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Grads bring "Yumm!" to Corvallis

Two OSU grads bring Eugene-based franchise Café Yumm! to OSU, Corvallis community with new location open on Monroe

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Vegans, vegetarians, and assorted organic and health food enthusiasts alike have been flocking to Café Yumm! on Monroe Avenue since its opening on July 12, expressing excitement over the new Corvallis site of the Eugene-based franchise.

The Café Yumm! franchise, which was established by Mark and Mary Ann Beauchamp, has experienced mounting popularity in recent years as it continues to open new locations across Oregon.

The name, which may seem a little obvious at first, came from Mary Ann Beauchamp's first restaurant enterprise, the Wild Rose Café & Deli, where she served her famous bowls of beans and rice topped with her special creamy sauce and salsa.

"Almost without exception, my customers would take a bite, roll their eyes heavenward, do a little knee-dip and say, 'Yumm ... what is this?' Henceforth, we called the dish Yumm!" Beauchamp explained on the Café Yumm website, www.cafeyumm.com.

Various Café Yumm! owners claim to have experienced a ripple effect in their communities, in which people may be slightly skeptical about the food at first but are dragged into the restaurant by friends or family members and who then become true believers in Café Yumm! and the famous Yumm! bowls.

The partners who ventured into the business in Corvallis are Dennis Abrew and Judy Engelking, both of whom are OSU graduates from 1995 and 1981, respectively.

Although they both lived in Corvallis, the two didn't meet until they were studying for their graduate degrees in social work at Portland State University.

Both Abrew and Engelking have lived in Corvallis and raised children here since the time of

their education at OSU. The couple plans to be wed by the end of the year.

Before considering a Café Yumm! franchise opportunity, both were involved in social work and worked in the mental health departments of Benton and Polk counties, which they continue to do part-time when not busy at the restaurant.

"When looking at the company and the values of the company, it really matched my values as a social worker. They offer healthy, nutritious food at an affordable price," Abrew said.

He also cited that the company's steadfast dedication to environmental causes, as they employ only organic and recyclable materials all throughout the store, perfectly paralleled his and his partner's beliefs.

While currently only in their third week of operation, the pair already has plans to become a larger part of the Corvallis community, with hopes to cater OSU and Corvallis High School sporting events to offer a wider and healthier variety of concessions.

"We're avid sports fans," Engelking said. "I'm particularly fond of Beaver baseball. We go to all the games and want to be able to think ahead to the future of how we can have Café Yumm! at some of the upcoming events, to be able to offer our food in that way."

The owners also cite the tremendous support they've received from the Café Yumm! company. They are in contact with the company daily and said that it has guided them step-by-step through the process of opening a franchise.

"We came to realize really quickly that if we had tried to do this on our own it would have either been ten times harder or we would have failed," Engelking said.

"I can't imagine taking on an endeavor like this now without the support, training, and ongoing assistance they provide us."

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