

THE CHAIN COLLABORATIVE

# 2019 Annual Report



THE CHAIN  
*collaborative*

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# LETTER FROM THE FOUNDER



Dear Supporters and Collaborators,

Often, as the Executive Director of The Chain Collaborative (TCC), I find myself challenged in new ways, and this year, the challenges kept on coming. It's not easy to describe an incredible amount of change in only a few paragraphs, but below is an attempt to do so. We thank you, our supporters and collaborators, for staying with us through it all, and look forward to meeting 2020 with as much strength as we met 2019.

First, in the beginning of 2019, with a heavy heart we said goodbye to two beloved staff members, Tina Kim and Krista Pelletier. The devotion and drive they brought to TCC for several years, and the growth they sparked, will not be forgotten. We thank them for their service. Second, with another heavy heart, at the start of 2019, we said goodbye to our long-standing partnership in Ecuador with Asociación de Pequeñas Productoras de Café, Mujeres de Chaucha. This happened as our partners in Nicaragua, Las Diosas, were just getting back to work after an almost year-long political crisis that threatened their capacity to continue their mission.

Despite these challenges and changes, new leaves were turned, and at the beginning of 2019, TCC piloted the first ever Foundation course of the new SCA Coffee Sustainability Program, a global curriculum about sustainability in coffee co-authored by TCC and three other creators. Since then, TCC has taught twelve Foundation, Intermediate, and Professional level courses to students worldwide. We also began a partnership with an online resource library that shares resources about sustainability in coffee and launched two Fellowship programs. Meanwhile, we assembled a task force to revamp our approach to accompanying our Change Leader partners, renewed a consulting relationship with Kula Project to support their agricultural training program in Rwanda, and continued to consult for The Partnership for Gender Equity (PGE). We supported PGE through the design and launch of their generations workshops in Kenya, Uganda, and Guatemala, intended to understand the generational dynamics in coffee-growing communities.

While 2019 signaled the end of few relationships, it was also a year of beginnings. In 2020, our task is to nurture these beginnings. We thank you in advance for helping us nurture in 2020 what we began in 2019. We can't do it without you, nor would we ever want to.

**NORA BURKEY, FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**



# Mission, Beliefs, and Vision

## OUR MISSION

The mission of The Chain Collaborative is to invest in the capacity of Change Leaders in coffee growing regions and accompany them as they drive grassroots, sustainable development in their own communities, according to their own visions for change.

## OUR BELIEFS

We believe that coffee communities make the best decisions about their own development and that sustainable change comes from local leadership. We know that local leaders possess the drive and capacity to mobilize and inspire their community toward reaching long-term goals that will bring positive change.

## OUR VISION

Our vision for the future is an equitable and responsive global coffee industry that recognizes, values, and accompanies the self-directed development of coffee communities.

# 2019 Achievements at a Glance

## IPP REVAMP

Since our founding in 2014, we have accompanied our Change Leader partners as they have developed, monitored, and sustained quality of life improvements in their own communities, according to their own ideas for development and sustainability. To date, this accompaniment, termed our Investment Partnership Program (IPP), has included financial as well as program management support to Change Leader partners. In 2019, TCC celebrated our five-year anniversary by beginning a process to reflect on the successes and challenges of the IPP in order to enhance our impact moving forward.

To this end, TCC built a task force of former TCC volunteers, fellows, and collaborators in July of this year. Our goal was to collectively define a more systematic program structure for the IPP that would a) clarify TCC's expectations and goals when working with Change Leader partners; b) integrate a formal graduation strategy; and c) open doors to new funding and investment opportunities. Together with TCC, the task force identified a systematic approach to accompaniment that can be shared with Change Leaders and funders alike. TCC plans to roll out the revamped IPP in 2020, so stay tuned!

## LAUNCH OF THE EPP

This year saw the formal launch of TCC's newest program, the Education Partnership Program (EPP). In 2018, TCC was instrumental in the creation of the Specialty Coffee Association (SCA)'s Coffee Sustainability Program (CSusP). The CSusP is a world-wide curriculum about sustainability in coffee that includes three levels of instruction: Foundation, Intermediate, and Professional. The program is designed to engage stakeholders in all parts of the value chain and provide training on how to build holistic sustainability solutions in diverse contexts.

