

ENTERING THE ENTREPRENEURIAL WORLD

Brewing Up a New Start

Sarah and Andy Hassler are forging their own path to small business ownership with a few twists and turns along the way.

The couple lives on the near north side of Indianapolis with their children and operates a small business out of their home – or more specifically in their backyard – roasting coffee beans. Blue Mind Roasting offers single origin coffees from different regions of the world, including Africa, Central America and South America.

The two started dating during high school in Crawfordsville. Andy attended Butler University and Sarah went to Anderson University. But neither studied business nor planned to start their own company.

“My husband actually has a Ph.D. in Biblical studies,” Sarah says. “When he finished his studies, he decided he didn’t really want to go that route. He was doing some research for people when he decided he wanted to take another path.”

Sarah, a trained social worker, had been employed at an adoption agency. When their children were all old enough for school, she wanted to head back to work full time.

“Andy loves coffee and had become a home roaster,” Sarah notes. “I love to be artistic and work with people. We thought we could do a new venture together. He started roasting coffee and selling it to friends and family to see if it would be a viable business. In 2016, we officially launched Blue Mind Roasting.”

They feel that growing up in Indiana instilled a positive work ethic into their lives.

“We’ve had to figure it out on our own, one step at a time,” she adds. “Our vision is to offer quality specialty coffee to the Indy market. We source our beans from experts who search out the best specifically green coffee available and pay a fair price for it.”

Overall, the company is steadily growing and expanding organically through relationship building within the coffee community.

“We love meeting other roasters and shop owners,” Sarah shares. “Those are great relationships to have. We think Indianapolis is a special place, and we are excited to be a part of its burgeoning coffee culture.”

Blue Mind Roasting produces roast light to medium, with the intent to highlight the coffee’s natural origin flavor.

“We’ve had great, positive feedback,” Sarah says. “It’s been fun. We have a couple handfuls of wholesale accounts and we provide the coffee to a shop in Colorado and one in Illinois. We also have products in several Indiana shops.”



The name Blue Mind Roasting comes from a song about getting lost in the “blue deep” of reflection: “Remember when you were only a child ... start to see with your blue mind ... don’t be afraid of what you find.”

RESOURCE: Sarah Hassler, Blue Mind Roasting, at www.bluemindroasting.com

Program Provides Boost to Latinos

Networking and creating connections in a community are imperative when starting a new enterprise.

The Goshen College Latino Entrepreneurship Initiative (LEI) is providing exactly that to Latino entrepreneurs throughout Elkhart County. The program is administered by Rocio Diaz, director of community engagement and adult outreach, and Gilberto Pérez, vice president for student life and dean of students.

“The Mexican Consulate in Chicago gave us funds to help the Latino community,” Diaz says. “We did a collaboration with the Goshen and Elkhart chambers and came up with eight or nine different topics that would be helpful for new business owners.”

Pérez explains that a taskforce was created to help plan and schedule a series of workshops.

“We had about 10 business owners come together to identify topics that would be most useful to Latino entrepreneurs,” he shares. “We set up workshops on topics like how to budget, pay your taxes and necessary paperwork. Each week we had 22 to 24 people participate.”

Diaz notes the key to participation was offering the workshops in Spanish.

“Hearing the presentation in the native language was very helpful,” she asserts. “We’d done presentations with the chambers before, but I was there to translate. No matter how many times you ask if anyone has questions, they are going to wait until after the presentation to come up and ask me questions after.”

She says hearing the workshop in Spanish put the participants at ease and they opened up more to the speakers.

“We now have English as a Second Language courses offered for adults in the community,” Diaz adds. “It’s important for a business owner to learn English as well. If they learn English, they can serve the whole community.”

Francisco Zamarripa, owner of Transportes del Norte, an auto transportation business, relates that he was encouraged by a friend to participate. He says hearing from other Latino

employers is very helpful.

“I remember how a person talked about how he failed several times in his business. That helped me not to make the same mistakes and know what I should do,” he notes. “I learned how to apply for a loan. I wish there were more workshops to continue learning from other people.”

Maribel Gutiérrez leads K-Lo Bazar in Elkhart, a small business that focuses on special event planning. She initially had doubts about how much the program would help her business.

“I received new information that I didn’t know and met new people,” she relays in Spanish. “Sometimes we think that we will not succeed. In this workshop, the facilitators and the attendees motivated us (to believe) that we can do it!”

“Prior to their work with the initiative,”



The Goshen College Latino Entrepreneurship Initiative has opened the doors for members of the Latino community to participate in their local chambers of commerce.

Pérez notes, “these owners had very little interaction with the chambers of commerce. If we are looking to integrate these

entrepreneurs into the fiber of our society, we have to be intentional about creating pathways for them to get involved.”

RESOURCES: Rocío Diaz and Gilberto Pérez, Goshen College, at www.goshen.edu

Growing New Sports Businesses

So many sports “firsts” have taken place in Indiana.

The first baseball game in a professional league occurred May 4, 1871, in Fort Wayne and, more famously, the first long-distance auto race in the U.S. was held May 30, 1911, at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. Now, the first sports-centric business accelerator is wrapping up its inaugural cohort in Indianapolis.

“We run accelerators around the world. Some are based on cities and then we have specialized (programs) like a music accelerator in L.A.,” says Jordan Fliegel, managing director for the Techstars Sports Accelerator Powered by Indy.

“This was the first sports accelerator we’ve done, and it was important we do it in Indianapolis, a home for sports tech. The sports heritage and the governing bodies that are here, including the NCAA, makes Indy unique for a city of its size. We use that to attract young companies to come here and hopefully want to stay here.”

Techstars Sports Accelerator Powered by Indy, first announced in January, is made possible through founding partners Pacers Sports & Entertainment, Next Level Fund, 50 South Capital, NCAA and Indiana Sports Corp, and supporting partners the Indianapolis Colts, NTT IndyCar Series and the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. Many of the volunteers and mentors came from these companies to share their experiences with the participants.

During each accelerator, Techstars invests \$120,000 into 10



Jordan Fliegel previously served as co-CEO of DRAFT.com, a fantasy sports company headquartered in New York that later sold for \$48 million.

companies and puts them through an intense 13-week program to jumpstart their business. There are 125 mentors volunteering their time to help these entrepreneurs and companies grow during their time in Indiana. The start-ups participating in this inaugural sports accelerator, wrapping up in early September, are from eight different U.S. cities and one in Moscow, Russia. None are from Indiana.

Techstars is renting space in downtown Indianapolis for three months and helping the start-ups with every facet of their business – from raising capital to hiring staff and much more, Fliegel notes.

He first experienced Techstars as a client. A former professional basketball player and longtime private coach, Fliegel co-founded CoachUp with his partner, an experienced sailing instructor and software engineer.

“When I founded CoachUp, I was a 25-year-old first-time CEO,” Fliegel writes in a blog. “Everything was new, and everything was hard. ... I know that without Techstars – the program itself, its leadership, and its network of founders, angels, and mentors – we might not have made it off the ground.”

The program does not just end after the 90 days. Techstars alumni have access to the organization’s resources for life. Fliegel says the entrepreneurs have support and resources from more than 10,000 mentors, a like number of investors, 1,600 alumni companies and more than 200 staff members.

RESOURCE: Jordan Fliegel, Techstars Sports Accelerator Powered by Indy, at www.techstars.com