

Lavazza, Spar Bean Tree collaboration empowers deaf baristas

Coffee brand Lavazza and Spar Bean Tree coffee shops are collaborating to uplift South Africa's deaf community, training and employing internationally accredited coffee shop baristas through the Ciro Coffee Academy (CCA).

The initiative is made possible by the CCA, of which the Lavazza Training Academy is a part in South Africa, and its Barista Upliftment Programme. As Lavazza clients, a select number of SPAR Bean Tree coffee shops now employ several CCA-trained deaf baristas and offer specially designed sign language menus.



"Deaf baristas – and the sign language menus that enable communication and facilitate ordering at SPAR Bean Tree coffee shops – have been well-received by customers who get excellent coffee and warm, friendly service," says Debbie Haswell, SPAR's group retail operations project manager.

CCA coffee courses

The CCA has strategically designed its various specialised coffee courses to accommodate deaf barista training into their programmes. Trainee baristas are taken through the Speciality Coffee Association of Europe (SCAE) modules, which develop their skills on the history of coffee machines and the coffee-making process, customer engagement, grinding, extracting, milk-texturing, presenting and serving, and maintenance, etc. The St Vincent School for the Deaf and eDeaf are two organisations that assist CCA in recruiting candidates who wish to pursue a career in coffee.

After completion of their training, CCA also assists with the employment of deaf barista graduates through its network of clients, including Spar Bean Tree, to help them launch their careers.



Thabo Albert Mkhale is a deaf barista at Spar Bean Tree in Hobart, Bryanston

CCA is now offering a new short course in barista skills, an official NQF Level four certification available exclusively through UNISA, for both hearing and hearing-impaired candidates. As part of launching this programme, UNISA is sponsoring the enrolment of 30 deaf candidate baristas. All that's needed is 30 stipends to the value of R2,700 each to assist candidates with expenses while undergoing training. The sponsorship opportunity is open to the coffee community (contact Lani Snyman on lanis@ciro.co.za to become a sponsor). For more info on the training programme, go to www.ciro.co.za/training.

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