

Alumni-owned coffeehouses recognized for healthy menu options

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The PJ's Coffee locations housed on the Tulane University uptown campus were recognized as WellSpots by the Well-Ahead Louisiana program for making it easier for customers to order healthier options. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

Whether stopping by for a piping hot pick-me-up or cooling off with a cup of iced coffee between classes, students have frequented the [PJ's Coffee](#) shops bookending the Tulane University uptown campus for nearly 30 years. Now recognized as WellSpots by the [Well-Ahead Louisiana program](#), the Willow Street and Percival Stern Hall locations are making it easier for local customers to order healthier options.

Founded in 1978 by coffee industry pioneer and company namesake Phyllis Jordan, PJ's was purchased in 2008 by Tulane alumni and brothers Paul, Steven and Scott Ballard.

"Aiming to improve the health and wellness of Louisiana citizens, the Well-Ahead Louisiana initiative was started by the Louisiana Department of Health," said Reid Nolte, director of marketing and brand strategy for PJ's Coffee. Nolte says that the campaign promotes healthy choices in places that residents frequent every day.

Launched in early 2014, the program has designated WellSpots in every parish throughout the state. WellSpots are companies or organizations that are taking sustainable steps toward improving the health of their customers and employees.

PJ's achieved several goals in order for 51 of the company's locations to become newly designated as WellSpots. Those benchmarks included training staff to offer healthy menu options, providing low-sodium items and accommodating patrons with dietary restrictions or allergies.

One of PJ's better-for-you options is the Protein Velvet Ice. When ordered in a small size, the tasty frozen treat contains less than 1 teaspoon of added sugar and 21 grams of protein.

The coffee company has also partnered with with the [Ochsner Eat Fit](#) program to provide a convenient [brochure](#) displaying PJ's Eat Fit approved beverages and their nutritional facts.

"If you really enjoy a specific beverage at PJ's, here's how you can order it to make it Eat Fit approved," said Nolte. "We're letting customers know that they do have options when ordering our products to get them customized to their needs."

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