



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

KNORR-BREMSE GLOBAL CARE NORTH AMERICA GRANT
CREATES NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR WORKFORCE READINESS
AT NORTHEAST OHIO HIGH SCHOOL

*Nearly \$70,000 Award to Midview High School Funds Harbor of Hope Spirit Shop,
Student-Run Café, and New Pre-Apprenticeship Programs in Finance and Hospitality*

AVON, Ohio – Oct. 6, 2025 – What had long served as a classroom and library at Midview High School has been reimaged into a hub where students design and sell spirit wear, serve coffee to staff and peers, and build skills that will last a lifetime. Thanks to a nearly \$70,000 grant from Knorr-Bremse Global Care North America (KBGCNA), the Grafton, Ohio-located school launched a sweeping initiative known as Harbor of Hope to prepare students of all abilities for life after graduation.

Inside the transformed space is a student-run café, a production shop and storefront for Midview gear, a sensory room, a full-scale special education classroom, and a teaching kitchen. A Kindness Closet, stocked with clothing, hygiene items, and school supplies for students in need, is also nearby. The new areas are designed for hands-on training and anchor two pre-apprenticeship programs in finance and hospitality, offering real-world experience to more than 800 students – including more than 80 with mild-to-severe disabilities. These programs also align with Ohio's workforce readiness goals, which emphasize career-focused training and alternative graduation pathways alongside traditional academics.

In these pathways, students develop concrete, transferable skills. Those in the finance track practice budgeting, saving, marketing, and accounting basics as they manage real

transactions. Hospitality students gain experience in customer service, barista training, kitchen and health safety, and operating point-of-sale systems. Together, these opportunities provide a foundation that employers value – skills many graduates might not otherwise encounter until their first job.

“This project gives our students experiences that simply didn’t exist a few months ago,” said Meredith Udris, director of pupil services. “They’re going to leave here with the confidence and preparation to be employable after graduation – carrying with them knowledge and experiences they can use to help make our community a better place.”

Growing Portfolio of Change

What’s happening at Midview is part of something bigger: a growing portfolio of projects designed to open doors for young people by KBGCNA, the North American philanthropic organization for Knorr-Bremse of Munich, Germany – the global market leader for braking systems and a leading supplier of other safety-critical rail and commercial vehicle systems.

Since its launch in 2018, KBGCNA has awarded more than \$2.6 million to over 30 initiatives across the United States, Canada, and Mexico. The nonprofit focuses on efforts that support youth, education, and underprivileged populations in communities near three of Knorr-Bremse’s largest North American companies: Avon, Ohio-based Bendix Commercial Vehicle Systems LLC (Bendix); Westminster, Maryland-based Knorr Brake Company; and Watertown, New York-based New York Air Brake LLC.

For KBGCNA, the Midview project represents exactly the kind of community investment the organization seeks – one that blends education with hands-on skills and creates opportunity for students who need it most.

“This partnership hit our sweet spot at KBGCNA – helping young people at risk build real skills for life, from vocational training to inclusion,” said Maria Gutierrez, KBGCNA president. “It meant so much to see Midview dream big and then bring that vision to life with creativity, resourcefulness, and community spirit.”

Every KBGCNA project is supported by an employee champion, and for Harbor of Hope that role was filled by Cheryl Greenly, a Bendix intellectual property attorney and parent of three Midview graduates. Greenly helped stretch grant dollars through strategic purchases and stayed in close touch with teachers as the program took shape. She also assembled equipment, joined by other Bendix volunteers.

“As a parent of three Midview graduates, this was my chance to give back,” Greenly said. “I saw firsthand how much Midview gave my kids, and now I can help make sure other students have the same opportunities.”

From Idea to Investment

The seed for the ambitious project began when Transition Coordinator Jessica Hoban noticed the student population she supports was not typically headed to college or vocational school but still needed pathways and thoughtful support as they charted their future. She pitched the idea of a small café and shop to district leaders, and then she met with Gutierrez and was encouraged to broaden the scope. That conversation grew the plan into a full-scale workforce readiness center with a teaching kitchen, sensory room, learning labs, and the Kindness Closet.

“Our goal is for every student to feel they belong and to see the value in their skills,” said Hoban. “This program shows them they belong, they have skills, and they have a future.”

Hoban continued, “As a transition coordinator, part of my role is seeing skills in students that they don’t always see in themselves and helping them dream about what their future could look like. In my previous district, I had proposed a small T-shirt shop, and the amount of growth we saw in students was incredible. They had something they could take ownership of, something they could succeed at, and something that made them feel like they belonged at school. When I came to Midview, I knew I wanted to bring that same idea here.”