In 2019, TCC formally launched our course offerings (and scholarships offerings!) in this program and have to date conducted courses at all three levels. Meanwhile, we began a partnership with an online resource library, Sustain Coffee (SC), which collates and shares resources about sustainability in coffee. TCC has supported SC to build its online library, social media presence, and stellar team of volunteers. Finally, TCC established two Fellowship Programs that allow participants to take all three levels of the CSusP alongside additional coursework and remote fieldwork.

# Las Diosas



## CHANGE LEADER PROFILE

Las Diosas is a feminist coffee cooperative in Esteli, Nicaragua comprising over 220 female farmers. Since 2015, TCC has accompanied Las Disoas to diversify income streams for their members and improve their technical assistance program. In 2018, Nicaragua was faced with a political crisis that sparked new priorities for the cooperative as well as for the organization that founded them, Fundación Entre Mujeres (La FEM). In 2019, TCC accompanied Las Diosas and La FEM to increase food sovereignty in 10 communities. In particular, they revamped the infrastructure of their seed storage center, improved irrigation in two communities, conducted training on seed saving and the production of basic grains, and distributed hundreds of thousands of seeds that would later be saved and re-produced in community seed reservoirs. In 2020, TCC will continue to accompany the expansion this project, which will provide new training on seed reproduction and increase access to water and irrigation in four communities. In addition, TCC will accompany Las Diosas and La FEM to develop a study to document the causes, effects, and prevalence of gender-based violence in Northern Nicaragua, and assess how they can improve their anti-violence programming to respond to the findings.



# Impact

LAS DIOSAS

**150,000**

Red bean, sorghum, and corn seeds distributed

**362**

Direct female beneficiaries

**30**

Workshops on seed saving and basic grain production held for women in **10** communities

**100%**

Of leadership roles held by women

**64,000**

Seeds now held in improved seed storage center, between seven different silos

“

*The seed reservoirs project was of great importance for our women, taking into account that the end of 2018 was difficult due to the prolonged drought that occurred in Nicaragua. Having access to this funding allowed us to secure the seeds we needed to plant in the first cycle of 2019 and guarantee our staple food supply. Given prolonged drought, bean and corn seeds have recently been in short supply, and being able to now reproduce seeds on our own will guarantee we will have them in the future. In the communities where we now have seed reservoirs, women have organized to coordinate activities to support the reservoirs. The work that these women are doing is recognized by other members of the community. They recognize that women leaders can get involved in organizational processes.*

*Las Diosas*

CO-DIRECTOR, FUNDACION ENTRE MUJERES

**CRISTIAN MERLO**



# Now Africa Initiative



## CHANGE LEADER PROFILE

Now Africa Initiative (NAI) is a grassroots farmer organization located in Nyamigoye Parish in the Kanyantorogo sub-county of the Kanungu District in Southwestern Uganda. NAI's mission is to play a catalytic role in contributing to the socio-economic transformation of rural Uganda through sustainable agricultural development and educational improvements. Since 2014, TCC has accompanied NAI to establish and improve primary school education in Nyamigoye Parish and increase access to coffee markets and income through infrastructure development for farmers. In 2019 in particular, TCC accompanied NAI as they continued to improve infrastructure at their coffee storage center and doubled the number of farmers they purchased from in the most recent harvest season. Meanwhile, TCC accompanied NAI's primary school, Karama Education Center (KEC), as they initiated an organic school garden program, improved sanitation and hygiene facilities, increased access to water, and enhanced resources at their school library. In 2020, TCC will accompany NAI to launch a farmer training program, install solar energy at KEC, ensure access to clean water for community members, grow KEC's organic school garden program, and continue improving infrastructure at their storage center.



