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Lima Launches 1 Million Cups to Educate and Connect Local Entrepreneurs

*IMC is a National Program Developed by the Kauffman Foundation
that helps build startup communities nationwide*

(LIMA, Ohio) - A new entrepreneurship program is launching in Lima, Ohio.

Lima is now the newest home of a national program to engage, educate and connect local entrepreneurs. One Million Cups (IMC) was founded in 2012 by the Kauffman Foundation and has since expanded to more than 107 communities across the country. The program allows entrepreneurs and their communities to gather and connect, so they can work through business challenges and identify opportunities. On Wednesday mornings, entrepreneurs across the country meet up, network, discuss business ideas, and discover solutions over a million cups of coffee.

Wednesday, April 5th, 2023, is the inaugural meet-up of 1 Million Cups Lima. The kickoff gathering will take place at the Cambridge Center, 418 North Central Ave, Lima, Ohio, from 9 AM - 10 AM. Coffee will be sponsored by Mercy Health, St. Rita's Medical Center.

The free and weekly nationwide gatherings help build startup communities on a grassroots level. In each 1 Million Cups city, local entrepreneurs drive the program as community organizers. Leading the charge for 1 Million Cups Lima are:

- Jermaine Harper, Lead Organizer and Founder of the Startup Lab
- Amber Martin, City of Lima
- Jed Metzger, Organizer, Lima/Allen County Chamber of Commerce
- Jamesha Williamson, J Williamson Law Firm

- Bart Mills, Small Business Owner
- Carlton Mclellan, Vibe Coffeehouse
- Beth Kheen, Mercy Health St. Rita's
- Tyler Smith, Mercy Health St. Rita's
- Chad Stearns, MODO Media
- Jennifer Broggee, The Meeting Place

“Our goal is to continue to help build a more inclusive and equitable local entrepreneurial ecosystem. The 1 Million Cups framework provides a unique combination of education and networking opportunities that enable entrepreneurs to share their vision and the community to come alongside to support their efforts,” states **Jermaine Harper, Lead Organizer and Founder of the Startup Lab**.

“The 1 Million Cups platform is not only a great way for people in our community to tell others about their businesses, but it hopefully starts conversations of encouragement and networking that will help our local entrepreneurs get to the next step,” states **Jed Metzger, President of Lima/ Allen County Chamber of Commerce**.

“Mercy Health understands that thriving small businesses are an integral part of any community. The 1 Million Cups program is a great way to support the continued growth of Lima and the surrounding communities in an innovative and impactful way,” states **Beth Kheen, Director of Government and Community Affairs for Mercy Health - St. Rita's**.

“The City of Lima is committed to creating the right environment for entrepreneurs to succeed. The addition of One Million Cups to our community brings not just a strong partnership but a national brand to Lima that can help connect Lima entrepreneurs to each other, get them in front of potential funders, and expose their companies to a national audience,” states **Lima Mayor Sharetta Smith**. “Small Businesses are the backbone of our economy. When small businesses succeed, Lima Succeeds.”

Entrepreneurs, innovators, funders, and other interested community members are invited to attend 1 Million Cups each Wednesday from 9-10 AM.

Each week, an early-stage business startup will present its company to an audience of community-based mentors, advisers, and fellow entrepreneurs. Each presentation lasts six minutes, followed by a 20-minute Q&A session between the presenter and the audience.

The interaction and proceeding free flow of thoughts and ideas on how to truly help the presenter, is the key to the success of 1 Million Cups and the reason for the phenomenal growth

of the program nationally. 1 Million Cups licenses its tool kit of community-building resources for free to communities that meet the program's criteria for participation.

View the national website at www.1millioncups.com and access the City of Lima microsite at <https://www.1millioncups.com/s/account/0014W00002AsWLOQA3/lima-ohioURL>. Twitter: @1MC Lima

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The Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation is a private, nonpartisan foundation that works together with communities in education and entrepreneurship to create uncommon solutions and empower people to shape their futures and be successful. The Kauffman Foundation is based in Kansas City, Missouri, and uses its \$2 billion in assets to collaboratively help people be self-sufficient, productive citizens. For more information, visit www.kauffman.org and connect with us at www.twitter.com/kauffmanfdn and www.facebook.com/kauffmanfdn.