



# The First Presbyterian Church of Howard County

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Dear Community Business Owner,

For the past twelve years, the First Presbyterian Church of Howard County (FPCHC) has enjoyed generous support from local businesses for the **5K Family Run for Coffee event**, an annual fundraiser for one of our mission outreach programs, the Guatemala Coffee Microgrants. Thanks to the generous support of neighbors like you, microgrants have enabled over 300 impoverished Mayan families in Guatemala to cultivate coffee plants that help them to supplement their own incomes, and to create job opportunities in communities where they are desperately needed.

Despite the challenging times we are facing in our own community, FPCHC's commitment to this mission is undiminished. We will once again be holding a Run for Coffee on **Saturday, May 14, 2022**. As in past years, there will once again be opportunities for business sponsorship. Please review the information below and consider lending your support to this event and this mission. You will be making an investment in hope – hope that, in a part of the world where prospects are dim, a brighter future is possible.

## **The Event: The 2022 Run for Coffee**

Run for Coffee participants (including, but not limited to, FPCHC members) complete a 5K run or walk to raise funds and awareness for the Coffee Microgrants program, and to show solidarity with our partners in Guatemala. This year, participants who choose to run will enjoy a fun run near the church starting at 10AM on the morning of May 14<sup>th</sup> while those who choose to walk can do so on a marked course on the FPCHC property. A picnic lunch and other refreshments will be included in the festivities. We anticipate more than 60 runners and walkers, in addition to dozens of volunteers and supporters, will attend the event.

## **The Opportunity: How Businesses Can Sponsor & Support the Event**

Participants ask their family and friends to sponsor their involvement, but the participants' efforts alone do not get us to our fundraising goal. Financial donations from local businesses like yours are needed to support both the event itself and the Coffee Microgrants program. Your tax-deductible gift will be acknowledged on the day of the event, and your logo will appear on the commemorative tee shirt given to each runner, walker and volunteer. Church members wear these tee shirts for FPCHC events throughout the year, so your support will be remembered long after the event concludes! Donations of \$500 or

more will be acknowledged on the church website for 90 days after the event. In addition to financial donations, giveaways for participants and attendees are also welcomed.

If you would like to make a donation, have questions or want additional information, please contact the planning committee at: [letsrunforcoffee@firstpreshc.org](mailto:letsrunforcoffee@firstpreshc.org) **The deadline for having your logo included on the shirt is Sunday, April 24, 2022.** Details are included on the sponsor commitment form.

### **The Mission: Guatemala Coffee Microgrants & FPCHC Guatemala Partnership**

Since 2003, FPCHC has partnered with a presbytery (group of churches) to address the root causes of poverty for Mayan families in the Boca Costa region of southwestern Guatemala (Suchitepequez and Solola Departments). Ours is an equitable partnership, where our Guatemalan brothers and sisters identify the needs and opportunities in their community, and we jointly determine how FPCHC can most effectively help and empower them. The partnership pursues multiple strategies:

- **Education:** FPCHC provides scholarships for youth who want to attend school past the government-supported elementary grades.
- **Health:** The church also purchases efficient wood-burning ONIL Plancha stoves, which are installed by FPCHC members working alongside local church leaders in homes where cooking was previously done over open, unvented fires.
- **Community Leadership:** The partnership also assists with theological studies for the pastors, who are community leaders as well as spiritual leaders within their villages.

The Coffee Microgrants are the partnership's most direct investment in **Economic Development**. As a result of the peace accords that ended the Guatemalan Civil War in 1996, many Mayan men and women were granted small plots of land, typically in the mountains, that are suitable for growing coffee. But the start-up costs of clearing the land and purchasing plants, fertilizer, fungicide, and insecticide are well beyond their means. The microgrants were created to fill that gap, enabling families to turn these small plots of land into productive assets that can change the trajectory of their lives.

Through a one-time grant of approximately \$415, the landowners receive financial assistance to clear their land. The coffee plants, fertilizer, fungicide and insecticide are purchased in bulk and distributed to the recipients by local church leaders, many of whom are experienced in coffee agriculture. The recipients attend classes on the proper care of their coffee fields to increase their chances of good harvests for the life of the trees, which is typically 16-20 years, after which they should be able to afford to replace the plants as needed.

To date, over 300 families have received these microgrants, but the impact of the project reaches beyond those families. The recipients generally hire their neighbors and relatives to help clear the land and plant the coffee plants. They also hire these same people to help harvest the coffee each year, which spreads the money through these communities on an ongoing basis.

Thank you very much for your consideration. For more information, please contact the event organizers at [letsrunforcoffee@firstpreshc.org](mailto:letsrunforcoffee@firstpreshc.org).