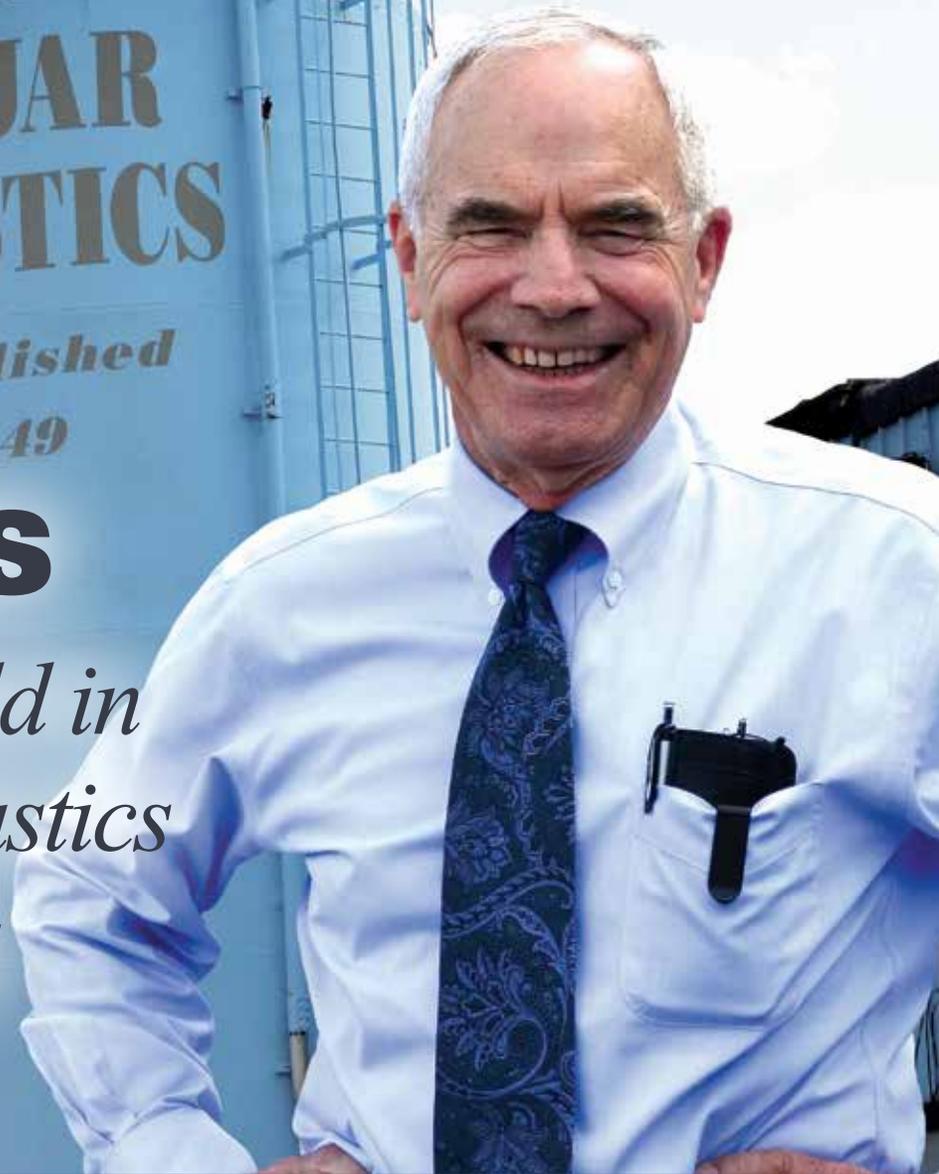


Fall 2017

geauga BUSINESS

Sajar Plastics

*Breaks the Mold in
Specialized Plastics
Manufacturing*



PLUS: **UH Geauga Medical Center**
Opens Seidman Cancer Center

Geauga Credit Union
A Matter of People Helping People

Sweet Grace Anna's
A Cakery and Bakery that Dabbles in Imagination
and more...

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Letter from the Editor



Fall is my favorite season—not only for the spectacular visuals nature provides us in Geauga County, but because of memories that remain precious to me through the years of Thanksgivings and Christmases shared with family.

The concept of family resonates within the Geauga County business community as well. From third-generation Great Lakes Cheese in Troy Township to third-generation Bloom Brothers in Chester Township, common themes emerge among the hundreds of family-owned businesses in Geauga County, like a commitment to hard work, quality, customer service, and consistency of product.

We are all stewards for the next generation. This understanding was personally driven home with the death of my mother, Eileen Ginley Buelow, in February. Mom was the daughter of an immigrant who came to the United States alone, at the age of 14, from Achille Island, County Mayo, Ireland. Margaret Scanlon Ginley taught her children the value of hard work, a good education, a belief and trust in God, and love of family. Mom passed that lesson on to her children. I hope my legacy will be the same.

With Great Appreciation,

Margie Wilber
Editor-in-Chief/Publisher, Geauga Business
President, Write 2 the Point



In this issue of Geauga Business, you will read about Arms Trucking, owned by Howard Bates. Working alongside Howard is his son Brian and daughter Abbie. Brian already understands that for Arms Trucking, it's all about "customer service." Sweet Grace Anna's, owned by Ellen and Devin Bennett, is named after the couple's daughter. They established their family-owned business in Geauga County to be closer to their extended family.

H. Fisk Johnson, fifth-generation chairman and CEO of S.C. Johnson & Son, spoke about what makes a family-owned business special in a March 10, 2016 article in The Wall Street Journal: "One of my key objectives is to ensure the family is proud of the company and feels a part of it. The moment the company becomes more of a financial investment for the family, we may as well go public, honestly. The family never sees the value of the equity because that gets passed on. We see ourselves simply as a steward of that equity as it moves from one generation to the next."

Chris Yuhasz
Publisher, Geauga Business
President, POV Print Communications



SAJAR PLASTICS

BREAKS THE MOLD IN SPECIALIZED PLASTICS MANUFACTURING

Middlefield's injection molding pioneer
joins the Universal Plastics family

BY CHRIS TAYLOR

In the heart of Middlefield, where rolling farmland gives way to modern industry, sits Sajar Plastics' sprawling production facility. Founded in 1949, the manufacturer specializes in gas-assist injection molding of plastic parts. Sajar derived its name from an acronym representing the last names of its founders. Considered a pioneer in the gas-assist injection molding industry—technology that Sajar founders helped develop—the company employs more than 100 people in its 150,000-square-foot facility and has estimated sales of \$16 million.

Gas-assist injection molding is a process used to manufacture large plastic parts with complex designs and high-quality surface finishes. It is ideal for producing large handles, equipment covers, doors, bezels, cabinets, and skins. End markets include medical, laboratory and diagnostic, business, and retail registers/dispensing machines. Sajar offers multiple gas-assist technologies, including traditional internal gas assist and external, gas-counterpressure processes.



“OUR NO. 1 GOAL IS TO GET MORE WORK INTO THE MIDDLEFIELD FACILITY.”

– Jay Kumar, CEO and Owner, Universal Plastics

technology is used to make large pieces such as aerospace parts and automotive bumpers. The next year, the Kumars acquired Mayfield Plastics in Sutton, Mass. Both Universal and Mayfield focus on the design and low-volume production of large parts. End products include covers and panels for medical equipment, such as X-ray and CT scanning machines. From kayaks to alpine sleds to plastic-clamshell food packaging, the sister companies produce a slew of products for

a variety of industries. Together, Universal and Mayfield represent one of the largest precision thermoformers in the United States.

“Our goal was to grow the plastics platform and buy more good businesses that fit the culture,” says Kumar.

Kumar credits Geauga County administrators with helping Universal Plastics throughout the Sajar acquisition process. “Everyone has been extremely helpful,” he says. “Ohio has a reputation for being a very pro-business state, and I’m already beginning to see that.”

