

# ANNUAL REPORT **22** **23**



KOKOMO **CEO**

CEO *Facilitator*

As the facilitator of the innovative Kokomo CEO program, I've come to understand the crucial role of cultivating a deep-seated appreciation for learning among our future leaders. And to achieve this, we must first embody the mindset of a lifelong learner ourselves, acknowledging that the pursuit of knowledge is a never-ending journey, with no ultimate destination in sight.

**I'd like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the trailblazing leaders in education, business, and local government who have helped make Kokomo CEO a reality in our community.** This year, we proudly marked our 9th class of Kokomo CEO, during which we explored entrepreneurship, problem-solving, and best practices in effective leadership. Thanks to the tireless efforts and support of our board and investors, high school juniors and seniors continue to receive invaluable exposure to these key themes.

Of all the memorable moments from this year's program, our CEO Summit stands out as a true highlight. Despite facing unfavorable weather, these incredible kids pulled together and sold over 300 tickets to our Leadership Conference, which brought in an impressive profit of \$12,000. With the unwavering determination and adaptability that defines true leaders, they even pivoted to provide video recordings for guests who couldn't attend in person.

I was also blown away by the caliber of personal businesses my kids developed, each one perfectly tailored to their unique personalities and creative talents. Witnessing their intense focus and drive was a truly inspiring experience. **There's nothing more fulfilling than seeing the look of pride and self-assurance on their faces when they tackle a difficult challenge and come out on top.**

Kokomo CEO is about more than just business and entrepreneurship – it's also about helping our young adults discover who they truly want to be, not just what they want to do. Through personality assessments and candid discussions about our core values and beliefs, we encouraged introspection and personal growth in a way that truly resonated with our team. I firmly believe that we must empower the next generation to become the best version of themselves, rather than forcing them into narrow career paths that may not align with their true passions and strengths.

Finally, I want to express my pride and gratitude for the close bonds that formed among our team members and mentors this year. The connections forged during Kokomo CEO will undoubtedly serve these young professionals well as they continue to pursue their dreams and aspirations. I feel incredibly fortunate to have been a part of this life-changing experience, and I can't wait to see what these young men and women will achieve next.



Brandon Bishop  
Facilitator, Kokomo CEO



THE MISSION OF KOKOMO CEO IS TO  
PREPARE OUR YOUTH TO BE RESPONSIBLE,  
ENTERPRISING INDIVIDUALS WHO BECOME  
ENTREPRENEURS OR ENTREPRENEURIAL  
THINKERS AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND  
SUSTAINABILITY OF THE KOKOMO REGION



## 2022-2023 CLASS MENTORS

GINA CURL | BRAD PRIDAY | JERRY SMITH | CARLY EADS  
MARY BAKER | JOHANNA MOOS | BART IRWIN } JONATHAN  
MALIN | ALEC DOWNING | NICK PATE | BRIANNE BOLES  
MORGAN YOUNG | SARAH PITZER | MARGARET JOHNSON  
LILLY RAGAN | MICHAEL KEBRDLE } CHRISTY DECHERT  
JESSICA GREEN FUNK | TA WEBER

# 2022-2023 CLASS

MEET THE



## **AJ Blessing**

AJ is a junior at Kokomo High School, and he plans to attend Indiana University Bloomington to study sports marketing after graduating next year. AJ's business, SeeGlass, provides hand-made crafts made out of sustainable and recyclable materials.

The CEO program was the most useful and enjoyable class I have taken. The CEO program allowed me to open up and be more confident around not only adults but my classmates as well. CEO provided me with the opportunity to explore and learn about the business world through personal experiences with local business owners. The relationships I built this year with my classmates and mentors have been very beneficial to me and prepared me for my future.



## **Hannah Bonds**

Hannah Bonds is a senior at Northwestern High School and plans to attend Milligan University to study Children's Ministry. She creates greeting cards to enable people to stay in touch with their loved ones in her business, Joyful Greetings.

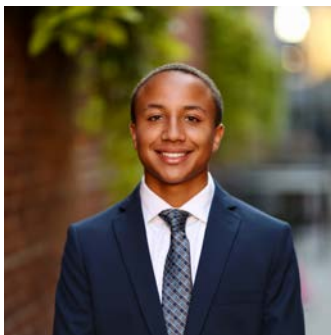
Kokomo CEO has taught me a lot about communicating and working with a team. I have been able to grow through the unique experiences in CEO and I am grateful for all of the lessons I've learned throughout the year.



