

Business name - Sweet Poppin's LLC
First and last name of client - Tashia Johnson-St.Clair
Job title - Owner
Business address - 107 E Sycamore Kokomo, IN 46901
Website address - www.sweetpoppins.com
County - Howard
Date business established - December 2005
Type of business - Manufacturing and retail sales for gourmet flavored chocolate covered popcorn
Number of employees - 9
First visit to SBDC - 12/01/2005
SBDC counselor - Monty Henderson/Kathy Rogers/Heather Clark-Reynolds



The assistance requested of the SBDC - I initially went to the SBDC to see about grants for small businesses. I am a Black female and Veteran so I knew there would be something somewhere.

The assistance and help the SBDC provided - I ended up getting more than what I asked for. I didn't get the grants but I received a wealth of information on starting a business. I attended a financing seminar where they had many bankers from the area come and tell us the difference between their banks and what it took to qualify for a loan. They answered the many questions we had and it ended up being very educational. All of the seminars they hold are great for anyone who is planning to go into business for themselves. One day, Kathy and I were talking about legal issues and she asked me if I had an attorney. I told her I did but he was very expensive and I didn't know if I could afford the bill I would receive him to read over a contract that I was working with a vendor on. She said the SBDC has access to an SBDC advisor that could assist me with some of my legal concerns. I drove to Purdue to meet with Heather and she has helped me read over contracts for clarification and to prevent misunderstandings and bad business deals. Heather is very professional and gave me good direction.

When I needed copies of the many pages of information for my certification application, Ruth and Kathy were available to help me again. Monty is very knowledgeable in his field. He's helped me with cost analysis, cost of goods, cash flow projections etc.

I was involved in the Collegiate Management Program with Kathy Rogers and the IUK students. The students came up with a concept of using my waste product as Ice Cream toppings. I adopted their suggestion and it is now another product that I can offer my customers. The students also worked with me on a Break/Even Analysis. This helped me identify and determine what my costs are and how many of each product I need to sell to make a profit. I would recommend the Collegiate Management Program to anyone in business!

Every time I call or go into the office, they are always happy to see me (and vice versa) and always willing to help me.

Results/impacts - The Kokomo SBDC truly believes in what I am doing and as stated before, they are always willing to help. Because of them, my business is going to new heights. As pictured above, this was taken at the Gala at the Kentucky Derby. I was invited to place my products in the bags at the Gala as giveaways. This event opened many doors as the other people seated at the same table was a huge marketing firm and is interested in my product. This summer, my product is being sent out to celebrities all over the US. Sweet Poppin's will be in gift bags in Chicago, Atlanta Georgia (twice) and California. The popcorn will also be in a movie

coming out in the fall. I don't know what other new or continuing services I will need but I know where to go to find the help and support. I always refer others who are starting a business to start with the SBDC first. They can help save time and especially money, when it comes to their services. Whoever hired Kathy, Monty and Ruth to run the SBDC, KNEW what they were doing! They are awesome people.