

Beyond26

Newsletter | Summer 2021



Putting Faith to Work

THE BUSINESS PARTNER ISSUE

We're starting something new! Each newsletter will now celebrate one of the four main "participants" in our vision - our jobseekers, business partners, volunteers, and donors! This issue will highlight our business partners - those who employ our jobseekers and often sponsor Beyond26 as well! Of course, we couldn't do what we do without business partners.

While we thank them from the bottom of our hearts for participating in our mission, we also know that they benefit from our vision as well! Our business partners gain dependable and enthusiastic employees, and have given us countless testimonials in support of that vision:

"Sarah is truly a **blessing** to the New Life Thrift Store. She works hard and always has a **positive attitude** and smile. She is **courteous** with the customers. She has grown so much since starting with us. She has been a **great addition** to our store. Beyond26 is so easy to work with." - Betsy, New Life Thrift Store

"We all love Courtney here and she's come so far... Courtney has been a godsend to our team here at Walker. She's a **hard worker** that **pushes past her own comfort zone** and amazes me daily." - Bonnie, J & H Family Stores

"Katie has grown here; we definitely think of her as **part of our family** here. She walks around with a smile, **positive attitude**, joking personality and completes her work before she leaves." - Susan, J & H Family Stores

"It is always a **JOY** and pleasure to have Sean volunteering with us. He is **dependable** and such a **hard worker**. We love having him as part of our team." - Beverly, North Kent Connect

"Phil brings a **positive energy** and **positive attitude** to work, which is infectious for all of us at the office." - Mike, Farm Bureau Insurance

"[Eric and Nick] are joy to work with - very **eager to do a great job**, asking for feedback - I can't say enough about the **work ethic** that both of them have. It's just been a really good fit." - Seth, Meijer

"[Anonymous] is a **big help!** She does many of the tasks I struggle to get done. She is very **flexible** as well... I appreciate her help very much!" - April, Our Flower Shoppe

OUR CHAMPION BUSINESS SPONSORS

We want to give a HUGE thank you to our two Champion sponsors who have each donated \$5,000+ to Beyond26 in the past year!



Meijer has advocated for individuals with disabilities from the beginning, and has partnered to provide employment for two of our jobseekers. Eric told us: "The Meijer distribution center has been a good employer to me. I'm really enjoying the job!" Meijer has also been recognized as a "Best Place to Work for Disability Inclusion" four years in a row by the Disability Equality Index (DEI).



Procare shares a building with our document shredding crew. They have fully welcomed our crew and have formed relationships with them that are really amazing to see! Our document shredders love the Procare staff, and we can't thank them enough for their generosity and kindness! They have been a blessing to Beyond26 in so many ways.

JOBSEEKER SPOTLIGHT



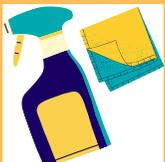
Congratulations to our newly employed jobseekers!



Melissa has been volunteering for two months and told us, "I just love it!" The staff has made her feel right at home. The volunteer coordinator brought Melissa a gift on her first day, and her manager mentored her for her first shift! - at *Kent District Library*



Daniel will be assisting with custodial duties. After many years of working for Calvin College, cut short by the COVID-19 shutdown, we are so happy to have found Daniel a new work family that is as supportive and welcoming as all of his Calvin College coworkers were! - at *Grace Reformed Church*



Anonymous came to us in early 2020 but was laid off due to COVID-19. Recently, we found her new employment as a custodian! Her mom said, "They've been really encouraging of her, and she's feeling good about it!" - at *Aspen Investment Management*



A week before Macey came to us, we had a local business reach out to ask about anyone interested in dishwashing - one week later Macey was on board looking for dishwashing jobs! What a great match! Macey started just last month, and her mom said, "We are very excited and feeling very good about this opportunity for Macey." - at *RedWater Restaurant Group*



Robert is happy to be volunteering and helping out at Buist Ministries! He is working side by side with his CLS worker and is doing a great job according to his supervisor. They were very excited for him to start! - at *Buist Community Assistance Center*

DIRK'S CORNER

Beyond26 has just celebrated 3 years since receiving our 501(c)3 nonprofit designation in March of 2018. We are gaining traction in our community serving jobseekers, their families, and employers alike. Truly a win, win, win situation.

Some of our supporters may not know how we got started and where the name Beyond26 came from. I coach my son Will's Challengers ball team at the Grandville Little League. In 2016-17 the Coordinator of that league was Bob Wondergem. He and I started talking about what the plan was for our sons after aging out of the transition programs at their respective schools. We identified a need for employment services so they could transition from a school community to a work community. The importance of the job being paid, or volunteer was not really an issue. It was establishing a new community that was supportive and inclusive. This transition is not easy for families, it is not always comfortable for a family to advocate for their jobseeker.

As time went on, we were introduced to other like-minded people that either have children with disabilities or taught individuals with disabilities. We formed a round table that met at Russ' restaurant once a month until we realized it was time to form a board of directors. We invited my niece who is a lawyer to join as well as my sister who has years of administrative experience. Through Special Olympics basketball I was introduced to a CPA with non-profit experience. Before I could completely ask the question, he said YES! I'd love to serve on the Beyond26 board. The last component was to choose the Executive Director. The board looked to me and I was excited to accept the responsibility. That has been over 3 years ago, and we have not looked back.

The name Beyond26 was a spin off from the name of a restaurant in Cadillac called After 26 Depot. We really liked the reference to aging out of the school system and had a board member workshop to come up with our own name. Beyond26 was born and an intern designed our logo.

There you have the condensed version of the birth of Beyond26! Have a great summer and thank you for your support!



Dirk Bakhuyzen,
Executive Director

THE BEYOND26 BULLETIN

- Thank you for an amazing peer-to-peer fundraiser! We raised \$8,830 - including many first time donors! Thank you to everyone who donated and helped us spread the word
- A sincere and heartfelt thank you to those that donated in memoriam of Elaine Geers: Mitchell Urbytes, Cindy & Jerry Gritter, Alice & Larry Bakale, the Kail Family Trust, and John & Dawn Docter

A huge thank you to our sponsors:



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