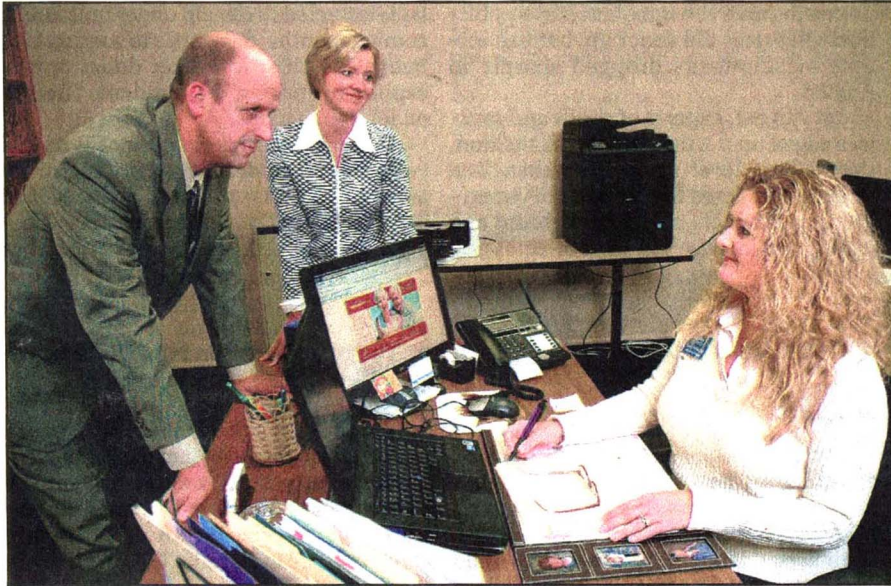


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TONY V. MARTIN PHOTOS | THE TIMES

David Van Drunen, left, and his wife, Julie, work with Director of Nursing Kelley Phillips, seated, at Brightstar, a Highland staffing agency that supplies medical and nonmedical home care.

New local franchise serves those in need

Man starts BrightStar after two decades in corporate world

BY ROB EARNSHAW
Times Correspondent

After working 20 years in the corporate world, Dave Van Drunen made the jump into owning his own business. Van Drunen, who worked for a global consulting company, began looking to start a business several years ago. After getting "more serious about it" last winter, he found an opportunity in a national company that launched franchise operations in 1995.

Today, Van Drunen and his wife Julie own BrightStar, a health care staffing agency that provides medical and nonmedical personal home care services to residents throughout Lake County.

BrightStar has more than 130 locations in more than 30 states. The franchise the Van Drunens operate is located in Highland, where they live.

"We just started our operations here, and we're already blessed with the opportunity to take care of people," Van Drunen said. "I view this as an exciting opportunity to be part of the fabric of the community here in Northwest Indiana, and our goal is to provide great service and take care of folks who need it."

BRIGHTSTAR

LOCATION: 9515
Indianapolis
Blvd., Unit 4,
Highland

PHONE: (219)
924-0200

OWNERS: Dave
and Julie Van
Drunen

WHEN OPENED:
August

WEB SITE:
BRIGHTSTAR
CARE.COM

CONTINUED FROM PAGE B1

Brightstar

To finance the business, the Van Drunens used their savings and investments built up over the years. They were also able to secure a business line of credit, so as they grow they're positioned to

finance that growth.

"We see tremendous opportunities for growth," Van Drunen said. "There is a strong demand to care for people due to the aging of the population and an increased realization that home care — even skilled home care for the nonelderly — is an important growing segment."

While Van Drunen is sure the current

economy has had a dampening effect on the private-pay companion care industry, people will still look for those services when they're in a time of need.

"They may have a family member that needs something they don't have the time, skills or ability to provide," he said. "Typically in those situations, people need the help, and they'll figure out a way to make it happen."