

Jung Gun

His smile is infectious. His enthusiasm is contagious. His love for Racine is boundless. Life is good for Trevor Jung.

The first thing you're likely to notice about Trevor Jung is his smile, followed almost immediately by his high-energy disposition and outlook on life. He bounces through each day like a Jack Russell Terrier — seemingly without a care in the world — greeting everyone who comes his way and wishing them a splendid good morning. Yep, if you're looking for a quick high when life's got you down, Bunky, Trevor Jung is your man.

Some people go through life with question marks hanging above their heads. Trevor's punctuation of choice is the exclamation point! He speaks of Racine as if it were his utopia — because it is.

"I owe everything to Racine," says Trevor, who turned 25 in November. "If it weren't for this community, I wouldn't be who I am. I was raised by a single dad and this community."

Trevor was born in Krasnodar, the second-largest city in Southern Russia, north of the Caucasus Mountains on the Black Sea.

"My birth mother was not in a position to take care of a child," he explains, "so I was placed in an orphanage from birth until about two years old. And my dad, who is my hero, traveled halfway across the world to save a child from an orphanage and bring him to the United States of America. And raised me in a quintessential American city — Racine."

Trevor had what he calls "an idyllic childhood" in many respects: playing Little League baseball, doing community theater, going to ceramics classes. His father Scott made it a point to expose him to every outlet of interest, including politics and government.

"My grandma had a big part in that, too," Trevor says. "So, between my dad making sure I had a diverse experience in my childhood, and my grandmother supporting my intellectual curiosities,

I was inspired at a very young age to learn more about what it meant to be an American and to celebrate that.

"I grew up with two big things: A deep sense of gratitude, like seriously, to think about where I could have been, and number-two, a deep sense of commitment to give back. I owe everything to my hometown."

Ask him what he likes most about Racine, and he rattles off a litany of attributes as if had been preparing this elevator speech for years:

"Racine is a special place," he begins. "Our community is right between Milwaukee and Chicago, has a historic downtown, award-winning architecture, one of the top ten fresh-water beaches in the country, a diverse population — we speak more than 40 languages in our public schools — and we have the largest collection of craft art in the western hemisphere."

But he enumerates what he calls some "extraordinary challenges," as well, including racial inequality.

"Racine County is the second-worst place in the nation for African-Americans," he says, "in terms of a myriad of metrics based on home ownership, education attainment, and wages. So our number-one job should be to take what is great about Racine to overcome the challenges we have in this community. Bill Clinton once said (in his 1993 inaugural address), 'There is nothing wrong with America that cannot be cured with what is right with America.'"

"And that is so true about Racine. We have all the attributes that can make us this dynamic and vibrant community. Yet we still have these dramatic challenges that are not insurmountable but that need to be given the attention they deserve, because for too long they have been ignored. Now we have some younger leadership in City Hall — a diverse city council, a progressive mayor, and a community that

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would like to see some serious progress happen.”

Trevor is part of that younger leadership. When he was sworn in to be the city’s 9th district alderman two years ago, he was the youngest alder in history since 1862. (“Highland Raymond had that honor,” Trevor says. “He went off to found the Town of Raymond. That’s a high bar.”)

Even while attending Case High School not so long ago, Trevor says he had a “fascination with local government to the point where I attended UW-Milwaukee for urban studies and urban planning instead of political science or anything like that. This is because I saw at the local level is where the difference is made.”

If you ask Trevor about his further political aspirations, he will likely remind you that it’s one step at a time.

“I am learning how to be an alderman right now,” he says with a smile, “and it is difficult because the City of Racine is uniquely positioned with a lot of opportunities but, again, the challenges are real. And some of those challenges relate directly to very limited municipal resources.

“In the very brief time I’ve been on the City Council, I’ve had to be part of some decisions that have been extraordinarily difficult because they impact the quality of life for public servants in Racine – city employees. And that’s been the toughest part of this whole thing.

“We’ve had to change a healthcare plan, we’ve had to reduce the size of certain departments. These are good, decent people who are providing something valuable to our community. Those are tough choices. We use all the information we have at our disposal to balance the long-term longevity of the city’s financial health and being good stewards of taxpayer dollars, while treating those who provide these services with the dignity and respect they deserve. It has been a real education that you can’t get anywhere else.

