

SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION

The Family Business

It has been said many times that Bloomington is a great place to raise a family. It also happens to be a great place to grow a family business. Herein are the stories of seven such successful family businesses.

Photos by Martin Boling

VARIETY STORE.



Rich Raake

Räke Cabinet & Countertop Solutions Robert, Margaret, and Rich Raake, owners

When the Raake family purchased Laminated Tops in 1997, the countertop company—founded in 1969—complemented Robert's experience in industrial arts, a subject that he both studied and taught. Over time, and as the business grew, the family's roles within the company became evident. The couple's son, Rich, left his job with Pulte Homes to join the business soon after graduating from Purdue University. And with Robert reluctant to take on another leadership role after teaching and running a business for 18 years, Rich stepped up to manage the company while Margaret handled the bookkeeping.

As demand grew, so did the company's offerings and, in 2003, the Raakes added hard surfaces, cabinets, hardware, millwork, and more to their product line. Because the business was no longer served appropriately by the name it had held since its 1969 founding, the Raakes rebranded the company in 2008, and Räke Cabinet & Countertop Solutions was born.

Today, Räke continues to grow. With a 30-person staff and 23,000 square feet of combined showroom and fabrication space, Räke's regional projects include clients in health care, auto sales, and hospitality. Annual sales, which were \$800,000 in 1997, are expected to surpass \$4 million this year. "It's an even better place now," Rich says.

For more information, visit rakesolutions.com.

Azzip Pizza

Brad Niemeier, owner; Dan Niemeier, director of operations; Craig Niemeier, director of field operations; Andy Niemeier, director of capital; Laura Niemeier, accounting

When Brad Niemeier decided to open a fast, casual pizza restaurant that would offer variety, quality, and speed, he had the full support of his family, and a \$20,000 prize from the 2012 Burton D. Morgan Business Plan Competition at Purdue University as a seed.

"I know they have my best intentions at heart. They have my back," Niemeier says of his family. "When I first started, my parents invested in the company on behalf of all the family, so they're all part owners in the business. We all have a stake in it."

The idea spawned from his Purdue University days as a walk-on football player. A hospitality and tourism management major, Niemeier would make pizza for his teammates and they'd chip in \$5 each to help cover costs. He knew he wanted to own a restaurant someday, and it was then that Niemeier realized pizza could be his future.

He came up with a plan to make customized personal pizzas—a choice of 8 or 11 inches with 16 million different combinations of toppings—in front of customers as they order. "We make it right in front of you and it goes through the oven and bakes in two and a half minutes," Niemeier says. That idea won the business plan competition, which gave the idea validation, and gave Niemeier the confidence to move forward.

In 2014, the Evansville native opened his first pizza shop with assistance from his parents. His mother even helped with the unique name—Azzip Pizza—which is "pizza" spelled backward. "We have a very diverse kind of talent pool in our immediate family," he says. "They all have other things they could be doing, but they all decided they wanted to come back and work for Azzip."

Niemeier's older brother, Andy, recently graduated from Vanderbilt University and joined the company in June to manage human resources and finances. His younger brother, Craig, handles general management, while his mother does the bookwork, and his father manages maintenance and new store rollout.

In less than four years, Niemeier has grown his idea into six restaurants. The newest one, which opened in October in College Mall, is his largest restaurant to date. "We're thrilled to be in Bloomington and looking forward to being part of the community," he says.

The venture is one Niemeier couldn't have done without his family. "My family is always going to look out for me—and I'll do the same for them," he says. "Our family always strives to take care of each other."

For more information on Azzip Pizza, visit azzippizza.com.



Samantha Eibling (right) and daughter, Stella.

Goods for Cooks

George Huntington, Samantha Eibling, and Doug Eibling, owners

When George Huntington saw that Goods for Cooks was for sale, he and his sister, Samantha Eibling, and her husband, Doug, knew it was the perfect opportunity for them. "We all have a passion for cooking, good food, and gathering with friends and family," Samantha says. "We enjoy very similar tastes and, quite frankly, we like each other. We believe that when we cook and grow our own food, we are more connected to each other, our traditions, and the environment."

Huntington says they plan to continue the tradition of Goods for Cooks, open since 1973. "Our hope is to be equally good stewards and caretakers of the business," he adds. "We want to meet the needs of people who love to cook, or want to love to cook. People who enjoy being around food, talking about food, and serving food."

Huntington and the Eiblings will run the business as a team, playing on each other's strengths and supporting one another. "Our goal is to have a place where people feel comfortable visiting to talk about food and its preparation and, perhaps, leave with a tool or some food that allows them to continue when they get home," Huntington says. For more information about Goods for Cooks, located at 115 N. College, visit goodsforcooks.com.



Brad Niemeier (center, with scissors) with family and friends at Azzip Pizza's grand opening.



(l-r) Dr. Greg Morrow; Nancy Doley, chiropractic assistant; and Dr. Craig Morrow.

Bloomington Neurospinal Chiro Clinic

**Drs. Greg and Craig Morrow,
owners**

Drs. Greg and Craig Morrow, identical twins, have practiced chiropractic medicine together for 35 years at Bloomington Neurospinal Chiro Clinic—and they still have as much passion to help others as they did on the first day. “When you can help people who have been in pain for a long time, that’s really why you do it. We still have the passion to try to help people,” Craig says.

The Drs. Morrow offer comprehensive examinations assessing physical, neurological, and orthopedic problems; in-house X-rays with biomedical evaluations; an on-site massage therapist; free spinal health care classes; and a built-in second opinion when the need arises. If necessary, they order medical tests like MRIs, CT scans, urinalyses, bloodwork, and bone scans to target the cause of pain. “Our goal is to do more with the patient than to just get them out of pain,” Greg says. “We want to rehabilitate the patient.”

