

GREATER FORT WAYNE
Business Weekly

FORTY

UNDER

4

2024™

FORT WAYNE
NEWSPAPERS
FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

Event and special
publication by Fort
Wayne Newspapers

Gaby Aleman

Age: 37

Principe de Paz, Fort Wayne, Inc.

Executive Director/
Pastor



EMPLOYER: Principe de Paz Fort Wayne, Inc., Executive Director/Pastor

EDUCATION: Graduated in 2005 from West Noble High school in Ligonier.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS: I am a member of the Allen County Health Equity Coalition, Fort Wayne Women for Good, Partnership with Food Rescue US, certified community health worker through Health Visions Midwest, also part of the Healthy Safe Sanctuaries Network, and last but not least, founder of “Ayuda a tu prójimo:Fort Wayne,” a ministry that has served our community for 8 years and has reached a total of 22,700 members up to date.

HOBBIES: My hobbies are singing, reading, and I really enjoy watching my kids play sports.

WHY ARE YOU IN NORTHEAST INDIANA? At the age of 11 yrs. old, I migrated with my family to northeast Indiana and I have lived here ever since. I decided to stay here because I think it is a great place to live and raise a family.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR PROFESSION THAT YOU ENJOY AND WHY? I truly enjoy being there for people, lending a helping hand, giving people hope, guiding them, advocating for those without a voice and bridging the gap between the people and many resources in the community. The reason I enjoy it so much is because it gives me satisfaction knowing I am making a difference in someone’s life.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU? To some people, success may be achieving goals, career milestones, or financial stability, which are all great things, but to me there is no greater satisfaction than doing God’s will and seeing His purpose being fulfilled in my life. Making a positive impact in people’s lives through our service is success to me.

AS A CHILD, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP? Growing up as a child, I enjoyed reading and writing very much, so I always wanted to be a book writer.

WHERE DID YOUR FIRST PAYCHECK COME FROM AND WHAT WAS YOUR JOB THEN? My very first paycheck came from West Noble High School. When I was 16, I was teaching Spanish to elementary kids ages 7-9 in an after-school program.

WHO WAS YOUR BIGGEST SUPPORTER WHO HELPED YOU ADVANCE IN YOUR CAREER? My husband, Ivan Aleman, has been my biggest supporter, through everything that I’ve planned or accomplished, he has been by my side and supporting me every step of the way.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST

ACCOMPLISHMENT THUS FAR IN YOUR CAREER? The biggest accomplishment, in my perspective, is to see our community come together as one through the preaching of the Gospel in words and actions.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR GREATEST MISTAKE THUS FAR AND WHAT LESSONS DID YOU LEARN FROM IT? To allow doubt and insecurities become greater than a God given vision, and allowing it to hold me back. I’ve learned that every promise or vision that God gives us will come to pass at its appointed time and I keep Habakkuk 2:3 as my reminder “For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.

WHAT ARE YOUR CURRENT PROFESSIONAL GOALS? To continue to grow as a leader to positively make an impact in our community. Strive to be an advocate and a voice for the Hispanic & Latino community.

HOW DO YOU REMAIN CURRENT/RELEVANT IN YOUR PROFESSION? I try to seek any type of training that can help me grow and also better understand people and their needs, connect with different organizations and learn about the resources they offer, so I can lead people to find the help they need.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR CAREER, FAMILY, LIFE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE? I have realized one thing; my life is my career and to honor God I have dedicated my life to the service of others. Always prioritizing the most important, which is my family.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELAX? There are days where “to relax” simply means not having anything planned or running on a schedule. I am blessed to be a stay-at-home mom, so my days revolve around my family. There are other days when I like to drive alone and just turn up the music and worship. I also enjoy taking walks with my kids at the park, enjoy nature, and sitting down to have long conversations with my husband.

WHAT BOOK DO YOU RECOMMEND? I recommend the Bible, which is God’s wisdom that gives life and hope. “The Purpose Driven Life” by Rick Warren.

BASED ON WHAT YOU KNOW NOW, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL YOUR HIGH SCHOOL SELF? To never underestimate yourself and your abilities, trust God and His perfect plan. Don’t let mistakes hold you back, they are meant to teach us, help us grow and make us stronger. Be you. You are unique, so never compare yourself to others.

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FORT WAYNE
NEWSPAPERS

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

GREATER • FORT WAYNE

Business Weekly

Esli Barron Perez

Age: 30

Te Gusto Hospitality

Owner and Event Coordinator



EMPLOYER: Te Gusto Hospitality, Owner and Event Coordinator

EDUCATION: High School-Homestead High School, Bachelor's at IPFW, Masters at Ball State

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS: Partnering with Prime Boxing association, Member of Greater Fort Wayne

HOBBIES: Reading, watching anime, trying new recipes/food, and going to estate sales

WHY ARE YOU IN NORTHEAST INDIANA? I was raised in Fort Wayne and fell in love with its big city amenities but small town feel. I'm excited to raise my family here and am constantly amazed by the local support of our businesses.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR PROFESSION THAT YOU ENJOY AND WHY? I enjoy being a part of someone's meal, as I've always thought it's a great way to bring people together. Whether it be a night out, birthday, or date night, it's fulfilling to give another person an amazing experience. I also love being able to curate a work environment for my staff.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU? Success is the ability to directly impact the lives of others through your efforts.

AS A CHILD, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP? An author.

ACCOMPLISHMENT THUS FAR IN YOUR CAREER? Besides winning this award, I am very proud of my education as a first generation immigrant whose family came to provide opportunities.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR GREATEST MISTAKE THUS FAR AND WHAT LESSONS DID YOU LEARN FROM IT? I used to have a lot of self-doubt, especially as a woman in a male dominated profession, even to the extent of telling my husband to give interviews in place of myself. I have learned to feel confident in the knowledge and ideas that I bring. I also embrace my different upbringing and perspectives.

WHAT ARE YOUR CURRENT PROFESSIONAL GOALS? I'm excited to grow the company with new ventures coming later this year and continue to improve on quality in my current businesses.

HOW DO YOU REMAIN CURRENT/RELEVANT IN YOUR PROFESSION? I love to travel and see new and creative ways to present food. I also take advantage of our technological advancements by using social media to connect with creators all around the world.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR CAREER, FAMILY, LIFE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE? I thankfully have a lot of support from my family so that I can feel fulfilled in multiple areas of my life, including self-care, while not compromising on my professional and personal needs.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELAX? I love to spend time with my two kids, listen to music or murder podcasts.

WHAT BOOK DO YOU RECOMMEND? I recommend "1984" by George Orwell as well as the Bible. They cover both intellectual and moral concepts.

BASED ON WHAT YOU KNOW NOW, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL YOUR HIGH SCHOOL SELF? I would tell myself to act as if I belong, as I was constantly worried about how others would perceive me instead of enjoying or even participating in the present time.

Awards Reception

March 28 • 5:30-8:30 p.m.

Ceruti's Summit Park II

6601 Innovation Blvd.

Brandon Jay Almas

Age: 38

Barrett McNagny LLP

Attorney



EMPLOYER: Barrett McNagny LLP, Attorney

EDUCATION: B.A. and J.D.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS: I'm currently a member of the Board of Directors for Genesis Outreach, Inc. and the Walnut Creek Homeowners' Association. I recently finished my second term with Homebound Meals, Inc. and I help coach youth sports. I also formerly served as a school board member for Smith Green Community Schools.

HOBBIES: I enjoy hiking, biking, traveling, music, watching Michigan football games and spending time with friends and family.

WHY ARE YOU IN NORTHEAST INDIANA? I grew up in this area.

My wife's family is still in the area, my sister is here, and my parents are looking to move back to the area upon retirement.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR PROFESSION THAT YOU ENJOY AND WHY? I love being a problem solver. As lawyers, we encounter challenges every day, and we have to figure out ways to overcome those challenges to accomplish our clients' goals.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU? To me, success just means having a fulfilling career, being able to take care of my family and make the people that I love proud.

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Barrett McNagny congratulates

Brandon Almas

on being named to

Greater Fort Wayne Business Weekly's

Forty Under 40 Class of 2024.



A real estate attorney with Barrett McNagny, Brandon Almas assists clients with the purchase and sale of real estate, leasing, land use planning and zoning. He also has experience with utility, regulatory and municipal law.

Congratulations to Brandon and to all of the 2024 *Forty Under 40* recipients!

Nicole (Niki) Marie Anderson

Age: 38

Andy's Car Wash

Owner/
Business
Director



EMPLOYER: Andy's Car Wash, Owner-Business Director

EDUCATION: Homestead H.S. Core 40, some college

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS: Whitley County Chamber board, Whitley County Chamber ambassador, Columbia City Connect Promotions Committee, Kiwanis Club, Junior Achievement volunteer

HOBBIES: Art, painting, spending time with family, self-care and creating household/self-care products using essential oils and helping others.

WHY ARE YOU IN NORTHEAST INDIANA? I grew up in Southwest Fort Wayne, but moved to Whitley County 5 years ago after owning the

car wash for 3 years.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR PROFESSION THAT YOU ENJOY AND WHY? Being able to encourage others and small businesses. Making connections/lifelong relations in our community. Spreading love and support in our community.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU? Creating goals and implementing steps to obtain them. Doing the very best I can for myself, family, friends, and community. Growth.

AS A CHILD, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP? A nurse or teacher.

WHERE DID YOUR FIRST

See **ANDERSON**, page A19

Cassie Joanne Beer

Age: 38

Community
Foundation
of Greater
Fort Wayne

Women's
Fund
Director



EMPLOYER: Community Foundation of Greater Fort Wayne Women's Fund Director

EDUCATION: Carroll High School, 2004, Bachelor of Arts in Communication, Purdue University, 2019, Master of Arts in Professional Communication, Indiana University 2021

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS: I serve on the board of directors for Accessible Festivals, the marketing committee for Fort Wayne Children's Choir, and the Purdue Fort Wayne College of Liberal Arts Advisory Council.

HOBBIES: I am the frontwoman and songwriter for my Americana folk-rock band, Rosalind & the Way. I also have a running group that meets three times a week, as well as a salon-style group that meets quarterly to foster creativity.

WHY ARE YOU IN NORTHEAST INDIANA? Originally we "boomer-anged" back to Fort Wayne after having our first child, but we've stayed because of the opportunities afforded to us here. I often say that one of my favorite things about Fort Wayne is that it's large enough that exciting new things are happening, and small enough that you can jump in to be a part of those things if you want to.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR PROFESSION THAT YOU ENJOY AND WHY? What I love about my profession is the opportunity to enact systems-level change. In my role at the Women's Fund, I often get to facilitate gatherings of organizations providing direct service all across the

community in order to identify gaps, barriers, and opportunities for collaboration. Bishop Desmond Tutu once said, "There comes a point where we need to stop just pulling people out of the river, we need to go upstream and find out why they're falling in." Having a role where I get to focus on those upstream solutions is the kind of creative problem solving that energizes me. Also, I'm fortunate to get to do this work alongside some of the most brilliant, generous, and thoughtful people in our community who serve on the Women's Fund committees. Those relationships have been the best gift of my role.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU? Success to me is being able to provide opportunities for my family while building a better community for all.

AS A CHILD, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP? My professional aspirations changed quite frequently as a child, but I always knew that I wanted to be on stage. I'm grateful for a career that provides me with frequent opportunities to use my voice in public spaces to advocate for change.

WHERE DID YOUR FIRST PAYCHECK COME FROM AND WHAT WAS YOUR JOB THEN? My first paycheck was from working sales at The Buckle at Glenbrook mall, and the only reason there was any commission tacked on was because my dad came in and pretended to be a stranger so I could sell him lots of over-priced jeans.

See **BEER**, page A19

Congratulations to all the winners of 40 under Forty from Andy's Car Wash Columbia City!

As a mother of a young family, Niki understands how much it takes to be able to commit to her community, and her business, while balancing family time. Without her team at Andy's, friends and family it wouldn't be possible to love on her community well.

Visit Andy's Car Wash in Columbia City, IN, for the Ultimate Experience. Come as a customer, and leave as part of the Andy's fam, with a meticulously hand-prepped vehicle and their signature Express Interior Service.





COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
OF GREATER FORT WAYNE

We're the Community Foundation of Greater Fort Wayne, and We Do Three Things.

1

We help people make their charitable giving more impactful.

2

We connect funding to effective nonprofits through grantmaking.

3

We provide leadership to address community needs and improve quality of life.

Looking for ways to make an impact? Contact our team today.

555 E. Wayne Street, Fort Wayne, IN 46802 (260) 426-4083 cfgfw.org

Alisa Jayne Biggins

Age: 36

Brotherhood Mutual

HR Specialist - Employee Experience and Outreach



EMPLOYER: Brotherhood Mutual, HR Specialist - Employee Experience and Outreach

EDUCATION: Elmhurst High School. Bachelor of Science from Purdue University (Fort Wayne). Master of Business Administration from Huntington University.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS: Habitat for Humanity of Greater Fort Wayne, Associated Churches, United Way, Rescue Mission, Blessings in a Backpack

HOBBIES: I treasure family time, especially when we're outdoors in the sunshine or exploring abroad. My husband, kids, parents, in-laws, and siblings are my world. Whether it's weekends or weekly dinners, these moments are my favorite.

WHY ARE YOU IN NORTHEAST INDIANA? Having been born and raised here, my love and appreciation for Fort Wayne have only deepened over time. With its supportive community, proximity to family, ideal size, and abundant opportunities, I couldn't imagine calling anywhere else home.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR PROFESSION THAT YOU ENJOY AND WHY? As a community outreach and event manager, my passion is fueled by the opportunity to make a tangible difference in people's lives. Strong communities are built upon meaningful relationships and shared experiences. Whether I'm leading efforts to meet community needs, organizing events, or fostering collaboration, my focus is always on making a positive difference and cultivating a sense of belonging.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU? Success = joy, peace, and not dreading Monday's. ☺

WHERE DID YOUR FIRST PAYCHECK COME FROM AND WHAT WAS YOUR JOB THEN? Steak 'n Shake as a server.

WHO WAS YOUR BIGGEST

SUPPORTER WHO HELPED YOU ADVANCE IN YOUR CAREER?

My husband. I would not be where I am at without him by my side. He has helped me believe in myself and continues to encourage me every step of the way.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THUS FAR IN YOUR CAREER? Pushing through the uncomfortable and continuing to challenge myself.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR GREATEST MISTAKE THUS FAR AND WHAT LESSONS DID YOU LEARN FROM IT? Allowing myself to believe that I am not smart enough, strong enough or deserving enough.

I had to learn my own sense of self-worth before I can effectively help others to recognize their value.

WHAT ARE YOUR CURRENT PROFESSIONAL GOALS? To continually expand my knowledge, foster personal growth and cultivate stronger relationships within our community partners.

HOW DO YOU REMAIN CURRENT/RELEVANT IN YOUR PROFESSION? Maintaining consistency and proactive engagement with the evolving needs of our community partners and employees.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR CAREER, FAMILY, LIFE, AND COMMUNITY SERVICE? To be fully present, purposeful, and prioritize clear communication with my husband, children, and my leaders.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELAX? Brew a new cup of coffee and seek out a cozy spot in the sun or snuggle up on the couch with my children.

WHAT BOOK DO YOU RECOMMEND? Any book by Patrick Lencioni.

BASED ON WHAT YOU KNOW NOW, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL YOUR HIGH SCHOOL SELF? You are worthy, have confidence and be true to who you are.

