



Goodwill
Southwest Florida 

Robert & Rebecca Dussman Gulf Shore Bakery

SWFL MicroEnterprise Program
Graduates

Robert & Rebecca Dussman first met nearly two decades ago while working in a grocery store bakery. It only seems logical that the two of them would eventually open their own bakery.

"We've both been in the industry for more than 20 years," says Rebecca. "Even when we had other jobs, we were still making cakes out of our home. We realized that we really should be doing this full-time."

The nudge they needed came when a friend referred them to the SWFL MicroEnterprise project, a Goodwill program that provides hopeful small business owners with the training they need to write a business plan and start their own businesses.

The Dussmans signed up for the classes in summer 2011 and set their sights on purchasing Gulf Shore Bakery, an established retail and wholesale bakery in Fort Myers.

Today, as Gulf Shore Bakery's new owners, they operate a full-service bakery, selling pastries, breads, and cookies to walk-in customers and providing wholesale breads to local restaurants. Their long-term plans include expanding the bakery's retail offerings, in particular their special occasion cakes, which have earned rave reviews at wedding shows and parties across Southwest Florida.

Employing nine workers hasn't been easy in the slow summer months, but the Dussmans are expecting that business will pick up once season returns in the fall. They're confident that their MicroEnterprise training has prepared them for the ups and downs of business ownership.

"The MicroEnterprise classes really showed us what to do and how to do it," says Rebecca. "When we applied for a loan from the bank, the vice president of the loan department said our business plan was the best he'd ever seen, and that was the first one we'd ever done!"

"We couldn't have gotten the business without the loan, and we couldn't have gotten the loan without the business plan and without Goodwill."



Gulf Shore Bakery was asked to bake a very special cake in celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Hodges Funeral Home

Robert and Rebecca Dussman are two of Goodwill's 87 total SWFL MicroEnterprise graduates (through Sept. 2012).

The program has sparked 29 small business startups, and 46 graduates are now successfully operating small businesses.

 **SWFL MICRO
ENTERPRISE**

www.goodwillswfl.org/microenterprise

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