Meeting Notes – Aug. 13, 2024

Pictured left to right: DeAnna Hand, Ashlee Noles, Kendall Emfinger, Jennifer Graves

The LaFayette Rotary Club held its weekly meeting on Tuesday, August 13, 2024, in the Fellowship Hall of the First Baptist Church of LaFayette. Rotarian DeAnna Hand was responsible for the program this week. She invited a panel of LaFayette business owners to come and speak to the club about their experiences and plans for the future. The panel included Ruby Presley, owner of Krave Korner; Ashlee Noles, owner of the hair salon Magnolia Hair; Kendall Emfinger of Hair by Kendall; and Jennifer Graves, former owner of Gimme Some Sugar.

Ruby Presley spoke of her love of and talent for cooking. This is her third year in business. She loves her new location on the four-lane and the cafe is open for breakfast and lunch. Pick up orders are also available, even for events like tailgating. Her restaurant business has expanded into catering and she has had catering jobs as far away as Montgomery and Atlanta. Because of her commitment to give her clients the best possible experience, she only accepts one catering job per day. She encouraged us to tell a friend about her business. She attributes the growth of her business to friends telling friends. Ruby caters the Rotary lunch each week and we are among her biggest fans!

This is Ashlee Noles' 24th year of doing hair. She has been on her own for 23 of those years and in LaFayette for 18 of the years. The other five years were in Wadley when the family moved there due to her husband's job. She has been back in LaFayette for seven years. Prior to this last return to LaFayette, Ashlee had always rented space for her business, but this time she bought some buildings in downtown LaFayette. She originally was in the big part of the building, where she had both her hair salon and a boutique. She ultimately renovated the smaller building and moved her salon there. Ashlee spoke of God's hand in placing Kendall Emfinger, another hair stylist, with her. There are five rooms in the back of the larger building for rent. This will be known as the Market on Main and will be open to individuals who want to start their own business. She has spoken to Jennifer Graves about running that part of the business. This is all part of Promoting Small Business to Succeed.

Kendall Emfinger worked in the Auburn Opelika area while attending cosmetology school, then worked toward the Valley area. Now that she is in LaFayette, located inside Ashlee's, she is feeling very supported. Her clientele has grown through the publicity received from the LaFayette Main Street Facebook page. She considers LaFayette to be very loyal to her as she is growing her own business, Hair by Kendall.

Jennifer Graves is the former owner of Gimme Some Sugar in downtown LaFayette. She had a five-year plan to grow the business, then sell it to start a new adventure. She sold out a little ahead of schedule to devote time to family but will now be handling all aspects of The Market on Main. She had 17 vendors in Gimme Some Sugar, so she has the perfect experience to develop The Market on Main. The goal is to have 20-25 businesses in the big part of the building. Businesses can rent a room, a wall, or whatever space they need. Only handmade or new items will be sold. They are envisioning vendors who sell fresh-made bread, pickles, jams, candles, jewelry, home-made candies for children, and possibly even a men's store. The hope is some of these businesses will grow large enough to move out of The Market on Main and open their own store in some of the vacant buildings downtown. The goal is to open The Market on Main on either October 7 or 21, 2024. The boutique part will open first. Jennifer will also be creating a new Facebook page. In addition to The Market on Main, she envisions having some sort of business open at night.

Diane Sherriff