“I’m still learning how to effectively engage in that type of decision-making and make sure that Racine moves forward.”

One way to move the city forward, Trevor says, is to invest in “The Five Ts of Success” (see below). The policy prescription is based in part on a Brookings Institution’s study on the attributes that make the City of Chicago a vibrant and successful community.

“After reading that report,” he says, “and thinking, ‘What does Racine have that relates to the recommendations of Brookings? How can we apply that lens to our work here?’ The answers to the City of Racine’s



▲ Trevor taking in the sights of one of his favorite cities in the world.

financial challenges as a municipality rely on growth. There are some segments of the community who say just keep doing what we’ve been doing, and others who say we should just slash and burn municipal government. The answer is to grow our way out of the financial challenges we have. And the way we do that is to invest in the Five Ts.”

The city, Trevor says, is light on its feet and that is a big-time advantage.

“We are a flexible community,” he says, “and that is becoming increasingly more apparent. We can throw things at the wall and see what works. That’s the beauty of local government. We can test things, we can workshop and make real change. You’re seeing gridlock at the state and federal levels because of politics and personalities rather than problem-solving. And at the local level, you are seeing real things happen: getting development projects off the ground, master plans for neighborhoods, construction projects that are improving the nuts and bolts of our community. You’re seeing many, many things happen at the local level – things that can’t be achieved at state and federal levels.”

A forever-optimist and self-described extrovert, Trevor says he gets his high energy from other people, which is perhaps ironic because most people seem to get their energy from *him*.

“He is a people person,” says Sammy Rasin, Racine Democratic Campaign organizer, for whom Trevor worked last summer to train local volunteers to write scripts, make voter-direct phone calls, and instruct people on where to vote. “He was very patient with people, he was clear, he was enthusiastic, and he made people feel like they wanted to do

Trevor’s Five Ts of Success for Racine

TALENT

If you draw a 175-mile radius around the City of Racine, there are more Level 1 Universities than any city in United States outside of the Boston area. From the UW System to the University of Chicago, we have regional talent unlike anywhere else in the world. In a race for talent, we do not need to reach far, but we need to set ourselves apart from our neighbors. This means investing in the assets of our community. Our job is not just to attract talent, but to create it.

TRAINING

We have the first technical college in the U.S. and should celebrate and support Gateway Tech, along with our RUSD Academies. More than 75% of Gateway’s graduates stay and work in the area. We are fortunate to have a diversified economy where our Tech and K-12 system supports that growth. With the work of these institutions we now have curriculum that is aligned to the needs of the region and because of that Racine is more competitive.

TRANSPORTATION

Racine is an hour away from the rest of the world with access to the modernized Mitchell International and O’Hare Airports. These airports provide Racine access to six continents. United, American and Southwest host their major operations just 40 miles south of our city. We are in the third largest economic region in the U.S., and 10th largest in the world. This regional asset needs to be enhanced by our transportation options. We need to fix our roads and form a multi-modal transportation system that gets Racinians to and from work.

We can connect workers to jobs and expand opportunity for all by working with our municipal neighbors to enhance service and create regional connectivity. Racine needs to capitalize on our current and future industry.

TECHNOLOGY

There is a technological boom in this community. We need to support local technology start-ups and businesses. Racine is the 4th best city in the nation for women owned-businesses. This should include tech companies. We need to support programs like All Girls Code through the Racine Creative Center that encourages girls to learn about business and the tech sector in order to tap into the full potential of our community. Encouraging entrepreneurship in this sector by creating homegrown talent is how we create jobs and expand opportunity. It’s about quality of life.

TOURISM

North Beach, Kringle, the Racine Art Museum, Downtown, the Root River and our Marina attract visitors from across the nation. We need to encourage hotel development and mindfully pursue development that complements our natural advantages. The more visitors we have in our community will enhance quality of life for our residents.

“By focusing on these five Ts,” Trevor says, “we will realize the potential of this amazing, historic city. Let’s work together to make sure everyone has the opportunity to live the life they wish in our great community.”

things for him, which is always a good thing in any campaign. In addition, he was extremely passionate about his support for candidate Joe Biden.”

