





# (SHOP)KIND OF A BIG DEAL

By Sutton Rettig

IMAGINE IF YOU PURCHASED a water bottle which would help fund global poverty alleviation or buying a pair of sunglasses which would assist people in need of proper eye care.

Barrington High School '17 graduate Kelsey Sullivan founded a business following an initial idea to go into either shin splints or interior design. No one within the group, however, was passionate about the ideas, which ended up leading the tandem of students to explore a route in social entrepreneurship. Sullivan's classmates, now colleagues, include co-founder and CEO Barbara Malczynski as well as product manager Natalie Edwards who, as a collective, have emphasized the principle of social change to be the agenda of their business, ShopKind. An online shopping medium conceptualized via their work in the Business Incubator Start-Up course at BHS, ShopKind has become one of the capstone social entrepreneurship groups ever to manifest from the program. Their catalog is intertwined with Amazon.com which partners with a given social cause company and tracks purchase history as well as revenue trends of their business. Upon payment confirmation, Amazon then sheds between 6-10% of the profit to the student-incepted company. ShopKind's website details the 60-70 companies they work with, hoping to eventually reach 100 associations and continually grow as a cause-oriented staple in the modern day business arena.

During their junior years, the three students set out with an objective to bolster awareness for under-represented social causes. Nearly two years into the company's manifestation, the team is as driven as ever, engineering ShopKind by collaborating with an extensive pool of cause-oriented organizations, revolving their sublime vision around the betterment of the people and bolstering the reputations of causes that benefit water crises, poverty, human trafficking, animal extinction, and environmental sustainability. Showcased on a comprehensive online platform, consumers who browse ShopKind's website can search by product inventory, enticing the public with an opportunity to know that they are making the world a better place as a result of utilizing the website.

The cohesion of ShopKind's entrepreneurial pursuits is a product of their own trust in

WHILE EMBARKING ON THEIR COLLEGE CAREERS, THE THREE YOUNG BUSINESS WOMEN PLAN TO EXPAND SHOPKIND'S BRAND EVEN FURTHER, POSSESSING A PASSION TO MAKE AN IMPACT ON BOTH CONSUMERS AND THE WORLD AS A WHOLE.



From left to right: Barbara Malczynski, Kelsey Sullivan and Natalie Edwards.

one another, fueled by a commitment to quality and excellence. Every member of their team strives in the roles they occupy, propelling each other in the workplace and forming a sort of unitary wholeness within the company ever since its inception in January of 2015.

The identity of ShopKind is personified through their slogan of "Buy conscious, do good," illustrating a promise to always remain a company built on giving back.

Product manager Natalie Edwards, who was hired during the summer of 2016, elaborated on the fulfillment that is gained when one opts to choose a philanthropic manner of online shopping.

"There's a difference between buying online just to buy it and buying something for a greater cause," Edwards illustrated, "So why not shop in a way where you can help out those in need?"

ShopKind identifies which underrepresented causes to promote via an organization's social media presence, or lack thereof in some cases. Sullivan took a further dive into this matters and how their team assesses these various groups.

"We pick out who we've already heard of, but also seek out organizations who have the least followers and figure out what we can do to help build their representation. We basically just research the company, and you definitely know when a company isn't recognized when you need to research a lot to find it. That's what caused us to create ShopKind."

Social media-wise, the business is active on both Facebook and Instagram under the tagline @goshopkind, frequently posting a variety of statuses and pictures of items within their inventory.

Now graduated, Edwards will be attending Hope College in the fall, while Sullivan will be attending Miami of Ohio and Malczynski will enroll at Harper College. The three girls plan on conducting weekly FaceTime sessions with each other in an effort to discuss matters at hand to maintain a steady business model throughout their college careers.

Consumers who choose to browse ShopKind's catalog will find an array of products from a beanie cap's profits that go toward employing vulnerable women in impoverished areas around the world, to a duffle bag that offers proceeds going toward the elimination of trash from large lakes and oceans. It is a consensus that young people, by association, are idealistic, and they understand the fulfillment gained through carrying out work worth doing, especially the opportunity to help others in need arises. What if you purchased a pair of sunglasses for which proceeds went toward improving educational institutions in developing communities around the world?

