



WINTER NEWSLETTER



Local Small Businesses That Support Those with Disabilities

Are you looking to support small local businesses? Or do you know someone looking for a local employment opportunity at an inclusive and diverse business? These wonderful businesses may be just what you're looking for!

Bitty & Beau's in Ann Arbor is a franchise coffee shop that originally started in 2016 and employs individuals with disabilities.

A similar story follows with **Anastasia and Katie's Coffee and Cafe** in Livonia, named after two girls with down syndrome, where they thrive on opportunity and inclusion.

The final coffee shop we'd like to share is **Maggie's Be Cafe** in Hudsonville, "known as "an environment filled with love, acceptance, and inclusivity for its employees and customers."

If you aren't a coffee drinker and still would like to show your support or find a local employment opportunity, check out **Dutton Farms** in Rochester Hills, where their mission is to empower and support adults with disabilities to live a life of purpose, inclusion and dignity.



Explore these businesses online:

[Bitty & Beau's \(Ann Arbor\)](#)

[Anastasia and Katie's Coffee \(Livonia\)](#)

[Maggie's Be Cafe \(Hudsonville\)](#)

[Dutton Farm \(Rochester\)](#)

Preparing for the Holidays

As wonderful as the holiday season is, it can also be stressful—especially for families with children on the spectrum who are to celebrate the holidays with loved ones. To keep the stress level at a minimum, it's encouraged for parents to plan ahead and provide the child with details about what to expect at their holiday gatherings. For example, telling the child where they're going, who's going to be there, and what they'll be doing there, could help them feel more comfortable. Another way to ease the travel anxiety is to bring the child's preferred item, a fun movie to watch, and/or their favorite snacks during the commute. Lastly, reaching out ahead of time to family members who will be present during these gatherings could be beneficial as well. Talking to your family members about having a designated "break" area for your child, what to expect and how to react to certain emotions from your child can limit confusion in case a difficult situation arises.. Even without travel, the holidays are a time for atypical routines with school age children being on breaks, kids having later-than-usual bedtimes, or more weekday activities and outings. Helping set those expectations and providing them with the support they need to manage the changes in routine, and what to expect from their days/holiday gatherings, can be vital.

[Check Out Our Blog About Navigating the Holidays](#)



Employee Spotlight

Shayla Whitt *Assistant Clinical Director, Southgate*



My name is Shayla, and I am the Assistant Clinical Director at our Southgate clinic. I have worked at Gateway and in the field of behavior analysis for 4.5 years. I grew up in Fraser, Michigan and attended Wayne State University for both undergraduate and graduate studies, majoring in psychology and behavior analysis.

What made you decide to go into the field of behavior analysis?

Prior to my younger brother starting ABA therapy, I had never even known that this field existed. Seeing all the progress that he was making and how happy he was to go everyday made me even more intrigued with the field. After starting a job as a behavior technician and graduate school, I knew that behavior analysis was what I was meant to do.

What is your favorite thing about being a BCBA?

I love how both rewarding and challenging my job is. I am learning something new every day, and watching our clients grow and reach milestones is so amazing to be a part of.

What moment or memory impacted you the most in your career so far?

One of the most impactful moments in my career was hearing one of my clients, who had remained non-vocal since I began working with him, start making sounds and hum along with his favorite songs. We are now working on him emitting whole words, and he continues to amaze us all!

Who or what has been the biggest influence on your career?

Throughout graduate school, my clinical supervisors were always encouraging and helpful. Even on days where I felt I was falling behind or overwhelmed, they kept me positive and continued pushing me towards my goals. I also have my grandma to thank throughout all stages of my life, leading up to my career as a behavior analyst; she had always been my #1 supporter and celebrated all of my accomplishments along with me.

What was another career path you were interested in besides being a BCBA?

I always knew I wanted to work with kids, and as I got older the brain itself fascinated me. My dream job as a child was to be a doctor so I could help others, and as I got older the field of neurology sparked my interest. I started undergraduate as a pre-med major; however, I switched gears to psychology and ABA during my junior year after gaining more experience with my brother's ABA therapy and seeing all of the progress that he had made.

What is something that makes you smile?

I'm a huge animal lover. Give me a puppy to hold and my day couldn't get any better.

What is a random fact about yourself?

I have lived in 11 different cities.



Around the Clinics

