

THE CAPITAL NEWS

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The Untold Stories

Community First: Ward 8 Businesses Leading with Care and Collaboration

By Avery Monroe

Ward 8 has always carried a strong sense of identity, rich in history, culture, and community pride. But for too long, residents here have watched other parts of the city benefit from investment, amenities, and dining options that never seemed to make it across the river.

Not anymore.

Today, along Marion Barry Avenue, a growing cluster of locally owned and Black-owned businesses is changing the landscape. They are doing it not just with good food but with a shared commitment to community care and local collaboration.

From the smoky aroma at DCity Smokehouse to the creative plates at Kitchen Savage, the vibrant Caribbean flavors at Sapodillas, and the newly launched Marion Barry Avenue Market & Café, these establishments represent something new and deeply needed. They are filling a gap in the community that existed for decades.

From Scarcity to Presence

For many longtime Ward 8 residents, there was a time when access to quality, sit-down



(Pictured: DCity Smokehouse exterior in Anacostia.)

restaurants and locally driven food options simply did not exist in their own neighborhood. Dining out often meant crossing the river, not by choice but by lack of options.

Now, people can walk or drive down Marion Barry Avenue and find spaces that feel familiar, welcoming, and rooted in their culture. These businesses do not just serve meals. They serve a sense of belonging.

DCity Smokehouse: A Neighborhood Favorite

One of the first anchors in this new wave of investment is DCity Smokehouse, located at 1301 Marion Barry Avenue SE. Known for its signature smoked meats, lively atmosphere, and commitment to community, DCity has become a gathering place for neighbors and visitors alike.

Owner and operator Melvin Hines calls
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opening in Anacostia "a dream fulfilled." From the day he envisioned having his own establishment, he wanted to open in the neighborhood he calls home.

In the two years since opening, DCity has collaborated with local groups such as the Anacostia Business Improvement District to bring community-centered programming like Jazzy Sundays, an eight-week concert series, to the heart of Ward 8.

This kind of programming is not just good for business. It is good for the neighborhood. It creates a sense of shared identity and collective pride.