

From Mercy to Startup

Alumnus Andrew Boryk '17 Recognized by Forbes "30 Under 30"

When small businesses struggled during the pandemic, it highlighted for the nation the economic vulnerability of restaurants. In the midst of this crisis, a digital startup was already positioned to

help; a company centered on providing business solutions with the small restaurant owner in mind. Offering an alternative to third party apps like Grubhub that can cut into a small business's profits, Lunchbox (<https://lunchbox.io/>) is a collection of modern and creative online ordering solutions for enterprise

LUNCHBOX restaurant chains and ghost kitchens that thinks differently.

At the helm of innovation at Lunchbox is co-founder Andrew Boryk '17 whose passion for digital business began while he was still a student at Mercy. Boryk, and one of his co-founders, Hadi Rashid, received a spot on the Forbes Magazine 2022 "30 Under 30 List." Though not his first major startup business, Boryk says he is probably most passionate about this project out of a very personal connection to restaurant ownership: his grandparents, who owned and operated restaurants in New York City for over 40 years. "I always think back to my grandparents and how hard they worked, and it motivates me. When I think about our work at Lunchbox, it's really about offering the ability and the tools to empower restaurants to have control over their business' future."

Launched in February 2019, New York-based Lunchbox started with less than a dozen employees, and as of today has grown to a workforce of over 250 people in what Boryk describes as a thriving company culture. In February 2022, the company announced their Series B fundraising of \$50 million, making the platform a standout among a sea of web-based businesses. Today, Lunchbox offers its employees many of the desirable work benefits of larger companies, such as a complete health plan, 401(k) plan and even a work from home stipend. However, for its employees Boryk said it's the mission and the challenge that draw them to joining this unique workplace. "I call it the best bootcamp," said Boryk. "What our employees learn here in a month, you learn in six to twelve months anywhere else." A truly unique perk of working at Lunchbox is that they will reimburse you the entire cost of any food-related tattoo.

"I spend a lot of my days looking at the technologies that are going to be the future of not only the industry, but the world," said Boryk, who says in his dual role as

Head of Innovation, he gets to ideate on what will be the next trends.

"In this role I can straddle the lines between our product and the engineering of it," said Boryk. He says his journey from someone focused on coding to that of a co-founder launching outside-of-the-box business

concepts was all about not hesitating. Boryk believes hesitation in the entrepreneurial world can be the surest path to lost opportunity.

Tinkering with ideas for new technologies is nothing new for Boryk. Self-taught, he began making websites in eighth grade and began looking toward colleges that nurtured him as an entrepreneur and found Mercy to be the perfect college to help broaden his foundation in business. "I had so many opportunities to dive right into so many facets of business at Mercy," said Boryk, whose coding side projects throughout college kept him constantly busy. While on duty as a resident assistant, Boryk recalls testing out his newest apps on students, converting feedback into better versions of his digital creations.

Not content to wait until after graduation for his career to start, Boryk jumped at a chance to join his first start-up, with the creator of an app called Linute, in his junior year. Helping shape the groundbreaking social calendar app was an opportunity Boryk did not want to miss, but he needed to find a way to balance the life of a college student with that of a full-time entrepreneur.

As it turned out, this early career launch only further strengthened his resolve as a student. "Mercy allowed me the flexibility that made this move possible," said Boryk. "I moved in with my aunt and moved all my classes to online and on the weekends." Though the unconventional move surprised his classmates and shifting to a full-time working schedule kept him from freedoms he once enjoyed as an on-campus student, he believes it was the momentum that shifted his career into high gear. After Boryk graduated and before he started Lunchbox, he worked at Johnson & Johnson as a software engineer, a role he got with the support of Mercy's Career and Professional Development Department that helped to make an initial introduction. "At Mercy, they don't tell you what the real world is like, they give you a taste of it and I guess you can say I was ready to start my path," said Boryk.



Photo provided by Andrew Boryk