

Where Hendricks County Business Comes First

BUSINESS LEADER[®]

HENDRICKS COUNTY

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**LAUREN
HELLER**

*Our SpecialTEA serves a cup
full of tea and possibilities*

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BUSINESS LEADERS

What Got You Here Is a Good Beginning ...

As many of you know, I have a passion for helping good leaders become great leaders. Most good leaders succeed despite their various flaws. What got them to be a good leader is truly a good beginning. Yet, excellent behavioral competency, not technical skill, is what most often separates great leaders from good leaders. According to bestselling author and coach, Marshall Goldsmith*, there are twenty habits which can hinder a good leader from being a great leader.

1. **Winning too much:** The need to win at all costs and in all situations—when it matters, when it doesn't, and when it's totally beside the point.
2. **Adding too much value:** The overwhelming desire to add our two cents to every discussion.
3. **Passing judgement:** The need to rate others and impose our standards on them.
4. **Making destructive comments:** The needless sarcasms and cutting remarks that we think make us sound sharp and witty.
5. **Starting with “no”, “but” or “however”:** The overuse of these negative qualifiers which secretly say to everyone, “I’m right. You’re wrong.”
6. **Telling the world how smart we are:** The need to show people we’re smarter than they think we are.
7. **Speaking when angry:** Using emotional volatility as a management tool.

8. **Negativity or “let me explain why that won’t work”:** The need to share our negative thoughts even when we weren’t asked.

9. **Withholding information:** The refusal to share information in order to maintain an advantage over others.
10. **Failing to give proper recognition:** The inability to praise and reward those around you.
11. **Claiming credit we don’t deserve:** The most annoying way to overestimate our contribution to any success.
12. **Making excuses:** The need to reposition our annoying behavior as a permanent fixture so people excuse us for it.
13. **Clinging to the past:** The need to deflect blame from ourselves and onto events and people from our past; a subset of blaming everyone else.
14. **Playing favorites:** Failing to see that we are treating someone unfairly.
15. **Refusing to express regret:** The inability to take responsibility for our actions, admit we’re wrong, or realize how our actions affect others.
16. **Not listening:** The most passive-aggressive form of disrespect for colleagues.
17. **Failing to express gratitude:** The most basic form of bad manners.

18. **Punishing the messenger:** The misguided need to attack the innocent who are usually only trying to help us.

19. **Passing the buck:** The need to blame everyone but ourselves.

20. **An excessive need to be “me”:** Exalting our faults as virtues simply because of who we are.

If you can see yourself in one (or more) of these habits, it’s an opportunity to grow! If you changed the habit, how could it impact your leadership? And, are you willing to change it? That’s the first step ... willingness to change.

If you don’t think you have any of these habits, consider asking those around you if they see any of the habits in you. This is a simple reality test to ensure you don’t have a blind spot regarding how people experience your leadership. You won’t change what you don’t know is a problem.



Susan Rozzi is the president of Rozzi and Associates, a leadership and organizational development company helping good leaders become great! Our programs start with the premise that great leadership skills are a product of time, practice and focused development. Our leadership development, emotional intelligence insight and career management programs can be customized to meet your desired outcomes and needs. Contact Susan at susan@rozziandassociates.com.

LET'S DO LUNCH

OPA!

By Kate Anderson

In our newest column, we will feature a restaurant you should try for your next business lunch or informal meeting. For our first, we feature OPA! At this family-owned and operated Greek-style restaurant in Avon, owners Gus and his son Dimos look forward to welcoming you with hospitality and charm. Their large menu will fit any appetite and diet restriction. From gyros to delicious salads to their “lighter side” menu and appetizers like their famous Flaming Saganaki, there is something for everyone. The atmosphere and music are lively, but also conducive to those that prefer private conversation with a client. With the additional amenity of free WIFI, Opa! is also a great place to have a working lunch by yourself or with your co-workers. When planning your next lunch away from the office, consider this wonderful establishment. You won’t regret it!



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HENDRICKS COUNTY

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Cover Photo: Lauren Heller (Submitted Photo)

LOCAL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

Erica Ogden, Westside Music Academy

By Julie Brackemyre

CHECK OUT THE BUSINESS **CHECK OUT THE OWNER****1. How many years has Westside Music Academy been in business, and what inspired you to start/purchase/work with this business?**

Westside Music Academy opened in August of 2020 due to the overwhelming need for quality music education on the west side of Indianapolis.

