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# Say hello

## Coffee shop changes hands

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With strong faith, high energy and skilled coffee-making, Delana Ball opens Sabaidee Coffee House today at 45 S. Sandusky St. next to Tiffin University.

"Sabaidee," which translates to "Hello. How are you?" in the Lao language, has special meaning for the shop's new owner.

"I was in Laos for the last seven years, near Thailand and Vietnam," Ball said. "I was teaching English as a second language. That was partly what I did. I also helped a lot of people."

### Article Photos



PHOTO BY VICKI JOHNSON

Delana Ball works on final preparations Thursday to open Sabaidee Coffee House today at 45 S. Sandusky St. next to Tiffin University.

She helped poor people pay for medical expenses there.

"If you don't have money, you don't get help," she said. "I was the money to help them get the help they needed."

She said the people she met and the experiences she had in Laos changed her life.

"God's done miracle after miracle, and He's not going to stop with me," she said.

Ball, who graduated from Otsego High School in 1985, said she follows God's plan for her life.

She went to Laos as a missionary in October 2007, and she returned to the United States April 10 "broke and broken," not knowing what was in store for the next part of her life.

"I came home and was getting anxious about life," she said. "I wept. I'm 47 and on a new adventure. I have no money and I don't know what's going to happen."

She asked to be shown her passion and purpose, and after two weeks, she got her answer through dreams and visions.

She saw herself operating a coffee shop next to a university.

"At first I thought it was in Bowling Green," she said.

But she met with an old friend and told him her story.

"Two days later he said, 'I know these people who have this coffee shop in Tiffin,'" she said.

She visited the former Java House and talked to the previous owners, and soon they were talking to her about taking over the shop.

"I paid a little bit for a lot of stuff," she said. "Everything I needed just kept falling into place."

Just one example is the shop's new booths. She met a new friend and they spent a couple hours talking over breakfast one day. In that conversation, Ball said she would like to have booths in the shop and the friend said her church has booths they no longer wanted. They were an exact match to the tables already in the shop.

Four months after her decision to open a coffee shop, the opening day has arrived.

"As of today, this is a debt-free adventure," she said. "God's done that. He's provided the whole thing. I'm just His hands and feet."

In addition to coffee drinks, the shop offers bagels, muffins, cream cheese, yogurt and hummus as well as soft drinks and tea.

"The teas are all loose leaf teas," she said. "No bags. It's high quality."

The signature drink is the "banana yum yum," made with coffee.

"It's so yummy," she said. "Trust me."

To Ball, it's not just a coffee shop. It's a place where college students - and anybody else - can stop to get a cup of coffee and hang out.

The shop retains natural brick walls on two sides, and the old-fashioned tin ceiling.

One spot has board games people are welcome to play.

Along one wall is a book shelf and chairs to sit and read.

WiFi is free, and Christian music plays in the background.

"It's good to have a place to go, a place to study," she said. "A home away from home.

"I want to love on these kids and give them a place to sit and just talk," she said. "A home away from home."

She encourages all students to stop in, but especially international students who are far from home.

"It will give them an opportunity to talk and learn the language and become more fluent," she said.

"I want them to chill out, laugh, scream, whatever you gotta do. Well, maybe not scream."

Ball also offers for sale handmade items made by friends in Laos.

"They're sold here and proceeds will be sent back to Laos to help the needy," she said.

Hours are 6:30 a.m.-8:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 7 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday. Closed Sunday.