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Experience Grand Rapids Launches “Craft Your Career” to Build the Future of Hospitality Talent
Program highlights real career pathways and invests in the future of West Michigan’s tourism workforce

Grand Rapids, Mich. – As the tourism industry continues to play a critical role in driving West Michigan’s economy, Experience Grand Rapids is investing in its future workforce with the launch of [Craft Your Career](#). The new campaign is designed to inspire the next generation to explore meaningful, long-term careers in hospitality and tourism. By showcasing real stories from professionals across the industry, the initiative aims to reshape perceptions and position hospitality as a viable and rewarding career path for students, graduates and early-career talent.

The initiative comes as communities across the country recognize [National Travel & Tourism Week](#), May 3 through May 9, a time to highlight the impact of tourism and the people who power it.

“As one of the region’s key economic drivers, the tourism industry supports thousands of jobs and businesses across Kent County, said Doug Small, president and CEO at Experience Grand Rapids. “Craft Your Career reinforces the importance of building a strong, sustainable talent pipeline to support continued growth and ensure the industry remains vibrant for years to come.”

Craft Your Career brings to life the real experiences behind the industry, featuring local professionals who have built dynamic careers in restaurants, hotels, attractions and beyond. Through a series of short “[Day in the Life](#)” videos and a broader brand story, the campaign highlights the creativity, growth and opportunity that define hospitality careers today.

“We want people to see hospitality not just as a job, but as a craft where you can grow, lead and leave your mark,” said Kate Lieto, vice president of marketing at Experience Grand Rapids. “These are real stories from real people in West Michigan, and we hope they spark something for the next generation of industry professionals.”

The campaign builds on EXGR’s longstanding commitment to workforce development, including partnerships with local schools and programs like the [Academy of Hospitality & Tourism](#), which connects students to career pathways across the industry. Since its launch, the program has expanded to multiple schools throughout the region, creating stronger connections between education and industry.

With Craft Your Career, EXGR is extending that impact by reaching individuals as they graduate high school, enter college or begin exploring career options, and providing a clearer view into the breadth of opportunities available within hospitality and tourism.

The campaign also emphasizes the diversity of roles and career journeys within hospitality, highlighting opportunities in operations, marketing, culinary arts, guest experience and leadership—many of which begin with entry-level jobs and evolve into long-term careers.

To learn more, visit www.craftyourcareergr.com.

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About Experience Grand Rapids

Established in 1927, Experience Grand Rapids (EXGR) leads the marketing of Grand Rapids/Kent County as a premier convention & visitor destination providing a significant positive impact to the West Michigan economy. Previously named the Grand Rapids/Kent County Convention & Visitors Bureau, EXGR represents the second largest city in Michigan with over one million residents.