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Inside the Totally Awesome Kitchen Kid with Samantha Barnes



When it comes time to look for a fun camp for your kiddos, we know you have a few key ingredients in mind: a friendly staff, engaging activities, accessible schedules. Combine it all and you get **Kitchen Kid**—your Totally Awesome pick for best kids camp in the L.A. area. At a Kitchen Kid camp, kids mix math, simmer science, and taste geography with the help of dynamic culinary coaches. There are even weekly trips to the farmers market, an Iron Chef challenge, cooking for a good cause, and Friday tastings. Sounds like a winning dish to us!

Samantha Barnes, founder of Kitchen Kid, recently took the time to chat with us about what makes this camp so awesome, the inspiration behind Kitchen Kid, and more. Read on:

Red Tricycle: Congratulations on being voted "Most Awesome" by your community! What do you think your customers value most about your business?

Samantha Barnes: We were incredibly humbled and honored to be the "Most Awesome" camp in the Los Angeles area. Thanks to Red Tricycle for hosting and organizing such a terrific contest, to our amazing and passionate Culinary Coaches who make our camps fun and delicious, and to our wonderful families and young chefs for supporting Kitchen Kid!

On Fridays during summer camp, we invite parents to come to a tasting. Our young chefs beam with pride and accomplishment as they serve their parents the delicious food they created throughout the week. Parents always comment on how engaged their kids were and how impressive the food was. Our families really appreciate the quality of food Kitchen Kids make!

RT: What inspired you to start your business?

SB: When I started Kitchen Kid in 2006, I was teaching middle school and eating lunch with many of my students, and we loved talking about food. Thanks to the Food Network, so many of them were aspiring young foodies, yet they had little to no actual experience in the kitchen. Meanwhile, the food choices they were making were terrible - junk food, snacks, and soda. I asked a few of my students to cook a Mexican dinner with me - and we had a blast! The kids tasted and loved new foods, were totally proud of what they made, and the parents were beyond impressed and delighted to be served delicious food by their children. It was then I realized that teaching cooking to kids was a perfect career for me.

RT: Any advice for new business owners just getting started?

SB: Don't be afraid to ask for help - but don't be afraid to wear lots of different hats either. In the beginning I did everything: from web design and PR to balancing my books, writing curriculum, and testing recipes. The benefit of this was learning all the different components that go into starting and operating a business. Ultimately, I realized I couldn't do everything - and slowly began hiring others to teach classes and take on tasks so I could grow the business and focus on my strengths. Now, with the support of my incredible team, I've been able to launch Raddish, a monthly subscription box that brings families together in the kitchen and at the table. Raddish delivers Kitchen Kid's innovative curriculum, recipes, and culinary fun to doorsteps everywhere!

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RT: Can you give us one tip for balancing entrepreneurship with parenthood?

SB: Ha! I need all the tips I can get! Balancing my family (I'm the mom to a 3 year old and 1 year old) while owning a business is definitely the hardest thing I do, because there is never an off button for either kids or work. And my husband definitely gets short-changed! Probably the best advice is something I don't always follow myself: try to create days (or part of days), and places, where you focus exclusively on family or work. It'll help you feel less guilty about neglecting something.

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