



COMMUNITY FOOD HALL & BUSINESS INCUBATOR

a project of Mandela Partners

The Ashland Market & Café is a vibrant food business incubator, providing retail opportunities for community entrepreneurs to market and sell food products. A project of Mandela Partners, in partnership with Resources for Community Development (RCD) and the Alameda County Economic Development Agency, the Market & Cafe is home to four local food businesses and serves as a community gathering space.

The 2019 inaugural vendors are:

I AM Café
Thank Que Grill
Jacquelynn's Heart & Soul
Andrea Marie Custom Cakes & Treats

THE CONCEPT

The concept behind the Ashland Market & Cafe was developed through a community engagement process that sought to increase access to food and economic opportunity through resident-led decision making. Mandela Partners' model pivots away from development that promotes expansion of corporate chains, and instead uplifts local assets, and creates tangible economic opportunities for community residents and local businesses.

"To have my own restaurant on the corner of where I grew up, it's a dream"
Jacquelynn Chancellor, co-owner of Jacquelynn's Heart & Soul
and resident of Ashland Village

By partnering with affordable housing developer, Resources for Community Development, and the Alameda County Economic Development Agency, Mandela Partners was able to activate an affordable retail opportunity that will support local entrepreneurship and build wealth in unincorporated Alameda County.



Original Concept Design



2019 INAUGURAL VENDORS



I AM CAFE

A place to exhale, when life gets you uptight

The I AM cafe is a socially responsible cafe that provides delicious to-go lunch items, breakfast pastries, quality beverages, and a comfortable space where community members can relax. The I AM CAFÉ offers quality flavored coffees and fresh drinks, breakfast and lunch options, extraordinary desserts, corporate catering/meeting service, meal prep services, and pre-ordered family dinners.



JACQUELYNN'S HEART & SOUL

Bringing the community together with heart warming, quality and affordable soul food.

Jacquelynn's Heart & Soul prides itself on being the healthiest choice & the fairest cost soul food restaurant in the Bay Area. Our produce comes from local, sustainable farms and gardens to make sure your food is the freshest. Both owners Jacquelynn Chancellor and Latoya Bryant grew up in the area, and are excited to be working in the community.



THANK QUE GRILL

Say "Thank You" with Thank Que Grill.

Thank Que Grill wants to give fellow Filipino people a tasty reminder of home and introduce the delicious flavors of the Philippines to the wider community. Thank Que Grill provides the best way to show your gratitude to family members, friends, employees, current clientele or potential clients you want to impress - appreciation through tasty filipino food for all of their hard work, dedication, and support.



ANDREA MARIE CUSTOM CAKES & TREATS

Enjoy a sweet treat at Andrea Marie Custom Cakes and Treats.

Andrea Marie offers tasty custom cakes & treats for special occasions such as birthdays, weddings, and baby showers at an affordable price, with vegan and gluten-free options. In addition to providing a comfortable space to enjoy a sweet treat, you can also enjoy a fresh, healthy smoothie at the beautiful Ashland Market & Cafe.



PHASE ONE – COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Mandela Partners worked with local leadership and various community groups to engage in listening sessions, conduct surveys, and collect personal accounts centered around food access and economic opportunity in unincorporated Alameda County. Once the 'food hall' concept took shape, additional feedback was gathered to ensure that the businesses selected would be responsive to the identified community needs regarding prepared food offerings.



Community members meet to discuss which entrepreneurs they'd like to see in the space.

"There's nothing to eat in the neighborhood but fast food; to have real food, choices, variety, that's the Ashland Market & Cafe"

Latoya Bryant, co owner of Jacquelynn's Heart & Soul and resident of Ashland Village

PHASE TWO – SELECTING LOCAL ENTREPRENEURS



Jacquelynn Chancellor interviewing for the inaugural class of Ashland Market & Cafe

A Community Advisory Committee was assembled, consisting of 12 community members that had been an integral part of the community engagement process. The Committee reviewed community feedback results and was tasked with interviewing, assessing, and selecting candidates guided by information gathered through community surveys and a personal understanding of neighborhood needs. Mandela Partners co-led outreach efforts to ensure that local entrepreneurs were aware of the opportunity.

Ultimately the inaugural class was chosen based on community fit, interview performance, food taste, and presentation.

"I first saw the opportunity on the community board of the building I live in. At first it was scary, but I thought this is an opportunity to show people who I am"

Andrea Marie, owner of AndreaMarie Cakes & Treats and Ashland Place resident





PHASE THREE – BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Once the Ashland Market & Café entrepreneur selection process was completed, selected entrepreneurs along with other community businesses, were invited to attend a Basic Business Development training series led in partnership with Centro Community Partners. The workshop series gave entrepreneurs the time and resources to build a basic business plan and development their food business concept. After completing the workshop series, the Ashland Market & Cafe vendors moved into one-on-one advising and culinary development programming made available through Mandela Partners.



LaShawn Raybon of I AM Cafe pitches her new business concept to classmates

“The incubation process is made easier because Mandela is there to guide us and bounce off ideas, brainstorm together”

Rene Lontoc, owner of Thank Que Grill



Rene Lontoc preps Filipino bahn mi's during commercial kitchen hours

Mandela Partners hosted a series of culinary development workshops, trainings, experiential learning modules, as well as free open kitchen hours - with kitchen space made available by the Hayward Area Parks & Recreation District - which allowed entrepreneurs to develop recipes with expert help from Bay Area restaurant consultant Marcella Lew.

“The process allowed for us to put ‘pen to paper’ and actually go from just hustling, to having the confidence to say ‘I own a business’. [We] think on a broader scale and are given the measure of growth from kitchen to a retail space. We have more at stake now.”

LaShawn Raybon, owner of I AM Cafe





PHASE FOUR – POP UPS & GRAND OPENING

The Ashland Market & Cafe vendors also engaged in pop-up events throughout the community, gathered customer feedback regarding their planned menus, and continued to perfect offerings in preparation for the grand opening of the new space.

The long-term goal of the Ashland Market & Cafe project is to provide an opportunity for local food entrepreneurs to grow into full-service retail spaces that contribute to neighborhood revitalization efforts.



Jacquelynn Chancellor & Latoya Bryant of Jacquelynn's Heart & Soul at the Heritage and Diversity festival at Hayward Senior Center.

“Pushing everything out and getting responses made it real. People really like our food, want our food, and there’s a demand for it. [We know] how to talk to customers, what to expect with a rush, timing, when things mess up, and how to troubleshoot and fix them.”

Jacquelynn Chancellor, co-owner of Jacquelynn's Heart & Soul



Andrea Marie Scott showcases her cakes and sweets at a pop up at Ashland Place.

The Ashland Market & Cafe serves as an example of Mandela Partners' model of sustainable, local development, driven by community residents - the real experts on neighborhood needs.

Though projects like The Ashland Market & Cafe, Mandela Partners develops and promotes new models for investment, growth, and shared wealth that sustain and elevate community ownership, opportunity and health.