

Tyra and Daryl Collins  
PHOTO BY MELISSA UROFF

# Barbecue With Soul

## A local restaurant's good cooking supports a good cause

BY MATT CRAGGS

**At** D's Smokin Pit, in the heart of Del Paso Heights, owners Daryl and Tyra Collins serve their tangy barbecue with a side of community involvement.

Daryl learned to cook from his mother and grandmother, who owned a Midtown soul food restaurant in the 1940s. At D's Smokin Pit, Daryl showcases his smoked meats with what he calls TexaCali Jerk – a mixture of flavors from Tyra and his home states, Texas and California respectively.

"My wife does all the sides and she's just brilliant with them," Daryl said. "Greens with smoked turkey, red beans and rice, and gumbo – she's the sides master and I'm the pit master."

The restaurant, which offers catering and delivery, provides local employment opportunities and helps fund the couple's nonprofit, Voices of Inspiration, which operates out of the Collins Resource Center. The organization seeks to rebuild, revive and renew the people in their community, primarily those challenged by homelessness and mental health issues.

Voices of Inspiration's community events, resources and

classes on parenting, financial literacy, nutrition and life skills are open to all and – Tyra said – touch hundreds of lives a year.

Tyra recalled one client, Elizabeth, who came to Voices of Inspiration. She had lost custody of her children in the '90s and lived on the streets for 10 years.

"Life-threatening tragedies had left her permanently disabled," Tyra said. "She came to us one day and said, 'I'm tired, will you help me?' And we said, yes, of course we will."

Voices of Inspiration helped Elizabeth find resources, housing and her now-grown children.

"As soon as she found them," Tyra said, "and they saw their mom, they immediately forgave her, embraced her and started a journey of family reunification."

Though Elizabeth – three years sober – left Sacramento to live with her children and grandchildren, Tyra still talks with her often.

"She found her life again," Tyra said.

"She's just so happy."

Believing that when people are whole, the community can be whole, Daryl and Tyra stand as proof in the power of a helping hand. Or a good meal.

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**Tyra Collins**  
Chaplain, Voices of Inspiration



## Easy to Help

While Voices of Inspiration accepts monetary donations, diners at D's Smokin Pit naturally support their community every time they enjoy a delicious plate of local barbecue.

Look for a celebration in February as D's Smokin Pit collaborates with neighboring Go To Bed to open six days a week with an expanded menu, featuring tacos and fries loaded with the restaurant's smoked meats.



**D's Smokin Pit**  
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Sacramento, CA 95815  
(916) 993-9428  
Daily, 12–7 p.m.



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