

Todd Carmichael

The CEO and co-founder of the La Colombe coffee empire is building community through a new concert series.

At age 15, Washington state-native Todd Carmichael made the notoriously dangerous ascent to the top of Mount Rainier. He remembers a revelation on that mountaintop. “Mount Rainier is where I started the first step of my life that got me here,” says Carmichael from the company’s Fishtown flagship cafe (lacolombe.com). “I had climbed a mountain in a national park! That was something poor kids didn’t do. Looking over that landscape, I realized that I didn’t have to stay where I was born.” Carmichael, who describes himself as still “insanely optimistic,” leads a company with cafes nationwide, with bigger plans to grow—and give back. Famously progressive and civically engaged, Carmichael launched a campaign this year to help support the National Park Foundation. As well as starting the Haiti Coffee Academy and supporting Wide Horizons for Children, a global child welfare agency, La Colombe gives back locally with this year’s Hope & Fury concert series, hosted monthly in the Fishtown cafe to promote community activism on weighty topics including mental health, gun violence and gender equality. Carmichael bottom-lines his practical altruism: “Commit to goodness and good things happen.”

Through La Colombe, Todd Carmichael is fueling a variety of philanthropic interests.