

Gigglechops Dog Wash

People start small businesses for a variety of reasons. First, they have an idea or dream for a service or product they believe the public will want to buy. Almost 70%, are financed with personal savings with the others seeking various types of business loans. They pour their hearts, their life savings, and an unbelievable amount of time into their new business. At the end of one year, about 78% are still open. After five years, about 50% are still doing business. So why would anyone want to take that kind of risk?

Erica Hargadine and Keith Bower are your typical startup business partners, working long hours and putting their life savings on the line. But their dream is what set them apart when they opened Gigglechops Dog Wash (GDW) the last week of December, 2017.

In addition to being dog lovers and providing a service for other dog lovers in Magnolia, they have a higher purpose than just making money, although that is definitely critical to their plan. Theirs is also a humanitarian mission for Gigglechops Dog Wash that can be found at 2809 Thorndyke Ave W in Seattle's Magnolia neighborhood.

The tagline on their website states, the mission at Gigglechops is "Dogs Helping People Help Dogs". Behind that simple statement is a commitment to helping people with learning difficulties, providing them with employment and job training in a society that is lacking in such support when fifteen percent of the U.S. population, or one in seven Americans, has some type of learning disability, according to the National Institutes of Health.

The bright blue shop across from the small plaza hosting Americano and Time 4 Pho, has six tubs for bathing their furry customers, with one of the spaces approved by the American With Disabilities Act (ADA) for people with a tub that is lower for wheelchair access. The colorful interior is inviting and well thought-out with cute accessories to make the task of bathing little Muffy a treat for owner and doggy alike.

Their commitment to helping the learning-disabled citizens has a very personal connection. Hargadine is the mother of three children, Alex, Stella, and Elias. All are in college now. Alex has autism. Learning has been a lifelong struggle for Alex, and Hargadine and Bower, who have been together for a decade, have personally helped Alex become a success. They are intent on making a difference for people with disabilities through their doggy wash enterprise.

The first step in their mission is employing people with learning disabilities at the dog wash to give them the experience and skills to live more independently in a world that can be challenging for people with disabilities.

GDW is a self-service dog wash that makes bathing Fido both fun and a lot easier than wrestling with him/her in your bathroom while thrashing about in a tsunami of water and soap suds, and then cleaning up the mess that ends up all over you and on the floor. You need to see the GDW setup to appreciate it, so be sure to check out the video at <https://gigglechopsdogwash.com>, or better yet, stop by and say hello. Bring Fido along, of course.

The second part of their goal, when the Hargadine/Bower team reaches the breakeven point and begin to see a profit, is to donate 20% of the annual net revenue from Gigglechops Dog Wash to Brigadoon Service Dogs, a non-profit in Bellingham, WA. Brigadoon provides service dogs for veterans, and for all people with disabilities to help move them toward a more rewarding and independent life.

Given the challenge of starting any new business in Magnolia or anywhere, we should all support our local businesses to the best of our ability.

And in the case of Gigglechops Dog Wash, it would seem there might be added motivation to make that venture a roaring success. So, pack up your pooch and head down to Gigglechops, say hi to everyone, and leave with a pooch that is squeaky clean and smelling like a spring bouquet.