



A new logo is on display on the door of Tru Yo Cafe near the corner of Franklin and McPherson streets near The Square. New owners Chris and Denise Bailey have some changes planned for the frozen yogurt shop, such as made to order sandwiches, salads and soups. *Photo by Nicolas Telep/TMN*

New business owners aim to revamp Tru Yo Cafe

BY NICOLAS TELEP
Staff Writer

Tru Yo, the popular frozen yogurt shop near The Square in Kirksville, recently changed ownership and is undergoing changes to become Tru Yo Cafe.

After he graduated from Truman State, founder Jim Ressler sold the yogurt shop to Chris and Denise Bailey, who took over the business in Fall 2016. The shop, located near the intersection of Franklin and McPherson Streets in downtown Kirksville, has a new name and logo. The new owners are implementing a number of changes at the establishment that aim to broaden its offerings while maintaining the open atmosphere Tru Yo is known for.

The Baileys met Ressler when they went on a mission trip to Africa together. Chris Bailey said there were a number of interested buyers, but after a few months of discussion, he and his wife bought the shop Sept. 1, 2016.

"We just kind of took a leap of faith and took it over for him" said Chris Bailey.

This isn't the Baileys' first experience running a business — Chris Bailey previously ran a window cleaning company in Quincy, Illinois, and now runs a similar business in Kirksville. Denise Bailey managed a Subway restaurant for many years. Chris Bailey said this experience is valuable in a particular new aspect of the business — the cafe will soon be offering made-to-order sandwiches, salads and soups. The equipment to make these products was moved from the back kitchen to the bar, which was given a new wood finish. Additionally, the floor was redone and the green and pink walls were painted over in Truman colors of purple and white. The pricing system for yogurt will also change, as the weight-based system is abandoned in favor of a single price for each different sized cup that can be filled with yogurt and toppings. Chris Bailey said prices will be competitive. As for the long term, Denise Bailey said she plans to start a catering service, which will serve weddings, dances and schools. Denise Bailey said she hopes to have catering up and running within a year. The Baileys also plan on taking advantage of the cafe's location to create an atmosphere welcoming to college students.

"We want to make it an atmosphere that's comfortable, that's suitable for a college student who wants to grab a bite and go, or if they want to come in here and do their homework," Chris Bailey said.

Chris Bailey also said free Wi-Fi and charging stations will be available in the cafe. He said he wants to create an open atmosphere that is welcoming to everyone, and doesn't just cater to one specific group. He said he wants it to be a place where everyone is comfortable.

"We're going to continue to try new things and fall forward," Chris Bailey said. "If it doesn't work, we try something new."

The cafe is currently only open Fridays and Saturdays. The Baileys are planning a grand opening for early April, after which the cafe will be open Monday to Saturday. They also said they plan to hold fundraisers and events in the space. TruHop, a swing dancing group from Truman, recently held a fundraiser at the shop, and the Baileys said they would be open to having music and entertainment in the cafe in the future.

Sandra Williams, Kirksville Chamber of Commerce executive director, said she previously met with the new owners and said she hopes to do a ribbon-cutting event with them soon. Williams explained that Tru Yo's location between Truman's campus and downtown is a good one, especially for students. Additionally, the decision to offer lunch items could bring in more customers who work at businesses on The Square or who visit The Square looking for a meal. Williams said the impact on other restaurants and cafes on The Square will likely be limited to a month or so. When a new place comes in, she explained, many people might want to give the new establishment a try before returning to their old favorites.

"It's always nice to see any new eating establishment come in, especially if they offer something a little different than what everyone else has," Williams said.

As far as The Square in general is concerned, Williams said, while opinions might differ about how the area is doing based on the performance of individual businesses, many businesses were added to The Square recently. Additionally, Tru Yo is not the only cafe to change hands. Sweet Espressions did so recently, as well. Williams said many people were concerned about downtown Kirksville when the Hallmark store closed, but she said newer and more diverse businesses are good for The Square.

"In my mind, those are all good things," Williams said. "People are still willing to locate downtown and I think the more ... variety you have down there, the better."

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