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## Center Story #14

### Sista Kim's Kitchen: Come for Lunch or an Early Dinner

14th in a series of stories focusing on Commercial Center as written by noted long-time Las Vegas journalist, Diane Taylor.

**In this article, Diane explores the tasty world of Sista Kim's Kitchen in New Orleans Square:**

- *What was the original inception for this very popular Commercial Center food venue?*
- *How did the owners' 10 children help inform the menu selections?*
- *What's the biggest tip amount that a customer has left after dining at Sista Kim's Kitchen, and what's the largest number of customers they've handled for a catering event? You'll be surprised!*

Sista Kim's Kitchen Owners: Kim and David Jones

#### **Try the Food at Sista Kim's Kitchen! Come for Lunch or an Early Dinner**

Know anybody with 10 children? We do. Las Vegans Kimberly (Kim) and David Jones have 10 children, the youngest just about to graduate from high school. Six of them work in the family restaurant, "Sista Kim's Kitchen," in Commercial Center.

Kim and David, both California natives, married 29 years ago. In 2007, in search of a less costly life, they moved from Apple Valley, CA to Las Vegas. Kim worked in banking and David was in computer repair.

Once here, the Clarks became local church-goers. Kim was used to “cooking big” for her family and as time went on, she often prepared meals for church activities, as well. The money that people paid for her food was then donated to the church.

Kim enjoyed her cooking activities. Fans of her food wanted more. So, when Kim cooked for her family, she would send text messages with her menu to people interested in personal purchases. The orders followed, and eventually Kim dreamed about someday having her own restaurant.

Then, five years ago, the couple met with a gentleman who was to help them with credit card issues. When the conversation came around to Kim’s idea to someday have her own place, she showed the gentleman photos of her food products. He was impressed and eventually contacted another friend who built food trucks.

Kim and David were helped with all the details required to license and finance their own truck (Kim admits that at first she had no idea how to cook foods in a food truck). However, for the next two years of their lives, Kim’s recipes were the source of their new food business.

Because the success of the food truck depended on events in Las Vegas for a good deal of their business - and because Commercial Center often had such events, the truck found its way to Commercial Center many times.

And ultimately, when space was available for an actual “Sista Kim’s Kitchen” restaurant at Commercial Center, the couple gave up the food truck and opened their restaurant located “down the hall” in the New Orleans Square building.

So, what’s on the restaurant’s menu? The children in the family all told of the favorite foods their mom cooked, and the menu was set. The offerings include chicken wings, juicy burgers and fries, seafood, salads, pastrami sandwiches and po’ boys. The restaurant also has a customer’s choice of sauces with each dish. (The family’s own sauce, Sweet Heat, is delicious.)

And yes, “Sista Kim’s Kitchen” does cater to large groups with the food typically picked up from the restaurant. Kim notes proudly that one group of 850 people were served by “Sista Kim’s Kitchen”. That’s a lot of hungry folks!

And, how do people find out about “Sista Kim’s Kitchen”? Kim notes that in their location, foot traffic is non-existent. However, Sista Kim’s presence on Instagram and TikTok has been very helpful.

“We have had customers come to us from all over the world,” she says. “Alaska, Jamaica, Europe.” Another help? A positive review from Keith Lee, food reviewer, who left a \$3,000 tip after visiting their place.

Along the way, the Jones family has stayed devoted, even when family difficulties arise. “We have been blessed,” say the parents.

Despite the somewhat challenging walk to find “Sista Kim’s Kitchen”, the reviews of their food have been excellent.

On a recent Monday when I visited, the customers kept coming in. Some eat in the small restaurant; many ordered takeout. One customer insisted on a selfie with Kim while another gave Kim a big hug. Kim reports that one customer is so fond of the food that he comes to the restaurant twice a day!

There’s one other interesting thing I noticed. When a customer with an empty soda glass is about to leave, Kim asks, “Would you like a refill?” and many accepted the offer.

Prices at Sista Kim’s are moderate. Husband David explains that when his family was younger, going out was very expensive and he and his wife don’t want cost and skimpy portions to be a reason not to come to “Sista Kim’s Kitchen”.

“Sista Kim’s Kitchen” is closed Sundays and open from 11 AM to 7 PM on Monday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, and from 11 AM to 5 PM on Tuesday and Wednesday.

And what do the busy owners do in their spare time? Bible study and prayer at the Coda Ministries Church of Divine Appointments are on their calendars. In fact, David is a pastor and Kimberly is a minister at the church.

In looking at the mid-day customers in the restaurant, David and Kim say that the job of the staff is to greet every customer then watch. If the customers eat and then lean back and seem to give a big sigh and relax, David and Kim know they’ve done their job.

