

2022 Distinguished Alumni Hall of Fame Inductee



MATT SMITH CLASS OF 2009 CAREER ACHIEVEMENTS

Matt Smith graduated from Hudsonville High School in 2009. He then enrolled at Palm Beach Atlantic University to pursue a degree in marketing. He returned home in the spring of 2013 after graduating to be near his mother, who was battling cancer.

In 2011, Matt and his dad began the hobby of dabbling with buying and selling liquidated goods out of their barn (mainly during the summers when Matt was home). They would make trips to Indianapolis with a truck and trailer, pick up shelf pulls and return goods and then resell those items through various outlets.

Matt's mother died in October of 2013 and using some of her life insurance money, Matt and his dad purchased a small online auction in Hudsonville (Grand Valley Online Auction) and changed the name to Bid-2-Benefit-Youth. They dedicated the business in memory of Matt's mother, who was a compassionate and caring nurse, and it would reflect the purpose of developing youth as young leaders and giving back.

The two soon learned that the online auction model would prove challenging to make a profit. At about that time, the landlord for the old Carter Lumber building complex on Balsam Drive heard about the Smiths' vision and rented the building to them for a fair price. Matt hatched the idea of a retail outlet store to work alongside the auction. A second building was soon leased, and Matt secured a contract to receive all liquidated goods from a name-brand big box store. Now Bid-2-Benefit-Youth was on the map.

In the spring of 2015, the outlet store of B2BY became the central revenue-producing piece of the business. With that, the name was changed to "Benefit Twice Outlet Stores" to reflect the two-fold benefit of customers receiving a good price on products while giving back to the community with every purchase. Additional stores were added in other communities throughout West Michigan.

Today, Matt Smith is the CEO of B2 Outlet Stores. At 31 years old, he no longer leads a small business but a growing and innovative company. B2 Outlets Stores has given back over \$1.5 million to over 250 non-profit groups throughout Michigan and beyond. With twenty-seven stores and 400 employees, the company is positioned to double the number of stores in the next five years, with the goal to give back \$1 million to non-profits annually.

Matt represents a tough, resilient, yet kind and level-headed entrepreneurial spirit that has weathered many storms and proven what a young man from Hudsonville can do. Matt and his wife Rebecca live in Hudsonville.