



elizabeth LESSNER

CEO, The Betty's Family of Restaurants

Elizabeth Lessner is working to make Columbus a better place to live, work, and play.

Elizabeth is wise beyond her years. As CEO of The Betty's Family of Restaurants, she has created Betty's Food and Spirits, Surly Girl, Tip Top, and the up-and-coming Dirty Frank's Hot Dogs; all restaurants located in downtown Columbus or the Short North.

Elizabeth, born and raised in Chicago, had to taste for herself what the world had to offer. At 18, she moved out West for four years and worked in restaurants and coffee shops throughout Seattle and California.

Elizabeth moved to Columbus to be near her family. Elizabeth wanted to develop a neighborhood restaurant, similar to what she had seen on the West Coast, where women would feel welcome and comfortable. This was a niche left unfilled by male-oriented sports bars. She chose a retro theme from the 1940s, offering warm lighting, comfortable seating, and an inviting atmosphere. Opening to standing room only in 2001, Elizabeth said, "Betty's was more fun than I thought I would ever have."

Public service is a commitment for Elizabeth. All of her managers are required, as part of their jobs, to be involved in community organizations. Elizabeth coordinates other Short North business leaders in addressing a variety of causes: fund-raising efforts, voter registration, and more. In fact, she says, philanthropy is what makes her feel good.

She is President/Chair of Green Efforts of the Central Ohio Restaurant Association, is on Mayor Coleman's Young Professionals Commission, is a board member for the Central Ohio Workforce Investment Corp, is a COTA Mobility Advisory board member, is a past YWCA mentor, and is an avid women's health activist.

To Elizabeth, Columbus is one big neighborhood. She continues to make plans to cook up new ways to make it even better.