Reggie Blackmon

Age: 29

Youth for Christ

City Life Lead



EMPLOYER: Youth for Christ, City Life Lead

EDUCATION: Bachelor's degree in Business

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS: Fort Wayne United, National Young Leaders Institute, Latter Rain Ministries

HOBBIES: Pretty simple creature, in the warm months lots of golfing although very mediocre at best, I love basketball, not proud to say amongst business people but also play video games, and coaching people.

WHY ARE YOU IN NORTHEAST INDIANA? Crazy full story, but two main reasons my family wanted to move closer to my biological family, but mainly because my parents were looking for a place to start a second church plant.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR PROFESSION THAT YOU ENJOY AND WHY? I tell people regularly that the greatest investment that we could ever make is into the lives of our young people. And I truly believe that! I've been serving in the youth development space for about 10 years and it has taught me so much about life! I enjoy sitting with young people to navigate life's turns with them. I enjoy watching the positive transformation that takes place over the years, as they say yes to the right opportunities. I believe that anytime we get to walk with people through life it is truly a gift, and this career allows me to help young people establish who they want to be in this world, holistically.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU? Success to me is truly defined by impact. My faith is what drives my desire for success and as Jesus sought not to be served, but to serve, so should I. It does me little good to

be "selfishly successful", because that kind of success stops at me. I tell kids that if their vision for their life doesn't include impacting others, then their vision is too small! Because life is truly about relationships, vertically first then horizontally. Meaning our relationship with God first, then our spouses, family, peers, and those in need.

AS A CHILD, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP? As a child, I wanted to be a firefighter and Michael Jordan. Because I wanted to help save people and fly.

WHERE DID YOUR FIRST PAYCHECK COME FROM AND WHAT WAS YOUR JOB THEN? It was an internship at the SportONE fieldhouse, I worked with Pineapple volleyball, and Always 100 Basketball.

WHO WAS YOUR BIGGEST SUPPORTER WHO HELPED YOU ADVANCE IN YOUR CAREER? My two greatest supporters over my life have definitely been my parents. I would be the man I am today without the greatest father in the world leading by example in every area of his life. And my mom has an endless love for me as she's covered me in prayer and challenged me to be my best. I tell people all the time that the greatest gift I have to give the world is the way in which I've been loved. And now my wife supports me in my day to day grind. Helping keep me passionate, yet kind, humble, yet hungry.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THUS FAR IN YOUR CAREER? My biggest accomplishments have been when kids have said yes to following Jesus, and honestly seeing some of them walk across the stage graduating high school. There isn't a single moment

See BLACKMON, page A19



CONGRATS REGGIE!

ON BEING NAMED IN THE 40 UNDER 40 CLASS OF 2024!

Awards Reception
March 28 • 5:30-8:30 p.m.
Ceruti's Summit Park II
6601 Innovation Blvd.

REGGIE BLACKMON
CITY LIFE LEAD



Beth Boatright

Age: 39

Allen County
Public
Library

Director of
Community
Partnership
and Programs



EMPLOYER: Allen County Public Library, Director of Community Partnerships and Programs

EDUCATION: BA from Houghton College, Masters from IU-Bloomington

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS: Friends of Allen County Public Library, Young-Weisser PTA, and a few faith-related organizations

HOBBIES: I'm training for Fort-4Fitness this fall, and this year I'm also attempting some low-stakes gardening with my kiddos. The bulbs are blooming!

WHY ARE YOU IN NORTHEAST INDIANA? I moved here to work at IPFW, then fell in love with this community (and my husband). We left Indiana for a few years, but we knew we wanted to be back in Fort Wayne. This is such a vibrant city. I'm grateful that we'll be able to raise

our children here.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR PROFESSION THAT YOU ENJOY AND WHY? I love helping people succeed and thrive. In my current role, I get to help our whole community succeed. I get to show all kinds of people, small businesses, schools, leaders, and community organizations discover how the library can help them reach their goals. I get to empower an extraordinary team of library employees so our reach and impact can be wider and deeper. I love creating moments of community where we all share ideas, brainstorm possibilities, and work together to make a difference. I get to do that every day, and I love it.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU? Success is the exhilarating knowledge that my efforts are

See BOATRIGHT, page A18

Adam Blakey Sr.

Age: 39

Blakey
Consulting
Owner



EMPLOYER: Blakey Consulting - owner

EDUCATION: Ben Davis High School (Indianapolis) Core 40-degree 2003; undergraduate degree in Social Work – University of Saint Francis 2008; graduate degree in Social Work – IPFW (IU degree) 2014

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS: Adam Blakey Holiday Foundation - founder

HOBBIES: Sleeping and video games

WHY ARE YOU IN NORTHEAST INDIANA? I am in northeast Indiana to pursue professional opportunities, contribute to the local community, and engage with the diverse range of industries and individuals in this region.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR PROFESSION THAT YOU ENJOY AND WHY? I enjoy the dynamic nature of my profession, which allows me to continuously learn and grow while solving complex problems and making a meaningful impact. Additionally, the opportunity to collaborate with diverse teams and individuals, coupled with the potential to innovate and drive positive change, brings me satisfaction and fulfillment in my work.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU? Success to me, is the culmination of achieving meaningful goals, personal growth, and making a positive impact on others and the world around me. It's about continuous improvement, fulfillment, and finding balance in various aspects of life while staying true to one's values and purpose.

AS A CHILD, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP? A professional NFL football player.

WHERE DID YOUR FIRST PAYCHECK COME FROM AND WHAT WAS YOUR JOB THEN? McDonald's (I spent every dollar on junk)

WHO WAS YOUR BIGGEST SUPPORTER WHO HELPED YOU ADVANCE IN YOUR CAREER? My wife, Kelly Blakey.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THUS FAR IN YOUR CAREER? Making a successful transition to self-employment.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR GREATEST MISTAKE THUS FAR AND WHAT LESSONS DID YOU LEARN FROM IT? Being hasty when making business decisions. The lesson I learned from it is to be patient when making significant decisions that will impact my business.

WHAT ARE YOUR CURRENT PROFESSIONAL GOALS? Stay afloat in self-employment for the next thirty years.

HOW DO YOU REMAIN CURRENT/RELEVANT IN YOUR PROFESSION? Generating new business ideas to stay up to date with what is happening in the community setting.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR CAREER, FAMILY, LIFE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE? I intentionally make time for all aspects listed.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELAX? Play video games.

WHAT BOOK DO YOU RECOMMEND? "How to Murder Your Life" – Cat Marnell

BASED ON WHAT YOU KNOW NOW, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL YOUR HIGH SCHOOL SELF? Invest in crypto and embrace the rainy days, they make the sunny days worthwhile.

Awards Reception
March 28 • 5:30-8:30 p.m.
Ceruti's Summit Park II
6601 Innovation Blvd.



CONGRATULATIONS!
BETH BOATRIGHT

Director of Community
Partnerships and Programs

From your colleagues at ACPL!

 Allen County Public Library

EMPLOYER: Katz, Sapper & Miller, Director of Finance & Accounting Services; Waste Works, Co-Founder

EDUCATION: Bachelor of Science degree in Accounting from Indiana University Purdue University of Fort Wayne (IPFW)

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS: I am currently the ministry chair at Sonrise Church of Fort Wayne. I'm involved in many charitable organizations that are meaningful to me – either as a volunteer, professional resource, or financial supporter – a few of which include Project216, Neighborlink, Destiny Rescue, Nicaragua Resource Network, Mission Preborn, St. Jude Children's Hospital, and Operation Christmas Child.

HOBBIES: I love snowboarding and wakeboarding. I also enjoy learning new things. I'm always listening to an audiobook.

WHY ARE YOU IN NORTHEAST INDIANA? My family moved from Iowa to a small town in northeast Indiana when I was in middle school. I then attended IPFW and fell in love with Fort Wayne. Post-college I lived in Michigan for a few years but missed Fort Wayne greatly. The affordability, friendliness, welcoming environment (both personally and in business), and sense of community is hard to find anywhere else, and I hope we can maintain it as we continue to grow.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR PROFESSION THAT YOU ENJOY AND WHY? With hundreds of clients in varying industries, every day presents different (and fun!) challenges and opportunities. Helping business owners and entrepreneurs – especially because I am an entrepreneur myself – is something I'm passionate about. I'm also enamored by the power of numbers. My favorite days are spent in Excel.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU? Freedom. Growing up with relatively little, every step toward success is a step closer to having the freedom and flexibility to support people and causes that are meaningful to me.

AS A CHILD, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP? Unlike most children, I never had a specific career in mind. I just knew I always wanted to be better, and I would follow whatever opportunities were in front of me to make that happen. Fortuitously, that approach landed me in a career that I love!

WHERE DID YOUR FIRST PAYCHECK COME FROM AND WHAT WAS YOUR JOB THEN? In my sophomore year of high school, I became a CNA. I cared for dementia patients in a nursing home throughout high school and college.

WHO WAS YOUR BIGGEST SUPPORTER WHO HELPED YOU ADVANCE IN YOUR CAREER? My now husband was the first person to tell me that I would succeed in college, and I started classes the very next day. To this day, he is still my biggest supporter in my career and in life.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THUS FAR IN YOUR CAREER? I don't have a single accomplishment that stands out from the others. I'm proud of all of my accomplishments! I love this quote from Adam Grant's book, "Hidden Potential": "Potential is not a matter of where you start, but of how far you travel." I started young adulthood with a series of unfortunate events, and where I am today is beyond my then-wildest dreams. So I view each accomplishment as extraordinary.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR GREATEST MISTAKE THUS FAR AND WHAT LESSONS DID YOU

Valerie Borchers

Age: 32

Katz, Sapper & Miller - Director of Finance & Accounting Services

Waste Works - Co-Founder



LEARN FROM IT? My biggest mistake has been believing that miserable people must be miserable for a reason, and if you can fix that reason for them, they won't be miserable anymore. I have come to learn that I cannot fix miserable people. Instead, I need to focus my efforts on building relationships with growth-minded people and developing relationships that are mutually encouraging.

WHAT ARE YOUR CURRENT PROFESSIONAL GOALS? I love where I am with KSM and with Waste Works. The ceiling is very high in both of these companies, and I don't want to slow down! I would love for Waste Works to become the largest privately held waste company in Indiana so that we can help establish better environmental opportunities for our citizens. In my role at KSM, although we serve clients across the country, I would

love to see our Fort Wayne client base increase exponentially in the next few years as I love knowing and helping the businesses in my hometown.

HOW DO YOU REMAIN CURRENT/RELEVANT IN YOUR PROFESSION? The nuts and bolts involve continuing professional education; constant communication with my clients and evaluation of their needs; and staying abreast of both best practices and regulatory changes on the horizon. Maybe more importantly, however, is keeping myself uncomfortable. People who get comfortable doing things a certain way are the quickest to become irrelevant. I am always hunting for ways to improve!

HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR CAREER, FAMILY, LIFE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE? I know

See Borchers, page A18



Congratulations, Valerie Borchers!

Not only are you a leader in the Northeast Indiana business community, you're also a trailblazer within our own ranks. From all of us at Katz, Sapper & Miller, congratulations on being named to the Greater Fort Wayne Business Weekly's Forty Under 40 class of 2024!

John W. Bowen

Age: 39

Parkview
Regional
Medical
Center and
Affiliates

President



EMPLOYER: Parkview Regional Medical Center and Affiliates, President

EDUCATION: Bachelor's Degree in Political Science and Philosophy from Oklahoma Baptist University, Master's Degree in Health Services Administration from University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, Fellow in the American College of Healthcare Executives

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS: Matthew 25 board member, Pontiac Street Market, United Front, Greater Fort Wayne

HOBBIES: I love sports, golf and spending time with my family.

WHY ARE YOU IN NORTHEAST INDIANA? I moved to NE Indiana to join Parkview. It is an incredible organization and its values stood out and align perfectly with my own personal mission. Since moving to

Fort Wayne, it has become home for my family and I.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR PROFESSION THAT YOU ENJOY AND WHY? I love the ability to work in healthcare and partnering with physicians and clinical staff to build an environment to positively impact a person's life.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU? As a leader, I believe your success is reflected in the growth and development of the team that you lead. I am extremely fortunate to get to work with a wonderful team of leaders at Parkview Regional Medical Center and Affiliates. Additionally, I am a goal-oriented person. I believe success is also defined in terms of setting goals for yourself, professionally, personally and spiritually and then taking the path towards achieving those goals.

AS A CHILD, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP? I wanted to be a football coach. I am an extremely competitive person.

WHERE DID YOUR FIRST PAYCHECK COME FROM AND WHAT WAS YOUR JOB THEN? My first job was mowing grass when I was 12 years old.

WHO WAS YOUR BIGGEST SUPPORTER WHO HELPED YOU ADVANCE IN YOUR CAREER? I have had many supporters in my career. I have had incredible leaders who have invested in my growth and development. Estela Chapa was my first leader who coached me and taught me what it meant to work in a hospital in South Texas. Russ Harrington was the CEO at Baptist Health, and he provided me with my first opportunity to be a hospital President in Arkansas. He and my leader at Baptist, Harrison Dean, taught me how to be a Christian leader in healthcare. Mike Packnett and Rick Henvey have provided me with examples of how to be visionary yet servant leaders. At every phase of my career, I have been blessed to have leaders who have taught me something unique that has made me better. I am blessed that I now get to work with Dr. Greg Johnson at Parkview who has a similar humble approach to Mike and Rick and who challenges me to seek growth and improvement.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THUS FAR IN YOUR CAREER? I became president of PRMC and Affiliates in August of 2020, during the COVID pandemic. I am so proud of how Parkview responded during a difficult time. We stayed open at a time when many hospitals ran out of beds. Our physicians, leadership, and staff had a mentality of "Just Say Yes" and remained committed to

providing services in the midst of the pandemic.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR GREATEST MISTAKE THUS FAR AND WHAT LESSONS DID YOU LEARN FROM IT? Early in my career, I learned in leadership how you do something is oftentimes more important than what you do.

WHAT ARE YOUR CURRENT PROFESSIONAL GOALS? My goal is to continue leading a great team and finding ways to increase access to care for our community.

HOW DO YOU REMAIN CURRENT/RELEVANT IN YOUR PROFESSION? I am a big believer in networking and learning from peers. I try to connect with leaders from across the country, formally and informally, on a regular basis to see how others are approaching the many challenges within healthcare.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR CAREER, FAMILY, LIFE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE? Finding balance is different for every person. I make time to see my family every day even if it is just putting the kids to bed or having breakfast. Also, my wife and I established having coffee together every day. Coffee time is sacred in the Bowen Home.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELAX? Golf and watch sports

WHAT BOOK DO YOU RECOMMEND? Outside of the Bible it is hard to pick one. My 2 favorite books from last year were "Authentic Leadership" by Dan Owolabi and "Resilient" by John Eldredge.

BASED ON WHAT YOU KNOW NOW, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL YOUR HIGH SCHOOL SELF? Chill out and enjoy the journey.

John Bowen
President,
Parkview Regional
Medical Center &
Affiliates

John Bowen,
Congratulations on being
named a Forty Under 40
recipient.

We're proud to recognize John Bowen for being named one of Business Weekly's Forty Under 40 winners. Every year, this recognition highlights the top professionals in northeast Indiana who are making a difference both at work and in their community. Thank you, John, for being an outstanding leader for Parkview and our region.



