

SAN RAFAEL

Fried chicken fanatics get a kickstart

By Carey Sweet

When Arthur Chang and Rachel Hundley of San Rafael started a Kickstarter campaign earlier this year for Drums & Crumbs, the most they could offer donors was fried chicken.

Compared with other Kickstarter campaigns with lush incentives to donate, would chicken be enough to get even complete strangers to support their culinary dreams?

Apparently so. Chang and Hundley knew they had really good fried chicken, done Southern style with a proprietary recipe and served with sides like chunky mashed potatoes, baked macaroni and cheese, Carolina coleslaw and Southern collard greens, and homemade buttermilk biscuits.

Through their food, they were able to surpass their \$15,000 goal — raising a total of \$15,787 — from 206 donors to finance the start of a food truck business, and nudge them toward launching a pop-up cafe in San Rafael.

The pop-up will debut with a special dinner on Sept. 27 in the cafe space at the Renaissance Center Marin on Third and A streets.

All Kickstarter projects must be in the creative field. While Drums & Crumbs, which started as a catering company, fits in the food category, raising money to finance the opening of a restaurant and food truck is a unique way to use the popular crowd-funding site.

For their money, donors got everything from one fried chicken lunch box (\$10), to a catered party for 35 within 100 miles of Sonoma, a T-shirt, a handwritten postcard expressing Chang and Hundley's appreciation, and their "eternal gratitude" (\$1,000). Two people snatched that up.

"It's a very unique idea against a traditional loan," said Chang, adding that Kickstarter is also an excellent way to test



Photos by Dan Evans / Special to The Chronicle

Arthur Chang, co-owner of Drums & Crumbs, chops peppers in a food processor for a coleslaw. Chang and co-owner Rachel Hundley raised money to open a kitchen at the Renaissance Center in San Rafael through Kickstarter.

"I'm hoping that in 10 years I can go to Drum & Crumbs' food truck and still eat the dessert with my name on it. That would definitely satisfy my stomach and my soul."

—Ryan Chapman, an investment manager on donating to the Kickstarter campaign

consumer reaction to an idea.

To help lessen risk, he and Hundley will apply for a regular loan to add what they think will be another \$50,000 or so in seed money, including \$25,000 to \$30,000 for buy a good used food truck and then create a custom kitchen inside.

To further smooth the process, they enlisted the help of the Renaissance Center Marin, a nonprofit small business incubator that was created in

1985 in San Francisco and opened a San Rafael branch in June 2012.

A project of the Marin Community Foundation, the center is still in its early phases, but it works with seven businesses in its café, as well as clients like retailers, designers and contractors. It offers aspiring entrepreneurs low-cost training programs, classes, and business and financial advising, plus a 600-square-foot commercial



Hundley cuts a biscuit from a mass of dough.