

Vendors humbled, excited for chance to grow their businesses

ANIYA THOMAS
ATHOMAS@LNPNEWS.COM

Brittnie Jones said she felt humbled and excited at Southern Market's grand reopening Thursday.

"I started in a small in-home kitchen and slowly we've grown to this point," said the owner of Savoy Truffle, a dessert vendor at the newly opened venue at 100 S. Queen St. "It's been a really humbling experience and exciting experience all in one to just kind of see, 'Hey, one day I want a store front. How can I get there?' And this is the first iteration of that. So, it's so exciting. And could we ask for literally anything more beautiful than this place?"

After 36 years of being closed as a farmers market, the historic Southern Market reopened with new resources for food vendors, rental spaces for businesses, and over 100 customers ready to experience some of the globally inspired meals surrounding a large, central bar serving cocktails, wine and beer.

For 6 to 18 months — with a potential extension for 20 to 24 months — the market provides booths and business training programs for culinary startup businesses with hopes that they out-

grow the resources provided and eventually take their business out to the city and own their own locations. The market declined to provide the cost for rental space for vendors and businesses.

"This is a real opportunity for people who are actual, local, native or been in Lancaster for a long while to get our names out here and get the opportunity to say, 'Hey, we can compete with these national chains and franchises and all this crazy stuff, in a way that we can afford to do,'" Jones said.

The market has now become a modernized mixed-use public space. The first floor of the market acts as a food hall with 10 food vendors, coffee shops, a shared kitchen space and two retail spaces, one of which will be used as a pizzeria. The first floor also has three community rooms that are rentable and available to anyone in the community for any event or meeting. To support the small businesses that are getting their start in the market, no outside catering is allowed for events hosted at the market.

The second floor — the mezzanine level — offers a mix of 19 co-working and private office spaces for busi-



BLAINE SHAHAN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Brittnie Jones of Savoy Truffle makes red velvet cupcakes Thursday in the kitchen at Southern Market.

nesses in the community; 12 of those spaces have been reserved for long-term leases.

'So excited'

Mary Ellen Davis, general manager of the Southern Market, said it is amazing to finally see everything come to fruition.

"The vendors are so excited. They've been working two, three weeks now, practicing their recipes," Davis said. "The outpouring from the community to see everyone in here tonight. ... We're so excited for them

to be able to showcase their talents here in Lancaster."

The food vendors offer Moroccan, Vietnamese, Southern soul, Latin and Middle Eastern food, pizza, and bakery menu choices. Some vendors are making dishes that they grew up with and providing it to the community.

Davis said, she's tried all of the food that the vendors have to offer over the course of several months and can highly recommend everything.

Willow Valley Communities, Lancaster Equity, and

Assets have partnered to make the reopening of the Southern Market a reality. Chris Ballentine, community relations manager for Willow Valley Communities, said with the renovations completed and the opportunities the market brings to the community, it's been exciting getting ready for the historic reopening.

"It's just a cool space, and it's wonderful that it holds that historic beautiful architecture that it's got," Ballentine said.

"It's been terrific hearing from the vendors how impactful the opportunity is because the resources have been provided," he said. "If any vendor were offered

just space that they had to outfit themselves that could run them on the low end \$25,000 all the way up to about \$85,000 for them to outfit their own space. And that's before they cook anything. But the great thing here with Willow Valley Communities, having taken the lead as the developer, all of that work is done."

Ballentine also said that, with the resources provided at the market, the vendors need only to bring any special cookware needed, their recipes, and willingness to build and grow their busi-

ness.

Jessie Tuno, owner of Butter and Bean coffee vendor, said she hopes with the help of the resources provided at the market she can open a location of her own.

"I've been in the industry for a while, and I've really been looking forward to that day when I open my own business. So, it's just fantastic," said Tuno. "I'm hoping to be here about a year, year and a half. Build my following and get myself out there. The goal is to move out and open my own breakfast and brunch place."

Ballentine said the market aspires to be a great community hub that brings everybody from the community.

"With it being one block down from Penn Square, we're hoping that this helps to draw people further south just by one block," said Ballentine. "And also, bring our southern neighbors and friends up. So, we're hoping that it's like the connective tissue for like that southern gateway."

For more information about the Southern Market and its vendor opportunities and rental space, visit southernmarketlancaster.com, call 717-735-6890 or email info@SouthernMarketLancaster.com.