



Meg Barnhart, Founder of **the zen of slow cooking**, has created a business where home cooks find success in the kitchen through simple, straightforward, whole food recipes prepared in 20 minutes or less. Meg believes, *“Slow cooking with the sacred intention of slowing down creates a sense of peace and calm after a full day of work and school.”* Meg discovered that meal planning coupled with slow cooking allowed her to be more attentive to her family’s needs.

In February 2012, she formed a business called Yogini, LLC and launched a slow cooking blog with her co-creator, Jane McKay, in October of the same year. They continued to expand their vision by creating slow cooker organic whole/ground spice blends which they debuted at the Lake Forest Farmers Market in the fall of 2013. They “sold out” on their first weekend at the market and at year-end sold close to 1,000 blends.

Meg and Jane learned about the Illinois SBDC International Trade Center through the Lake Forest Accelerator in May, 2012 and were immediately introduced to an advisor. They needed assistance with developing a framework and business plan. In the summer of 2013, Meg and Jane decided to work through the “proof of concept” stage of their business and again reached out to the IL SBDC/ITC for further guidance. Weekly conference calls were arranged with their advisor who put together a timeline for them to work through the business plan. Meg expressed that she *“most liked the Illinois SBDC/ITC’s depth of resources and accessibility to its staff.”*

In addition to sending a weekly slow cooking recipe to their subscribers, they also send a monthly inspirational post on how to find a little more zen in their kitchen. Meg and Jane’s short term goals include selling their products on-line by July 2014 and to be in stores such as Marianos, Whole Foods and Fresh Market. But the heart of their business lies in their long term dream of creating work opportunities for adults with developmental challenges.

To follow **the zen of slow cooking**, visit www.thezenofslowcooking.com.