The parts Sajar Plastics manufactures are similar to those Universal Plastics makes. In fact, the companies have an overlapping customer base, yet they do not compete with each other. When considering the Sajar purchase, Kumar and his team had a vision of serving customers who started with custom thermoforming and eventually progressed to injection molding. In addition to gas-assist injection molding, Sajar offers customers high-pressure structural molding, straight injection molding, engineering services, and secondary operations that include finishing (paint, labeling, and printing), assembly, and packaging. A broad choice of manufacturing capabilities means customers can find solutions within the Universal family of companies.

Because of Sajar Plastics’ ongoing success, Universal management did not make changes regarding employees, facilities and procedures. Larry Nowak, president and CEO of Sajar Plastics, continues to head the Middlefield facility.

In June 2017, the company was sold to Universal Plastics Corp., a heavy-gauge thermoformer based in Holyoke, Mass. For more than 50 years, Universal has been a leader in manufacturing parts for the aerospace, medical device, transportation, consumer products, food packaging, and electronics industries. Jay Kumar, president and CEO of Universal Plastics and Mayfield Plastics Inc., explains the philosophy behind the recent Sajar acquisition.

“We are very pro-American manufacturing,” he says. “We want to see more work coming back to America. In that regard, we were always looking for an injection molder. When we looked at Sajar, we knew it was by far the best we had ever seen. It had a strong Midwestern work ethic and engineering department, and a culture of people working together.”

Before he was a plastics industry entrepreneur, Kumar was a Wall Street trader. After 10 years at J.P. Morgan Chase, he and his father, Sunil Kumar, decided to team up and take on small-business ownership. The elder Kumar had worked in the manufacturing sector for more than four decades. After selling the company he was working for, he was ready for a new venture.

“My father ran a chemical company, which he sold to Ashland,” says Jay Kumar. “We are very bullish on American manufacturing. We thought it would be a good idea to buy a small manufacturing company and see what we could do with it.”

The father-son team purchased Universal Plastics in 2012. The company specializes in thermoforming, a process in which a sheet of plastic is heated and placed over a mold. When the sheet cools, it hardens and forms a part. The

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

SAJAR PLASTICS

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THE PROCESS

Gas-assist injection molding technology was developed in the 1980s by three companies, Sajar being one of them. During the process, plastic pellets are heated and melted. The melted resin is then injected into a steel mold. Because the liquid plastic is injected at high pressures, it is able to reach all areas of the mold. Small channels within the mold are filled with pressurized nitrogen gas, allowing the resin



“WE WANT TO SEE MORE WORK COMING BACK TO AMERICA. IN THAT REGARD, WE WERE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR AN INJECTION MOLDER. WHEN WE LOOKED AT SAJAR, WE KNEW IT WAS BY FAR THE BEST WE HAD EVER SEEN.”

– Jay Kumar, CEO and Owner, Universal Plastics

to flow throughout the mold. Once the resin is cooled, the part is removed from the mold. Gas-assist molding enables the production of complex, large parts with stringent cosmetic requirements. It requires less resin than traditional injection molding processes, which translates into material reduction and cost savings.

“Sajar is probably the best in the nation—maybe the world—in the gas-assist injection molding industry,” says Kumar. “Our employees are really good at what they do and at pushing the envelope of this technology.”

Though known for medium- to large-part manufacturing, Sajar has the capabilities to produce almost any size part so customers can streamline their processes and consolidate supply bases. The injection molder can produce plastic parts up to 80 inches long and 70 inches wide with surface areas of 1,000 square inches. One medical-device manufacturer hired Sajar to design and fabricate a custom medical equipment cover, converting their previous product from a thermoform process. Other applications include the production of custom, computer-server doors and medical equipment trays. Previously, the trays were manufactured using a structural foam process. Converting the process to gas-assist injection molding allowed the customer to increase production quantities and reduce the weight of the finished product.

LOOKING AHEAD

Though it has been less than three months since the acquisition, adding the Middlefield-based manufacturer to the Universal Plastics family is proving beneficial to customers, employees and investors.

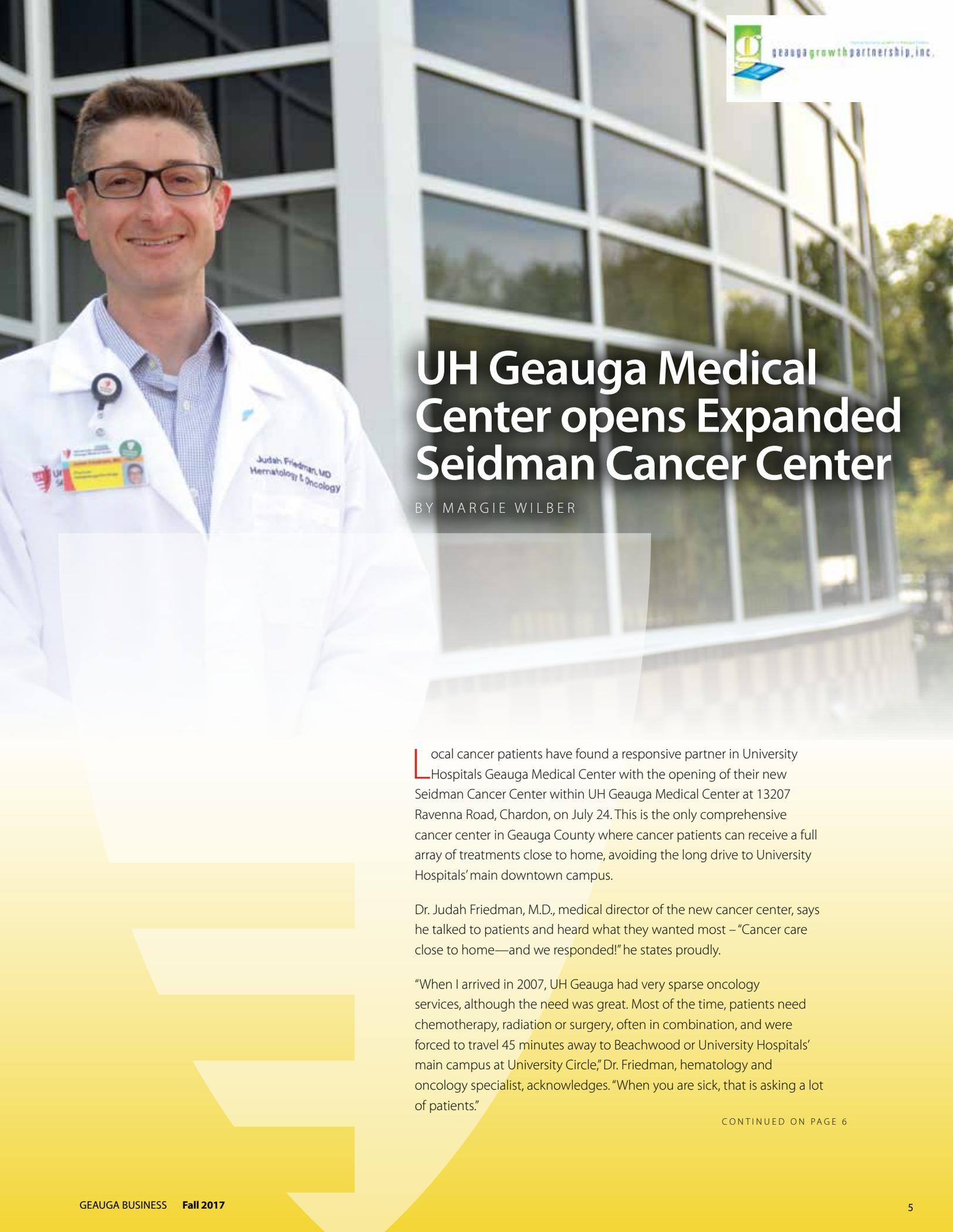
“It was a good fit,” says Kumar. “I’m very happy with the purchase. It has only been a few months, but we have had no negative surprises. I really enjoy the people who are there. They work very hard, are intellectually honest, and I like their spirit and work ethic.”

When asked if he has plans to grow Sajar’s business, Kumar says, “Absolutely. We plan on expanding through acquisitions—the Midwest is ideal for that. And, we

plan to expand the Middlefield site. Our No. 1 goal is to get more work into the Middlefield facility. We want to add more thermoforming and molding equipment there.

