

Lydia Sargent Dean:

Brewing up business and friendship

By ELISA BIZZELL
Contributing Writer

The “Coffee Lady” is a moniker that Lydia Sargent Dean hopes to keep for some time. The owner of Latte Da Espresso Catering was looking for a way to earn some extra money when a friend told her about a unique business that would provide the flexible hours the mother of two young boys wanted.

“A portable coffee shop brought to your place of business or event” is how Dean describes the business she started two years ago. Dean and her husband, Greg, a counselor at Caldwell Elementary School, decided to go ahead with the venture even through the friend who was going to be Dean’s business partner pursued another opportunity.

“By then we had laid all of the groundwork and researched everything,” says Dean. “We had flown to Oregon to meet a lady who has had an espresso catering business for 16 years. We decided that we might as well try. I wanted to stay home and have flexible hours.”

The 45-year-old says she enjoys being able to spend as much time as possible with her sons Josiah, 6, and Aidan, 8.

“It’s been really fun. I can still take the kids to school and pick them up,” she says. “I really feel like God put this opportunity before me, and it has been wonderful.”

Dean says her new job is different from her previous experiences as a counselor for a mental health center and a project coordinator for Colorado’s non-profit I Have a Dream Foundation, which works with at-risk kids. Her educational background includes master’s degrees in



biblical studies from Dallas Theological Seminary and in counseling from Colorado Christian University. Dean admits she never thought of herself as a business owner and has never taken a business class, but is glad she added “barista” to her titles.

“I love talking to people so this job really fits with my personality,” she says. “I love to see the pleasure on people’s faces when I offer them something special. I also love educating people about the different drinks and how to order so they won’t be intimidated when ordering at a coffee shop.”

Dean says she uses Distant Lands Coffee, a Tyler coffee bean roaster whose beans are used in McDonald’s Cafés all over the world, and everything is fresh and made-to-order. She also trained to become skilled at creating both the hot and cold concoctions. The mobile coffee bar offers

lattes, mochas, cappuccinos, espresso, tea and steamers. Too hot for warm beverages? Dean also offers summer favorites, such as fruit smoothies, blended ice coffee drinks, Italian sodas and Creamosas, which are a blend of club soda and flavored syrup served with or without cream.

When she was 12 years old, Dean’s father, Jack Sargent, moved his family from Dallas to Tyler, where they became involved in the community’s activities. Dean was a lady-in-waiting for the 1984 Rose Festival. Dean says her business continues to open new avenues of friendship as she brings her mobile coffee bar to weddings, teacher appreciation events, luncheons and club meetings.

“I’ve met so many great people,” she says. “I like it when someone waves at me and says ‘there’s the Coffee Lady.’” **IN**