



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Komae, Northeast Ohio's "Free Babysitting!" Startup, Elevates Region with Successful Exit

CLEVELAND, OH – Local Akron startup [Komae, Inc.](#) hosts families across America using the community-driven mobile app to meet, playdate, and trade childcare for "time points" instead of dollars. After four high-growth years, the company, which now boasts over 19,000 accounts, has achieved a successful exit through acquisition to LA-based competitor, [Wana Family Network](#).

Reminiscent of neighborhood babysitting co-ops popular in the 80's, families on Komae take turns caring for each other's children. One couple's date night and another parent's gym session are kept equal with points by the hour, and families can group into neighborhood webs of trusted swappers.

"I want to tell you a story about two women who had an amazing community and had children and had a desire to live their lives and to love their children and to have it all," starts Komae's CEO and Co-Founder, **Audrey Wallace**. She began with a small co-op at her church that included **Amy Husted**, her eventual Co-Founder and Komae's COO.

For local parent **Shannon Volpi**, Komae means "being there for one another and helping each other out when they need it the most. My son had a cold and my babysitter pulled out. Audrey stood up and took both my kids for the afternoon!"

"They said this is amazing, more people need this. What if there was an app?" recalls Wallace.

Five years later, as Komae prepared for exit, Husted says she "began to see the truth of what we had accomplished. We won ten pitch competitions, I think we only competed in eleven. We lived in New York [with Project Entrepreneur] and traveled back and forth on the weekends to make it work because both family and your dreams matter. We raised over \$600,000. And now we've had the pleasure of participating in an acquisition."

Even as Wana's Founder, **Erin Beck**, launched her own sit swap platform, she watched the Northeast Ohio company as the market leader. "Amy and Audrey were the ones who first said we can create a modern solution that makes this successful for everybody. They have given hope and community and friendship and health to moms and dads like me and like us."

Husted adds, "We were contacted by quite a lot of people, and Erin said, 'Why don't we do this thing together?' We decided we trusted Erin to take the torch and carry it on." Both Husted and Wallace are staying on as advisors to Wana.

The founders announced the deal at a cleverly-billed "Reveal Party" at **Bounce Innovation Hub**, site of Komae's headquarters in Akron on June 20, 2019. Family, friends, investors, staff, and local members of the platform, called Villagers, were treated to sprinkled signature drinks and orange-coated purple cake balls at the kid-forward event. (True to theme, party-goers rotated the childcare.)

"What's the thing that's going to crack this problem?" challenges Beck. "As much pride as we take in independence, what we all really want is to care, and be cared for." Beck makes it clear that the story continues on both coasts. "We have the team that's going to make that happen."

Full remarks available [here](#). Photos by request. **Interviews available.**

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