Cameron Brooks

Age: 32

Brooks BBQ
and Chicken
Owner



EMPLOYER: Brooks BBQ and Chicken, Owner

EDUCATION: North Side Class of 2009, Indiana State University 09-11

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS: SAAB (student African American Brotherhood) Metro Football, NFL Flag Youth Coach

HOBBIES: I spend most of my spare time singing, playing games or having gatherings with friends and family at the house

WHY ARE YOU IN NORTHEAST INDIANA? I was born and raised in Fort Wayne. I used to feel stuck but now that I'm older I realize there is a lot of opportunity here to grow and live a great life while raising my family.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR PROFESSION THAT YOU ENJOY AND WHY? What I enjoy most are the reactions of people when they try my food. I love the fact that I can provide something to their day that makes them smile. My main life goal is to spread joy and good vibes in this sad world we live in.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU? Success to me is having a dream, and never giving up on it until you reach it. In my book, as long as you haven't quit you're still in the race, and if you are in the race then you're already winning because the only competition is yourself!

AS A CHILD, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP? As a kid I watched Warren Sapp like other kids watched cartoons. I was determined to be the next superstar NFL defensive tackle. So much I wore his beloved No. 99 all throughout youth football to high school lol

WHERE DID YOUR FIRST PAYCHECK COME FROM AND WHAT WAS YOUR JOB THEN? My first job was at Brooks with my family, but my first paycheck didn't come until yearsssss later lol. 17yrs old working at Toys R Us

WHO WAS YOUR BIGGEST SUPPORTER WHO HELPED YOU ADVANCE IN YOUR CAREER? My biggest supporter from Day One has been my dad. He always told me he believed me and that I could do whatever I put my mind to if I got out my own way. He's the one who instilled this determination and helped me build strength of character and faith at a young age. Still to this day the same remains true.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR

BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THUS FAR IN YOUR CAREER? I can't say what the biggest is, they all mean the world to me from being a Kingsford Preserve the Pit Fellow, and being written about in Complex and Forbes Magazine to having Ryan Seacrest and the "American Idol" judges eat my food on national TV while I audition for the show, and so many other things along the journey that has given me the will to keep going. I'm just grateful to be here living my dream.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR GREATEST MISTAKE THUS FAR AND WHAT LESSONS DID YOU LEARN FROM IT? My greatest mistake has been "jumping the gun." You have to come to a point of realization where you realize that just because something seems to be opportunity that doesn't mean it's an opportunity necessarily for you!

WHAT ARE YOUR CURRENT PROFESSIONAL GOALS? My next goal is to continue to be successful in my BBQ business. We eventually want to have our own storefront, with a full bar, small dance floor, good food and great nightly entertainment-live music, comedy, poetry with food that compliments the vibe. It's coming soon!

HOW DO YOU REMAIN CURRENT/RELEVANT IN YOUR PROFESSION? You stay relevant by being consistent. People love good food, so in my field as long as you do what you're supposed to do and have good customer service you can't lose.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR CAREER, FAMILY, LIFE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE? Balance has been tough, especially since opening at Electric Works. But my kids often come to work with us, and my wife and I spend more time together than ever being at the restaurant so you can imagine how hectic it can get, lol, but we're learning how to minimize in certain areas, and we have hope that things will get better really soon in that area.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELAX? Love to travel.

WHAT BOOK DO YOU RECOMMEND? "Think and Grow Rich" by Napoleon Hill.

BASED ON WHAT YOU KNOW NOW, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL YOUR HIGH SCHOOL SELF? Take advantage of every opportunity and make sure you're prepared for what you're chasing because you just might have a chance to achieve every goal you set out to.

Stasha Carrasquillo

Age: 36

Turnstone
Center
Chief
Marketing
Technology
Officer



EMPLOYER: Turnstone Center, Chief Marketing Technology Officer

EDUCATION: Bremen High School (Bremen, IN); Purdue University Fort Wayne, Bachelor of Arts Degree with Distinction in Communication with double concentrations in Interpersonal & Organizational Communication; Indiana Tech, Master's Degree in Business Administration with a double concentration in Marketing and Management

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS: I joined the Rotary Club of Fort Wayne in 2018, served as the PR Committee Chair for a number of years, and currently manage the club's weekly newsletter. I am also on the board of directors for Project Ballet, actively involved in the Northeast Indiana Workforce Council, and serve the KidCity Ministry at Pathway Community Church.

HOBBIES: Losing myself in a good book and enjoying live music, both preferably in the warmth of the sun, bring me a lot of joy. I also love to travel with my husband, and given enough free time, I like trying different crafts, even if they sometimes turn out as "Pinterest fails."

WHY ARE YOU IN NORTHEAST INDIANA? I am incredibly proud to have witnessed and continue to support the momentum and evolution of our community over the last decade and counting. I spent the majority of my childhood in northeast Indiana, and when I moved to Fort Wayne for my undergraduate studies, the roots sunk deeper. I

met my husband here, and we can't imagine pursuing our careers and raising our family anywhere else. It is thrilling to watch my daughters explore downtown Fort Wayne or the small-town streets of surrounding towns. So many of the experiences that shape their minds and appreciation of "home" are made possible by residents who directly invest in and take ownership of our community's trajectory. I hope my daughters' firsthand exposure to social responsibility creates a value that takes root in their own lives.

My time with Turnstone Center has also put a spotlight on the incredible fabric and history of our community that has made such a unique institution possible. I have heard countless remarks from people across the country and the globe that they wish they had a "Turnstone" wherever they call home. And if you spend any amount of time in northeast Indiana, it's obvious that Turnstone is only one of countless organizations made possible by passionate community members to enhance our collective quality of life with a flavor unique to our region.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR PROFESSION THAT YOU ENJOY AND WHY? Building relationships and crafting clear messages through words is really satisfying, and problem-solving for community needs and social change adds layers of purpose. With my experiences specifically in our local human services landscape, I'm also energized by knowing that all of the work

See CARRASQUILLO, page A18



Stasha Carrasquillo
| CHIEF MARKETING
TECHNOLOGY OFFICER

Turnstone congratulates our very own 40 under 40 honoree, Stasha Carrasquillo.

Stasha's contributions to our organization and community are truly commendable. Her dedication, love for what she does, and innovative spirit make this a well-deserved recognition.

Stasha, as you celebrate this milestone, know that your accomplishments are respected by all those who have shared this journey with you. May this honor be one of many milestones on the path to success and a reminder of the potential that awaits.




John Buteyn

Age: 38

Purdue University
Fort Wayne

Clinical Assistant
Professor of Music, Director



EMPLOYER: Purdue University Fort Wayne; Clinical Assistant Professor of Music; Director, Popular Music, Music Industry, Music Technology Programs; Director, Gold Top Music Group

EDUCATION: Master of Music (M.M.), Music Technology from Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, Georgia, 2009-2011; Bachelor of Science (B.S.), Business Administration and Bachelor of Art (B.A.), Music from Houghton College, Houghton, New York, 2004-2008

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS: Purdue University Fort Wayne, Unitarian Universalist Church of Fort Wayne

HOBBIES: Hiking and cycling with my family. Traveling near and far. Music (listening, recording, composing, performing).

WHY ARE YOU IN NORTHEAST INDIANA? Work, and Fort Wayne seemed like a great place to move to with my family.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR PROFESSION THAT YOU ENJOY AND WHY? I get to work in and around music, recording and production every day, with excellent colleagues, and wonderful students. I absolutely love teaching and couldn't imagine doing anything else!

WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU? Doing the best I can in all endeavors, and being able to do the things I love with the people I care about.

AS A CHILD, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP? I knew for a long time that I wanted to be a musician and involved in sound/audio

in some capacity – I was always very passionate about music and technology.

Where did your first paycheck come from and what was your job then? My first paycheck came from the Olean Times Herald, a newspaper that I delivered on foot/bike throughout my small town. I was 10 years old.

WHO WAS YOUR BIGGEST SUPPORTER WHO HELPED YOU ADVANCE IN YOUR CAREER? My partner and I have been married for 15 years, and she has been the absolute best supporter throughout my career, from graduate school through several different jobs in various locations.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THUS FAR IN YOUR CAREER? I educate students, so I feel most accomplished when they complete the degree program and land good job opportunities in music.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR GREATEST MISTAKE THUS FAR AND WHAT LESSONS DID YOU LEARN FROM IT? I have always struggled with procrastination, and at various points throughout my career that has caused me to miss fairly important deadlines. I have since learned how to manage and prioritize tasks to help prevent opportunities to miss critical deadlines.

WHAT ARE YOUR CURRENT PROFESSIONAL GOALS? I hope to produce and record more of my own original compositions, build my network locally and regionally, and continue to grow the programs I oversee in the PFW School of Music.

HOW DO YOU REMAIN CURRENT/RELEVANT IN YOUR

PROFESSION? I read and study (magazines, journals, blogs, textbooks), and practice (recording, production, mixing, instruments) on a regular basis. I also analyze feedback from students and colleagues to improve my teaching.


HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR CAREER, FAMILY, LIFE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE? It is sometimes difficult, but so important, to set boundaries. Without boundaries, balancing everything would be impossible. It takes effort to prioritize and set boundaries, but sometimes even more effort to uphold those boundaries. But once established I find myself in a life rhythm that has a good balance.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELAX? I will relax by watching a good show or movie with my family, or reading a book together by the fireplace, or taking a family walk or bike ride, or eating a delicious meal with my family, or having a glass of wine with my partner, or hiking a mountain and exploring new territory, or booking a retreat to spend time by myself and recharge.

WHAT BOOK DO YOU RECOMMEND? If I had to choose just one, it would be "The Storyteller" by Dave Grohl. I just finished that and it was an amazing read. If I could choose a couple more, I would add "This is Your Brain on Music" by Daniel Levitin, and "A Dream About Lightning Bugs" by Ben Folds.

BASED ON WHAT YOU KNOW NOW, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL YOUR HIGH SCHOOL SELF? Follow and pursue what you are passionate about and love most in life. Whatever passion drives you, put all your efforts and educational pursuits into that. When you do what you love, you love what you do.


Congratulations John Buteyn on your hard work and ongoing dedication to the School of Music. The College of Visual and Performing Arts is proud to help welcome you into the 40 Under 40 Class of 2024.



PURDUE UNIVERSITY
FORT WAYNE

School of Music

Study Popular Music, Music Industry, and Music Technology with John Buteyn and the excellent team of professors in the School of Music.



Melanie Kellogg

Age: 36

Be Noble Inc.

Executive Director



EMPLOYER: Be Noble Inc., Executive Director

EDUCATION: Carroll High School, Indiana State University - Bachelors of Science: Major - Public Relations Minor - Marketing, Indiana State University - Masters of Business Administration

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS: Junior Achievement of Noble County, president of Junior Achievement of Whitley County, president of Warriors, Inc.

HOBBIES: My hobbies include volunteering, music, reading, and being out on the water.

WHY ARE YOU IN NORTHEAST INDIANA? I chose to stay and live in Northeast Indiana for family, close-knit communities, and the tranquil beauty of the lakes.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR PROFESSION THAT YOU ENJOY AND WHY? I enjoy economic development because it represents the intersection of innovation, strategy, and community. Being part of this process makes me feel connected to the broader goal of creating sustainable growth and resilience for my community. I enjoy watching the projects go from the planning stages to making a difference in people's lives. It is incredibly fulfilling and deeply rewarding.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU? As the first woman in my family to graduate college, success means breaking barriers and setting new expectations. To me, success means setting personal goals, making mistakes, and learning from them. Success is having the ability to lead life that is aligned with my values, continually contributing to my community, and being a consistent inspiration to my two daughters as I feel that success is not just a personal triumph, but a beacon of hope and possibility for others following in my footsteps.

AS A CHILD, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP? I wanted to be the 3rd Melanie in the Spice Girls so that there could be a Mel A, Mel B and Mel C. (my maiden name is Allen)

WHERE DID YOUR FIRST PAYCHECK COME FROM AND WHAT WAS YOUR JOB THEN? My first paycheck came from Hometown Lions, and I was an umpire for T-ball and lob ball. It was great watching the little kiddos learn how to play baseball and work together as a team.

WHO WAS YOUR BIGGEST SUPPORTER WHO HELPED YOU ADVANCE IN YOUR CAREER? Throughout my career, I have been fortunate to have various mentors who played pivotal roles in my professional advancement. Each mentor brought a unique perspective and set of skills

that guided me through different aspects of my career journey. Early on, a mentor provided valuable technical expertise, helping me navigate complex challenges and build a solid foundation in my field. As I progressed, another mentor focused on honing my leadership skills, encouraging me to take on more responsibilities and refine my decision-making abilities. Later, a mentor with industry insights provided strategic guidance, helping me navigate the ever-changing landscape and make informed career choices. These mentors collectively shaped my career trajectory, offering support, advice, and wisdom that have been instrumental in my growth and success.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THUS FAR IN YOUR CAREER? Setting up a nonprofit organization called Warriors Inc., with the purpose of providing children and adults enduring intellectual development and physical disabilities the opportunity to perform, has undoubtedly been my most significant accomplishment in my career. This initiative not only aligns with my passion for inclusivity and community support but also reflects a deep commitment to making a positive impact on the lives of those facing unique challenges. Through Warriors Inc., I have helped to create a platform that goes beyond traditional notions of support by fostering an environment where individuals can showcase their talents, promoting overall wellness, and instilling confidence in their abilities. Witnessing the transformative power of this endeavor has not only brought fulfillment to my professional journey but has also reinforced the belief that everyone, regardless of their abilities, deserves the chance to shine and contribute meaningfully to society.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR GREATEST MISTAKE THUS FAR AND WHAT LESSONS DID YOU LEARN FROM IT? Failing to prioritize personal time has proven to be my most significant mistake to date. In the ruthless pursuit of professional success, I neglected the crucial need for balance and personal well-being. The relentless work hours and constant commitment took a toll on my mental and physical health, leading to burnout and diminished productivity. I've come to realize that sustainable success requires a harmonious integration of work and personal life. Embracing personal time not only rejuvenates the mind and body but also enhances creativity and problem-solving skills. I've learned the importance of setting boundaries, managing workload effectively, and making time for hobbies and relationships. It has taught me that a healthy work-life balance is not a luxury but a prerequisite for long-term success and fulfillment in my career.

See **KELLOGG**, page A16

Grace Elizabeth Caswell

Age: 33

The Noble County Convention and Visitors Bureau

Executive Directory



EMPLOYER: The Noble County Convention and Visitors Bureau, Executive Director

WHAT IS YOUR EDUCATION: Reading (Michigan) High School, Bachelor of Art s- Anthropology and Sociology Oakland University, Master of Art in Leadership and Organization Psychology Siena Heights University

WHAT COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS ARE YOU INVOLVED IN? Board member: Be Noble, Inc. LEDO of Noble County, Crossroads United Way- serving Elkhart, LaGrange, and Noble County, Indiana Foodways Alliance, Noble County Parks and Recreation Board, Noble County Purdue Extension Board; Steering committee member: Noble County Young Professional Network, Economic Advisory Council for the City of Kendallville, Mainstreet Ligonier (Future Ligonier Alliance), Noble County Health Task Force for St Martin's Healthcare, Power of the Purse Fundraiser- CRUW, Thrive Noble County; Volunteer: Pre-K Sunday School Teacher, Fairview Missionary Church in Angola.

HOBBIES: Camping, hiking, kayaking, coffee cupping/tasting, attending museums and gallery exhibits, photography, travel (leisure, history, culture), volunteering, writing.