# Impact

## NOW AFRICA INITIATIVE

**7**  
New community projects set in motion

**37%**  
Income increase for participating farmers

**195**  
Farmers selling **10.5** metric tons of coffee to the NAI coffee storage center in 2019

**80%**  
Completion rate of the storage center

**260**  
Students at Karama Education Center

**98%**  
Germination rate of the Organic School Garden Nursery Bed



“

*NAI has registered tremendous growth in its quest for sustainable rural development. The farmers are now more aware of the need to embrace sustainable agricultural practices and the need to pay more attention to post-harvest handling; this has translated to better earnings. KEC has grown from strength-to-strength with the stocking of the library, introduction of the WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) program, and the Organic School Garden Project. Performance of pupils has greatly improved, absenteeism due to illness has greatly reduced, the school is now more friendly to the girl-child education and the morale amongst the teaching staff and school management committee is high. We are now rated highly in terms of performance in our sub-county of Kanyantorogo. Starting this new school year, the pupils are going to receive uniforms that will greatly enhance the image of KEC. The addition of solar power will unlock other opportunities like e-learning in the near future! All this wouldn't have been possible without the GREAT support from our wonderful partners, TCC!*

**DENIS TWINAMATSIKO**  
FOUNDER AND CEO, NOW AFRICA INITIATIVE

# Consulting Partnership Program

TCC's Consulting Partnership Program, launched in 2016, allows us to do two things. First, it allows us to share our expertise with like-minded organizations in the coffee and development sectors, ensuring other organizations have the resources they need to remain sustainable and impact livelihoods around the world. Second, it provides earned income to our organization so that more donations to our Investment Partnership Program can go directly to our community partners. In 2019, TCC renewed two consulting relationships, providing tailored services to projects that aim to increase gender equity in the coffee value chain, improve income for farming families, and spark greater youth engagement in agriculture.

k u l a

## KULA PROJECT

In 2019, we worked with Kula Project to secure grant funding for their Kula Fellowship Program and conducted grant training, prospecting, and proposal writing. In total, we trained Kula in grant and report writing, authored several grants that allowed them to raise \$64,180, and ensured funding for a total of 162 Kula Fellows in 2020.



## THE PARTNERSHIP FOR GENDER EQUITY

In 2019, among other activities, we worked with The Partnership for Gender Equity to conduct supply chain research. In total, we designed and attended three trainings in Kenya, Guatemala, and Uganda to understand generational dynamics in coffee communities and their impacts on youth disengagement in agriculture; designed and conducted industry-wide research to assess current company engagement with gender equity in the coffee value chain; and designed and attended focus group discussions to support the creation of a set of gender equity criteria for producer organizations.

# Education Partnership Program

This year marked the formal launch of TCC's newest organizational program, the Education Partnership Program (EPP). Comprising three components, the EPP engages all members of the value chain through the provision of theoretical and practical sustainability education.

## SUSTAIN COFFEE PARTNERSHIP

TCC's partnership with Sustain Coffee began in 2018 and continued in earnest throughout 2019. Sustain Coffee is a comprehensive online database collating available academic research and industry-wide resources on sustainability in the coffee value chain. Throughout 2019, TCC contributed 50 resources to the database, collaborated with Sustain Coffee to on-board two new resource contributors, and established a Sustain Coffee Fellowship Program that is designed to solicit on-going resource contributions from industry members and share those resources through a variety of media.

## SCA COFFEE SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM

In 2018, TCC was instrumental in the design of the Specialty Coffee Association (SCA)'s new Coffee Sustainability Program (CSusP), serving as a member of the Creators Group. In 2019, TCC launched our CSusP course offerings at a Foundation, Intermediate, and Professional level. At the start of 2019, TCC co-launched and co-taught a Foundation and Intermediate pilot alongside CSusP co-creators. In April 2019, TCC's Authorized SCA Trainer co-taught the first-ever in-person Foundation course at the SCA Global Coffee Expo in April with co-creator Erika Koss. Since then, TCC has taught nine more courses in total at a Foundation, Intermediate, and Professional level.

## SUSTAINABILITY EDUCATION FELLOWSHIP

Introduced in 2019, the Sustainability Education Fellowship provides Fellows with the opportunity to take all three levels of the SCA Coffee Sustainability Program while completing additional coursework in community-led development and ethical fundraising. Fellows are paired with one of TCC's Change Leader partners and throughout the course of their Fellowship are responsible for leveraging their training to co-design and co-implement a sustainability project to benefit the Change Leader community, raise \$5,000 to apply toward this project, and contribute new resources to Sustain Coffee.



