

Introducing Neurodiversity Helped This Small Business Thrive

Gabi&Jules

HANDMADE PIES & BAKED GOODNESS

gabiandjules.com



Gabi and Jules bakery is named after owner Lisa's two daughters. Juliana has autism and Lisa's vision is for the bakery to be a place for her, and others on the autism spectrum, to work, connect and belong.

Gabi and Jules bakery opened in July 2016 by Lisa Beecroft and her husband Patrick. They also both own Caffe Divano, which has three locations in Burnaby, Port Moody and Poco. The bakery is named after their two daughters, Gabriela and Juliana. The desire to create an inclusive environment is motivated by the fact that their eldest daughter, Juliana, has autism. They want Gabi & Jules bakery to offer opportunities to individuals on the autism spectrum.

Juliana had a Behavioural Interventionist (BI), who had a client looking for employment. At the same time, Gabi and Jules needed someone to build their pie boxes. They were looking for someone who was willing to work a couple hours a week, would enjoy the repetitive task of building boxes, and was also fast and extremely accurate – as the boxes are a big part of their brand. Working with the BI, they came across the perfect candidate for this – Aaron.

Upon opening the bakery, they needed a delivery driver to take what was being prepared at the bakery, and distribute to the Caffe Divano's to be freshly baked. Because their mandate to create an inclusive work environment is recognized in their community, a representative from the Pacific Autism Centre reached out, indicating that she might have a client who would be an ideal candidate. This ended up being a good fit and Conrad was hired for two-days a week to deliver between the three Divano locations. Lisa provided workplace accommodations that fit Conrad's needs. For example, she allowed him to deliver at non-



peak times to avoid the anxiety that can be triggered with a bustling café. Not only did this make great business sense for Lisa, but it also worked well for Conrad. He's been an extremely loyal employee, and continues to deliver baked goodness.

Out of a small staff of 15 employees, 7 have declared having a disability. Along with Conrad and Aaron, they have hired Corey, a dishwasher, Jeremy, a cookie scooper, and Ryan, an experienced baking assistant.

One of the keys to their success has been job-carving to improve efficiencies. Job-carving is a process by which an employer "carves out" existing responsibilities from other positions to create a new role. Job-carving allowed Gabi & Jules to hire for specific skillsets, and create efficiencies by having roles that as a small business, they need on a part-time basis. Instead of hiring one person as a dishwasher/baking assistant/driver – they were able to hire separately for these roles and match duties to skill sets, reducing turn over, increasing job satisfaction, and improving efficiencies on these tasks.

"The design and function of the bakery created an ideal situation where we can tailor roles and tasks around individuals strengths and needs so they can meaningfully contribute to the team and complete tasks integral to our operation," *-Lisa Beecroft, Owner.*