

## **Coffee Connection and Irondequoit Presbyterian Church**

### **2022 Mission Collaboration Grant Report**

This report covers only six months of this project, since the grant was not received until September 2022. This report includes plans for the next six months which were part of the original application.

#### **What were you hoping to accomplish?**

**Coffee Connection:** We established our partnership with PCHO (Person Centered Housing Options), with a MOU (memorandum of understanding) in place and three meetings with their staff. They have only referred one person to us, although one person came to us before this project started from PCHO, who is our lead coffee roaster and doing very well. They referred one woman who has obstacles with DHS and can't begin employment as a trainee yet but does work as an unpaid interim—and another woman was just now referred to us. Our goal of training women who have been homeless in addition to a history of addiction, trauma, and incarceration—which is our focus population for our mission—is developing slowly, but it has begun.

**Irondequoit Presbyterian Church (IPC):** IPC wanted to find ways to partner with the Coffee Connection in their goal of partnering with PCHO to help take on women trainees who have been homeless and also struggled with addiction. We envisioned this beginning with one Saturday morning Small Group and see what interest and motivation we could generate. The long-term goal is to present the mission and vision of the Coffee Connection and PCHO to the entire IPC congregation to garner more full church-wide support.

#### **Who was touched by your project or program?**

**Coffee Connection:** Our hope for this project with Irondequoit Presbyterian Church was that a few of their members would take become active volunteers with the Coffee Connection. David Eckstrand, project coordinator for IPC, has joined the Coffee Connection board. Perhaps in the next few months, more of their members will participate. Our hope for the remainder of the project year and beyond is that an increasing number of women from PCHO will be trainees, some continuing as employees—and that they will experience similar personal and professional development as the woman who is now our roaster.

**Irondequoit Presbyterian Church:** Dave Eckstrand, IPC Project Coordinator, arranged for one Saturday morning to have Joy Bergfalk, CC Executive Director, to come and present the mission and programs of the CC, including its new partnership with PCHO to the Saturday morning Small Group. Nearly all of the Saturday morning Small Group Members expressed an interest in the CC and its partnership with PCHO and wanted to help in one way or another.

#### **How did this grant energize or transform your congregation or community?**

**Coffee Connection:** The \$3,000 grant covered 190 hours of in-house training (annual average of 3.6 hours a week)—hours paid to our employees who are training new employees and the trainee's time. That training is essential to our mission because it includes learning the life practices at the core of our program which empower the women. The training is also essential to our business because women in the program are learning how to run a business in effective ways.

**Irondequoit Presbyterian Church:** Knowing and recognizing that IPC had joined with the CC and PCHO in underwriting this grant energized nearly every member of the IPC Saturday morning Small Group to want to contribute to the mission supported by the grant in some way or other. David Eckstrand, IPC Project Coordinator, has joined the Coffee Connection Board of Directors. As noted above, Dave (along with his son) committed to helping deliver bags of coffee beans upon arrival from the pallets into the CC coffee grinding area. Nearly all members of the Saturday morning IPC Small Group buy their coffee and other gift items from the Coffee Connection. Approximately 1/2 agreed to donate directly to the Coffee Connection via their website. The coffee we use at Small Group meetings is purchased from the Coffee Connection. Approximately 3 to 4 of the women in the Saturday morning Small Group have agreed to volunteer to help mentor and train new women interns from PCHO once that flow of women trainees has begun, and once they are trained and instructed on what that role specifically requires of them. Many of the Group Members were also willing to fill-in on "one-time" volunteer needs for CC when those occasions arise.

### **What did you learn from this project and what obstacles did you experience?**

**Coffee Connection:** Our main obstacle has been the slow progress toward an agreement with PCHO and their incorporating the training piece into what they do so they could refer women to us. That has now begun, and we expect that there will be a growing number of women coming into the training program through them. As a cooperative project with the Irondequoit Presbyterian Church, we hoped for volunteers who would work with our staff—the women in the program—offering encouragement and personal support and experiencing direct mission in this way for themselves. We did not yet find a way to expand that beyond David Eckstrand.

**Irondequoit Presbyterian Church:** At IPC, our Small Group has learned that organizations like CC and PCHO can make a tremendous and transformative difference for so many homeless and addicted, unemployed persons in the greater Rochester Community. There is a great willingness to do more and we are awaiting an influx and flow of new trainees from PCHO so that our women volunteers can help more directly once they have received more specific training and instructions on what that role will require.

### **What are your next steps?**

**Coffee Connection:** Our original application envisioned a full year for this project, so we will continue to work with PCHO staff to grow the project. Because PCHO has only now referred someone to us, who has not yet started work, none of their funding came to us since the agreement is they will reimburse us on a weekly basis for training completed. That is how the project will continue to be funded. – We will also continue to work with IPC members, as that may be possible, to build more active participation which will hopefully continue beyond this year. We do have ongoing support from other Presbytery congregations and the Presbytery in other ways, including financial support and customers.

**Irondequoit Presbyterian Church:** For IPC and the Saturday morning Small Group, now that it appears there might soon be more training clients referred from PCHO, we will need to schedule a follow-up appearance from Joy to our Small Group to present the specifics (and perhaps a set of instructions/training manual) on what is required for those women who have agreed to volunteer and help mentor women who are referred from PCHO. And then, I think we need to find a time this Spring to bring Joy back during a minute for mission to the Whole IPC Congregation to present what is already happening at IPC via the Saturday morning Small Group and to see if we can get a more church-wide commitment.

**Please share a story of where you saw God in this project.**

**Coffee Connection:** Our application includes this sentence: “Empowerment, love, healthy relationships, new ways of being, hope in the world – all are essential to the mission.” This is the essence of the church’s mission, as well as the mission of the Coffee Connection. We have seen that happening in the life of our employee who came from PCHO before the project began, and we hope to see that in the lives of other women as well. ... We also see it in David Eckstrand who brought energy and hope, seeking to work with us to empower and love the women.

**Irondequoit Presbyterian Church:** IPC saw God in this project in every aspect and in every endeavor of CC's and PCHO's mission. IPC has signed on and become a Matthew 25 Congregation. In Matthew 25 the Bible says:

<sup>34</sup> “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. <sup>35</sup> For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, <sup>36</sup> I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

<sup>37</sup> “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? <sup>38</sup> When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? <sup>39</sup> When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

<sup>40</sup> “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

We at IPC see that the mission of CC and its partnership with PCHO furthers the vision expressed in Matthew 25 in every way. God is embodied and at the heart of what they do everyday!