



Matthew Turkel of Franklin Village (left) and Sawyer Altman of Birmingham have created an energy drink.

## Students aim to energize Detroit

Sawyer Altman and Matthew Turkel hope to revitalize the Motor City with an energy drink.

The two created 313Energy, an energy drink developed through a new business course offered at their school, the Frankel Jewish Academy, where they are in their junior year.

Through the course, students construct a business plan detailing how they would develop a product and bring it to market.

"At first, I had the idea of bottling Detroit water, because we know the city produces some of the best tap water," said Altman, who lives in Birmingham. "But when we told people about our idea, we didn't get the most positive feedback."

Next came the idea for an energy drink.

"One day I was sitting in class, and it hit me," said Turkel, who lives in Franklin. "Detroit doesn't need water — it needs energy. Our idea quickly morphed into 313Energy, a drink that re-energizes consumers and the city at the same time."

Altman designed the packaging and

website for the product, while Turkel developed the marketing plan. After months of calls and e-mails, they found a contract manufacturer to produce the beverage. Using their own funds, they brought the product to market, with multiple Birmingham stores the first to offer it to customers.

"We wanted to start out producing slowly, but our first case sold out at Pogo in five days. We knew we had to increase production," Turkel said.

Revive, Pogo and Sweet Thing in downtown Birmingham carry the product. For every can of 313Energy sold, 10 cents goes toward supporting the Detroit Public Schools Foundation.

"We wanted to give back, because for us, our drink represents more than just a beverage. 313Energy represents a movement of Detroit's youth who are willing to stand up for the city," Altman said. "We want to create a new kind of awareness for the city and be part of a real change in how it's viewed."

For more information about 313Energy visit [313Energy.com](http://313Energy.com) or Facebook. [313Energy.com](http://313Energy.com)

## Local business owner finds success on the Internet

Katie Kiyo of Bloomfield Hills is owner of [www.bighugllc.com](http://www.bighugllc.com), a successful Web-based company. Here she shares her formula for success.

**Q: What was the inspiration for your company?**

Kiyo: When I was laid off from my corporate sales job at the height of Michigan's worst economic crisis, I hoped no one saw me jump up from my chair and virtually click my heels as I went out the door. At that very moment I knew I would be putting a successful 25+ year advertising career (including first-ever female Detroit sales manager for *Time* magazine behind me and embracing a new way of life — one of entrepreneurship. I felt energized and eager to go in a different direction. After much thought, I went on to develop an online sympathy/remembrance gift company ([www.bighugllc.com](http://www.bighugllc.com)) offering unique, high-quality personalized gifts to honor special people and even beloved pets. I named the company "Big Hug" because, to me, those two little words conveyed an expression of caring and compassion.

**Q: What were your start-up costs?**

A: Start up costs were reasonable, primarily the cost for a good-looking, functional web-site, for graphics and logo design, legal/professional fees and a limited amount of inventory. Because many of our products are personalized by the artist or at the factory, we are able to ship these items straight to the customer

**Q: Do you have some suggestions for starting up a small business?**

A: As we all know, a large proportion of small businesses fail in their first few years. Before doing anything else, write yourself a good business plan, and update it frequently. This doesn't have to be a long, drawn out laborious project, but get it on paper. Network with others in your field or related fields. People really do want to see you succeed. You can do this in person, through trade organizations, on-line through Linked In, etc. Get up-front legal counseling. Use the resources of the Small Business Administration in Michigan. Use the free or low cost resources available to you through SCORE.

**Q: What are your most popular gifts?**

A: Two of our most cherished gifts on a personal level thus far have been our wind chimes — both our personalized chimes, as well as an exclusive line of remembrance chimes created especially for us by Woodstock, with custom artwork and our most-requested phrase, "Listen to the wind and know I am near."



Katie Kiyo shows one of the popular products offered by her company [www.bighugllc.com](http://www.bighugllc.com).

Our personalized chimes are engraved by an engraver in Troy. Also popular are Tree Huggers stainless steel custom-engraved tree dedication plaques, supplied by a Michigan company.

**Q: Is there seasonality to your business?**

A: No, not really, but Mother's Day remembrance, and the holiday time period are especially busy times for us.

**Q: Do you use social media?**

A: Yes - Linked In, Facebook, YouTube, newsletters, and a blog for networking, and for staying connected with our customers and colleagues. It's not self-serving, these tools really do allow your customers and colleagues to join the conversation.

**Q: How do you promote Big Hug?**

A: We have been fortunate that our local, and even national news media seem to like what we are doing. We have a partnership with Legacy.com, the nation's largest repository of online obituaries, and we have worked with Tributes.com, a similar company. We use our social media tools, and occasionally invest in online paid search campaigns. Our Google "local places" listing also directs a surprising amount of traffic to our site. We also have an Affiliate management company in place that makes it possible for us to help schools, non-profit and civic organizations with fund-raising efforts.

**Q: What are some of your most interesting projects?**

A: I like my job because every day brings new challenges, but I especially liked being called back to my junior high school in Ann Arbor (where I had not been for almost 40 years!) and assisting them with a memorial garden.

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## Bernhardt on stage



The legendary Sarah Bernhardt will make a special appearance 7:30 p.m. Saturday, March 24, at Hagopian World of Rugs, 850 S. Old Woodward. Bernhardt, actually Carol Dunitz, will bring her show, "Bernhardt on Broadway," to the show. Bernhardt on Broadway, "to the show." It is "a no holds barred expose" about the daughter of a courtesan who overcame countless obstacles to become the most famous woman in the world. Tickets are available at [www.BrownPaperTickets.com](http://www.BrownPaperTickets.com).

## On the air



Bloomfield Hills-based interior designer Corey Damen Jenkins will be featured on an upcoming episode of HGTV's Showhouse Showdown. The episode, "Saginaw Michigan Showdown: Old World Style vs. Fun Floating Furniture," was filmed in Midland, Mich., and was set to air at 2:30 p.m. Saturday, March 24, with an encore showing at 1:30 p.m. Friday, March 30. The designer furnished the homes using furniture and accessories from Michigan-based Gorman's Home Furnishings and Interior Design.