## **John Curl Jr.**

John is a senior at Kokomo High school who plans to attend Indiana State University, where he will major in business marketing and will be a member of the baseball team. John's business, Bruno's & Beyond, is a fresh edition of the family owned business of 63 years. The services offered are catering, pre-bake pizzas, take-home pizza kits, and pizza making experiences.

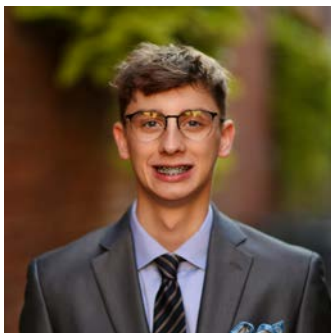
Kokomo CEO has been an unparalleled opportunity that has allowed me to grow in my leadership role as well learning to network within my community. The program has given me the opportunity to learn different ways to lead and build on my strengths.



## **Kyan Gamble**

Kyan is a senior at Kokomo High School and is undecided on what college he is attending; however, he plans to study building technology and business management. His business, Shake It Up, provides a nutritional structure and helps supply the amount of natural protein the body needs daily.

Kokomo CEO has given me the confidence to communicate in a professional interaction. My time in Kokomo CEO has changed my view on the community and has opened up new doors for me. I am thankful for the opportunity to be in this program.



## **Eli Guest**

Eli is a senior at Kokomo High School and plans to attend Indiana University and major in finance. Eli is the owner of Grade A Auto Detail, a mobile vehicle detailing company that aims to bring high quality and effective detailing to each and every customer.

Kokomo CEO has taught me many skills such as communication, getting out of my comfort zone, and the knowledge of business and entrepreneurship. To become successful, you have to be comfortable in the uncomfortable, that is one main things CEO has ingrained in me. Without a doubt, Kokomo CEO is an excellent opportunity for every Kokomo area student and these skills will utilized throughout my life!

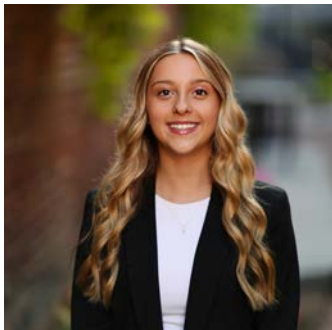
# 2022-2023 CLASS

MEET THE



## **Sedalia Herrera**

Kokomo CEO has given me the opportunity to make great connections. It also has helped me become more confident in making professional decisions. Being in the program has improved my communication and social skills. I am thrilled to have had the experience to be in CEO. It has changed my view point for the better.



## **Kylie Irwin**

Kylie is a senior at Western High School and plans to get her real estate license. Her business, Kylie Mae's Crafts, creates and sells wooden, handmade signs that add a creative touch to homes.

The CEO program has been one of the best choices that I could have made in my high school career. It has provided me with the opportunity to learn and grow through real world experiences. It has pushed me out of my comfort zone and forced me to improve as a leader in all aspects. I'm very thankful for the opportunities it has provided for me



## **Keaton Lewellen**

Keaton is a senior at Lewis Cass High School and plans to attend Ball State University, where he will major in Architecture. Keaton's business, Crown Cornhole, is a business that specializes in the design of quality, custom Cornhole boards.

Applying for Kokomo CEO was the best choice I made throughout my high school career. This class has taught me many skills that I will be able to use throughout my life outside of high school. I have learned various leadership and team skills, and I have gained relationships with people in the community.



## **Karson Parrott**

Karson is a current senior at Kokomo High School who plans to attend Indiana University Bloomington in the fall of 2023, where he will study business administration. Karson's business, Apex-Swings, was developed to promote and educate the young generation of today's golfers!

Kokomo CEO has been such a mind-expanding experience for myself. Kokomo CEO has a huge promotion on personal health and knowledge. Each and everyday the CEO team has brought new challenges and adversity to my life. The lessons I've learned throughout the journey of CEO have helped me overcome challenges and face adversity. CEO gave me the opportunity to strengthen my networking skills, which then boosted my self-confidence. For these reasons, I push students to apply to CEO and push communities to help create their own CEO brand.



