



CRA MEMBER SPOTLIGHT STORY:

From Waitress to Founder: How Danielle Casilio Built Yelli, a Training Tool Restaurants Actually Need

What happens when a working waitress gets tired of watching good employees fail because nobody gave them a clear way to learn the job? For Danielle Casilio, the answer was to build the tool herself.

Danielle started waitressing at 15 and spent the next decade working her way through a range of restaurants — a breakfast diner in rural Pennsylvania, a German Biergarten in Texas, a rooftop restaurant with Hollywood Hills views. Wherever she landed, she noticed the same pattern: because of her knack for organization, she kept getting handed the training program. Onboard the new hire. Keep the menu knowledge current. Make sure the whole team was actually on the same page. She did it with binders, sticky notes, and group texts — and it never quite worked.

In 2019, she decided to fix it. That idea became [Yelli](#), a training and communication app built specifically for restaurants. Instead of managers relying on printed binders or scattered group chats, [Yelli](#) gives them one place to build training plans, assign them to new hires automatically, and push real-time updates the moment something changes — a menu item, a procedure, a policy. Staff pull it up on their phones, in a format built for a five-minute break, not a two-hour orientation.

Danielle has said the goal from day one was simple: if restaurants could simplify how they train and communicate, both the staff experience and the guest experience would improve. That idea came straight from the floor, not a boardroom — and it's still the standard the product gets held to today.

[Yelli](#) is built and maintained by Terra Tech LLC and is now used by restaurant groups across the country looking to cut down on training time, reduce turnover-related retraining, and keep menu knowledge consistent across every location — without a single printed binder. For an industry that runs on fast onboarding and constant menu changes, Danielle's story is a reminder that some of the best tools come from the people who were doing the job long before they built the software for it.