

Avenue Eatery reopens on West Broadway

Written by Shaina Brassard

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The Avenue Eatery is back.

As of Oct. 18, the coffee shop at West Broadway and Emerson Avenue N is open for business, and we couldn't be more excited.

Walk through the doors and one is promptly greeted by young men dressed in a uniform of black shirts and pants, crisp white aprons and warm smiles. From a display case, perfect pecan and sweet potato pies almost beg to pair them with a cup of coffee or Chai tea. And at \$2 a slice, why not?

One of those young men working at Avenue Eatery is new owner Sammy McDowell, an active member of West Broadway's Shiloh Temple and a man adored by many for his food and friendliness. McDowell has been working in and managing restaurants for the past 18 years. Most recently, he has been focusing on his catering business, The Lilac, especially popular for its soul food.

When McDowell learned that the Avenue Eatery space was available for lease, he decided to move on it.

"This opportunity excited me because I wanted an actual space in North Minneapolis," said McDowell. "The kitchen is small here, so I can't do my big food plates like I like to, but I snuck in a few desserts and I want to do some light breakfasts, maybe waffles, a single stove to make eggs."

Food is not McDowell's only passion.

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"I really want to infuse the neighborhood with great customer service. It's been my dream, actually, to come over north and use what I've learned in the restaurant industry," said McDowell. "Even if you're busy, I think it's important to say hi and, 'I'll be right with you.' People need to smile more, be happy to get up in the morning and get some coffee."

McDowell is dedicated to the surrounding community and intent on making the Eatery a success. Aside from providing soul-satisfying coffee and food, McDowell knows that having a thriving coffee shop has a lot to do with ambience. The walls are already decorated with the work of local artist Norsha Roland (www.rebirthofeve.com), and soon the cafe will be equipped with wireless internet and smooth tunes to help customers really feel at home.

"We want people to feel they can come in and just chill," said McDowell. "We're thinking about getting some big mugs people can sit with. We'll have soup for people to sip on."

As a chef, McDowell is creative and good at the basics. He is known for his soul food, but he also spent eight years with the sandwich chain, Jimmy Johns. McDowell will tell you many times, "I'm a food guy."



Avenue Eatery is serving up attractive baskets of freshly made sandwiches for every palate, including hot grilled chicken, hot turkey melts, turkey pastrami, veggie clubs, turkey bacon clubs, tuna, chicken salad, and fresh garden salads. One customer we spoke to thoroughly enjoyed the veggie club, saying, "It's so great to be able to get healthy vegetarian food nearby."

Expect soup starting in November, and if you're having an event, consider ordering sandwich trays and desserts off the catering menu. They're happy to deliver, and encourage lunchtime customers to call ahead. Avenue Eatery is located at 1101 West Broadway Ave. Its phone number is (612)767-6278. People can also find Avenue Eatery on the web at [facebook.com/AvenueEatery](https://www.facebook.com/AvenueEatery)