2. Are you the original owner?

Yes. I am majority co-founder, along with Sandra Kirchenbauer and Susan Finney.

3. Describe your typical work day.

Networking earlier in the day and music lessons early afternoon to late in the evening.

4. What inspires your work, and what sets you apart from everyone else?

With nearly 20 years of music teaching experience, I find joy in teaching the language of music, seeing student's eyes light up as they accomplish what used to be impossible.

5. If you could go back to the beginning knowing what you know now, what would you have done differently?

I would have done more research into what it actually takes to make a business succeed. I would have gotten at least a minor in business.

6. What's your best advice for someone who wants to start their own business?

Do your research. Talk to other professionals. Find a mentor. Find a cheerleader. Surround yourself with people who excel in your areas of weakness. Create a network of people that will mention your name in a crowded room. Realize that starting a business is 100 percent uphill – being realistically optimistic is necessary to succeed.

Name: Erica Ogden**Occupation:** Music Teacher and Small Business Owner**1. How long have you worked with Westside Music Academy? Tell me a little about your background and how you developed your skill set.**

Westside Music Academy: Aug. 2020 - Present

Erica's Piano Studio: Sept. 2013 - Aug. 2020

Pensacola Christian Academy: Aug. 2008 -

May 2013

Music Teaching Internship at Pensacola Christian Academy: Aug. 2006 - May 2007

College Education at Pensacola Christian College: Sept. 2003 - May 2007

Private Piano Instruction: 1992 - 2003

I have been preparing for my career since I was seven years old. While I've had to work very hard, music came relatively naturally. Due to certain challenges, however, it has made me a better teacher with the patience and perseverance to help my own students with their challenges. I tend to be optimistic, upbeat, interested in others, logically minded, and helpful.



Erica Ogden (submitted photo)

2. What has been your biggest success to date, and what has been your biggest challenge?

My biggest success has been Westside Music Academy. My biggest challenge has been Westside Music Academy. Haha

3. What inspires you to hit the ground running each morning?

An internal work ethic, striving to make others' lives better in addition to my own. Trying to provide value and a positive experience for those in my world.

4. Tell me some of your hobbies, outside of working for Westside Music Academy.

I enjoy time with family, anything outdoors (fishing, hunting, woodworking, growing plumeria trees), utilizing my CDL by bus driving for Brownsburg in the mornings, and driving a tour bus for the IMS Museum. Of course, I love playing the piano - I use this mostly in my church. Of course, ANYTHING Indy500 or IMS related.

5. What's an interesting fact about your business that most people don't know?

Our logo is home to all of my favorite colors - blues, greens, teals, and closely resembles the town of Avon colors. Also, we provide the following lessons: Piano (private and group), Music FunTime Classes (ages two - seven), Brass, Woodwinds, Voice, Guitar, Strings, Concert Percussion

6. What's an interesting fact about you that most people don't know?

Ahh...two things...choose your favorite:
In 2019, I harvested a record buck in Alleghany County, Virginia - a 15 point with a Boone & Crockett score of 181 6/8. He was harvested with a 50cal inline muzzleloader and is still talked about today. I also learned how to land a Cessna airplane in a "pinch hitter" course at the HC Airport with instructor, Dick Richards. I may or may not have but most assuredly did make myself ill....haha

COVER STORY

LAUREN HELLER

Living Life to a "Tea"