WHY ARE YOU IN NORTHEAST INDIANA? I live in NEIN because it provides me with the best opportunities for personal and professional growth as a young professional. I

chose to live in Indiana. About six years ago, I met my husband, Nik Caswell. After we got engaged, I moved from my hometown in Michigan to NEIN. Living, working, and playing in Northeastern Indiana has allowed me to achieve my goals much faster than I ever thought possible. I can worship, volunteer, build a family, and advance my career in ways that I could not have done anywhere else in the Midwest.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR PROFESSION THAT YOU ENJOY AND WHY? Although I love various aspects of my job in the tourism industry, what I find most fulfilling is having the opportunity to serve and lead my community in ways that make a real difference to its residents. I particularly enjoy the marketing and promotions side of my work, which allows me to utilize my communication skills and creativity to benefit others. Our mission at Visit Noble County is to promote tourism by connecting partners and events, developing unique assets, and enriching visitors' experiences in a way that contributes to economic growth.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU? To me, success is not an absolute measure but rather a spectrum. It means doing my best with the tools and resources available at any given time. Success is listening carefully to others and striving to improve in small ways consistently. I often ask myself, "Grace, what can you do 1% better tomorrow?" or "How can I handle

See **CASWELL**, page A17



The tourism bureau staff is ready to assist visitors, innkeepers, and tourism partners across Noble county and the region!

GRACE CASWELL

Executive Director of the Noble County Convention and Visitors Bureau Inc



A 501(c)3 tax exempt, charitable organization
Located at
110 S. Orange St.
Albion, IN 46701

Kristin Conley

Age: 36

Indiana Tech

Director of PhD Admissions



EMPLOYER: Indiana Tech, Director of PhD Admissions

EDUCATION: Warsaw Community High School, BA Media and Public Communications: IPFW, MS Leadership: Trine

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS: Young Leaders of Northeast Indiana (YLNi): board member, VP of Mission Advancement

HOBBIES: Spending time with my 1- and 3-year-old boys and my husband, Doug, hoarding house plants, attending concerts, comedy shows, and sporting events, visiting the YLNi Farmer’s Market, watching reruns of “Ted Lasso” and “Schitt’s Creek.”

WHY ARE YOU IN NORTHEAST

INDIANA? I love the small town, big city feel. I grew up near Warsaw, in a close-knit farming family, and I love that I’m able to enjoy everything that Fort Wayne has to offer while still being able to easily go visit my family’s farm.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR PROFESSION THAT YOU ENJOY AND WHY? I love being able to help students from all over the world achieve their educational goals. I’ve met so many wonderful students who I know I’ll stay in touch with even after they have graduated.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU? To me, success means being able to enjoy what you’re doing — getting satisfaction and joy out of what you accomplish

and do from day to day.

AS A CHILD, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP? I wanted to be a teacher or a professional beach volleyball player.

WHERE DID YOUR FIRST PAYCHECK COME FROM AND WHAT WAS YOUR JOB THEN? My first paycheck actually came from baling hay for my family’s farm. Aside from that, my first job was at Arby’s.

WHO WAS YOUR BIGGEST SUPPORTER WHO HELPED YOU ADVANCE IN YOUR CAREER? I’ve been fortunate enough to have had many mentors throughout my 15 years in higher education, but my parents always reminded us kids that if we believed in ourselves, we could accomplish anything.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THUS FAR IN YOUR CAREER? I’m thankful for a career that allows me to be both analytical and creative. Helping to develop an MBA pathway to our PhD program, which has proved to be quite successful, has been gratifying. As well, holding a seat on the YLNi board of directors has been extremely rewarding. However, receiving this honor may be the biggest accomplishment in my career thus far.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR GREATEST MISTAKE THUS FAR AND WHAT LESSONS DID YOU LEARN FROM IT? I made a lot of mistakes when I first started in higher education. There are a lot of moving parts and a lot of policies that must be followed. Making these mistakes taught me everything that I know now — how to be an effective and efficient higher education professional.

WHAT ARE YOUR CURRENT PROFESSIONAL GOALS? My short-term goals are to grow our PhD program both domestically and internationally and continue to develop unique pathways and program opportunities that cannot be found elsewhere.

HOW DO YOU REMAIN CURRENT/RELEVANT IN YOUR PROFESSION? I follow and interact with many higher education professionals and associations on LinkedIn, attend workshops and conferences, and meet with many professionals throughout the area.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR CAREER, FAMILY, LIFE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE? It can be hard at times, but I’m grateful to work for a university that values this balance. I have had to say “no” to opportunities, even when I didn’t want to, because I knew I couldn’t give them 100% at the time. I’m getting better at saying no...even though it doesn’t come naturally.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELAX? I’m not sure that my mind ever relaxes, but sometimes I must take the day to myself. I get coffee and aimlessly walk around Target.

WHAT BOOK DO YOU RECOMMEND? “Tuesdays with Morrie” by Mitch Albom.

BASED ON WHAT YOU KNOW NOW, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL YOUR HIGH SCHOOL SELF? “It gets better. After you survive the rollercoaster that is your 20s, you’ll be really happy in your 30s. Keep being you.”

A WELL-DESERVED RECOGNITION!

Congratulations to Kristin Conley, director of admissions for Indiana Tech’s Ph.D. in Global Leadership program, for being recognized as a Greater Fort Wayne Business Weekly Forty Under 40 top professional in Northeast Indiana.

INDIANATECH.EDU | 800.937.2448



INDIANATECH

Alyssa Dumire

Age: 34

Fort Wayne
Museum of
Art

Directory of
Education



EMPLOYER: Fort Wayne Museum of Art, Director of Education

EDUCATION: I studied art education and art history at Ball State University.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS: My day job is fully community-oriented. We work with schools throughout the region, retirement communities, scouts, Allen County Juvenile Center, and more. We're also fortunate to partner with other community organizations on programming for specific groups. Museums exist to preserve the objects in their collection, but also to educate the public about them: from my perspective, we're equally beholden to the communities we serve as we are to the artwork we display (what would be the point if no one came to see the "stuff"?).

I am also in the process of joining the board at the African/African-American Historical Society and Museum.

HOBBIES: My partner and I have two needy dogs who are always looking for trouble and occupy much of our free time, but I also like to cook and bake and spend time outdoors. I don't make much "Art" these days, but I channel my creative energy into other hobbies like sewing or DIY projects around the house or garden.

WHY ARE YOU IN NORTHEAST INDIANA? I'm from here and stayed because of my job. When I started applying for museum jobs, I fully expected to move or go back to school (probably both), but got lucky and landed a position at the museum I grew up visiting. I think a lot of people my age never necessarily planned to stay in the area as long as we have, but now there is so much exciting development, the cost of living is great, and I'm increasingly glad to be close to family.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR PROFESSION THAT YOU ENJOY AND WHY? My colleague and I joke that our job is "looking at things and talking about stuff" and at the core, it is really looking at art with people and helping them make meaning from what they see, which holds endless possibilities. I love that there is always something new to learn about as our exhibitions change frequently, and that I get to share the museum with people of all ages, pre-k through older adults. I also have wonderful coworkers!

WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU? Doing work that I'm proud of and continually growing and learning.

AS A CHILD, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP? A marine biologist, a teacher,

and for a time, something in the medical field. I still kind of want to be an astronaut.

WHERE DID YOUR FIRST PAYCHECK COME FROM AND WHAT WAS YOUR JOB THEN? I was a counselor at Franke Park Day Camp for three summers after high school. Then, after college I worked in the campground office of a state park before I moved back to Fort Wayne.

WHO WAS YOUR BIGGEST SUPPORTER WHO HELPED YOU ADVANCE IN YOUR CAREER? I have never been good at following advice or accepting help (something I'm working on!), and have to figure things out for myself for them to feel meaningful or worthwhile. However, my parents, and especially my mom, always told me I could be and do anything and I took that to heart. I know they were perplexed when I didn't go into teaching after graduating with my license, but they were always supportive anyway.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THUS FAR IN YOUR CAREER? I've been involved with FWMoA for nearly 10 years, joining the staff in 2016 after two years as a volunteer docent, and I think that longevity is an accomplishment in itself, since it allowed me to grow professionally without having to start over at a new organization.

Three years in, in 2019, I managed updates to the museum's Learning Center as an interactive gallery space, with a focus on making art and the museum more accessible and welcoming for all. It set the stage for recent efforts to include more interactive components within the main galleries, and has served its many purposes well for almost five years.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR GREATEST MISTAKE THUS FAR AND WHAT LESSONS DID YOU LEARN FROM IT? There are no mistakes! Really, I make small mistakes constantly but I honestly don't think of things that way. Any task accomplished is something to be learned from — even when it's overall a success, there are places to improve.

WHAT ARE YOUR CURRENT PROFESSIONAL GOALS? One of my goals is actually to better celebrate my accomplishments and those of my team, no matter how small, so this award has helped with that thanks to my nominators! I'm always looking to improve my skills as a manager, more effectively evaluate programs, and seek out formal training for parts of my job that I'm less experienced in.

See DUMIRE, page A18

Jessica Davis

Age: 38

Fort
Financial
Credit
Union, Vice
President
of Member
Experience



EMPLOYER: Fort Financial Credit Union, Vice President of Member Experience

EDUCATION: Bachelors in Psychology and Bachelors in Accounting

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS: I am board president of a nonprofit organization for individuals with Down Syndrome called, Gigi's Playhouse Fort Wayne.

HOBBIES: If I'm not spending time with my family, you can find me at Gigi's Playhouse, at the gym, or designing and completing home projects.

WHY ARE YOU IN NORTHEAST INDIANA? I've lived in a smaller community in northeast Indiana since I was 8 years old. I love the small-town atmosphere and close-knit community that's all within driving distance of the city life. With a slower pace and less traffic, it's a safe place to raise children, so I've stayed in the area as the benefits of this area are too great to leave.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR PROFESSION THAT YOU ENJOY AND WHY? The instant a member connects with Fort Financial, whether they walk in, call, or utilize our online/mobile avenues, an experience is created and it's my job to make it the best experience it can be. Behind the scenes, I'm creating a culture of accountability and ownership in which our employees understand and feel a connection to their role in the mission of the credit union. So, while our ultimate goal is for every member to have a positive experience with the credit union, I'm also seeking to ensure our employees

have a positive experience within their roles. My role is truly all encompassing for both the member and our employees.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU? Success isn't about accomplishing a goal. Success is the journey towards accomplishing a goal. The journey shapes your characteristics and qualities of leading and living a life of fruitful relationships, a career you're passionate about, and a life you're proud of.

AS A CHILD, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP? Throughout my childhood and into my high school years, I aspired to be a lawyer.

WHERE DID YOUR FIRST PAYCHECK COME FROM AND WHAT WAS YOUR JOB THEN? My first paycheck came from working at a car wash while I was in high school.

WHO WAS YOUR BIGGEST SUPPORTER WHO HELPED YOU ADVANCE IN YOUR CAREER? There have always been people within my jobs that encouraged me along the way, but the biggest supporter behind the scenes has always been my dad. He's always pushed and encouraged me to go further, expect more of myself, and aim higher. As each advancement opportunity presented itself, it was him that gave me the gentle nudge I'd need to keep moving forward.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THUS FAR IN YOUR CAREER? Successfully, creating roles and departments from inception to

See DAVIS, page A17



Congrats
Jessica Davis
Vice President of Member Experience

Congratulations Jessica for being selected as a member of Greater Fort Wayne Business Weekly's Forty Under 40 Class of 2024!

We're grateful for your leadership and proud to have you on our team!



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Christi M. Hille

Age: 32

Asher Agency

Digital Media Buyer



EMPLOYER: Asher Agency, Digital Media Buyer

EDUCATION: Purdue University, Fort Wayne, BA Media & Public Communication, BA English

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION: Fort Wayne Cinema Center, board president; Hobnobben Film Festival, director; Fort Wayne Dance Collective, marketing committee

HOBBIES: When I'm not working or volunteering, I enjoy reading, cooking, watching films and TV shows, going to punk shows, and hanging out with my cats and family.

WHY ARE YOU IN NORTHEAST INDIANA? I grew up in the Fort Wayne area. I enjoy living in Fort Wayne because it's small enough and growing so quickly that individuals can really enact change and make a difference. There's a close community feeling within the city and a growing energy.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR PROFESSION THAT YOU ENJOY AND WHY? I've been in the marketing industry for 10+ years when everyone was just starting to get more familiar with digital marketing practices. The field never gets boring and is both analytical and creative at the same time. There's always another challenge to solve based on the client's needs or goals.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU? My personal understanding of success is constantly changing. My main goals in being successful is to cultivate a team environment that is dynamic, egalitarian and combats traditional notions of corporate culture. I also believe it's important to cultivate healthy relationships with clients, colleagues, and the community. By

See HILLE, page A16

Kelsey Herber

Age: 29

Huntington University

Head Women's Volleyball Coach



EMPLOYER: Huntington University, Head Women's Volleyball Coach

EDUCATION: Graduated from Lake-wood Park Christian School (Auburn, Indiana) 2012, Bachelor of Arts in Broadcast Media from Huntington University (Huntington, Indiana) 2016, Master's in Clinical Mental Health Counseling from Huntington University (Huntington, Indiana) 2019

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS: Star 88.3 Radio Station: record weekly for the show "Josh and Friends" and Empowered Volleyball Academy: Director of Mental Health

HOBBIES: Spending time with my 2-year-old son; radio, TV, and public speaking; attending/watching Huntington University and Indiana University basketball games; playing games with family and friends; deep conversations

WHY ARE YOU IN NORTHEAST INDIANA? I was born and raised here and never left!

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR PROFESSION THAT YOU ENJOY AND WHY? I am passionate about coaching because I believe I have a unique opportunity to invest in the lives of my athletes in a way that transcends the court. I'm not just growing players. I'm growing people. To walk alongside my girls in their lives within the 4 lines and outside the 4 lines is a great honor.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU? I define success within our program through the acronym F.A.I.T.H. (Family, Achievement, Investment, Training, Heaven). I want my players to feel like they are part of a family where they are genuinely loved and cared for. This then empowers them to achieve their goal of climbing the ladder in our conference. I believe making an investment in their lives is the most valuable part of my job, and training with excellence while keeping a Heaven-focused mindset is our daily goal.

AS A CHILD, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP? As a child, I wanted to be an elementary school teacher or the host of a cooking show when I grew up!

WHERE DID YOUR FIRST PAYCHECK COME FROM AND WHAT WAS YOUR JOB THEN? My first paycheck came from babysitting my high school volleyball coach's kids!

WHO WAS YOUR BIGGEST SUPPORTER WHO HELPED YOU ADVANCE IN YOUR CAREER? I am grateful to have had so many people support me in my journey. My dad (Mitch Kruse) has always been one of my biggest fans in life. I remember him telling me when I was struggling with my college volleyball career coming to an end, "Kelsey, I know this is hard right now, but I truly believe you are going to find a lot of fulfillment in coaching someday." I can confidently say I enjoy coaching even more than I did playing. My dad was one of my coaches growing up, and when I think about the coaching presence I want to have in the gym, it is one of enthusiasm, connection, and empowerment-what I saw him bring into the gym each day with his athletes.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THUS FAR IN YOUR CAREER? My team winning the most games in program history since 2007 this past season has been my biggest accomplishment thus far.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR GREATEST MISTAKE THUS FAR

See HERBER, page A16



40 under 40 Winner!



Congratulations to our own

super star

Christi Hille!

We're in awe at all you do and extremely proud to have you as a vital part of our team.

Congratulations from everyone at Asher.

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LEARN MORE ABOUT KELSEY'S STORY

Congratulations, Kelsey Herber!



HUNTINGTON UNIVERSITY
CHRIST. SCHOLARSHIP. SERVICE.