# Impact

## EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

**6**

Fellowships granted; two cohorts of Fellowships launched

**12**

SCA Coffee Sustainability Program courses taught by TCC's AST

**70**

Total SCA Coffee Sustainability Program class participants from **26** countries

**100%**

Of total course participants reporting that their expectations were exceeded

**50**

New resources uploaded to the Sustain Coffee online resource library



“

*Our mission is to do more than just roast and serve great coffee, but to use our profits to make a difference at origin through clean water initiatives. I feel it is imperative that, for any organization with the desire to make social impact, we understand the role the sourcing of our coffee plays in the net impact we are making. TCC's Sustainability Foundation course helps set the historical foundation on how we arrived here in the first place and the work still to accomplish. After attending this course, it is evident we can't do this work alone - the challenges are so complex and interdependent. So the more individuals that choose to take this information to heart, we are implicated in working toward the solution together.*

**MIKE LENDA**

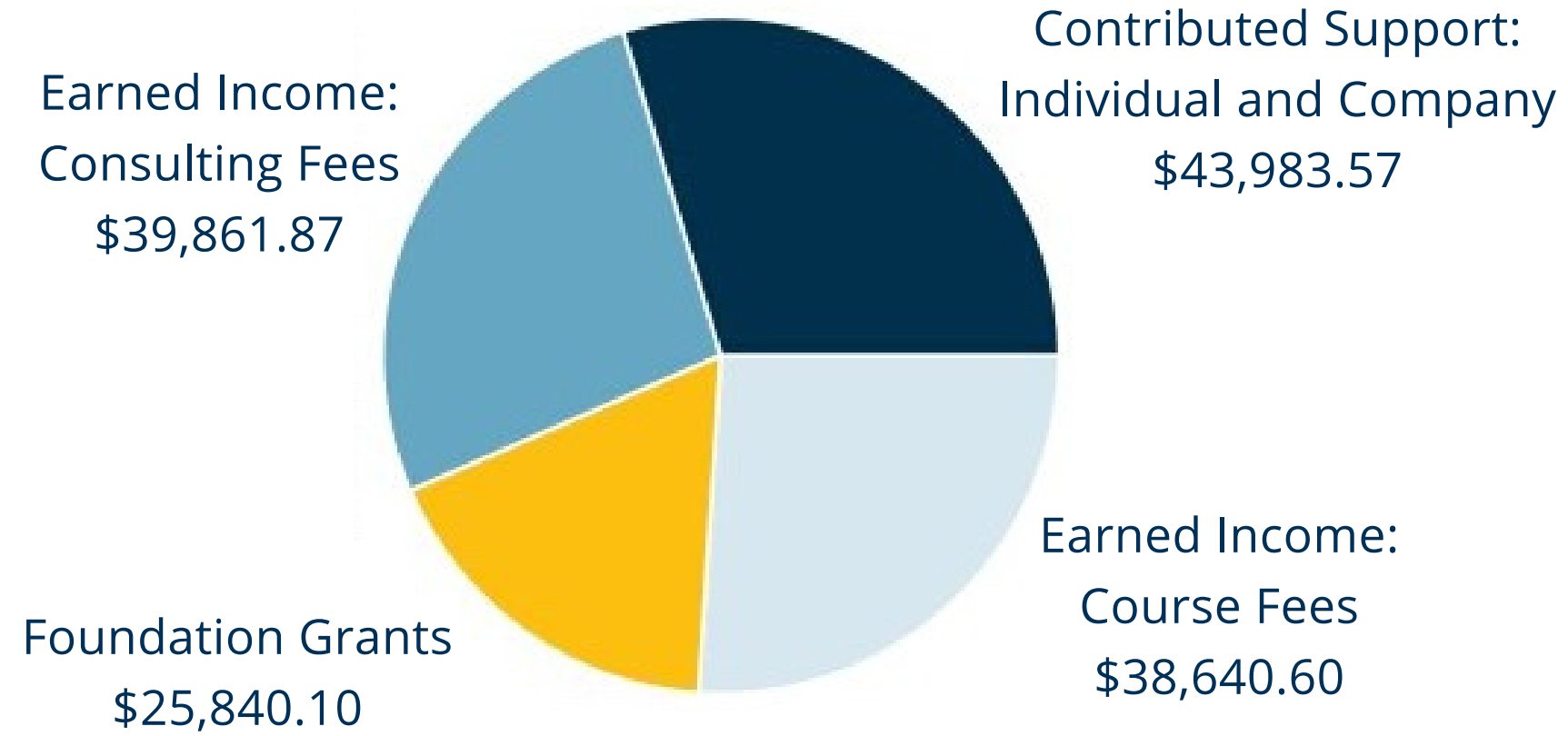
SCA COFFEE SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM, FOUNDATION LEVEL PARTICIPANT