## **Ava Peoples**

Ava is a senior at Northwestern High School and plans to attend Indiana University Bloomington to Study Business Management and Marketing. Ava is the owner of FrontdoorFancy, a ribbon bundle company that helps people elevate their homes.

Kokomo CEO has helped me tremendously in multiple aspects of my life. My leadership and team working skills have improved and allowed me to collaborate with any person. My communication skills have also increased through class discussions and open conversations with my teammates. I will always be grateful for the skills CEO allowed me to develop through the year.

# 2022-2023 CLASS

MEET THE



## **Anna Perry**

Anna Perry is currently a senior at Northwestern High School and will be attending Purdue University, where she will major in hospitality and tourism management. Her business, Daily Decor, consists of trays of small and medium sizes, as well as cup coasters.

CEO has helped me learn how to work in groups and how to be comfortable being uncomfortable. Kokomo CEO has also given me connections of which I am grateful.



## **Jace Rayl**

Jace is a senior at Kokomo High School and plans to attend Purdue University where he will study engineering. His business, the Rayl School of Shooting, offers basketball lessons to teenagers in the area. His business is meant to focus on improving each clients' jumpshot.

Kokomo CEO has pushed me out of my comfort zone this year. It has improved my communication skills, time management, and organizational skills. This class taught me a lot about the business world, and the city of Kokomo.



## **Kendall Rhees**

Kendall Rhees is a Senior at Western High School and plans to attend Western Michigan University to study Business and Marketing management. Kendall is the owner of Craft Natural, a ceramic and wooden sign company that specializes in handmade projects.

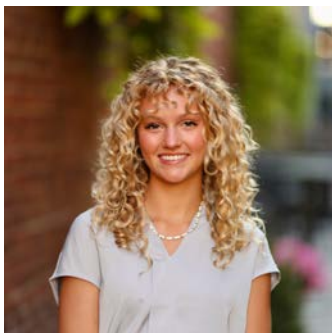
CEO has taken me out of my comfort zone and taught me how to become mindful within business experiences. It has helped me feel comfortable when tackling real world problems. One take away from CEO would have to be the communication skills I have developed throughout the entirety of the class. I will forever recommend CEO to anyone interested in business.



## **Andrew Ryan**

Andrew is a Senior at Western High School. He will attend Taylor University to join Army ROTC and study History. His business, Ranger Woodworking, creates custom, high-quality wooden games and decorations.

Kokomo CEO has helped teach me about responsibility and leadership. I have really learned what it means to be an entrepreneur and how to work as a team.



## **Liberty Scott**

Liberty Scott is a senior at Lewis Cass and is attending Depauw University in the fall, where she will major in Kinesiology and run Track and Field. Her business, Cozy Knit Creations, creates custom colored, chunky, knit blankets to provide quality comfort and bring life to your home.

I'm very grateful for the opportunity to learn and grow from the lessons I've experienced in CEO. It has truly taught me that there is much more to building a team than just communication. One of the most valuable skills I learned was undoubtedly learning to meet everyone's needs as a team and value each person's opinions and thoughts.

# 2022-2023 CLASS

MEET THE



## Lillian Sullivan

Lillian Sullivan is a Senior at Western High School and will be attending Purdue University to further her education in Communications. Her business, Bag It! By Lilli, offers stylish and custom clear bags that are stadium approved. In addition, she is also selling makeup bags for travel.

Kokomo CEO has taught me tremendous leadership skills and has helped prepare me for my future. I am grateful for the opportunity to work and solve real world business problems with my fellow peers. This has been a once in a lifetime experience, and I have immensely enjoyed being a part of the program.



## Noah Thompson

Noah is a senior at Kokomo High School with plans to attend the University of Notre Dame. He plans on majoring in computer science while minoring in finance. Noah's personal business, Relaxation Pro, is a drop-shipping business that focuses on providing affordable, quality wellness products to customers across the country.

