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El Aripo Prepares to Open at 172 Delancey St.



Randy, Ruth and Dennis Sanchez at El Aripo, 172 Delancey St.

A new family-run restaurant serving arepas and other Latin dishes is coming to 172 Delancey St., alongside the Williamsburg Bridge. Recently, we spoke with the owner, Dennis Sanchez, a guy who's just about as "local" as he could possibly be. Dennis, you see, lives in an apartment over the restaurant. In fact, it's where he was born and raised. The new spot, called El Aripo, will be a family affair. His mom and dad, Ruth and Juan, and brother will be helping to run the place.

Dennis and family have been working on the storefront for months. They've done much of the work themselves, but when it comes to dealing with the city's often frustrating regulatory maze, they've gotten some welcome assistance from an agency designed to "fast-track" restaurant start-ups. [The New Business Acceleration Team](#) was created in 2010 and is available to anyone opening a food-related business in New York City.

Dennis heard about the free program through a friend. He connected with a client manager, Veronica Velez, who's been helping coordinate various inspections and deal required by agencies such as the Buildings, Fire, Health, Consumer Affairs and Environmental Protection departments. "Every step of opening a restaurant in New York is difficult," Dennis said. "They talked me through a lot. If you're opening a business and you're not using the service, you're not taking advantage of what's available to you."

Robinson Hernandez, executive director of the program, which is envisioned as a "one-stop shop" for new businesses has helped about 1200 restaurants open in the past three years. "It typically shaves about two-and-a-half months from the opening process which he concedes is a "burdensome regulatory environment." In addition to assisting clients, the New Business Acceleration Team is also working with city agencies, Hernandez said, to streamline regulations. Even though the service has been used by quite a few business owners, he added, the city is eager to get the word out to more start-ups.

At El Aripo, Dennis and his dad are putting the finishing touches on the space, which features a big picture window, polished wood floors and modern decor. The menu will consist of arepas (chicken, steak and shrimp), empanadas and fresh juices. The cuisine, reminiscent of Venezuela and Puerto Rico, is very familiar to the Sanchez family. These are the types of dishes Ruth has been preparing most of her life.

Dennis has a job uptown in the mornings, so his parents will run the restaurant in the early part of the day. His dad is just about to retire from his job as a school bus driver, and he gave Dennis some of the start-up money for the new business. El Aripo will be open from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily, beginning May 1.

If you're interested in learning more about the New Business Acceleration Team, [visit their web site](#), or call 311.

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By Ed Litvak in [Featured](#), [Food](#) on April 18, 2013 8:11 am
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