3 CulinaryMed Docs Podcast\_1

**Kathryn Dankesreiter:** Welcome back to this episode of the Hub Hustle Podcast. I'm Kathryn Dankesreiter, the Marketing and Engagement Coordinator at the Innovation Hub. I'm joined today by one of our Accelerator graduates 3 CulinaryMed Docs.

**Allison Childress:** I'm Allison Childress, I'm the CEO.

**Michelle Alcorn:** I'm Michelle Alcorn, the CFO.

**Shannon Galyean:** Shannon Gallian and I'm the CTO.

**Kathryn Dankesreiter:** You've been an amazing team to work with over the past year through the Accelerator Program, how did three culinary med docs get started?

**Michelle Alcorn:** I was teaching food production classes and was approached by a fraternity. They wanted to do a cooking demo for Men's Health. I thought, "Wow, what an awesome opportunity to bring in people from the nutrition department. So I reached out to Dr. Gallian and we started with a research project and a cooking demo for a bunch of gentlemen.

We were like, let's keep going with this and figure out what we can do. So we brought in Dr. Childress and culinary medicine became our research focus.

Then somewhere along the line, somebody said, "Wow, you should really think about commercializing this research." We thought, what a great idea.

**Kathryn Dankesreiter:** That's awesome. Just briefly. Can you explain what culinary medicine is?

**Shannon Galyean:** Culinary medicine is a new build of medicine and it takes the art of cooking and blends it with the science of medicine. We like to say great taste, science-based.

We know that taste is important, but it's also something we feel is empowering to someone who has a chronic condition like diabetes. And if they're questioning, what do I eat? This culinary medicine helps them meet them where they're at in their culture and give them the answers of what foods to buy that are still tasty.

**Kathryn Dankesreiter:** That's awesome. So what is Sam? I see that logo all the time in conjunction with the 3 CulinaryMed Docs logo.

**Allison Childress:** Sam is an app that creates customized meal plans using culinary medicine for people who have chronic conditions. It empowers people to manage their chronic condition nutritionally because what we've found as clinicians and through our I-CORPS Program was that there was no place for people to go and find that information. People would find information from this website and this podcast and this other website and this blog and they tried to put it all together. Sometimes that information wasn't correct.

We realized that we needed to create a place where people could come and get good nutrition information based on your chronic condition.

**Kathryn Dankesreiter:** What chronic illnesses are you targeting?

**Allison Childress:** That's a good question. So we are tackling diabetes and pre-diabetes, hypertension, and pre-hypertension, cardiovascular disease, high cholesterol, celiac disease, gerd, and obesity.

And we get asked this question a lot especially by investors, why are you focusing on so many chronic conditions? Why not just focus on one and do that one really well, and then do another one?

The answer to that is it is rare that somebody just has one of these chronic conditions. You know, most people have more than one, and sometimes that becomes even more confusing because they think, "Okay, this is low in sugar and it will help me manage my blood sugar for my diabetes, but how is it gonna affect my high blood pressure?"

That's the problem our app solves. You can have one of those chronic conditions or you can have every single one of them and our app creates a customized meal plan for you.

**Kathryn Dankesreiter:** That is so fantastic. So over a year ago, I interviewed you. You had just started your journey through the Accelerator Program and last week you finished it up officially. What are the major highlights from this program?

**Allison Childress:** I think I wanna start with really kinda the first thing that we did with our accelerator fund was we went through the branding process. There was a little bit of the back and forth on this cause it was not cheap.

Our entire branding process was 2 months. When I say branding, they helped us come up with a logo, they helped us come up with a color scheme, they helped us come up with voice pillars, and a culture. In other words, we have an entire branding guide. I think that's probably the most important thing we did.

For example, we had a meeting with General Mills and we showed people our prototype, utilizing this branding. That's the most impressive part, I think, to what a lot of people see. We've been told so many times that it looks like something you'd wanna engage in versus, what we've heard from competitors. So I think branding to me was, that was a big first step.

**Shannon Galyean:** We would have been so lost prior to the Accelerator. Having that team know exactly what our product is, what our goals are, and then giving us connections to talk with people to figure out more of our path that we need to take was truly helpful.

**Michelle Alcorn:** Speaking of our mentors they were just recently awarded the mentor of the year.

**Kathryn Dankesreiter:** Yes!

**Allison Childress:** We sat down and we spent like an hour and a half of really intentional writing. Thinking back deeply about what everybody had taught us.

**Kathryn Dankesreiter:** Yeah. It was really, really cool. I was the person that was overseeing as the awards were coming in. It was cool to see how much every single team in the Accelerator Program had to say about the mentor team.

I think every single one of them submitted something and then y'all's obviously came through and I was like, "They wrote a book!"

It was so endearing to see. I really do wanna harp on the fact that these mentors, like they hold your hands through it. And I think that that is such an awesome foundation.

**Allison Childress:** I think that's a really good point. Even people who don't have a startup have days that are just tough. I'm telling you, the mentors just really guided us through and helped us make it through those tough days.

Not only were they there to support us, but they helped reinvigorate us and kept us going down a very long road.

**Kathryn Dankesreiter:** Yeah, for sure, and those are connections that you have now for the rest of your lives. It's one of the things that I love about the Innovation Hub. It's good to see that the startups value it as well. So what's on the horizon?

