

Logistics Plus a 'Difference Maker' in Erie

Former Buffalo Bills quarterback Jim Kelly — one of the greatest quarterbacks in NFL history — issued a direct challenge during his moving speech at the Erie Times-News' Best of Varsity Cup event in June at the Bayfront Convention Center.

"I challenge everyone to be a difference maker," Kelly said.

Logistics Plus has risen to that challenge since its inception and is proud to be one of the businesses making a difference in Erie.

The company's commitment to the city can be traced back to the day Logistics Plus founder Jim Berlin made the decision to house the company's global headquarters at Union Station, which had been long abandoned and fallen into a sad state of disrepair. Berlin committed to investing thousands of hours and millions of dollars to revitalize the historic train station. It is now a centerpiece of downtown Erie, known for the flags that fly from the roof (representing nearly 50 countries where Logistics Plus has offices or does business). Berlin's investment in the property has made it possible for other businesses to make their home there too. The BrewErie, for instance, is a gathering spot the whole community loves.

The work at Union Station was just the beginning of Jim's commitment to making a difference in Erie. More recent examples include encouraging local athletes by sponsoring events like the Erie Times-News' Best of Varsity Cup each of the past three years — where Kelly was the featured speaker; recruiting local college students to stay in Erie by giving them the opportunity to take part in the company's robust internship program; and, once again, supporting the Manufacturer & Business Association (MBA) and its Annual Event in October. Coming up, Logistics Plus is also supporting the upcoming Tall Ships Erie by sponsoring the ship Picton Castle during the four-day festival, scheduled Aug. 22 to 25.

"The 2016 Tall Ships Erie festival attracted 90,000 people and brought \$8 million to the community and simply made Erie feel good about itself," Berlin said. "We expect this festival to have just as an incredible an impact and wanted to support that any way we could."





Berlin also encourages his employees (now close to 200 of them in Erie alone) to make a difference in Erie by giving them paid time off to volunteer for community organizations. The company and its employees are active in dozens of Erie nonprofits, including United Way, the March of Dimes, the American Heart Association, the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, the Make A Wish Foundation, the Barber National Institute, Grady's Decision,

WQLN, Community Blood Bank of Northwest Pennsylvania & Western New York, Gaudenzia, the Greater Erie Area Habitat for Humanity, and many others.

"I want to give our team as many opportunities as I can to contribute to this community that we all care about so much," Berlin said. "I want to encourage them to be that difference maker right here in Erie.

That sort of business culture has benefited Logistics Plus in other ways as well. The company has been certified as a great workplace through employee surveys and by the independent analysts at Great Place to Work® each of the past two years; last year, for the fourth time, the company was included on Inc. magazine's annual Inc. 5000 list, an exclusive ranking of the nation's fastest-growing private companies (the company has more than doubled in the past two years, and they've added 30 new jobs in Erie already this year); and the company annually receives numerous other forms of recognition for quality services, entrepreneurship, community service, and its workplace environment.



Regarding 2019 commitments to Erie, Berlin added, "I hope that by supporting Erie athletes through the Best of Varsity Cup, by supporting the MBA and its members, and by supporting Erie's tourism efforts at the Tall Ship Festival, we're encouraging other companies to be difference makers too."

###