

FINANCIALLY SPEAKING

# Inspiring entrepreneurialism in our kids



## Financially Speaking

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When our sons were very young, my husband Gene and I set a goal to have some sort of part-time business for them to run during their teenage years. We wanted Jacob and Zachary to develop a business acumen early in life. We wanted them to grow up with the commitment and responsibility it takes to run a successful business, to feel the exhilaration of success, the disappointment of temporary setbacks and to learn how to think and work their way out of them, to experience what it feels like to earn a dollar and so much more. Gene and I bought our first small business when we were 24; neither of us had a family history of business ownership nor did we ask for help financially or otherwise. We quickly learned that there was another whole world of experience that came with ownership. Good, bad, or indifferent, what was striking was that we were the ones in control with the final responsibility for our own success. What I always wanted to impart upon our sons was, someday, if there is not someone out there to give you a job, you can make your own! Take it up a level and you can even own a business that can create jobs for other people.

When we set this goal, we had no idea how we would fulfill it. We knew it could not interfere with school or compete with extracurricular activities that are im-

portant to them, yet be demanding enough necessitate commitment. Many ideas ran through our heads.... Mowing lawns, making and selling items through e-bay, an ice cream stand, making and selling firewood (like we did when I was a girl). We didn't have the details, but we held the goal.

Then, when Jacob and Zachary were just eight and six years old, a golf driving range that was just one mile from our house had closed with plans to turn back into a hay field. We saw this as a great possibility and called the owners. It was a bit of a complicated purchase, but we managed, and finalized the purchase shortly after they turned nine and seven. We spent and borrowed a great deal of money for the land and equipment. Now the challenge was keeping two young boys interested in business and motivated to do the work. The first and obvious things we did were little treats at the range that we did not have at home, like ice cream bars or their favorite frozen pizzas for break times. The bigger picture though, came with teaching them to set goals. We worked with them to create "Reality Boards," things they wanted to buy with their money to become their "reality." We had them print out pictures and paste them onto their reality board: things like a dirt bike, a Nintendo DS, so that every day they were visually reminded of what they were working toward. We set an hourly wage and established an 80/20 rule; 80% of what they earned went into their Roth IRAs and 20% of their wage could be used for their personal goals on their reality board. They became fully responsible for the purchases, determining how much money it would take to buy the dirt bike for example, and how many hours they would have to work to make enough money to get to their "reality." Jacob and Zac became experts at multiplying any number by 20%! We consistently showered them with praise for jobs well done. Imagine parents at an

intense sporting event that their child is competing in.... Our attitudes and affirmations were and still are all of that and then some for business!

The 2019 season was Jacob and Zachary's thirteenth and final year of operating Rolling Hills Driving Range, LLC. Their responsibilities increased with their maturity. Their duties included managing the facility, picking the golf balls from the range land and washing them clean, filling a couple thousand buckets full of little white balls each year, mowing 13 acres of grass, and keeping the inside of the clubhouse neat and orderly. They developed customer service skills by greeting and interacting with our patrons, showing appreciation for their business. Their responsibilities also included keeping sales ledgers, counting money, measuring it against the number of buckets sold, and mechanically fixing mowers, the golf cart and ball picker when there were equipment breakdowns (and there were plenty!). Jacob and Zac marketed Rolling Hills Driving Range through a Facebook page. We held regular business development meetings where they would brainstorm ways to improve operations and profitability. Entrepreneurialism and business ownership became a way of life for Jacob and Zachary. We understood the compounding effects of mindset, critical thinking skills, attitude, and work ethic. Looking back, it was a lot of hard work and perseverance from all four of us. Looking forward, I could not be more excited for their futures, as they will forever benefit from the entrepreneurialism that was inspired in them while they were just kids.

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## Mid-State's diesel program receives highest level of accreditation

FOR CITY TIMES

WISCONSIN RAPIDS – Mid-State Technical College's Diesel & Heavy Equipment Technician program is now accredited as a Heavy Truck program by the National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) Education Foundation. The diesel program designation confirms the

program meets the strict industry standards required for accreditation in Master Truck Service Technology, the highest level of program accreditation recognized by the ASE.

"We are proud to receive this high accreditation status from the ASE," said Ryan Kawski, Mid-State dean of the



Mid-State Technical College Diesel and Heavy Equipment Technician program instructor and students. Submitted photo

School of Applied Technology. "This accreditation is a testament to our dedicated instructors who work to ensure our curriculum is up-to-date and relevant for today's workforce, allowing our students to be confident when they enter the field."

Mid-State's automotive programs were also re-accredited by ASE after a successful accreditation visit in fall 2023. To achieve this coveted recognition, the

school's automotive training program underwent rigorous evaluation by the ASE Education Foundation. Nationally accepted standards of excellence in areas such as instruction, facilities and equipment were used.

Through hands-on classroom learning and training on state-of-the-art equipment, students learn to perform preventive maintenance and troubleshooting procedures, rebuild components and respond to field service calls. They also participate in field trips, tours and equipment demonstrations, and get real-world experience by maintaining Mid-State's vehicle fleet and operating onsite equipment.

The ASE Education Foundation is a nonprofit, independent organization that evaluates and accredits entry-level technician training programs against standards developed by the automotive industry.

Learn more about Mid-State's automotive and diesel programs at mstc.edu/programs.



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