Independence Market supports local community organizations in celebration of store opening

When we open a new Meijer store, one of the first things the store director begins to do is connect with the community, finding out what is important to neighbors and how the store can support local nonprofits in their missions. When Robert Lajcaj, Independence Market store director, began connecting with the community prior to opening our new neighborhood market this April, he first reached out to the Independence Township staff for some initial guidance and connections.

“I met with Robert and his team at the new Independence Market to talk about ways they could get involved in the community right away. We had a great conversation about some of the local nonprofits that are just getting started and could really use a boost—both in visibility and funding,” said Lauren Rinke, Independence Township public information officer. “Standing there at the grand opening and seeing three of our local nonprofits receive funding was incredibly emotional. It was honestly so heart-warming—I cried. These organizations are doing such important, meaningful work for the young people in our community.”

During its opening week, the Independence Market team demonstrated its support of the community by donating to three local organizations important to the store team and community, including Social Medium, a nonprofit focused on creating a safe space for teens to practice art therapy, On a Dragonfly's Wings, an organization aimed to break the stigma of mental health and suicide, and The Happy Teeth Project, which provides funding and resources to children who lack access to dental care.

For the founder of On a Dragonfly’s Wings, the support was monumental.

“We are an incredibly small organization, only in our third year, so these dollars meant the world to us,” said Kris Miller, founder of On a Dragonfly’s Wings. “Our dream was to build a one-week mental wellness day camp for kids in 4th-9th grade. This was a huge undertaking for our small organization and took a lot of dollars to make it happen. Thanks to Independence Market, we were able to provide mental health resources and support for sixty campers over the course of one week. It was amazing!”

Now that the store has been open for three months, the team is finding more ways to connect with the community, including new partnerships with Clarkston Family Farms and the Clarkston Chamber of Commerce, and the Market is also sponsoring a few Clarkston high school teams. In July, they hosted their first Summer Patio Party, a free event for families to come and enjoy the outdoor space at the Market with games, face painting, balloon animals and a craft activity for families to make stickers and magnets with Social Medium founders Andrea and Dan.

“We’ve felt so honored to be welcomed warmly by the community and to become a part of this area’s weekly routine, from grocery shopping to stopping in for coffee or a meal at Honcho, to folks who just stop by to see friends and neighbors or hang out on the patio,” said Robert. “We will keep working every day to serve this community, and we welcome feedback or suggestions from anyone about what they’d like to see, or other organizations in the area that could use support.”

Additional assets available online: Photos (1)

https://meijercommunity.com/2025-07-31-Independence-Market-supports-local-community-organizations-in-celebration-of-store-opening