

## + COMMUNITY

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for my master's degree," he said. "She held me accountable for everything that I wanted. I didn't want to go back for my master's, but she saw the vision clearer than I did when it came to working on owning my own dealership."

He also attended the Ford-sponsored NADA Academy – a prestigious program that develops current and future leaders to operate a successful and profitable automotive business.

In 2019, Liddell earned a position as a salesperson for Avis Ford in Southfield, an African American owned dealership.

As a salesperson turned Financial Manager, Liddell contributed to cutting the delivery time in half – shortening the time from when the customer walked in the door and walked out with a vehicle.

Due to a stellar performance in service of the automotive industry, Avis Ford earned the President's Award in 2021 & 2022.

"It's definitely a proud feeling when your team is winning," he said. "It was something special to be a part of."

The Automotive News nominated Lid-

dell with the "40 Under 40" honors -- being only one of three people from Michigan to have received the award.

"Earning that award will set me apart from the rest when it's time for me to actually acquire my own dealership," he said.

While working for Avis, his reputation and story became a buzz amongst those in the automotive industry.

One name in particular that heard about him was Richard Garber, owner of Garber Automotive Group. Knowing what Liddell was capable of, he proposed an offer knowing that the collaboration could propel into something special.

"They created this general manager position for me," he said. "He believed in me and my story and actually tried to hire me three times. I was stuck at the ceiling at Avis Ford, but God put it on my spirit to at least speak to Mr. Garber as he heard wonderful things about me and wanted to get me on board."

Acknowledging the rare accomplishment, Liddell is the first black General Manager for Garber Automotive Group in Michigan out of the 26 dealerships in total

– the only other black General Manager is in Rochester, N.Y.

Having a home in Southfield and not wanting to commute, Liddell is currently living in a townhome five minutes from the dealership in Saginaw.

As a product of mentorship, Liddell wants to give the advice to others that he wishes someone would've given to his teenage self.

"I had a quitter's mindset," he said. "If you have the patience and tenacity to work towards something, it'll fall into place for you. If it's something that I truly want, then I'll never quit again."

Making black history is an accomplishment for Liddell, but he's far from content as he's looking to open the doors to others just like him.

"It means that there's more to come for me," he said. "I'm the first, but I don't want to be the only one. I want more of us to have that opportunity. I'm working to create a way for those to come behind me by opening as many doors as I can."

**#TeamUp for the Dow GLBR grant program returns for 2024; Applications now open for local nonprofits**

Local nonprofits can now apply for the 2024 #TeamUp for the Great Lakes Bay Region grant program, tournament officials with the Dow Championship announced today. Nonprofit organizations can apply online at [www.dowchampionship.com/community-impact](http://www.dowchampionship.com/community-impact) through March 15th. The LPGA tournament remains committed to donating to charities across the Great Lakes Bay Region and has awarded more than \$2 million to local nonprofits since its inception in 2019.

"At the heart of our event's mission is '#TeamUp for the Great Lakes Bay Region,' fostering enrichment through charitable giveback. We take pride in supporting local organizations and making a significant impact in our community," said Heather Gallegos, Director of Community Affairs at Dow. "The tournament and these groups together create a lasting positive influence throughout the Great Lakes Bay Region. We are committed to amplifying this im-

pact in the coming year."

Each year, #TeamUp for the Great Lakes Bay Region selects seven organizations across each of the region's counties (Saginaw, Bay, Midland and Isabella). An additional eight nonprofits are also selected based on the services they provide on a regional level. Since 2019, the tournament's charitable giving programs have supported more than 60 nonprofits across the Great Lakes Bay Region, such as the Isabella Community Soup Kitchen of Isabella County. The nonprofit was awarded a bonus donation of \$11,000 after last year's event for being paired with the 2023 champions, Cheyenne Knight and Elizabeth Szokol.

All 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations in the Great Lakes Bay Region are invited to apply. Nonprofits will be chosen based on their organization's impact on science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education; sustainability; inclusion, diver-

sity and equity (ID&E); community resiliency; and/or innovation. Once selected, each of the 36 nonprofits will be paired randomly with one of the 72 teams competing in the 2024 LPGA event. A total of \$237,000 will be donated through this program with each selected nonprofit guaranteed to receive at least a \$4,500 grant. Additional grant opportunities will be announced at a later date.

Selections are expected to be announced at the end of April. Tournament staff will continue to #TeamUp with the Midland Area Community Foundation, Bay Area Community Foundation, Saginaw Community Foundation and the Mt. Pleasant Area Community Foundation and the Dow Great Lakes Bay Region Grant Team to manage the program.

The Dow Championship will return to Midland Country Club June 24 – 30, 2024. Visit [www.dowchampionship.com](http://www.dowchampionship.com) for more information about this year's event.