By Kate Anderson

Tea. It's a pretty big deal. Especially to Lauren Heller and her family, who joke that "tea is their life". There is a strong chance that you have heard of her, and she is affectionately called "the tea lady" around town. Heller, her husband and four children, have been residents of Danville since 2014. What started out as a casual hobby, became a humble home-based business in 2006 that has turned into so much more. To tell her story, you must go back to the beginning. Though both Heller and her husband are from this area, they had a yearning for warmer weather and had a thought to move out west at one point. Her husband, who is in law enforcement, was offered a job in California. "We thought, why not give it a go," said Heller. During this time, Lauren was pregnant with their first child. As a couple, they started traveling back and forth from the west coast on a mission to find a home, and while there they discovered a little tea shop that caught her attention. "Back then, tea just wasn't a huge thing in the Midwest," said Heller. In their travels, they started bringing back loads of tea to share with friends, family, and neighbors. "We became the people that brought 'the good tea' to get-togethers," said Heller. While on these trips back and forth from the coast, they continued to speak with tea purveyors and their interest in the industry grew. At one point it occurred to them that their interest in tea had gone past an interest and had turned into a passion. "It became more and more obvious to us that we should turn this into something," said Heller. They continued their preparations for the move, but at the last moment Lauren gave birth to her son and they quickly realized that this just wasn't the time to pick up and move. It was time to plant their roots here in Hendricks County and watch them grow. Their family continued to expand over the years, all the while she quietly continued her research into the fascinating world of tea. Her priority was being a mother, though. She felt a strong conviction to homeschool her children and continues to do so to this day. "I really feel like the Lord led me to this decision. I feel very strongly about investing in my children's education and their lives," said Heller.

Tea was always in the forefront of her mind, though. She studied and researched for two years before she decided to delve into it and really make it a business. She started out slowly and opened an



Lauren with her products, Our SpecialTEA (Submitted photo)

"Without my faith, this wouldn't be possible. Without my walk with the Lord, I wouldn't be where I am today."

e-commerce business in her home, named Our SpecialTEA. She developed relationships with growers, farmers, and suppliers overseas and with her vast education, began packaging and inventing her own blends of tea to sell to the public. After a few years, her business grew and so did her name in the community. She was approached by a business that wanted to both sell her tea in their retail space and use her teas in their restaurant. She was elated and her confidence in the business grew. This led her to open the wholesale side of her business. She is now featured in eight businesses in the Indy area and more locations out of state as well. As the popularity of her business progressed, she began dreaming of owning a café and retail space to further showcase her wares. The Lord had other plans, though.

In 2009, it was discovered that Lauren had a brain tumor and was rushed into emergency surgery. Several complications accompanied this serious illness and she fought very hard to come back from it. "I felt very lucky that the Lord blessed me with NOT having a retail store front during this time. When you have a business, you are sort of married to it and I could not have sustained it during my illness," said Heller. Lauren continued to heal herself and because of her illness, she really started to take an interest in her health and how tea blends could possibly bring her relief and act as an alternative to traditional medicine. She began wandering around her garden and experimenting with many dried herbs like mint, etc., to see what benefits it might have for her and possibly others. This curiosity began her interest in Phyto-Therapy. "I realized that my garden held so many possibilities. There were so many options that could help various aspects of our overall health," said Heller.

Fast forward to 2020 and the Pandemic. Lauren's business continued to thrive and her interests in holistic health and remedies not only grew personally, but were highly sought after due to the rising number of respiratory illnesses that were occurring. She started being approached by long-time and new clients with questions about certain teas to help alleviate symptoms and side effects of COVID. Her business was busier than ever, and she felt that this was a great opportunity to educate her customers on the benefits of the nature that is all around us, many of which have various health benefits they



Lauren's packaged Our SpecialTEA (Submitted photo)

are seeking. As Lauren simply puts it, "We have medicine in our own backyards". When so many businesses were shutting down, her business was just ramping up. "The Pandemic didn't hurt my business. It was just the opposite. I was already established as an e-commerce business, so I just kept plugging away," said Heller.

She continues to work hard at bringing a great product to her customers and also educates her customers every chance she gets. Her business moved out of her home and now has been blessed with an office above the Courthouse Grounds Café in Danville, which also features her teas. While her dream of having a retail space and café of her own still thrives, she is waiting for the right moment to make that change. "I am not one to chase a dollar, as they say. I trust that the Lord will lead me to the right place when timing is right," says Heller. This month marks Our SpecialTEA's 18th anniversary. At present, Lauren stocks over 100 varieties of tea, ranging from black and herbal tea

to green and white and beyond. While the e-commerce side of her business is thriving and she is happy to mail your items to you, she also offers local pick-up options as well. As many would say, there are so many benefits to living in a small community and features like this are one of them. Supporting small businesses in our community is what makes Hendricks County such a special place.

A huge proponent of education, Lauren feels blessed and grateful that she has been able to do what she loves and use her knowledge and life experience to both educate and inspire others. As her children have grown, she has been given more and more opportunities to invest in her church home and support other wives of law enforcement officers. "Without my faith, this wouldn't be possible. Without my walk with the Lord, I wouldn't be where I am today," said Heller. It can be said that Lauren's "cup is filled" with promise and excitement for the future.