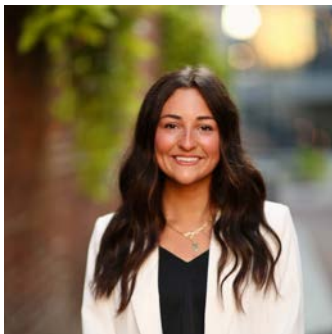
Kokomo CEO has expanded my entrepreneurial knowledge beyond levels I ever would have known. The hands-on approach to learning within the CEO course has allowed me to create connections with many local business owners. The ability to take this unique, once in a lifetime course is an opportunity that I highly suggest.



## Mya Truax

Mya is a senior at Tri-Central High School and plans to attend Ivy Tech to study general agriculture and horticulture. She operates Mya's Garden out of a greenhouse to sell start-up vegetable plants for at home gardens.

The Kokomo CEO program has been the most involved program within the community that I have ever been apart of. It has helped me grow out of my comfort zone. I have made so many connections within this program that I'll be using in the near future. My biggest takeaway is the amazing opportunities I was given and the real world experiences I received within this program.



## Ava Williamson

Ava Williamson is a Senior at Western High School. She will be attending Purdue University in the Exploratory Studies Program planning to major in Business. Her business, The Bloom Bar, is a fully customizable bouquet shop. She aims to create a unique and fun way to gift yourself or a loved one a bouquet of flowers.

The Kokomo CEO Program has truly been beneficial to me this year as it has provided me with many skills and connections that I will be able to use in the future. This program has not only grown my confidence, but also my leadership skills and how to work as a team. I am very grateful for the opportunities and blessed to be a part of this program!

## Clay Brubaker, CEO Class of 2019

As a senior at Indiana University Kokomo, I am proud to announce that I will be graduating this spring with a degree in Exercise Science, with plans to further my education in the Occupational Therapy Assistant Program. My passion lies in working with young children in a therapy setting, helping them achieve their goals and ultimately making a positive impact on their lives.

Aside from my academic pursuits, I have also been a student athlete at IUK for the past four years, competing on the track and field team. I am honored to have received All-Conference honors three times, and I am eager to make it four in the upcoming outdoor season.

Reflecting on my high school career, the CEO Program was undoubtedly one of the most impactful experiences I had. The lessons I learned during this program have stayed with me throughout my college years and beyond. The connections and relationships I formed were one of the highlights of the program, and knowing that I have a support system to turn to for personal and professional advice is truly invaluable. I owe much of my confidence and character to the mentors and facilitators I met through the program, and for that, I am forever grateful.



Alumni Update

*with Noah Thompson*

Kokomo CEO offers a once in a lifetime opportunity for high school students to gain hands-on experience in the world of entrepreneurship. Students are able to seek valuable insight from a variety of local business owners, regarding how to develop a successful business. In addition, students gain interpersonal communication skills by working in a group setting alongside like-minded individuals, all with similar entrepreneurial aspirations. Such communication and networking skills are essential in the development of the class business at the conclusion of the first semester.

Brandon Bishop truly exceeds his title as a facilitator, as he works tirelessly to arrange incredible guest speakers, as well as intriguing business visits. He makes it his goal to develop personal relationships with each member of the Kokomo CEO course, which contributes tremendously to the overall chemistry amongst the class.

To conclude the year, CEO students compile their business knowledge into their own personal business, which altogether highlights the incredible opportunities that Kokomo CEO offers to students. Kokomo CEO is truly a unique, immersive, entrepreneurial experience offered to Kokomo area students, with the opportunity to work alongside an amazing leader and mentor in Brandon Bishop.

Noah Thompson - Kokomo High School  
Kokomo CEO Class of 2023





# Class Activities

## **Mentor Matching**

Students work with individual mentors during class and outside of class to network, build professional relationships and get advice on business plans.

## **CEO Summit (class business)**

Students collaborated to plan, fund, and implement an afternoon business seminar with a working budget of \$18,000.

## **Banker Day**

CEO students presented their business plans to area bankers for guidance and input.

## **CEO Student Trade Show**

Students held their trade show at Northview Church. Community members attended and enjoyed a wide variety of student businesses that were showcased.



