

Pochis Sweet Designs celebrates success at Meijer LPGA Classic

Paola Carlson made her debut at the Meijer LPGA Classic for *Simply Give* last year with her floral arrangements and chocolate-dipped strawberries during a luncheon at the golf course. She also had a booth where she handed out samples of chocolate-covered coffee beans – part of her product line, featuring Colombian coffee and coffee treats, that are available in Meijer stores throughout the Midwest. They were a hit with attendees at the tournament, which attracts more than 50,000 people annually.

She's back this year with more flower arrangements. She'll also be debuting cuisine from her new Grand Rapids eatery, Pochis Sweet Designs Colombian Restaurant & Cafe.

The restaurant originally was intended to be a cafe to showcase her popular handmade macarons and chocolate-covered strawberries, along with Colombian coffee and other products, but the menu has quickly grown to include dishes from her native country.

"I had a lot of demand from the community, so I expanded into a full-blown Colombian restaurant," Paola said.

She's thrilled to be part of J. Brewer's, the best-in-class culinary experience right off the fairway, at the [Meijer LPGA Classic for *Simply Give*](#), which runs June 15-18 at Blythefield Country Club. Over the past 9 years, the tournament has raised nearly \$9 million to support our mission of feeding families in need through our [Simply Give](#) program.

Partnering with Meijer has opened her world in many ways, says Paola, who immigrated to the United States 5 years ago, leaving behind a successful career supporting designers in the architectural industry.

Finding a job was difficult because of the language barrier. As she was learning English, she turned her creative talents to making customized gifts filled with flowers and sweet treats for her friends. Impressed with the quality and details of the thoughtful gifts, her friends encouraged her to turn her hobby into a business. She took the advice and began selling the gift baskets online and at community events.

That success led to her enter Start Garden's 5x5 Spanish competition and win the \$5,000 prize in 2021. Later that year, she competed in Start Garden 100, where she was one of the top 20 entrepreneurs selected for a \$20,000 prize.

The last prize helped her grow her import business, which sells coffee and goods from her native country. Her growing business, Pochis Sweet Designs, incorporates her grandfather's nickname for her. Her family back in Colombia has been excited to follow the news reports about the growth of her business as she continues to make her dreams come true.

"I saw the opportunity to bring something unique to the market," Paola said.

Taking part in the Meijer LPGA Classic has been a gateway opportunity for Paola because she has met people from all over the world. Some of those new contacts have led to her products being distributed outside her Midwest market to shops in New York and Florida.

"I'm really thankful for the opportunity," she said. "I want to thank Meijer for putting trust in me and giving me the opportunity to share my Colombian culture and our amazing food."

Additional assets available online: [Photos ^{\(1\)}](#)

<https://meijercommunity.com/2023-05-09-Pochis-Sweet-Designs-celebrates-success-at-Meijer-LPGA-Classic>