**Allison Childress:** Well, big thing is our app being completed, our MVP. That will happen in November. And so the first thing we'll do is test it. We're gonna test in a retail clinic and then we're also gonna test with some private physicians and then a couple of physician groups.

Look at what the users think about how the app flow. What do they think about the recipes? What do they think about the meal plans? And really dive deep into some good data so that we can then tweak it a little bit. Hopefully in early 2024 bring it to people.

**Kathryn Dankesreiter:** It feels like it's not right around the corner, but I know the time is going to fly by for y'all. I'd be happy to test it if you ever need someone.

**Michelle Alcorn:** We need to bring Yes. Yes. Bring me along. Bring you, yes.

**Kathryn Dankesreiter:** I do wanna go eventually, but walk me through like, what is a presentation at TechConnect?

**Allison Childress:** We have five minutes to pitch and we get to pitch to NIH, NSF, the Department of Defense, USDA. There'll be government grant officers. There'll be private industry. There'll be public companies. We're really excited more than anything to tell people what it is we're doing. We see it as an opportunity to see where we can go nationwide with Sam.

**Kathryn Dankesreiter:** Congratulations, first of all on that. You'll have to let me know how that goes. Okay. I expect some social media posts to be sent my way. I'll share all of that.

I've heard rumors about this, but y'all are gonna be inside H-E-B, is that right?

**Allison Childress:** So that is the plan for now, yes. We're gonna start with they are one of the companies that's decided to help us start beta testing. We don't have a medical clinic here in the Lubbock store, but there are in the other stores.

Then hopefully we will be partnering with them so that our grocery list can be migrated into an H-E-B grocery cart so that people can go pick up their groceries for their meal plan or have 'em delivered. We're really excited about a lot of future possibilities.

**Kathryn Dankesreiter:** That is so cool. Yeah. So walk me through that process just a little bit. Did they approach you, did you approach them?

**Allison Childress:** It happened at our soft launch in November, where we just started spreading the word. Michelle had a colleague who was there.

**Michelle Alcorn:** Yeah. So my colleague is friends with somebody who is working in the H-E-B Wellness Program, and she was mentioning what she had done a night after work and her friend was like, " tell me more about this".

So my colleague briefly summarized our launch that night. And she goes, "wow, I really think that that is something that we want here at H-E-B. So can you give me their contact information?"

And she didn't stop there. When my colleague didn't give her the contact information quickly enough, she reached back out and said "I need that contact information". And it started from there. For us, it was like kind of a crazy thing, right? Like HEB is contacting us to have a meeting and we had no idea what it meant, right?

We actually did our meeting here at the Hub in one of the conference rooms. From there it's kind of spurred into different partnership opportunities.

**Allison Childress:** One of the things that we learned, especially from Mike, our lead mentor, is that connections are everything and it only takes one person. It only takes one person hearing your idea or about your company or about your product to completely change the trajectory of where you're going.

And that's exactly what happened that night. It was just one person who heard it and it happened to be the right person, and it just changed the direction we were going.

**Kathryn Dankesreiter:** That is insane. And with H-E-B no less, that's so cool.

**Allison Childress:** Really cool things about, about H-E-B was that they were so impressed with the Innovation Hub and they were so impressed with the backing and the support that we got. And I know that without that there, we would not have formed the partnership that we have today. So we, we would not have that were it not for the Hub.

**Kathryn Dankesreiter:** Alright. So now I'm gonna expect H-E-B to call me and they're gonna set up some things, you know very, very cool.

We got to see a lot of you, Alison, throughout the month of April, you introduced your keynote speaker, IRA Green at the Discoveries to Impact keynote luncheon. And then again last week y'all shared your story at the graduation ceremony. And so will we continue to see you around the hub?

**Allison Childress:** Definitely we are members of the hub. We really don't need office space, but we wanna be here and that Hub membership just meet us right where we were at with exactly what we need, when we need to have meetings, when we need to have conferences, but we're not taking up space that somebody else might, would use on a daily basis.

**Michelle Alcorn:** I feel like the community here are so supportive in the sense that, we say something or we ask something we've never been told no. Right? Like, no, that's a bad idea. No, we can't help you with that. Nope. We've never heard. No. So it's supportive.

**Shannon Galyean:** I mean, just motivating to work. We work for hours and get so much done. And I don't know if it's just. The environment, the color of the table, the color of the walls, I dunno.

But when we walk in, the community is definitely there. I like to say family, just because it has that feel of like people want to help you. They love to see you succeed. So having that support and motivation. We just get tons done here.

I will say we would, we had no idea about the hub as we started our journey. And I just remember us being in awe as we learned more and more about the hub and like we had this at our fingertips. It was just crazy to know the support and everything that you guys do for people.

**Allison Childress:** We'll really tell everybody we come in contact with about the hub. And I think one of the most common misconceptions is out there is it's just for tech people. We tell people all the time, no, it is not just for students or faculty or staff, it's for anybody in the Lubbock community. And so we take what we can, we bring people here, we invite 'em to events just so they can see the atmosphere and feel the energy and feel the innovation that happened here.

**Kathryn Dankesreiter:** We always say between our team," oh, if we could just get them in the door, then they're hooked".

**Allison Childress:** That's true.

**Kathryn Dankesreiter:** We appreciate y'all being ambassadors for us and so glad that you're staying around. Well thank y'all so much for joining me for this podcast and congratulations on graduating from the accelerator once again.

**Michelle Alcorn:** Thank you. Thank you.