

Soul food entrepreneur promises change in the neighborhood

Written by Al McFarlane
Friday, 20 May 2011 17:00



“Like the unique music that originates in the South, Louisiana Fried is the Bourbon Street of Chicken. The unique spicy Cajun flavor will Jazz your taste buds and put a smile on your face, The spice is right! ”

That is the promise of young entrepreneur Marzell Harris, who last week declared “Change has come to North Minneapolis!” with the opening of the first Minnesota franchise of Louisiana Famous Fried Chicken.

Harris is owner and CEO of the tastefully decorated soul food eatery at 904 West Broadway, Minneapolis.

So if you are looking for authentic Southern food, this is the place for chicken & waffles, delicious Southern fried fish and sides like red beans & rice, mac n cheese, greens and more.



And by the looks of the lines of people queuing up and waiting patiently to enjoy his brand of down home southern fried soul food, it is a change that will be significant for several reasons.

Though he didn't tell me this—we haven't yet had our sit down radio/newspaper interview – I used my imagination to understand what bold vision led Harris to audaciously declare change

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has come to the neighborhood.

In his early 20's, Harris is obviously a man on a mission. Louisiana Fried Chicken is his second formal business venture as an owner, but he has already honed business skills and savvy as a manager in other major national chain retail businesses. Most recently he managed a Holiday Station Store in Plymouth, acquiring invaluable insight into the world of business, customer service, and top flight branding.



So I imagine when candidate, now President, Barack Obama proclaimed Change was a hand, young Harris was one of the thousands of young people who caught the vision.

Or perhaps it was that Harris' own entrepreneurial vision found additional confirmation in the Barack Obama declaration that change was at hand.

After all, the President was saying to all young men in our community, "If I can do it, your can do it!"

Harris heeded the call to action by our President and redoubled his own efforts to pursue the path of business excellence. Most of all, he believed. And he let that unshakable belief fuel focused action.

When you go to Facebook to the Louisiana Famous Fried Chicken page, you find that Harris has had his shoulder to the wheel on this project for at least two years.

And you discover that his enthusiasm and conviction inspire belief and anticipation in others.

Posts at his Facebook page show people mentally lining up for months, eager to check out the promise of authentically soulful Louisiana Fried Chicken.

When I dropped in on Sunday, the second day of operation, Harris manned the cash register, taking orders, and keeping eye contact with the host who greeting people warmly at the door, and the cooking crew that, I discovered, had been overwhelmed by the tremendous rush of

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customers from the moment the doors opened, and with wait staff, who brought food out to tables and served sodas to customers as they waited for their orders.

What was so nice about the first visit was the enthusiasm of the staff and of the customers.

Harris got it right. North Minneapolis is ready for a change, and with his investment, he is saying the change begins with him.

Everything on the menu is moderately to inexpensively priced, meaning you can't find a better price value anywhere.

The specialties include fried catfish, fried red snapper, fried shrimp, shrimp po'boys and catfish po'boys, and sides that include fried okra or French Fries.

Of course there are more sandwiches and chicken and fish box order combinations. But those details you will have to discover for yourself. I can only tell that the items I mentioned above are the items I tried. And I hereby declare the food exceptional!

Harris told me that he opened on the 15th with meats that undergo 24 hours of marinating before being introduced to the deep fryer.

"We couldn't believe it! We had over 1,000 customers on Opening Day alone, selling out inventory prepared for that day and the next two days as well.," he said as he was preparing my order.

By midafternoon Sunday, he had served over 500 customers, he said.

Here's what I think.

I am proud to see this energetic, focused young businessman drop anchor in North Minneapolis in the middle of our neighborhood. And I think he is right. Change has come to the neighborhood. And just like he is demonstrating that he believes that the change begins with him, by his passion and action he is saying that each of us should likewise say "The change begins with me!"

Let's do something special to support this young man. Let's lift him up. Let's support his business. Let's help him break records for fried chicken and fish sales in a way that the market has to stop and take notice of the awesome purchasing power of our community. Let's send a message to the market and to ourselves. "We are the market, and change has come to the neighborhood!"

For further information: 612-756-7400, or visit www.lfcmn.com