Kelsey Herber

Huntington University graduate (2016, MA 2019)
Head HU Volleyball coach

Keirsten Eberts

Age: 33

Trine University

Vice President of Online and International Studies



EMPLOYER: Trine University, Vice President of Online and International Studies

EDUCATION: I have a Bachelor of Science with a major in psychology from Trine University, a Master of Science in Leadership from Trine University, and I am currently pursuing a Doctor of Education in Instructional Systems Technology from Indiana University.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS: While I am currently focused on my studies and caring for my 10-month-old daughter, I have had to take a break from my involvement in community organizations. However, in the past, I have enjoyed being active with several community organizations. These include the Community Humane Shelter of Steuben County, Emerging Leaders Alliance, Young Professionals Network of Steuben County, Angola Area Chamber of Commerce, Easterseals RISE, and United Way.

HOBBIES: My hobbies include reading, playing tennis, practicing yoga, traveling, listening to true crime podcasts while cooking, enjoying local restaurants with my husband, and sewing and creating handmade designs for a small business I co-own with my best friend.

WHY ARE YOU IN NORTHEAST INDIANA? I have lived in Northeast Indiana my entire life. Over 50 years ago, my great-grandparents, who lived in the Toledo, Ohio area, purchased lake property in Steuben County. Since then, many in my family have moved here, drawn by the region's opportunities and community.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR

PROFESSION THAT YOU ENJOY AND WHY? Working in higher education is incredibly rewarding. In my position, I primarily support post-traditional and international learners. These learners often face unique challenges, whether it is balancing work and family responsibilities, navigating cultural differences, or overcoming language barriers. Being able to play a small role in their educational journey is very fulfilling.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU? Success, to me, means being willing to adapt, change, and grow. Regardless of the industry or profession, continuous learning and personal development are essential components of success. Every day presents new opportunities for growth, and embracing these opportunities with an open mind and a willingness to evolve is key to achieving long-term success.

AS A CHILD, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP? As a child, I was fascinated by the world of crime-solving. I wanted to become an FBI agent or a crime scene investigator, inspired by the detective stories I read, and the crime shows I watched. While my career path may have taken me in a different direction, that childhood dream instilled in me a sense of curiosity and a desire to make a difference in the world.

WHERE DID YOUR FIRST PAYCHECK COME FROM AND WHAT WAS YOUR JOB THEN? My first paycheck came from my job as a hostess at a local restaurant. I started working there during the summer after 8th grade.

See **EBERTS**, page A17

Samuel “Sam” Jordan Grate

Age: 34

Auburn Cord Duesenberg Automobile Museum

Curator



EMPLOYER: Auburn Cord Duesenberg Automobile Museum, Curator

EDUCATION: Attended Newcastle University in Newcastle, England, where I got my Masters of Arts in Museum Studies with Merit

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS: Presently I help with the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Festival, DeKalb County Visitors Bureau, Deacon with Trinity Lutheran Church, and have been involved with the DeKalb chapter of the Civil Air Patrol and 4H.

HOBBIES: In general, I'm a history nerd so I do lots of reading about historical events and figures, enjoy time with friends, cooking, and spending time with my 17-year-old cat Delilah who keeps me very busy!

WHY ARE YOU IN NORTHEAST INDIANA? I was born and raised in Auburn, and was able to secure and progress into a job as curator of the Auburn Cord Duesenberg Automobile Museum, so I hope to be able to stay in Auburn and the northeast Indiana area.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR PROFESSION THAT YOU ENJOY AND WHY? Auburn, Indiana, is very rich in automotive history and even almost 90 years after the Auburn Automobile Company closed its doors, the cars are still widely celebrated and considered by enthusiasts and historians worldwide to be amongst the very best ever designed and built. To be able to be the curator of the museum that represents the history in the very same space that these cars were conceived, drawn, tested, and built is very rewarding. I am able to design

galleries and displays, work on and drive the cars, and interact with and interpret these pieces of history, while bringing other significant automobiles and pieces of art to northeast Indiana for all to see, learn, and enjoy. Meeting historians, enthusiasts, and owners worldwide when they come to this community yearly to celebrate the cars and history is also a great bonus.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU? For me, success is setting about achieving a goal, whether large or small, and reaching a conclusion to the goal, whether it is met or not. You can make mistakes and learn and make meaningful personal and professional advances even if the goal is not met, and that also is a success. Previous examples in my professional career include planning, creating, and interpreting a whole gallery full of the rarest experimental and one-off Duesenbergs in existence while presenting new historical research and findings, which ended up making national news.

AS A CHILD, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP? The usual policeman, fireman, and at one point a volcanologist sounded fun. My current job as a museum curator never crossed my mind growing up however.

WHERE DID YOUR FIRST PAYCHECK COME FROM AND WHAT WAS YOUR JOB THEN? My first job was mowing lawns in the neighborhood, if a personal check counts. It was helpful in my youth for doing jobs on a schedule, doing it properly, and to the best of my ability, just like how I try with every job and

See **GRATE**, page A16



Trine University salutes our member of the Business Weekly Forty Under 40 Class of 2024

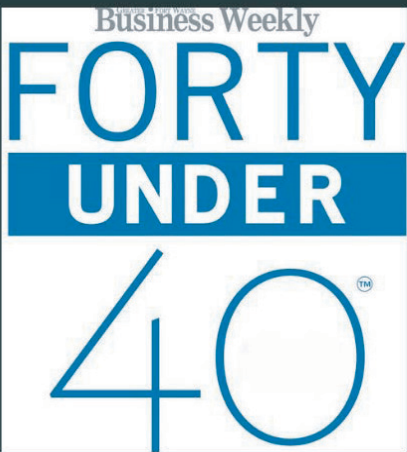
Keirsten Eberts
Vice President of Online and International Studies

We are proud of your success, exceptional leadership and service to Trine University.



CONGRATULATIONS
SAM GRATE, CURATOR

AUBURN CORD DUESENBERG AUTOMOBILE MUSEUM



GRATE

FROM PAGE A15

task I have.

WHO WAS YOUR BIGGEST SUPPORTER WHO HELPED YOU ADVANCE IN YOUR CAREER? I have been blessed to have parents, family, and friends who have always been supportive of my adventures, education, and work throughout life.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THUS FAR IN YOUR CAREER? My biggest career accomplishment so far would be the completion of my first full-scale exhibit titled “Duesenberg: The Evolution of America’s Finest Motorcar.” It required a large amount of planning, sample layouts, interpretation, sign making and printing, and extensive research into how the Duesenberg automobile changed and evolved over the years. I was able to acquire through donations and through loans the rarest and one-off Duesenbergs in existence and

display them all in the same space for the first time since 1927. The exhibit made national news and was published in numerous nationally circulated car publications.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR GREATEST MISTAKE THUS FAR AND WHAT LESSONS DID YOU LEARN FROM IT? Not taking advantage of opportunities I have had. There have been times when I overthink or talk myself out of ideas and opportunities, and I have learned that doing that more often than not leads to missing things that could have been a benefit to me.

WHAT ARE YOUR CURRENT PROFESSIONAL GOALS? Outreach is a significant current goal. At the museum, we have been working at getting more and more of our collection on loan to other institutions, as well as getting our collection out to local shows and national concours d’elegance events. This requires getting the automobiles to start, run,

and drive. We have been working on other events and opportunities locally to reach out to the public to ride in the cars and experience how they felt and drove 100 years ago.

HOW DO YOU REMAIN CURRENT/RELEVANT IN YOUR PROFESSION? I am part of a group called the National Association of Automobile Museums which has a yearly conference to discuss museum, automobile, and other relevant topics. This has allowed me to befriend and network with other professionals in the same or similar field. I am also a part of some national car clubs that are relevant to the museum collections. I am also sure to keep up with other national museum organizations such as the Association of Midwest Museums, American Alliance of Museums, and American Association for State and Local History.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR CAREER, FAMILY, LIFE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE? I make

sure to take time for myself. It is very important to be able to relax, clear your mind, and get plenty of rest. No one benefits from being overworked, overtired, or stressed.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELAX? I like to read, walk some nature trails, and spend plenty of time playing with and petting my 17-year-old cat. Being sure to take time for myself is a good way to also find time to relax.

WHAT BOOK DO YOU RECOMMEND? I do not have a single specific book that I would recommend, but I have preferred and enjoyed historical and mystery novels since I could read.

BASED ON WHAT YOU KNOW NOW, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL YOUR HIGH SCHOOL SELF? I would tell my high school self to just reach out and take more opportunities, stop analyzing everything so deeply to talk myself out of things, and don’t let negative things that have happened to me in the past affect me in the future.

HERBER

FROM PAGE A14

AND WHAT LESSONS DID YOU LEARN FROM IT? During COVID, we had a season where we only won 3 games. I recognized that I was defining myself as a person by our wins and losses. It led to insecurity, a lack of confidence, and an emotional rollercoaster ride. That season, I remember looking at my husband and saying, “I need to find a way to separate my identity from the wins and losses or else I think I am going to get burnt out in this job.” That was a devastating thought to me because coaching is something I hope to do for a long time. It motivated me to go on a journey of finding my confidence and security in Christ, which has allowed

me to lead my players to do the same through the highs and the lows of competition.

WHAT ARE YOUR CURRENT PROFESSIONAL GOALS? We are a part of one of the strongest conferences in the NAIA. My goal is that our team climbs the ladder of our successful conference. I also want to be the best leader, mentor, and supporter for my players that I possibly can be. I want to be the first person to hold them accountable and the first person to encourage them. I would also like to engage in ministry opportunities for public speaking whenever possible, as well as write a book.

HOW DO YOU REMAIN CURRENT/RELEVANT IN YOUR PROFESSION? Volleyball is a sport that is constantly evolving, so I have

to remain a student of the game. Attending conferences, reading books, doing research, and surrounding myself with coaching mentors will be necessary throughout my entire career.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR CAREER, FAMILY, LIFE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE? I used to approach life in a way where I said “yes” to any opportunity that came my way. I am now learning that rather than overloading my plate with many things, it is actually better for me to do less but be able to pursue excellence in the areas I am most passionate. Putting my phone away for periods of time in a given day, prioritizing relationships, and staying connected to Jesus keep me present where my feet are in a given moment.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELAX? Listen to podcasts and worship music, watch movies, read books that help me grow, spend time with family and friends

WHAT BOOK DO YOU RECOMMEND? “Daring Greatly” by Brené Brown.

BASED ON WHAT YOU KNOW NOW, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL YOUR HIGH SCHOOL SELF? Kelsey, who you are is not defined by your performance. You are a daughter of God who is deeply loved no matter what you do. Embrace your identity, security, and confidence in Jesus and then go help others do the same. You are going to absolutely love your future career. It will be your ministry and passion, and everything you’re experiencing now will help prepare you for it.

HILLE

FROM PAGE A14

prioritizing these relationships, we can create a positive impact both within organizations and in the broader Fort Wayne area. I also firmly believe that seeking ways to consistently grow and evolve is imperative to living a successful life.

AS A CHILD, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP? I never really had many career aspirations when I was a child. I was much more focused on the tasks at hand like education, etc. Career ambitions came to me during college where an amazing group of mentors offered me opportunities in the nonprofit, marketing, and academic organizations.

WHERE DID YOUR FIRST PAYCHECK COME FROM AND WHAT WAS YOUR JOB THEN? I was a gas station attendant for about 3 years during high school and college.

WHO WAS YOUR BIGGEST SUPPORTER WHO HELPED YOU

ADVANCE IN YOUR CAREER? Of course, my friends and family have always been supportive of my goals. I’m so lucky to have their unwavering love and support. Very early on in my career, I sought out a host of incredible mentors to really understand what career goals were important and valuable.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THUS FAR IN YOUR CAREER? My biggest accomplishment is one I share with two other women, Amanda Hille and Alix Watson. I’m so proud of the work that we’ve done with Hobnobben Film Festival. For the past five years we’ve curated and led an inclusive and special film festival, along with a host of inspiring volunteers.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR GREATEST MISTAKE THUS FAR AND WHAT LESSONS DID YOU LEARN FROM IT? Looking back on my career, I’ve definitely made my fair share of mistakes, from small slip-ups like typos to some bigger blunders. However, the most significant error I’ve made was remaining in roles or

positions where the organizational culture didn’t align with my values or ideals. This experience taught me the importance of seeking out environments that resonate with what I hold dear. As a result, I’ve learned to prioritize finding opportunities where I can thrive and contribute effectively.

WHAT ARE YOUR CURRENT PROFESSIONAL GOALS? I’m really happy with where I am now. My goal right now is to become a stronger team member and leader in my volunteer opportunities and paid profession.

HOW DO YOU REMAIN CURRENT/RELEVANT IN YOUR PROFESSION? I’m constantly seeking growth opportunities from people, blogs and podcasts. The digital landscape is shifting every day, so staying on top of emerging trends is imperative.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR CAREER, FAMILY, LIFE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE? Admittedly, work/life balance is not my strong suit, but I’m trying to get better at that. I’ve found that prioritization of tasks and needs is helpful, especially when that’s taking self-care time.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELAX? Being a mom of two very busy girls, relaxation is rare. However, when I do manage to carve out some time for myself, I find comfort in curling up with a good book. Escaping into different worlds and narratives allows me to recharge and momentarily escape the demands of everyday life. I also enjoy the tranquility of being out on the water. The serenity of being on the lake, and outside, provides a refreshing break, helping me rejuvenate and face the joyful chaos of life with renewed energy.

WHAT BOOK DO YOU RECOMMEND? I recommend that everyone read “Ride of a Lifetime” by Robert Iger, past CEO of Disney. This book offers valuable insights into effective leadership, decision-making, and

innovation. He gives you real life examples on navigating challenges, shaping a successful corporate culture, and fostering creativity. Iger also gives insightful lessons on strategic decision-making and how to manage change, which I think is very relevant to today’s ever-changing culture.

BASED ON WHAT YOU KNOW NOW, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL YOUR HIGH SCHOOL SELF? I would tell my high school self that, while knowledge is very important, building a strong network and cultivating relationships is equally crucial for success. The connections you make and the relationships you nurture can open doors, provide opportunities, and contribute significantly to your personal and professional growth.

KELLOGG

FROM PAGE A11

HOW DO YOU REMAIN CURRENT/RELEVANT IN YOUR PROFESSION? Staying current/relevant in economic development requires me to have a commitment to always learning, being quick to adapt, and staying informed on the current industry trends. Making sure that I am always fostering relationships with local stakeholders allows me to gain perspective from their point of view. I feel that it is also important to always remain open-minded and curious about the world around me so that I am able to better adapt to the evolving challenges and opportunities that await.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR CAREER, FAMILY, LIFE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE? As a mom of two very active girls, balancing a career, family, life, and community service requires careful organization and prioritization. Juggling my professional responsibilities means that I have to have a flexible schedule that allows me to accommodate both my family and my work. All of this would not be possible without the support of my husband who I am able to share responsibilities and who supports me with all of my crazy goals and dreams. Despite my busy schedule, I make sure that I dedicate time to community service. This is important so that my daughters grow up with a sense of social responsibility and commitment to our community.

CASWELL

FROM PAGE A11

this situation 1% more effectively in the future? or “How can I give 1% more of myself away to build up another person/cause?”

AS A CHILD, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP? As a child, I had a fascination with the profession of archaeology and dreamed of working in a museum. My dream was to write for the museum or college/university and foster a love for travel, culture, and history in everyone around me, just as I do.

WHERE DID YOUR FIRST PAYCHECK COME FROM AND WHAT WAS YOUR JOB THEN? My first paycheck was from the Hillsdale Daily News as a youngster. I was a papergirl for my hometown, Reading, Michigan.

