

Pambe Ghana World Market returning to Midtown

BY MOLLY M. FLEMING • The Journal Record

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The shop opens Nov. 9 with a grand opening on Nov. 11 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., when food, drinks and live music will be available.

KLAHOMA CITY – The Pambe Ghana World Market pop-up is returning to Midtown for the holiday season. Its operators said they hope the move will increase revenue.

The annual market raises money for the La'Angum Learning Center in Ghana, West Africa. The school uses the village's language to teach children starting in pre-K, and then helps them learn English.

Other schools in the area expect the children to know English, so the dropout rate at those schools is high.

This is the 10th year for the shop. For the last four years, the shop was set up in a Chesapeake Energy-owned space at NW 65th Street and N. Ollie Avenue. Shop Manager Sara Braden said there was plenty of room to store their items, so annual setup was easier.

"We didn't get any foot traffic," she said. "We only had destination shoppers, several of whom were quite (frustrated) because of the directions to get there."

Chesapeake sold the building, which meant the World Market had to find a new home.

Board member Patti Tepper-Rasmussen was on the lookout for empty space. In August, when she heard Marva Ellard and development partner Billy Woodring purchased Villa Teresa in Midtown, Tepper-Rasmussen reached out to Ellard.

After a conversation with Ellard, Market Organizer Linda Temple and other board members, it seemed to make sense to bring the shop to The Sieber, setting up in the former restaurant space. Ellard is donating the space, making her a market sponsor.

The organizers have also talked to Holiday Pop-up Shops organizer Allison Barta Bailey about helping direct Holiday Shop visitors to the store. The Sieber, at NW 12th Street and N. Hudson Avenue, is two blocks north of Bailey's Holiday Pop-Up Shops.

The World Market had been in the pop-up shops previously and also had used space at the Midtown Plaza Court building.



Items at the Pambe Ghana World Market pop-up include carved zebras, above, and seedpod birds, below.

Ellard said the World Market is an experiment to test having a permanent retail tenant. In the past, the space was home to The Woods restaurant and a cafeteria before that. The space measures about 1,400 square feet, but the World Market is taking only the front area.

The shop runs on volunteer help, with 50 volunteers working three-hour shifts. The items are purchased from the Ten Thousand Villages store and through the Fair Trade Federation. The federation makes sure the items are made by people who are being paid fairly and treated well.

The market's merchandise comes from Africa, South America, Central America, and Asia.

"We try to get as much of it as we can from Ghana," Temple said.

Through the store, Pambe Ghana is

able to donate about \$35,000 annually to the school, but Temple said she's hoping the revenue will be more this year. There are extended store hours, opening Tuesday to Sunday at noon. Closing times vary.

People can organize private parties and they can have a small pop-up shop off-site as well.

Temple said buying items from the shop are a way for everyone to get involved with helping people who are less fortunate than themselves. She's worked with Pambe Ghana since 2008, though she was involved with fair trade for 30 years, working with weavers in Guatemala.

"I found that there are a lot of people that once they have the opportunity to do something within their reach, maybe they can do a little something," she said.



Pambe Ghana World Market Organizer Linda Temple.