



Encouraging People to Thrive

November 2018

I remember a long debate in one of my college psychology classes over the concept of nature vs. nurture. People argued vehemently over whether we are the product of our environment or our genetic make-up. It got heated. People lined up to support one side or the other. Looking back, I realize what a false choice it was. Life is more complex than simple, either/or answers.

At Matthew 25, we deal with the complexity of what shapes people every day. Our work is both systemic and focused on the individual. Children and adults are the products of their home, school and community environments. Jesus understood this. Over and over in scripture, we see him healing individuals while also seeking to heal a system that leaves too many poor, unhealthy and falling short of their God-given potential.



Matthew 25 does our work in neighborhoods that are sometimes defined by high obesity rates, struggling schools, low-income housing and other negative statistics. These are symptoms of economically challenged neighborhoods that can take opportunities away from individuals living here. Our goal is to change the neighborhood system to one that encourages people to thrive.



Matthew 25's Cultivate Hope Urban Farm & surrounding neighborhood

Let me give you an example of how this mix of the individualistic and systemic gets lived out at Matthew 25. In the last six months, we've launched three new programmatic initiatives. We've moved our weekly market nights to the urban farm, started a new pay-it-forward café and opened a co-working and event space. Yes, it's been a lot!

Each of these programs builds community with individuals and gives away resources that help people to help themselves. The urban farm has discounted food classes and fresh produce. The café gives out free, healthy food. Groundswell for Good provides access to incredible work and event space at low rates. But the overall goal goes beyond helping individuals. Our mission is to transform neighborhoods.

For example, instead of having a space defined by blight, we created beauty with the urban farm. Now that

farm is producing fresh vegetables that are making their way into the neighborhood and being served at the Groundswell Café. We're working to connect the farm to healthy, affordable housing that sup-

ports families. Next spring, we will be launching classes and meet-up groups at the farm focused on exercise, healthy eating and more. The tiny seed of an idea for the urban farm that started seven years ago is growing into a thriving oasis that is creating a healthier neighborhood around it.

We are committed to using our resources to impact individuals, neighborhoods and the city in a positive way. The world is complex. We could sit and debate whether people struggle because of their individual choices or the environment. Instead, we choose to get to work. We thank you for joining us.

- Clint Twedt-Ball
Executive Director



Groundswell Growth

On October 8 we expanded our Groundswell initiative to include a pay-it-forward café and a coworking space – both of which can also be used as events venues. We see these ventures as an investment in inclusive neighborhood development.



Cafe



The mission of the café is to provide a place where everyone has access to fresh, healthy food, regardless of their ability to pay.

Our simple healthy menu features delicious soups, salads, and sandwiches, with as much of the food as possible supplied by what we grow less than a mile away on our Cultivate Hope Urban Farm and in our on-site hydroponic garden. The rest of the food is sourced from local and

organic suppliers. In addition to healthy local food, we also serve a selection of fair trade coffee and teas.

At this cafe, guests can round up their bill or make a donation to help pay for a meal for someone who can't afford it. Those who can't afford to pay can order and enjoy our super-fresh, healthy food at no cost. There's also a large community table where guests are invited to sit together and visit.



Coworking

Groundswell Coworking is a shared workspace for location-independent workers, such as entrepreneurs, freelancers and others who might traditionally work from home.

It's a community-driven space that promotes collaboration and creativity, and it provides a unique green coworking environment with two living walls and an indoor garden. Our



Groundswell for Good 20% discount helps make coworking more affordable for individuals who are doing good for the community but might not otherwise have access to a coworking space.

Events

Both the café and the coworking space are available to rent for public and private events. There is a divider wall in between them that can be opened up for larger events

using both spaces. All of the furniture is easily movable, so the spaces can be modified to fit just about any kind of event, from corporate trainings, to holiday parties, to weddings.

A Successful Market Season

On October 30 we closed out the first season of the Cultivate Hope Market by trying our new brick oven and baking fresh pizza for market-goers to sample.



The pizza was a hit and we can't wait to have pizza nights regularly at next year's market!

This is the first year we hosted our own market on the urban farm. It was a resounding success with a wide variety of amazing fresh produce sold and many customers who came back every week. It was great to have our market be

so easily accessible for our neighbors and to be able to provide half-price produce to income-qualified individuals through our Farm Fresh Friends program.

We appreciated being able to offer some items from other local farmers for sale, such as Ebert's Honey. Market customers also enjoyed cutting their own fresh flowers



from the many beautiful flower beds on the farm.

As we head into the winter season, it's time to start planning next year's markets!

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