

Your Business is Our Business

Talking UP

Economic Development
UPdates

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U.P. Business Helps All Children Reach Their Full Potential

One University Place business is doing its part to make the world a welcoming place for all children, including those with special learning needs such as autism, ADHD and Sensory Processing Disorder.



LakiKid is a U.P.-based e-commerce company that provides an online support network for parents of children with special learning needs. It offers monthly video educational blogs and a Sensory Adventure Club which provides children with fun games and activities that meet their physical fitness needs. LakiKid also has an online store with products such as toys to help with fine motor skills, and weighted blankets and stuffed animals designed to reduce anxiety.

According to the company's co-founder, Jason Hsieh, these items are used in more than 300 locations across the country, including NBA arenas, football and baseball stadiums, aquariums and zoos as part of KultureCity's Sensory Inclusive Initiative program. KultureCity is a nonprofit organization, dedicated to building acceptance and inclusion for all people with autism.

"Our mission is to empower, support and educate kids with learning differences and help build an inclusive community where everyone will be accepted," Jason says. He and his wife, Miho, created LakiKid in 2017 to help their son, Keanu, who has Autism and ADHD. They discovered that resources in Miho's native Japan for children like Keanu were limited. So they moved to the U.S. in the hope that they could provide their son with all of the support and resources he needed.

“We soon discovered, however, that therapies and sensory products were very expensive and our insurance did not cover them,” Jason recalls. “We struggled to find affordable, quality products to help our son with his challenges so we decided to create our own brand instead. That’s when LakiKid was born.”

In just four short years since its launch, LakiKid has helped more than 20,000 children and their parents. “We believe that every kid is different and beautiful in their own way,” Jason says. “And everyone deserves a chance to learn and become their fullest self in this wonderful life.”

Learn more about LakiKid's products and services at www.lakikid.com.

Help Us Welcome AngelCom IT Services to U.P.



What began 25 years ago as a second career for retired Air Force chaplain Lt. Col. Robert P. Hamm has become a bi-coastal IT services firm that assists small businesses with their computing technology needs.

The name AngelCom IT Services reflects Robert’s history as a retired chaplain. It also helps that it starts with the letter “A,” which put

his new business towards the top of the listings when phone books were still in use.

Today, Robert’s grandson Jeremy Brabham is carrying the torch for the next generation of the business. He recently opened new office space for AngelCom IT services at 4111 Bridgeport Way W, Ste B. in University Place, where his 10 or so employees focus on work with professional services companies that include legal and financial firms, hospitality businesses such as hotels and restaurants, as well as those in grocery and auto sales.

“We serve mostly small- to medium-sized businesses in the greater Puget Sound area and the mid-Coast region of Maine, although in today’s era of remote computing, there are now no boundaries and AngelCom IT is able to support clients all across the country,” Jeremy says. The Maine office is staffed by an employee who moved back to the East Coast to be closer to family and who has successfully continued to serve AngelCom’s existing clients from there, while building a new client base in the area around Belfast, Maine as well.

After looking to purchase space for the business in Lakewood and Tacoma, Jeremy says he and his wife decided U.P. was the perfect location for his new offices. “It’s a great central location—close to State Route 16 and it offers an easy commute for our employees who live in Tacoma, Gig Harbor and beyond.”

Get Linked UP Today



Be sure your business is on the Economic Development Department's email list so you can receive time-sensitive updates on news, COVID recovery programs and more. And help us make sure every business in University Place is Linked UP by reminding other business owners you interact with to sign up as well. Thank you.

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March's REcovery Theme: RE-fresh Your Space

Throughout 2021, each issue of Talking UP will feature an aspect of how you can strengthen and enhance your post-COVID recovery efforts.

The arrival of Spring in 2021 holds special meaning, doesn't it? We made it through a long winter of pandemic-induced losses, closures, etc. But now it's time to do some spring cleaning: to let go of the events of the last year and open our minds to new possibilities.



Things are looking UP! Is your business reflecting that?

For retailers and restaurants especially, this is a great time to look at your spaces in a new light. Here are some tips on how to make sure your business is ready to welcome customers back:

- Bring in an outsider (or two) to look at your space with a fresh pair of eyes. When we occupy the same space for a period of time, we can become "blind" to the things that others see right away, like cluttered counters, dusty shelves and crowded aisles.
- Make this the spring that you clean everything from top to bottom: sweep away cobwebs in the corners and ceilings; clean the floors (including carpets, if need be); take down light fixtures and rid them of dust and dead bugs.
- Wash those windows! Make it easy for people to see what you have to offer by removing old posters, flyers, etc., and make your windows sparkle.
- Employ the Costco "treasure search" model. Move your merchandise around occasionally so people have more reason

to explore your space and discover new items they may not know you carry.

- Don't forget to give your website a good scrubbing as well! Make sure it is updated and fresh. Use it to promote new hours, special products and any other changes you've made.

It may still be a few months before we achieve a full sense of our “new normal,” but March is always a great time to celebrate new beginnings—this year more than ever.