★ YOU'RE INVITED ★

2024 Legislative BREAKFASTS

7 AM

January 29
February 26
March 25

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This is your opportunity to hear first-hand what's happening during session at the Indiana Statehouse! These annual legislative breakfasts are the largest publicly attended event in Indiana during session.

We have invited Representatives Becky Cash, Craig Haggard, Greg Steuerwald, and Jeff Thompson to join us, along with Senators Brian Buchanan, John Crane and Mike Young.

RSVP BY THURSDAY PRIOR

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TECH TALK

Reminiscing over 20 years in Tech

By Chet Cromer

2024 marks 20 years of business for C2IT Consulting. It's an exciting milestone, and I'm still considering how to celebrate it over the course of the next 12 months. There are few things in life I've stuck with for this length of time besides matters of faith, family, and this business. As I talked with a new friend earlier this week, I joked about how the last resume I completed was when I was 16 years old, applying for the summer internship that eventually led to an opportunity to fall into business ownership 10 years later.

If you're a small business owner like me that found yourself owning a business doing the work you do as an employee and have never read the book *E-Myth*, I highly recommend it. There's a huge difference between doing meaningful work you love for a job, owning a job, and owning a business that employs others to do that work. I've learned so much over these years about how NOT to do things that I feel I've finally learned a few things that I SHOULD do. While I'm no expert, here are a few I thought were worth writing down:

Treat your customers like partners.

Treat your employees like family.

Treat your family like a priority.

Treat yourself like a work in progress.

I'm sure there are many more pieces of advice to give about cash flow, debt, investments in capital, strategic plans, and skilled labor, but when it all boils down to it, it really is the people you interact with that make owning and operating a business and serving others a journey worth staying on for decades. I look back to men and women who invested in me early in my journey - Don Haycox, Dave and Sharon Pilcher, Jeff Harris, Stacey Peters, and Linda Smith - and realize that the effort they made into my life really wasn't a huge endeavor for them - it was just what they did and who they were.

We have a dozen families that rely on C2IT for their livelihood now and almost 100 clients that count on us to manage aspects of technology within their organization, and while it's enjoyable to get the "big win" from time to time, the simple check-ins, honest talks about issues, and occasional errors that have to be made right... Those are what make us a success.

I'm thrilled to have 20 years of business under my belt, excited about what's around the corner for our team, and thankful for all who've been a part of our journey, including you!

Thank you.

Chet Cromer is the president of C2IT Consulting, Inc., a Plainfield-based technology business that provides IT support, websites, mobile apps, and technology consulting to businesses across central Indiana. He can be reached at chetcromer@c2itconsulting.net or 317-721-2248.

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From Inside the Loop
Gov. Holcomb says "significant work" was completed in the most recent legislative session

Why investors are flocking to the Indianapolis housing market in 2020

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BUSINESS BRIEFS

Gov. Holcomb announces \$18.1 million grant to support child care

FSSA awards 64 businesses, organizations, schools in first round of grants

Governor Eric J. Holcomb recently announced the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration's Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning is awarding \$18.1 million in employer-sponsored child care grants to 64 businesses, community groups, and school corporations. The initiative, part of Gov. Holcomb's 2023 Next Level Agenda, is mobilizing employers and communities to create or expand child care offerings that address the needs of working Hoosiers.

"We wanted those who know first-hand the critical needs of their employees, and those who are best positioned to partner in their communities, to create child care solutions for their workforce, and they delivered," Gov. Holcomb said. "This effort harnesses the combined efforts of businesses, community groups, and schools that want to support working Hoosiers' careers and our youngest learners across the state."

Thirty-three employers plan to provide on-site

child care to their employees, and 13 will offer child care tuition benefits to their workers. The remaining awardees plan to support child care for their employees in a variety of other ways, such as reserving seats at partner child care centers. The full list of allowable uses and details can be found at www.in.gov/fssa.

This round of awardees, including K1DS Count Therapy in Brownsburg, will receive 72 percent of available funding from the \$25 million fund. Round two awardees – which will be announced in early 2024 – will receive the remaining funds. To view the comprehensive list of awardees, go to www.in.gov and search "Employee-Sponsored Child Care Grants".

