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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**HOPE hAVEN A DIVISION OF Imagine THE POSSIBILITIES
makes tough decision about cAN rEDEMPTION cENTER**

Over the last several years, Hope Haven, a Division of Imagine the Possibilities (HH/ITP) has struggled to cover the costs to provide can redemption services. Hope for an offset of costs came in 2022 when the Iowa legislature increased the amount from 1 cent to 3 cents per can or bottle the redemption centers would receive. However, since this increased amount went into effect on January 1, 2023, it has not made a significant difference. In consideration of the costs to employ a person to sort the cans and bottles, redemption centers will need to sort approximately 400 cans each hour, 3,200 cans a day, 16,000 cans a week – all just to cover one employee’s hourly wage. (not including taxes, benefits, or any other costs associated). Cheryl Plank, Chief Strategic Advancement Officer explains, “The monetary loss is just insurmountable.” Due to the continued monetary loss, HH/ITP had to make a tough decision about future operations and has come to the difficult decision to discontinue can redemption services in Burlington, Iowa, effective March 31, 2025.

This decision is being made with several considerations in mind. First, HH/ITP recognizes the continuation of can redemption services would negatively impact the organization’s ability to fulfill our mission. Plank explains, “If we were to continue with redemption services, we are projected to lose $200,000 per year.” Additionally, when agencies like HH/ITP first began providing this service, it was to help employ individuals with disabilities. At that time, the agency worked under a 14c Certificate allowing individuals with disabilities to be paid a subminimum wage. “We no longer pay anyone below minimum wage, which is only the right thing to do.” Lastly, HH/ITP continues to provide paper shredding, and we continue to look for ways to increase our profitability with our Hopefully Yours Thrift Store. These services

employ individuals with disabilities in ways that allow them to grow in their interests and skills. In addition to these factors, HH/ITP offers Day Habilitation services, which may be an alternative for individuals who are nearing retirement age. Imagine also continues to look for Supported Employment opportunities in the community for individuals with disabilities wanting employment-related services.

As funding for services become increasingly constricted, agencies can no longer support programs or business operations that do not, at a minimum, break even financially. “Careful attention to this reality is the exact reason for our merger with Imagine the Possibilities. As we create efficiencies administratively and within our programs, our simple goal is to ensure there are enough funds to pay for services and support our ongoing mission” says Plank. The closing of the HH/ITP Can Redemption Center was not made lightly, but it is one leadership believes to be most beneficial for the organization – especially to protect and further fund the services we provide directly to individuals in our communities. We are so thankful for the community of Burlington, Iowa, who have faithfully given to the can redemption center in past years, and we hope to find new ways to partner alongside you to support the mission of Hope Haven, A Division of Imagine the Possibilities.

Can Redemption Centers in the area:

Patel Redemption

1414 48th St. Ste. 2

Ft. Madison, IA 52627

Mt. Pleasant Can & Bottle Center

1001 N. Broadway St.

Mt. Pleasant, IA 52641

Muscatine Redemption

720 Clay St.

Muscatine, IA 52761

WCDC Redemption

702 E. Washington

Washington, IA 52353

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