

Project Profile



Location:

6901 Lynn Way
Pittsburgh, PA 15208
millieshomemade.com

County:

Allegheny

Description:

Business expansion

Total Project Cost:

\$101,585



Millie's Homemade Ice Cream



People:

Chad and Lauren Townsend needed a rush of inspiration. He had honed his culinary skills in France and served as chef at fine Pittsburgh restaurants. She worked in finance, and knew that they could launch a business. Talking it over at an ice cream shop, at first they got only brain freeze. The taste was not inspiring. “Chad and I started thinking about it,” says Lauren, “and I asked him, ‘Is anybody making ice cream in Pittsburgh?’”

Progress:

They started small, making artisanal ice cream for friends, special events and, later, subscribers. To be sustainable, they'd need a dairy plant. Big banks brushed them off, but a friendly banker referred them to The Progress Fund, which loaned \$90,000.

Impact:

Now the Townsends bring Pennsylvania dairy, Amish eggs and local fruits, grains and even vegetables together in their North Point Breeze plant. There, Chad and a team including Pittsburgh Public Schools culinary students craft unique ice creams – Toasted Oat or Brown Butter Parsnip, anyone? – now sold at shops including their own Millie's Homemade Ice Cream in Shadyside. Lauren's favorites? Concord grape sorbet, or pistachio ice cream. But you can also order “The BEST Chocolate” or “Chad's Vanilla.” “At the end of the day,” Lauren says, “we know ice cream is supposed to be fun.”

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Ice cream photo by Adam Milliron (www.adammilliron.com)
Business owner photo by Laura Petrilla