“I don’t do well when I can’t be around other people,” Trevor says, which is why the COVID-19 pandemic has taken somewhat of a toll on his ordinarily highly contagious demeanor. But he has his daily bicycle route, and his new elliptical that he put through its paces this winter, to keep him energized.

“Fitness is important to me,” he says, “as is intellectual stimulation. I’m a big fan of British Parliament – following politics in the United Kingdom.

“But as a young professional, I still have a lot to learn about balance. I have some weeks that are well in balance, and other weeks where I am falling behind one way or another. Candidly, I’m still learning what that looks like.”

His proudest moment so far on the city council, he says, is his sponsoring of an ordinance to ban gay-conversion therapy.

“The LGBT Center of Racine and activists in the LGBT+ community reached out to alders and said we need to ban gay-conversion therapy, which is a practice – I consider it child abuse – of telling LGBT children that there’s something wrong with them, and then going through an intensive therapy to change their sexual orientation, and sexual identity, gender identity. The American Association of Psychiatric Medicine and other medical and psychological associations have come out and said that this is horrible for the well-being of children. From hearing the wishes and the activism of people in that community, I was proud to be a sponsor of that policy. The hard-line religious right came out and said that this is an infringement on their rights, and the LGBT community

and their allies came out and said, no, this is about making sure that children are safe and have the protection under the law that they deserve as human beings.

“That was a very proud moment when we got that passed.”

With all he has going for him, one might wonder if Trevor isn’t destined for communities larger than Racine – say, Milwaukee, Madison, or even Minneapolis.

“I don’t see that happening,” he says. “I love this community. If everybody who grew up in a place like Racine moved on to other places so they might have greater financial success, we would see a steep decline in the strength of these important places. Racine has everything that I would ever hope for – the diversity, the natural attributes, the tight-knit community, the vibrant cultures, the great history, the grit. I tell my friends who are looking to go to other places to change their quality of life, ‘We can create that in Racine; that’s not far away.’ So, I’m sticking around.

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▲ When he was a boy, Trevor was given this interactive board by his grandmother, whom Trevor credits for sparking his interest in U.S. politics. He still has the board at home today.

When Trevor announced his candidacy for Racine’s 9th district alderman in 2018, he gained the early support of one of America’s most-admired mayors: Raymond Thomas (R.T.) Rybak Jr., who served as the 46th mayor of Minneapolis from 2002–2014. Trevor met R.T. in 2016 at the Hillary Clinton–Bernie Sanders debate in Milwaukee, when R.T. was one of five Vice Chairs of the Democratic National Committee. They kept in touch, meeting again a year later in Minneapolis, where R.T. is now the president and CEO of the Minneapolis Foundation.

“R.T. was the first person to donate to my campaign,” Trevor says, “which is pretty cool. I have always been an admirer of his work and have leaned on him occasionally for advice and guidance.”

Similarly, R.T. has taken a liking to Trevor.

“When you meet Trevor you realize immediately that he’s super-enthusiastic and committed to doing good things,” R.T. says. “When he told me he wanted to run for office, I asked, ‘Why do you want to do that?’ He looked me in the eye and said, ‘Because everything I am I owe to Racine.’ And I paused, because I have said before that everything I am I owe to Minneapolis. I understood very deeply what it means to be somebody who is so committed to their community that they just want to serve, and after dealing a whole lot of politics – local and national – with a whole lot of people in it for the wrong reason, it struck me that he was going into it for exactly the right

reason. So I walked over to my desk, wrote a check, and said, ‘I want to be your first contributor.’

“He called on me at a particular moment when I was dealing with some people who represented to me the worst in politics, and in came this idealistic young person wanting to give himself to the community – to his hometown – that he loves. And I thought, ‘That’s what I want to support,’ and not all this crap you see too often in politics.

“These days, we need people who are able to see the details in front of them, then, with a forward-looking vision, put them into where they want their community to go. Trevor is about more than youthful enthusiasm. He is about looking at a town like Racine – that has so much potential that many others don’t see – and being able to see what’s beautiful about his hometown. I find him to be a very positive realist as opposed to a clueless idealist.”