“I am very excited and feel honored that I was able to purchase Sajar. I love the people there and the work that they do. I think the customers appreciate what Sajar Plastics has to offer.”

With an eye on customer success, Sajar will continue to grow its business. Stay tuned for more from the plastics pioneer of Geauga County. For more information on manufacturing solutions from Sajar Plastics, please contact the company at 440.632.5203 or info@sajar.com, or visit their website at www.sajarplastics.com. 



UH Geauga Medical Center opens Expanded Seidman Cancer Center

BY MARGIE WILBER

Local cancer patients have found a responsive partner in University Hospitals Geauga Medical Center with the opening of their new Seidman Cancer Center within UH Geauga Medical Center at 13207 Ravenna Road, Chardon, on July 24. This is the only comprehensive cancer center in Geauga County where cancer patients can receive a full array of treatments close to home, avoiding the long drive to University Hospitals' main downtown campus.

Dr. Judah Friedman, M.D., medical director of the new cancer center, says he talked to patients and heard what they wanted most – “Cancer care close to home—and we responded!” he states proudly.

“When I arrived in 2007, UH Geauga had very sparse oncology services, although the need was great. Most of the time, patients need chemotherapy, radiation or surgery, often in combination, and were forced to travel 45 minutes away to Beachwood or University Hospitals' main campus at University Circle,” Dr. Friedman, hematology and oncology specialist, acknowledges. “When you are sick, that is asking a lot of patients.”

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Seidman Cancer Center

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5



again. I'm glad we have it in Geauga County. I would recommend Dr. Friedman and Dr. Janice Lyons, Radiation Oncology, Director of Breast Cancer Services, UH Cleveland Medical Center, in a heartbeat. They listen. They care."

"Our nurses, physicians, pharmacy and lab technicians, security personnel and members of the community participated in the design of this building," Amanda Musial, RN, Nurse Manager at UH Geauga's Seidman Cancer Center, says. "No one person could think of everything." Together, the result is impressive.

University Hospitals Geauga Medical Center media relations representative Lynn Novelli says, "One goal of creating the new facility was to make it a restful, calming and beautiful environment for patients who are on a very difficult journey with their disease."

He says cancer patients receiving radiation typically need treatment every day for up to six weeks; infusion or chemotherapy treatment can be weekly for up to six months and last up to four hours each. With the opening of UH Geauga Medical Center's Seidman Cancer Center, patients battling cancer can now use their energy to fight the disease rather than on burdensome travel. "Cancer patients check in at one desk and walk down the hall to get their various treatments. This makes them very happy," says Dr. Friedman.

Gauga County Recorder Sharon Gingerich knows firsthand what it takes to battle cancer. She was diagnosed with breast cancer on February 10, 2015. "When I was diagnosed, it was like being hit by a truck. I cried a lot," she admits.

Gingerich received aggressive treatment, including chemotherapy and radiation, at a different hospital downtown. The travel proved exhausting. She switched her care to UH Geauga but still experienced the challenges of walking from radiation to the infusion center. "When you have chemotherapy, or are halfway through with treatment, it zaps all your energy. I work in the Annex on Chardon Square and live in Burton Village. I chose to go to UH Geauga Medical Center so I could do my treatments on my way home.

"I am happy for all the other cancer patients who will now have access to UH Geauga's Seidman Cancer Center -- with everything conveniently located in one spot within the hospital. While I am currently cancer-free, it is always in the back of my mind that I may need to use these facilities

Features of the UH Geauga Seidman Cancer Center include:

- 10 physician exam rooms
- 18 infusion (chemotherapy) bays
- Large, comfortable, private and semi-private infusion rooms
- One communal infusion room
- A spacious, open, contemporary design with windows overlooking the scenic, rolling Geauga landscape
- Healing Garden for family, friends and patients
- Natural stone accent wall
- Consultation room
- Blood draw room

In addition, available videoconferencing enables Geauga physicians to discuss the most effective treatments with cancer specialists at UH Cleveland Medical Center. "Gauga patients can also participate in a number of clinical trials available through UH Seidman Cancer Center and have access to social workers, dietitians and a library with tons of information for patients and their families," Musial says. "A lot of our patients need follow-up blood work and scans. We facilitate this by immediately scheduling these tests while they are here."

Construction of the 11,500-square-foot cancer center was made possible by local philanthropists and caregivers involved in funding and promoting the project.

“One goal of creating the new facility was to make it a restful, calming and beautiful environment for patients who are on a very difficult journey with their disease.”

- Lynn Novelli, University Hospitals Geauga Medical Center media relations representative

“More than 700 donors contributed \$28 million towards the project, which totals \$5.6 million,” says Emilie Gottsegen, UH Geauga Medical Center development director. “Our largest single donation of \$300,000 came from the William O. and Gertrude Frohring Foundation. Jim Patterson, owner of Patterson Fruit Farms, served as campaign chair.”

In recognition, 25 plaques honoring major donors have been hung at the cancer center. UH Geauga Seidman Cancer Center continues to welcome donations.

What other offerings are being considered? Dr. Friedman says one area for potential exploration is pediatric oncology, “but right now, we are geared for only adult cancer care.”

Since opening, UH Geauga Seidman Cancer Center sees an average of 40 patients a day with one or two radiation oncologists on call each day. “We hope to add surgical specialists in gynecology and oncology,” Dr. Friedman adds.

UH Geauga Medical Center has long been at the forefront in preventive care, offering a number of cancer pre-screenings and education programs in Geauga County annually. “We will continue to make Geauga County residents aware of what they can personally do to prevent cancer, such as leading a healthy lifestyle and participating in our breast, skin, colorectal and lung cancer screenings,” Dr. Friedman states. “A lot can be done to prevent the disease, however, a lot is just part of the human condition.” 



Arms Trucking

BY GINA MCVEY

What's in a name?

Arms. There's a name that's been around Geauga County for about 40 years.

Back in the 1930s, a fellow by the name of Albert R. May opened a small trucking company called The Arms Trucking Co. For more than 40 years, he provided services for hauling asphalt and other construction aggregates. He enjoyed a stable business.

In the mid-1970s, Howard Bates and Jim and Bill Ronyak pooled their resources and bought Arms Trucking from the retiring owner. The three gentlemen had some ideas about turning a seasonal business into one that would stand on its own for 12 months a year.

"They started hauling salt in the winter months so they would not have to lay off their drivers," says Brian Bates, Howard's son and VP of The Arms Trucking Co.

Since that time, the unassuming trucking company has flexed its muscles. The company also owns Arms Dock in Toledo, which stores salt for local manufacturers in Northeast Ohio for ease of product distribution to Western Ohio, Northern Indiana and Southern Michigan. Any Midwesterner knows salt is about as recession-proof as it gets.

In 2006, Howard Bates found himself the sole owner of a long-standing and growing business. That's not to say he works alone. Without dedicated and loyal employees, none of this would have been accomplished. His daughter, Abbie Logan, oversees the billing, collections and vehicle compliance. Brian Bates, Howard's son, joined the family business in 2000. With a degree in golf course management from Ohio State, Brian brought another idea into the family business, and Arms Turf was born.

Arms Turf is known to more than 800 golf courses and sports fields as the place to call when you need bunker sand, top dressing, or a specialty mix to build greens and tees. In fact, The Ohio State University knows them well. It was the Arms Turf division that provided the mix for the Buckeyes' practice football field.

So, just how does a trucking business make inroads to the wide open fields and courses? Well, it helps when one of your local customers is a multinational corporation. Best Sand, a division of Fairmount Santrol, also calls on Arms Trucking to deliver their products. In 2009, Arms purchased a small Pittsburgh-based company, DM Boyd, from Best Sand/Fairmount. It's at this location, and a couple of other regional plants, that Arms produces the special mixes that their customers in golf and athletics have come to rely on. How's that for vision?

Today, Arms Trucking owns approximately 100 trucks and staffs 130 full-time employees, about 90 of whom are drivers. The company's turnover is low because they know how to take care of their equipment and people.

