

# Recipe for success: Dakota Harvest bakers hope to mentor others, raise daughter and write two books

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Dakota Harvest Bakery owners George Kelley

*Photo by: left*

"It was really nice not baking two tons of bread on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving this year," Kelley recently said in the building that once held the duo's business.

The popular bakery closed in September 2016, bringing an end to a decade of operation. Though they miss baking—and they are stopped often by customers who miss their baking—the two are happy with what they accomplished.

"We did 10 years here at the bakery," Holje said, adding it was time for a change. "We really kind of accomplished what we wanted to do."

The two have been busy raising a daughter and catching up on 10 years of projects, as well as mentoring other businesses. Kelley and Holje, who once were an air traffic controller and architect, respectively, still own the building at 17 N. Third St. The location now is home to Half Brothers Brewing Co.

The former bakery owners have partnered with the brewery, and the two said they like what they see as customers fill the space.

"Their whole community concept is pretty much the same thing we were doing," Kelley said of the brewery.

'Farm to table to home'

Dakota Harvest opened in May 2006 "with the goal of bringing something special to our downtown," according to Herald archives. The duo wanted to bring local products to customers.

At least 80 percent of the ingredients used in products sold at their store came from within 200 miles of their bakery, they said.

"Farm to table to home," Kelley said. "That's always been our concept."

The two give credit to other business owners for mentoring them. Bakers also came from across the country to intern at Dakota Harvest.

After the success that Dakota Harvest saw, Kelley and Holje said they want to reach out to other businesses to help them succeed. They are advisers for Pivotplanet, a networking organization that connects startups with business advisers. They also

have given speeches for TEDx Grand Forks about how they started Dakota Harvest, hoping to encourage others.

The two still would like to pursue Dakota Harvest Builders, their architecture venture. Kelley and Holje said they are working to write two books: one highlighting recipes from their bakery and another that focuses on mentoring readers on the business side.

"There really isn't a one-stop shop out there anywhere on what it takes to start a business as a bakery, how to run a business as a bakery and how to do your outreach," Holje said.

The duo get a lot of requests for baked goods. The baking book will feature stories behind the recipes, Holje said.

"Every recipe has a story behind it," he said. "I think there can be some interesting recipes and stories to share."

They just have to figure out how to scale back the recipes, Kelley said.

"I'm sure they are not going to want to make 30 kilos of sugar cookie dough in one shot," he said.