

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Gretchen Moore  
Downtown Fresno Foundation  
845 Fulton Mall Fresno, CA 93721  
216-402-5255

[gmoore@downtownfresno.org](mailto:gmoore@downtownfresno.org)

[www.downtownfresno.org/foundation/createhere](http://www.downtownfresno.org/foundation/createhere)



## **Create Here Business Plan Competition Winner Announced**

FRESNO, Calif., October 29, 2015 --The Downtown Fresno Foundation announced House of Pendragon/Pita Kabob as the winner of the 2015 Create Here Business Plan Competition, presented by Wells Fargo. The winning business plan calls for a gastropub featuring a collaboration of the popular Sanger brewery House of Pendragon and Visalia eatery Pita Kabob. As competition winner, House of Pendragon/Pita Kabob comes away with over \$100,000 in cash and prizes to help launch the business.

Together, House of Pendragon/Pita Kabob envisions a restaurant that is a downtown Fresno destination for top-notch craft beer and outstanding food with a lively environment and superior customer experience.

A joint statement from House of Pendragon and Pita Kabob states, "We couldn't be more excited! We want to thank the Downtown Fresno Foundation for allowing us the opportunity to create something truly special and add to the strong revitalization of Downtown Fresno that has already begun. We also want to thank everyone who voted for us. Cheers!"

The Create Here Business Plan Competition launched in July 2015, attracting 22 entrepreneurs and providing one-on-one mentorship from SCORE Central Valley to help write and refine business plans.

Competition judges evaluated the business proposals on several criteria including the applicant's experience and investment, improvement to the downtown business mix, ability to engage the public, and job creation. The competition also included a People's Choice online public vote, which House of Pendragon/Pita Kabob won, nabbing a \$500 cash prize. House of Pendragon/Pita Kabob expects to employ 30 people, and brings to downtown a full-service restaurant with both daytime and evening hours.

"This was an incredibly tough decision, but our panel of judges felt that House of Pendragon/Pita Kabob best met the selection criteria of the competition. We are very excited about the added vitality and energy that House of Pendragon/Pita Kabob will bring to downtown Fresno," said Gretchen Moore, Executive Director of the Downtown Fresno Foundation.

The Downtown Fresno Foundation has also named competition finalist RawFresno as a Create Here Merit Award winner in recognition of the outstanding effort put forth by owner Chef Naomi Hendrix. RawFresno is most widely known as the popular food truck that provides organic, locally grown gourmet food. Chef Hendrix is moving forward with plans to open a restaurant in the Galleria downtown at 2405 Capitol Street.

"I'm so grateful to the Foundation and the downtown community that are forever supportive to us entrepreneurs. I look forward to providing high quality local produce loved into beautiful nutrient dense dishes to be a supporter of local downtown business folks seeking healthy alternatives and clean food under one roof as RawFresno inside the Galleria. Thank you Downtown Fresno Foundation, Civic Center Square and Wells Fargo," said RawFresno owner Chef Naomi Hendrix.

-MORE-

The competition has already created tangible economic impact in downtown Fresno with Create Here semi-finalist Root General Store set to open at 1243 Fulton Mall in the coming weeks.

“Downtown Fresno has become a hot spot for investment. The interest we are seeing from retailers, restaurants and office users continues to increase. This competition shows what we’ve known all along: Downtown Fresno is a great business community where entrepreneurs can find an outstanding network of support. We are committed to providing resources to help all interested entrepreneurs find a home in downtown Fresno,” said Aaron Blair, President & CEO of the Downtown Fresno Partnership.

Create Here is made possible by the generous support of the following sponsors who continue to be champions for the economic growth of downtown Fresno:

Wells Fargo, Central Valley SCORE, Luxe Creative Strategies, Viking Construction, Civic Center Square, Clark Bros. Inc., Talley Transportation, Constar Supply, The Business Journal, Central Valley Community Bank, 1101 Fulton Mall LLC, Connecting the Dots, Colins Communications, Fresno Chamber of Commerce, Fresno State University Downtown Center, Innovation Commercial Flooring and The Loft Salon.

Rules, eligibility, key dates, prize package, contestant pitch videos and resource information is available at [www.downtownfresno.org/foundation/createhere](http://www.downtownfresno.org/foundation/createhere)

#### **THE COMPANIES**

House of Pendragon Brewing Company is a local craft beer micro-brewery in Sanger, CA. The company was started by Sanger and Central Valley natives Thomas and Nora Caprelian. House of Pendragon began commercial operation in February 2013 and currently has two locations, their retail tasting room in Clovis, CA and their operational brewery facility in Sanger, CA. House of Pendragon’s current tasting room location opened in April 2014 after a successful crowdsource fundraising project campaign through Kickstarter at the end of 2013. [www.hopbeer.com](http://www.hopbeer.com)

Pita Kabob & Grill, Inc. is a Mediterranean Fusion Grill and Craft Beer focused Gastropub restaurant operation based out of Visalia CA. Pita Kabob & Grill began in 1996 by Mo & Sahar Dada when they decided to open a small Mediterranean Grocery & Deli. Pita Kabob & Grill, Inc.’s first restaurant was established in 2004 with the help of current CEO and COO Chafic and Kareem Dada, sons of Mo & Sahar Dada. They have since grown to three locations in Visalia with their flagship Pita Kabob Gastropub opening in 2014 in the heart of downtown Visalia. The Dada family has been in the food service industry for over 15 years. [www.pitakabob.com](http://www.pitakabob.com)

#### **About the Downtown Fresno Foundation**

The DFF is a sister organization to the Downtown Fresno Partnership. Established in 2015, this 501(c)3 organization is dedicated to improving our community by developing projects, programs and activities that support economic development, revitalization and community engagement within downtown Fresno’s central business district. The organization’s mission is: To enhance our community by providing resources and support for downtown Fresno stakeholders. Last month, DFF completed a renovation of Kikku Japanese Food, winner of the organization’s 2015 Restaurant Makeover Competition. Later this year, DFF will launch a new mobile app using location-awareness technology to promote downtown Fresno landmarks, artwork and businesses. The (re)Discover Fresno app was built by local tech company OneSense. [www.downtownfresno.org/foundation](http://www.downtownfresno.org/foundation)

RawFresno began in Chef Naomi's residence kitchen. After being diagnosed with an auto immune disease, Naomi remodeled her kitchen and began teaching classes in 2010. Then RawFresno Delivery service was born as RawFresno grew popularity in the real food movement. In 2012 RawFresno was invited Kaiser Farmers Market. In 2013 RawFresno purchased "Minerva the RawMeister" a gourmet food truck traveling throughout the San Joaquin Valley and Mountain Communities. In 2014 RawFresno won a Local Food Makers Grant from WholeFoods and introduced Cashew Queso to the World at the Fresno Food Expo which started the marriage between RawFresno, Abundant Harvest and WholeFoods. [www.RawFresno.com](http://www.RawFresno.com)

###