



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact:

Cathy Yudzevich

Director of Marketing & Development

Vanderheyden

cyudzevich@vanderheyden.org

518.269.5646

The Vandy Thrift Shoppe to host anniversary celebration to mark successful first year in vibrant Beaver Alley

ALBANY, NY: This Friday and Saturday, March 31 and April 1, The Vandy Thrift Shoppe (“The Vandy”) will celebrate its first anniversary at 412 Broadway, located in a growing cluster of retail and restaurant businesses along downtown Albany’s Beaver Alley. The thrift boutique will host a special anniversary sale with 20% off the entire store, live entertainment, cookies from Vanderheyden’s Cookie Jar bakery, and coupons to neighboring businesses. In addition, The Vandy will host guest cashiers Mark Eagan, Capital Region Chamber President, and Kathy Lanni, Broadview Federal Credit Union Chief Community Officer on Friday, and Albany Mayor Kathy Sheehan on Saturday.

In honor of The Vandy’s anniversary and growing economic activity in Beaver Alley, Vanderheyden President and CEO Karen Carpenter, volunteer store operator Tracy Metzger, and Downtown Albany BID Executive Director Georgette Steffens will be joined by Fort Orange General Store Owner Schuyler Bull, Loch and Quay Owner Frank O’Connor, and local elected officials for anniversary ceremonies and a press conference at 11:00 AM on Friday at The Vandy. Both The Vandy and Fort Orange General Store plan to announce expanded store hours due to the increase in business.

Downtown Albany BID Executive Director Georgette Steffens said: “The Vandy’s

wild success in their first year shows that retail in Downtown is not only viable, but thriving. With double the amount of business they had anticipated in year one, The Vandy has been able to far surpass expectations and support the important work of Vanderheyden. It's wonderful to see neighboring businesses building on each other's success and expanding evening and weekend hours while enriching residential life Downtown and adding to the growing list of reasons for others to visit Albany's Central Social District."

In its first year, The Vandy raised \$150,000 to benefit Vanderheyden, one of the premier children, adult, and family service agencies in the Capital Region. The Vandy is part of the Vanderheyden's career training programs and is operated and managed collaboratively by Vanderheyden students, team members, and clients.

Vanderheyden President and CEO Karen Carpenter said: "We are overjoyed to celebrate a successful first anniversary at The Vandy Thrift Shoppe. The business collaborations in downtown Albany are invaluable. The donors and grant support has enabled us to make tremendous strides in job training for our individuals. This entire year has been a vital experience with so many to thank for assisting us in changing lives to save lives."

Vanderheyden has received support from Broadview Federal Credit Union for their Career Center including The Vandy, first with a \$100,000 grant to begin the Vanderheyden Career Center program and an additional pledge of \$50,000 over a two-year period starting in 2023.

Michael Castellana, CEO, Broadview Federal Credit Union, said: "Broadview is thrilled to continue to support Vanderheyden's Career Center and The Vandy Thrift Shoppe. The shop has been an exciting addition to a revitalized Downtown Albany neighborhood and also continues to help the many individuals that Vanderheyden serves by building a foundation of critical skills."

In April 2022, Vanderheyden received a Downtown Albany Retail Grant Program award which supported The Vandy Thrift Shoppe's storefront signage and interior renovations. Developed and administered by Capitalize Albany Corporation, the program is made possible with support from the City of Albany Capital Resource

Corporation. Created in 2016, the program can assist with a location's renovation, fit-up costs, and exterior improvements.

Capitalize Albany Corporation president and City of Albany Capital Resource Corporation CEO Sarah Reginelli said, "The Vandy has filled a critical retail niche identified in our downtown neighborhood development strategic plans. This shop gives downtown a quality thrift retailer with a boutique feel. Beyond supporting Albany's central business district and its expanding downtown neighborhood, we are thrilled to also be able to support Vanderheyden's meaningful work in the community. Congratulations on a successful first year, and on behalf of our Boards, I'm grateful to the Vanderheyden team that made this possible for expanding their investment in their mission while bringing such a benefit to the downtown community in the process."

