



# The Salt Lake Tribune

THURSDAY, May 7, 2009

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## One World Café makes sure everyone eats

Pay what you want » Concept cuts down on waste, helps feed hungry

By Pamela Manson  
The Salt Lake Tribune

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One World Café has it all, according to diner Nancy Bell Reid: Great food, a pleasant atmosphere and courteous workers.

But the biggest plus is the philosophy underlying the operation of the Avenues community kitchen, she said. No one goes hungry, even those with little or no money.

"They help a lot of people," Reid said as she dined with her mother last week at the restaurant, located at 41 S. 300 East.

The eatery serves organic food and lets its customers select their portion sizes as they go down the cafeteria line.

For years, One World Café patrons paid at the end of the meal by dropping an envelope with the amount their consciences dictated they pay. Beginning Tuesday, the restaurant

reversed the procedure, having diners decide a price, then choose their meals.

Hungry patrons can earn a voucher for a full meal with one hour of work, such as sweeping the floor or washing dishes. The voucher also covers meals for a parent's young children.

One World Café went through a rough financial period last fall when overstaffing and a drop of the average meal payment from about \$10 to \$7 led to bounced paychecks and the dismissal of staff members. But board member Don Merrill said operations are going smoothly now.

He said One World Café is serving 100 to 120 patrons a day. The average payment is \$7 but the diners who can afford it tend to pay more, he said.

"The community continues to support the concept," Merrill said. "I think it goes beyond the economic climate. People were looking for a way to take ownership of their community."

Boosting the success of the restaurant are non-voucher volunteers, including Merrill and Stephanie Lee.

Lee said she feels inspired that a woman entrepreneur developed the community eatery. As a volunteer, she's learned how to make omelets, salad dressings and other foods.

"I love how I feel when I eat here," Lee said. "I love the concept of paying what it's worth."

The idea is catching on. Founder Denise Cerretta and the One World Everybody Eats foundation help set up similar community kitchens in other states.

"It's a vibrant model," Merrill said. "It was an idea that resonated with me."

The draw for diner Josh Stasinos is the organic meals.

"It's like getting fast food that won't kill you," he said.

Another plus, according to Stasinos: "It's a great place to take a date. It's so unusual."

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### One World Café

One World Café, which was founded in 2003, is dedicated to doing away with hunger; serving organic, unprocessed food; eliminating waste; and paying a living wage to its employees.

The non-profit restaurant works with the Department of Workforce Services to help people who want to work and learn new skills. It also

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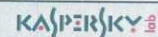
The One World Cafe in Salt Lake City. (Chris Detrick/The Salt Lake Tribune)

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