



## Redefining Independence and Rae’s Café – Serving Up Opportunities!

Dear Supporters of Redefining Independence and Rae’s Café,

We are thrilled to share with you the exciting progress we’ve made on our journey towards creating a community-focused and inclusive environment at Rae’s Café! We are excited to share our recent achievements and developments in this newsletter.

Firstly, we are delighted to announce that Redefining Independence NFP received official 501(c)3 approval in late January. This means that any donation to our organization is not only appreciated, but tax-deductible paving the way for us to make a positive impact on individuals of all abilities. In June we officially registered as a business with the state of Illinois.

As we gear up for our opening, we are finalizing essential aspects of this process. We have secured a payroll company, are implementing a point of sales system and have obtained insurance coverage ensuring Workers Comp policies are followed and coverage is in place for our employees.

Finally, we want to express our gratitude to all those who have contributed to our mission so far. Redefining Independence relies on the kindness and support of our community. If you are interested in joining us on this journey, please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

Together, we are redefining what independence means for individuals of **all** abilities.

Enjoy this month’s newsletter!

### In this newsletter you can expect:

---

Rae’s Café Updates

---

Recent Outreach

---

Partnerships

---

Training

---



## Outreach

We held a public meeting on April 16 at Edwardsville High School to share information about our organization. The meeting was very well attended and the Edwardsville Intelligencer published a wonderful article about the event.

The following evening, a number of our Board members traveled to Champaign to attend a gala featuring a panel discussion with the world-renowned and brilliant, Temple Grandin. We were lucky enough to have a personal conversation with her about our organization and mission and she was kind enough to share some advice with us as to how to best meet the needs of our employees with special needs.



## Partnerships and Support

Thanks to the generous contributions of equipment, including a significant contribution from the Lynne F. Solon Foundation, and items sourced through our Amazon wish list, we have been able to equip Rae's Café for success. Numerous monetary donations have been made and used to help with the costs associated with the requirements to register our organization and business. Thank you!

## Training

All of our Board members, our executive director and three other individuals who will provide support to our employees, have been trained and received their Food Safety Manager certification. By law, a food safety manager must be onsite at all times to ensure that safe food handling practices are followed. We have purchased a Food Handler training program that all employees will be required to take. Training programs are being developed to equip our employees with the knowledge and skills that will lead to a successful employment experience for all. Job coaching training is also being developed for our employees who will be responsible for supporting those employees with special needs.



## Final Thoughts

**Starting October 1, Rae's Café will be serving delicious breakfast and lunch options to the community.**

Our menu not only satisfies hunger but also supports our mission of providing employment opportunities for **all** individuals. Rae's Café will operate out of the concession area in the Edwardsville YMCA Meyer Center thanks to a generous donation of that space to us by Brandon Bell, YMCA Director.

Please, keep track of our progress and updates by following our Facebook pages for Redefining Independence and Rae's Café, as well as visiting our website at [www.rdi618.org](http://www.rdi618.org). Your continued support means the world to us, and we can't wait to have you join us on this journey!

Thank you for being a crucial part of Redefining Independence and Rae's Café.

**Warm Regards,**

Susan Converse  
Co-founder and Board President

Kris Ellsworth  
Co-founder and Executive Director

**REDEFINING  
INDEPENDENCE**

[www.rdi618.org](http://www.rdi618.org)

---