

Evansville CEO's actions as a temporary babysitter to help a working mom go viral

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It's not every day you see a CEO pushing a one-year-old infant around a busy office.

But as of Wednesday afternoon, millions of individuals had seen just that from an Evansville CEO thanks to a social media post that went viral May 28.

President and CEO Greg Wathen said he was simply trying to help his colleague, Audrie Burkett, at Economic Development Coalition of Southwest Indiana.

Burkett was facing the same dilemma many working parents face — balancing work and family into their daily routines.

Burkett, vice president & COO of the Coalition, had a big day in the office and discovered her one-year-old

daughter Faye was under the weather and wouldn't be able to go to daycare.

She called Wathen to explain her dilemma, and without hesitation, he told her to bring Faye into the office while she prepared for two meetings.

"I had the difficult decision of 'Do I pick my family or do I pick my work?'" she said. "It's really hard to put work over your family. I didn't want to let my team down, and I didn't want to let my family down. Not everyone is lucky enough to have someone like Greg (Wathen) as a leader that doesn't make you choose between your family or work."

Faye sat on the floor with her snacks while her mother participated in the regional broadband meeting consisting of 18 people.

"We really didn't miss a beat and met for almost an hour," Burkett said. "Every now and then she needed a

little snuggle and sat on my lap, but for the most part, you didn't even realize she was there because she was quietly playing on the floor... and I had her attention with crackers."

That was just the first part of Burkett's busy day. She had more meetings and tasks lined up, so Wathen stepped in to walk Faye in a stroller around the halls. After 45 minutes, Faye was sound asleep, he said.

Burkett was so grateful for Wathen's support that she made a LinkedIn status about her experience. To date, the post has been viewed by more than five million people worldwide, received more than 90,000 reactions and nearly 3,300 comments.

"I knew keeping a one-year-old entertained for an entire workday would be a challenge I hadn't faced before, but our team embraced our youngest employee of the day," she wrote on a LinkedIn post. "We have a culture of understanding the importance of family and the struggles working moms can face because Greg has made these issues a priority."

Wathen said he's glad the LinkedIn post sparked conversations about daycare and working parents.

"The reaction that we received from around the world has been astonishing, and it has truly struck a cord because this is an issue that not just impacts here at our office or southwest Indiana, but it certainly impacts so many companies, families and individuals (both men and women)," Wathen said.

Economic Development Coalition of Southwest Indiana is in the process of talking to groups across the country about how to change the traditional 8 to 5 work model to integrate family and talent into a more seamless type of work environment.

"For whatever reason, society has created this barrier by not being as open as we could be to dealing with this issue of daycare," Wathen said. "We need to change the traditional model."

Burkett said she hopes other parents get the same level of support from their companies or organizations as she did.

"We need highly-skilled people and people to be in our workforce," she said. "Well, sometimes there are barriers that come up — not just from working moms but for working parents too — and having the mentality of a true work-life balance is something that we need to think about as we think about how we keep our talent here in southwest Indiana."

When the day ended, Burkett said she was glad she didn't have to choose between home and work, stating, "You can have both. You can be successful."

Obituaries

W.E. Butts, Jr.

MT. VERNON - Wilburn E. Butts, Jr., 88, of Mt. Vernon, IN passed away June 10, 2019 at his home. He was born September 4, 1930 in Morganfield, KY to the late Wilburn E., Sr. and Delia (Collins) Butts.

W.E. served in the Indiana National Guard for 7 years. He retired from ADM Milling Company after 45 years of service. W.E. enjoyed camping, fishing and gardening.

He was preceded in death by his sister, Helen Ramberger.

He is survived by his wife of 66 years, Lois (Morehead) Butts; daughters, Debbie (David) Schaefer, Doris (Roger) Nation, and Denise (Donnie) Garrett; brother, Robert (Donna) Butts; grandchildren, Larry McCarty, Jeremy (Christina) McCarty, Jason (Robin) Young, Brandi (Wayne) Muensterman, Tyler (Tosha) Greathouse, Stephanie (Bruce) Coy, Chris (Reyna) Schaefer; 19 great-grandchildren.

Funeral service will be held at 1:00 pm on Thursday, June 13, 2019 at Schneider Funeral Home, 512 Main St., Mt. Vernon, IN, with Fr. Jim Sauer officiating and entombment to follow in St. Joseph Mausoleum.

Visitation will be held from 10:00 am until 1:00 pm on service time on Thursday at the funeral home.

Memorial contributions may be made to Linda E. White Hospice House.

Condolences may be made online at www.schneiderfuneralhome.com



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Kirk Anthony Dougherty

MT. CARMEL - Kirk Anthony Dougherty, 61, of Mt. Carmel, Illinois passed away Tuesday, June 11, 2019 at Deaconess Midtown Hospital surrounded by his loving family.

Kirk was born November 5, 1957 in Mt. Carmel, IL to Elbert E. Dougherty, Jr. and Carolyn Joyce (Trimble) Dougherty. He graduated Mt. Carmel High School, Wabash Valley College, and earned Associate Degree in Petroleum Technology from Midland College.

He worked for over twenty years in the oil production field industry as Geological Technician with several firms; RK Petroleum, El Paso Energy Corporation, Vintage Petroleum, Inc., Santa Fe Minerals, Inc., and Chesapeake Energy, Inc.

Kirk enjoyed hunting, collecting coins and arrowheads. He was an avid sports fan. His favorite teams were the Dallas Cowboys, OKC Thunder, Oklahoma Sooners and the St. Louis Cardinals. He also ran in 5K and 10K marathons.

He was a member of the First Baptist Church in Mt. Carmel, Elks Lodge #715 and Knights of Columbus.

Kirk was a devoted father to his two daughters, Carolyn Rose Dougherty and Catherine Grace Dougherty. Also left to cherish his memory are his brothers Joseph William (Margaret) Dougherty, Timothy John Dougherty; and grandson Jack Leroy O'Donnell; and many nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents; sister Sabrina Dougherty Risley and brothers Mark Vincent Dougherty and Patrick Alan Dougherty.

Visitation will be Thursday, June 13, 2019 from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. at Short Funeral Home in Mt. Carmel. Funeral Service will be Friday, June 14, 2019 at 10:30 a.m. in the Chapel of Short Funeral Home. Burial will follow in St. Mary's Catholic Cemetery.

Donations in memory of Kirk can be made to the Mt. Carmel Public Library. Envelopes are available at the funeral home.

Condolences may be made online at www.short-cunninghamfh.com

Short-Cunningham Funeral Home is honored to serve Kirk's family.



CEO Greg Wathen walked baby Faye around the office for 45 minutes before she fell asleep.
COURTESY OF AUDRIE BURKETT