"We own our trucks, have easy access to the product, and have drivers who are available."

- Stephanie Ronyak, Controller,
The Arms Trucking Company



Flexes Its Muscle

What's their secret to success?

"It's customer service," states Brian Bates. "I grew up knowing business calls were coming to our home if the office was closed. Even now, our customers call my cell phone anytime if they need something. And I will always answer."

While it's always nice when a live person answers the phone, all can probably agree that there's more to customer service than availability. Perhaps that's why 95 percent of their customers call on Arms repeatedly.

Arms Trucking is responsive and flexible. Need a product tomorrow? They have the trucks and the drivers. They might even own the product: mulch, dirt, salt. Need to move corn or beans? No problem. In fact, Arms Trucking might just be able to do it today.

"We own our trucks, have easy access to the product, and have drivers who are available," says controller Stephanie Ronyak. "This gives us flexibility that some of our competitors don't have."

Of course, a commitment to service does not end with customers. Howard Bates has been a mainstay in Geauga County communities for years. He served as a longtime member of the local Rotary, the Geauga County Fair Board, Geauga Growth Partnership and

Leadership Geauga. They are known to make generous livestock purchases at Geauga, Portage and Ashtabula County Fairs. Local 4-H, Boy Scouts and many other Geauga groups can count on Arms Trucking for support for their special events as well. As recently as this fall, Arms Trucking hauled water to Florida to lend a hand to those in need.

Back in the late '60s, Howard Bates was spending his summers away from Kent State University greasing trucks for a little company in Geauga County. Today, he and his corporate team run a business that has both grown and stayed true to its roots. They operate in seven states and manage over 400 acres in Geauga County, which includes their current office building, located at 14818 Mayfield Road, Huntsburg, purchased in 2006. Some might remember it as the Claridon Elementary School. Certainly, there are lessons that are still being taught there. 📖



Geauga Credit Union:



A Matter of People Helping

More than 15 years ago, Jon Clark moved his personal and business accounts from a large bank to Geauga Credit Union in Burton, Ohio.

"I own a small business, and I like to deal locally," he says. "I was fed up with big banking. Everything has become automated. If I need to borrow money, I want someone to know and evaluate who I am, not pure numbers."

Clark owns Jon Clark Electric, a small electrical contractor started by his father in 1951. He says the personal touch is important to his business and residential clients. It helps him do a better job. "There's more human touch with Geauga Credit Union," he says. "People know you and know you're a member. I know the tellers and talk to them. I feel like they have my back."



Lisa Briggs, CEO, Geauga Credit Union



People

BY PARIS WOLFE

Personal Touch is built into the credit union model. While both banks and credit unions offer similar services, credit unions are more of a community, says Lisa Briggs, who worked her way from part-time clerk to Chief Executive Officer in the past 33 years.

For example, banks have shareholders, and credit unions have members. A bank shareholder does not have to be a customer and vice versa. However, to use a credit union, a customer must become a member of the financial cooperative. Joining Geauga Credit Union requires a \$5 deposit. That deposit makes them eligible for interest-bearing savings accounts and gentle loan evaluation. If it sounds a bit like the Bedford Falls Building & Loan from the movie, "It's a Wonderful Life", it just might be.

Gegauga Credit Union started in 1956 as Geauga School Employee Credit Union, serving all employees of Geauga County schools. Through the years, it has grown and evolved. In the 1980s, membership expanded to select employee groups, like county and hospital employees. Then, in the 1990s, with a community charter, credit union services reached out to anyone who lived or worked in Geauga County, with a few exceptions.

Today, anyone who lives, works, worships or goes to school in Geauga, Trumbull, Portage and Ashtabula counties is eligible for membership. The institution has grown to more than 5,800 members and \$37 million in assets.

Members can borrow as little as \$250 and as much as \$500,000. These loans may serve as a credit line for a small business or be used to purchase anything from farm equipment to an SUV, and from a motorcycle to a horse and buggy.

Loan evaluation is both logical and personal. Briggs says the loan committee reviews credit score, credit report, consumer debt ratio and some personal information. They listen to applicants and may learn that an illness caused an unusual drop in a credit score, but the member is now solvent.

"We will do lending for folks with lower credit tiers," says Briggs. "And, when times are good, we tend to pay higher interest or charge lower interest. We are people helping people."

"When times are good, we tend to pay higher interest or charge lower interest. We are people helping people."

- Lisa Briggs, Chief Executive Officer, Geauga Credit Union

Another difference is that the Geauga Credit Union's nine-member governing board is comprised of all volunteers. They are chosen because they represent the local community, including the Amish community, and bring special expertise to the group.

Touchy-feely stuff aside, Geauga Credit Union is state-chartered, and each account is federally insured for up to \$250,000. To join, stop in the office across from Burton High School at 14499 N. Cheshire St. in Burton. 📍

GGP's 5th Annual HomeGrown Geauga Eclipses Prior Year Events

BY PAIGE ORVIS

The clouds parted, the sun shone, the gardens were in full bloom and the ASM International Geodesic dome provided a regal canopy over the festivities known as Geauga Growth Partnership's 5th Annual HomeGrown Geauga fundraising event. GGP offers special thanks to ASM International, which opened its dome, and its doors, to HomeGrown guests.

Geauga Growth Partnership (GGP) hosts this event each year as a means to raise funds to support GGP's continually expanding Youth Workforce training programs, which are reaching students in nearly every public, private and parochial school in Geauga County with the skills they need to enter the

workforce. The planning efforts paid off this year as fundraising returns surpassed prior events.

The HomeGrown Geauga event has always focused on all things Geauga County – the people, produce, products and places. This year is the first time the event was held at ASM International. And this year, four students who had participated in

and completed the GGP Internship program volunteered their time to help. These students are Deanna Swinerton, Abbey Brandeweide, Tim Cermak and Valerie Heintz.

Ten Geauga restaurants and chefs supported the event by donating their food and services for more than 300 guests. Each served a different menu offering to give guests a delicious and balanced selection. Featured eateries were Blazin' Bill's, Burntwood Tavern, Sirna's Pizzeria, Tom's Foolery, Warren's Spirited Kitchen, Welshfield Inn, Chef Jonathan Bennett featuring Adams Reserve Cheddar, Chefs Timothy Willis & Joe Matteucci of UH Geauga Medical Center Nutrition Services, and Chef William Davis of ICASI & Loretta Paganini School of Cooking, who brought three ICASI Scholarship recipients—Maggie Fuentes, Ola Shirko and Melissa Raber—to help serve and provide the desserts.

