

wise

WOMEN IGNITING THE SPIRIT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

FEATURED ENTREPRENEUR

Charlene Echols-Barnes
Owner, Echols Gourmet Wholesale Desserts

For her entire life, owning and running a bakery was a family dream. For a natural baker and trained gourmet chef, Charlene Echols-Barnes found her passion in desserts. Originally working for a large corporation, her vision remained a dream. Due to corporate downsizing which upset her comfort zone and caused a series of undesired inner-company relocations, she decided to redirect her career.

Opening a retail store didn't work with a full-time job, so Charlene opted to pursue the wholesale industry for her baked goods. After work hours, she would bake samples and visit restaurants to sell her delicious, homemade confections. Business was soon booming. Unable to keep up with the demand and variety of products offered (or catch up on sleep), she decided to limit her supply to only a few products such as her famous pound cake. After testing recipes for caramel corn on a whim, she had

discovered her new signature specialty. Sales of the caramel corn skyrocketed and current clients include the Carrier Dome at SU, local supermarkets, and CNY distributor Deli-Boy. "Seeing your product on the shelf makes you proud—especially when you spend a lot of sleepless nights to get it there," notes Echols-Barnes.

To this day, she still makes each and every batch of caramel corn by hand. "I never envisioned caramel corn to be my niche... but I love it!" she remarks. Echols-Barnes' next step is to find a manufacturer to help her keep up with the high demand for her product and distribute nationally.

Although not intending to become a wholesaler specializing in one item, she has evolved her business model and welcomes changes that push her to that next step. "Be ready for the unknown to happen," notes Echols-Barnes. "Business never works out as planned."



wise words of wisdom...

"Knowledge is power. Learn all you can about what it is that you want to do."

– Charlene Echols-Barnes

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WISE HAPPENINGS:

The Bare Necessities of Starting a Business

WHEN: August 29, 5:30 – 7:00PM
WHERE: WISE Women's Business Center
You are unique! And so is your business idea! But how can you translate all of that into a business?

WISE Launch Hours

WHEN: August 9, 12:00 – 1:30PM
WHERE: WISE Women's Business Center
Hear how women entrepreneurs are launching their businesses to new heights! Bring your Brown Bag Lunch and hear our highlighted speaker!

WISE – WBOC in the House

WHEN: August 2, 16, 12:00 – 1:30PM
WHERE: WISE Women's Business Center
WBOC (Women Business Opportunities Connections) is full of professionals ready to share their company secrets for growth! Bring your lunch and listen to a volunteer speaker ready to share her amazing stories!

Dress for Success, presenter Ann Marie Stonecypher

WHEN: August 13, 6:00 – 8:00PM
WHERE: WISE Women's Business Center
Fashion consultant and style designer, Ann Marie will share fashion rules to make and those to break in this fun session for busy business women.

A women's business center... run for women, by women.

WISE Women's Business Center // 2610 South Salina Street // Syracuse, NY 13205 // (315) 443-8634 // jmlenwea@syr.edu

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A PROGRAM OF THE FALCONE CENTER FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP AT SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

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