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1951 Coffee Company Awarded ‘Opportunity for All’ Grant by the Starbucks Foundation to Expand Barista Training Program

The \$63,000 grant allows 1951 Coffee Company to grow program to serve an additional 85 refugees, asylees and Special Immigrant Visa holders

BERKELEY, CALIF. (August 16, 2017) – Today, [1951 Coffee Company](#) co-founders **Doug Hewitt** and **Rachel Taber** announced that the nonprofit specialty coffee organization has been awarded an ‘**Opportunity for All’ Grant** in the amount of \$63,000 by the **Starbucks Foundation** to expand its **Barista Training Program**. The first-ever grants program builds on Starbucks’ 20-year history of supporting organizations that connect those facing barriers to jobs and education to pathways to long-term economic opportunity. 1951 Coffee was one of 41 nonprofit organizations selected, which collectively support job skills training and career readiness for youth, veterans and military spouses, and refugees. Starbucks selected 1951 Coffee because of their implementation of a proven, innovative approach to helping refugees obtain the skills and training they need to succeed in a rapidly changing global economy. With the grant, 1951 Coffee will increase its current training program in Oakland to take place, at minimum, once a month, with the ability to see up to 85 graduates over the next year. Additionally, building on the success of the inaugural program, 1951 Coffee will soon begin expanding the program to major coffee cities throughout the United States, starting with San Diego, serving refugee communities with underutilized skills and unmet employment needs.

“We are honored to receive this support from the Starbucks Foundation, as their goal of helping more refugees, young people and veterans connect to pathways to opportunity aligns with our mission of providing a platform of self-assistance,” says Taber, Co-Founder and Director of Operations. “In less than a year after completing the Barista Training Program, we’ve seen our graduates begin to build a life for themselves and even receive job promotions, due in large part to the strong, sustainable foundation we were able to provide.”

Since the training program launched in June 2016, 1951 Coffee has provided 51 refugees, asylees and Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) holders in the San Francisco Bay Area with a free, high-caliber curriculum and hands-on experience needed to work in the growing industry of specialty coffee. Hewitt and Taber work directly with local refugee resettlement organizations to find participants for the two-week course and, so far, have held nine classes. In addition to learning to create the perfect espresso drink, participants also become well-versed in customer-facing roles and receive the tools needed to apply and interview for a job. Graduates have gone on to work for Blue Bottle, Dropbox, Due Torrie, Highwire Coffee, Mazarine, Starbucks and at 1951 Coffee Company’s Café in Berkeley (2410 Channing Way, Berkeley 94704).

Says Hewitt, Co-Founder and Director of Coffee and Programs, “Refugees possess exceptional qualities and determination in creating a new life, but there are few options for immediate placement when they don’t have local references. The specified training connects refugees to countless career opportunities, and it also welcomes them into the local coffee shop, a welcoming place where communities thrive.”

Founded in 2015, 1951 Coffee Company draws its name from the year the United Nations first defined and set forth guidelines for the protection of refugees. In addition to the Barista Training Program, 1951 Coffee operates a café in Berkeley, which serves as a vehicle for educating the surrounding community about refugee life and issues. Open Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. - 7 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m., the 1,176-square foot space employs graduates of the Barista Training Program. In order to ensure a meaningful experience that engages 1951 Coffee customers through great coffee and respectful advocacy, **Montaag** has designed the cafe’s features to educate patrons about the path to resettlement and create an approachable environment for 1951 Coffee staff and the Bay Area community to connect.

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About 1951 Coffee

Based in California, 1951 Coffee Company was founded in 2015 in the spirit of the 1951 Refugee Convention to promote the well-being of the refugee community through job training and employment in the rapidly expanding coffee industry. The organization consists of 1951 Coffee Company’s café in Berkeley (2410 Channing Way, Berkeley 94704) and the Barista Training Program in Oakland. With its programs and café, 1951 Coffee also seeks to also educated communities about refugee life and issues. Find out more at 1951coffee.com/.