

# Little Kitchen Academy and WS Development Partner to Bring Concept to Jackson, MS with Immediate Franchise Opportunity

*Jackson-Born Iron Chef Cat Cora Serves as Special Advisor and Official Brand Ambassador for New Montessori-Inspired Cooking Academy for Children*

JACKSON, MS, USA, July 15, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Little Kitchen Academy (LKA), the first-of-its-kind, Montessori-inspired cooking academy for kids ages three through teen, today announced it is partnering with WS Development to find the [right franchise partner](#) to bring the first Little Kitchen Academy to Mississippi. The two companies have identified a space at the iconic Highland Village in Jackson and have developed an agreement that is ready to sign. They are now seeking a like-minded franchise partner to open the location in the hometown of Iron Chef Cat Cora, LKA's global brand ambassador. The

quickly growing concept will open its first U.S. location in Los Angeles in August and another in Portland before year's end on its path to open 423 locations worldwide by 2025. Mississippi is one of just 11 exclusive markets available for development in the U.S.

The nearly pandemic-proof concept was founded by Montessori-trained culinary innovator Felicity Curin; her husband, proven global brand and franchise expert and serial entrepreneur Brian Curin (Cold Stone Creamery, Moe's Southwest Grill, Flip Flop Shops) and social impact investor and entrepreneur, Praveen Varshney, to provide a safe, inspiring, and empowering space for children to identify, develop, and refine their senses and develop practical skills for independent thinking.

"We were delighted when WS Development reached out to us with this opportunity to [bring a](#)



little  
kitchen  
academy®

Little Kitchen Academy logo

[Little Kitchen Academy to Jackson](#),” said Brian Curin, CEO and co-founder of Little Kitchen Academy. “We know how long it can take to find the right real estate to get a location open, but by having already found a space and negotiated a deal, which is ready to sign, we have significantly shortened the opening process and now just need to find the right franchise partner to bring the gift of LKA to Jackson! With an agreement ready to go and with the right franchise partner, we could see a location open by late fall.”

Iron Chef Cat Cora, who was born and raised in Jackson, can't wait to find the right person to open a Little Kitchen Academy in her hometown. “When I first met Brian and Felicity and learned about Little Kitchen Academy, I immediately knew that it was something I wanted to be a part of. When I experienced a class and saw how empowered and independent the students were in the kitchen in response to the caring Montessori-inspired approach, I was certain that we had to share this incredible gift with as many children as possible,” said Cora. “As a mother, I am completely aligned with the

unique curriculum and food philosophy. A program like this is needed more now than ever, and it would mean the world to me to share this concept with my hometown.” Cora has served as a key advisor to the company since opening its doors in June 2019. (Hear why Cora is aligned with LKA at: <https://youtu.be/b-zR6Lcltxs>)



Iron Chef Cat Cora & LKA Founder, Felicity Curin

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*Iron Chef Cat Cora, LKA  
Official Brand Ambassador  
and Advisor*

WS Development is equally as excited to bring this concept to Jackson. “As a leader in retail developments and shopping center management, WS Development knows lightning in a bottle when we see it – an experiential concept that builds strong loyalty and creates impact with its customers,” said Alyson Douglas O’Laughlin, senior leasing representative for WS Development. “When we heard about Little Kitchen Academy’s desire to come to Jackson, we worked hard to create a deal with the company to bring the first of this concept to the south,

right here at the Highland Village in downtown Jackson. Now we just need to find the right franchise owner.”

LKA founder and COO, Felicity Curin, is excited to share the concept with families in Jackson, because she sees the impact it has on students every day. “Little Kitchen Academy is the key

ingredient for an independent child,” said Felicity. “We see the independence in our students growing every day. It starts from the moment our students walk in the door when an instructor hands them their chef’s coat and demonstrates how to do up the first button, then encourages the child to do the rest. We’ve definitely seen some interesting ways of buttoning a chef coat and buttons are frequently missed, but it’s about the effort, not the result. Then once our students are in class, they continue to build their independence with every task they do, whether that’s learning how to use a knife, making a decision about what substitutions they might like to make to that day’s recipe, or taking responsibility for cleaning their station and washing their dishes. Seeing their independence and empowerment grow is truly inspiring and we can’t wait to share the joy with the community in Jackson.”

### Seasonal Sessions Year-round

Seasonal sessions run year-round and are organized by age group (ages 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, and 13+ years old). Students experience a three-hour class once a week during the school year or over five consecutive days during Summer, Winter, & Spring breaks. In each class students learn how to make healthy, delicious, and seasonal meals from scratch to consumption—all while experimenting with math and science concepts, working on their reading skills, and polishing up their table manners by sharing meals around the LKA community table (made with more than 33,000 recycled chopsticks). Sessions are limited to just 10 students and are overseen by three instructors. The curriculum focuses on seasonal, locally grown, and organic produce and ingredients, and students enjoy the fruits of their labor for a “scratch to consumption” experience at the end of each lesson. All students are welcome in this fully inclusive program, including those with learning or other disabilities. The program, which is nut, meat, poultry, and seafood free, also can accommodate those with gluten, dairy, or other allergies.



