



SUCCESS STORIES

from Michigan City Area Schools

SUCCESS begins with Erik Bernethy

...RETAIL STORE VICE PRESIDENT

...PET LOVER

...MICHIGAN CITY AREA SCHOOLS SUCCESS STORY

As a high school senior, Erik Bernethy had one thing on his mind: “My main motivation in life was to earn money for a car,” he laughs. Erik achieved his goal... and much more, when he was placed at Brandt’s Old Fashion Feed, Pet & Wildlife Emporium, in an arrangement through Michigan City High School’s Interdisciplinary Cooperative Education (ICE) program. “I was a part-time stock boy, but I knew immediately that I wanted a long-term career in retail,” he says. He also loved animals – which came in very handy at Brandt’s.

PET SMARTS: Store owner Doug Brandt offered Erik a management position upon graduation, and in less than ten years he rose to Vice President in charge of store operations. Today, Erik handles everything from staffing to marketing to bookkeeping to plowing the parking lot. “I actually enjoy paperwork,” he admits. “I also like to study the competition, to try new things that will help us serve our customers better than anyone else.”

SCHOOL DAYS: Erik attended Joy Elementary, Krueger Middle School, and Michigan City Jr. High, and graduated from MCHS in 2000. “The ICE program taught me to have a strong work ethic,” says Erik, who has not missed a day of work in 12 years. “I stress the same thing with the ICE students who are placed with me now. I tell them employers want employees who are dedicated, people who have solid skills in math, communication, and customer service.”

SECRET TO SUCCESS: “Sometimes people in entry-level positions think, ‘it’s just a job, it’s not going to take me anywhere.’ But I realized early on that you can learn a lot about a business at every level of the operation.”



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