

The Lady Behind New Wood River Bakery "The Cheesecake Lady"

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter
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WOOD RIVER - A new bakery has opened in Wood River, and the story behind "The Cheesecake Lady Bakery Co." is just as sweet as the treats they make.

Since 2017, Deb Shultis has gained a reputation for the desserts she sells on her [The Cheesecake Lady Facebook page](#). But now The Cheesecake Lady has a storefront at 333

N. Wood River Avenue, and Shultis is excited to share her baking with more people around the Riverbend.

“I outgrew my kitchen by far,” Shultis laughed. “We’re looking forward to supporting the community the way they’ve shown us support. We love being here.”

Shultis was always a baker, but she never expected it would become her full-time job. She simply enjoyed baking cheesecakes for her family and friends at church functions, bake sales and holidays. When her husband first suggested Shultis should sell her baked goods, she dismissed the idea right away.

“It all started with just a simple crème brûlée cheesecake,” she remembered. “When I started out, I just baked crème brûlée cheesecake for our house and I’d give them to the church and whatnot for events. And my husband was like, ‘This is so good. You should sell these.’ And I was like, ‘Yeah, okay.’”

She was content to bake for fun — until a fellow congregation member asked to buy a cheesecake. Shultis was stunned, but decided to give it a shot. She put up a few fliers at church and her husband’s workplace, and she had 15 sales that holiday season.

Since then, The Cheesecake Lady has grown into a local phenomenon. She sells over 100 cheesecakes every Christmas and anticipates a bigger order this year than ever before. Her business was expanding past what she could handle in her home, and that’s when she got a phone call from [Santino’s Steak and Pasta House owner Sonny Asani](#), who convinced her to look into the storefront at 333 N. Wood River Avenue.

Now, customers can buy decorated cookies, holiday-themed snacks and slices of cheesecake right at the shop. You can also contact Shultis at (618) 401-0310 to place orders. Looking forward, Shultis has big plans for the business.

“After the holidays, we’re going to start focusing a little bit more on the commercial side,” she explained. “We’ll still have by-the-slice, but we’re going to expand with the commercial, because that’s one thing I was definitely not able to do out of my house. It was just kind of friends and family. So that’s the next step, to start getting our cheesecakes and desserts into local restaurants and a few other places there too.”

This includes Santino’s, which will offer The Cheesecake Lady cheesecakes starting next week. In the meantime, Shultis has been delighted by the response to her business and her new spot in Wood River. She is excited to continue growing with the city.

“It’s been absolutely wonderful. I had City Hall call and the mayor came down for opening day. Opening day, we had lines out the door until we were sold out of every last

crumb at two,” she said. “It’s just the most wonderful community here. We’re very glad to be here.”

For more information about The Cheesecake Lady Bakery Co., stop by the store or check out the [official website at LadyCheesecakes.com](http://LadyCheesecakes.com).

