



# ENERGIZING ENTREPRENEURIAL COMMUNITIES

## A Pathway to Prosperity



Source: *Entrepreneurs in Action* newsletter, provided by [Rural Action](#)

## Sunflower Bakery Plants Seeds in Nelsonville Local Economy

November 14th, 2018 marks the day that Nelsonville, Ohio welcomed its most recent storefront addition to its Public Square: The Sunflower Bakery. While there were already several amazing places to grab a bite to eat in Nelsonville, the Sunflower Bakery fit in nicely and was quickly accepted by the community with open arms (and hungry mouths)!



Owner Liz Florentino has worked in the food industry as a chef and baker for over 20 years, but she had never been a businesswoman. Liz was happy to admit that while she did have to put in most of the effort for opening up her shop, she had a lot of help, too. Specifically, she credits Ohio University's Small Business Development Center for guiding her through the many required steps of turning her idea into a reality, her friends and family for donating their time and loaning her money, and Ohio University Credit Union for helping her fix her credit to be eligible for a loan.

She also shared that, while she was overwhelmed with support, there were plenty of frustrations that she experienced during the process. There were many hoops that she had to jump through with the state and county health departments, fees that she had to pay, and complications with the old building that she rents for her shop space. Thankfully, there were enough people—including her own strong-willed self—who cared about her, her business, and the local economy to help get her through all of it.

These days, Liz is proud to serve up for the community baked goods that she makes from scratch, and, as often as possible, with organic, fair-trade, and non-GMO ingredients from local growers and producers. She has also recently taken Rural Action's Zero Waste Pledge, in which she has committed to educating her customers on the importance of reusable food containers, proper recycling and composting, and minimizing the use of virgin plastic.



She also cares about how her business has impacted the community. Many friendships have been formed in her bakery, especially with local residents and other business owners. She credits the family-owned quilt store on the opposite side of the square with being one of her biggest cheerleaders and coming in everyday, even just to say hi. It is exciting for her to feel like she has positively impacted Nelsonville, and that other people enjoy the presence of her and her store.

Next time you're in Nelsonville, be sure to stop in for a treat and meet Liz.

