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## **SCORE Cincinnati's Names C'est Cheese Food Truck a Client Success**

It's no surprise that a bowl of tomato soup and a grilled cheese sandwich is a national comfort food.

What may be surprising is that grilled cheese has created a sustainable business for entrepreneur Emily Frank, owner of C'est Cheese Food Truck, Inc. of Cincinnati.

Frank, 39, of Kenwood, has been selected a SCORE Client Success for her hard work, profitability and vision to form and organize the Cincinnati Food Truck Association. Her two-year old company was a 2012 finalist in the Bad Girl Ventures micro-lending class.

She came to SCORE, the volunteer arm of the Small Business Administration, in 2012, when she moved back to Cincinnati from Chicago to start her business.

“Emily came to us for help with a business plan, financing and funding options and has used SCORE as a sounding board for opportunities to take her business to the

next level,” said Jane Vanderhorst, president of Vanderhorst Consulting, Inc. and Frank’s SCORE counselor. “She embodies the spirit of the true entrepreneur— she’s passionate about her business, willing to work and engage, and has a vision for the future of what her industry can be.”

Cincinnati SCORE’s 100 counselors are working and retired executives who help new and existing small business owners with free and low-cost marketing, finance and internal operations.

“SCORE has been such an amazing resource,” said Frank. “It’s silly for a small business *not* to take advantage of the services it offers. I especially like the team mentoring process—each week I meet with two or three SCORE counselors who are eager to help. I get the benefit of their different perspectives.”

Frank started her business after spending a decade in Chicago working in the client services department for a large printing company. She said she traveled constantly and was so busy, she didn’t realize she was unhappy. “When my nephew was born and I Skyped with him, I realized I didn’t want to be an ‘aunt in a box,’” she said. “I wanted to be part of his life-- the ‘auntie at the zoo.’”

So she came home to Cincinnati.

“The city has changed so much,” she said. “This is not the city I grew up in. It’s really exciting now and I’ve met so many people in the two years I’ve been back. It’s exciting to be a part of what the city is becoming.”

A graduate of Sycamore High School and the University of Cincinnati, Frank earned a bachelor’s degree in political science. Now she claims an honorary doctorate in buttering bread.

“I had a small catering business on the side in Chicago, but I knew owning a restaurant was expensive and the risk of failure was high,” she said. “The food industry always fascinated me and I enjoy cooking. Plus, I was on the road 90 percent of my time, so saw the food truck revolution in other cities. When I came home, I jumped in like a crazy person.”

She realized quickly that a large percentage of people locally didn’t understand what a food truck was. She started the Cincinnati Food Truck Association last February; there are now 28 members. The group meets quarterly and is a “great one-stop resource” for other food truck owners, she said.

C’est Cheese offers gourmet grilled cheese sandwiches, tomato soup and homemade pickles. Of the 25 sandwiches on the menu, the top three best sellers include: The Bee Sting, made of mozzarella cheese, pepperoni, and basil-infused honey with chili flaked butter; the Cheesy Wonder, a four-cheese blend that is “super kid friendly;” and the Green Lantern, made of mozzarella cheese, pesto and Roma tomatoes.

Frank has two nephews now: one is three years old and one is 16 months. The older one continually wants grilled cheese for dinner. And Frank? She eats grilled cheese almost every day.

“I really did my homework,” said Frank. “Grilled cheese was one of the top ten grossing food item on trucks in the country. People are always nostalgic about grilled cheese. It has lots of flexibility and is very popular. But to me, selecting grilled cheese was a business decision.

“You would think by now that I’d be really sick of the sandwiches,” she added. “But I’m not.”

C'est Cheese visits suburban industrial parks throughout greater Cincinnati, including the communities of Blue Ash, Sharonville, West Chester, and Kenwood. At night and on weekends, Frank attends city events, music festivals, concerts, private events and corporate functions. It's not uncommon for the truck to appear in three locations during one day.

For more information, go to [www.cestcheesecincy.com](http://www.cestcheesecincy.com), contact Frank at [Emily@cestcheesecincy.com](mailto:Emily@cestcheesecincy.com) or call (513) 535-8857.

SCORE's main office is located at 535 Vine St., Room 1030. For more information about SCORE, its counseling services and seminars, go to [www.scoreworks.org](http://www.scoreworks.org) or call (513) 684-2812.

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