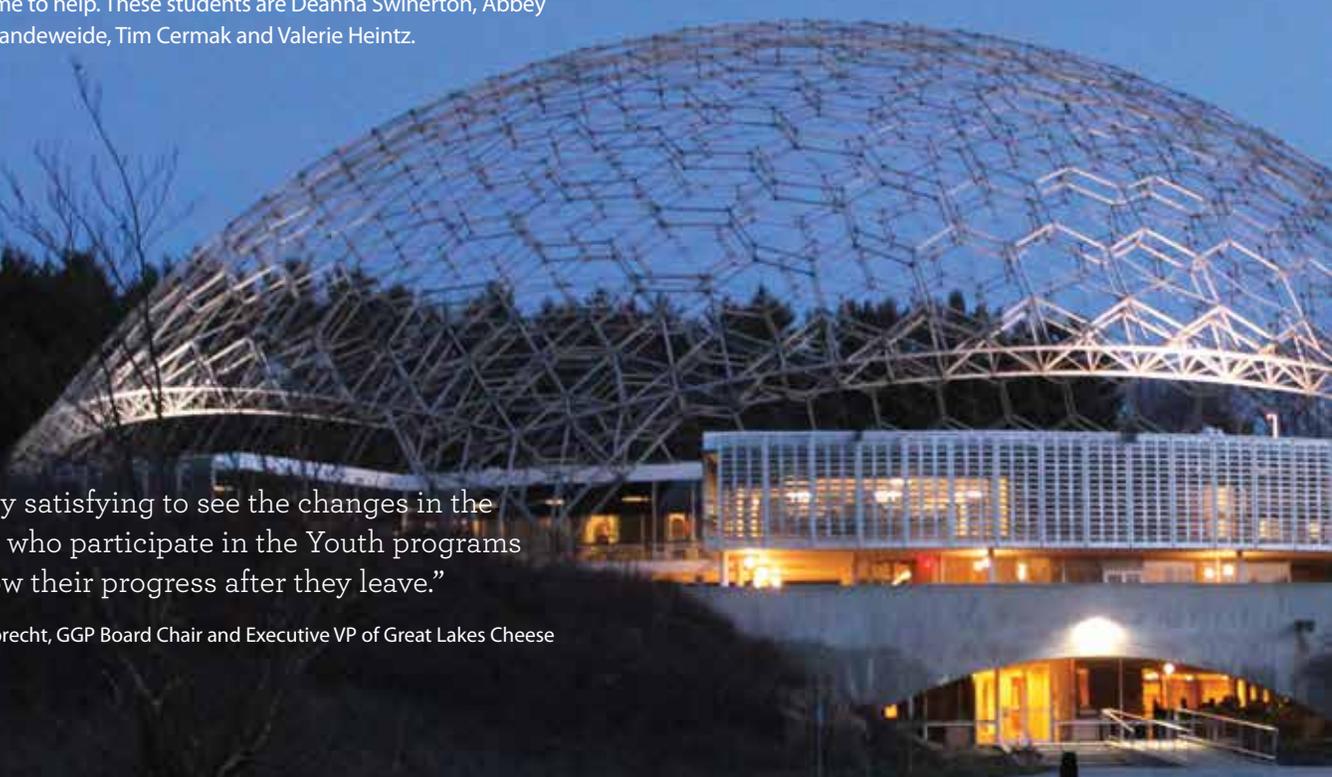
Guests were entertained by "homegrown" talent, such as the music of No Moss, Chesterland native and event painter Jacqueline DelBrocco, and Chardon's own Jasmine Dragons Aerial Acrobats. Chardon native Bill Ward of Bill Ward Productions acted as emcee for the evening. There were opportunities to experience some virtual reality technology, to have event photos taken by Chardon photographer Paul A. Newman, as well as a behind-the-scenes look into the ASM International facility. Guests were motivated to support GGP's cause by participating in various fundraising activities, such as a silent auction, Queen of Hearts, and raffle, using the latest cell phone donation technology by Qtogo.

"It was a festive evening and a great time was had by all. But more importantly, all gained a greater awareness of the GGP Youth Workforce Programs," Paige Hosier, Communications & Development Director, Geauga Growth Partnership, says.



"It is really satisfying to see the changes in the students who participate in the Youth programs and follow their progress after they leave."

- John Epprecht, GGP Board Chair and Executive VP of Great Lakes Cheese





Geauga Growth thanks all the sponsors who helped to make HomeGrown Geauga possible:

DIAMOND: Great Lakes Cheese

PLATINUM: ASM International; Richard & Christie Frenchie & The Frenchie Consulting Group; University Hospitals Geauga Medical Center

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SILVER: Arms Trucking Company; Company 119; Fairmount Santrol; Hexpol/Burton Rubber Processing; HR Strategies & Solutions; R43 Limited; Sheoga Hardwood Flooring & Paneling

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Geauga Growth Partnership, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) business-led organization dedicated to the retention, growth and attraction of jobs, investment and economic growth in Geauga County. For more information, visit www.geaugagrowthpartnership.com or call 440-564-1060.

John Epprecht, GGP Board Chair and Executive VP of Great Lakes Cheese, spoke about the youth programs during a brief presentation at the festivities. "These programs are making a big difference for the students and businesses involved. Kids in 8th grade are getting to visit three or more businesses and talk to employers. We are teaching high school students how to prepare their resumes and conduct themselves in an interview. It is really satisfying to see the changes in the students who participate in the youth programs, and follow their progress after they leave."

Bill Mahoney, managing director of ASM, spoke during the program of their organization's great success with the GGP High School Internship Program. He expressed his commitment to partnering with GGP and to the GGP Internship Program.

According to Tracy Jemison, President of Geauga Growth Partnership, funds raised at HomeGrown Geauga benefit GGP's Youth Education programs, developed with the mission to "Prepare Tomorrow's Workforce Today." These programs include Career Readiness events and Career Awareness training, Ignite Your Career event, and the High School Internship Program. The multi-faceted workforce training continuum was launched in 2012 by GGP founding director Frank Samuel, who was passionate about preparing young people for successful careers. Since the program's inception, when nine high school students were matched with sponsoring employers for summer internships, the programs have grown exponentially. In 2016 alone, more than 1,200 Geauga County students participated in GGP's youth workforce training programs. 



Sweet Grace Anna's
A cakery and bakery
that dabbles in imagination

BY PARIS WOLFE



When Ellen Harvischak was planning her wedding to Devin Bennett, the Youngstown native wanted the nicest wedding cake in town. But, the baker she wanted charged \$1,500 or so for a 150-person cake.

So, Ellen decided to bake her own. "I really got into it. I took classes," she recalls. And she practiced and practiced. Her vanilla raspberry wedding cake and chocolate groom's cake were hits; so much so that she found herself transitioning from high school French teacher to baker.

But, it wasn't a straightforward, frou-frou wedding cake evolution. Her husband, Devin, a web designer and graphic artist, crafted specialty cakes with the edible materials Ellen prepared. Their foray into unusual cakes started with a detailed dragon. It was such a hit, they continued dabbling in imaginative baking. Today, they own

Sweet Anna Grace's cakery and bakery in Chardon. The store is named after their daughter.

Not only do Northeast Ohio

cake fans appreciate their skills, judges from the Food Network's Cake Wars do as well. In August 2016, the couple won first place with a Transformers-themed cake. Then, on a return trip to Cake Wars—this time pitting winners against each other—they finished second.

And, it wasn't just about the decorating. The couple's creations had to taste great, too. They did. One of the judges couldn't stop eating their cake. The TV experience was a bucket-list moment long before they expected it to happen.

Various life experiences contributed to their success. Ellen had spent 1997 and 1998 in France as an au pair in France, where she was moved by fancy French bakery. Devin has a degree in Fine Arts from Denison University and serious skills with sculptural materials. At one point, he trained himself to become a special-effects artist.

While not professionally trained in the cake business, they applied accumulated skills to their first Youngstown storefront. After eight years, they received an offer they couldn't refuse so they sold, consulted their bucket list, and moved to Florida.



The weather was enticing, but they wanted their daughter (and themselves) to be closer to family. When they had an opportunity to move to Chardon, they jumped. Two years later, Ellen says, "I love Chardon. It has a small-town feel and that vintage, old town look. People know each other. They're patient and friendly."

People come from all over Northeast Ohio to enjoy Ellen's and Devin's creativity. Recently, Debbie Ernst-May drove 90 minutes to say "hi" and buy three cupcakes – cassata, better-than-sex and Oreo cookie.

Debbie remembers, "My first taste of her cake was at a Halloween party. I thought, 'This was the best cake I've ever had. Usually white cake is bland, but this was moist with vanilla flavor, and the frosting was buttery and creamy, not sugary or greasy. It was perfect. I thought, 'I need to find this baker.'"

And, that she did. When Ellen and Devin moved to Florida, Debbie couldn't find anything good enough, so she started experimenting with her own recipes. "When I found out Ellen was here, I knew I had to make it to the store. The cupcakes were really good."

Shoppers can usually discover several cupcake flavors available every day. Other pastries include delicate French macaroons sandwich cookies, tarts and more. Indulge your sweet tooth today. Stop by Sweet Grace Anna's and mention you heard about them in Geauga Business Magazine. Sweet Grace Anna's is located at 209 Center St, in Chardon.

"When I found out Ellen was here, I knew I had to make it to the store. The cupcakes were really good."

