



Woman-Owned Neighbors & Friends Kitchen Now Open in South Pasadena

Founder Kaiy Smith-Biesman brings comfort, culture, community-building, and monthly gathering experiences to the heart of South Pasadena

SOUTH PASADENA, CA, UNITED STATES, June 8, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Neighbors & Friends Kitchen](#) is now open in South Pasadena and taking reservations on [OpenTable](#), bringing a new kind of neighborhood restaurant to the city. One built around comfort, connection, and the simple but powerful idea that food can make people feel at home.

Created by entrepreneur and founder Kaiy Smith-Biesman, Neighbors & Friends Kitchen is the next chapter in Smith-Biesman's growing Neighbors & Friends brand — a hospitality vision built by a Black founder who has turned food into a platform for culture, connection, community, and local economic impact. Neighbors & Friends Café has become a staple of Union Street, Pasadena and was an important place of healing and resources post-Altadena fires.

At Neighbors & Friends Kitchen, comfort is not just about what is on the plate. It is the feeling of being welcomed in, remembered, cared for, and invited to stay awhile. Rooted in Smith-Biesman's Black and Italian background, the restaurant blends American Southern comfort, coastal Italian influence, and warm, intentional hospitality into a full-service dining experience designed for gathering.

The restaurant also gives South Pas Smash, the burger window from cook and owner James Kruse, a permanent home as part of the broader Neighbors & Friends family. The easiest way to understand the concept: same kitchen, two different experiences. Out front, South Pas Smash serves smash burgers, fries, and beer through the kitchen window. Inside, Neighbors & Friends Kitchen offers full-service neighborhood dining from Smith-Biesman, with a beverage program curated with Teo Hunter of Crowns & Hops.

Now open, the restaurant is launching a recurring cultural hospitality calendar that turns Neighbors & Friends Kitchen into more than a place to eat — it is a place to meet, listen, celebrate, discover, and belong. Monthly and seasonal programming will include:

- Crowns & Friends Fridays — a cultural beer and music series with Crowns & Hops
- Brewers and Winemaker Table pairing dinners
- Culture on Tap community conversations
- World Cup watch events

Farmers Market Thursday activations
Neighborhood nights
Family-forward Sunday programming
Meet-the-brewer events

At its core, Neighbors & Friends Kitchen is exactly what the name promises: a place where neighbors become friends, friends become family, and where culture meets community.

“Neighbors & Friends Kitchen is about comfort, but not just comfort food. It is about creating a place where people feel welcomed, remembered, cared for, and connected,” Kaiy Smith-Biesman said.

“People act like you have to choose between doing good and building wealth. I don't buy that. Everything I've built, from catering to the café to the restaurant, has proven the opposite. When you create spaces where people feel welcome, supported, and connected, they come back. I believe that community creates retention, retention creates revenue, revenue creates generational wealth and generational wealth allows you to create opportunities for your community. Community isn't separate from the business model. It is the business model.”

“As a Black woman founder, I know what it means to build without the traditional head start. Neighbors & Friends Kitchen is part of a bigger vision — one that uses food, hospitality, and community to create opportunity, support local businesses, and show my children that you can build wealth and give back at the same time,” Kaiy Smith-Biesman said.

WHAT

Neighbors & Friends Kitchen is now open and taking reservations on OpenTable. The Black woman-owned, full-service neighborhood restaurant from founder Kaiy Smith-Biesman brings together comfort-driven dining, Southern and Italian family influences, community-centered hospitality, South Pas Smash, a Crowns & Hops-curated beer program, and monthly curated programming designed to bring people together.

WHEN

Now open
Reservations available on OpenTable
Monthly programming launching throughout June and July

WHERE

Neighbors & Friends Kitchen
1009 El Centro St.
South Pasadena, CA 91030

WHO

Media may request interviews with:

Kaiy Smith-Biesman

Founder and Owner, Neighbors & Friends Kitchen

Teo Hunter

Brewmaster / Co-Founder and Head of Brewing Operations, Crowns & Hops

MEDIA / PHOTO / VIDEO OPPORTUNITIES

Kaiy Smith-Biesman inside her South Pasadena restaurant

Full-service dining room and neighborhood hospitality visuals

South Pas Smash burger window in action

Smash burgers, fries, beer, and full-service comfort-driven dishes

Crowns & Hops beer program and cultural beer programming

Monthly music, food, beer, and community gathering moments

Menu highlights rooted in Southern comfort and Italian coastal influence

South Pasadena neighborhood and Mission Street district visuals

PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS

Crowns & Friends Fridays

A monthly cultural beer and music series with Crowns & Hops featuring curated beer, music, community, limited menu items, and special releases.

Brewers and Winemaker Table

An intimate wine or beer-pairing dinner series featuring guest breweries and winemakers, guided tastings, storytelling, and chef-driven menus.

Culture on Tap

A community conversation series focused on food, culture, creativity, beer, music, entrepreneurship, hospitality, and what it means to build community through shared experience.

World Cup Watch Events

Seasonal match-day gatherings with beer pairings, food specials, DJ programming, and a global hospitality feel.

Friends, Neighbors & Farmers Thursday

A weekly activation designed to connect with South Pasadena Farmers Market traffic through small bites, draft specials, music, patio energy, and local vendor tie-ins.

Neighborhood Nights

Programming celebrating Los Angeles communities, culture, makers, artists, chefs, brewers, and local collaborators.

WHY IT MATTERS

Neighbors & Friends Kitchen is more than a restaurant. It is a community-building space created

by a Black woman-owned hospitality brand with comfort at the center.

Smith-Biesman has built multiple community-centered brands across catering, café, coaching, media, and nonprofit work. With Neighbors & Friends Kitchen, she is expanding that model into a full-service evening concept designed around shared meals, cultural programming, local collaboration, and the kind of hospitality that makes people feel like they belong.

RESERVATIONS / MEDIA INQUIRIES

Reservations are available on OpenTable.

Media interested in visiting, filming, photographing, or scheduling interviews should contact:

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