

Clearly Kosciusko Podcast Series

Celebrates what is unique, what is special what is...Clearly Kosciusko

Episode 9: Luke & Whitney Wright, a Business Built on LOVE & the Importance of Strong Community Support

- MudLOVE founder and owner, Luke Wright said, “Pretty much all I had on me [when Luke started the business] a stamp set, some clay and a mini fridge.”
- With a degree in ceramics from Indiana Wesleyan, Luke set out on a mission to start a business that was built on **love**. For every product you buy from [MudLOVE](#) you give a week’s worth of water through [Water for Good](#), to underserved communities around the world.
- The first MudLOVE bracelet appeared in July 2010. Luke never anticipated having a line of people in his shop for these bracelets. He knew he had something here...
- Luke met his wife Whitney when she moved back to the Hoosier State from California. Originally from Fort Wayne, life brought Whitney back to Winona Lake, and she found Luke who also had a spirit and passion for creating and entrepreneurship. After Luke and married, Whitney, owner of handmade jewelry company, [Bel Kai](#), and Luke’s MudLOVE, came together to form a new gem in Winona Village, [Belove](#).
- Housed in the cozy garage where MudLOVE had its beginning, Belove carries [MudLOVE](#) & [Bel Kai](#) products, curated vintage finds, vendors with a social good emphasis and other lovely giftable finds!
- Luke emphasized the importance of being a community that lifts each other up when people are struggling. Luke and Whitney believe there’s always more that can be done to help one another, so how can we do that together as a community?
- Luke said, “It’s so encouraging as a small business to see people truly invested in the small businesses.”

Check out KEDCO’s Outside the Fishbowl monthly meetup for newcomers to K-County by visiting KEDCO’s [Facebook page](#) for meetup and event updates.

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Episode 10: Jeremy Kilgore, Lake City Radio WRSW & Fishing

- Jeremy Kilgore was born and raised in Dayton, Ohio, and ventured to K-County when he received a baseball scholarship with [Grace College](#). And it was at Grace where he met his wife, Leah who was also a newcomer to the area.
- He currently works with Lake City Media Group, which includes local broadcast stations, [107.3 WRSW](#) and [Willie 103.5](#).
- Jeremy pointed out some pros about commuting when you live in the area. He noted that what's cool about the commute when you live in the area is, "Warsaw driving is about 15 minutes."
- Jeremy shared that it's been encouraging to see the small business community continue to grow and support one another. "People support things here," he said.
- KEDCO can support and help connect aspiring entrepreneurs and business owners in the community. Check out KEDCO's [Entrepreneurship Initiative](#) and [Entrepreneur Circuit](#) monthly meetups for local entrepreneurs.
- Jeremy encouraged residents and visitors to check out [nature preserves](#) and [trails](#) throughout the county. He's particularly fond of some preserves and trails in Syracuse and North Webster.
- "Fishing here is fantastic," Jeremy said. And he said the best part is that you don't need a boat to fish here. Additionally, Jeremy grew up in a suburb and didn't have the opportunity to hunt, so he also took up hunting as a new hobby in the last couple of years.
- If you're not familiar with the local [City County Athletic Complex \(CCAC\)](#) be sure to check out all it has to offer!

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Episode 11: Tiffany Aites, Port Winona & getting out and about in K-County

- Tiffany Aites was born and raised in Warsaw, and currently resides in the area. She's certainly been out and about, venturing off to Germany when she was 16 years old to follow and nanny for a family she'd connected with here at home. While living overseas, she had the incredible opportunity to visit Austria, Italy, Prague and several other destinations. How could she miss the opportunity to enjoy her first beer...in Munich?!
- When Tiffany finished school and headed back to the area, that's when she became involved in the hospitality industry. She fell in love. Hospitality was a natural fit, and after spending nearly a decade in hospitality, her vision grew and her journey continued. [Port Winona Wine + Market](#) was born.
- The idea for Port Winona came to life over a glass of wine...or two. Port Winona offers wine tastings--of wines from around the world--classes, events and a dreamy outdoor space overlooking the canal at Winona Lake.
- With both outdoor and indoor space, Port Winona is the perfect hangout during any season. During the summer months, guests can enjoy outdoor games and live music.
- With more than [100 lakes in Kosciusko County](#), Tiffany said the community would benefit from having more sandy beach areas for residents and visitors to enjoy. Tiffany added, along with beaches, more great restaurants, bars and shops would brighten the community even more.
- Residents and visitors can also check out live outdoor music at [Central Park](#) in Warsaw and other places in the [Village at Winona](#).
- Tiffany encouraged residents and guests to check out [Westmain Kitchen](#) in Syracuse.

Check out KEDCO's [Outside the Fishbowl](#) monthly meetup for newcomers. Are you a business owner or aspiring entrepreneur? Check out KEDCO's [Entrepreneurship Initiative](#).

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Episode 12: Chris Plack, 24/7 Cars & a 3,500-Mile Journey

- Although a Hoosier now, Chris Plack has lived many places around the world.
- Chris was born in Frankfurt, Germany, while his parents were overseas serving in the U.S. Army. After living in Frankfurt for the first nine days of his life, his family was transferred to Boston. At six years old, his family then headed to Anchorage, Alaska, where Chris was hopeful he would live in an igloo. 😊
- Although living in a subdivision instead of the igloo may not have been what Chris had hoped, after several years in Anchorage, he became more connected to the Hoosier State through [CompuServe](#)--or what we now just refer to as "online."
- Chris connected with a gal from Warsaw, Indiana online, and he couldn't have predicted the adventure that unfolded ahead of him which led him to his wife, Jamie.
- With a journey of many twists and turns, and many would say, "fate," Chris moved to Warsaw, and he and Jamie were married. Chris, Jamie and their children have remained in Warsaw because he emphasized it was the perfect place for them to be.
- Chris said, "As an 'adopted son' of Kosciusko County, I have such a love and appreciation for this community. It's a special place. And I couldn't be happier for my children to grow up in a community like Warsaw, Indiana."
- Chris emphasized that it's not just about the ample opportunities here in K-County, it's the ethos of the community. He's built many invaluable relationships here, and a trusted relationship with a best friend is how Chris got started as co-owner of [24/7 Cars](#).
- As a community which more than 60% of residents are not natives, Chris feels so many people *choose* to be in Kosciusko County. And there are unique and dynamic voices that need to be heard.
- Chris encourages people to get involved, whether it's running for office or starting a business. He said, "Let's help fuel peoples' passions."

- Like many residents and visitors, Chris raved about the restaurant scene in Kosciusko County. Some of his favorites are [110 Craft Meatery](#), [Cerulean](#), and [The Buzz on Buffalo](#).
- With a passion for the K-County community, Chris said, "I've seen other places, I've lived in other places, and we are so blessed to live here."

Are you new to the community or do you know someone who is new to the area? Check out KEDCO's [Outside the Fishbowl](#) monthly meetup for newcomers. Check out KEDCO's [Entrepreneurship Initiative](#) to learn more about opportunities for connection and support in the local entrepreneurial community.