- Debbie Ernst-May, customer

MAYFIELD DRIVE-IN



If you blink, you might miss it. Set back from the road, looming large and quietly, is a patchwork of scaffolding behind a huge, white square. In the afternoon sun, it almost blends into the sky. Yet under summer nights, it's unmistakable. Chardon's Mayfield Road Drive-In towers bright in the dark, screening double-features for Geauga County families. This year was its 72nd summer.

Just beyond the box office, as a gravel driveway leads cars curling around the massive screen, a broad lot opens up before them. Bands of grass and stone alternate, peppered with olden radio poles, stretching to a forest's edge. An old playground has retreated into memory. Yet, the concession

stand, now much larger, remains anchored in the center. It is there, before showtime, that the seeds of a new playground can be heard.

"We're sort of a hidden gem up here. We're a family-owned business; the family owns a couple drive-ins, but here we like to focus on the families," says General Manager Michael Marxen. Visiting their website (funflick.com/mayfield), this becomes clear. Recently, Trunk or Treat on October 20 & 21 featured a trunk-decorating contest and costume contest in addition to the candy-hunting fun.



A Nostalgic Gem

BY AUSTIN BATTLES

MAYFIELD RD.

DRIVE-IN THEATRE

HOTEL TRANSYLVANIA
MONSTER SQUAD
ADDAMS FAMILY
TRUNK OR TREAT
FRI & SAT 6PM

Marxen emphasizes the variety of events the Mayfield Road Drive-In provides throughout the season. Kirtland Elementary was the first school to participate in a special screening catered to the students. This has become a popular treat for youngsters in the area. In addition to car shows and simple pleasures like Jeep Night, summer concerts take to the stage on select evenings. Arriving when the box office opens, guests are treated to local performers while the sun begins to set, wrapping up shortly before showtime. The website boasts a trove of photos taken on Family Fun Night, showcasing the pleasure of a night at the drive-in.

While drive-in theaters once numbered in the thousands, technological advancements have brought those figures down into the hundreds. Northeast Ohio is blessed with its small share, yet that is what makes Mayfield Road Drive-In even more special. A child's memories of the drive-in experience are lifelong, as many adults will attest. Marxen insists, "Our goal is to keep the place here, keep it functioning and operating for as long as we can. We don't want to see these things go by the wayside. We don't want to see them ever close up. Our intentions are to be here for the long haul!"

So be sure to take advantage of Geauga County's local gem. Park in the front for a special date, enjoy a spooky flick, or just load up the family for some affordable fun. And get ready for next season's surprises! 🍿

"WE'RE A FAMILY-OWNED BUSINESS; THE FAMILY OWNS A COUPLE DRIVE-INS, BUT HERE WE LIKE TO FOCUS ON THE FAMILIES."

- Michael Marxen, General Manager, Mayfield Drive-In



It's time to

Discover My Cleveland

BY MARGIE WILBER

Interested in attracting skilled employees to your company by showcasing the fantastic attractions in downtown Cleveland and Geauga County? Need assistance planning a fun, unforgettable evening for corporate visitors? Behind the eight ball in planning a worker recognition night or corporate anniversary? Look no further than Discover My Cleveland!

Discover My Cleveland can provide whatever level of assistance you need to achieve your objective – whether it is simply picking up out-of-town guests at the airport and making them feel special or planning a multi-day extravaganza, complete with transportation to all the highlights within downtown Cleveland, Geauga County and the surrounding areas.

Discover My Cleveland was founded by Lynde Vaspoli after identifying a gap in service for tour groups. Vaspoli and her husband recently moved to Minnesota and sold the company to Lynda Nemeth, former executive director for Destination Geauga.

“At the time Lynde created Discover My Cleveland, there was no one to connect the dots between bus tour operators, hotel concierges, conventioners, etcetera, who could recommend tours, transportation services, overnight accommodations – basically tie it all together,” explains Nemeth. “This company connects the dots and provides services much like a concierge service to private and corporate groups.”

Nemeth says taking ownership of Discover My Cleveland was the perfect next step for her career. “The work involves much of the same as what I was doing at Destination Geauga – working with tour groups, bus groups, etcetera. I sat on the board of Adventures of Northeast Ohio for 13 years. Adventures in Northeast Ohio is one of the strongest regional marketing associations in Ohio. The organization brings attractions, bed and breakfasts, campgrounds, convention and visitors bureaus, festivals and events, hotels, restaurants, tour promoters, tourist councils and other partners in the travel industry together to promote the region to visitors and locals alike.

“I also chaired committees with Ohio Travel Association and represented Northeast Ohio at travel showcases for group and leisure travel. These connections put me in contact with many of

the key people across Northeast Ohio in the tourism industry and had many positive impacts for Geauga County,” Nemeth explains.

“I see a lot of potential for growth and ways to expand Discover My Cleveland,” Nemeth states. Her first step was to find the right person to partner with. The enthusiastic businesswoman did not have to look far. Pegi Dickson had worked with Nemeth in the Destination Geauga office: Nemeth as Executive Director, and Dickson as Office Manager. Nemeth and Dickson became co-owners of Discover My Cleveland.

“Pegi and I share different skill sets. The things I hate to do, she is great at. On some days we seem to share a brain. We are great at bouncing ideas off one another, but in the respect of solid office tasks, we each have our talents and never the two shall cross. Most importantly, we are friends.”

“It is a perfect balance,” Dickson concurs. “We are not ego-driven. We are looking for the same result – serving our community.” Dickson has worked in the service industry for decades and is quite adept at social media.

“Selling invisible things is difficult. You must create value in people’s minds,” Dickson describes. Discover My Cleveland primarily works with groups or businesses and will write itineraries, step on a motor coach and provide narrative tours, and much more.

“We will do as little or as much as needed,” Nemeth describes. “From meet-and-greets at the airport to planning open nights of a conference. Every request is so different. For example, we are working on a project now for 2019 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Woodstock.”

Nemeth says, “Discover My Cleveland melds attractions throughout Northeast Ohio including Akron, Lake and Geauga Counties, and downtown Cleveland.”

(l-r) Pegi Dickson and Lynda Nemeth, co-owners of Discover My Cleveland



“Having contacts at all the major Northeast Ohio attractions, along with our years of experience in the tourism business, makes Discover My Cleveland a perfect fit.”

- Lynda Nemeth, Owner Discover My Cleveland

What can Discover My Cleveland do for your Geauga County company?

“Right now, Cleveland is the place to be!” exclaims Dickson. “Companies from all across the country are choosing Cleveland for their meetings and conventions. Our local businesses have amazing venues within an hour’s drive. Many don’t know what is available or where to begin. We do. We can take care of all the planning for any type of meeting or special event – booking a private concert at the Music Box Supper Club, arranging private executive coaches or limos, even providing a guide aboard to point out highlights in the area as it makes its way to Geauga County. If a company needs to ‘sell’ the area, Discover My Cleveland can do the selling. Consider Discover My Cleveland if you are planning a corporate retreat, a team-building activity, or special event.”

“What better way to attract middle or upper-management employees to your company than to show them the attributes of the area?” Nemeth asks. “We can pick up visitors at the airport, show them the highlights of downtown Cleveland and University Circle, and offer a guided tour through Geauga County. We can show the families why this is a great place to live.”

“Through our contacts, groups will enjoy a custom experience. We don’t want to box ourselves in. We love Geauga County, and we are excited to showcase this county as well as Cleveland. Discover My Cleveland can truly provide a city to country experience,” Nemeth adds. “Having contacts at all the major Northeast Ohio attractions, along with our years of experience in the tourism business, makes Discover My Cleveland a perfect fit.”

In addition to serving corporate out-of-town guests, special events and conventions, DMC also offers ‘pre-packed’ incentives perfect for any company that offer their employees perks for meeting their goals, or any other incentive-based programs. Packages range from \$50 event experiences to \$500 overnight packages. Order three or order 50 – they are great for holiday gifts and can be customized.

Discover My Cleveland is happy to work with individuals planning family reunions, weddings, school reunions and any group looking for a local adventure. They can plan a little, or plan it all. For more information, please call Lynda Nemeth or Pegi Dickson at 216.369.9399 or visit www.DiscoverMyCleveland.com. 