Thirty large employers with 1,000 or more employees will receive up to \$750,000 each. Twenty-five mid-sized employers with between 100 and 999 employees will receive up to \$350,000. And nine small employers with between 20 and 99 employees will receive up to \$50,000.

"I look forward to seeing all the inventive approaches to child care come to life in communities across the state, and partnering with more businesses, community groups, and schools on this important, collaborative effort to support children, their families and the state's economy," said Courtney Penn, OECOSL director. "Birth to age five are the most critical in a person's life, and now more of our next generation will receive early education that is crucial to their brain and social development."

The program, a partnership with the Indiana Chamber of Commerce, uses a portion of the state's remaining federal relief funds from the COVID-19 pandemic and is part of the state's broader efforts to strengthen the early care and education sector, providing support for today's workforce and investing in tomorrow's workforce. The program is also supported by the Indiana Manufacturers Association.

Indiana National Guard soldiers, airmen exempt from state income tax

Hoosier National Guardsmen will no longer pay state income tax starting with their 2023 tax returns

As tax season approaches, Hoosier National Guardsmen, which number approximately 12,000 troops, will no longer pay state income tax starting with their 2023 tax returns.

In April, the Indiana legislature passed the military exemption bill, House Bill 1034, and on May 1, Gov. Eric J. Holcomb signed it into law.

"By completely phasing out state taxes on military veteran retirement in 2022 and eliminating the state income tax for Hoosier Guardsmen in 2023, Indiana continues to demonstrate our state's enduring appreciation for the exemplary women and men who serve our local communities, state, and nation in the Indiana National Guard," Gov. Holcomb said.

The tax exemption applies to all Hoosier Guardsmen, which includes traditional members, military technicians, and full-time National Guard soldiers and airmen.

"I'm grateful for Gov. Holcomb's and the legislature's meaningful support for Hoosier Guardsmen through this exemption from state income tax," said Maj. Gen. Dale Lyles, Indiana's adjutant general. "Soldiers and airmen in our many uniquely rewarding careers will enjoy the additional benefit of keeping more of what they earn while serving our state and nation."

According to the Indiana Department of Revenue, a member of the National Guard is allowed a deduction from adjusted gross income for wages earned as a result of the member's military service, including service for National Guard state active-duty missions and federalized overseas missions.

The exemption also includes wages earned as a dual-status military technician. A dual-status technician is one who works full-time for the National Guard and must serve in the National

Guard for that employment.

Exemptions do not apply for non dual-status technicians or independent military contractors. Exemptions also do not apply for wages earned from employment outside of military service.

Military personnel are required to file an Indiana income tax return if their gross income exceeds their exemptions. Income from all sources, both military and non-military, excluding military combat zone compensation, should be reported on the Indiana resident return, Form IT-40, even if the income is deducted in full for Indiana tax purposes.

More information can be found online at <https://www.in.gov/dor/files/reference/ib27.pdf>. Learn more about the Indiana National Guard at NationalGuard.IN.gov.

New Superintendent Named to Lead North Putnam Community Schools

The North Putnam Community Schools Board of Education announced Dr. Dustin LeMay as its new Superintendent at a meeting on Nov. 16, 2023. He began his new role Dec. 5, 2023.

Dr. LeMay, a 44-year resident of Avon, brings a wealth of experience in education to this new position, having served more than 28 years in Avon Community School Corporation. He held positions including teacher, coach, assistant principal, principal, and, most recently, Director of Teaching and Learning, 7-12.

North Putnam School Board President, Joanie Knapp said, "With excitement we are honored to welcome Dr. LeMay to North Putnam School Corporation. We look forward to his leadership in achieving goals that will have a positive impact on our students and staff. The School Board is extremely confident about his commitment and dedication to education."

"I am honored to be selected as Superintendent, and am grateful for the warm welcome I have received from the North Putnam community,"



Dr. Dustin LeMay named new Superintendent of North Putnam Community Schools (submitted photo)

Dr. LeMay shared, "This is an exciting time to be part of the North Putnam team. Our schools excel academically and we look forward to upcoming facility enhancements that will further serve and support our students, staff, and community. As I have visited each school, met students and staff, and attended events, it is abundantly clear that North Putnam schools are a very special place to learn and grow."

