

Calendar of Events

September 4

Football Friday Block Party
100 block of Michigan St. near the College Football Hall of Fame
6:00–10:00 p.m.

First Fridays

Downtown South Bend businesses and venues
dtsbfirstfridays.com

September 4

Nathan Gunn, Opera Concert
DeBartolo Performing Arts Center
Leighton Concert Hall
8:00 p.m.

September 8

Creating a Safe Community
Safety Seminar with SBPD and NDSP
Notre Dame Downtown
217 S. Michigan
6:00 p.m.

September 13

Rosanne Cash Music Concert
DeBartolo Performing Arts Center
Leighton Concert Hall
2:00 p.m.

September 18

Football Friday Block Party
100 block of Michigan St. near the College Football Hall of Fame
6:00–10:00 p.m.
dtsbfootballparty.com

September 19

12th Annual KeyBank Salmon Chase Races
Race begins at College Football Hall of Fame
7:30 a.m.
salmonchase.org

September 25

Tokyo String Quartet
DeBartolo Performing Arts Center
Leighton Concert Hall
7:00 p.m.

September 26

Art Beat 2009
Downtown South Bend
10:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m.
artbeatsouthbend.org

September 28

Senior Citizen Lunch & Learn Lecture Series
Robinson Community Learning Center
921 N. Eddy St.
11:30 a.m.
RSVP 574-631-3249

October 2

First Fridays
Downtown South Bend businesses and venues
dtsbfirstfridays.com

October 2

2009 Fischhoff Competition Grand Prize Winner
DeBartolo Performing Arts Center
Leighton Concert Hall
8:00 p.m.

October 13

Creating a Safe Community
Safety Seminar with SBPD and NDSP
Notre Dame Downtown
217 S. Michigan
6:00 p.m.

Through January 31, 2010

Mishawaka at 175
Historical display for Mishawaka's 175th anniversary
Center for History
808 W. Washington, South Bend

To submit an upcoming community event for the calendar, please send us an email at commrel@nd.edu. The deadline for the next issue is September 21.



Business students lend expertise to local business owners

By Nancy P. Johnson

Scott Kelsey loves running his used bike shop and wants to sell bicycles to the end of his days. In the meantime, it's great to have some help to boost the business side.

A team of students from a class at the Notre Dame's Mendoza College of Business lent a hand to Kelsey and other small business owners. During the spring semester, the Microventuring class worked with seven local small business owners to help them run their ventures more efficiently and profitably.

The class, in its third year, was offered through the Gigot Center for Entrepreneurial Studies. The class gave students a live consulting opportunity; they had to be professional and learn about the business and its place within the community. The students also developed a relationship with the business owner, demonstrating a willingness to listen and learn, thereby providing more thoughtful, measured assistance, said social/microventuring programs manager Melissa Paulsen. There was also the service aspect: Their classroom skills provided a benefit to someone who couldn't necessarily afford them.

Last autumn, Paulsen and adjunct professor Frank Belatti looked for participants by networking in the community and meeting with agencies such as Downtown South Bend. Criteria for the participants included passion about the business and its success, operational experience with a desire to stabilize and grow, work experience but no business training at the university level, inability to afford market-rate consulting assistance, and location in an economically distressed neighborhood.

Students interviewed the entrepreneurs and simultaneously learned about concerns in the community. In the classroom, students learned the basics of running a small business. Then teams consisting of four students forged relationships with one of the entrepreneurs, identifying problem areas such as budgeting, inventory, marketing, or accounting. Together, the students and the business owner created a plan that was implemented during the spring semester.

Those strategies worked for Kelsey and his wife, Hannah. They are owners of The

Avenue Bicycle Station in South Bend, which they've run for about a year. Neither of them have any formal business training.

The students helped the Kelseys conduct their first-ever inventory of bicycles and parts and created a system so that each product was numbered. By looking up that number in a spreadsheet—also created by the students—anyone working in the shop can see the correct sales price, as well as what new parts or labor went into the bicycle. The students also helped the Kelseys determine a way to price each product to ensure a profit.

"Now, anyone working in the shop can look it up and tell the customer we put on new tires and new grips. This helps us know the bottom line," Kelsey said.

The bike shop team also helped create a monthly budget, a comprehensive business plan, and a long-range plan. They also wanted to increase sales: Ideas included holding a grand opening in the spring to draw customers to the store, a basic Web

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presence, and possibly an eBay store. "They have a lot of unique items, like an antique tandem bike, that they could advertise online. This would open a new stream of revenue to them," said Brian Eskew, a finance major.

Kelsey is very pleased with the help in organization, especially the newly inventoried products. "We hope it will help us be successful selling bikes, to be a successful business. I don't plan to do anything else," he said.

Another business owner is Heather Yarbrough, owner of the Chicory Café in South Bend. The New Orleans-themed coffee house is in its third year. Sales aren't what she would like, and the economy isn't



helping. "Cash flow is very tight right now, so to have help from the students who are focusing on things like marketing and business is priceless," she said.

Yarbrough's team studied her operation, compared it with her competitors, and wrote an assessment of her needs. They planned to increase sales with a strategy "to build her brand as a gourmet coffee café and to align the entire operation behind her brand image," said Chris Terschluse, a business major.

"I think the students will be able to give an unbiased, fresh perspective and probably discover ways to improve the business that I may have been blind to, since I'm so close to it and possibly too focused on the day-to-day to look at the overall picture," Yarbrough said in the beginning stages of the project.

Other participating businesses include Commercial Cleaning Plus, KJ's Main Cafe, CircaArts, and Ehninger Florist, all in South Bend, and the Red Purl knitting shop in neighboring Niles, Mich.

"We have an expectation that students do something important and worthwhile for the business," said Paulsen. "One of the goals is for the students to benefit the business owner in a specific, measurable way, like showing them how to implement and use accounting software or interpreting financial statements and determining the drivers of the business. They also might help the business owner with a major decision, like whether to maintain a storefront or continue in another service capacity only, such as a Web presence."

The students were enthusiastic about applying what they learned in the classroom to a real-world situation. "It is us working directly with the entrepreneurs. We are really getting into the nitty-gritty of keeping a business running day to day," said Eskew.