# Quick Coop

Allyson Quick's journey to creating Quick Coop is a testament to the power of family, community, and a resilient spirit. While her path wasn't always linear, it's a story of embracing change, pursuing passions, and building a business that nourishes both her family and her community.

Prior to launching Quick Coop, Allyson worked full-time as a dedicated nurse, a career that took on profound significance during the COVID-19 pandemic. The challenges she faced during that time, including contracting COVID-19 and its lingering effects, led her to reconsider her lifestyle and prioritize healthier living. This period of reflection, coupled with her role as a stay-at-home mom, sparked a desire to create something tangible and nourishing for her family.

Allyson's interest in raising chickens was ignited by social media, where she saw the potential for a sustainable, family-friendly venture. "It made me feel like I could do it," she recalls. The idea blossomed into Quick Coop, a business focused on providing fresh, high-quality eggs to her community.

Why start a business? For Allyson, it was about more than just producing eggs. It was about creating a healthier lifestyle, fostering a connection to her food, and building a legacy for her children. "I just want to live a healthier lifestyle and try my hand at baking and canning and learning from those processes," she explains.

The early stages of Quick Coop were a family affair. Allyson's initial coop, a significant find at a minimal cost, was a testament to the support of her extended family. "The startup for me was lucky because I started telling my family about it and they ended up knowing someone that was buying a house that had a chicken coop they wanted to get rid of. I got a $2,000 coop for 100 bucks."

Her husband, Marcus, and children, AJ and Amara, are integral to the operation. Amara, the "chicken wrangler," actively participates in caring for the flock, while Marcus is always ready to lend a hand with any chore. "My husband will do any chicken chore I tell him to do. He is the best," Allyson shares. The coop's location at her grandmother's garden in Rock Island further underscores the family's involvement. "My grandma is so supportive and lets me do whatever I want on her plot," Allyson says.

The journey wasn't without its challenges. An early setback, the loss of her first flock to foxes, prompted Marcus to start building a "chicken mansion" from pallets and hardware cloth, demonstrating the family's commitment to resilience. The current temporary coop at her own house, built by her uncle, emphasizes the strong family connection.

Allyson's flock, a carefully chosen mix of a Leghorn, two blue Ameraucanas, two green Ameraucanas, two Welsummers, a Rhode Island Red, two Black Copper Marans, and three Easter Eggers, is currently providing a bountiful supply of eggs. With seven or eight hens laying, she's consistently selling several dozen eggs weekly. “Presently, business is booming,” Allyson confirms, 'I’m consistently getting about 7 eggs a day and I’m selling 4 or 5 dozen per week. They’ve only been laying since December, and my customers are my family and friends.” And what Allyson enjoys most? It doesn’t feel like work. She truly loves what she does.

Allyson's vision extends beyond eggs. She plans to expand her offerings to include bees and honey, and she dreams of creating a community event space. "My next plan that I want to talk to Ann about is getting an event space to do more community events," she says. "In an ideal situation, I would love to have an event space where I can do anything community wise, workshops, and can also double as an event rental space for birthday parties or even wedding receptions." Her involvement with the Jaycees of the Quad Cities, an organization of young professionals that prides itself on blending social opportunities with service, reflects her desire to foster community connections. "I want to have this balance of work and family and community and push it all together."

Allyson first connected with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at Western Illinois University while seeking assistance with a previous business venture. When she decided to launch Quick Coop, she knew where to turn. "I got a catalogue in the mail from WIU and her name was in it so I reached out," she says of Ann Friederichs, Director of the Small Business Development Center at Western Illinois University.

The SBDC played a crucial role in helping Allyson navigate the complexities of starting a business. "I can always bounce ideas off of Ann and sometimes I feel like I'm running into a brick wall and I wonder if it's just me but Ann always assures me that it's not," Allyson shares. "And if I'm not able to meet in person, she's always very willing to communicate via email or Zoom."

To aspiring entrepreneurs, Allyson offers simple yet powerful advice: "Just go do it. Sometimes you're scared to lose but you just need to do it. I don't want to live with regrets. So, whatever it is, just do it."

Quick Coop is more than just a business; it's a reflection of Allyson's commitment to her family, her community, and a healthier lifestyle. With the support of her loved ones and the guidance of the SBDC, Allyson Quick is building a thriving enterprise, one egg, and one connection, at a time.