WHO WAS YOUR BIGGEST SUPPORTER WHO HELPED YOU ADVANCE IN YOUR CAREER? In various stages of my life, several individuals, both men and women, have played a significant role in helping me advance my career. I am incredibly grateful to each one of them. However, my husband, Nik Caswell, has been my unwavering support for mapping, planning, and achieving my career goals over the

last five years. He has stood by me through thick and thin, in both my victories and defeats, Nik has been my biggest champion and partner. I owe it all to him and his faith that we can do it - together.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THUS FAR IN YOUR CAREER? One of the most significant achievements in my career has been leading the development of the Noble County Convention and Visitors Bureau’s three-year comprehensive strategic plan. The entire project was completed in-house, with me as the lead and the board of directors as the client and ultimate sounding board.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR GREATEST MISTAKE THUS FAR AND WHAT LESSONS DID YOU LEARN FROM IT? Life is full of mistakes; we only fail when we don’t try. When we don’t get back up again. We don’t ask forgiveness for what we have done wrong. Handling, owning, and transforming rejection and missteps into something positive, has been one of the best life lessons I have ever learned.

WHAT ARE YOUR CURRENT PROFESSIONAL GOALS? While I have some wonderful professional goals, some I am not ready to share publicly...yet. Let’s have

a coffee and we can have a wonderful conversation.

HOW DO YOU REMAIN CURRENT/RELEVANT IN YOUR PROFESSION? Visit Noble County is a 501(c)3 organization. So I need to stay sharp on best practices for nonprofits as well as for the tourism industry. I stay up-to-date and engaged in my role and field by actively participating in professional development opportunities for non-profit leaders and the tourism industry. Notably, I am a graduate of the 2024 Academy of the Indiana Tourism Association.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR CAREER, FAMILY LIFE, AND COMMUNITY SERVICE? I want to take a moment to express my appreciation for my wonderful partner and spouse, Nik Caswell. He is pivotal in establishing a healthy balance in our lives, careers, and community engagements. We met while volunteering, which is a significant part of our family’s core values. We’ve discovered that when we prioritize our perspectives, things tend to fall into place smoothly. Our filter is God, Others, and Self, with our faith in God being the most crucial aspect. That gives us the greatest balance.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELAX? To unwind and relax, I keep it simple. I enjoy taking walks, doing

yoga, reading the Bible, and indulging in an occasional glass of red wine from my favorite local winery - Acres Away in Ashley.

WHAT BOOK DO YOU RECOMMEND? “Permission to Screw Up” by Kristen Hadeed and “Jesus Feminist: An Invitation to Revisit the Bible’s View of Women” by Sarah Bessey.

BASED ON WHAT YOU KNOW NOW, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL YOUR HIGH SCHOOL SELF? About 6 or so years ago I wrote a blog all about that. So, here is the short version:

Dear 14-year-old girl with big dreams, you are already enough. Use your tenacity to help others, it’s the best thing you can do. Keep moving forward, keep learning, and keep loving those around you. Always write. Remember, you’re braver, stronger, and smarter than you think. Stop caring what others think, do what feeds your soul. Music is therapy, when you cannot make it yourself, find a cherished one who does. You are beautiful, even with blemishes, awkward boobs, and glasses. Love is your secret weapon, keep using it. I’m proud of you. You have overcome so much already, and you will do it again.

DAVIS

FROM PAGE A13

launch while also integrating a new internal company culture has been my greatest accomplishment thus far.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR GREATEST MISTAKE THUS FAR AND WHAT LESSONS DID YOU LEARN FROM IT? Professionally, the greatest mistake I made was applying for and accepting a position that did not fit my overall professional goals or personality. Because of that mistake, I learned to ask the right questions during the interview process and stand firm in only accepting positions that aligned with my overall professional goal. That specific mistake led me to where I am today, for which I am forever grateful.

WHAT ARE YOUR CURRENT PROFESSIONAL GOALS? My current professional goals are to master the intricacies of my role to equip myself with and maintain industry knowledge to one day serve as CEO.

HOW DO YOU REMAIN CURRENT/RELEVANT IN YOUR PROFESSION? The financial industry is always changing so keeping up with regulatory requirements, industry happenings, and upcoming changes is a must. Attending Indiana Credit Union League events, round tables, conferences, webinars, and subscribing to area and industry chat forums and newsletters are great resources to remain current and relevant. Outside of that, it’s important to engage with your members and future members by being visible, making branch visits and being involved in community

events.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR CAREER, FAMILY, LIFE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE? As a working mother to four kids aged 20, 14, 4, and 3, the greatest balance is simply showing grace to yourself. You can’t be everything to everyone all at once. There are days my career takes me away from my family, there are times my kids’ needs and activities take me away from my career, and there are times when I volunteer at events that take me away from both my career and family. The pendulum is always moving too far one way or another. Compartmentalizing and prioritizing can be challenging, but wherever I’m at and whomever I’m with, it’s important to me that they get my undivided attention.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELAX? My physical and mental health is

what allows me to keep up with four kids, a career, and being heavily involved at Gigi’s Playhouse. Because of that, I place a high priority on diet and exercise, so I find relaxation in working out throughout the week.

WHAT BOOK DO YOU RECOMMEND? “The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership” by John C. Maxwell.

BASED ON WHAT YOU KNOW NOW, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL YOUR HIGH SCHOOL SELF? As a senior, graduating with academic honors holding a 6-month old baby, I’d tell myself everything will be OK. I had many people telling me I should settle for a mediocre life and I’m thankful I never listened. Being a teen mom didn’t define me. In fact, it was the catalyst of proving to those that said I should settle wrong. I’d firmly grab my shoulders and repeat, “Everything will be OK.”

EBERTS

FROM PAGE A15

WHO WAS YOUR BIGGEST SUPPORTER WHO HELPED YOU ADVANCE IN YOUR CAREER? My biggest supporters who have helped me advance in my career are my family, particularly my mom, husband, and daughter. Their encouragement and belief in me have been my biggest motivator. Additionally, I have been fortunate to have the support of many incredible peers and leaders at Trine University including Trine’s president Dr. Shannon, my best friend Jackie Delagrange, and my amazing team. Their mentorship, guidance, and friendship have played a significant role in my professional growth and success.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THUS FAR IN YOUR CAREER? My biggest accomplishment thus far is being able to balance my new role as a mom while working full-time and attending school. This has been challenging, yet incredibly fulfilling. Watching my daughter grow and achieve significant milestones during this time fills me with pride.

Additionally, supporting my team members as they navigate their career paths and witnessing their growth has been one of the most rewarding aspects of my professional journey. I am honored to work with such a talented, dedicated, and caring team.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR GREATEST MISTAKE THUS FAR AND WHAT LESSONS DID YOU LEARN FROM IT? One of my greatest mistakes thus far has been taking on too much at once and not maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Over the years, I have learned the importance of prioritizing work-life balance. This is not only important for myself but also in setting a positive example for my team. Setting goals with realistic expectations, prioritizing tasks, and putting trust in my team by delegating tasks have been important lessons I have learned. I believe it is essential to balance ambition and self-care if you want to lead a healthy and happy life.

WHAT ARE YOUR CURRENT PROFESSIONAL GOALS? My current professional goals are to continue to grow and develop, both for myself and my team. By fostering a culture of continuous

improvement, I believe we can achieve our individual goals while contributing to the overall success of Trine University.

HOW DO YOU REMAIN CURRENT/RELEVANT IN YOUR PROFESSION? To maintain relevance in my profession, I engage in continuous learning. This includes exploring the latest research, participating in webinars and conferences, and staying updated with industry publications and trends. Given the dynamic nature of higher education, staying current is necessary to thrive in an ever-evolving landscape.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR CAREER, FAMILY, LIFE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE? I think in today’s world, balancing a career, family life, and community service is a challenge for anyone. I am very fortunate to have a great family support system. Within my professional life, I believe it is important to build a capable and trustworthy team. By empowering team members and delegating responsibilities effectively, I hope to create a culture where everyone can contribute their unique strengths and skills. This not only fosters a sense of ownership and

accountability but also allows individuals to grow as leaders.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELAX? My favorite ways to relax are either through yoga (focusing on inner peace) or reading a book (escaping to another world).

WHAT BOOK DO YOU RECOMMEND? I love reading, so it is difficult to pick just one favorite. However, if I had to choose, one of the most impactful books that has stayed with me is “The Nightingale” by Kristin Hannah.

BASED ON WHAT YOU KNOW NOW, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL YOUR HIGH SCHOOL SELF? If I could go back and speak to my high school self, I would tell her that the journey ahead is full of surprises and unexpected twists. I never imagined I would be where I am today. In high school, I was not the best student nor the worst. I have learned that our journeys are rarely linear. It is okay to stumble and face challenges because each obstacle is an opportunity for growth. So, to my high school self, I would say: Embrace the journey, stay curious, and never underestimate your potential to achieve great things.

BOATRIGHT

FROM PAGE A6

making a positive difference.

AS A CHILD, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP? Broadway, London, or touring, my sights were set on a lifetime of musical theater. <jazz hands>

WHERE DID YOUR FIRST PAYCHECK COME FROM AND WHAT WAS YOUR JOB THEN? My first W-2 job was mopping floors and cleaning bathrooms in college. Surprisingly satisfying work, despite being repetitive and sometimes icky.

WHO WAS YOUR BIGGEST SUPPORTER WHO HELPED YOU ADVANCE IN YOUR CAREER? I was raised by a village. Many, many people shaped me into who I am. But in terms of career advancement I have to mention Lisa Wemett, a Girl Scout friend who introduced me to librarianship, Courtney McDonald, who shared her mentorship and network, and Michael Meth, who

took the risk of hiring me into my first management role.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THUS FAR IN YOUR CAREER? I’m most proud of the people I’ve mentored who have gone on to do great things. I’m also proud of coordinating the first Critical Thinking Symposium at Florida State University. During a time filled with misinformation, we held important community conversations about information literacy, media, and the choices we can each make to be engaged, well-informed citizens.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR GREATEST MISTAKE THUS FAR AND WHAT LESSONS DID YOU LEARN FROM IT? The costliest mistake was being careless with my words. I’ve learned that positional authority in an organization gives my words additional weight, and that I need to be very careful about both intent and impact when I communicate. It’s a lesson I’m still learning and practicing.

WHAT ARE YOUR CURRENT

PROFESSIONAL GOALS? My job is challenging, and right now my professional goal is to get really good at it! I want to dazzle our community with ACPL’s amazing programs, and I want to find ways for the library to contribute to the success of all our community members and organizational partners. I want ACPL to be part of your success story!

HOW DO YOU REMAIN CURRENT/RELEVANT IN YOUR PROFESSION? Professional organizations help. Professional friends and mentors help even more. I read everything I can, meet everyone I can, and try to keep track of all the amazing stories happening in Allen County.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR CAREER, FAMILY, LIFE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE? I’ve heard it said that when you’re juggling too many things, you have to keep track of which ones are plastic and which ones are glass.

The “glass” things are precious and sometimes fragile: tending to my

closest relationships, my faith, and my own personhood. Everything else gets juggled accordingly. I try to remember that imposter syndrome is just a feeling, not a reflection of reality, and that doing the best I can is enough.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELAX? Time with my family, time with friends, time outside, time rewatching my favorite TV shows, and once in a while time with the best massage therapist in Allen County.

WHAT BOOK DO YOU RECOMMEND? I cannot possibly answer this question without more conversation. But in general: “The Prisoner of Zenda” (Hawkins), “Making Vision Stick” (Stanley), and “Innovating for People” (Luma Institute).

BASED ON WHAT YOU KNOW NOW, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL YOUR HIGH SCHOOL SELF? It’s going to be okay. Really. (Really.)

Also, take these winning lotto numbers and this extraordinarily insightful investment strategy and go make the world a better place!

BORCHERS

FROM PAGE A7

a lot of people have learned to say “no” at this point in their lives. I’m not there yet, so I still tend to over-commit. I have, however, learned to

find some balance by limiting time-wasters like TV and social media.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELAX? Spending time with my family and without electronics. Intentionally being in the moment is a practice I’m working on.

WHAT BOOK DO YOU RECOMMEND? I just finished “The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry,” and it was amazing, I plan to read the rest of John Mark Comer’s books. “Scrum” by Jeff Sutherland and “Traction” by Gino Wickman are two of my most

used business books.

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self? Nothing. I’ve learned a lot the hard way, and those are my favorite lessons.

CARRASQUILLO

FROM PAGE A9

we do in connecting people to information, opportunities, and services is making a difference in someone’s life.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU? Aligning myself with a clear purpose is the foundation for success. It starts with being intentional about identifying the purpose for a specific situation, which could be personal or organizational. And then, the work begins by actively assessing and taking the next steps that keeps you on course. No matter what context I find myself in, I want my purpose to align with authenticity, compassion, and community.

AS A CHILD, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP? I think I’ve always gravitated towards visions of a career that fit my love of words, but that ranged from being a lawyer, a missionary, a video store clerk (according to my dad!), and a news anchor.

WHERE DID YOUR FIRST PAYCHECK COME FROM AND WHAT WAS YOUR JOB THEN? I made ice cream treats at the Creamery in Angola.

WHO WAS YOUR BIGGEST SUPPORTER WHO HELPED YOU ADVANCE IN YOUR CAREER? I am blessed with an incredible support system. My husband,

parents, family, friends, and a number of mentors have opened doors and held me upright. However, I still count my youth philanthropy coordinator, Lorna Leaders, as one of my biggest supporters. Lorna passed away while I was a college student, but her photo still sits in my office to remind me that we all have the power to make a difference in the world around us.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THUS FAR IN YOUR CAREER? It’s tight competition, but working with our Turnstone team to organize Fort Wayne’s largest international event — the Goalball and Blind Judo Paralympic Qualifier — stands as my proudest professional achievement. This milestone attracted 500 international athletes competing for a spot in the 2020 Tokyo Paralympics. The Marketing & Media Team secured coverage from regional, national, and global media outlets and our advocacy with the City of Fort Wayne prompted accessibility improvements in the downtown area. The week-long event loudly demonstrated the hospitality, service, and inclusivity of our community and continues to set the bar for our vision of Fort Wayne to be a leading destination for adaptive sports.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR GREATEST MISTAKE THUS FAR, AND WHAT LESSONS DID YOU LEARN FROM IT? I have no shortage of mistakes to draw lessons

from, but one overarching lesson I’m still learning to apply is that trying to achieve perfection is rarely worth the anxiety. When perfection becomes the enemy of good (thank you, Voltaire), we stand in our own way. It’s better to remember that progress, not perfection, carries momentum.

WHAT ARE YOUR CURRENT PROFESSIONAL GOALS? I am currently pursuing the credits to become a certified ADA coordinator, which complements the Corporate Services we launched to support employers who are prioritizing the lived experience of disability in their hiring efforts. This is Turnstone’s first B2B service in its 80-year history and our continued work to bring this service to life is an honor and a privilege.

HOW DO YOU REMAIN CURRENT/RELEVANT IN YOUR PROFESSION? I work to keep a pulse on the interests and attention of our local community, best practices in modern media, communication and storytelling, as well as creative techniques from a variety of industries outside of Turnstone’s silo. I also listen and learn from my peers in various brain trust networks, and make it a priority to read diverse authors in my personal time to support our teams’ focus on storytelling.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR CAREER, FAMILY, LIFE, AND COMMUNITY SERVICE? I read a book by the title of “The Best Yes” many years ago, and I regularly

consider this concept to try to keep myself from over-committing. I also try to be fully present wherever I am. It is not humanly possible for my best to always be 100% in every moment, but if I give myself permission to ebb and flow where I am needed, the bigger picture tends to be something that might look and feel balanced.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELAX? One thing I have learned about myself, especially after adding “mom hat” to my shelf, is that I need to prioritize quiet time in my own head to relax. This often looks like taking a walk outside, scheduling lazy mornings, and reading feel-good fiction.

