

LEADERS CIRCLE:



[View All](#)

Menu



*Every Thursday is **THINK LOCAL THURSDAY**
in Lake Forest and Lake Bluff!*

MEMBER SPOTLIGHTS...

[Chamber Gift Certificates](#)

Meet Aric, Lee & Jay Shlifka Kiddles Sports

258 Market Square, LF

Lake Forest/Lake Bluff Chamber: Congratulations on your 50th anniversary! How was Kiddles Sports started and how did you all become involved?

Lee: My grandfather bought Kiddles (which was a hardware store) in 1968. In that time period Schwinn & Raleigh were distributed exclusively in hardware stores. My dad worked part time as a teenager and once he graduated in 1975, he came on full time. The 1970s propelled health and active lifestyles into the mainstream and with that top of mind, bicycles, running and sports in general took over our business model. With that change, it edged out hardware. We were the fourth Adidas dealer in Illinois and were pioneers in taking on popular brands such as: Nike, Rollerblade, Trek, Brooks, along with many more. Aric and I tried several jobs out of college, but ultimately found our love for the Kiddles Sports trumped those opportunities and we both came on full time in the mid 2000's.



LFLBC: What is the one thing you want your customers to know about Kiddles Sports?

Aric: When you walk in the door, you are not just coming in as just a customer, you're coming in as a friend...[you're] coming into our house and we'll take care of you. We're not here to sell you; we're here to guide you in the direction you are seeking.

LFLBC: What is your business vision?

Aric: We want to stick to our roots with top quality customer service in selling bikes, running shoes and sports equipment to our local families--outfitting them for sports. While team sports have been a foundation for us since our inception, in the last decade, we've transitioned into more custom apparel and equipment for schools, club teams and corporations.

LFLBC: What is your most successful business initiative?

Aric: In all our fifty years?! (laughs) We change as the retail climate changes. So, right now we're in the season of bicycles, so it's bicycle sales and service. But, the big growth initiative is probably going to be the custom uniforms, spirit wear and equipment for teams, corporations, school events as applicable. While you see it online, we take the time to guide you every step of the way!

LFLBC: What other local businesses do you collaborate with?

Aric / Lee: We've done recent promotions with Sweets, The Left Bank and Fitness Together to name a few. We're always trying to find synergies with other small businesses.

LFLBC: How does your business give back to the community?

Aric / Lee: We have donated to so many local charities. In our 50th year, we are looking to find synergies with more local organizations. We've done things with Catholic Charities, Most Blessed Trinity, GLASA, Gorton Center, LEAD and many more... We like to do 'Shop for a Cause' events, to give people a reason to not just go online.

LFLBC: Is there anything else you'd like to share?

Aric: We want to say 'Thank You' for allowing us be part of your community for 50 years.

Lee: Look for more Kiddles Sports events in the next couple months ... our actual 50th is September, so we'll be celebrating through the end of the year.

Jay: We do and will continue to listen to feedback to ensure we offer any and all sporting goods needs.

8.6.2018
