



# **Making Coffee While Making A Difference**



As a member-owned, not-for-profit cooperative, Limestone Federal Credit Union is committed to our members. We strive to uphold our fundamental responsibility to actively serve people within our field of membership and, as appropriate, the communities they live in. Our story is of a small credit union located in Schoolcraft County.

As is the case in much of rural America; Schoolcraft County has a history of slow economic growth, high unemployment rates, declining population, and continuous outflow of our youth. As a cooperative located in rural America, we continually seek ways to act in accordance with the seven cooperative principles, specifically "Concern for Community". This model was created specifically to encourage students to consider small business ownership as an option for their future. In turn creating sustainable business development in our area.

*Through youth programs, education, and involvement Limestone FCU has found a unique way to engage young people while providing them with valuable educational tools, a live classroom, and an entrepreneurial spirit.*

# *In October of 2015*

we wrote a grant application outlining an idea of a student operated small business and were subsequently awarded a \$20,000 Community Reinvestment Grant from the Michigan Credit Union Foundation. With \$20,000 in hand and a vacant building, Limestone Federal Credit Union staff was excited to get started. They presented the idea of a student operated small business to Manistique Area Schools administrative and teaching staff who quickly jumped on board to support the project. Meetings of interested students were held and over the next several months thus The Grind Coffee House was born.

This venture embodies the community spirit of Schoolcraft County. Donations of volunteer hours as well as generous contributions of both in kind and monetary donations were necessary to make this dream a reality. After two years of work, in 2017, through an arrangement with Manistique Area Schools, students enrolled in work-based learning classes to work at the coffee shop during designated hours of the school day.

This program was designed to ensure students were set up for success. Enrollment in this work study program required students to meet certain prerequisites, including course requirements, GPA, strong attendance records, and commitment to volunteer hours.



# Before



The location of the coffee house had been predetermined as a vacant building owned by LFCU and was in close proximity to both LFCU and the high school. The building was in a state of disrepair and required substantial remodeling. This remodeling work was facilitated by the Building Trades and CAD (Computer-Aided Design) classes.

# After



These students, along with their instructors, met with the building inspector, local contractors, and engineers. Together they reviewed building codes, handled all of the demolition, installed new headers to support the updated design, worked with contractors to reconstruct, and generated a set of plans showing the final expected layout of the Coffee House. The Accounting and Practical Math classes worked on projected financial statements, pricing, researched equipment needs, cost of goods, profit margins, and projected sales.

# Today,

the coffee shop is governed by UPward Community Youth Inc., a non-profit organization created to support this, and future, student entrepreneurial projects. Daily operations are supervised by Limestone FCU's student education coordinator and Manistique Area Schools teacher liaison, who provide onsite training, serve as advisors to the students and provide guidance and direction to student entrepreneurs.

After retaining income necessary to ensure future viability, revenues are distributed through UPward Community Youth, Inc. to area schools for educational resources, equipment, classroom educational materials, technology resources, financial education materials, school improvements, or additional courses.

*Since 2017, The Grind Coffee House has donated \$13,621 to area educators through education awards.*

This project has surpassed initial expectations and is beyond the startup risk period. The Grind has been established in the community as a thriving small business, which has brought us to the decision to sell this business as a turn-key opportunity for an entrepreneur who can take the business to the next level. In its current form, it has outgrown the business model of operating as student-run.

We believe selling to an owner/operator will allow continued growth while further developing the business to meet its full potential. The sale, once complete, will leave Upward Community Youth, Inc with a substantial amount of seed money which will be allocated to recreate this project through another small business venture.

While almost six years in the making, this venture has paved the way for a business incubator that allows students to gain knowledge of small business startup, daily operations, and ultimately a sale, while increasing business in our community as a whole.

<b>INCOME/EXPENSE</b>	<b>AUG 2021</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>
Gross Sales	\$ 113,392.27	\$116,749.70	\$ 104,064.18	\$ 84,312.72
Cost of Goods	\$ 48,420.86	\$ 52,812.71	\$ 46,579.91	\$ 36,922.57
Operating Expenses	\$ 48,912.48	\$ 52,271.06	\$ 44,764.81	\$ 33,345.69
Net Profit	\$ 16,058.93	\$ 11,665.93	\$ 12,719.46	\$ 14,044.46

## JENNIFER WATSON

*CEO of Limestone FCU & Board Chair of Upward Community Youth, Inc.*

This project has been a true source of pride for all involved. From day one, Manistique Area Schools Students & Staff, Limestone FCU, the Michigan Credit Union Foundation, and many local business leaders, community members, and private donors saw the potential in this project. Time and time again I have found myself reveling in the success generated by giving students the opportunity to participate in this live classroom.



