



Southwest Idaho

Common Ground

2024



Common Ground

Sarah Keck and
Laurie Pearman (Owners)

Boise, ID

Started: 2024

common-ground-coffee-market.square.site



“We’ve been helped by so many established businesses, creators, organizations, and outright strangers along the way in countless and often unexpected ways. We had no idea that starting a business would be so emotional or so wholesome.”

Laurie Pearman and Sarah Keck recognized that there was a need for a community gathering space in their Boise Neighborhood. Their first sales were a pop-up event during Boise’s Neighborhood Concert Series at a neighborhood park but their dream was a brick and mortar coffee shop.

As two women trying to start a coffee shop, one of the biggest problems they faced was having people take them seriously. Another unavoidable hurdle was that their target area had limited commercial spaces available, all of which would require major renovations. They spent nearly a year trying to secure a building and with limited capital to work with, they knew they would have to secure a business loan.

Their regional SBDC consultant’s tough love and financial projections spreadsheet were excellent resources for them throughout their journey. She gave them the “this is going to be hard, you may fail” reality check. They learned they needed to be able to support themselves quickly once the doors opened. Their SBDC consultant lit a fire under them to be precise, resourceful, and realistic. That awareness served them well when applying for a SBA loan. Since opening, they tracked actual numbers against the projections a few times, serving as a great compass.

On June 1, 2024, they opened their coffee shop with a full espresso menu, beer, wine, pastries, and snacks. A small section of the shop is a market with fresh bread, milk, salsa, cheese, chocolates, etc. They also sell other gifts and goods made by local or regional creators.

More importantly, they see themselves as a community-centric gathering space to host events that allow for connection and fun! Book clubs, music, bingo, family karaoke — they’re just getting started! They are genuinely trying to create space for the community to come together and connect.

The engagement and encouragement of their community became apparent through a subsequent crowd funding campaign. This campaign gave them a chance to share their story and vision with the community, resulting in the completion of a patio space in time for their Grand Opening on October 5, 2024 which was made even more special by having Boise Mayor McLean join them for a ribbon cutting.

As of October 15, 2024 they have 10 part time employees, a total of 18,629 sales / tickets and about \$198k in total sales. On grand opening day they hit their biggest day yet, 310 tickets!