WHAT BOOK DO YOU RECOMMEND? One of the most enlightening reads I’ve found recently is the book “Demystifying Disability” by Emily Ladau. It was an easy read with incredible insight that has influenced my understanding of respect for people in the disability community. If you need a fiction recommendation, “Bel Canto” by Ann Patchett has a permanent spot in my personal top 5.

BASED ON WHAT YOU KNOW NOW, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL YOUR HIGH SCHOOL SELF? I’m grateful to have received the advice from my mom to “expect nothing but be prepared for anything,” and I would affirm my high school self in holding tight to this sentiment because it has served me well in keeping me grounded in countless situations.

DUMIRE

FROM PAGE A13

HOW DO YOU REMAIN CURRENT/RELEVANT IN YOUR PROFESSION? I try to keep up both on my content knowledge and teaching practices and I’m fortunate to work with a team that does the same so we pool our resources. One positive product of the pandemic was the growth of virtual conferences

and webinars, making professional development more accessible, but I occasionally attend these in-person too. We’re also always listening and taking on feedback from those we serve.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR CAREER, FAMILY, LIFE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE? Boundaries and planning ahead. I try not to work when I’m not at work, and, though my job necessitates work on weekends and evenings from time to

time, I make sure these don’t conflict with any family events.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELAX? I love a project to focus my thoughts, the more complicated the better!

WHAT BOOK DO YOU RECOMMEND? I don’t read as much as I’d like to, and I love artist biographies, which I realize are definitely not everyone’s “thing,” but one recent favorite is “Picasso’s War: How Modern Art Came to America.” The

book is not so much about Picasso the man, but how he came to be the recognizable name he is, which is actually a very complex story against the backdrop of a lot of world history.

BASED ON WHAT YOU KNOW NOW, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL YOUR HIGH SCHOOL SELF? Honestly, nothing that I probably would have listened to, but some encouragement to be myself and that I was on the right track wouldn’t hurt!

ALMAS
FROM PAGE A3
AS A CHILD, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP? A professional basketball player.

WHERE DID YOUR FIRST PAYCHECK COME FROM AND WHAT WAS YOUR JOB THEN? The IGA in Churubusco. I started as a bagger and over time worked several different roles including cashier, stocker, and meat clerk.

WHO WAS YOUR BIGGEST SUPPORTER WHO HELPED YOU ADVANCE IN YOUR CAREER? Several people jump out – former professors, colleagues, bosses, friends, and family – but if I had to choose one person who has made the biggest impact, it would be my wife. She’s always there to encourage me and lift me up and without her support, I wouldn’t be where I am today.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THUS FAR IN YOUR CAREER? Like choosing my favorite child, it’s difficult to pick my “biggest” accomplishment because

I consider it a big accomplishment any time I am able to help someone solve a challenge or problem they are facing. Although some challenges or problems may seem small, to the person who is experiencing the problem, it’s a big deal. Whenever I can help someone with a problem they are going through, it is a big accomplishment to me.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR GREATEST MISTAKE THUS FAR AND WHAT LESSONS DID YOU LEARN FROM IT? I’ve made many mistakes throughout my career. Aside from the technical lessons that I learn to prevent the same mistake from happening again, there are a couple of more important lessons that I’ve carried with me. The first is that mistakes are going to happen and most of them can be fixed. It’s easy to ruminate about mistakes and go down the rabbit hole of all the bad things that can happen, but in reality, there is often a relatively easy solution. The second is that we’re all more resilient than we think, so when mistakes do occur, we are usually capable of handling them.

WHAT ARE YOUR CURRENT PROFESSIONAL GOALS? My goals are to continue to expand

my technical skillset and expertise in my practice areas, be elected to the partnership at my law firm, and to be thought of as someone in our community who treats people with kindness and respect.

HOW DO YOU REMAIN CURRENT/RELEVANT IN YOUR PROFESSION? The first thing is staying up to date on changes in the law through continuing education. We’re required to obtain a certain number of continuing education credits each year, so that is a big part of it. We also try to respond to changes in how people communicate in today’s world. Maintaining a presence on certain social media platforms such as Linkedin, having an up-to-date website, and posting content online are all part of staying current/relevant.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR CAREER, FAMILY, LIFE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE? When I am at work, I work hard and strive to be as efficient as possible so I can reduce the need to check emails or work when I am at home. During leisure time – whether on the week-ends or vacation, I focus on my family. I may set aside a little time in the mornings to work, but after that,

I try to really be present with my wife and kids.

Naturally, we live in a fast-paced world and there are times where the balance becomes skewed. In those moments, I’m very fortunate to have a wife and family members who are able to help with some of my family obligations such as getting kids to and from their various activities.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELAX? Being in nature helps me relax, so I like to go hiking. I also like to go on bike rides – particularly out in the country – where I am removed from some of the bustle of my day-to-day routine and to binge watch a good television series.

WHAT BOOK DO YOU RECOMMEND? “Into the Wild” by Jon Krakauer.

BASED ON WHAT YOU KNOW NOW, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL YOUR HIGH SCHOOL SELF? High school came somewhat easily to me, so I didn’t push myself and grow in areas that I could have. I would tell myself to get outside of my comfort zone and don’t just take the path of least resistance.

ANDERSON
FROM PAGE A4
PAYCHECK COME FROM AND WHAT WAS YOUR JOB THEN? Lutheran Hospital- nutritional services.

WHO WAS YOUR BIGGEST SUPPORTER WHO HELPED YOU ADVANCE IN YOUR CAREER? My husband, Ben, and my parents.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THUS FAR IN YOUR CAREER? Creating and bringing relationships in our

community. ½ century award, Whitley County Chamber Member of the Year, Forty Under 40 award.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR GREATEST MISTAKE THUS FAR AND WHAT LESSONS DID YOU LEARN FROM IT? Not creating and implementing a clear-cut schedule to accomplish daily work/home tasks sooner. I feel more refreshed and healthier with a daily “game plan.”

WHAT ARE YOUR CURRENT PROFESSIONAL GOALS? To continue to make an impact in our community.

HOW DO YOU REMAIN CURRENT/RELEVANT IN YOUR PROFESSION? Reading car wash specific articles, magazines, social media, attending marketing seminars.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR CAREER, FAMILY, LIFE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE? Haha. This is a tough question. I have created a schedule of how to accomplish all I need to. I have learned to trust it will all get done and to give myself grace while prioritizing what’s most important. Also, it is important to allow flexibility.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELAX?

Spend time outside, sit in solitude, take a bath, read a book, or watch a favorite show.

WHAT BOOK DO YOU RECOMMEND? The Bible and “Raising a Business & Babies.”

BASED ON WHAT YOU KNOW NOW, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL YOUR HIGH SCHOOL SELF? Keep working hard while continuing to remain true to yourself. Trusting God’s plan even in the hardest times. Having patience while remaining persistent will always bring God’s plan for you to light.

BEER
FROM PAGE A4
WHO WAS YOUR BIGGEST SUPPORTER WHO HELPED YOU ADVANCE IN YOUR CAREER?

My husband, Jason, has been the biggest champion of my career goals. From supporting my return to graduate school to figuring out childcare once I was working full time, he’s been my biggest supporter every step of the way.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THUS FAR IN YOUR CAREER? The accomplishment I’m most proud of has been spearheading the launch of the Women’s Fund’s Allen County Women in the Workplace Report. By analyzing where our community stands when it comes to women in leadership, compensation, supportive benefits, and equitable hiring practices, we can set specific goals for progress and help support economic security for all.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR GREATEST MISTAKE THUS FAR AND WHAT LESSONS DID YOU LEARN FROM IT? I most often make mistakes when I’m in a hurry, so I am constantly reminding myself to practice the pause. There are many times when my fearlessness and tenacity serve me and my work well, but other times that I need to intentionally center myself to be more detail-oriented. Pausing to double check or ask myself whose voice is missing from the table only improves the outcomes.

WHAT ARE YOUR CURRENT PROFESSIONAL GOALS? My current professional goal is namely to advance the mission of the Women’s Fund: being committed to understanding and overcoming the challenges facing all women and girls in Allen County. Beyond that, I’m passionate about making sure that our city is not just meeting the baseline of the Americans with Disabilities Act but leading the way when it comes to inclusivity and universal

design.

HOW DO YOU REMAIN CURRENT/RELEVANT IN YOUR PROFESSION? Once a month I’m able to meet virtually with other women’s fund directors from all over the country, and hearing their experiences helps me stay connected to the movement on a larger scale. I also try to regularly meet with women who have either spent their entire careers in the nonprofit space or those who are just getting started. Having perspective from both the historical standpoint and the grassroots movement helps me feel more in touch with what our community needs right now.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR CAREER, FAMILY, LIFE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE? I certainly don’t balance it all, and I think we do a disservice especially to young women when we say that balancing it all is attainable. I adhere to the philosophy, “You can have it all, just not at the same time.” When you pair workplaces that were designed

primarily with men in mind with caregiving that most often falls on women’s shoulders, it becomes nearly impossible to balance what’s expected of us. That being said, I’m grateful to work at an organization that supports flexible work arrangements, and to have a family that jumps in to help with caregiving. Without those two supports in place, there is no way I could be as active in my community or in my passion areas.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELAX? Every year I look forward to hauling my kayak into the boat launch at Harbor Springs, Michigan. If I can spend some of my summer mornings out there in the calm of Lake Michigan, I can handle anything that comes my way.

WHAT BOOK DO YOU RECOMMEND? I have two books that I wish everyone would read: “What Can a Body Do?” by Sara Hendren and “A Fever in the Heartland” by Timothy Egan.

BLACKMON
FROM PAGE A5

because so many are precious.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR GREATEST MISTAKE THUS FAR AND WHAT LESSONS DID YOU LEARN FROM IT? My greatest mistakes in my career have often been when I’ve told myself “no”. When opportunities have presented themselves for me to take steps, yet choosing not to walk through the doors. The lesson I’ve learned is what I tell my kids, the more you say “yes” to the right opportunities the more fulfilling life will be.

WHAT ARE YOUR CURRENT

PROFESSIONAL GOALS? Make national impact for the betterment of our nation, to the glory of God.

HOW DO YOU REMAIN CURRENT/RELEVANT IN YOUR PROFESSION? I believe that remaining “relevant” can be relative to the person within the industry. But, one thing I try to do is remain curious. Curiosity often for me, brings innovation and creativity. Which allows me to think about what the needs of our young people are, and how we can solve them. Also, I enjoy education in engaging settings. So trainings that offer real-time dialogue, I love studying and learning about human psychology. This education helps break through layers when working with young people and helping them process the world around them.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR CAREER, FAMILY, LIFE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE? I believe that balance can never fully be obtained, but our effort can always be controlled. I have seasons where 2 of the 3 are going well and then they shift. But, what keeps me on the grind in each area is my desire to be a great husband first, then leader in my organization, then leader in my community.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELAX? Most frequently it is just sitting on the couch watching a show with my wife or playing video games. We also will do weekend getaways to quiet the noise from time to time. Spending time with family and close friends is a big part of relaxation. Environments that say “I love you” are where I go to find

relaxation.

WHAT BOOK DO YOU RECOMMEND? The Bible, even if you aren’t a Christian, the Book of Proverbs is so rich on how to walk in wisdom. How to handle money is a large topic throughout the Bible, and also how to treat people well! Overall bringing morality to a person’s life.

“The 5 Love languages,” “His needs Her needs”, most of my books are about relationships with people.
BASED ON WHAT YOU KNOW NOW, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL YOUR HIGH SCHOOL SELF? “Keep it up, God has you!” “Stay on the grind!” “Take the full-ride scholarship!” “Apply for more scholarships” “Join some clubs for networking.”

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John Dortch created The Dream Center to provide life skills such as nutrition to residents in southeast Fort Wayne.



John Dortch stands by coworking spaces available in The Dream Center.



Artwork by Phresh Laundry shows that children can have any career they dream of.

John Dortch seeks to help southeast with Dream Center

BY LISA ESQUIVEL LONG
llong@kpcmedia.com

John Dortch has so many ideas he's sometimes not sure what he wants to do next. However, the author, retired Parkview Health executive, minority-newspaper owner and Fort Wayne Black Chamber of Commerce founder is tending to his latest project: The Dream Center.

Dortch converted the vacant manufacturing building at 1615 E. Wallace St. into a place that supports and enhances the lives of southeast Fort Wayne residents.

Dream stands for: Determination, Respect, Energy, Attitude, Motivation.

Dortch plans to see a number of community classes held at the center on a variety of topics for life skills: What happens if you get stopped by the police; Rights of passage — being a gentleman, fatherhood; Stock market — how to invest, when to invest, how much money to invest; and Health nutrition and exercise.

"It's too bad that we have to teach it ... but honestly I have seen it make a difference," said Dortch, a certified mediator who grew up in the deep South as one of 11 children. He came to Fort Wayne as a personnel development trainee for the former International Harvester before going to work at Parkview Health.

"Dad had a sixth-grade education; Mom had a eighth-grade education," Dortch said. However, as he writes in his book, "In My Father's House," the couple instilled the desire to get a skill or education.

Dortch calls himself a country boy



The Dream Center, 1615 E. Wallace St., Fort Wayne, held a grand opening March 24. Among those participating were, from left, Chuck Surack, Mayor Tom Henry, City Councilwoman Sharon Tucker, Wayne Township Trustee Austin Knox, Greater Fort Wayne Inc. President / CEO John Urbahns, and center founder John Dortch.

and focuses on others.

"If I can help somebody as I pass along then my living will not have been in vain," he said.

The southeast Fort Wayne ZIP code of 46806 has the highest infant mortality rate in Allen County. Dortch is working with Parkview Health to bring the Ronald McDonald Care Mobile, which provides fluoride treatments; childhood health and safety education, to park monthly at the center. He plans to work with the nearby churches and YMCA. "Food, clothing and shelter is the basic," he said. "Medical, people have a tendency to push that aside. It could be because of income. It could be because of psychological feelings or differences or whatever."

The center, 7 minutes from downtown, also serves as a home for

businesses. Two boardrooms for rent are named after Black community leaders. Dr. Wayne Walker, a dentist, spends part of his time caring for Allen County Jail inmates' oral health, and Sharon Tucker, is one of the first two Black women to serve on City Council. One community leader told Dortch of the rooms' naming, "John, this is great because these are the shoulders that we all are standing on," he said. On the walls is artwork by Theoplis Smith III, aka Phresh Laundry, of children dressed for various careers. "They represent pretty much you can be a physician, you can be a lawyer. You can dream to be that," Dortch said.

In the front are 16 coworking spaces available to anyone, not just minorities, Dortch said, for \$375 a month. The five offices along the wall are already rented. A break

room provides coffee with a vending machine and refrigerator with an ice maker. After 31 years at Parkview Health, where he retired in 2004 as vice president of employee relations, he has provided some healthy options for snacks.

Dortch, who won't give his age, has lots of things going on in the community. He's owner of The Ink Spot newspaper; the Preston Group consultancy; and the Penta C.S. Group LLC , Minority Entrepreneurial Center. It's through these and many other projects, like The Dream Center, that he comes in contact with people who need help.

"Everybody who knows me, knows I have a big heart," Dortch said.

For information on The Dream Center, go to www.thedreamcenterfw.com.

Components of successful business plans

BY METRO CREATIVE SERVICES

The entrepreneurial spirit strikes millions of people every year. The latest data from the United States Small Business Administration indicates there are 32.5 million small businesses in the U.S., which underscores just how many people aspire to be their own boss.