Would Trevor do as well in a larger city, such as Minneapolis? “I fully understand him not wanting to jump to another political office,” R.T. says, “because for me the highest office I could ever have was to be mayor of my hometown. I’ve had offers to do things in Washington and other places and they don’t interest me in the least because I’m all about my hometown. So I can relate to Trevor saying he’s about making Racine an even-better place.

“I don’t think there is a higher calling in the world than being a public servant in a hometown you love. That to me is the highest possible thing you can do.

“Part of the reason he inspires me is because he speaks to me about something I understand really well: the incredible honor it is to make your hometown better. If you’re like him (or me), someone who is wired to believe in your hometown, there’s a lifetime of work to be done – some of it may be in public office and some of it may be in civic leadership.”

Even R.T., a seasoned journalist, businessman, activist, and politician, has turned to Trevor for the occasional pick-me-up.

“My whole family follows him on Instagram,” R.T. says with a little laugh. “We’ve all been through the ups and downs of politics so whenever any of us want to get a boosterism, we look at his account and be reminded of someone who is in it for the right reason, rollin’ up his sleeves, and owing the whole world to Racine.”

R.T. was the first mayor of a major U.S. city to endorse Illinois Sen. Barack Obama’s 2008 campaign for president.

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Trevor with former Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak in 2017



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“People think running for office is about sharing your vision — and that’s a part of it — but running for office is about listening to people and hearing their stories. That’s what makes a good public servant. That’s what makes me a better alderman. The best days are ahead of us. It’s a community like Racine that has the determination, the character to be able to weather these challenging times and come out ahead in the end.”

And how would he like to be remembered? Trevor says simply:

“Grateful and committed. Gratitude is such a strong feeling. It’s easy to be a critic. It’s easier to engage in pseudo-intellectual conversation as to why the world has gone to hell rather than sit back and think about what do I appreciate, what I am I grateful for, and where am I needed?”

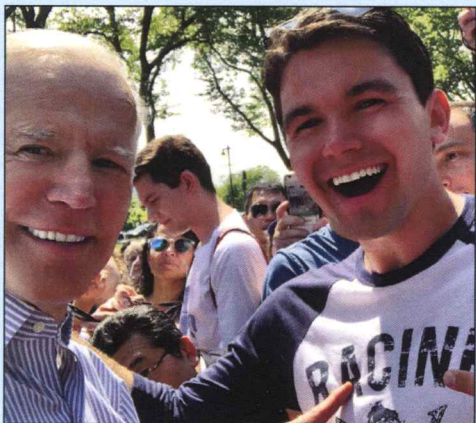
“Everybody deserves to be treated with dignity and respect, and I felt too often that based on someone’s sexual orientation, gender identity, race, class — that people are treated differently. I find that to be abhorrent.

“I think that’s another reason I am so involved.”

Trevor is in his second year as a career specialist at Carthage College for government nonprofit and law, connecting students with opportunities and experiential learning, “so they can develop career awareness and the skills that are necessary for them to be the quality public servants they hope to be.” ●

Trevor served as one of Wisconsin’s 97 delegates to the 2020 Democratic National Convention last summer, a body that declared a 67-30 vote for former Vice President Joe Biden over Sen. Bernie Sanders in a race for Wisconsin’s choice for the Democratic presidential nominee. It was an experience through which Trevor gained

additional insights to the inner workings of the national political process — something he has followed intently since he was 12, when a young African-American senator from Illinois named Barack Obama ran for president in 2008.

