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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BLACK PEARL CAFÉ RECEIVES SMALL BUSINESS LOAN

Coffee, tea café set to open in August on Chestnut Street in Downtown Muscatine

MUSCATINE, Iowa – A new café plans to open in Downtown Muscatine by mid-August and those plans received a boost from the City of Muscatine Friday with the presentation of a Small Business Forgivable Loan. Monica Gonzalez received her check from City Administrator Gregg Mandsager Friday afternoon with her family looking on.

“I am starting a café that will feature mostly coffees and teas along with other healthy items,” Gonzalez said. “The goal of the café is not so much for me to get rich out of it, it is to give back.”

Gonzalez has named her venture the Black Pearl Café which will be located on Chestnut Street between 2nd Street and Mississippi Drive.

“It will be cozy and it will be different,” Gonzalez said. “It will be really urban. I like downtowns and I like big cities so I want to bring a little taste of home, which is Denver, to Muscatine which is now my new home.”

The name was inspired not only because Muscatine is known for its pearls.

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“It is rare and it means love,” Gonzalez said. “It also has deep meaning to me. My son found a black pearl in an oyster and put it into a turtle necklace. He says that is so his mom is always with him.”

Gonzalez is not a stranger to running a business or a stranger to Muscatine. She helps her parents operate Chicaro’s Mexican Grill on Park Avenue and is also part owner of The Clam Shell on Mississippi Drive.

“I want to give back to the community and I want to give back to the word,” Gonzalez said. “I want my kids to know that they not only work for money but they also work to help others.”

Part of the profits from the café will be donated to places like the Musser Public Library and for programs such as those that help high risk students who are having trouble going to school or paying for school after high school.

“I want them to get the education they need,” Gonzalez said. “And I want to make a difference in this town.”

The Small Business Forgivable Loan program offers help to pay for building improvements and startup costs associated with the creation of a new business or to existing businesses significantly expanding into a new market, product, or service.

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“We have had a lot of success stories come out of this program,” Adam Thompson, planning and community development coordinator said. “We encourage prospective business owners to look into this program.”

For more information on the program, visit <http://www.muscatineiowa.gov/923/Small-Business-Forgivable-Loan-Program>.



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Monica Gonzalez (far right) is pictured with Muscatine City Administrator Gregg Mandsager (center) and Community Development Director Dave Gobin (far left) along with her children Rylee (left) and Brennin (right) while receiving a Small Business Forgivable Loan from the City of Muscatine. Gonzalez plans to open the Black Pearl Café on Chestnut Street between 2nd Street and Mississippi Drive by mid-August.

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