



For Immediate Release

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Kaiser Permanente partners with Becoming Independent on new café

Santa Rosa, CA – December 5, 2018 – Kaiser Permanente (KP) and Becoming Independent (BI) will celebrate a significant milestone in their longstanding partnership with the opening of the BI Buzz café at the new Mercury Way Medical Offices on Wednesday, December 12, 2018 at 10:00 a.m. BI, one of the North Bay’s strongest providers of services for people with developmental disabilities, will provide staff to run the café, and persons served who have expressed interest in careers in the food and beverage industry will be afforded opportunities for vocational training and job placement. The café builds upon the success BI has enjoyed as the solo concessionaire on all SMART trains and will feature locally sourced “grab and go” sandwiches, salads and wraps, as well as coffee and pastries provided by local vendors such as Andy’s Produce, Taylor Lane Organic Coffee, and Redbird Bakery.

“From the moment that BI approached us about operating the café at our new facility, we knew it had the potential to build in a very positive way on a longstanding community partnership. They’re excited to have the opportunity to offer their participants opportunities for job training and social interaction, and we’re delighted that these interactions promise to help dispel stigmas about people with different abilities,” said P.L. Maillard, Medical Group Administrator, adding “And our staff at Mercury Way can’t wait! They’re hungry!”

“We’re so excited to have Kaiser’s new medical offices right down the street from our main campus, and this opportunity to truly engage on a daily basis with their staff and patients is absolutely wonderful,” according to Luana Vaetoe, BI’s CEO. “There’s a huge buzz among the people we serve about the opening of the café,” she went on to say. “Our 2018 Volunteer of the Year is a student in our Passport to Independence program, and his career goal is to be a cashier. With the training and support he receives at BI, and this opportunity to test his assumptions when the time is right at Kaiser, is a dream come true. We can’t thank Kaiser enough for affording us this opportunity.”

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