



Treasure Breads, Inc – Illinois SBDC at Waubonsee

Geneva Pedersen started Treasure Breads in 2007, essentially by accident. She wanted to teach her son Calvin, aged three at the time, about helping children in need. So, they baked a few loaves of sweet bread, sold them at a neighborhood garage sale, and donated the proceeds. End of story...



Except, it wasn't. Shortly after the garage sale, she started getting calls from people who had purchased her bread asking where they could buy more. That was the beginning of Treasure Breads - a small business offering a delectable assortment of gourmet sweet breads for fundraisers, business gifting, or purchase on-line or at area farmers markets.

Geneva (and Calvin) decided to give the recipes a try at the Yorkville farmers market, where she gained an immediate following, selling 30-50 loaves every week. Calvin's preschool soon asked Geneva if they could do a fundraiser with the breads, and Treasure Breads found its first true niche! Word began to spread, and local scouting organizations, music groups and sports teams readily took to selling Treasure Bread to support their organizations.

A few years later, Geneva's sister, Rena, had just graduated from DePaul College of Law. While waiting for the results of her BAR exam, she started helping Geneva in the business. By the time she learned that she had passed the BAR, she was already hooked on entrepreneurship and decided to stay with the business. By the end of 2014, they were baking 180 loaves per week at the kitchen in Chapel on the Green in Yorkville.

Geneva and Rena were referred to the IL Small Business Development Center at Waubonsee in February, 2015, after telling a friend they felt they had grown the business as far as they were able. They had started to investigate contract baking, but weren't sure how they should move forward.

Working with the SBDC, they were able to evaluate their numbers, implement QuickBooks, negotiate pricing with a contract baker, TF Processors in Elk Grove Village, and put a growth plan in place. By September, they were baking 1200 loaves of bread each month.

"Growing Treasure Breads continues to be an amazing adventure," stated Geneva. "Each small step has been important, and we feel that each day is another opportunity to make a difference



in the world with our product. Owning a business can seem all consuming at times, and as soon as we sat down with Harriet Parker, our SBDC business advisor, we felt supported and encouraged to continue following our dream. The SBDC has provided us with a perspective that we could not get from inside the business. Harriet keeps us on track and continually brings us back to doing the next right thing."



In October, after several baking trials to perfect the recipe and the packaging, Geneva and Rena switched all baking operations over to their contract bakers and formally launched their business gifting program. In 2016, they started marketing to hospital gift shops, and are currently

on track to triple their revenue for 2016.

As a testimony to the quality and "delicious-ness" of the Treasure Breads product, one financial advisor, after sending loaves to all of his clients, reported that 80% of his clients called him to comment on how great it was - a tremendous return on his investment!!

You can find Treasure Breads online at <http://www.treasurebreadsinc.com>