

Meijer Team Gives Helps Student Impact Open Expanded Facility

When a new Meijer store broke ground in Westfield, Ind. in 2020, [Student Impact](#) Executive Director Danyele Easterhaus was amazed to get a call inquiring about a partnership.

“They were still putting stakes in the ground!” she said. “In all my tenure working with Student Impact, it had never happened before that a company came to us and asked how *they* could help *us*.”

The partnership came together quickly, and twice now, the Westfield store team members voted to give their Meijer Team Gives donation to Student Impact, one \$10,000 and one \$5,000 check. Over the past few years, as the organization worked and fundraised toward an expanded facility for students, these donations came in handy.

[Meijer Team Gives](#) is a program, created in 2021, that empowers team members to donate to one nonprofit in their community. Team members at each location work together to identify the local nonprofits meaningful to them and the communities they serve. The Westfield store team is continually impressed by how Student Impact helps so many kids in the community every day.

“Our store team realized what a huge impact this organization has on the community, and that’s why we love working with them so much,” said Chad Clark, Westfield Store Director. “Many of our team members are parents, including me, and so we also identify with the need for after-school activities for kids that are safe and accessible and most of all, free. It’s such a huge benefit and resource in our community.”

Student Impact was started in 1999 to provide love and acceptance in a safe and consistent environment for students in 5th through 12th grade. Student Impact’s “hub,” The Rock, opened in 2006.

By 2019, The Rock was bursting at the seams, full of kids who needed a safe space to be after school. Because of the demand, Danyele had to start limiting students to 75 per day.

When the pandemic hit in early 2020, Student Impact switched to hosting online activities, and Danyele spent her days creating them and “drop kits” for the kids, to make sure they could stay engaged during the period of separation from peers. The online sessions were a huge hit, and kept kids busy with baking, crafting and chatting with their friends.

“Post-COVID, the loneliness factor has only increased,” Danyele says. “And the only way to combat that is to provide safe and consistent relationships.”

That’s why the new space was so needed, she says. It’s always “come as you are” so kids can feel comfortable no matter what happens at school or home.

Last week, Student Impact celebrated the ribbon cutting of their brand-new space, which added a fully useable backyard space, as well as an extra 200 percent more indoor space for kids to hang out, complete with ping pong tables, study areas, and a back porch with a firepit.

Today, Danyele and Chad have a close relationship, where Danyele can reach out with requests for the kids she works with and Chad will always help if he can, whether she needs extra flowers to help decorate for a fundraiser or popsicles for the local homecoming parade.

“It can’t be understated, these minor asks that we make really add up to something big for the kids in Westfield,” Danyele said. “Our goal is to be a safe place to hang out after school that feels like your best friend’s mom’s house. This community, where people are willing to step up and work together, is so amazing, and we sincerely appreciate our local Meijer store and the role they have played in our success.”

Additional assets available online: [Photos](#) ⁽³⁾

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