Iron Chef Cat Cora and LKA founder, Felicity Curin



Changing Lives From Scratch

## The Montessori Approach

LKA's Montessori-inspired environment is organized to support the growth and development of each child. Instructors show the students how to safely use tools, but step back to closely observe the independent work, only stepping in when deemed appropriate. This approach enables students to learn at their own pace while they acquire practical life skills that foster independence, confidence, and socialization. LKA further empowers students to make better food choices, to apply age-appropriate math and science skills in real-world settings, and embrace practices such as recycling, composting, and the concept of philanthropy in order to make positive, socially conscious contributions to the world through its recently announced global philanthropic initiative "How Can I Help," which empowers students to learn about giving back and making a difference by putting the choice in their hands to support one of three notable causes. Learn more about LKA's innovative philanthropic program:

<https://littlekitchenacademy.com/how-can-i-help/>

## The Inspiration and Trajectory

LKA is the brain trust of Founder Felicity Curin, a mother of three, who combined three of her life-long passions: cooking, education, and children. She is a trained chef who began her career at Earls Restaurants, a Canadian-based upscale eatery chain, which she introduced into the U.S. market. She also is the daughter of the founding headmaster of the prestigious West Point Grey Academy and took her natural ability to teach and love for children to the classroom by getting her (AMI) Association Montessori Internationale teaching degree. The idea for Little Kitchen Academy was born in 2018 and Felicity opened her first location in June 2019. Her husband and co-founder, Brian Curin, quickly developed the brand and franchise model, secured the company's early investors and advisors, and set out to secure global partners and the first multi-unit franchisees and development partners. Two locations in Canada are opening this month: LKA South Surrey (Greater Vancouver, BC) and LKA Oakville (Greater Toronto, ON). At least six new locations will open in 2021 with the first U.S. location in Los Angeles and the second (and first franchise location) in Portland.

Little Kitchen Academy is currently seeking like-minded multi-unit franchisees and development partners based exclusively in AZ, CA, CO, FL, IL, MS, NC, OR, TX, WA, and WI. Internationally, LKA is focused on expanding further into Canada in AB, select markets in BC, and ON, as well as Australia, India, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, MENA region, Singapore, Spain, and the U.K.

## The Signature Environment

Every Little Kitchen Academy features the brand's signature innovative and modern design and include 10 individual cooking stations (a.k.a. Little Kitchens); a handwashing station; a living food wall powered by AeroGarden for students to grow and harvest fruits, vegetables, and herbs for use in their creations; the LKA Community Table made by ChopValue from more than 33,000 recycled chopsticks; a stocked pantry and refrigeration system for the children to gather their

ingredients; laundry facilities for the little chef coats; an educational recycling and composting area; and restrooms. Each of the 10 individual cooking stations includes an oven, induction cooktop, sink, cleaning and sanitizing supplies, prep table, mixer, and all the equipment and utensils needed to make the “from scratch” creations including vegetable peelers, rolling pins, measuring spoons, and colanders, which are meticulously kept, cleaned, and commercially sanitized between each class.

## About Little Kitchen Academy

Little Kitchen Academy (LKA) is the key ingredient for an independent child. The first-of-its-kind, Montessori-inspired cooking academy for kids ages three through teen, is focused on providing a safe, inspiring, and empowering space for children to identify, develop and refine their senses. Based in Vancouver, Canada, the concept was co-founded by proven global brand and franchise expert and serial entrepreneur Brian Curin, his wife, Montessori-trained, culinary expert and visionary Felicity Curin, and social impact investor and entrepreneur Praveen Varshney, on the belief that by empowering children with practical life skills and knowledge in a positive and joyful environment, they and their company will effect positive lifestyle changes that result in a healthier world. True to its mission, LKA lives to create a more educated, able, and healthy society through mindful, healthy eating choices, and is committed to changing lives, from scratch to consumption. Part of that mission includes empowering students to learn how they can make the world a better place through How Can I Help by Little Kitchen Academy, LKA's signature philanthropic program, supporting Chefs for Humanity, The Global FoodBanking Network, Kids Help Phone, and PHIT America. In addition to charitable partnerships, LKA has forged strategic global brand partnerships with Iron Chef Cat Cora, AeroGarden, BIRKENSTOCK, ChefWorks, Emeco, ChopValue, Welcome Industries, Location3, and PRISE Inc. Little Kitchen Academy's flagship venues are located in Vancouver, BC and Los Angeles, CA.

For a taste of Little Kitchen Academy, visit [littlekitchenacademy.com](http://littlekitchenacademy.com) or join its communities on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube. □

## About Highland Village

Nestled in the heart of Jackson just off of I-55 N is the city's largest, most eclectic shopping destination. Highland Village (HV) is an iconic hub of the community where timeless meets of-the-moment in an atmosphere steeped in culture and southern charm. At HV, local artists' works dot our enchanting property, which is home to some of the most sought-after names in regional and national retail and dining, as well as several of the area's top specialty medical clinics. Stroll the ambling hallways and explore every story to discover beloved boutiques, cuisine from renowned chefs and the only Whole Foods Market in Mississippi. At HV, we strive to celebrate our roots and open our doors to the world beyond Jackson.

## About WS Development

Massachusetts-based WS Development is a mixed-use developer with a singular mission: creating places people want to be. With an approach that values art, science, innovation and, above all else, people, WS strives to engage each community it serves. Established in 1990, WS is a vertically integrated company that conceptualizes, owns, operates, markets and leases more than 100 properties that range from cutting-edge urban spaces to lifestyle and community destinations. With over 20 million square feet of existing space and an additional five million square feet under development, it is one of the largest privately-owned development firms in the country. For more information, visit [www.wsdevelopment.com](http://www.wsdevelopment.com), call 617.232.8900 or follow WS Development on LinkedIn.

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