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UAMS Opens 12th Street Community Café

Joins Community Partners in Grand Opening of 12th Street Center

LITTLE ROCK — The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) is celebrating its newly opened 12th Street Community Café at 3999 W. 12th St., as part of today’s grand opening of the city’s 12th Street Center.

Operated by employees of the UAMS Department of Nutrition Services, the café is located inside the center, which has been home to a Little Rock Police Department station since 2014.

While the café will be open today from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., its normal operating hours are 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday through Friday. It is located on the west end of the first floor and is accessible through entrances on both 12th and Pine streets, as well as from the interior lobby.

Offering specialty coffee drinks made with Westrock coffee along with healthy breakfast, lunch and snack items such as breakfast burritos, sandwiches, bagels, yogurt, fruit cups, salad and thin-crust pizza, the café is part of UAMS’ mission to improve the health of all Arkansans, particularly those experiencing food insecurity.

Mariella Hernandez, senior project manager of strategic initiatives at UAMS, said meal preparation workshops will eventually be offered at the center by members of the UAMS Culinary Medicine Program, in collaboration with the Arkansas Minority Health Commission. Also, she said, “We are looking forward to collaborating with farmer’s markets to make fresh produce available.”

Today’s grand opening celebration begins with a 10:30 a.m. ribbon-cutting ceremony announcing the new additions to the 12th Street Center: the café, a Philander Smith College center and offices for Southern Bancorp.

Held jointly by the city and those community partners, the celebration includes a block party complete with a kid zone, snow cones, a live radio broadcast and free lunches.

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In addition, between 11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m., dietitians from the UAMS Culinary Medicine Program will hold four 15-20-minute demonstrations on preparing healthy meals, eating nutrient-dense foods and using recipes that can help prevent and manage certain chronic illnesses.

Each session, held in the café's kitchen, is limited to 10 participants, all of whom will receive a free meal box from Well Fed, a mobile nonprofit that takes healthy foods and nutrition education services into the community.

Representatives of the nearby UAMS 12th Street Health and Wellness Center will also be on hand at the event to check blood pressure and hand out health information.

“The UAMS 12th Street Community Café aligns with the UAMS health improvement mission by encouraging healthy eating and habits to improve health,” said Stephanie Gardner, Pharm.D., Ed.D., UAMS provost and chief strategy officer. “We are proud to work with our partners — including the City of Little Rock, Southern Bancorp and Philander Smith College — on a project we hope will create a thriving new resource for this neighborhood.”

UAMS is the state's only health sciences university, with colleges of Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Health Professions and Public Health; a graduate school; a hospital; a main campus in Little Rock; a Northwest Arkansas regional campus in Fayetteville; a statewide network of regional campuses; and seven institutes: the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute, Jackson T. Stephens Spine & Neurosciences Institute, Harvey & Bernice Jones Eye Institute, Psychiatric Research Institute, Donald W. Reynolds Institute on Aging, Translational Research Institute and Institute for Digital Health & Innovation. UAMS includes UAMS Health, a statewide health system that encompasses all of UAMS' clinical enterprise. UAMS is the only adult Level 1 trauma center in the state. UAMS has 3,240 students, 913 medical residents and fellows, and five dental residents. It is the state's largest public employer with more than 11,000 employees, including 1,200 physicians who provide care to patients at UAMS, its regional campuses, Arkansas Children's, the VA Medical Center and Baptist Health. Visit www.uams.edu or www.uamshealth.com. Find us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#) or [Instagram](#).

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