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826michigan to bring free tutoring closer to Ypsilanti students

By Chelsea Hoedl



826michigan will offer drop in tutoring at Beezy's Cafe this September.

Courtesy of beezy's cafe

Nonprofit organization [826michigan](#), located behind the red velvet curtain in the back of Liberty Street's [Robot Supply & Repair](#), will soon be operating out of a second location come September. The organization's says its main focus in establishing another space is to reach out to students in **Ypsilanti**.

The organization offers free tutoring and creative writing programs from its Ann Arbor location as well as on-site visits to schools, libraries and community centers across Southeast Michigan. The new location will offer tutoring services at [Beezy's Cafe](#), 20 N. Washington St., in Ypsilanti, beginning in the fall.

826michigan has been offering services to **Ypsilanti Middle School** students out of the actual school for five years, but because the building is closing due to [district consolidation](#), the organization had to find a new way to serve students in the area.

"We thought long and hard about how to best fit the needs of families in Ypsilanti," said **Amanda Uhle**, executive director of 826. "We could have moved to another school, but we decided we really wanted to start an evening program open to the whole community."

Tutoring previously was only available to seventh- and eighth-grade students recommended by the middle school's administration, but once the program begins operating from Beezy's Cafe, students from any district and between the age of 8 and 18 can participate.

"In the middle school we were serving between 75 and 80 students over the course of the school year," Uhle said. "Before, we had a finite group we were working with in Ypsilanti, but now any student can attend."

Uhle said she expects to serve more than 100 students throughout the school year at the new location. She said the drop-in system will result in varying participation rates, but she believes it will allow more students to benefit from the program.

Students will be able to receive help with homework in all subject areas in two of the three rooms in Beezy's Cafe after the restaurant closes at 4 p.m.

826michigan hopes to offer tutoring out of a store in Detroit within the next year and a half.

Courtesy of 826Michigan

Uhle said 826 asked to operate out of Beezy's because the organization has had a longstanding relationship with the restaurant, Uhle said.

Cafe owner **Bee Mayhew** said her immediate reaction to the request was yes because she believes 826michigan makes a huge difference to kids and future community leaders.

"To offer a space that exists and is underutilized means significant resources being saved while contributing to the greater good," Mayhew said. "I've been an advocate and supporter of 826 since the cafe opened; connecting through [Mittenfest](#) when it was being held down the street at the [Elbow Room](#)."

826michigan will take on around 30 new volunteers to support the new tutoring program, which will function similarly to the program run out of Robot Supply & Repair in Ann Arbor.

The new drop-in tutoring is a part of the another sign of the growth the organization has seen since it began in 2005, Uhle said.

“We were a two-person staff for years and now we are a seven-person staff,” Uhle said. “When we started, we were serving primarily Ann Arbor with some Ypsilanti and now we are serving primarily students from Ypsilanti with some Ann Arbor and we also serve some schools in Detroit.”

The organization works with about 2,500 students and is looking to expand its reach even further.

According to Uhle, 826michigan is looking for a retail store in **Detroit** to run a drop-in tutoring program through as well. The organization is working to establish the right funding outlet and volunteer staff to begin the program within the next year and a half.

Ypsilanti area students will be able to receive help with homework from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday at Beezy’s Cafe. 826michigan will be [recruiting volunteers](#) to help with the new program.

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