

Joe Beans brings specialty coffee to Lynchburg years ago

Almost 22 years ago, Dr. Linda Brown brought specialty coffee to Lynchburg with her drive-thru coffee business called Joe Beans.

Brown said people were confused about what the business was at first. At the time, they got their coffee from gas stations and only ever chose

stand what specialty coffee is and embrace Joe Beans.

Today, there are over 10 coffee shops in the Lynchburg area including Brown's Joe Beans, and Joe Beans grew from one location to seven.

Brown said it all started with a fly fishing trip to Montana.

and a coffee bean. It is also named after her nephew Joey. Brown said he was nicknamed "Joe Beans" when he was little.

Over the years, Brown has used her business to give back to the community.

“You could call it our duty to help or to give back, but it's just a passion.

- Dr. Linda Brown



between what they believed were cappuccinos and a regular cup of coffee brewed at home.

Joe Beans offered a large variety of handcrafted coffee, made how their customers wanted it.

“Before, it was like those powered machines, and that's what they thought a cappuccino was. We had to talk them through it a little bit for them to get what they wanted,” Brown said. “They would come back and say, ‘I can't go

“Every morning, you get up at the crack of dawn ... and (we'd) go every morning and get coffee,” Brown said.

They would go to an old photo-booth sized trailer in a mall parking lot, drive-thru and pick up their coffee.

Before this place, Brown had never had a latte or a cappuccino.

The first cappuccino she tasted had her hooked.

When she arrived back home, she decided Lynchburg needed a drive-thru specialty coffee place like the one they went to. Brown spent a year researching the ins and outs of creating a business like this.

She found a place in Portland, Oregon, who would supply her with a building and equipment and also train and educate her on how to make the coffee and run the business.

Brown previously managed Burger Kings and McDonald's for about 10 years, so she knew how to work in the restaurant industry. But, she did not know anything about coffee, so she hired a consultant, Bob Cox, to help her with setting up the coffee equipment and helping her understand the coffee industry.

Once the building was finished, it was pulled from Oregon to Virginia and installed on Timberlake Road.

Brown said the hardest part was naming her business, which took her about six months.

Joe Beans is a play on “a cup of joe”

“I've always given back to the community. If I do well, then I can give more to help others. It doesn't sound right to me (to) not give back,” Brown said. “You could call it our duty to help or to give back, but it's just a passion.”

Joe Beans has a fundraiser program where individuals or groups can raise money by selling packages of Joe Beans coffee. They also partner with various raffles and gift baskets.

They recently launched a new program at their Appomattox location. This program partners with the local animal shelter.

Customers are encouraged to bring food, toys or other supplies for the animals to Joe Beans. For the items, customers will receive a couple punches on their Joe Beans punch card.

Brown said they do not need to pur-



back to my gas station coffee cause, crap, yours is better.”

Brown said it took the town about two to three years to truly under-



chase anything but can drop off the items and receive the punches. Joe Beans will take these items and bring them to the animal shelter.

After they fill up their punch card, customers can redeem a free drink at any Joe Beans location.

Brown said if the program goes well, they will start it at other locations.

For more information, visit their website joebeans.coffee.

BY CHARITY FITCH