Dr. LeMay, a graduate of Avon High School, received a Bachelor's degree from Ball State University, a Master's Degree and administration credentials from Indiana Wesleyan University, and a Doctorate degree in Education Leadership from Indiana State University. In addition to his years of service in Avon Community School Corporation, he has also coached youth basketball and served on the boards of Avon community organizations including the Police Merit Board, the Mary Lee Maier Community Pantry, and the Avon Rotary Club (President 2022-2023). Dr. LeMay and his wife Emily reside in Avon with their two sons.

"I am honored to be selected as Superintendent, and am grateful for the warm welcome I have received from the North Putnam community."

- Dr. Dustin Lemay, Superintendent of North Putnam Community Schools

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BUSINESS BRIEF

Kendall Hendricks Servant-Leadership Award Recipient

We have all been impacted by a leader who served us and therefore changed our lives. Kendall Hendricks was one of those leaders and has served many people not only in our local republican party, but throughout the county. In 2022, we decided to create a leadership award that embodied Kendall's spirit and service. This year we named Jerry Nadin the Kendall Hendricks Servant-Leadership Award recipient. Jerry leads and serves the party in many ways but also leads in many other organizations. Please congratulate Jerry on receiving this award and thank him for the many ways he serves our party and county! Congratulations, Jerry Nadin!



Jerry Nadin presented the award by Mary Kendall and their son Ben (submitted photo)

MONEY MATTERS

Three Financial Resolutions You Should Make and Keep!

By Jeff Binkley

Many financial resolutions made for New Year's never make it past the thought. That's why I'm going to suggest you make the most impactful one first.

Build an emergency fund first.

An emergency fund is just that. It's money set aside in case an emergency happens. Its establishment provides the foundation for any other financial resolution to build upon. An emergency fund is typically one or two months' worth of expenses set aside in cash. A recent survey (Forbes.com 12/1/2023) stated that just over 40 percent (40.7%) of Americans are living paycheck to paycheck and that three quarters of those (77 percent) do not have enough money in emergency savings to cover even one month of their expenses. If you don't have one in place, forget about all other financial resolutions other than getting that emergency account fully funded.

Pay down or pay off credit cards.

When I establish a financial plan with a client, I like to find ways we can achieve total return for them. If you have credit card debt, one way of achieving total return in your portfolio is to pay it down or off. The average credit card interest rate is now 27.82 percent, according to Forbes Advisor's weekly credit card rates report (12/11/2023). My job has me look for good investment results for my clients. Imagine getting a guaranteed 27.82 percent rate of return! That's what paying down your credit cards does for you. Yes, when you're in debt,

specifically credit card debt, money spent toward reducing that debt gives you a rate of return effectively equal to the interest rate of the debt you're paying off. Guarantee a high rate of return on your money by using it toward paying off those debts.

Contribute (more) to your retirement account.

Finally, but only after your first two resolutions have been met, consider increasing your 401(k) or IRA contributions. These are easy and very effective ways to help ensure the life you lead in retirement is just as fun and fulfilling as the life you lead now.

These are simple resolutions to make and with some discipline, shouldn't be all that hard to implement. But start with building that emergency fund first. Because just like what happens to the "lose weight" resolution when the boss buys your favorite pizza for the crew, if you don't have your emergency fund in place, the "pay off credit cards" and "save for retirement" resolutions quickly go out the window when the water heater breaks down or a tire blows out or your kid needs new basketball shoes and has to have the best. Best wishes for the New Year. Now get busy.



Jeff Binkley is the Founder and Managing Director of Binkley Wealth Management Group, an Independent Fee-Only Registered Investment Advisory Firm.

Mr. Binkley is adding a few new select clients from those who qualify. For further information or an appointment contact him at Jeff@thebinkleygroup.com or 317-697-1618.

BUSINESS BRIEF

Hendricks County Bank Now Offering Wealth Management Services

Hendricks County Bank and Trust Company is excited to introduce Hendricks County Wealth Advisors, a new division aimed at providing its customers and communities with the wealth management and investment services they need at a local institution they trust. Financial Advisor Seth Cromer will lead the new division.

