



From the array of exotic spices hitting your nose, to tasting flavors unfamiliar to the area, shopping and eating at the World Mart food truck promises a delicious experience with an authentic African flavor. Every two weeks, owner Nathalie Nkashama drives to the Twin Cities to pick up her shipment of spices and coffee beans imported directly from Ethiopia. These items then stock the shelves of World Mart as it travels around Worthington.

Nathalie first started World Mart as a fixed storefront in Worthington. After months of bearing through the COVID-19 pandemic, Nathalie was seeing less traffic coming through her doors and a direct loss in revenue. Determined to continue her passion for sharing a taste of her culture with others, Nathalie decided to transform her business from a brick and mortar location into a food truck and bring her products directly to her customers.

Through the help of SRDC's COVID-19 Revolving Loan Fund (RLF), Nathalie was able to acquire a mobile food truck, as well as a new grill, food racks, coolers for produce, and inventory for the truck. Nathalie's new mobile and socially-distanced business proved to be fruitful during the pandemic as she found herself making more deliveries and building a new customer base due to the amount of people staying home to social distance. With this new equipment, Nathalie says she wants to "Americanize African food," and plans on cooking and selling authentic African food to introduce products available.

Born in the Congo and having lived in several West African countries, Nathalie has a passion for sharing a taste of her culture with others. This passion earned Nathalie SRDC's 2020 Regional Project of the Year award. With SRDC by her side, Nathalie has been able to expand her products and hire more employees. World Mart also added online ordering due to the increased popularity of the food truck and began selling at the Worthington Farmers Market.

"Small businesses need to be ready to make quick changes," Nathalie noted about her decision to transition her business. "Without program like SRDC's, small businesses wouldn't be able to." Nathalie looks forward to continuing to share authentic African flavors with the Worthington community as she continues to expand her business.



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