

About Breaking New Grounds

In 1992 Gary Heine and Mike Mays started Heine Brothers' Coffee as an espresso cart in an east Louisville, Kentucky grocery, roasting beans three pounds at a time in a coffee roaster the size of a large mailbox. The idea was to sell the world's finest coffees fresh out of the roaster to others as passionate about outstanding coffee as were Gary and Mike. Gary and Mike also believed that Louisville's neighborhoods needed gathering places where people could meet friends or make new ones. Places where the atmosphere and the music and the coffee came together with people to create magic. The first store opened at 1295 Bardstown Road in the Highlands in October 1994. The Crescent Hill store opened at 2714 Frankfort Avenue in August 1995. In November 1997 they opened a St. Matthews store at 119 Chenoweth Lane. The Douglass Loop store at 2200 Bardstown Road opened in May 2000. Their 1449 Bardstown Road (at Eastern Parkway) store opened in July 2004. Along with a dedication to operating neighborhood gathering places serving the world's finest coffees with high quality service, Gary and Mike have focused on continuously searching for ways to make their business more "sustainable." In September 1996 Gary attended the first Sustainable Coffee Conference in Washington D.C. Sustainable coffee is coffee that can be grown, processed and sold today, tomorrow and 100 years from now without harming people, native soils or cultures either now or then. From this meeting, Heine Brothers' went on to become a founding member of Cooperative Coffees, an organization owned and managed collectively by a small group of specialty coffee roasters located throughout the United States and Canada. The members are committed to supporting and partnering with small-scale, fair trade coffee farmers and their exporting cooperatives. By importing directly from farmer partners, Cooperative Coffees seeks to foster a more equitable system of coffee trade that directly benefits these farmers, their families and their communities. Several years ago, Gary and Mike started researching the composting of the 50 tons of coffee grounds produced by their five local coffee stores each year. Then, after traveling to Nicaragua and Guatemala in 2005 and 2006, they saw how the purchase of fair trade, organic coffees helped the communities of coffee farmers there. They wondered what they could do in Louisville, Kentucky to help our economically disadvantaged neighbors, and their children who go to bed hungry, to transform their lives? Was there something they could do to reduce the ecologic impact of their business and at the same time produce some added benefit for the local community? Thus, the idea of Breaking New Grounds was born—a neighborhood-based community food system that turns "waste into wealth."