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Business is a Force for Good

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My community would not thrive or merely exist if not for business, and I am certain that you could all say the same. Companies in Wisconsin contribute immensely to help their local communities in countless ways. Businesses create job opportunities, get money circulating in the local economy, build community identity, diversify the local marketplace, and become involved with the community in other, various ways. Although not an exclusively local business, Culver's is a standout example of this that I have witnessed firsthand in my community.

Culver's is not only a restaurant that serves the frozen custard, fresh butterburgers, and Wisconsin cheese curds that we all love, it is a corporation that is constantly supporting and elevating communities around the state. I desire to highlight Culver's in this essay because of their extensive generosity and longing to give back. From sponsorships to donations to the hosting of fundraising events, they support local schools and communities.

There is often a fundraiser taking place at my local Culver's due to the fact that they make it extremely easy to organize and make successful. In order to host a fundraiser at a Culver's restaurant near you, all you have to do is request a date, spread the word via social media and other advertising strategies, and let your guests have delicious meals that will benefit your cause. Channel 3000 reports that since the majority of Culver's restaurants are locally owned, every location takes part in the "Make Your Meal Matter" program where amounts

ranging from 10 to 100 percent will be donated back to the cause (Culver's *Give Local: Supporting The Community*). In Portage, organizations, clubs, and teams such as the Boys & Girls Club, Post-Prom planning team, PHS girl's varsity basketball team, Portage Library, and more have utilized Culver's as a fundraising instrument. The people fundraising provide service at the restaurant by greeting guests, clearing tables, and giving gratitude to customers for their support. Culver's has and continues to be a force for good in my community.

I had the pristine honor of interviewing local Portage Culver's owner, Chad Stevenson. Stevenson became a Shift Leader at Culver's when he was only 16 years old, General Manager by age 20, and an owner at 23. Stevenson currently owns 73 restaurants nationwide with the official title of Owner Operator/COO/President. When asked why he values giving back to his community on a personal and professional level, Stevenson stated that "[He] feel[s] that God has given [him] a great life and has put [him] in a position to be able to affect a lot of peoples' lives." He wants to "make that influence as positive as possible." He also mentioned that giving back to the community builds "strong and loyal relationships" with customers. Stevenson completed his response by stating that "Our communities have given us everything we have so [he] feel[s] [he] owe[s] it to everyone to return it as well." Stevenson spoke about a special fundraiser that he holds close to his heart. His Culver's crew recently ran a fundraiser for one of his own team members that is currently fighting cancer. Stevenson explained that "Jean has worked for [him] for 25 years and it was great to see how much the community supported her." He also greatly values all of the fundraisers that revolve around, or have anything to do with, Portage's local youth. Looking ahead, Stevenson envisions all Culver's continuing to support their local communities as much as possible. He also mentioned the idea of really focusing on mental health by stating that "This topic is very dear to [him] and [he] feel[s] as though [they] are in a position

to help build awareness for people as well as help people reach out when they are struggling.”

Interviewing Chad Stevenson was an extremely informative and inspiring experience that proved my claim that my community would not thrive without support from businesses like Culver’s.

Local businesses are extremely vital for communities because they provide many economic benefits, diversify the local marketplace, promote local tax base, and connect citizens (Truic *6 Ways Your Small Business Affects The Community: Make A Difference!*). My community, the city of Portage, has a plethora of local restaurants, cafes, and other stores. These include, but are not limited to, Two Rivers Coffee Roaster, The Mercantile, The Popcorn Corner, Theresa’s Boutique, and the Portage Cafe. A mix of chain and local businesses is essential for a community’s professional success.

Businesses fuel communities and give them opportunities to merely exist, develop, and thrive. Numerous companies across the state of Wisconsin give back to their local communities; both you and I have witnessed this firsthand. Business is all around you, everywhere you look, and it is a force for good.

Works Cited

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