

Clean Eats Kitchen

Eating Healthy; everybody wants to do it but nobody does it enough. And preparing those healthy meals every day isn't easy, not for families or for singles. Jodee Soltes faced both challenges. Her son had special dietary needs which she had to address. And managing a family while building a second career as a Palm Coast high school teacher made time of the essence. Jodee Soltes found an answer. And then she decided to share it.



JODEE & JOE SOLTES

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Together with her son Joe, a soon-to-be culinary arts graduate, she developed a business idea: a full service prep kitchen, sourcing local, fresh, whole foods, built on a passion for a healthy lifestyle and dedicated to using food as not only enjoyment, but as a type of medicine. Offering three different meal plans – Light, Traditional and Athlete – with a wide ranging menu appealing to all tastes, as well as a Grab 'N Go option, Soltes believed she had a winning business proposition that would serve the Flagler County community she loves: Clean Eats Kitchen.

But a great business idea is one thing; how to start a business is a second. That's when Jodee Soltes turned to the Florida Small Business Development Center at UCF (FSBDC at UCF). "I needed help," she recalls. "I felt like I had no clue about what to do. But I did know there was help out there, at the FSBDC."

Soltes turned to the local FSBDC in Flagler County and consultant Mike Oppenheim for its no-cost, expert consulting services and access to broad, in-depth market research resources. They started with the basics and then they used the FSBDC's access to market information to research the opportunity.

"We needed to develop a financial plan to prove the concept," says Oppenheim. "We needed to make sure her vision worked. We did the necessary market research. In my four years at the Florida SBDC, no client has done more or better preparation and market research before diving into the pool. It all laid the groundwork for a winning Clean Eats Kitchen business plan."

Since starting their work with the FSBDC and consultant Oppenheim, the mother-son team of Jodee and Joe Soltes and Clean Eats Kitchen has had a whirlwind of success. With the help of the FSBDC, they found an excellent Palm Coast location; got the city permits and approvals they needed; obtained a loan from a local bank (never an easy thing for any start-up business); set up the store front and kitchen; and opened their doors in March 2019.

Clean East Kitchen: "The Easy Way to Eat Clean" goes their slogan. And since opening, business has been good as the health conscious of Flagler County have found and started using this great, new source of eating well and eating smart.

"It was fantastic working with the FSBDC," concluded Jodee Soltes. "I absolutely couldn't have done it without them and their support. They are an invaluable resource to entrepreneurs and small business owners."

Providing the tools, strategies, and expertise to help Florida's business community thrive.

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