



Mike Greenlar/Staff photographer

LISA LUCAS (left) and Felicia Tymofy (right) are trying to keep afloat the Seven Rays Book Store on Westcott Street in Syracuse. Pictured with them is Felicia's daughter, Trinity Tymofy, 4.

Rays of Hope?

Two women hope to keep spirit of Seven Rays afloat

By **Tori Woods**
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They finish each other's sentences. They say they balance each other, yin and yang. It seems destined that these two friends, Felicia Tymofy and Lisa Lucas, would become business partners, too.

Felicia: "We're used to talking at the same time, and ..."

Lisa: "... we finish each other's sentences, or say the same thing at the same time, or she'll yell at me to get out of her head, or vice versa."

Tymofy, 25, and Lucas, 31, work at the Seven Rays Book Store at 508 Westcott St., Syracuse. Founded in 1977 by owner David Davis, Seven Rays is a cornerstone and community hub of the eclectic neighborhood. The store specializes in books and supplies that deal with the metaphysical, but it has come to mean much more to its devoted following.

Customers and residents alike were dismayed to learn that before spring arrives, Seven Rays will close its doors.

Or will it?

Tymofy and Lucas, both employees for less than a year, were long-time customers before they started working at Seven Rays. They say that Seven Rays is far more than a store, and they're trying to keep the store's spirit alive.

In addition to vending books, herbs, crystals, religious supplies, jewelry, incense, and just about everything else imaginable, Seven Rays offers educational and participatory classes. There are also readers and healers available, and the women are always ready and happy to talk

with anyone who walks through their door.

"Everyone should know all different paths in order to really understand themselves," Tymofy said.

Lucas spoke about how the store has something to offer for everyone — Christians, Buddhists, Hindus, Pagans and any number of intermingled beliefs. The store is especially helpful for those who want to learn more.

"There's so many different spiritual paths inside Syracuse," Lucas said. "Whatever you need, we try to have it."

The women say there is a steady stream of people in the store — some simply curious, some seeking someone to talk to, some exploring new spiritual paths. They enjoy talking with open-minded people, and trying to help visitors discover new things. They enjoy making discoveries along with their customers.

"We learn at the same time. If there's something we don't know, we're, like, let's go explore this section," Lucas said.

A group regularly gathers at Seven Rays. They're friends who talk about their lives, their spirituality, their families. Tymofy's daughter, 4-year-old Trinity, makes friends with the customers and advises them on their purchases. Some regulars bring their children to play with Trinity.

"It's like a family. An extended family," Tymofy said. "We all know what's going on in everyone's lives, to the detail. We're each other's shoulder, support group. It's like a safe-haven for the community."

It's this type of family atmosphere that would be the hardest loss if Seven Rays were gone for good. So Tymofy and Lucas decided to act

Tymofy and Lucas are in the process of trying to save the spirit of Seven Rays. They are working with banks, through the outpouring of emotional and written support from their customers, who have become their friends. They're trying to achieve their dream: to re-open a new shop with the same name, together.

Though the friends share similar beliefs and philosophies, they are very individual people. They say their different personalities compliment and balance each other.

Both Tymofy and Lucas think it's necessary to have a store like Seven Rays in the community. They say the store fosters understanding and communication about alternative paths, and is a source for knowledge and exploration. They also hope they can continue the tradition of helping dispel myths about alternative religions, and overcoming Hollywood stereotypes.

Their new store would take the best parts of Seven Rays and add their own twists. They would like to conduct more classes and establish a larger meeting area. They want to provide a more extensive herb collection, and carry a larger selection of children's materials.

The women have both pursued other business ventures, and they feel confident their business know-how and commitment and love for the store will spell success for the new Seven Rays.

"We have the energy to be more focused, and to learn with the customers and to teach them," Tymofy said. "Get the two of us together with a customer, and we could go for hours. It's crazy — there's something with the energy. When you get us together, people don't leave here. Yin and yang."