# 2019 Financials

## Income



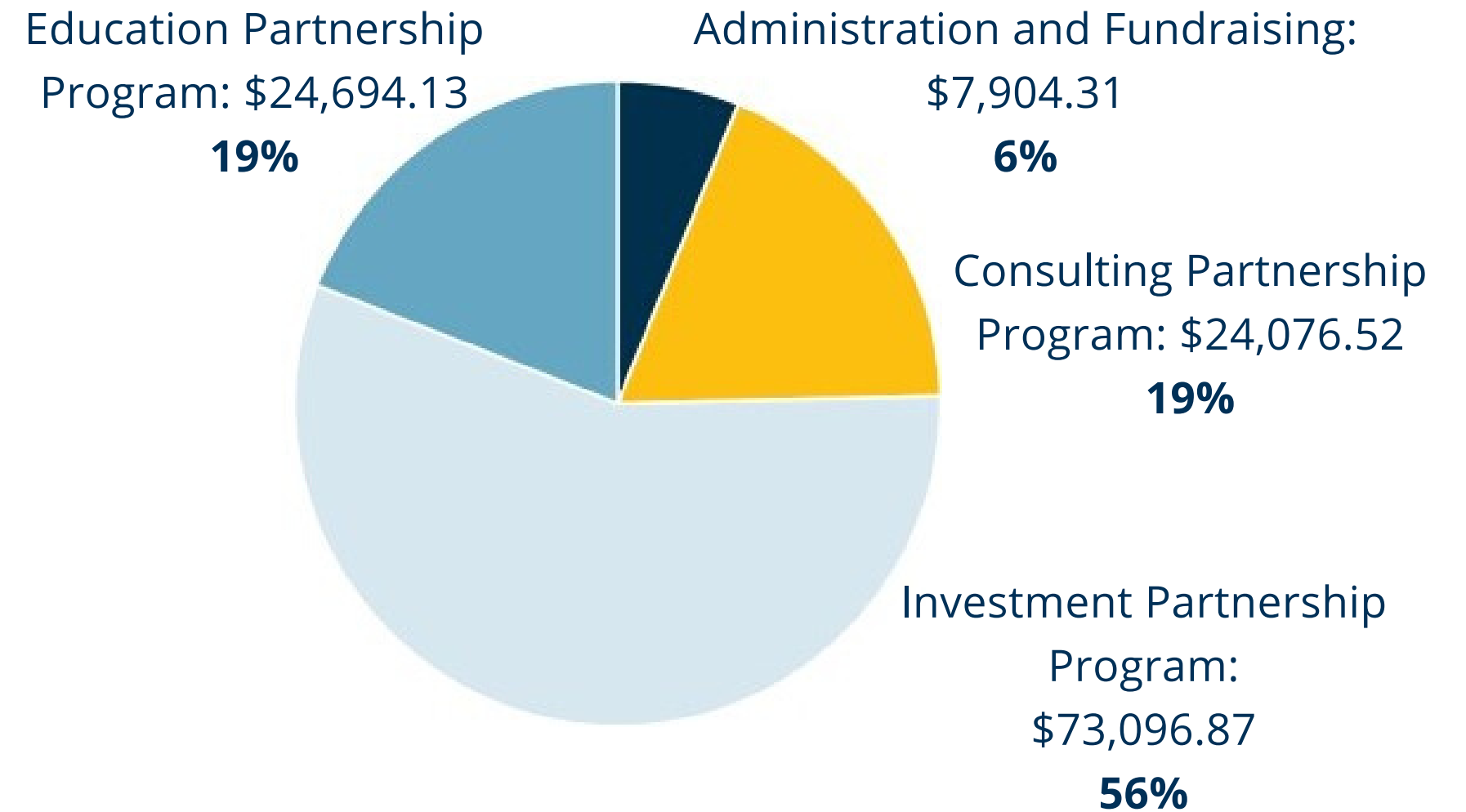
Total Income: \$148,326.14



## Expenditures



Total Expenditures: \$129,771.83







## LOOKING AHEAD

With such an incredible year of change and new beginnings now behind us, there is so much we are looking forward to in the new year. In 2020, TCC will:

- Launch the official revamp of our Investment Partnership Program, on-boarding one new Change Leader partner who we will accompany on their journey for community-driven change.
- Continue to accompany Now Africa Initiative as they finalize their storage center, add more infrastructure to enhance their coffee processing capacity, launch solar energy at Karama Education Center, install a clean water system, and continue their organic school garden program.
- Continue to accompany Las Diosas with their seed reservoirs and food sovereignty project, allowing more women in Northern Nicaragua to reproduce their own seeds and reduce dependence on seed and food purchase, and accompany Las Diosas to develop a research project to improve their response to gender-based violence in the region.
- Assist The Well Coffeehouse with project management and evaluation reporting on behalf of a water reforestation, source protection, and source enhancement project they are funding in Honduras.
- Provide gender assessments and impact reporting for a three-year project with Cooperative Coffees introducing a tool to measure and increase the level of carbon sequestration in the soils of organic, small-scale coffee farmers.
- Collaborate with Cooperative Coffees to develop feasibility studies assessing the potential of a premium scheme to reward coffee farmers for their carbon capture.
