

New Dorothy & Toto's Gourmet Kettle Corn shop in Grand Rapids is poppin' busy

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By Sharon Hanks

Ever since [Dorothy & Toto's Gourmet Kettle Corn](#) opened its doors for business last month, Kyle Behm is so busy poppin' the light, fluffy stuff that he hardly thinks of going home.

"It's going really great!" Behm says, noting he and his cousin, Kris Woods, are putting in long hours at the quaint storefront building at 2106 Plainfield Ave. NE in Grand Rapids. "We've got one kettle and it's going from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m., pretty much non-stop."

To meet the overwhelming demand, Behm's parents, Dan and Barb, and his sister, Jill, are helping make and package the popcorn flavored with a secret family recipe developed years ago by Behm's grandparents.

"We have distributors coming to us that want to distribute it, but we don't have the capacity to do that yet," he says. "They want a lot more than we can even think of producing. But we're working on that this week and next. Our goal is to distribute it statewide.

"We went through 1,000 bags in 10 days at Forest Hills Foods," Behm says, adding that the grocery store at 4668 Cascade Rd. SE is the only outlet in town besides his retail storefront that carries the gourmet treat.

The shop opened January 6 in a building that also houses [Weatherhead & Sons, Inc.](#) In the near future, Behm anticipates leasing out a manufacturing site to house 10 kettles operated by 10 to 12 more workers.

The popular kettle corn is named after his grandparents, Dorothy and Tony "Toto" Meyers, who bought the kettle popcorn business years ago from a man in Arizona. The snowbirds temporarily relocate to Arizona during the winters and sell their kettle corn. During the warmer months, they're back in Michigan where they sell their tasty delights at local farmer's markets.

A recent new addition to the business is a custom label designed by Behm featuring an image of Dorothy and her dog, Toto, a pair made famous by the legendary 1939 movie musical, "The Wizard of Oz." To no surprise, Dorothy's face bears a resemblance to a youthful image of Kyle's grandmother, Dorothy Meyers. "We thought it was a cute idea," Behm says.

Behm, 24, began helping his grandparents with their business after he moved back to Michigan following a job in Florida. His grandparents wanted to retire and Behm, a Michigan State University graduate with a finance background, was looking for a new opportunity.

The three generations like to boast about the popcorn's calorie count: only 120 calories for two cups, with no saturated or trans fat.

Dorothy and Toto's Gourmet Kettle Corn is open from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

Source: Kyle Behm of Dorothy & Toto's Gourmet Kettle Corn.

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