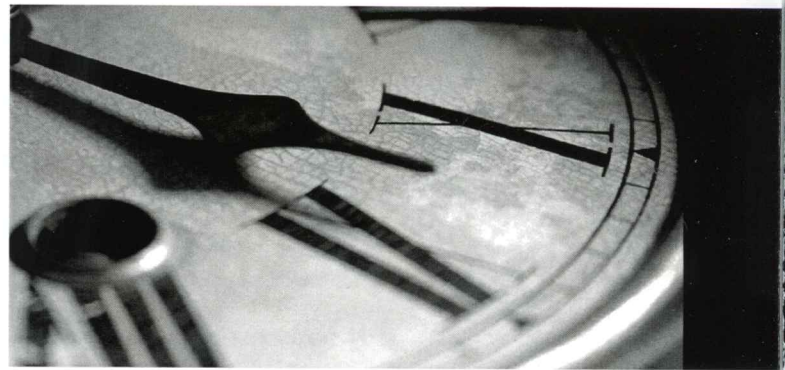


▲ Trevor with the new POTUS

“As a kid who had this peripheral interest in American history and the presidents and government, I thought, ‘How cool is this?’” Trevor says. “I was super-fascinated by the message of the Obama campaign. Even then, I recognized the challenges that the country was facing — whether it was the Iraq War or an economic recession — and there was a real hunger across the country to find change. The legacy of that era in American history is going to be extremely positive.”

Against this backdrop, 13 years later, Trevor remains engaged in local, state, and national politics, and applauds his contemporaries for remaining involved, as well.

“There have always been young people engaged in the process,” he says, “and that’s where you have seen progress come from. The history of the United States, in large part, all of the movements of social progress have been brought about by young people saying, ‘I want to live in a different type of society’ — whether that be the civil-rights movement, or the women’s suffrage movement. They were young people who led those movements. Martin Luther King Jr. was only 34 when he gave his ‘I Have a Dream’ speech (in 1963).”



While most of us are enjoying a good night’s sleep after a hard day at the office, plant, or school, there is a larger-than-you-might-think contingent of friends and neighbors braving the bitter cold and starting their workdays in the dead of night — all in an effort to make tomorrow better for us by keeping our streets safe, stocking store shelves, making fresh bakery, and a host of other services.

These are the few. The special. The underappreciated. They are... The Graveyard Shift. And here are some of their stories.

According to the National Highway Safety Administration, on any given overnight, there are hundreds of big rigs traveling across the Midwest to deliver products to stores and restaurants.

And 23-year-old **Chris Hendrickson** is driving one of them.

“I always wanted to drive a big truck,” says the 2016 graduate of Horlick High School and father to three-year-old Ava. “Now I’m realizing that dream, without having to spend too much time away from my daughter.”

As one of McLane Transportation’s youngest drivers in its food-service division, Chris climbs four nights a week into a cab that will pull his seven-ton, 48-foot refrigerated trailer through parts of Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Illinois, to deliver up to 42,000 pounds of ingredients and packaging to dozens of fast-food restaurants along his way.

“I drive a slightly shorter rig,” he says, “to navigate the smaller parking lots and more congested cities like Chicago. And it’s easier to pull a U-turn in the middle of the road if I need to, which seems to surprise some people. I get a lot of second looks.”

His four-nights-on/three-nights-off schedule suits him just fine, thank you, even though the 14-hour days — er, nights — can be grueling. And the money is good. He gave up a solid, normal-hours daytime job as a CNC operator two years ago when McLane picked up the \$4,000 tab to earn his commercial driver’s license (CDL). Now he is earning more than twice his previous wage and living out his dream at the same time.

The toughest part of his job, he says, is the physical nature of his work, which can take its toll — even on a young body.

“Some days I feel like I’m 80,” Chris says. “While I’ll never get fat doing this, my back often aches and my legs often throb. Delivering 1300 cases a night to a dozen stops can be agonizing.”

But he’s not complaining. He loves the open road — “though night-time driving can get boring” — and he especially enjoys his (and Ava’s) home he just purchased in West Racine with his earnings.

Oh, and the new car is nice, too.

On **Rachael Patino**’s first night of work at O&H Danish Bakery on Washington Avenue four years ago, she found herself, at the end of her first-ever shift, staring out the mezzanine window that overlooks the company’s production floor. And she was smiling.

“This is amazing,” she thought. “This is cool.”

What Rachael saw 15 feet below was a flurry of activity unlike any she had seen before: two dozen bakers, finishers, and packagers racing the clock to get 40 or so fully loaded racks and cabinets of fresh breads, cakes, donuts, Kringle and other goodies onto the dock in time for a 3:30 a.m. departure of delivery trucks that serve four O&H satellite stores and more than a dozen corporate customers.

The stores open at 5:30, so there’s no time to lose. The pace is quick and the process almost effortless as team members quietly band

