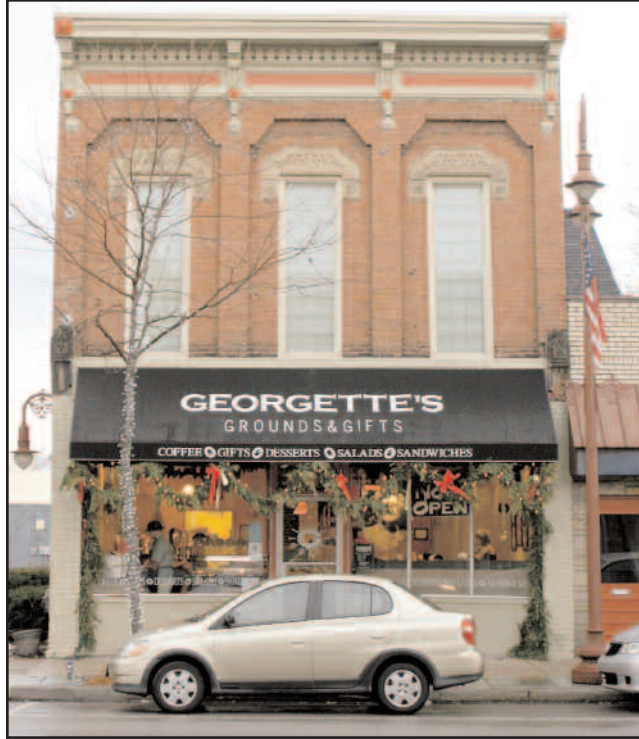




Jason roasts and bags coffee beans for Georgette's Grounds & Gifts on Conant Street in Maumee.

MIRROR PHOTO BY MELISSA GARRETT



Georgette's is conveniently located at 311 Conant St., between Dudley and Wayne, in uptown Maumee.

MIRROR PHOTO BY DAN LAWRENCE



Angie makes marshmallow snowmen to sell in Georgette's Grounds & Gifts on Conant Street in Maumee.

MIRROR PHOTO BY MELISSA GARRETT

Georgette's Grounds & Gifts Provides Much-Needed Services To Sunshine Clients As Well As Uptown Maumee Customers



Georgette's has opened its doors at 311 Conant St. in uptown Maumee as a premier coffee and gift shop that employs clients of Sunshine Inc. of NW Ohio. On hand for the ribbon cutting ceremony several weeks ago were (front, from left) Karen Yount, manager of the gift shop; Deb Rasmusson, director of clinical services for Sunshine, Inc.; Brenda Clixby, executive director of the Maumee Chamber of Commerce; Alex Hamilton, a client of Sunshine and an employee of Georgette's; Byron Stickles, a friend of Georgette Engler, the founder of Sunshine; Dianne Westhoven, supported employment manager at Sunshine, Inc. and manager of the coffee shop. In the back, from left, are Jerry Kosch, director of facilities at Sunshine, Inc.; Tim Wagener, mayor of Maumee; and John Martin, executive director at Sunshine, Inc.

MIRROR PHOTO BY MIKE McCARTHY

BY MELISSA GARRETT
MIRROR REPORTER

A new coffee and gift shop has opened on Conant Street in Maumee, and the profits help a highly respected and loved organization in the area, Sunshine Children's Home.

Kelly Gerald, of Sunshine Inc. of Northwest Ohio, said the main reason for opening the shop was to provide employment opportunities for clients of Sunshine Children's Home.

Gerald said Georgette's currently employs 12 people with disabilities for roasting coffee, food preparation and service and work in the gift shop.

According to Gerald, there is a higher rate of unemployment and underemployment for people with disabilities than any other group, so creating diverse job opportunities while supporting the programs at Sunshine is the goal of the shop.

Sunshine Inc. researched the area before the opening of the shop and found there was a need for a coffee shop in the downtown Maumee area.

"We wanted to create a higher-end coffee and gift shop in Maumee with fair trade products," Gerald said.

"We wanted to be a hometown establishment rather than a chain and be a good neighbor to the other local businesses. We worked with as many local contractors as possible to create the shop."

Gerald said they sell fair trade products from around the world, which means the people who are making the products are paid a living wage for them.

Georgette's is happy to be able to support people locally while supporting a fair wage for people in 32 other countries.

