Ryan Loomis, MBA
Regional Director

HELENA COLLEGE
University of Montana

Helena Regional SBDC

Mariposa Massage & Healing Center

Helena, MT



"Ryan has been extremely helpful in helping me figure out the best way to move my business forward to the next level. He has given me the confidence boost I needed to believe in myself and my vision again. His knowledge of the resources available to help small businesses navigate through often rough waters is amazing! I am extremely grateful to be working with the Helena SBDC."
Barbara Calahan, *Owner*

Twenty-four years ago, Barbara Calahan left her Amish community in rural Ohio. She never imagined she would become a massage therapist or employer when she grew up, but in 2016 things changed. Wanting to do something that would make a difference for those Barbara encountered, and most importantly, wanting to provide a better life for her two daughters, she decided to attend massage school. In October 2016, after completing massage school, Barbara started Mariposa Massage and worked part-time, two days a week. By October 2017, Barbara had transitioned into working full-time, doing 20-25 massages per week. At this point, Barbara needed help and entertained the idea of bringing on another therapist. Barbara's first therapist came on staff in January of 2018, followed by three more as her client demand continued to increase. By early 2019, Barbara needed to expand her footprint and find a new, larger location to keep up with increased business.

Barbara met with Ryan Loomis, Helena SBDC Regional Director, to help navigate the decisions needed to continue her path of sustained success. Mariposa had grown at such a fast rate that Barbara began the transition of stepping out of massages to take on administrative duties and needed help finding a way to pay herself a salary. Additionally, there was a need to hire more therapists within the existing space of her current building. Ryan worked with Barbara to maximize the space to accommodate an increased staff, analyzing pricing and employee pay, while working on a loan package to finance the option of moving into a new facility for expansion, hire new employees, and purchase new equipment needed for development.

While seeing close to 100 percent growth each year, Barbara has hired two new massage therapists and an administrative manager and has retained four staff. She has increased her client numbers and is currently looking to expand into a new facility and to hire more massage therapists. Barbara also has plans to create a healing center by offering space to other health and wellness businesses, such as chiropractic care and behavioral health services. Massage therapy is much more than just pampering at the spa. It is therapy with many benefits, some still being discovered, even though it is a form of therapy that goes back to ancient times. Barbara's dedication to educating people and bringing massage therapy to the rapidly growing healthcare system has shown in Mariposa's growth. Mariposa was voted Best Massage in the Best of Helena 2019, an annual publication that recognizes the most outstanding businesses and organizations in Helena.