

Monthly Meals, Maximum Impact: Smack Dab's Recipe for Feeding Chicago and Building Community

From 19,000 meals to a neighborhood pantry, Smack Dab blends catering, brunch, and community care into one recipe for impact.



smack dab chicago logo

CHICAGO, IL, UNITED STATES, October 1, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In Rogers Park, one restaurant is proving that

food is more than what shows up on the plate. [Smack Dab](#), the women-owned Chicago restaurant and [Chicago catering](#) company known for its scratch-made comfort dishes and [brunch menu](#), has built a model where every order helps feed the neighborhood. From nearly 19,000 community meals served to keeping a local pantry and Love Fridge stocked on a weekly basis, Smack Dab's work is a reminder that restaurants can play a bigger role in the fabric of city life.

“

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Teeny - Owner

A TRADITION OF MONTHLY MEALS

Smack Dab's monthly community meals began nearly a decade ago as a way to meet neighbors' needs directly. What started as a simple gesture has grown into a long-standing commitment. Today, the restaurant serves roughly 225 meals each month, adding up to nearly 19,000 over the course of seven to eight years.

“We never set out to make this a flashy initiative,” says Teeny, co-owner of Smack Dab. “It just became part of who we are. Sharing meals with people isn't an extra; it's at the heart of how we operate.”

The monthly meals are served with the same care and quality as Smack Dab's everyday offerings. For the restaurant team, it's about showing that good food and dignity belong together, regardless of circumstance.

STOCKING THE PANTRY, FILLING THE FRIDGE

Alongside the monthly meals, Smack Dab also supports the city's mutual aid network by contributing to local Love Fridges, community refrigerators where anyone can give or take food.

On any given week, Smack Dab might stock jars of beans, donate surplus produce, or fill the fridge with fresh-made items like donuts. At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, Teeny regularly purchased \$200-\$300 worth of produce at half price to make sure the fridge stayed full. More recently, the restaurant has committed up to 100 pounds of beans a week, keeping protein-rich, shelf-stable food available to anyone who needs it.

"The pantry and fridge aren't about charity, they're about community care," Teeny explains.

"Everyone contributes what they can, and everyone knows there's food there if they need it."

Maintained by neighbors and fueled in part by Smack Dab's consistent contributions, the pantry and fridge are living proof of how grassroots food security can work.

WHY BUSINESSES CHOOSE SMACK DAB

Smack Dab's focus on community impact isn't just good for Rogers Park, it's also a deciding factor for many of the businesses and organizations that choose the restaurant for catering.

"Companies tell us all the time that they could order catering from anywhere," Teeny says. "But when they order from us, they know their dollars are doing double duty. They're not only feeding their staff or their clients, they're also helping us keep meals and pantry staples available for people right here in Chicago. That matters to them."



Community Dinner - Always Vegan



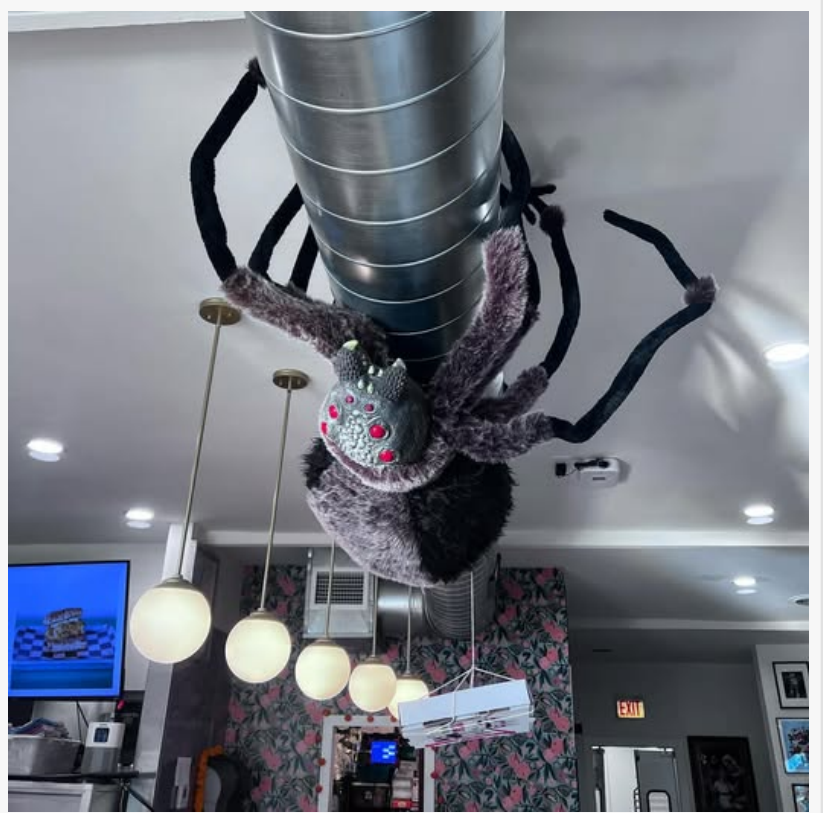
Macaroni and Cheese

This community-first reputation has made Smack Dab a go-to choice for offices, schools, creative agencies, and wellness centers within a 10-mile radius. Clients appreciate that they can host meetings, retreats, or special events while aligning their dollars with a local business that reinvests in the neighborhood. Businesses can reinvest their own dollars by ordering catering directly through Smack Dab.

CATERING THAT EXTENDS BEYOND THE EVENT

Smack Dab's catering operations, available for events of up to 250 guests, are designed to make things easy on clients while keeping the mission front and center. Word-of-mouth referrals remain strong, with many clients returning for repeat bookings once they realize the impact their orders support.

Susan the Spider



For smaller gatherings, the restaurant also offers flexible packages and à la carte ordering, giving teams options whether they need a spread of breakfast sandwiches or a full table of lunch favorites. And for those who'd rather come to the source, Smack Dab's Rogers Park location is open for brunch, with a brunch menu that balances comfort and creativity.

A PRACTICAL MODEL OF MUTUAL AID

Unlike one-off charity drives, Smack Dab's work is structured to be ongoing and sustainable. The monthly meals are built into operations. Pantry contributions come from both restaurant purchases and kitchen surplus. The approach isn't about grand gestures but about weaving generosity into the day-to-day.

That practicality has kept the program steady over the years. Even when the restaurant faced challenges of its own, the meals and fridge stocking remained non-negotiable.

"Restaurants are built on consistency," Teeny says. "We serve breakfast, lunch, and brunch every day of the week we are open. Extending that consistency into how we take care of our community just made sense."

MORE THAN A RESTAURANT

For Smack Dab, food is never just food. It's connection, comfort, and a vehicle for impact. With nearly 19,000 meals served, countless jars of beans distributed, and an unwavering commitment to mutual aid, the restaurant has carved out a unique place in Chicago's dining scene.

For customers, it means that enjoying a Saturday brunch, picking up coffee, or booking catering is also an act of support for neighbors. That's a powerful incentive to return, not just for the food but for the values baked into it.

ABOUT SMACK DAB

Smack Dab is a women-owned restaurant and catering company in Chicago's Rogers Park neighborhood, serving scratch-made comfort dishes with options for gluten-free and vegan eaters. Founded on the belief that everyone deserves something comforting and filling to eat, Smack Dab has donated nearly 19,000 community meals over the past eight years while keeping local pantries and Love Fridges stocked year-round. Learn more about us, browse the brunch menu, or consider ordering catering for your next gathering.

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