The coffee shop offers baked goods, salads, sandwiches, soups and a variety of coffees including espresso,

cappuccino, latte and cafe mocha.

Customers can also enjoy one of 17 flavored syrups in their coffee.

A variety of other types of drinks such as hot organic tea, hot cocoa, fruit smoothies, Italian soda and many more are available for customers who do not want coffee.

All of Georgette's specialty foods and drinks are served in a relaxing and trendy setting. The smell of roasting coffee

(continued on page 7)



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Georgette's Grounds & Gifts in Maumee has a wide selection of fair trade products from around the world that provide a unique gift-giving opportunities for customers.

Georgette's Opens In Maumee

(continued from page 6)
beans fills the air while customers enjoy their drinks or lunch.

The coffees are made of 100-percent shade-grown, organic Arabica beans mostly purchased from a green coffee-importing cooperative of community-based coffee roasters in the United States and Canada.

The coffees at Georgette's can be purchased in bags to take home in ground or bean forms.

Georgette's gift shop is filled with jewelry, art pieces, wall hangings, sculptures, home decor, music, foods, coffee and tea products, gift baskets and much more.

The gift shop employees will customize baskets for customers to meet their specific needs and budgets.

Each gift is unique, from hand-tied Numi teas from China to wall hangings from Africa.

"All of the items in the shop are tagged with where they came from. The shop has a world bazaar kind of approach," Gerald said.

According to Gerald, the coffee and gift shops have been well received by the community and continue to grow.

The coffee shop is managed by Dianne Westhoven, who has worked with Sunshine Children's Home for 20 years and has vast experience as a professional caterer and in other food service work.

Karen Yount manages the gift shop. She has worked with Sunshine for seven years.

Gerald said Jean Emery, formerly of Emery Florist, works as a consultant in the shop developing gift baskets and helping with product merchandising.

According to Gerald, the state of Ohio has frozen the rate of funding for Sunshine, so the organization is looking for other opportunities to fund their programs.

Everyone involved with Georgette's hopes the business will be a success and contribute to continuing the

dream of the shop's name-sake, Georgette Engler.

Engler and her husband raised five children with disabilities in Maumee and founded the Sunshine Children's Home to help other families with the challenges of caring for their children with disabilities.

Georgette hoped to "bring a little bit of sunshine" into the lives of the children by providing loving care in a clean, home-like setting.

Now, 60 year later, Sunshine is the largest provider of residential and related services to people with disabilities and their families in Northwest Ohio.

Sunshine has 16 family care group homes in addition to Sunshine Children's Home and provides supported living

services to 100 clients living in their homes.

The creation of job opportunities for people with disabilities is just one of the programs Sunshine has to help bring good lives to their clients.

Georgette's coffee shop is open from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on weekdays, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays and closed on Sundays.

The gift shop is open weekdays from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and is closed on Sundays.

Georgette's is located at 311 Conant St. in Maumee and can be reached at (419) 891-8888. For more information about Georgette's, visit their Web site at www.georgettes.org.

UT Law Student To Give Up Break To Help Hurricane Katrina Victims

University of Toledo law student Katina Werner is packing light for her travels over winter break. From Christmas to New Year's Day, her accommodations will be a FEMA camp in New Orleans.

She will fly south to join more than 200 law students across the country spending their winter breaks to help address the legal needs of Hurricane Katrina survivors.

Werner and other students have been assigned to the task of helping thousands of low-to-moderate income victims locate and trace titles to their homes. Many homeowners have no other legal claims to their residences.

Looking forward to the opportunity to put her law school training to use, Werner says as she became more aware of the great legal needs caused by the hurricane, she wondered what she could do to help within the constraints of her class schedule.

Then she got an e-mail from the Student Hurricane Network, a student-run initiative that has recruited law students from across the country to help during their breaks from law school, and she knew what to do.

The network has matched law students with a range of Louisiana and Mississippi organizations providing legal services, community outreach, public education, policy development and cleanup assistance.

Werner is not sure exactly what the work will entail, but she anticipates her duties will at least in part include interviewing survivors and helping to complete paperwork. She looks forward to the one-on-one interaction with sur-

vivors and hopes to give them a bright spot in these difficult days.

"We'll be helping to fill a long-term, specific need," she said. "Getting this taken care of can help them to begin to take care of other needs."

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