Hendricks County Wealth Advisors is ready to assist its clients with individual retirement accounts, employer-sponsored retirement plans, investment brokerage services, college savings plans, trust accounts and charitable giving solutions. As the financial advisor, Cromer will work with clients to determine their financial goals and create individualized plans to help them reach those goals.

With more than 10 years of experience as a licensed financial advisor, Cromer is ready to assist individuals, commercial and agricultural businesses and nonprofit organizations with their investment needs. He is available to meet with clients at Hendricks County Bank by appointment. He can be reached at 317-204-7979 or scromer@hcwealthadvisors.com.

When asked why the new initiative was added to the bank's portfolio, Bank President Jerry Orem explained, "In working with our customers, we have been

able to provide limited wealth management services. Adding this new division allows us to serve our current customers in a better way and opens up the possibilities of expanding those relationships as well as providing opportunities for new ones to be formed."

The mission of Hendricks County Bank is to promote economic prosperity-improving the quality of life in the community it serves. It does this by providing quality banking services in a professional manner with employees who are empowered to recognize and respond to the needs of its customers. This new line of services is one more way they are able to fulfill all their customers' financial needs.

Hendricks County Wealth Advisors is a division of Hendricks County Bank and Trust Company (HCBT). Securities are: not insured by the FDIC; not a deposit or other obligation of, or guaranteed by, the depository institution; subject to investment risks, including possible loss of the principal amount invested. Securities, Insurance and Investment Advisory Services are offered through Midwestern Securities Trading Company, LLC (MSTC). Member FINRA/SIPC. MSTC and HCBT are not affiliated. MSTC is a fully disclosed, introducing broker/dealer, registered investment advisor and insurance agency located in East Peoria, Ill.

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HEALTH MATTERS

Engaged Leadership Drives Worker Wellness



By Dr. April Johnson, M.D.

More than 20 years ago, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health set out to make American workers healthier and happier. They tasked employers with implementing programs that went beyond workplace safety and promoted health and well-being. This shift made sense because most working adults spend most of their waking hours in the workplace, and employers endure the ever-increasing costs of their health care. Many organizations added wellness programs and policies in hopes of improving employee retention, job satisfaction, and return on investment with their health insurance claims. Many different programs have been launched and studied to determine which characteristics are most successful. One key discovery was that employee participation and the program's overall success are strongly impacted by the level of engagement of leadership. One motivated team member handing out free pedometers isn't enough. Leadership involvement at every level of an organization predicts the best outcomes.

The World Health Organization and CDC promote 'healthy relationships' as a contributing factor to overall health. We usually think of relationships with friends and family, but many adults spend more time with co-workers each week than with friends and family. When workers and leaders participate in wellness activities together, they build healthy relationships. People who work together to reach common health goals feel connected to and valued by their group and its leader. These positive feelings motivate them to be more involved and more productive in all areas – not just health goals. Encouraging leaders and their teams to work together on health goals will improve any workplace wellness program. Employees who feel connected and valued will enjoy better health outcomes, which will benefit the entire organization.



April Johnson, M.D., DipACLM, has been a physician with Hendricks Regional Health for 17 years and currently serves as the Medical Director for Hendricks at Work employer clinics. She is passionate about educating and empowering patients to use lifestyle habits to reduce chronic disease and improve health.

BUSINESS BRIEF

United Way of Central Indiana awards nearly \$1 million to nonprofits

United Way estimates 10,000+ will be served through this round of funding

United Way of Central Indiana recently announced that it is awarding \$950,000 in grants to 13 community organizations from the Social Innovation Fund. The fund supports nonprofits that are meeting the community's needs through creative solutions.

Grant recipients will use the funding to provide opportunities for workforce development, address food insecurity, and help people access health care, transportation, housing, education, and social capital. More than 80 organizations submitted letters of interest to United Way seeking grants from the Social Innovation Fund. The pool was narrowed to 24 nonprofits that were asked to submit applications. A workgroup of 13 people, including volunteers from the community and United Way board members and staff, reviewed the applications and selected the recipients. United Way estimates more than 10,000 people will be served through this round of funding. The grantees listed below serve the residents of Hendricks county.

