

Dreamers, Doers and Entrepreneurs, Pt. 2

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ALTON - The campaign for Alton to be featured on *The Small Business Revolution* season three was a massive undertaking for most of the community - and it worked.

Before that wave, however, Michael Gebben saw something brewing in his hometown. After traveling around the world, including private islands and filming for internationally-known motivational speaker Tony Robbins, Gebben returned to Alton (where he has lived for all his 31 years) and took a moment to realize what was

happening. He said he saw the city begin to come alive again, adding it was always a beautiful place to live, but he was noticing so many people were working toward a better future, or actively seeking ways to improve it.

Because of that organic push, Gebben created Jumpstarters, which is designed to "create clarity, confidence and community for dreamers, doers and entrepreneurs." In its description on Facebook, Jumpstarters is described as "an immersive experience of guided self-discovery."

Gebben hosted such an experience at an inaugural event at WOW Furnishings and Event Center, located at 515 E. Third Street in Alton, earlier this year. Gebben said more than 200 people were in attendance.

A second one is being held on Wednesday March 7, 2018, at 7 p.m., also at WOW Furnishings and Event Center. Gebben said he hopes even more people attend. On the Facebook event, he invited people to come to the event, which is free, and bring friends. He assured it was not a sales pitch.

Instead, he said, it was a way for everyone to prosper. He invites people who are wanting to take the next steps in their passions to see if they can convert a hobby into a living. The best way to do that, he said, is connecting people within the community.

He said many people who give motivational or inspirational talks places will skip the Midwest in favor of the coasts. They may occasionally stop in Chicago, but they are mostly focused on New York City and Los Angeles. Gebben is hoping Jumpstarters and the free networking events will help improve the lives of Altonians.

"The last event, we had people asking what's the 'catch' or is this an MLM (multi-level marketing)," Gebben said on the Facebook page for the March 7 event. "The answer to both of those questions is NO... NO there is NO catch and NO this is NOT and MLM... It may be hard to believe there are people in the world who want to see people happy and love what they do and feel supported by others and connected with like-minded people to support their goals, dreams and aspirations. We believe."

Gebben demonstrated that belief in Alton as well when he hosted two four-hour live streams to get out the vote for "#MyAlton." During the first one at his home, Gebben said he had people from as far as The Philippines and South Africa casting votes for a town they have never known existed before that moment.

He hosted a second event at the Riverbender.com Community Center on the final day of voting. During those four hours, hundreds of people watched Gebben interview community members and raise the bar of excitement for the nationwide campaign.

That excitement will be shared with everyone attending the free event Wednesday night as well.