

# Luminaries

June 19, 2023

Martin Co., St. Lucie Co., Indian River Co.

## House of Hope and Inner Truth Project build self-esteem with Pie Lab

**Rob Ranieri**  
House of Hope

STUART – The P.I.E. Lab project is just as good as it sounds.

P.I.E., which stands for Positive Integrated Experiences, is a collaboration between House of Hope and The Inner Truth Project to help women build self-esteem and acquire marketable skills. And it results in good pies.

Clients from The Inner Truth Project, the Treasure Coast's leader in providing therapeutic services to survivors of sexual trauma, have been working and learning in the kitchen at

House of Hope's Elizabeth Lahti Nutrition Center for several weeks under the direction of House of Hope's Food Distribution Supervisor Andrew Funcke.

Along with learning to make pies, they learned business management, customer service and marketing skills to prepare them for employment, and they graduated from the program with certification in Food Safety.

During the project, House of Hope clients were offered the day's pies for dessert, but the ultimate goal is to turn

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The P.I.E. Lab project, a collaboration between The Inner Truth Project and the House of Hope, turned the Elizabeth Lahti Nutrition Center into a place of sweet smells, good fellowship, and positive learning experiences. PROVIDED BY HOUSE OF HOPE

## Pie lab

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pie-making skills into a self-sustaining business that can generate funds for the organizations and the pie-makers themselves.

"We're so proud of these women," said Mindi Fetterman, executive director of Inner Truth. "They accepted this challenge to find out how very capable they really are, and they succeeded. The benefits of this program go far beyond what can be measured in the pies they've learned to make."

One of the pie-makers, Summer, talks about the new confidence she's gained from the program after a very troubled time in her life. "I never made a pie or worked in a group, and I thought I couldn't do it, but I did. It's changed my life."

The culinary class is free to Inner

Truth clients thanks to grants awarded House of Hope and The Inner Truth Project, including support from private funders through The Community Foundation of Martin – St. Lucie.

"This project has all of the ingredients for a successful program. As an example of social entrepreneurship, it's a perfect match with our mission to empower the people we serve to build better futures for themselves and their families," according to House of Hope CEO Rob Ranieri. "We've developed great facilities for food preparation over the years, thanks to generous community donors, and we're glad to share them with Inner Truth. Plus we all love the pies!"

Future classes will include a broader base of clients from both Inner Truth and House of Hope. Pie sales will eventually help generate revenue to sustain the program and provide a great gift to the community — delicious pies, baked with love.



The sweet taste of success was evident at the graduation of the P.I.E. Lab project students: Barbara Haias, Hortensia Mahon, instructor Andrew Funcke, Jessica Bright, and Summer Worthington. PROVIDED BY HOUSE OF HOPE