



Top: Participant Chardonney shows off cookie dough ready for the oven.

Middle: Participants Sharelle and Melissa adjust cookies in the oven.

Above: Pam Bracken, ReMerge director of workforce and Ana Rutherford, Catalyst Cookie coordinator, in the Catalyst Cookie kitchen.

“I’ve noticed that a lot of people like to buy our cookies. I hope they know they’re helping to save our lives.”

—Brittany, Catalyst Cookie program graduate

two-year program.

“We think that adding these job skills will help moms move through the process,” she said. “We’d like to see a 75% graduation rate.

“Incarceration costs about the same as coming to ReMerge. But consider what we provide: food, transportation, sober housing, an addiction recovery program plus mental and physical health care. And that’s not all: Each mom’s team includes a case manager, therapist, health and wellness program manager, child reunification program manager, education and employment coordinator and a peer recovery support specialist.”

The help and skill building isn’t even the best part – successful completion of the program means their criminal case is dismissed.

“What makes ReMerge truly different from other diversion programs is that, upon graduation, our moms are eligible to have their charges dismissed, removing a substantial barrier to the rest of their lives,” she said.

Entrepreneurs in the Kitchen

That, of course, is good news to these moms who need jobs to sustain their families. The training provided at Catalyst Cookies lays that foundation. In the kitchen, moms learn in-demand skills like communication, problem-solving, entrepreneurship, customer service and marketing.

“Marketing includes cookie presentation,” Walton said. “Our customers love the enclosure cards that are individually signed by our moms.”

And entrepreneurship?

“We’re always looking for small business owners who want to talk about entrepreneurship while joining our moms for a Thursday lunch in our beautiful ReMerge dining space,” said Ana Rutherford, Catalyst Cookies program coordinator.

Brittany finished packaging her last batch of cookies. The scents of oatmeal and chocolate and salted caramel linger in the air.

“I’ve noticed that a lot of people like to buy our cookies,” Brittany said. “I hope they know they’re helping to save our lives.”

That’s a mouthful, but it’s oh-so sweet. ■



Top: Program participants' Chardonnay, Jennifer, Rickie, Ana Rutherford, Catalyst Cookies coordinator, Sharelle, Melissa and Amber stand in front of recently baked cookies.

Left: ReMerge launched in 2011 and added Catalyst Cookies to its program in 2021.

