



Dr. Annise Mabry Foundation Announces New Workforce Development Collaboration

The collaboration is with Barista Source LLC, intending to form Barista Source Academy.

PORTERDALE, GEORGIA, UNITED STATES, March 24, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [Dr. Annise Mabry Foundation](#) announces a formal entrance into a strategic workforce development collaboration with [Barista Source, LLC](#), to form Barista Source Academy.

The Dr. Annise Mabry Foundation operates Tiers Free Academy Homeschool Cooperative, Georgia's largest homeschool cooperative. The cooperative provides an alternative pathway to a high school diploma for youth and adults in rural Georgia communities. Since 2015, Tiers Free Academy Homeschool Cooperative has worked with parents and guardians to award over 500 high school diplomas to deserving students.

The lack of a high school diploma is the first hurdle that many job seekers in rural communities encounter entering the workforce.

Dr. Annise Mabry, president of the Annise Mabry Foundation, summed it up, "In many rural Georgia communities, 38 percent of 18-24 year olds and 36 percent of 25-34 year olds lack a high school diploma. This is a significant amount of the working-age population missing from the labor force because they lack a diploma. I took a close look at the crime rates in these same communities. That's when I realized the age of those committing the crimes and the ages of people lacking a high school diploma were closely related. This is not just a school district and graduation rate problem — it is a community problem. A community problem needs a community-focused solution."

The Dr. Annise Mabry Foundation is a nonprofit Community Economic Development (CED) organization. Its goal is to find creative ways to improve economic development and community engagement for rural communities.

The collaboration between Kelley Smith, Barista Source LLC, Founder and The Dr. Annise Mabry Foundation began as a retail partnership donation request in 2018. Kelley Smith was the Starbucks store manager in Conyers, Ga.

"I remember the first time Dr. Mabry asked if the Conyers store could provide beverages for her annual graduate brunch. I knew her work in the community and had been following her

foundation on social media. I was happy to donate coffee to the cause,” said Kelley Smith, Founder of Barista Source LLC.

Smith knew just how much coffee could change a person's life – coffee changed her life. “I got started in the coffee industry because I was intrigued by Magic Johnson, a person who I admired as an athlete and businessman. He was integral in opening up Starbucks stores in neighborhoods like mine. Working in collaboration with Starbucks and Johnson Enterprises gave me a different lens into the world of coffee versus my regular Starbucks counterparts,” said Smith.

Barista Source LLC is the nation's first full service specialty coffee workforce development solutions firm. It helps individuals develop the critical skills needed to own a coffee business or become a certified Barista.

One challenge Barista Source, LLC, had was unemployed individuals who were completing the training needed a high school diploma. “Without a high school diploma, individuals could be the best trained Barista, but they would still be unemployed,” Smith explained.

A workforce development collaboration simply made sense for the two organizations.

“There’s an African proverb that says ‘If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together,’ Barista Source, LLC was operating Barista Source Academy but they didn’t have a way to transform a high school dropout to a high school graduate. This educational services partnership program allows participants to earn a homeschool high school diploma and to become a certified barista. I’m operating the largest homeschool cooperative in Georgia and she’s operating the only specialty coffee training firm in the nation. This collaboration just made sense,” explained Dr. Mabry.

Kelley Smith echoes those sentiments, “the collaboration with The Dr. Annise Mabry Foundation aligns with our mission to create a more equitable and welcoming experience in the world of specialty coffee for people of color. By creating more affordable access to specialized training, a network of employers and professionals focus on getting individuals to their desired goal of financial independence. We stand to disrupt the specialty coffee industry and make an immediate impact in the communities we serve.”

Barista Source Academy is coming to Tennille, Ga. The academy expects to bring 34 full-time jobs to the community.

“Rural communities often face barriers to engaging new, innovative programs that impact economic development. When I learned that the Barista Source Academy Project was seeking a rural community partnership, I knew this was something that I wanted in Tennille. This academy will be a tremendous economic development game changer for not only Tennille but also for Washington County,” said City of Tennille Mayor Eartha Cummings.

To learn more contact Kelley Smith from Barista Source LLC at kelley@thebaristasource.com

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