This project was truly one of those “reach for the stars” moments. The model, a small nonprofit, open to the public operated by students was a pipedream that has exceeded any initial projections. I hope you enjoy the student, board, staff, and customer testimonials; these statements show the true impact of this project thus far. I personally want to thank the past and present staff of Limestone Federal Credit Union, their passion for this project has been unwavering, without each and every one of them we would not have been successful.

As we embark on our next venture, we hope you will see the value in your contributions and continue to support the idea of student entrepreneurs.

Manistique Area Schools would also like to thank the Limestone FCU, community, parents, and students for their support and work on this project. This project has benefited our students who worked to make this project a reality. With the support of everyone involved, we facilitated a real-world experience of a business starting from a thought. This type of experience stays with those students, and they learn something most students do not learn until they are out of school! Again, thank you to all of you who supported this project and assisted Manistique Area Schools students.

## HOWARD PARMENTIER

MANISTIQUE AREA SCHOOLS SUPERINTENDENT

It's been one of the greatest honors of my life to watch The Grind grow into what it is today. What the students take away is so much more than simply how to make a latte. It's when a student understands the importance of hospitality, responsible financial decisions, and building relationships with community members.

It's about giving students the opportunity to make mistakes and thus learn how to problem-solve and make decisions, providing a solid foundation upon which they can go out into the world confident, as leaders and critical thinkers. And most importantly, it's showing them the difference they are making in other people's lives and the lasting impression of what it means to volunteer and give back.

## ALYCIA KAISER

STUDENT EDUCATION COORDINATOR



## EMMALYN BRAUN

*Grind Student and Employee*

In August of 2018, I applied to The Grind for my first high school job, a barista. I began shortly after being hired and learned the basic skills of working a POS system, using quality customer service, and, of course, making drinks. Quickly, I learned that The Grind was an excellent place for me to be. I looked forward to my shifts, was surrounded by such a positive group of people, and got to interact with the community in a different way. As time passed, I became more involved in small ways such as taking pictures for marketing, picking up every shift that I could, and going out of my way to do small chores and favors. In August of 2020, two years after I first became a barista, I was offered the opportunity to become the Assistant Manager. In this role, I would pick up extra responsibilities and get a sort of behind-the-scenes experience of running a small business. I took the position and the next school year quickly approached. As a dual-enrolled student, I had online classes for the first three hours of the day and did not have to attend school. Because I was Assistant Manager, I began to work 8-11 AM every weekday.

In these hours, I was able to teach and oversee the students that were taking the class as well as help create their marketing assignments on top of my other responsibilities. I continued this through the rest of the school year and was supposed to eventually become a manager throughout the summer until unfortunately, a personal emergency intervened. Either way, I still learned valuable skills that the position would need. Before I became involved in The Grind, I had no clue as to what I wanted to do with my future. Through my experiences at The Grind, though, I learned that I was passionate about pursuing a career in the field of business. As I learned what I wanted to do with my future, I also learned key skills that gave me an extraordinary foundation of information to start with. At The Grind and through

my positions, I learned skills along the lines of customer relations, target markets and marketing skills, finances, management, sales, and, overall, the runnings of a small business. Since I was given these opportunities through The Grind, I was inspired to and able to apply to a rigorous school, The Ross School of Business at The University of Michigan. To apply at the school, I was required to create a portfolio including a business plan and business artifact, both of which I personally related to my education from The Grind. My experiences gave me a huge footing to eventually get accepted and continue my education and journey into the business field.

Not only did The Grind give me incredible experience to apply and be accepted into this business school, but it also is even helping me on my business assignments. One of my main assignments is a semester-long assignment called the BizCafe simulation. The main idea of this assignment is to run a small coffee shop through a simulation. Each week, each group makes decisions regarding coffee bean purchases, perishable item purchases, furniture, equipment, advertising, wages, and so on. Each week we get feedback on revenue, profits, satisfaction, sales, etc. based on our last decisions. Also each week there is a “special decision” to be made based on certain incidents such as customer service incidents or supply/demand incidents. My experiences at The Grind give me a major step ahead in this assignment. Not only that, I think the example of how this assignment is showing up in a rigorous business school such as Ross shows how valuable the education that The Grind provides is. Overall, I couldn’t imagine where I’d be without the opportunities and experiences that The Grind has given me. It provided such a unique experience as a high school student and quite an incredible foundation for the start of my education and career in the business field.

