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“Why Wisconsin?” Spring 2023 Essay Contest

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Not Just a Cup of Coffee

Wisconsin is a state filled with variety. A place where if you're just 30 miles north of somewhere, the weather is completely different. Wisconsin is a place where anything is possible and there are no crocodiles in the pond in your backyard. Wisconsin is a place where people come together to become more than just a community, we come together to be a family.

I love living in Wisconsin because there are so many things to do, with an endless array of options. In the summer we can do fun lake activities like jet skiing, canoeing, kayaking, tubing, and swimming. We also can go fishing or floating down the river. In the winter we have a ton of options such as snowmobiling, ice fishing, snowshoeing, skiing, snowboarding, tubing, and sledding. (Side note, if Wisconsin isn't really all that, then why do so many people from Minnesota (the land of 10,000 lakes) come to Wisconsin to vacation?)

Wisconsin is more than just a dairy state. It's a place where family values and hard work are instilled in us from childhood. I spent the majority of my childhood on a beef farm where I had to do chores and take care of the animals. I was taught that when you do work, you have to do it right. If you're going to do something, don't ever do it less than your best.

Another thing that is great about Wisconsin is the communities we build. This is a place where the majority of people are kind to one another and generally welcoming. We establish hospitality in a way that no other state I've been to does. This is shown through our businesses. Our businesses are what create our communities and are what bring us together. A business that I find does this well is Cabin Coffee. It is not a business exclusive to Wisconsin but the location in

Rice Lake, WI definitely creates an environment of communion. An iced vanilla latte with almond milk or a turtle mocha with four shots of espresso doesn't just give you caffeine, it gives you connections. From the baristas' infectious joy to the fellow customers' contagious smiles, it never fails to brighten your day. It also provides a space where people can meet and come together for any reason. Whether that reason is meeting up after five years of not seeing each other or a weekly get together to catch up, it never fails to amaze me how much coffee can bring people together. I do work at this establishment, so I may be a tad biased, but I don't think that should discount the relationships that are continuously fostered and created there. The amount of regular customers I've formed relationships with and the friendships I've found in my workplace are amazing and that is all because of Cabin Coffee. I was even able to job shadow one of the regulars I met at Cabin, who is a mental health counselor in Rice Lake. This just goes to show that local businesses can inspire, build relationships, and elevate a community.

In conclusion, Wisconsin isn't just a "dairy state" in the Midwest with farms stretching for miles. Don't get me wrong, that is true, but we are more. We are small business owners, we are coffee drinkers, we are outdoor enthusiasts, we are a community, we are one. We are Wisconsin.