

Other Foods Kitchen Offers a Place to Mass Produce Your Eats



**Michael
Donahue**



9:01 a.m. Oct. 29,
2019

Your cozy kitchen probably isn't going to cut it if you want to mass produce your mom's famous oatmeal cookies and sell them to

grocery stores or restaurants. Plus, the kitchen needs to be certified by the Department of Agriculture.

Other Foods Kitchen, a shared, commercial Department of Agriculture-certified kitchen at 1249 Heistan Place off Bellevue near Lamar, can solve your problem, says CEO Steve Cantor. “We have a 24-hour facility that can handle up to six groups at a time. You just rent it by the hour.”

On a recent Friday, the kitchen was bustling with people slicing, dicing, and preparing food to be sold to the public. They have “regularly scheduled” people, whom they call “members,” who make food at designated times each week. “We’re up to 16 members now, and we’re growing,” Cantor says.



Michael Donahue

Other Foods’ Richard McCracken, Steve Cantor, and Evan Katz

The 5,000-square-foot space is a fully equipped commercial kitchen. “We have four convection ovens, 16 stove top burners. We have grills, all kinds of mixers, prep tables, coolers ... pots and pans and utensils.”

People can use the walk-in cooler, but, Cantor says, “We’re not a warehouse. You come in and you make it and you sell it. It’s gone.”

This began three years ago with Benefizz, a probiotic beverage developed by Cantor. He came up with the low-sugar drink recipe in the kitchen at Otherlands Coffee Bar, where he and his wife, Karen Lebovitz, are owners. He now sells Benefizz, which comes in ginger, cranberry, and lemon flavors, at 21 locations, including grocery stores and cafes, in Memphis and Nashville.”

After he outgrew the Otherlands kitchen, Cantor found other like-minded food makers and moved into a building on Madison.

When they outgrew that space, Rick Hechinger, one of their investors, told them about a building he owned next to his business, Blue Sky Couriers. “Literally, within a month of that conversation we started building it out,” Cantor says. “And two months ago we opened the doors.”



Rental price typically is \$13 an hour.

Long-range plans include adding another building. “We would want to keep this facility and open another facility that could be very similar,” he says.

Richard and Molly McCracken needed more space for their business, Amplified Meal Prep, which Richard describes as “healthy comfort food.” They also make custom meals, which they deliver on Sundays.

They outgrew the Madison kitchen. “When we hit about 800 meals a week, that’s when we knew we needed to go somewhere ASAP,” Richard says. “Right now we’re about 1,300 meals a week.”

Richard, who also is kitchen manager for Other Foods Kitchen, likes the open floor plan. “When we designed it, we wanted to make it use-able,” he says. “Where more than one resident could be in there at one time.”

Dave Scott, who sells his Dave’s Bagels products to restaurants and other businesses, works about five hours a day, four days a

week at Other Foods Kitchen. “I do all of my production and storage over there,” Scott says. “I do anywhere from 1,500 to about 2,000 bagels a week. And I do somewhere between 400 and 600 pretzels, hot dog buns, and pretzel hot dog buns. I brought in all of my manufacturing equipment, and I use the Other Foods’ ovens and stove top.”

Other Foods Kitchen is beneficial for novice cooks, Scott says. “I love that it gives young and starting entrepreneurs the chance to give their dreams a shot without the super-high financial commitment of buying your own commercial space or signing up for a lease you’re not sure you’re able to afford in six months if your idea doesn’t work out.”

It’s a “business incubator,” he adds. “It gives people enough time to test their food ideas and gives you some room to grow while you’re figuring all that out.”

Visit otherfoodskitchen.com for more information.

Support the Memphis Flyer

The Memphis Flyer is Memphis’ alternative newsweekly, serving the metro Memphis area of nearly a million residents. The Flyer was started in 1989 by Contemporary Media, Inc., the locally owned publishers of Memphis magazine. For over 30 years, The Memphis Flyer has hit the streets every Wednesday morning with a blend of serious hard news and Memphis’ best entertainment coverage.

[Subscribe to our newsletter](#)