Tracy Metzger, operating volunteer at The Vandy said: "I've never been in retail before, so The Vandy has been quite the experience for me as a volunteer operating the store. The community has been so supportive, and we have repeat customers that come in every week. I have met so many wonderful people, and working with the individuals from Vanderheyden has been very gratifying as well. I am looking forward to our second year as we extend our hours and look to program Beaver Alley with our neighbors."

Located next door to The Vandy, Fort Orange General Store also has plans to expand its weekend hours to capitalize on increased foot traffic, driven largely by the influx of neighboring businesses. The store, which offers a curated selection of home goods, gifts, stationery, jewelry and more, has seen an average 30% increase in sales year-over-year since opening in 2017, and has welcomed more than 35,000 customers during that time.

Fort Orange General Store owner Schuyler Bull said: "The partnership amongst our neighboring businesses demonstrates one of many benefits of being located in a downtown setting in which we can collectively share in each other's success. Through the efforts of many individuals and organizations, including the Downtown Albany BID and Capitalize Albany, we've effectively transformed this area from a largely vacant block into a vibrant commercial corridor that continues to grow in

popularity.”

Loch and Quay will celebrate five years in business on April 14. Located at 414 Broadway, the former home to the Plaza Grill and later Franklin Tower, Loch and Quay is open for both lunch and dinner Monday through Saturday.

Frank O’Connor IV, owner of Loch & Quay, said: “We wish every continued success to The Vandy and its mission! It has been an exciting year--having both the Fort Orange General Store and The Vandy active on Beaver Alley has brought added life to the Alley, to Loch & Quay and to our mutual patrons. The Vandy and Fort Orange made the winter brighter, and we very much look forward to joint events in Beaver Alley this spring and summer with our neighbors and friends.”

Albany Mayor Kathy Sheehan said: “When the City, Capitalize Albany, and the Downtown Albany BID first set out to attract additional investment in downtown Albany, the successes along Beaver Alley are exactly what we had in mind. The Fort Orange General Store is a go-to for gifts and local souvenirs, Loch and Quay is a favorite whether after work or on a night out before an event at MVP Arena, and The Vandy is helping reuse garments and raise funds for the important work happening at Vanderheyden. These successes can only happen when there is housing available in this walkable neighborhood and when we are attracting businesses and visitors every day - and that’s exactly what’s happening in downtown Albany.”

Assemblymember Patricia Fahy said: “Downtown Albany continues to thrive as the core of our Capital Region. Our businesses, shops, entertainment venues, green spaces, and more continue to drive responsible development and increased foot traffic. Congratulations to both The Vandy and the Fort Orange General Store on their continued success and for extending hours to accommodate increasing foot traffic to their locations. It’s another reminder that walkability and investing in the future of our small businesses matters and that the future is happening right here in Albany.”

Assemblymember John T. McDonald III, RPh said, "Congratulations to The Vandy Thrift Shoppe on their first anniversary. The Vandy not only helps supplement

funding at Vanderheyden but also provides vocational programming, giving students the opportunity for invaluable retail experience. I am happy to see the growth of these businesses along Beaver Alley, including The Vandy and the Fort Orange General Store, as small businesses are an integral part of our economy and our community."

Vanderheyden offers a safe haven for youth, adults and families who have experienced family disruption, trauma, abuse, emotional difficulty, developmental disability and learning problems. A designated Children and Family Treatment and Support Services Provider (CFTSS), Vanderheyden has been providing services for more than 185 years. The agency is committed to a family focused, trauma informed and community-based system of care.

The Vandy offers men and women's clothing, accessories, and home décor, and includes a boutique with gowns and designer suits and dresses. Following the expansion of their store hours, The Vandy will be open on Thursdays from 11:00 AM to 6:00 PM and on Sundays from Noon to 4:00 PM.

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Since 1996, the Downtown Albany Business Improvement District (BID) has worked to restore, promote and maintain the character and vitality of downtown Albany and improve the quality of life and overall image of downtown for those who work in, live in and visit New York's Capital City. The BID is a private, not-for profit 501(c) (3) organization. For more information about Downtown Albany BID please visit downtownalbany.org or call 518.465.2143.