## CLASS HOSTS

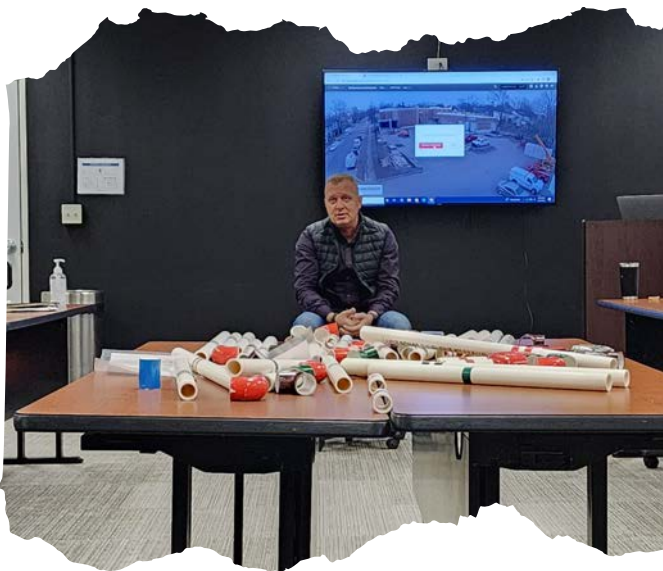


30+ speakers

**Dr. Alan Krabbenhoft** - Indiana University Kokomo  
**Chancellor Mark Canada** - Indiana University Kokomo  
**Morgan Young** - Northview Church  
**Travis Taflinger** - Bridges Outreach  
**Chris Farace**  
**Greg Reed** - personal planning  
**Nick Pate** - Nick Pate State Farm Insurance  
**Scott Pitcher** - Fortune Companies, Inc.  
**Kim LaFollette & Rob Blume** - Community First Bank  
**Lisa Pflueger** - MarketVibes, Inc.  
**Drew Larison** - Larison Media & The Kokomo Post  
**Brad Priday** - Shepherd Insurance  
**Christy Miller** - Oak Hill Millworks  
**Margaret Johnson** - The Wellness Garden  
**Monty Henderson** - Indiana SBDC  
**Paul Wyman** - The Wyman Group  
**Doug Vaughn** - Rite Quality Office Supplies  
**Bob Hickman** - Community First Bank  
**Mary Baker** - AndyMark, Inc.  
**Matt Lewellen** - Steinberger Construction  
**Amy Pate** - RACI  
**Megan Devito**  
**+ more!**



**Mid-America Beverage**  
**Weber Speakers**  
**Bona Vista Programs**  
**Ivy Tech - Kokomo Campus**  
**Indiana University Kokomo**  
**Miller Farm/Hoosier Steaks**  
**PlayPros**  
**UPS Franchise - Kokomo**  
**Purdue Polytechnic**  
**Button Chrysler Jeep Dodge Ram**  
**Kokomo Opalescent Glass**  
**IUK Economic Outlook Panel & Breakfast**  
**Coca-Cola Bottling Co.**  
**First Farmers Bank & Trust**  
**The Venue**  
**Kokomo YMCA**  
**Indiana Wesleyan Kokomo**  
**PF Hendricks**  
**Bruno's Pizza**  
**ZZ Diesel**  
**Indianapolis Home & Patio Show**  
**Sun King Kokomo**  
**+ more!**



40+ business visits



## FINANCIAL UPDATE

The CEO program operated with a \$54,000 budget funded by business investors and tuition payments from the Indiana state stipend. Without the financial support of business investors and the encouragement and business knowledge supplied by investors and speakers, CEO would never be such a life-changing experience.

**CEO Business Partners** are the foundation of CEO. Each invests \$1000 each year to support this program and the students involved. This investment goes toward our facilitator salary, class expenses, and program sustainability. These businesses, organizations, and individuals make up our list of investors.

## CLASS CONTRIBUTORS

- ALL SEASON GENERAL CONTRACTING
- SOLIDARITY FEDERAL CREDIT UNION
- FIRST FARMERS BANK & TRUST
- COMMUNITY FIRST BANK
- GREG REED
- PLAYPROS
- NICK PATE STATE FARM INSURANCE
- KOKOMO BOBKATS
- MID-AMERICA BEVERAGE
- COCA-COLA BOTTLING COMPANY
- COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
- THE WYMAN GROUP
- INDIANA UNIVERSITY KOKOMO
- IVY TECH KOKOMO
- BRUNO'S PIZZA
- J&J ELECTRIC
- BONA VISTA PROGRAMS
- CITY OF KOKOMO
- MCGONIGAL BUICK GMC
- CHARIOT AUTO GROUP
- SULLIVAN FAMILY ENTERPRISE
- RANDALL DERMATOLOGY
- KARDEX HANDLING SOLUTIONS
- ERIK'S CHEVROLET
- STEINBERGER CONSTRUCTION

