



Tri-Cities business mixing chocolate and charity for Valentine's Day

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KINGSPORT, Tenn. - A Tri-Cities business is mixing chocolate with charity to make Valentine's Day sweeter this year.

Bellafina Chocolates in Kingsport is partnering with Kuda Vana, a home for abandoned and orphaned children in Africa. Bellafina Chocolates Founder and President Brenda Barnicki said profits from chocolate sales this Valentine's Day will be donated to the Christian children's home in Zimbabwe.

"They really try to support the children kind of holistically. They live in family groups and show them a lot of love. They also give them a great education and teach them about their nutrition," Barnicki said.

The chocolate boxes will also feature the children's artwork. The children paint what they know and so there's little elephants and there are native flowers... it really makes a really special gift, especially for Valentine's Day," said Barnicki.

Bellafina Chocolates has been supporting a variety of children's organizations across the world for almost a decade. The store's mission is to support children suffering from disease, poverty, abuse or neglect. Barnicki said she went from dipping truffles one at a time in her kitchen to opening the store after she was laid off from a corporate job eight years ago. "I've always had a heart for children and I've always felt that I've been so blessed in my life... I really wanted to give back and give back in a tangible way."

Barnicki said 100 percent of Bellafina's proceeds goes to children's charities. Typically, they work with about two dozen organizations at a time and have partnered with local organizations like Court Appointed Special Advocates for Children and international ones like Samaritan's Purse. Barnicki hopes people get inspired when they receive a box of Bellafina Chocolates. "We love it when people get inspired by what we're doing because it causes people to think about how can I give back in my life."

Bellafina Chocolates is located at 123 Cherokee Street in Kingsport. Bellafina Chocolates has a special webpage for Kuda Vana set-up [here](#). You can also mention Kuda Vana while checking out online and your money will be earmarked for Kuda Vana. To learn more about the organization, visit the [Kuda Vana website](#).