

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Vegan Restaurant Chooses Indiana for HQ, Pizza Production Operations**

***Hoosier natives and sisters return to northeast Indiana to  
nourish their small businesses***

HUNTINGTON, Ind. (May 21, 2021) – Kitchen 17, a vegan food producer and restaurant, announced plans today to relocate its headquarters, production and marketing operations from Illinois to northeast Indiana, creating up to 64 new jobs in Huntington by the end of 2024.

"Kitchen 17's decision to locate in Indiana is a testament to our state's entrepreneur-friendly and pro-growth environment," said Interim Indiana Secretary of Commerce Jim Staton. "We're inspired by their creative, strategic and innovative approach to continuing to thrive through the pandemic and excited to see them grow in the Hoosier state."

Kitchen 17 will invest more than \$1 million to purchase and renovate the historical Herald Press building located at 7 North Jefferson St. in Huntington. The 25,000-square-foot pizza production facility will house the company's headquarters as well as food production, packaging and distribution operations including a prep kitchen, small retail tasting room, urban rooftop farming solutions and restaurant event space. The facility will also house a new photo and video production studio for the company's marketing, branding and content team, Smiley Face Media. Kitchen 17 and Smiley Face Media are owned by sisters and Hoosier natives Jennie and Lorry Plasterer, respectively.

"We grew up in Huntington, our families have been here for generations," said Jennie Plasterer, founder of Kitchen 17. "This is home. We went to big cities for different opportunities and had a great time doing so. When the pandemic hit, not only did we find an opportunity to restructure our lives and our businesses, but at the same time, expansion became necessary, and we couldn't think of a better place than Huntington. I've gotten to fully partner with my sister and my husband, in my hometown, while putting in the first plant-based restaurant here. It's a very special moment for us."

Kitchen 17, owned by Jennie Plasterer, currently employs 20 in Illinois and will begin hiring for a variety of corporate and production positions in Huntington this summer. Interested applicants may submit resumes to [jennie@kitchen17.com](mailto:jennie@kitchen17.com). Employment inquiries for Smiley Face Media should be directed to [lorry@smileyfacemedia.com](mailto:lorry@smileyfacemedia.com).

Founded in 2013, Chicago-based Kitchen 17 is an award-winning vegan restaurant specializing in vegan pizzas and comfort food with house-made meats, cheeses and desserts. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Jennie Plasterer maintained restaurant operations in Chicago while pivoting to expand her

business by transforming the eatery into a full-fledged production facility. Plasterer plans to maintain an eatery in Chicago while transitioning all production operations to Huntington.

Kitchen 17 was recently named the No. 2 'Best Vegan Restaurant in the U.S.' VegOut and landed No. 2 on the magazine's '10 Best Vegan Pizza Spots Across America' list.

"We're proud and excited to welcome Kitchen 17 and Smiley Face Media to Huntington," said Huntington Mayor Richard Strick. "Their ambition, creativity and follow-through will add to the talent mix Huntington has been cultivating, and we are eager to see what new opportunities arise as the project moves forward. We're extremely grateful to our partners at the IEDC, Huntington County United Economic Development and the Northeast Indiana Regional Partnership that helped pave the way for this investment."

The Indiana Economic Development Corporation offered Kitchen 17 up to \$565,000 in conditional tax credits based on the company's job creation plans. These tax credits are performance-based, meaning the company is eligible to claim incentives once Hoosiers are hired. The city of Huntington approved additional incentives. Northeast Indiana Works supports the project.

Indiana is home to more than 512,000 small businesses like Kitchen 17 that employ over 1.2 million Hoosiers. The state received an 'A+' grade for ease of starting a business ([Thumbtack 2019](#)) and ranks No. 1 in the Midwest and No. 6 in the nation for entrepreneur friendliness ([SBE Council 2019](#)).

#### **About Kitchen 17**

*Kitchen 17 is an award-winning vegan restaurant located in Chicago, IL founded by Jennie Plasterer specializing in vegan pizzas and comfort food with house-made meats, cheeses, desserts and more. For more information about Kitchen 17, visit [kitchen17.com](http://kitchen17.com).*

#### **About Smiley Face Media**

*Smiley Face Media is a full-service production and media agency specializing in commercial video production. They offer a wide range of services including photography, animation, graphic design, logo design, packaging design, marketing, and branding strategies. Founded by husband and wife team Lorry Plasterer and Rick Amieva in Los Angeles, CA, Smiley Face Media is now headquartered in Huntington, IN. For more information about Smiley Face Media, visit [smileyfacemedia.com](http://smileyfacemedia.com).*

#### **About IEDC**

*The Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC) leads the state of Indiana's economic development efforts, helping businesses launch, grow and locate in the state. Governed by a 15-member board chaired by Governor Eric J. Holcomb, the IEDC manages many initiatives, including performance-based tax credits, workforce training grants, innovation and entrepreneurship resources, public infrastructure assistance, and talent attraction and retention efforts. For more information about the IEDC, visit [iedc.in.gov](http://iedc.in.gov).*

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