

Local Nonprofits are Big Winners in Meijer Distribution Center Hockey Shootout

When Ryan VanKuiken, a Warehouse Clerk at our Walker, Mich. Distribution Center, came up with the idea of a hockey shootout as a fun workplace competition, he didn't realize it would soon have a more significant impact.

The first year, the winning team won gift cards. Now, the big winners are local nonprofits.

"I wanted to share my passion with the whole team. Back in 2019, we decided to put it on and it just blew up from there," said Ryan, who's been playing street hockey and roller hockey all his life.

That first year, he organized a hockey shootout at the facility with top prizes, such as tickets to a Grand Rapids Griffins hockey game.

In 2020, the organizing committee held a food drive instead of offering prizes to help the community during the COVID-19 pandemic. Thanks to a great turnout, they gathered plenty of food to donate to First Evangelical Covenant Church – which inspired Ryan to keep the charitable tradition going.

The 2021 shootout benefited the Humane Society of West Michigan and this year's event supported John Ball Zoo. Ryan and other organizers recently presented a \$1,000 check to the zoo.

"People enjoy it," Ryan said of the event's fundraising focus. "They just have a lot of fun knowing that we're raising money for a good cause."

The winners get bragging rights in the form of a trophy handmade by Ryan, who took a picture frame and embellished it with hockey sticks. Each year a new plaque honoring the winning team is added.

While 40 people participated in the hockey shootout, many more across the facility contributed to the fundraiser.

"It's really team member driven," said Seth Major, Unit Director for the Walker Distribution Center. "It used to be just a fun thing for us and we would award the winner. Then, as a group, the team members decided, let's do this for a good cause."

We're proud to see our team members embody our values of serving our community in such fun and creative ways.

Additional assets available online: [**Photos**](#) ⁽²⁾

<https://meijercommunity.com/Local-Nonprofits-are-Big-Winners-in-Meijer-Distribution-Center-Hockey-Shootout>