



OLD WORLD GLUTEN-FREE



Owner Alicia Bemiss



Alicia Bemiss' middle child was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes at the age of twelve and one month later was confirmed with Celiac Disease.

His first two comments were that he would never be able to drink beer when he was old enough, and he would never be able to have pierogi again. As the daughter of Polish immigrants, Alicia's children had been to Poland and eaten pierogi there so she knew that she had to do something about her son's request to find a way to make gluten-free pierogi. She battled with different flours and different ingredients for nine months and when her son Charley and the rest of our family tried the final batch of test pierogi, they all agreed that she had to sell these and help other people like Charley.

Alicia and her husband began to research all aspects of creating a business and built a dedicated gluten-free commercial kitchen in a building they own for his carpet cleaning business. Alicia went to New York to check out a pierogi making machine that she found on the internet, purchased it, and, by September of 2013, was ready to debut at the St. Clair Shores Made in Michigan Market. The response was tremendous, so she decided to try her luck at the Making It in Michigan Trade Show. She had only been selling for two months when she won the "Next SKU Could Be You" Award with Westborn Markets that year.

Along with the award and a news story on WDIV's Good Health Reports, her distribution got a kick start. After many emails, calls, and demos for buyers and managers, Old World Gluten-Free Pierogi can now be found in Westborn Markets, Plum Markets, Busch's Fresh Markets, Randazzo Fresh Markets, Whole Foods and other southwest Michigan grocers.

The pierogi are made fresh and also sold in the commercial kitchen in St. Clair Shores. Alicia is currently hoping to distribute the pierogi out of state.

"The exposure and product placement award at the Making It In Michigan trade show was invaluable in helping us get our product to retail," states Alicia Bemiss. "My husband and I continue to learn a lot from the many different educational sessions we have attended during this event in the last 3 years."

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