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826michigan Trivia for Cheaters: The kids (and I) need your money

By Richard Retyi

I'll get the begging out of the way first – [I'm raising money for kids](#) and I'd love your support. I'm competing (I use that term loosely) in [826michigan's Trivia for Cheaters](#) which pits my team of four social media professionals (I use that term loosely) against a bunch of smarty folks in the hopes that someone knows the capital of [Madagascar](#).

All proceeds benefit free creative writing and tutoring workshops at 826michigan, which not only serves Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti and surrounding communities, but also [expanded into Detroit recently](#).

Plus, like any good PBS campaign, each donation level earns you a special prize. Donate \$15, and I'll write you a personalized thank you note and give you a hug/handshake. For \$75 I'll take you to a secret club I belong to, share a drink with you and investigate rumors of a haunting. For \$250 I'll treat you to dinner and drinks and send you home with a commemorative photo, or for a saintly \$300, I'll video myself reenacting a scene from the movie [300](#) and ship it to you along with a copy of the original DVD. [Check out the full list and donate now](#).

This isn't just some random cash grab for kids. [I've been an 826michigan volunteer](#) and supporter since they operated out of the monster store on State Street back in 2006. My karmic teeter totter was way out of whack back then, and giving back to kids and the community seemed as good a way as any to balance my chakras.

Operating on a shoestring budget back in the day, the 826michigan staff balanced regular tutoring with a host of workshops, helping kids from all over Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti. They worked long hours, coordinating tons of volunteers and despite being located on the outskirts of downtown, drew a steady stream of enthusiastic children and parents.

Richard Retyi, champion mustache grower.

Rich Retyi | AnnArbor.com Contributor

826michigan is also where I met [my bestest friend in the whole world](#) and [his wife](#), along with a number of other great friends. When 826michigan relocated from State Street to Liberty, it was a chance for the organization to make a big impact right in the heart of downtown, which they've done 40 times over. The monsters were retired for robots and the [Liberty Street Robot Supply & Repair](#) and the new space has been packed day and night with curious minds ever since.

Finances are always an issue with any nonprofit, and 826 is no different. The popular [Mittenfest](#) music festival has [raised nearly \\$44,000](#) for 826michigan the last two years, along with a host of other fundraising events, including adult workshops, dinners with 826 founder [Dave Eggers](#) and the popular "cheaters" series. But with a growing need in the community and expansion into other cities, 826 needs help from good people like you.



The “cheater” fundraisers have included Scrabble and euchre and a spelling bee and now this – trivia. I covered the [826 Euchre for Cheaters](#) event for this very publication, competed (poorly) in the spelling bee and will now throw my hat in the ring for trivia. Each of these events is a fun way for the community to raise money for the organization and not only fills coffers but energizes the volunteers.

I know what it’s like to work with kids and spark their creativity and help them create something out of their imaginations. I’ve been part of the 826michigan story-making workshop for many years, in which children help create and write their very own collaborative stories over a one-hour period – stories which are illustrated, printed and stapled so they can take a copy home to have something tangible for

their efforts. 826michigan might not be churning out the next Ernest Hemingway (thank god) but these little experiences add up.

So [please donate to my team, donate for the kids](#) or attend the [Trivia for Cheaters event at LIVE on Wednesday \(March 20\) at 7 p.m.](#)

Richard Retyi returns to AnnArbor.com with his new column Hidden Ann Arbor. Rich will write about the hidden side of Ann Arbor and the things locals take for granted. In his day job, Rich is a social media director for a digital marketing agency in Ann Arbor. Read more of his stuff at [RichRetyi.com](#) or follow him on [Twitter](#).