Bridges@Work

Helps Geauga Companies Improve Employees' Lives

BY MARGIE WILBER

The car breaks down, unexpected medical bills arrive, caring for an aging parent causes stress at home... a host of life events can dramatically impact the personal lives of your employees which, in return, can impact efficiency in the workplace. That is why Geauga Growth Partnership (GGP), United Way Services of Geauga County, The Cleveland Foundation, the Geauga Credit Union, and Catholic Charities Community Services of Geauga County have banded together to offer Bridges@Work for Geauga County-based employers. The program's goal is to help employers retain their workforce while improving the lives of employees. In the long run, companies involved with Bridges@Work should see increased retention rates, improved attendance, increased productivity, strengthened employee satisfaction and improved time management in the workplace.

Companies of any size are invited to include Bridges@Work as an employee benefit to help support their current workforce.

Kimm Leininger, Executive Director of United Way Services of Geauga County, learned about a similar program in 2014 through United Way of Chittenden County (Vermont). "I was immediately interested in a program that could provide access to community resources for employees at work," Leininger says.



At the time, Tracy Jemison, President of GGP, was serving as a Board Member of United Way and was eager to partner on a program that could support local businesses. "Geauga County companies just can't find skilled workers to fill all the needed jobs within their companies and are doing everything they can to retain their workforce," Jemison explains. The two joined with local partners and began to develop a program specific to the needs of Geauga County, with startup funding provided by The Cleveland Foundation-Lake/Geauga Fund and United Way.

With Bridges@Work, a resource coordinator from Catholic Charities is onsite at the participating company for a minimum of two hours every other week. This individual assists employees by connecting them to programs and services, including benefits available from the employer and community resources. Employees may talk with the resource coordinator on their lunch break or before/after their shift to alleviate the need to take time off from work to address a personal issue for their family.

The Bridges@Work program partners with the Geauga Credit Union to provide employees in good standing with up to \$1,000. Once approved, the loan is available within 24 hours and carries with it an 18% APR. The loan and interest are paid back in under a year through an employer's payroll deduction, along with an additional \$10 per month, deposited into a personal savings account. Once the loan is paid off, the full amount of deduction continues into the employee's established savings account, unless discontinued by the employee.

"The resource coordinator has helped more than 330 employees with any number of concerns such as transportation issues, substance abuse, eldercare and housing."

- Kimm Leininger, Executive Director, United Way Services of Geauga County

Because of this intervention, employees are better able to concentrate on their work and not stress about things hindering their focus or keeping them from coming to work.

"We launched the program in July 2015. Since then, the resource coordinator has helped more than 330 employees with any number of concerns such as transportation issues, substance abuse, eldercare and housing," says Leininger. Employees do not need to live in Geauga County to participate in Bridges@Work. The resource coordinator has access to 2-1-1, which has information on programs in more than 26 Ohio counties.

"As a needed resource, Geauga Credit Union has been central to making this program work," Jemison says. He explains it is not uncommon for company presidents or CEOs to help an employee experiencing financial hardships with a pay advance or small personal loan. While thoughtful and appreciated, these loans do not help employees in the long run to establish much-needed credit.

"We have some Bridges@Work employees who now have more than \$2,000 in personal savings," states Lisa Briggs, CEO of Geauga Credit Union. "At the end of the program's second year, approximately 94% of employees who have paid back a Bridges@Work loan have continued saving."

"Employers should not have to function as a bank. Thanks to Bridges@Work, Geauga Credit Union has already provided more than 210 loans since the program was implemented," reports Jemison.

As the loans were increasingly needed, it became clear that budgeting workshops would be of benefit. Through a grant received from the FINRA Investor Education Foundation, Bridges@Work was able to offer classes focused on personal finances.

"Everyone can use money management advice," Jemison states. "The Ohio State University offers classes onsite at Bridges@Work companies." The financial education class tackles top personal finance issues facing employees today and makes an immediate impact, such as:

- Understanding a credit report, scores, and how to maximize credit
- Making a plan to prioritize, reduce and eventually eliminate debt
- Developing spending and saving strategies for a brighter future

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Bridges@Work

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21

“We are bringing businesses together to the table to discuss issues they are struggling with—often many of the same issues.”

- Tracy Jemison, President, Geauga Growth Partnership

Leininger and Jemison agree the financial classes provided through Bridges@Work have been a great success. “I had our United Way team go through the class, and we all picked up valuable information,” Leininger admits. Approximately 105 individuals have attended a class hosted at their company. An evaluation of the classes indicated the majority of participants reported increased confidence about their ability to manage their personal finances and had a plan to set aside money for occasional expenses or emergencies.

According to Jemison, there are currently 11 Geauga County employers offering Bridges@Work and more than 2,000 employees have access to the program.

“Corporate CEOs, presidents, and human resource managers were dealing with issues from evictions and car repairs to interceding on their employees' behalf. Unfortunately, much of this was outside of their skill set and consumed valuable time. The feedback we have received about the entire program has been very positive,” Jemison states.

Below is the list of Bridges@Work companies:

Arms Trucking, Chardon

De Nora Tech, Chardon

Engineered Endeavors, Middlefield

Great Lakes Cheese, Troy

Hexpol Compounding - Burton Rubber Processing, Burton

Hexpol - Gold Key Processing, Middlefield

IntelliPak, Newbury

Kinetico, Newbury

Montville Plastics, Parkman

Troy Chemical, Burton

Waste Management, Chardon

John Epprecht, CEO/
President of Great Lakes
Cheese, emphasizes, “The
Bridges@Work program has
accomplished all that was

promised and much more for our employees. Our onsite coordinator has been able to assist our employees with a large scale of services from assisting with finding child care and elder care to home and car repairs, counseling and much more. We all have families and responsibilities outside of work. When the two collide, it can lead to high stress, anxiety, and health concerns. Bridges@Work opens resources for our employees that they otherwise would not encounter.”

“Bridges@Work demonstrates what a caring community we have in Geauga County,” Jemison adds. “We are bringing businesses together to the table to discuss issues they are struggling with—often many of the same issues.”

“We were thrilled to learn we were recently chosen as the host community for a Center of Excellence, a two-day conference organized by United Way Worldwide, and the FINRA Investor Education Foundation, which will highlight Bridges@Work,” Leininger says. “This year, United Ways from across the country will be coming to Geauga County to learn more about Bridges@Work and how we made it happen. They were impressed at how quickly we were able to get this program off the ground. United Way Services of Geauga County is here to work in the community and focus on the people who work and live here while striving to improve quality of life.”

Any Geauga County company can enroll in Bridges@Work. To enroll or learn more about the program, contact Tracy Jemison at 440.476.8486 or tjemison@geaugagrowth.com or Monica Bricker-Thompson, Community Impact Program Manager, United Way Services of Geauga County at 216.436.2044 or mthompson@uws.org. 



Go Beyond

BY TANYA WILLEY, DIVISION SALES DIRECTOR, BEYOND



Tired of being locked into lengthy contracts only to have your rates get jacked up after you have signed? Not to mention the hidden surcharge costs, PCI compliance fees, annual fees, fees for services you aren't using, leasing equipment, and not reaching a person who can help or cares when you call with questions or concerns from your current credit card processing company. Go Beyond.

If you are a business owner and accept credit cards as a form of payment, you might think all credit-card processing companies are the same. In most cases, you would be correct, but there is one exception—Beyond. Beyond is not just a credit-card processing company, but much more.

Our goal, as owners of Beyond, is to change this industry by providing a level of service you're excited about. Our partnership with you is earned one transaction at a time. That is why there is no early termination fee and no contract term. Our goal is to keep our customers completely satisfied.

BEYOND PROMISES

When we say we are honest and transparent, we back it up. We make our commitment to you up front, in plain English, and with full disclosure — not buried in fine print.

Our commitment to transparent, customer-first service is spelled out in the Beyond Promises: 10 principles setting out the company's commitment to fair treatment, plain language and full disclosure, with no hidden fees and no unexpected surcharges or arbitrary pricing changes.