"With community, philanthropy, and innovation at the core of this investment, we could not be more excited to come alongside these organizations and their initiatives as they work toward better outcomes for our neighbors," Jones said. "We hope that these investments create new opportunities for the future of our central Indiana neighbors and go a long way toward spotlighting leaders and organizations working to focus their impact on often under-resourced populations. Thank you to these bold leaders for their vision and for putting community and innovation at the forefront." Here's a look at the 2024 Social Innovation Fund grantees and their plans for the grants:

Advocates for Education, Inc. – \$25,000**

Advocates for Education's programming has been serving the homeless and at-risk population in central Indiana since its inception. The organization provides comprehensive psychoeducational evaluations for learning differences, special education advocacy services, college and career counseling, and a high school equivalency completion program to clients served by its partner organizations. Advocates for Education has recently found a similar need among youth residing in detention centers and will expand its program to serve incarcerated youth, with the aim of educational support and dropout prevention.

Fathers and Families Center – \$86,000**

Leveraging relationships with correctional institutions, probation and parole offices, training providers, microlenders, Develop Indy's entrepreneurship systems, and high-quality employers, Fathers and Families Center connects returning citizens with employment and entrepreneurship so they can fulfill their obligations to their families while reintegrating into their support networks and society. Social Innovation funds will strengthen two paths to self-sufficiency for 100 fathers: entrepreneurship and high-quality employment.

Gennesaret Free Clinics – \$86,000**

Gennesaret Free Clinics will expand its free medical clinic in partnership with Gleaners. This proven, innovative model locating a health clinic inside a highly utilized food pantry allows people who are seeking food access to free health care in the same location. Gennesaret operates a medical clinic inside the St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry, a location chosen based on data that people living in this zip code have a 15-year shorter life expectancy than other areas of the city. Gleaners is both a highly utilized food pantry and a unique population not already seeking food or medicine at St. Vincent de Paul.

***denotes organizations that serve Hendricks County residents

GRAND OPENINGS

Gippers Way McDonalds opens

“The community has been very supportive. We are independent owner operators and Mary and I have been blessed with the opportunity to keep growing. Gipper Way is our third location in Brownsburg,” said John Liapes, Independent Owner/Operator.



The McDonalds ribbon cutting at 4490 Gippers Way (submitted photo)

State Bank of Brownsburg celebrates grand re-opening

State Bank of Brownsburg Campus on 56th street celebrated their grand re-opening and the expansion of their newly remodeled banking center and main office on Saturday, December 16. To commemorate the event, State Bank offered free professional family photos with Santa, a free document shredding service, and holiday treats for those in attendance, and fun was had by all. State Bank of Brownsburg looks forward to serving the community in the coming New Year and beyond.



State Bank at Brownsburg Campus at 56th Street ribbon cutting (submitted photo)

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Planner of Note



10 – Danville Chamber of Commerce: Wednesday, Jan. 10, 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. at Hendricks County 4-H Fairgrounds, Danville. For more information, call 317-745-0670.

16 – Plainfield Chamber of Commerce: Tuesday, Jan. 16, 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. at Richard A. Carlucci Recreation and Aquatic Center, Plainfield. For more information, call 317-839-3800.

17 – Brownsburg Chamber of Commerce: Wednesday, Jan. 17, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. at West Chase Golf Course Pavilion, Brownsburg. For more information, call 317-852-7885.

23 – Avon Chamber of Commerce: Tuesday, Jan. 23, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. at Avon American Legion, Avon. For more information, call 317-272-4333.

BUSINESS BRIEF

Brownsburg Superintendent Contract Not Renewed

During a school board meeting on Dec. 28, the Brownsburg Community School Board met because there is a provision in Dr. Snapp's contract stating that if he is not provided notice prior to Jan. 2 then an additional year is automatically added to his current contract. This language existed prior to any current board members being on the board. The only action taken this evening was to not add an additional year to Dr. Snapp's contract which currently extends through the 2025-2026 school year.

Members of the community spoke to support Dr. Snapp and demand additional answers for the board's actions. Dr. Snapp himself provided emotional words about his nearly 14 year tenure with Brownsburg. Dr. Snapp expressed that it had been his intent on retiring at the end of the 2027 school year, when he will be sixty-five years old. If the board moves forward then he will finish a year early, but will continue to give 100 percent to the students and community until his last day on June 30, 2026.

Following comments, BCSC Legal Counsel recommended that the board not agree to the extension of Dr. Snapp's contract. The board voted unanimously not to extend the contract.

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