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## **Made with Cola Love Launches to Support Local Businesses and Revitalize Vacant Storefronts**

Columbia, SC - January 25, 2024 - A new organization, Made with Cola Love has been launched to support small businesses and bring new life to vacant properties in Columbia, SC.

Made with Cola Love will provide a robust small business incubator program to equip entrepreneurs with the skills and support they need to succeed. The organization will also facilitate temporary "pop-up" shops for six to eight small businesses in vacant commercial real estate throughout Columbia.

"Our mission is to empower entrepreneurs and activate underutilized spaces to boost economic growth and community vibrancy," said Nell Fuller, Co-Founder and Executive Director of Made with Cola Love.

The pop-up shops will feature a diverse range of retail, food and beverage, and lifestyle businesses. Each business will operate a one-month pilot popup, creating a dynamic environment. Made with Cola Love will provide grants to the small business and landlord, operational support, and robust cross-promotion so the pop-up businesses can thrive.

The concept was inspired by the success of the pop-ups hosted by Cola Love this past year, from The Dal House, a Southern Pakistani concept, to collaborations with Dorsia Pasta, the Spice Dhaba, and many other vendors at collective activations like Community Table and The Little Lady. The idea also borrows inspiration from San Francisco's Vacant to Vibrant program.

"Styx Properties is proud to be one of the first real estate developer partners with Cola Love," says Styx co-owner and Made with Cola Love co-founder Julie Tuttle. "We're eager to partner with other property owners committed to creating a vibrant, flourishing community through place based activation and investment."

The incubator program will offer workshops, mentorship, and tailored assistance on topics like marketing, finance, legal issues, and more based on the entrepreneurs' needs. Experiential peer learning and community feedback sessions aim to create an inclusive, collaborative environment.

"This partnership allows the City to collaborate with experts to empower small businesses and local entrepreneurs to confidently reach their next step – whether it be a brick and mortar location or operational expansion," said Mayor Daniel Rickenmann. "As women-owned businesses are rapidly expanding in Columbia, I am excited for this strong team of woman leaders to bring this program to life and help us build off the momentum we are experiencing."

Made with Cola Love is launching with support from a grant from the Knight Foundation Fund at Central Carolina Community Foundation and the City of Columbia. The organization's innovative model aims to uplift diverse local businesses, activate underutilized spaces, foster community connections, and stimulate economic growth.

"By embracing fresh thinking and creative solutions, we believe Made with Cola Love can catalyze transformation in our city's entrepreneurial ecosystem," said Ayesha Driggers, Director of the Office of Business Opportunities.

Made with Cola Love will host a launch party from 6 - 9 PM Tuesday, February 13 at Proof (2001 Greene St, Suite B) and is currently [accepting applications](#) from small businesses interested in joining the pop-up program. For more details visit [www.madewithcolalove.org](http://www.madewithcolalove.org) or email [hello@madewithcolalove.org](mailto:hello@madewithcolalove.org).