



Illinois Metro East SBDC supports PinMe Organics' Gourmet Mushrooms

by Doug McIlhagga

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EDWARDSVILLE - PinMe Organics owner Maracus Scott started his PinMe Organics mushroom business as a hobby just a few short months ago. It grew rapidly and now has a promising future with help from the Illinois Small Business Development Center (SBDC) for the Metro East at Southern Illinois University of Edwardsville.

Scott works at SIUE in Information Technology Services. Capitalizing on his on-campus network, he contacted the SBDC for assistance. SBDC Business Specialist Marti Guntren offered one-on-one, no-cost counseling sessions to him.

“It is a pleasure working with Maracus,” Guntren said. “He had a great concept and had already done much of his homework on the mushroom business before he came to see us. He has a clear vision of his business, and we were able to discuss the moving parts of operating a business in Illinois. Together, we have worked to smoothly transition his business concept to ongoing production.”

Scott has been selling Pink Oyster mushrooms privately and at local farmers markets. Recently, his business notched a few milestones. Within weeks of being up and running, Scott was able to land his first customer, a high-end restaurant in Edwardsville. With the good news about the future of his business, Scott was in urgent need of guidance from Guntren and the SBDC.

When how he got into growing mushrooms, Scott said that his “first love was science.” He wanted to be a microbiologist, but then discovered his love for computers and has been working in the technology field for 12 years.

Scott says, “Growing mushrooms, I get to combine science and technology into one.” He knew that this was his calling after the positive feedback regarding his mushrooms.

“Growing your own mushrooms in-home is quite a complex process,” Scott says. “You need to be able to control the temperature, humidity, safety and decontamination process, air flow, and level of carbon dioxide for each type of mushroom. The time to create the perfect environment for each variety of mushroom takes a lot of love and patience.”

Scott’s wife, Mitoshia, has the proverbial “green thumb,” and loves gardening and growing foods. Helping his wife maintain their garden inspired him to look at mushroom cultivation. He soon realized a viable business need in the area.

Being able to grow and provide food for others is what drives the Scotts’ passion and determination to see PinMe Organics thrive in the Metro East.

Scott is currently growing Pink Oysters mushrooms and will be focused on the oyster mushroom family. In the coming months, his goal is to add Shiitake and Blue Oyster mushrooms to his inventory. He also wants to add a few other types of mushrooms to his collection, such as Lion Manes, Chestnut and Golden Oysters.

For more information, visit PinMe Organics’ [Facebook Page](#). PinMe Organics can be contacted at sales@pinmeorganics.com.

The Illinois SBDC for the Metro East assists start-up ventures like PinMe Organics as well as existing businesses headquartered in the nine-county region of Calhoun, Jersey, Madison, Bond, Clinton, St. Clair, Washington, Monroe and Randolph. It is funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, and [SIUE](#) as a service to Illinois small businesses.

By aiding entrepreneurs and companies in defining their path to success, the SBDC network positively impacts the Metro East by strengthening the business community, creating and retaining new jobs and encouraging new investment. It enhances the region's economic interests by providing one-stop assistance to individuals by means of counseling, training, research and advocacy for new ventures and existing small businesses. When appropriate, the SBDC strives to affiliate its ties to the region to support the goals and objectives of both the [SIUE School of Business](#) and the University at large.

To learn about the SBDC, contact the [IL SBDC for the Metro East at SIUE](#) at (618) 650-2929.