## CLASS INVESTORS

- AndyMark, Inc.
- Ascension St. Vincent Hospital
- Beck's Hybrid
- Bob & Betsy Hoshaw
- Brad Howell Ford
- Bucheri, McCarty and Metz
- Button Chrysler Jeep Dodge Ram
- City of Kokomo
- Coca-Cola Bottling Company of Kokomo
- Comfort Keepers
- Community First Bank of Indiana
- Community Foundation of Howard County
- Community Howard Regional Health
- David and Sara Sullivan
- Delphi Electronics and Safety
- Dr. Charles M. Simons DDS, DMD, MSD
- Dr. Tim and Dana Davis
- Drs. Matthew & Kristin Pate
- Duke Energy
- Eastern Howard County School Corp.
- Eriks Chevrolet
- First Farmers Bank & Trust
- Fortune Companies
- General Motors Components Holding
- H & R Industrials
- Hayes Advisory Group
- Haynes International
- Hearn Construction
- Horizon Bank
- Howard County Government
- Huston Electric
- Indiana American Water
- Indiana University Kokomo
- Ivy Tech Community College
- J&J Electric
- Jansen's Asphalt Sealing & Tax Service
- Kokomo CEO Class of 2016
- Kokomo CEO Class of 2017
- Kokomo CEO Class of 2018
- Kokomo CEO Class of 2019
- Kokomo CEO Class of 2020
- Kokomo CEO Class of 2022
- Kokomo School Corp.
- Lewis Cass School Corp.
- Liberty Financial Group
- Lorentson Manufacturing
- Maconaquah School Corporation
- McGonigal Buick GMC Cadillac
- Merrell Brothers
- Merrell Owen
- Mid America Beverage
- Nick Pate State Farm Insurance
- Northwestern School Corporation
- PASTArrific Ristorante Italiano
- PlayPros
- Purdue Polytechnic Institute, Kokomo
- Reed Contracting
- Regions Insurance
- Rite Quality Office Supplies
- Smith Financial
- Stephens Machine
- Taylor School Corp.
- The Wyman Group
- Tri-Central Community Schools
- Western School Corp.

# 22-23 ADVISORY board



- Brad Priday, Chairperson - Shepherd Insurance
- Alec Downing, Vice Chairperson - First Farmers Bank & Trust
- Greg Aaron, Past Chairperson - Community Foundation
- Andy Baker - AndyMark, Inc.
- Angela Blessing - Kokomo High School, Principal
- Hilda Burns - Community Foundation, retired
- Dr. Tim Garland - Lewis Cass Schools, Superintendent
- Christa Jordan - KACC Career Pathway Specialist
- Kim LaFollette - Community First Bank of Indiana
- Joseph Parker - Mid-America Beverage
- Aaron Smith - Smith Financial
- Doug Vaughn - Rite Quality Office Supplies
- TA Weber - Weber Speakers
- Sherry Yazel - Western Director of Counseling
- Jonathan Schuck, Ex-Officio, KACC Director
- Mike Stegal, Ex-Officio - Community First Bank, retired
- Dr. Mike Sargent, Ex-Officio, Kokomo Schools, Superintendent

## KOKOMO CEO PLEDGE CARD

Thank you for your interest in becoming an Investor in CEO!

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: / /

COMPANY NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

### I WISH TO BECOME AN INVESTOR IN THE KOKOMO CEO PROGRAM

- \$3000 Total - 3 year pledge Paid \$1000 each year
- I'd like to be Invoiced
- I would like to support the Kokomo CEO Program with my gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### I WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION ABOUT

- Becoming an investor
- Hosting the Class at my business
- Being a mentor
- Sharing my business knowledge with the class

Mailing Address:  
Kokomo CEO  
700 E. Firmin Street Ste. 200  
Kokomo, IN 46902

# KOKOMO CEO

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CREATING ENTREPRENEURIAL  
OPPORTUNITIES

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