said. “Due to the cost of staffing, this award is going to do wonders. It’s helping us to get out there that we’re looking for teachers and students.”

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Tedrow said she really appreciated the way Comcast was giving back to companies after COVID.

"I thought, I love the way that Comcast was trying to get companies back after COVID and give opportunities to businesses that survived," she said.

A Gold Star Academy stayed open during the pandemic, but had to reduce services because restrictions cut classroom capacity from 20 students to five. Now she's ready to move forward. "I think we are going to lean toward the expansion. We're coming back stronger for Farmington and San Juan County."

RISE is open to businesses that are independently owned and operated (not franchised); at least 51% owned and operated by someone who identifies as Black, Indigenous, a person of color or female; registered to conduct business in the United States; has been operating for at least a year; and is within the Comcast Business or effective service area footprint.

The current application cycle is open until Oct. 14. Applications are available at <https://www.comcastrise.com/rise-apply/>

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