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FOOD & LIFESTYLE

What's cooking at OtherFoods Kitchen



OtherFoods Kitchen's Memphis Gourmet Box
PACKET ADVENTURES

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"It was one of those businesses where you stumble into as far as realizing there's a need," said Evan Katz of the genesis of OtherFoods Kitchen.

It started because Steve Cantor, founder of Benefizz, needed a bigger space to make his line of kombucha drinks.

"To help keep the lights on, we started subletting it very casually to a couple of food groups in the city in the same boat," Katz said. "Renting your own space is super expensive for a small group. Then, one day we just kind of woke up and we're like, oh, wow, there's a whole 'nother business."

OtherFoods Kitchen, a commercial kitchen, moved into its current space at 1249 Heistan Place about a year ago. Katz – who is an employee of Southern Growth Studio – serves as OtherFoods CEO and co-owns the space with Cantor.

Currently, about 20 groups use the kitchen weekly – some for four hours a week, some for 30, said Katz. Rent is between \$11 and \$15 an hour.

Among the businesses currently using OtherFoods are Goodness Gracious Cookies, Lulu's Bakery, The Picky Farmer Baby Foods, Miss Sandie's Gluten-Free Cookies, Dave's Bagels, and Feast and Graze.

"The whole kitchen is very scheduled," Katz said. "We're very intentional about the times that people come in [because] the equipment is shared."

Katz said that OtherFoods is not an incubator.

"Typically those have a lot more services than just renting space," Katz explained. "They're actually doing coaching on how to run a business, providing funding. I would compare us more to a co-working space. Of course, there's a lot of informal coaching and great collaboration between our members. We can often offer advice, but we don't have a formal program as far as we're going to help you take your business from A to Z."

OtherFoods recently introduced its [Memphis Gourmet Box](#). They've sold about 150 boxes.

"When the pandemic hit, we saw a lot of our smaller groups find that all their typical distribution channels were either inactive or Incredibly disrupted," he said. "It was, of course, not great for us either. And so, we were thinking about ways

that we could do something with the relationships that we had with these groups."

The box features a sampling of products from OtherFoods' vendors – a couple of bagels from Dave's Bagels, a mini bundt from Mama Pug's, a loaf of bread from Lulu's – as well as other local food brands, such as Wolf River Popcorn and My Cup of Tea.

A one-time gift-box is \$45. There is now a monthly subscription available as well. It's \$35 per month.

Katz said the boxes are all about promoting their vendors.

"With these new boxes, we're going to make sure to include brochures from the individual vendors – anything that they want to talk about themselves and their food – and make sure it's really easy for people to find that group online and figure out how they can get more of their stuff," he said.

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