



# THE TOP 100 INNOVATORS and *Entrepreneurs*

Celebrating  
our 16th  
Year of  
Publishing

*Featuring*

**TRANG (LENA) LE**

**Founder and Chef  
Lena's Asian Kitchen**

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## TRANG (LENA) LE

### FOUNDER AND CHEF

Trang (Lena) Le wears many hats—award-winning chef, entrepreneur, and community advocate—but perhaps the most impactful is that of a healer. As the founder and executive chef of *Lena's Asian Kitchen*, a Houston-based meal prep and catering company, Lena is redefining what it means to run a business with purpose. At the heart of her work is an unwavering commitment to supporting survivors of domestic abuse, a cause that hits close to home.

Born and raised in Vietnam, Lena moved to the United States in 2015 with dreams as rich as her culture's culinary traditions. After earning a BA in accounting and finance, she shifted course and pursued her culinary passion, training in the U.S. and working at acclaimed Houston restaurants like Bludorn. In 2022, she launched Lena's Asian Kitchen, a meal prep service known for its fresh, healthy interpretations of classic Asian dishes like Honey Lemongrass Grilled Chicken and Korean Japchae, along with a diverse menu featuring more than 60 items from across the Asian culinary landscape. They also provide meal prep and catering for weddings and other events. But the kitchen serves more than meals—it serves as a safe haven.

"My mom and aunt are both survivors of domestic abuse," Lena shares. "That inspired me to help others going through the same trauma." Her firsthand experience with shelters exposed the critical gap survivors face after escaping abuse—often left without job skills, confidence, or means to support

themselves. Determined to bridge that gap, Lena created a solution grounded in compassion and sustainability.

Through Lena's Foundation, a 501-c3, she established the *Culinary Experience Program*, a paid internship that offers six to twelve months of structured training in both front and back-of-house restaurant operations. "Jumping into a busy kitchen is too overwhelming for many," she explains. "So, we created a space where they can learn, heal, and rebuild their lives without the pressure to turn a profit." The foundation has served over 18,000 meals to survivors of domestic violence, human trafficking, PTSD, and other crises over the past five years. Lena also provides job opportunities at her own business, allowing survivors to build financial independence while being supported every step of the way.

Her impact hasn't gone unnoticed. Lena has been featured as a champion on *Chopped* (Truffle episode, S57/E9), appeared on *Beat Bobby Flay* (S35/E5), and was named a *Top 50 Unsung Hero*. She's also a *James Beard Thanksgiving Table* winner—accolades that highlight not just her culinary talent, but her humanitarian spirit.

With 13 pickup locations, a growing frozen meal line, and full-service catering, Lena's Asian Kitchen is thriving. But for Lena, success is measured not in profits, but in people. "When someone tells me they finally feel safe, seen, or strong—that's the real reward."



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