

Margo Provost's Story

Margo Provost, founder, owner and operator of, Log Haven, a fine dining restaurant in Salt Lake City, Utah did not start out to be a restaurateur. After graduating from high school, she went to college and focused on a career in Information Technologies and Healthcare. She was very successful in this career into the early 1990's. In 1994 she decided to move to Utah but was unable to find work in her chosen field. During interviews she was told she earned too much money for a woman and would not be able to make the same salary she was accustomed to. So, she "changed careers and proved them all wrong."

Log Haven was originally built in 1920 by steel baron and Metropolitan Opera member, L.F. Rains as an anniversary gift for his wife. By the 1980's Log Haven was in bad shape and slated to be destroyed when Margo purchased the building in 1994. Renovating and refurbishing the historic building did not come easy or cheap. She invested every dollar of her savings and retirement, sold her house, her cars and ran up all her credit cards. And if that wasn't enough, the bank that originally committed to financing this endeavor of hers decided to back out. In addition, she was required by the County to meet 1990 earthquake codes which was an additional expense, asbestos was found throughout the structure, the contractor contracted hepatitis and to top it off, her husband lost his job!

For some, this may have been the last straw and would have thrown in the towel and given up. In spite of all these obstacles, Margo hung in there and opened the restaurant. However, two weeks after the opening, she was informed the cost of the project was not accurate due to accounting errors, and that her budget was over by nearly a half a million dollars. The project had taken nearly three years and now she found herself facing bankruptcy if something didn't change. "I decided to reorganize, hire a marketing professional and make a final push to salvage three years of heartache and back-breaking effort. I refinanced with a local institution, rebalanced my life and priorities after contracting cancer, and slowly climbed out of the hole."

Margo is proud of her accomplishments as an IT and Healthcare professional, for overcoming the challenges and obstacles she faced in opening her restaurant, and for owning and running a successful establishment today, but she is mostly proud of the non-tangibles. "I am most grateful for the perspectives I have embraced; those of compassion and empathy, acceptance and gratitude." She has learned to celebrate the success of others which has not always been easy for her and considers it a "true accomplishment."

Evidence of that speaks for itself because she is involved in mentoring programs and charities locally and nationwide. If we are unable to celebrate the success of others, we would probably not be mentors, involved in non-profit organizations in our communities or doing things that bring value and success to others. Margo has served as Board Chair for WNET, an organization that promotes entrepreneurship among women through mentoring. She has mentored several women restaurateurs in Utah as well as young girls in the Salt Lake County Juvenile Detention Center. She states; "This is always rewarding because others always assume one has had the advantages and that is what has led to their success." How true is that! Both younger and older women sometimes believe that if others have made it high on the ladder of success, they must have had some type of advantage, but in many situations that is not the case. Margo who didn't have an ideal past or childhood, found a way from sheer desire and determination to make a better life for herself; a life of joy and success and free of fear. Success not necessarily defined as monetary success although many times that is part of it, but success in having a better life and becoming a better person through all of the trials.

Today, Margo meditates daily and focuses on being in the present and not in the past. She continues to set goals for all aspects of her life; first setting the goal, communicating it then executing it step by step and measuring her progress. She's also very active as a volunteer in a program called ProStart which is very rewarding to her. She's been involved in the organization for six years as a mentor and as a judge at competitions. It is a formal career-building program for high school students interested in culinary arts and food service management. These students commit to a 2 year program consisting of classroom study and mentoring opportunities with local and national competitions. Over 60,000 students participate in more than 1,600 schools.

Log Haven remains a well known establishment for fine dining and if anyone is in the area, stop by and say hello to Margo and have a wonderful meal. I've had the pleasure of dining there on a few occasions and highly recommend it.

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Check out Log Haven. It's absolutely gorgeous. [www.log-haven.com](http://www.log-haven.com)

And for all those interested in learning about Prostart click on the link below.

[www.prostart.restaurant.org](http://www.prostart.restaurant.org)