

## **New Businesses Propelling Forward in Allendale & Barnwell**

By: Ron Baxley, Jr.

### **BARNWELL & ALLENDALE COUNTIES –**

In April, the first cohort of 17 graduates completed the Propel Business Lab, a 12 week accelerator course built to support entrepreneurs whose businesses impact Allendale or Barnwell counties, providing them with planning, marketing, and financial management skills. On April 13, graduates took part in a pitch competition where they competed for \$10,000 in cash awards to support their business, presented by the Southern Palmetto Chamber and Foundation. Tiffany Zieman of Barnwell and Lauren Creech of Allendale were the winners of the competition. What have these family-centric business women been doing since then?

Zieman, a self-taught baker and mother of four, owns The Southern T House, a baking and catering business. Inspired by her late grandmother Nokomia Joyner's passion for baking, along with recipes from Joyner's sewing group, Zieman puts her spin on classics such as pound cake and red velvet cake, while creating her own classics such as moonshine bread pudding. Some have said the bread pudding tastes like Christmas in a casserole dish, with gooey layers of cinnamon sugar, yeasty bread, and plump raisins.

Zieman has already hit the ground running with events, most recently doing desserts for Mother's Day dinner at the multi-cuisine Barnwell favorite restaurant, Eat Street. "I also plan to do bridal shower cakes with little

symbolic charms the friends of the bride can pull out of the cake,” Zieman said.

“I want my business to help make people happy and feel like their burdens are lifted,” she continued. “With social media and cell phones, I feel like people are missing a lot of what is going on in real life.”

Zieman has saved the \$10,000 award to put toward a food truck, which will be a remodeled vintage camper trailer similar to the iconic Winnebagos popularized in the 1950’s. Her goal is to have the food truck up and running by fall of this year, which will fulfill her vision of creating an atmosphere where families can talk over desserts, tea, and coffee.

“I will have two long tables with chairs in front of the truck and have people pop a squat, as Julia Roberts said in one of her movies,” Zieman laughs.

Lauren Creech, a mother of one and caregiver for her grandmother, won the pitch competition to support her business, Earth Heir Apothecary in Allendale. Her grandmother, Essie Kemp, was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2017, and as a result Creech was inspired to help her with natural remedies-thus the seeds for Earth Heir were planted.

“It’s been a long road,” Creech said.

She designed a proprietary, natural tea blend for her grandmother for the nausea and dehydration effects of radiation and chemotherapy. In addition to this founding tea blend, Creech has created a group of six teas which clients

can customize for their health needs. For example, she has a Spring Refresher blend which is for cleansing the body.

She has also created a heart healthy blend that will benefit the local organization Henrietta's Heart founded by her aunt. Creech's other grandmother was tragically killed in a drive-by shooting in Barnwell in 2020, and Henrietta's Heart was forged as a result. Creech will be selling the tea at the 2nd annual anti-gun violence event on Saturday, June 3 at the Veteran's Memorial Park in Barnwell.

Creech is currently hard at work on the remodeling of a new herb shop where she will create her teas and more, across from the Lobster House landmark on Hwy. 301 in Allendale.

"I am fortunate enough to have my parents as investors. I did not have to pay for the facility," Creech said.

The \$10,000 she was awarded will be used toward the remodeling and redesign of the facility, rebranding products, and inventory. Creech said, "I plan to keep the historic counter in the facility, while also changing the overall look. I will be fine-tuning the design concepts for the tea packaging as well."

In addition to a full selection of teas and herbs, the storefront will be host to tea demonstrations and tea parties in the near future.

The next cohort of Propel Business Lab has just begun, so you can keep an eye out for new businesses coming to Allendale and Barnwell in the months ahead as a result.

“It is truly exciting to be able to support so many businesses and get them the tools they need for success in our region. There were 17 graduates in the first cohort and we currently work with 26. We can’t wait to see many of these businesses grow and thrive with the support we can provide,” said Bob Snead, President and CEO of the Southern Palmetto Chamber and Foundation.

Alicia Davis of Davis Tax Consulting and Financial Services of Barnwell is the Propel Business Lab Facilitator, and with the help of Snead and Southern Palmetto Director of Programs, Enterick Lee, she produces a unique experience for the program participants, drawing on years of experience and leaning on her extensive network.

During the first cohort she brought in six guest speakers, from a lawyer to a marketing director, to present about their expertise. 2023 Propel Business Lab programming was made possible with support from the USDA, Barnwell County, SRP Federal Credit Union, and Barnwell County EDC.

For more information on Tiffany Zieman’s The Southern T House, visit [www.thesouthernhouse.com](http://www.thesouthernhouse.com), email [thesouthernhouse@gmail.com](mailto:thesouthernhouse@gmail.com), or call (803) 571-6972.

For more information on Lauren Creech’s Earth Heir Apothecary, visit [www.wowherbs.net](http://www.wowherbs.net), email [earthheirinfo@gmail.com](mailto:earthheirinfo@gmail.com), or call (904) 321-9286.

For more information on the work of the Southern Palmetto Chamber and Foundation, visit [www.southernpalmetto.org](http://www.southernpalmetto.org)

