

**ANDREW STOLOFF, 53**  
 Richmond, Calif.

"It's like God sent Andrew to this bakery," says quality assurance manager Sheila Young-Eberhart (far left) of Stoloff (third from right, with other employees).



# LAST-CHANCE BAKERY

**WHEN A FRIEND ASKED** former Wall Streeter Andrew Stoloff to sell the failing Rubicon Bakery for a nonprofit devoted to helping recovering addicts, ex-cons and other troubled souls, he never imagined he'd find the brave new owner staring back at him in the mirror. "The place had outdated equipment and 14 part-time employees, some of whom had come through prison or a drug program," he recalls. "It wasn't a very attractive package. But I fell in love with the mission:

To give people a second chance."

So he took a gamble himself. Putting up his own money and taking out a loan, he bought the place with its staff ("I promised no layoffs") and invested in new equipment. Today the wholesaler racks up \$8 million in annual sales and employs 80 men and women trying to turn around lives derailed by unemployment, drugs, crime and other problems. "Not only are we doing the right thing, it's great for business," says Stoloff, a married dad of two, whose staff

earns between \$8.50 and \$24 an hour and gets health and vacation benefits. "They are very, very loyal employees."

Count among the devoted David Johnson, 44, the bakery's equipment maintenance technician. "I applied everywhere from hamburger joints to unions, but I couldn't get hired because of the time I spent in and out of prison," says Johnson, who served 17 years for drugs, burglary and robbery. "Andrew had faith in me. I feel like I belong." —**SHARON COTLIAR**

KNOW A HERO? SEND SUGGESTIONS TO [HEROESAMONGUS@PEOPLEMAG.COM](mailto:HEROESAMONGUS@PEOPLEMAG.COM)