

## Dana Stallings - Success Story

It's not unusual to be surprised at the twists and turns our lives take, but for Dana Stallings, her life is an exciting, unpredictable ride. She received her BS in Health Care Management from Southern Illinois University, but her entrepreneurial spirit took her in another direction. With the uncanny ability to look at a situation, figure out if there is a market for it and then turn it into a profitable business, Dana took not a step but a leap into the entrepreneurial world.



Her first business was conceived while her children were young. She opened a day care center in her home that quickly grew into a brick and mortar business, called Little Britches Child Care and Learning Center. While Little Britches was satisfying, Dana felt the urge to do something more. As she investigated business ideas, Dana and her husband Vance were in Las Vegas at a convention. It was there that they learned of the St. Johns Town Center. Kilwins' Ice Cream and the Town Center seemed like a likely fit and a second business was born.

With Dana's attitude toward finding new business breaks and with the approval of Kilwins' home office, she began experimenting with catering opportunities. Dana developed ice cream socials and customized dessert parties, but found that her shop didn't afford the space she needed to expand into this area. Thus, Jax Kitchen was born. Jax Kitchen is a commercial rental kitchen for caterers, food truck and chefs in need of licensed space to prepare their food. "There's been a lot of hard work and challenges involved in all my projects," says Dana, "but that's what keeps me going."

After discovering their daughter, Haley, just a toddler at the time, was hearing impaired, the Stallings sent her to the Clarke School of Jacksonville for Hearing and Speech, which literally changed Haley's life. Dana has such a passion for the school that each year she hosts the Kilwins' Ice Cream 5k Run, to benefit the school. She also enjoys contributing unselfishly to organizations such as Northeast Florida Women Business Owners, Jax Chamber's Professional Women's Council, First Coast Manufacturing Association and Women's Food Alliance.

Little Britches, Kilwins', and Jax Kitchen are satisfying, but with Stallings uncontrollable entrepreneurial desire, she hasn't stopped there. She regularly lists her house on Airbnb, and Stallings Ranch is in the permitting/developmental phases. And who knows what other innovative ideas she will put into action.

"As a client of the Jacksonville Women's Business Center, I have taken EVERY class offered. My first class was Financial Matters in 2007 and the most recent class I took was Venture Leadership in 2017. The past 10 years the JWBC has given me the opportunity to grow my business through programs such as ATHENA<sup>PowerLink</sup>® as well as learn from a great bank of mentors and programs. JWBC has molded me into being the entrepreneur I am today. Never underestimate the power of a mentor and how it will change you and your business!"

Dana Stallings is the epitome of a successful entrepreneurial woman.