

Kettle corn business is 'amaizing'

Group starts operating with all profits going to Lindenwald United.

By [Michael D. Pitman](#), Staff Writer

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HAMILTON — Amaizing Grace Kettle Corn has a higher purpose than to just selling sweet and salty popcorn.

The organization isn't just any business — it's a "biznistry," a ministry-focused business.

"Here is a way you can fund ministry by operating a legitimate business, and having the profits go directly to that ministry," said Jim Mullaney, president of Christian Ministry Campus, a non-profit organization that operates Amaizing Grace Kettle Corn.

Amaizing Grace is a non-profit business (still pending its 501c3 status) operated under Christian Ministry Campus. All of the company's profits support Lindenwald United Methodist Church, 3501 Pleasant Ave.

Lindenwald United Methodist's vision committee has discussed for several years ways to reach out to the community. Mullaney said the group liked the biznistry concept, which was established by At Work on Purpose Founder Chuck Proudfit.

The group settled on kettle corn because of the operational ease. They raised \$9,000 — though its goal was \$15,000 — and purchased the equipment.

"The neat thing about this initiative is the heart behind it," Proudfit said, "which is really a heart to create a sustaining flow of funds that can support different kinds of philanthropic projects."

Because it did not meet its goal, many of the Christian Ministry Campus members volunteer to operate the kettle corn booth at festivals and events. Many have also paid out of pocket for initial supplies.

It's important for the church to be in the marketplace, even though some disagree a religious institute should be affiliated with a business, said the Rev. Valerie Waibel, Lindenwald United Methodist pastor.

"And if we realize it or not, we are already in the marketplace," she said referring to the church's preschool. "Not all clergy and not all church members agree with this, but we are a business in so many different ways."

Mullaney, a Fairfield resident and Rotarian, said work and church go hand-in-hand.

"We spend 90 percent of our time in the marketplace. We spend a very small percentage of our time in church," he said. "It would be impossible for us to be able fulfill the great mission of Christ if we ignore the marketplace because that's where all our time is spent. And to say the church and marketplace should be separate is not valid."

The biznistry's first-year goal is \$20,000.

"We see this as growing in size and scope. Ultimately, we can have any number of businesses," Mullaney said.

Mullaney and Waibel said they'd invite other church denominations to be a part of the Christian Ministry Campus — either to share in the fruits of Amaizing Grace or start other businesses.

Waibel said once the business is running efficiently, the group eventually wants to hire a person — part-time at first — to manage the biznistry.

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