- Continue to provide sustainability courses at a Foundation, Intermediate, and Professional level; collaborate with Sustain Coffee to build out their resource library and share new resources through a variety of media; and support our Sustainability Education Fellows to implement their co-designed projects with TCC Change Leaders.
- And much, much more!

# Supporters

## Company & Foundation Partners

49th Parallel Coffee Roasters

Amazon Smile

Benevity Fund

Blooming Prairie Foundation

Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church

Connect Roasters

Daily Press Coffee

Ferguson Trust

Forte Coffee

Grounds for Change

Hale Coffee

Houndstooth

Johnson & Johnson

Just Coffee Cooperative

Mama Hope

Mortenson Family Foundation

PrimaVera Coffee Importers

Red Arrow Roasters

See Beautiful

The Well Coffeehouse

United Way

Valley Foundation

WaterBridge Outreach

WIL of Greater Philadelphia

### In-Kind Donors:

Acaia

Brewista

Chemex

Partners Coffee

Rishi Tea and Botanicals

# Supporters

## Individual Giving

Alex House  
Amber Connell  
Amy MacDougall  
Andre Eiermann  
Ann Folino  
Ann Gary  
Aren Zolninger  
Audra Fitzgerald  
Audrey Lester  
Benjamin Myers  
Bobbie McGee  
Brian Martin  
Carolina Bevacqua  
Carolyn Holl Watson  
Carolyn Spaulding Wright  
Charles Mellon  
Christine Fairchild  
Christopher Thomas  
Cole Eisenberg

Dan Bubnis  
Devon Buchanan  
Diana Kaminsky  
Dominique Penninck  
Doug Fitzgerald  
Edith Burkey  
Elizabeth Warren  
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Fran Decker  
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Greta Gleason  
Hannah Zhao  
Harriet Forbes  
Heidi Schreiber  
Hillary Rodriguez  
Ilene Schneller  
Irene Marcuzzi  
Jackie Davis Templin  
James Button  
James Gary

