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# Brownies And Beverages: Greyston Bakery And Grace Farms Team Up To Do Good

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Greyston Bakery and Grace Farms Foods are collaborating to sell brownies, tea and coffee with a social mission

GREYSTON BAKERY AND GRACE FARMS FOODS

Artisanal brownies are extra-delicious when their maker has a strong social mission around job creation. The same can be said for organic coffee and tea that benefits farmers in the developing world and raises funds to end forced labor worldwide. Why not package them together in a gift box, amplifying the potential for impact many times over?

That was the thinking behind the collaboration of Greyston Bakery and Grace Farms Foods, two food-focused [B Corporations](#) owned by foundations. [Greyston Bakery](#), based in Yonkers, N.Y., with almost \$30 million in sales in 2022, is perhaps best known for supplying the brownie inclusions for Ben & Jerry's ice cream, while advancing employment and training opportunities for individuals with barriers to employment.

The business, a subsidiary of the Greyston Foundation, is also diversifying its business by growing its direct-to-consumer sales online with fair-trade baked goods and selling its products through retailers such as Whole Foods, says Greyston CEO and resident Joseph D. Kenner.

Greyston's policy of open hiring means that people who apply for trainee positions in the Yonkers bakery get the job regardless of their employment history or background when their name comes up next on the 700-strong waiting list. Each new hire is paired with a mentor to help ensure their success. In 2022, Greyston estimates it generated \$11 million in economic impact through its job programs.



Grace Farms Foods CEO Adam Thatcher with coffee bean sorters at supplier Dumerso Coffee in Yirgacheffe, Ethiopia

ADAM THATCHER

In 2021, Grace Farms Foods, wholly owned by the [Grace Farms Foundation](#), in New Canaan, CT, began selling fair trade, organic coffee and tea sourced from women-led companies and agricultural co-ops around the world. Its branded beverages are also served to visitors on Grace's almost 80-acre campus with 10 diverse habitats and an array of educational, arts and social programs. While the tea and coffee business isn't yet profitable, the goal is to donate 100% of future profits to Design for Freedom, Grace Farms' campaign to eliminate forced labor from the building industry's supply chain, says Grace Farms Foods CEO Adam Thatcher.

Grace Farms Foods has forged partnerships with the World Economic Forum and with JP Morgan, among others, to stock their workplaces with their coffee and tea and showcase their commitment to environmental, governance and social goals (ESG). Grace Farms offers four varieties of coffee and 15 types of tea, all organic and Fair Trade.

"For us, it's about getting our brand and mission out into so many more places," says Thatcher.

The collaboration between the two social enterprises is the result of mutual admiration. After learning all about Greyston's success at job generation during his MBA program in social entrepreneurship at NYU, Thatcher cold-called Greyston's general manager to see how they might work together. Then, in January 2023, during the World Economic Forum in Davos, Greyston Bakery CEO and president Joseph Kenner received an award as one of the Social Innovators of the Year 2023 by the Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship. While he was there, he and Grace Farms founder and CEO Sharon Prince got to talking.



Joseph D. Kenner, CEO and President, Greyston Bakery

GREYSTON BAKERY

“We’re both benefit corporations and tackling some pretty big issues,” Kenner says. “Sharon is trying to take what she calls the slave discount out of the construction industry, and we’re trying to unlock human potential through inclusive hiring. We thought there had to be a way for their beverages and our brownies to cooperate. This was really a natural symbiosis for us to come together.”

The gift box, [which retails for \\$49](#), launched a little late for inclusion in most gift guides this holiday season, says Thatcher, But it is already generating sales, particularly in the corporate gift-giving market, and the partners hope to make more of an impact next year. This is hopefully just the first step in forging a long-term partnership, he says.

“We’re looking at a few other things that would help Greyston provide more jobs in their community and they’d be able to help support the operations of our business. We haven’t ironed everything out, but that’s where things are heading.”



## Robin D. Schatz

Follow me on [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#). Check out my [website](#).

I'm a prize-winning business journalist and a weekend organic farmer in the Hudson Valley. My adventures growing my own food led me to start writing for Forbes in 2015 about the business of food and farming with a focus on sustainability, better-for-you CPG and plant-based products. I've been a staff writer and editor at Bloomberg News, Businessweek and other publications, covering healthcare, business, education and arts and culture. I now provide editorial services for a variety of clients. At Forbes, I love writing about game-changing entrepreneurs, those who are trying to figure out how we'll feed a planet of 9 billion people and others who are just trying to make a living producing something healthy and delicious. I am also interested in the nexus of nutrition, public health and business.

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