



Miss B and Karie Jordan

Whether it's your constant companion, best friend or first child, your pet is truly someone special. So when you treat them with a snack, it should be special, too. And what if that snack did more than just satisfy your pal's taste buds... what if it also satisfied a need in your community? That's the goal of Tulsa's Bridges Barkery.

**BY KILEY ROBERSON**

The Barkery is part of Tulsa's Bridges Foundation, an organization that offers education like vocational training, employment opportunities, living skills and community resources to individuals with developmental disabilities.

"We showcase the strengths, capabilities and talents of each individual we serve," explains Karie Jordan, President and CEO of the Bridges Foundation. "By assisting each person in the attainment of their individual goals, self-sufficiency increases, positively impacting the entire community landscape."

Karie says her 4-year-old English Bulldog, Miss B, was the inspiration for the organization's Barkery and is now their mascot and biggest fan.

"Miss B is our mascot, and we love her," she says. "Baking dog treats was our way of sharing our joy and enthusiasm for her. We knew this would be a great way to give a healthy treat to our community pets and create an employment opportunity for our clients. After baking a few trays of treats, the clients were in love with the idea and wanted to do more."

Today, the Barkery is hard at work baking dozens of doggie treats a day, all under the careful eye of Miss B, of course. She goes to work with her owner every day.

"She likes to walk the halls, ensuring she is kept in the loop on all things happening," Karie says. "Her favorite thing at the Barkery is when the clients bring her treats and spend time with her. She loves to have her

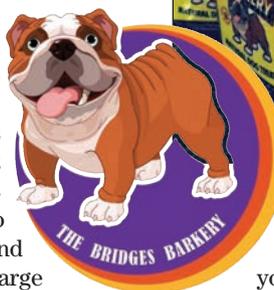
back scratched after eating her treats, and then she's off for a nap."

Miss B is also the official taste tester for the Barkery and has so far settled on four yummy, all natural flavors of biscuits: beef, chicken, cheese and peanut butter. The baking takes place at the Barkery's commercial kitchen located at the Bridges North Campus. Bridges clients start by choosing a flavor to bake. Then they carefully identify and measure the ingredients into a large mixer. After a thorough mixing, they roll the dough, cut the biscuits, place them on the tray and bake for approximately 30 minutes. After a proper amount of cooling time, they proceed to the assembly and packaging of each bag.

"All of the biscuits are baked fresh daily and contain no preservatives or harmful ingredients," explains Karie. "We only use human grade ingredients, so these treats are a healthy and delicious snack for your pets."

But Karie says the entire baking process offers so much more than just great treats; it builds confidence and life skills for clients, too. And the Barkery's Master Baker is a perfect example.

"When Ms. Chelsea began attending our training program at Bridges two years ago, she was shy and lacked confidence," Karie says. "When Chelsea graduated from the training program, she was offered a position in the Barkery baking treats.



Over the last year, Chelsea has grown to be an independent, confident young lady and is now the Barkery's Master Baker."

The employment opportunity with the Barkery allowed Chelsea to continue working on her vocational skills, learning how to bake, cook and earn a paycheck. The Barkery gave her confidence to grow at her own pace and try new skills she could use at home with the assurance that she has all the support she needed to succeed in her goals.

"The Barkery is important for everyone involved," Karie says. "It helps clients like Chelsea learn at their own speed, gives pet owners an opportunity to learn about the Bridges Foundation, and finally, you're favorite four-legged friends get a tasty, healthy treat baked without preservatives and made with lots of love."

You can find out more about the Bridges Foundation by checking out their website at [www.thebridgesfound.org](http://www.thebridgesfound.org). There, you can even buy a bag of their delicious treats through their online store. ■