Jason Finn  
Jeanne Schultz Lydon  
Jen Huff  
Jill Swavelly  
Jim & Ingrid Pardee  
Jimmy Silva  
Jonathan Ives  
Jonathan Westcott  
Jose Acevedo  
Joseph Cesa  
Judith Rhoads  
Judy Hubschman Rosenbaum  
Julia Dixon  
Julia Fitzgerald  
Karyn Graff  
Kathleen Burke  
Kathleen Haas  
Kathy Blakeslee  
Ken Stabinski

Kenneth Wells  
Kent Goetz  
Kevin Cheng  
Kristen Kuya  
Kristin Spaulding Holm  
Laura Valentini  
Lisa Liacouras  
Lorenzo Rizzi  
Louise Nichols  
Lucia Liano-Button  
Mallory Olson  
Mary Philips  
Matthew Breidenstein  
Melissa M Foy  
Michele Richert  
Natalie Zurka  
Nikki Smith  
Patricia Patterson  
Dave Patterson  
Peg Etil

Penny Breen Aleo  
Phil Bloss  
Rachel Meiri  
Rebecca Hervieux  
Renee DeCoskey  
Richard Barton  
Richard McElvain  
Robert & Irene Wise  
Robert Decampoli  
Robert Maziarz  
Sandra Malard & Molly Alcott  
Sara Morrocchi  
Shaun Ong  
Suzie Hoban  
Terri Tibbatts  
Theresa Conner  
Tim House  
Toby Tiktinsky  
William W Shipley

# Staff & Board



## STAFF & CHIEF COLLABORATORS

Nora Burkey, Founder & Executive Director | Alexander Porte, Programs and Communications Manager | Denis Twinamatsiko, Investment Partnership Program Liaison | Will Garde, Sustain Coffee Founder | Erika Koss, Co-Teacher & Authorized SCA Trainer | Honorable Mentions: Aleida Stone, Short-term Development Associate; Krista Pelletier, Former Project Manager; Tina Kim, Former Director of Strategy & Operations

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Benjamin Myers, President | Nadine Rasch, Vice President | Hillary Rodriguez, Secretary | Kyle Rosa, Treasurer | Robert Ditchey | Sara Morrocchi | Matt Slater

## FELLOWS & VOLUNTEERS

Sustainability Education Fellows: Alex House, Irene Marcuzzi, Marcela Morales | Sustain Coffee Fellow: Elisa Criscione | IPP Task Force Volunteers: Lissette Almanza, Emily Hlavka Freed, Lexi Spaulding, Allie Reiling

## Support Us: Become a Repeat Customer



Most for-profit coffee businesses, such as cafes and roasting companies, count on repeat customers, and when a customer comes back, it means the company is doing something right. In the non-profit world, some donors frown upon giving more than once, wanting to ensure they don't create dependency. But the truth is, non-profits as well as for-profits are made more sustainable when customers want to show up again and again. At TCC, we believe our repeat supporters make us stronger and better, not dependent. We believe repeat donors don't create dependency, they grow a mission.

With the support of our repeat supporters over the past several years, TCC has been able to build an organizational model where we can cover 100% of staff salaries through earned income, or, our consulting and course fees. That means 100% of donations for our Change Leader partners make it directly into their hands so that they too can build sustainable organizations and enterprises that improve livelihoods in their communities, according to their own visions.

In 2020, you can become a part of TCC's sustainability story and grow our mission. You can become a repeat customer and continue to make us stronger and better. Here's how:

VISIT

**[HTTPS://THECHAINCOLLABORATIVE.ORG/  
DONATE/](https://thechaincollaborative.org/donate/)** TO MAKE A ONE-TIME OR  
MONTHLY DONATION.

REACH OUT TO

**[INFO@THECHAINCOLLABORATIVE.ORG](mailto:info@thechaincollaborative.org)** TO  
INQUIRE ABOUT OUR CONSULTING  
SERVICES.

EMAIL

**[NORA@THECHAINCOLLABORATIVE.ORG](mailto:nora@thechaincollaborative.org)** TO  
LEARN ABOUT COURSE OFFERINGS AND  
FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITIES.

FOR ANYTHING ELSE YOU CAN THINK OF,  
**CONTACT US.** TRUST US. WE WANT TO HEAR  
FROM YOU, AGAIN AND AGAIN.

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