

For Immediate Release:

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Pana, Illinois: As a community bank, Peoples Bank & Trust recognizes the value of volunteerism in our communities. To recognize, commend and promote the volunteerism, Peoples Bank & Trust has established a program to recognize outstanding community members for their volunteer efforts of improvement to our community.

Erica Frailey-Matthews and the Brewin' Hope Coffeehouse has been chosen as our current Volunteers of the Quarter. The coffee house, which opened in November 2019, is staffed with students from the AAMP learning center's Jumpstart program, along with their job coaches. Brewin Hope works with each individual to get their food handlers license and learn valuable job skills to help them in the future.

"Having their own coffee house is a huge part of their independence. It's a part of who they are and they have purpose now", said Erica Matthews, who owns the coffee house and runs the JumpStart Program in Pana "They want to come to work and they are asking me all the time if they can come to work and they just light up." Matthews said that for many years she has tried to get job opportunities for adults with special needs. While there is nothing really close to Pana, individuals would have to go to Shelbyville or Springfield, but there are still limited resources for them there. "A lot of them came in very nervous and very timid", she said, "So just getting that practice has eliminated so much of that and their confidence has grown."

The Jumpstart Group, which is part of the AAMP program, is for high school and adults. They practice social skills, life skills and job experience. Some of the students' current working at Brewin' Hope will be able to eventually move on to other jobs in the community. On Thursday, the students do the baking and prep work for the Coffeehouse, which is open on Friday and Saturdays. Erica explained that there are some students who are not comfortable being with the public, but they still contribute with the food preparation and getting things ready for the weekends. There are currently 26 students in the JumpStart program and seven volunteer job coaches.

"Our kids are able, yes they have a disability but they are completely able to do their jobs and they want to work. Brewin' Hope not only brings hope to them, but it also brings hope to the community that we can rally around anyone and make sure they have a purpose in this life and they are a part of this community." Brewin Hope is open on Friday and Saturday from 7:00 A.M. to 11:00 A.M. at 38 Oak Street. Each week they serve a variety of pastry items along with the own signature coffee blend, Hope. Please stop by in and have a cup of delicious coffee visit with these young, enthusiastic hosts.

In honor of their volunteer services, Peoples Bank made a donation to Brewin' Hope and their names will be placed on a plaque to be displayed at the bank.

Peoples Bank & Trust is an independent Community Bank with ten offices located in Pana, Taylorville, Altamont, Tower Hill, Charleston, Springfield, Morrisonville, Palmyra, Waverly and White Hall. Peoples is a full service bank offering outstanding customer service to consumers, small business, and farmers in Central Illinois. People First Bancshares, Inc., with corporate offices in Pana, Illinois, is the holding company for Peoples Bank & Trust.