BEYOND DIFFERENCE

Robert O. Carr, 71, founded Beyond in 2017. Carr is a prominent businessman and philanthropist, whose track record of success reflects his deep, personal belief that "doing the right thing" for customers and employees ultimately produces the best bottom-line results.

"Our business is to take care of your business—providing the tools you need to make your daily operations simple, streamlined, and secure. When you accept payments with us, you can expect industry-leading technology, transparent pricing, flexible contract terms and world-class service."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24



Give Something Back has prepaid more than 1,000 scholarships for students at partner colleges and universities across the country—an upfront investment of more than \$35 million.

Carr is not new to this industry; he is the founder of Heartland Payment Systems, where he spent 20 years before the company was sold in 2016 to Global Payments. Since then, Carr has focused on continuing his legacy through the Give Something Back Foundation, which he founded in 2003.

Beyond has made the non-profit, Give Something Back, a founding partner in this new venture.

Give Something Back is a public charity that provides scholarships and mentoring to low-income students so they successfully graduate from college in four years, debt-free. So far, Give Something Back has prepaid more than 1,000 scholarships for students at partner colleges and universities across the country—an upfront investment of more than \$35 million.

By investing in the minds and futures of smart, capable young people, Beyond is building a well-prepared workforce and contributing to a growing economy—which creates greater opportunities for our customers.

In July, I joined Robert O. Carr at Beyond. I have been in the merchant-services industry for more than 20 years, conducting business in every state throughout the country. I can tell you Beyond is very different from any other organization I have come across.

My whole life I have worked under the philosophy that if you keep your head down, work hard, and are loyal, you will be rewarded. Well... there is some truth to that, but I have learned over the years that it is not always true, and there is a lot more to it.

Over 80% of Americans report that they don't find fulfillment in their jobs. I was one of the majority who, after 20 years in the merchant services industry, found myself dreading the beginning of another work day.

In a culture of misaligned priorities, focusing on Money, Title, and Power was what got a person respect and what the company believed would offer fulfillment. For me, my experience and wisdom taught me that while income is important, connecting to one's purpose, and connecting to something bigger than myself was what I was missing.

I am a person who likes having the security of working for a company, while having the freedom of an entrepreneur. That is not easy to find. My many years in corporate America taught me that I want to be "a part of something," not just an employee.

I was fortunate to find Beyond, an employee-owned company: a company where 100 percent of the employees own the stock, and every employee is genuinely heard. Employees are treated with kindness and respect. Beyond believes in honesty, and transparency. They put the customer first as well as the employee-owners.

Not only am I doing what I enjoy most, but 51 percent of all proceeds will be sending underprivileged kids to college. It makes me feel good to know that I am a part of giving back.

We offer a FREE competitive analysis and proposal on your credit card processing and any of our other services, some of which are listed here. You are not required to process your credit cards with us to use these other services; however, we do suggest it.

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Whether you are looking to expand, grow your business, or cover overhead, we provide loans as low as 10 percent that can be funded in a few days. Term lengths fit your business needs, and there are no early payment penalties.

PAYROLL & HR SERVICES

Beyond provides additional services such as Payroll, Human Resources, Time and Attendance, Recruiting & Onboarding, Benefits as well as Reporting.

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COMING SOON

Soon we will start offering Fundraising software and solutions for non-profits.

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While you grow your business, you can feel good about expanding the opportunities of young people at the same time—at no additional cost to you.

Send a copy of your current credit card processing statement for a free competitive analysis and proposal.

For more information on Beyond and how we can help your business thrive, please contact Tanya Willey, Division Sales Director, at 585.755.3579 or email: Tanya.Willey@getbeyond.com.



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The opening of the former Case Western Reserve University observatory and its massive telescope, housed in Observatory Park, smashed Geauga Park District attendance records for any park opening in its 56-year history.

Nassau Astronomical Station was built in 1957 by Case Western Reserve University for visual study of the heavens through the '80s. From 1994 to 2005, Geauga Park District teamed with CWRU to offer public Astronomy Nights there, using its tremendous 36" Cassegrain telescope built by the famous Warner & Swasey Company of Cleveland.

Time for Night Sky Viewing

By Sandy Ward

CWRU discontinued use of the station and sold the facility to the Park District in 2008. Connected property was dedicated as Observatory Park, a Silver Tier International Dark Sky Park, in 2011.

Since its initial sale, Nassau's doors only opened for very rare naturalist-guided tours.

Now fast forward to 2017, when a decade of dreams and fundraising efforts finally made it possible to restore the facility and its telescope to their former glory.

Regularly open to the public at last, the Nassau station is now renovated for wheelchair accessibility, restrooms and appropriate parking, and spruced up with museum features, interpretive signage and

displays, and retro furniture in its original living quarters. Plus, most importantly, the historic Warner & Swasey telescope is once again operational and available for public viewing during new incarnations of those much-celebrated Astronomy Nights — when the weather cooperates, of course.

"Nassau Astronomical Station's telescope is one of the largest, public viewing scopes in the state of Ohio," said John Oros, executive director of Geauga Park District. "We are excited to provide an opportunity to experience astronomy and the night skies to residents now and for years to come".

The Nassau station's reopening was highly anticipated in the community, especially by those with connections to its rich history. Amateur astronomers of all ages gathered to be among the first to see and celebrate, and what a celebration it was.

Free activities for more than 2,500 in attendance included shuttles from the

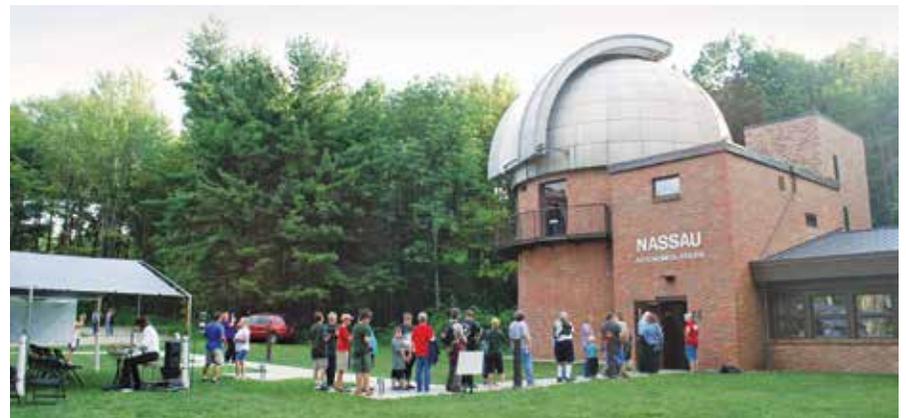
main Observatory Park campus to tour the Nassau station, music and entertainment, trail rides, face painting, make-n-take craft projects, games, costumed characters, hot dog dinners and more, plus a free outdoor movie at dark, attended by a record 700+ moviegoers.

The mission of Geauga Park District is to preserve, conserve and protect the natural features of Geauga County and to provide outdoor recreational experiences to our residents of every age, every ability and at all times of the year. Park District staff were thrilled to be part of this historic reopening, and feel honored that Observatory Park has become such a regional destination.

For information about scheduled night sky viewings and other programming at Nassau Astronomical Station, please visit www.geaugaparkdistrict.org. Geauga Park District is also on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.



Photo by Ray Richter



www.geaugaparkdistrict.org

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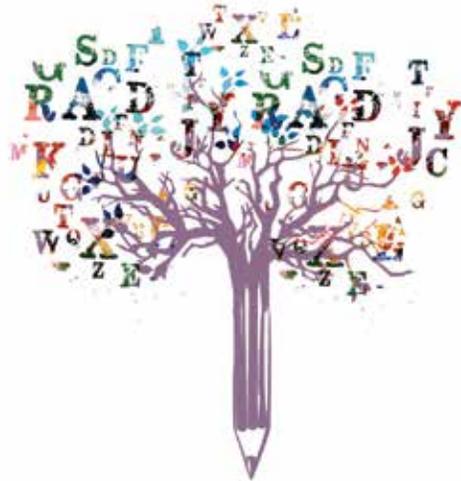
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