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Food & Lifestyle

Haley House Cafe to reopen with former Tatte leader at the helm



Reggie Jean and Kate Lord are opening a new Haley House Cafe
CLAUDIA GINESTRA



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Story Highlights

- Haley House Cafe reopens in early 2027 at Nubian Square under Kate Lord's leadership.
- Seventy-five percent of the core launch team are formerly incarcerated, earning 30% above market rate.
- The nonprofit expects $120,000 annual operating losses during the first three years of operation.

A shifting neighborhood and unsustainable financial losses shut Haley House Cafe down seven years ago. Now it is ready for a new life as a meaningful revenue stream for the nonprofit with insights from a former Tatte leader.

Haley House Cafe plans to reopen at the start of 2027 as a multimillion-dollar operation in the heart of Nubian Square, according to Executive Director Reggie Jean. The new cafe and a connected catering business are designed to fund the nonprofit's direct services, including free food access and workforce development, while providing a community gathering space with fresh food to Roxbury.

Haley House was established 60 years ago as a hospitality- and food-driven human services provider. The reimagined cafe opens seven years after the original cafe's closure, with an intent to be a nontraditional revenue stream to fund community support services.

"Diversifying your portfolio as a nonprofit is really important," Jean said, noting 80% of revenue from the cafe is ultimately earmarked for nonprofit work. "Our dollars go right back to the people that need it most."

At the head of Haley House Cafe's new era is Kate Lord, a former general manager of Tatte Bakery & Cafe.

Lord has a history of restaurant operations at such companies as the Hard Rock Cafe and Starbucks, and she is bringing those corporate skills to Haley House and its nonprofit model.

Lord's vision is to bring elements of the original cafe, which closed in 2019, into the new space, she told the Business Journal. The new cafe will be focused on cost efficiency along with community needs.

"We want to reinvest the finances from the cafe back into the community by keeping our costs as low as possible, so we can feed good food to good people at a good rate, which is getting harder and harder in Boston," Lord said.

The new space on Washington Street, just steps from its original home, totals 2,000 square feet. The new cafe is owned by Haley House through a condo deal structured as a social enterprise. There are more than 60 affordable-housing units on top of the cafe that the nonprofit will eventually buy, Jean said.



A rendering of the Haley House Cafe opening in January.

HALEY HOUSE

Haley House purchased the building with the original cafe and what would become its commercial kitchen space over a decade and a half ago, Jean told the Business Journal. The adjacent land was transformed by New Atlantic Development and Dream Collaborative into a mixed-use square that includes the new cafe as an anchor tenant, Jean said.

“Haley House was not a stranger to us, and it was really great to understand that there was another chapter for them,” Greg Minott, managing principal and co-founder of Dream, said.

The first iteration of the cafe remains a functional events space. Local partners like Franklin Cummings Tech and Community Music Center of Boston often book the space for off-site company gatherings. The building also houses a commercial kitchen, which makes everything fresh for the cafe and catering business, according to Jean.

“We want the business to thrive, not just the social aspect of providing employment opportunities and healthy, affordable meals to individuals,” Jean said.

The new menu for the cafe and the connected catering company includes familiar favorites, like the cafe’s holiday pies, which are already selling through the catering company and which began taking orders in summer 2026.

Financially smarter for the sake of the community

Haley House is no stranger to the difficulties of food-driven community work. Just as the cafe business closed in early 2019, other ventures, such as Dudley Dough, a pizza restaurant owned by the nonprofit, closed following financial challenges in 2017.

While the long-term vision is profitability, Jean is realistic about the capital it will take to get there, he told the Business Journal.

As the nonprofit scales Haley House's Bakery Café, it anticipates operating losses of approximately $120,000 annually during the first three years. Following the initial phase, Jean is looking to make the cafe a meaningful revenue stream for Haley House programs, including its soup kitchen and urban agriculture.

"We're looking at growth while understanding how the restaurant industry runs," Jean said.

Hiring people who have been formerly incarcerated is another key part of the mission, according to Jean. There will be a mix of full-time employees and temporary employees brought on through Haley House's Transitional Employment Program, an initiative for employing formerly incarecerated local residents.

Currently, 75% of the core team for launch are formerly incarcerated returning citizens, according to Lord. At full capacity, Lord anticipates 20 kitchen staff and around 10 front-of-the-house cafe employees, she told the Business Journal.

Employees hired are being paid 30% over market rate, with half of kitchen staffers earning more than $25 per hour and cafe workers earning minimum wage plus tips. The wages are higher than Tatte's and most for-profit cafe competitors in Boston, according to Lord.

"We have a happy team that is feeling supported in more ways than one, not just financially but also having a safe place to return to," Lord said.

THE LIST

Here are the biggest nonprofits in Massachusetts

Total assets

Rank	Prior Rank	Organization/Prior rank (*unranked in 2025)/
1	1	Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston Inc.
2	2	Museum of Fine Arts, Boston
3	5	Preservation of Affordable Housing

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