

Dutch Bros. Coffee Company

By Janna Reid

In 1992, thirty-eight-year-old Dane Boersma and his twenty-one-year-old brother Travis Boersma, third-generation dairy farmers in Grants Pass, decided to buy a double-head espresso machine and experiment with a hundred pounds of coffee in their empty milk house in Grants Pass. Within a month of handing out free samples of flavored coffee to friends and family, the duo ventured out into their southern Oregon town with a mobile espresso pushcart. They named their company Dutch Brother's Coffee Company, or Dutch Bros.

Before long, as a flavored-coffee craze swept through Grants Pass and surrounding areas, the Boersma brothers' company began to grow. They worked with local suppliers to ensure quality and commitment to their products and to the "Dutch Creed" (the Optimist's Creed) that they built their business on: to be positive and love life to the fullest, "to think only the best, to work only for the best and expect only the best."

Dutch Bros. roasts all of its own coffee, and the company's focus is on drive-through coffee shops. They currently offer franchising opportunities to existing franchises and current employees only and the company is the country's largest privately held, drive-through coffee chain. As of January 2012, 172 Dutch Bros. locally owned and operated franchises were operating in Oregon, California, Washington, Idaho, Nevada, Colorado, and Arizona.

In October 2009, Dane Boersma died of Lou Gehrig's disease. In his honor, all locations annually donate one designated day's proceeds to the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA). In 2010, over \$110,000 was donated to MDA for research and family services funding. The company also participates annually in a "Buck for Kids Day," when part of the proceeds benefits regional nonprofit organizations. In 2011, over \$93,000 was raised for this cause to further the Dutch Bros. mantra, "make a difference, one cup at a time." In addition to specific causes, over \$1,000,000 annually (1% of gross sales) is reinvested into the community by each retail location.

Sources

Hsuan, Amy. "Dutch Bros. Coffee Co-founder dies." *Oregonian*, October 15, 2009. www.oregonlive.com/business/index.ssf/2009/10/post_9.html

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