The transformation of the space was swift. Over the summer, Midview’s own maintenance team split the library, built new walls, installed cabinets and appliances, and rewired the area to create distinct zones for academics, the café, and the Harbor of Hope production center.

“For 20 years I knew what this space was, and now it is unbelievable,” said Don Caramell, an intervention specialist at the school. “Before, our students would have been in a typical classroom or library. Now they are running a café, pressing shirts, and learning what it takes to succeed in a real workplace. These are the kinds of experiences that help them walk into a job interview with confidence and pride.”

Sales, Spirit, and School Pride

Even in its early weeks, the program is creating a buzz. In just the first two weeks, Harbor of Hope logged nearly \$1,000 in sales. Orders came in from student council, ROTC, and

for themed football nights. The café quickly became part of the staff routine, with teachers joking that the student-made lattes rivaled national coffee chains.

“The coffee is great,” said Hoban. “But what really excites us is the joy on our students’ faces as they serve their community.”

That excitement has extended to school leadership. Midview Principal Chad Heuser – one of the café’s most frequent customers – said the initiative gives him confidence when he talks to families about Midview’s future.

“Now I can say to parents in this community that we have new pathways for your child, and we are actively pursuing multiple avenues that can help lead them to success after they graduate from Midview High School,” he said.

Hoban added, “In addition to our current base, programs like this make sure that every one of our students, not just those on a traditional academic path, has meaningful options. It’s something we’re incredibly proud of.”

Families, too, are noticing the difference. Administrators say parents have voiced their enthusiasm, pointing to the way the program builds independence and executive functioning skills their children will carry into adult life.

Teachers and staff see the same momentum continuing to grow. Hoban noted that proceeds from Harbor of Hope will support field trips, workplace visits, and student incentives. Plans are also underway to expand into embroidery and additional technology-based apprenticeships.

Small Victories, Lasting Impact

Teachers say the most profound changes are showing up in the small victories: the moments when students surprise themselves.

“At times our kids underestimate what they’re capable of. Many are still discovering just how much they can do,” said Caramell. “But when they break through a challenge or learn a new skill, you can see them gaining confidence and pride in themselves.”

For many at Midview, the impact of Harbor of Hope can be distilled into a single word that captures both the spirit of the program and its promise for the future: hope.

“This opportunity has made us really hopeful for the future and what it is going to provide for our students and our community,” said Katie Hicks, a school intervention specialist at Midview.

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Oct. 6, 2025/Page 5

The initiative was formally celebrated with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on October 3, followed by tours of the new space.

Harbor of Hope also adds to KBGCNA's expanding portfolio of efforts, which range from STEM enrichment programs in Maryland to vocational training initiatives in New York – all reflecting KBGCNA's mission to build long-term partnerships that open doors.

For Midview and KBGCNA, the program shows how schools and businesses can collaborate to expand opportunity.

"Education is strongest when the whole community is involved," said Udris. "When companies step up to support our students, the possibilities expand dramatically."

About Knorr-Bremse Global Care North America

Knorr-Bremse Global Care North America Inc. (KBGCNA) is an independent organization operating as the North American arm of a global nonprofit organization – Knorr-Bremse Global Care. With an aim to address local social challenges more effectively, KBGCNA investments are centered in the surrounding communities of Knorr-Bremse's three largest North American companies: Avon, Ohio-based Bendix Commercial Vehicle Systems LLC; Westminster, Maryland-based Knorr Brake Company; and Watertown, New York-based New York Air Brake LLC. Funding activities are championed and supported by the employees of each of the three local companies. Follow us on LinkedIn at [linkedin.com/company/knorr-bremse-global-care-north-america-inc](https://www.linkedin.com/company/knorr-bremse-global-care-north-america-inc).

About Bendix Commercial Vehicle Systems LLC

Bendix Commercial Vehicle Systems, a member of Knorr-Bremse, develops and supplies leading-edge active safety technologies, energy management solutions, and air brake charging and control systems and components under the Bendix® brand name for medium- and heavy-duty trucks, tractors, trailers, buses, and other commercial vehicles throughout North America. An industry pioneer, employing more than 3,600 people, Bendix is driven to deliver the best solutions for improved vehicle safety, performance, and overall operating cost. Contact us at 1-800-AIR-BRAKE (1-800-247-2725) or visit [bendix.com](https://www.bendix.com). Stay connected and informed through Bendix expert podcasts, blog posts, videos, and other resources at [knowledge-dock.com](https://www.knowledge-dock.com). Follow Bendix on X, formerly known as Twitter, at x.com/Bendix_CVS. Log on and learn from the Bendix experts at [brake-school.com](https://www.brake-school.com). And to learn more about career opportunities at Bendix, visit [bendix.com/careers](https://www.bendix.com/careers).

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