

# Alton's Cookie Factory Bakery and Cafe Recognized For Finding Mall Sweet Spot

by Debbie Hagen  
September 11 2023 7:00 AM



**GODFREY** – The Cookie Factory Bakery and Cafe has found its sweet spot at Alton Square Mall under Alton native Sarah Kinder, who purchased the business on Jan. 1, 2022.

Kinder took over the business on Jan. 1, 2022, and has 18 employees helping her with the day-to-day operations.

The Cookie Factory Bakery and Café has been selected as the September 2023 Small Business of the Month award recipient by the RiverBend Growth Association.

The bakery and restaurant, at 202 Alton Square in Alton, is located on the second floor of Alton Square Mall and has been a mainstay for generations of customers enjoying the cookies, sweets and munchies baked daily there. Satisfying the region's sweet tooth now for 43 years, The Cookie Factory was first opened by Linda McCormick at the mall, who operated the successful eatery until her retirement and sale of the business to Alton native Sarah Kinder.

"I was an at-home baker looking to move into a storefront but was not sure where to start, or how," said Kinder. "When I learned the news of Linda wanting to sell The Cookie Factory, I took the chance to reach out to her and express my interest. After weeks of discussion, she knew I was the best person to take over her business. I'm so happy to have this opportunity, and I have many plans for the bakery."

Fast approaching the start of her third year of ownership, Kinder has kept the favorites people already knew and loved while also adding her own recipes and enhancing awareness of the restaurant's lunch and dinner menu offerings. Kinder has also remodeled the Café since becoming its owner, updating its look while also expanding its menu offerings with over 25 new items. She now partners with Escoffier School of Culinary Arts as well to provide its students with externship opportunities and earn credits toward their graduation.



“Being able to bring more fresh and homemade goods into the Bakery has been an incredibly rewarding opportunity,” Kinder noted. “At The Cookie Factory, we aim to please and can truly give the customer what they want – from cake designs to cheesecakes! I am proud to be able to truly say that everything we make is a customer favorite.”

Challenges faced by The Cookie Factory Bakery and Café come from the increase in prices for ingredients as well as the increased minimum wage. Being a business inside a shopping mall provides further unique challenges for Kinder to manage.

With a legacy of providing sweetness and sustenance, The Cookie Factory furthers its commitment to its supporters through its community service. “We have made several donations to the local schools, parks, and nonprofit organizations,” Kinder said, “including Alton High School, Gordon Moore Park and All God’s Children Need Shoes.”

You can find out more about The Cookie Factory Bakery and Café by following its Facebook page or by calling (618) 462-5731.

The RiverBend Growth Association is the Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development organization for the 11 communities known as the Riverbend. For more information about the Growth Association, visit [www.growthassociation.com](http://www.growthassociation.com) or call (618) 467-2280.

*RBGA's Small Business of the Month Committee recognizes a different member business each month for its outstanding efforts and leadership in the community.*