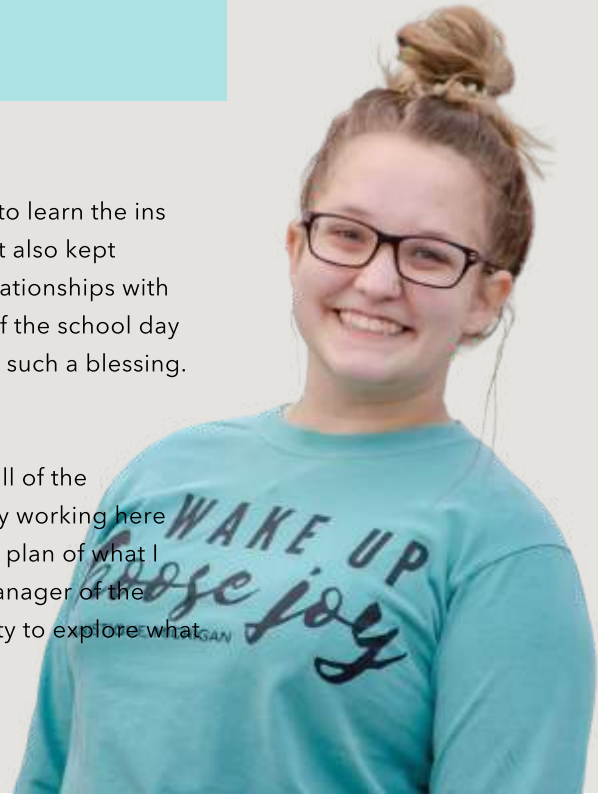


## ALEXIS HUBBLE

*Grind Student and Employee*

In 2019, I took the Grind as a work-based learning class. During the class we got to learn the ins and outs of running a small business. Not only did I learn how to make drinks, but also kept inventory, maintained a sanitary work environment, operate POS system, built relationships with the community, and kept a positive environment with the staff. My favorite time of the school day was when I was at the Grind. Being able to connect with the community has been such a blessing. Their love and support is what keeps us going.

After I graduated at 2019, I got a job at the Grind as a barista. I continued to do all of the responsibilities that I was doing as a student, plus added in a few more. I was only working here part-time because I was going to college at Bay College in Escanaba. My original plan of what I thought I wanted to do didn't work out. Now, I have accepted the job as Store Manager of the Grind. I am very excited to continue working at the Grind and take the opportunity to explore what my future holds.



What a privilege it has been to serve on the board of The Grind! The hard work and collaboration of our M.H.S. students has paid off, resulting in a resoundingly successful business model that exceeded expectations. I can't wait to see what comes next!

## CINDY PAWLEY

UPWARD COMMUNITY YOUTH BOARD MEMBER

I specifically remember the first day we met with the students to propose a small business venture where the energy in the room was remarkable. Watching the project evolve to a functioning small business has been so rewarding. We are very grateful for the hard work and dedication of our community, volunteers, students, and employees who made this vision possible.

## ALYSSA SWANSON

COO OF LFCU & UPWARD COMMUNITY YOUTH BOARD SECRETARY

I am so proud of the students who designed, launched, and ran The Grind from the very beginning to today. I am proud that The Grind was able to not only provide a learning platform for the students, but it was able to return monies to the school systems and further education on a broader front. I am very much looking forward to partnering with LFCU and MAS and the students to create "what's next"!

## ALAN BARR

UPWARD COMMUNITY YOUTH BOARD MEMBER

# *In closing, we want to thank you.*

Thank you for your support and generous donations to this project. Your contributions, no matter how large or small, will continue to pay dividends through students who have participated in this venture as well as through future projects.

At Limestone FCU we strive to be the best in our industry, regardless of our size or location, recognizing that if we don't serve our members, community, and youth, someone else will. By partnering with community members, such as yourself, to offer unconventional financial education to youth, we are securing our community's future success for many generations to come.

We are so proud of all who participated in this project. The collaborative efforts of all involved are an admirable example of what can be done when a community comes together and wholeheartedly supports a project. On any given day this once dilapidated building is filled with activity. What started with one person, one idea, and one connection ended with an entire community that is proud of their individual and collective contributions to this endeavor.

