Introduction: In July 2021, the SAM Initiative awarded Homeboy Industries with a generous $75,000 grant to support our newest social enterprise, Feed HOPE. This grant followed SAM Initiative’s initial grant investment in 2020 to support Feed HOPE start up operations. SAM Initiative’s investments in Feed HOPE have proved to be critical to our ability to continue to scale our newest – and now our most profitable – social enterprise. As we have previously shared, prior grant funding from the SAM Initiative’s enabled us to hire key positions supporting Feed HOPE in finance and procurement to expand our capacity and position ourselves for growing demand from Los Angeles County for larger contracts. Without the SAM Initiative’s vision and understanding of Feed HOPE’s potential, we would not be where we are today. As we approach the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic, Homeboy Industries is pleased to share this report to the SAM Initiative, detailing the tremendous impact, continued growth, and future plans of our newest social enterprise, Feed HOPE.

Objectives: As proposed to the SAM Initiative in June 2022, at the conclusion of the grant period, Homeboy Industries seeks to:

1. To secure the lease of a commercial kitchen.
2. To provide jobs and job training for 75 staff and/or reentry program participants.
3. To increase revenue to $2.5-$3.0 million.
4. To increase meal production capacity from 10,000 to up to 25,000 per week.

Impact: We are well on our way to meeting these objectives. We are proud to share that, this year, Feed HOPE had a net income of nearly $1 million – a first for our organization. Since Feed HOPE’s inception, we have produced and delivered roughly 11,000 meals weekly for food insecure Angelinos and will generate over $4.1 million in gross revenues in 2021, far exceeding our initial goal of $2.5-$3.0 million. We have also employed 28-35 employees at a given time in roles spanning the areas of food preparation, distribution services, data entry, logistics and more – all contributing to the self-value of our program participants while literally making the unemployable, employable.
Thanks to your gift, we are in a position to significantly scale Feed HOPE, and we have already secured a lease on a commercial kitchen in Pasadena to dramatically increase our production capacity. The Pasadena location will house meal production in addition to Feed HOPE’s purchasing, finance, logistics, and customer service efforts. We are preparing the kitchen and expect it will be fully operational in early 2022. We selected Pasadena as the location for our commercial kitchen as it is a “neutral” territory, ensuring that our team members keep safe traveling to and working at this location. When the new kitchen is fully operational, we anticipate being able to increase our capacity to 33,000 – 45,000 meals per week. We are also in the process of acquiring another building in Lincoln Heights as the permanent home for Feed HOPE.

A significant reason that we have been so successful is that our meals are known for being nutritious and delicious. Some of our most popular meals this year have been: BBQ chicken, mashed potatoes, and garlic green beans; chicken Caesar salads with tomato basil soup; chicken tamales, Mexican rice, black bean and corn salsa; beef and black bean chili with a loaded baked potato; and teriyaki beef with pineapple, ginger scented brown rice, and snap peas.

Our partnerships with government entities ensure that Feed HOPE is a sustainable, revenue-generating enterprise in the long-term. For example, Feed HOPE is working with the Los Angeles County Department of Workforce Development, Aging, and Community Services (WDACS) to provide meals to homebound older adults in Supervisor Districts 1 and 2. We hope to grow our partnerships in 2022 as we increase our capacity to produce more meals daily. Due in part to the high quality of meals we produce, we have also recently become state certified as an emergency food and food distribution supplier to the State of California, the highest level of certification available. This means that in the event of a disaster, Feed HOPE will be called upon to produce meals for affected Californians. We look forward to leveraging our state certification to expand partnerships throughout California.
Client Impact: Frankie’s story clearly demonstrates the tremendous impact that working at Feed HOPE has had on our trainees. Frankie came to Homeboy Industries in January 2019. As all new trainees do, Frankie went through the re-entry program and his first job was as front desk receptionist for the organization. He moved on from there to give our guests tours of the facilities and was included in speaking engagements (although Frankie claims he is shy!). When the pandemic hit and FEED HOPE was created, Frankie was part of the original driving crew delivering meals to our elderly clients through the WDACS contract. He was then asked to join the inside team to assist the manager doing client enrollments, assessments, and billing in the WDACS Get Care website and handle customer service answering phone calls and emails. Today Frankie handles the logistics for all WDACS deliveries, and he is the most senior customer service representative on the team. Frankie aspires to one day manage the logistics and customer service team. Frankie is a quick learner, and he understands the importance and time sensitive nature of the job. He is a very kind soul which is evident when listening to him take calls from our elderly clients and doing everything within his power to get food to them.

Conclusion: Homeboy Industries remain incredibly appreciative for your belief in our mission and ability to create this viable enterprise. We look forward to sharing more about our growth with the SAM Initiative throughout 2022. If you have any additional questions, please feel free to reach out to Steve Delgado, Chief Operating Officer at sdelgado@homeboyindustries.org or 323.526.1254 x396.