

Generational Recipes Lead Lillie's of Charleston's Midwest Expansion with Meijer

After noticing their father frequently giving away his homemade barbecue sauce to customers at his restaurant, The Rib Shack, sisters Tracey Richardson and Kellye Wicker realized the potential for a business – and Lillie's of Charleston was born.

Rooted in a rich legacy of family recipes passed down through generations, Lillie's of Charleston has reached a new milestone as its signature sauces and seasonings are now available in all Meijer stores across the Midwest.

Their recent expansion into Meijer stores is the result of one of the retailer's vendor events. At these events, small businesses are invited to showcase their brands to the Meijer team. The event provided Lillie's of Charleston with the opportunity to present their products to potential buyers.

"We had one of the booths there, and then the buyers could come through and taste the products, meet you, and learn more about our story," Tracey said. "It was a lot of fun to connect with them and then go through the process. The Meijer team is very generous and really held your hand through the process, letting you know what the steps are and what people are looking for, and connecting you directly to the right buyers for your categories."

The success of this introduction has led Lillie's of Charleston to increase its presence in the Midwest, a significant achievement for the family-owned business.

"This is our first year with Meijer, and we've been thrilled with the response," Tracey shared. "Sales are good, and the product placement has been fantastic. We're excited to explore more opportunities with them, especially with tailgating season coming up. We're excited to see what's to come."

Named after their great Aunt Lillie, Tracey and Kellye officially co-founded the brand in 2001. Twenty-three years later, they continue to honor the African American culinary traditions of the Lowcountry region.

The sisters' great Aunt Lillie played a pivotal role in teaching their father how to cook. Known for her boundless hospitality, Aunt Lillie was a beloved figure in the family, always ready with a plate of food for anyone who visited.

"She was just endlessly giving, and always laughing and smiling and always cooking up a plate of food for somebody," said Tracey said. "Our company slogan comes from her eulogy, where people say, 'May you never feel unwanted, unloved, or hungry,' because it was like her refrigerator never was empty. She fed so many people."

The company's products pay homage to the sisters' Gullah Geechee heritage, who predominantly live in the [Lowcountry](#) region of the [U.S. states](#) of [South Carolina](#), [Georgia](#), and [Florida](#). The recipes for their signature sauces, including a mustard-based barbecue sauce, are deeply rooted in the family's culinary traditions. Tracey's husband, Jamel, a chemist by trade, has been instrumental in helping the company scale its production to meet growing demand.

Additional assets available online:  [Photos](#) (3)

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