While they work well together because they share the same goals and nearly the same approach to health care, the brothers—who attended National College of Chiropractic and roomed at Ball State University together—keep family business out of the office. When they’re not working, though, they enjoy cycling and camping together. For more information on Bloomington Neurospinal Chiro Clinic, located at 1136 W. 17th St., call 812-333-1206.

T&T Pet Food & Supply

Terry Hays, owner

Forty-seven years ago, Terry Hays and his then-wife LeAnn, along with her brother and his wife, opened T&T Pet Food & Supply to provide high-quality customer service and products. In nearly five decades, that mission has not changed, even though ownership has. In May, Hays bought out his former wife and continues to run the store with two dedicated employees, Clay Grumieaux and Mercedes Francois.

The store’s product line evolved from produce to antiques to garden seed before Hays decided on birdseed, dog food, and cat food. “We had to get into something that was more reliable and consistent,” Hays says, explaining that he now specializes in frozen raw, freeze-dried raw, and dehydrated food, and many varieties of dry kibble. Through the years, customers have returned for the trusted knowledge offered by employees. “Customers can go pick up something at a bigger store, but there’s no one to talk to, no one to tell them why their dog is itching,” he adds.

Taking customer service one step further, employees carry purchases to customers’ vehicles. “We’re competing with the big guys and doing well,” Hays says. “We supply quality products at competitive prices and give customers excellent service that goes beyond what they can get elsewhere.” For more information, visit the store at 2375 S. Walnut.



(l-r) Terry Hays, Clay Grumieaux (sitting), Mercedes Francois, and Bill Clark.



Sam Hudson and Jessica Agnelneri. Photo by John Bailey

Oak Fires Glass Studio

**Jessica Agnelneri and
Sam Hudson, owners**

After losing her mother in 2012 and her father in 2015, Jessica Agnelneri was seeking a way to commemorate their lives and looked to her significant other, Sam Hudson, to help her find a creative, artistic way to do so. Hudson, a glass artist, chose to integrate the cremated ashes from Agnelneri’s parents into the designs of two handmade glass memorial marbles.

Soon, Hudson began to field requests for memorial marbles from others, and the couple realized that these original works of art had the potential to help heal others suffering from loss. That realization led them to open Oak Fires Glass Studio, where Hudson designs custom glass art and Agnelneri manages the office and day-to-day operations.

Located in Ellettsville, Oak Fires Glass Studio’s cremation memorial marbles are available in several sizes and price ranges. Hudson works with a molten sphere of glass attached to a glass rod, stamping it onto the cremated ashes resting on a clean oak slab, which engulfs the oak and transfers the ashes to the glass. He then hand blows each marble before giving it the final design. Hudson says the round shape of each marble comes somewhat organically, through a natural process of gravity, heat, and rotation. For more information about Oak Fires’ products, visit oakfiresglasstudio.com or call 812-322-3991.



(l-r) Gabriel, Debra, and Dan Gluesenkamp.

Designscape

Dan and Debra Gluesenkamp, owners

Engraved on the stone pillars greeting visitors to Designscape Horticultural Service's 60-plus acres at 2877 T.C. Steele Road in Nashville is Joshua 24:15— "...but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." That scripture epitomizes how Dan and Debra Gluesenkamp run their business and live their lives.

Soon after the couple met, they worked for Hilltop Garden and Nature Center at Indiana University while Debra was a botany student. They married in 1982 and started Designscape just outside Bloomington in 1986. Through the years, they wanted to expand and move the business closer to their Brown County home. It took three years of praying over the perfect land until they closed on their dream property, which is the current site of their nursery, tree farm, and business offices. It's a series of events the Gluesenkamps attribute to divine intervention.

"We couldn't afford it when the first deal fell through," Dan says. "Although we wanted it, we weren't capable of actually paying for it. So, finally, three years later it came about, and it's really been the perfect setup for us. The company has expanded

beyond our imagination thanks to many years of hard work of our team."

The Gluesenkamps say the secret to their success is the people God puts in their path, from employees to clients. "We have had an amazing group of people since the beginning," Dan says, explaining that their team is like family and some have worked with them for 20 years. "We didn't realize that we would become both a workplace and a social place. We also didn't realize in the beginning that we would have the ability to affect young people's lives throughout the years."

Debra adds, "One of the key reasons we wanted to start a business on our own together is because we had the same ideals toward team members, and we knew we had to invest in people because they would in turn invest in our community." Team members can earn incentive credits from positive customer service reviews that can be exchanged for cash, classes, or travel. The Gluesenkamps also take teams on local, national, and international mission trips. "We try to do something local and something out of state, but it helps all of us when we see those with struggles greater than ours. It makes ours seem so much less important."

Since Dan studied natural resources at Ball State University, the Gluesenkamps have been diligent about being good stew-

ards of the land. From the beginning of their business, they have composted and grown plants that provide carbon dioxide benefits, but they also have solar panels, geothermal heating, and an aquaponics greenhouse. "We try to reuse the things we can," Dan adds. "We're just trying to teach a progressive mindset."

The Gluesenkamps are gradually transferring leadership to their son, Gabriel, who grew up at Designscape. Dan says Gabriel is more than halfway through a 10-year process. "It really was a huge blessing to spend the majority of my life outdoors. When my parents had a break from work, we were still hiking neighboring forests and talking all things flora and fauna, so nature always provided me with a sense of purpose," Gabriel says.

Gabriel will lead with the same principles his parents have, and that includes adhering to four value statements: "We create beautiful landscapes; we do what we say we are going to do; we pursue a measurable profit; and we lead others with love," he says. "The vision for the company has really never changed. Our main goal continues to be to create an environment that leaves our team members and customers in a better long-term position than before."

For more information on Designscape, visit designhort.com.