

HAWAII SBDC SUCCESS STORY - WEST HAWAII CENTER



Poi Dog Deli

What do you get when you combine Kona's diversity, years of experience with a family restaurant business, a New Orleans vibe, and a dog loving couple who want to open a restaurant? Why Poi Dog Deli, what else.

The owners of Poi Dog Deli get asked about the name of their establishment "a lot", says Taylor Cline, who with partner Celeste Cline, opened the restaurant in April 2018. "There are hundreds of different backgrounds and cultures getting along here in Kona side by side, and we wanted to celebrate that in our name."

Taylor and Celeste are SBDC clients who came to the West Hawaii Center early on in their planning stages for advice, went through a long ramp up getting ready to open with multiple build out and permitting challenges, and then came back to us when they were closer to opening for assistance with employee procedures and documentation.

The restaurant has quickly gone from being busy only at lunch hour to a daylong hum of steady business. It features a sort of indoor beer garden, physically separated from the purchasing area, which allowed Poi Dog, working with a very helpful Liquor Commission, to operate under a retail beer and wine license.

"We've experienced both the joy and the pain of opening a business out here in the middle of nowhere, says Taylor. "The joy is that it's the middle of nowhere; the pain is that it's the middle of nowhere. But we wouldn't want to be anywhere else. No matter where they really come from, everyone here comes from a place of aloha."