

Several people in our community have struggled throughout the pandemic, but others have a feeling... A feeling of desire that they can stop this struggle. These people have confidence, sympathy, assertiveness, and hope. They have assisted others by donating money, food, masks, and other sources. That's why every one of us should admire the businesses of Wisconsin because there is one thing known in these times... Business is a Force for Good. All of these actions can make a difference in our community, and some businesses who have done this are Associated Bank, American Family Insurance, and VARC, Inc.

One of the numerous small businesses that help out this Wisconsin community is American Family Insurance. Most people think of the ones who are struggling in these times. But there are others who are helping the most in need; these people are our community's frontline workers. American Family Insurance had to do something, as soon as they realized they **could**... they went all out and donated \$6.8 million to our non-profit partners and frontline workers! Our community's frontline workers are all volunteers which means they don't get paid; they are a part of our non-profit partners. This must mean so much to our volunteers and just as much as the ones struggling. Furthermore, American Family Insurance is returning roughly \$200 million in premium to their auto insurance customers. This is very important to them because some of the customers don't have the money to pay for premium and/or they don't have the time to make the money. "Your car insurance premium is the amount you pay your insurance company on a regular basis, often every month or every six months, in exchange for insurance coverage." (Fitzpatrick). In essence, American Family Insurance surprised us with a huge donation worth \$6.8 million and they have returned about \$200 million in premium to their customers; these actions mean a lot to our community.

VARC, Inc. has also been a huge help along with the numerous astonishing businesses. Money isn't the only problem in this pandemic, there are several other things that people are affected by too. VARC focuses on many of these problems all jumbled into one solution. The first thing that VARC focuses on is face masks; they create numerous masks for people who need them the most. Face masks are probably one of the most important and protective items to use throughout the pandemic. The way VARC decided to help with this is by hiring/providing useful and valuable employment to local citizens and families who depend on a stable income. This means that they are providing opportunities to families to make money AND help other people out just like them who are struggling. All together, VARC produces around 30,000 face masks across 2 out of 5 of VARC's work facilities for the sake of attainment. VARC delivers these directly to U.S. medical providers as well as other citizens volunteering for us on the frontlines facing the virus. VARC has also proudly produced and donated hundreds of N95 masks to local medical facilities throughout Wisconsin. Some people need N95 masks because they work in the medical field and they need to be extra protected. According to the FDA (Food and Drug Administration), "N95 respirators and surgical masks are examples of personal protective equipment that are used to protect the wearer from airborne particles and from liquid contaminating the face." This means that N95 face masks just have more protection added to the product specifically used by people helping out others medically. VARC says that "none of this would be possible without their extraordinary team of employees throughout Wisconsin". They and we believe that our community is the ones who matter the most.

Associated Bank is another company that consists of these tremendous small businesses. Money has been a huge issue due to several jobs being lost from the virus. Associated Bank had a solution to help out people with this problem. Not too long after Covid-19 struck the worst in

Wisconsin, Associated Bank came in in a hurry and created a Covid relief program to help out their customers struck by negative economic outcomes due to Covid-19. This is one of the ways that Associated Bank has helped people who have lost their jobs because of the virus. Associated Bank made sure that customers that have economic issues still have a chance to come back from their misfortune. If Associated Bank didn't do this, many more people would be economically downfallen. Not only that, but Associated Bank has also donated \$150,000 to *each* local United Way Chapter in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Illinois to support community-based programs and help out services that supply essential goods/needs. 150,000 dollars! That is a whole lot...especially for a *small* business. All things considered, Associated Bank has helped us out by assembling a Covid-19 relief program to aid their economically brought-down customers *and* they donated \$150,000 to *every* United Way Chapter in our Midwest community.

To sum it all up, these small businesses are warmhearted, obliging, sympathetic, and compassionate. There are countless amounts of words out there that can describe these small businesses and people, but these aren't just words... they are things that these people have done that have lended us a (sanitized) hand. American Family Insurance is one of these stellar small businesses who donated a tremendous \$6.8 million *and* they returned approximately \$200 million in premium back towards their customers. Following that, VARC, Inc. donates nearly 30,000 face shields a day and has donated 100s of N95 masks. At last, but not least, Associated Bank has proudly donated \$150,000 to each local United Way chapter in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Illinois. These are only *some* of the many small businesses of Wisconsin and the things they have done that have assisted us. That's why we should look at these small businesses in a different way because they may be bigger than they seem...

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