There's no formula that entrepreneurs can follow to ensure their start-up is successful. However, devising a strong business plan is a great place to start. Such plans can serve as a road map for entrepreneurs as they try to turn an idea into a business and are often a necessity for prospective business owners who will be seeking funding from lenders or investors. The career experts at Indeed note that effective business plans are made up of various essential components that all entrepreneurs can utilize as a framework when starting their businesses.

• Executive summary: As its name suggests, this provides an overview of the business plan. Executive summaries typically contain the mission statement and include information about the products and services the business will offer. Curiously, though the executive summary



Entrepreneurs should look at creating a strong business plan.

could be the first thing lenders and investors read, Indeed recommends writing it after all other components of the plan have been mapped out. Doing so ensures the summary will reflect a full and clear understanding of the business.

• Business description: This section should include a detailed description of products and services and information about target customers. It also can help to identify the industry the business will be in and include an analysis of industry trends. The

description can include information about how the company is organized, noting information about key personnel, including their histories and roles in the start-up.

• Market analysis: The experts at Indeed note that the purpose of a market analysis is to identify the company's primary target audience, including its demographic, and where to find that audience. This portion of the plan should include how the business will meet the needs of its target audience and the best avenues to

connect with that audience (i.e., social media, in-store, etc.).

• Marketing and sales strategy: The experts at Growthink, which has provided strategic advisory and investment banking services to emerging and middle market companies since 1999, note that the marketing and sales plan should detail how a business will penetrate its target markets. Information regarding promotional strategies, pricing strategies and potential marketing partnerships are just some of the details to share in the marketing and sales strategy.

• Financial plan: This section will include significant information about the company's finances, including detailing how much capital the business will need to meet its objectives. The financial plan should include a detailed account of how revenue will be generated, and entrepreneurs should include financial statements and projections regarding cash flow.

These are not the only components to include in a business plan. However, they can serve as a useful foundation for entrepreneurs on the cusp of starting their own businesses.

Sarah Keefer

Age: 36

3Rivers
Federal
Credit Union

SVP Lending
Strategy



EMPLOYER: 3Rivers Federal Credit Union, SVP Lending Strategy

EDUCATION: I graduated from Snider High School in 2005 and while attending IPFW completed the Troyer School of Real Estate

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS: Habitat for Humanity is near and dear to my heart, partnering my passion for affordable homeownership with my passion for giving back.

HOBBIES: I love spending time with my family including my daughter Nora (age 10) and son Harry (age 4). When we are not busy with travel soccer, I love to golf and spend time at the lake.

WHY ARE YOU IN NORTHEAST INDIANA? I was born and raised in Fort Wayne, I truly love this area. After high school, I had initial plans to attend Florida State University

but realized shortly before classes started that my heart would always be in NE Indiana. I love watching my kids grow and enjoy this city as much as I did growing up.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR PROFESSION THAT YOU ENJOY AND WHY? I love helping borrowers realize the dream of homeownership. I have been fortunate enough to work for wonderful credit unions that have the same passion as I do of helping our members and the communities we serve every day.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU? I believe success is a moving target but as a leader I find success in the success of my team. Not just as a whole but individually. Whether it is professionally or personally, watching the team grow, develop and succeed is where I find success. I

See **KEEFER**, page B19



Sarah Keefer
Senior Vice President
of Lending Strategy

3Rivers Congratulates

Sarah Keefer

for being recognized as part of **Business Weekly's 2024 Forty Under 40.**

We're so proud of all your accomplishments and are excited to see what you continue to achieve in the future. 3Rivers is grateful to have you on our team!



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Allen Howard

Age: 34

Gibson

Employee
Benefits
Consultant



EMPLOYER: Gibson, Employee Benefits Consultant

EDUCATION: B.S. Business - IPFW

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS: I sit on the board of directors for the Northeast Indiana Human Resources Association (NIHRA), the board of advisors for the Wellness Council of Indiana, and have been involved with numerous nonprofits around NE Indiana including Junior Achievement (former board member), Habitat for Humanity (former board member), Arts United, United Way and the DeKalb Chamber Partnership

HOBBIES: Traveling, beaches, golf, 6 a.m. Friday basketball at Garrett High School and anything that involves our kids.

WHY ARE YOU IN NORTHEAST INDIANA? I grew up in North Carolina (High Point & Topsail Beach) and moved here when I was 12 years old. My dad was one of 16 kids and NE Indiana was centrally located to many of his siblings. In North Carolina, the school I attended had a 5th grade graduation. I very much remember that day because it was an emotional one. I spent the morning enjoying time with friends ahead of the graduation and then, immediately following the graduation, we packed up and moved to Garrett, IN, that afternoon. This was before Facebook was a thing so it was scary because I knew I would likely never see those friends again. However, moving to NE Indiana has been a blessing and is not something I have any regrets about. It's truly remarkable how life unfolds, and sometimes the unexpected turns

lead us to places where we find our true sense of belonging.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR PROFESSION THAT YOU ENJOY AND WHY? Growing up, our family epitomized the middle-class American dream. We weren't wealthy, but my parents worked tirelessly to ensure we had everything we needed. Their dedication to providing for me, even in the face of financial constraints, left a profound impression on me. It's a lesson in resilience and generosity that I carry with me to this day, especially as a parent myself.

However, our comfortable world was shattered during my senior year of high school when my mom was diagnosed with cancer. Suddenly, the stability we took for granted was thrown into disarray as medical bills piled up and our financial situation became precarious. Witnessing firsthand the toll that a terminal illness took on our family ignited within me a deep-seated desire to make a difference — to ensure that others wouldn't have to endure the same hardships we faced.

That experience fueled my passion for helping families navigate life's toughest challenges. Now, as a benefits consultant, I'm privileged to be in a position where I can contribute to creating life-changing opportunities for employees and their families. Our work isn't just about providing benefits — it's about offering a lifeline to those facing overwhelming medical debt, uncertain futures, and the fear of not being able to provide for their loved ones.

See **HOWARD**, page B19

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THEGIBSONEDGE.COM

Congratulations to Gibson's Allen Howard, Employee Benefits Consultant, and 40 Under 40 award recipient.

EMPLOYER: Sturges Property Group, Commercial Real Estate Broker

EDUCATION: Bishop Dwenger High School '08, Indiana University Bloomington-BS in Arts Management

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS: Proud board member of the Northeast Chapter IU Alumni Assn. Blue Jacket Inc. They are a terrific organization with a great leader that injects positive momentum in the community.

HOBBIES: Reading purchase agreements

WHY ARE YOU IN NORTHEAST INDIANA? I ask myself that question often. Hot Summers and Cold Winters, and a little in between. I was born and raised in Fort Wayne. It's where my sphere of influence lies.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR PROFESSION THAT YOU ENJOY AND WHY? In commercial real estate, no two deals are alike. Our clients work across many different industries. Each transaction offers an opportunity to learn and broaden

your horizon.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU? My wife & kids mean the world to me and if I can stay on their good side, I count that as a success.

AS A CHILD, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP? NBA player!

WHERE DID YOUR FIRST PAYCHECK COME FROM AND WHAT WAS YOUR JOB THEN? NISCO Pool & Patio Paradise. I would cart chlorine and muriatic acid out to cars and attempt to not spill it. Those stains don't come out

WHO WAS YOUR BIGGEST SUPPORTER WHO HELPED YOU ADVANCE IN YOUR CAREER? On a personal level, My wife & kids, brother and parents have had my back since Day One.

On a professional level, I have to give John Caffray at Sturges Property Group credit for mentoring my come up in commercial brokerage. If there was a Seal Team Six for real estate, he'd be on it.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT

Andrew J. Eckert

Age: 34

Sturges
Property
Group

Commercial
Real Estate
Broker



THUS FAR IN YOUR CAREER?

Being able to build and sustain a career while being on 100% commission based income. It's a real roller coaster that can take years to build.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR GREATEST MISTAKE THUS FAR AND WHAT LESSONS DID YOU LEARN FROM IT? Get everything in writing. Be thorough, stay vigilant when negotiating.

WHAT ARE YOUR CURRENT PROFESSIONAL GOALS? I would like to expand my community involvement through volunteering and/or board membership

HOW DO YOU REMAIN CURRENT/RELEVANT IN YOUR PROFESSION? If you aren't closing deals, you will not remain relevant. I enjoy being out in the field and getting in front of people.

I truly believe if you treat others with kindness and respect, you will remain on their, and others' radar.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR CAREER, FAMILY, LIFE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE? It's impossible to be 100% at all of these at all times. Enjoy your surroundings, be in the moment and understand others' needs vs. wants.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELAX? Weekend adventures with the kiddos. I also enjoy a good date night with the wifey.

WHAT BOOK DO YOU RECOMMEND? "Ghost Canoe" by Will Hobbs

BASED ON WHAT YOU KNOW NOW, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL YOUR HIGH SCHOOL SELF? "Buy every piece of real estate, effective immediately."

Awards Reception
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Ceruti's Summit Park II
6601 Innovation Blvd.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Andrew Eckert
Commercial Real Estate Broker



Sturges Property Group is proud to celebrate Andrew for his Forty Under 40 recognition. His ability to discover unique solutions and innovative ways to help clients is the key to his continued professional growth. We are proud to have him on the Sturges brokerage team!



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Francis Jomo

Age: 36

Sky Point
Social
Services

President
and CEO



EMPLOYER: Sky Point Social Services, President and CEO

EDUCATION: Masters in Business Administration (MBA) - Indiana Institute of Technology (Indiana Tech), Bachelor of Science in Human Services - Indiana Institute of Technology (Indiana Tech), Associate of Science in Human Services - Ivy Tech Community College, Concordia Lutheran High School

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS: Served as a Blacksnake with the 122nd Fighter Wing for eight years, participated and graduated from the Ignite Fort Wayne Leadership Development in the fall of 2023. We volunteer for the Day of Caring Annually. Some of the organizations we have worked with include This Day Forward, St. Vincent De Paul Thrift Store, Habitat for Humanity Restore, and Blue Jacket. Partnership with DCS and Juvenile Probation

HOBBIES: Some of my hobbies include taking care of the animals on our little farm. We have goats, chickens, turkeys and pigs. I also enjoy hiking, going on walks, and spending time with my family.

WHY ARE YOU IN NORTHEAST INDIANA? I like that Fort Wayne is big but not too big. The cost of living is better than most places. It's also an excellent place to raise a family.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR PROFESSION THAT YOU ENJOY AND WHY? I am truly blessed to lead an amazing group of people serving individuals with disabilities. Every day presents new challenges and opportunities to innovate, problem-solve, and advocate for those we serve. I love witnessing firsthand the transformation and growth of our clients and team members. It reinforces my belief in the power of compassion and collective action.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU? Success goes beyond external recognition; it's more internal satisfaction for me. It's about finding joy in small moments, celebrating progress rather than perfection, and staying true to myself in a world that constantly tries to define what success should look like. Success isn't just reaching the mountaintop; it's enjoying every step of the climb while staying grounded in gratitude for the present moment.

AS A CHILD, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP? I remember wanting to serve in the military. I am so grateful that I was able to fulfill that dream after serving in the US Air Force for eight years.

WHERE DID YOUR FIRST PAYCHECK COME FROM AND WHAT WAS YOUR JOB THEN? My first paycheck came from Target! I started stocking shelves and then was promoted to cashier after a few months. I loved that job!

WHO WAS YOUR BIGGEST SUPPORTER WHO HELPED YOU ADVANCE IN YOUR CAREER? From the early days of my career in the Air Force to taking the leap and starting Sky Point, my wife, Dana, has been by my side every step of the way. Her unwavering support and belief in me have been a constant source of motivation and strength. Whether it was juggling military orders or late-night brainstorming sessions for the business, she was and has always been there with a listening ear and encouraging words. I can't imagine navigating this journey without her.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THUS FAR IN YOUR CAREER? Launching our company seven years ago was a huge accomplishment. I remember my wife and I had just left our previous jobs, bought a house, and were expecting our daughter when we decided to take the leap. Everyone thought we were crazy for taking such a huge risk, but through the grace of God, it ended up being one of the best decisions we have ever made.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR GREATEST MISTAKE THUS FAR AND WHAT LESSONS DID YOU LEARN FROM IT? So, I have to admit my greatest mistake so far has been not prioritizing my mental and emotional well-being. For a very long time, I have put away or put aside my "issues" instead of dealing with them. I used to put work and others' needs before my own, thinking that self-care was selfish. But the stress, burnout, and anxiety that followed made me realize that self-leadership starts with taking care of yourself first.

WHAT ARE YOUR CURRENT PROFESSIONAL GOALS? As I reflect on my professional goals, one thing that stands out to me is the desire to become a better leader. But it's not just about being a more efficient or authoritative leader; for me, it's about embodying qualities like peace, love, and joy in my leadership style. I believe that true leadership is about inspiring and uplifting others, creating an environment where people feel valued and supported. And I've realized that nurturing

these inner qualities within myself is fundamental to becoming the kind of leader I aspire to be. Embracing these qualities doesn't just benefit me – it positively impacts everyone around me, too.

HOW DO YOU REMAIN CURRENT/RELEVANT IN YOUR PROFESSION? I'm always eager to learn new things and stay updated on what's happening in the world. I enjoy reading and keeping myself informed, and I also really enjoy connecting with people and gaining knowledge from their experiences.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR CAREER, FAMILY, LIFE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE? Setting clear boundaries and priorities is key to balancing my career, family, life, and community service. This means intentionally allocating time for each area and ensuring I give my full attention when I'm engaged in any of them. Another important strategy that I am learning is to say no when necessary. By focusing on a few meaningful initiatives, I can contribute more effectively while still fulfilling my responsibilities at work and home.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELAX? Engaging in high-energy activities actually helps me relax and clear my mind. The physical exertion and focus required in these activities serve as a form of meditation for me, allowing me to let go of stress and feel rejuvenated. There's something about the challenge and adrenaline of an intense workout or activity that quiets my mind and grounds me in the present moment.



WHAT BOOK DO YOU RECOMMEND? I highly recommend "Unoffendable" by Brant Hansen for anyone looking to shift their perspective on anger, forgiveness, and personal freedom. It made a huge impact on me.

BASED ON WHAT YOU KNOW NOW, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL YOUR HIGH SCHOOL SELF? If I could go back in time and have a heart-to-heart with my teenage self, the first thing I would say is to embrace your uniqueness. Don't be afraid to stand out and express yourself authentically, even if it means going against the grain.

Your individuality is your greatest strength, and it's what will set you apart in the future.

Secondly, I would urge my younger self to take more risks and not be so afraid of failure. Stepping outside of your comfort zone is where true growth happens, so don't let fear hold you back from pursuing your passions and dreams. Embrace every opportunity that comes your way and learn from every experience, whether it's a success or a stumble.

Lastly, I would emphasize the importance of nurturing meaningful relationships and surrounding yourself with people who lift you up. Invest in friendships that bring out the best in you and support your personal development. These connections will be invaluable as you navigate through life's challenges and triumphs. So, high school me, remember to stay true to yourself, take risks, and cherish genuine connections – they will shape the incredible journey ahead.



CONGRATULATIONS FRANCIS JOMO

Love Fort Wayne is proud to see Ignite Fort Wayne participant **Francis Jomo** honored as one of Greater Fort Wayne Business Weekly's Forty Under 40 recipients!

Ignite Fort Wayne is a unique learning experience focusing on the most important leadership opportunity every leader faces...self-leadership. Packed with relational, experiential, and reflective learning, you will anchor yourself to lead in the current environment and hone your ability to be an innovative leader. Participants will engage with veteran leaders, expert facilitators, community members, and carefully selected group of peers all within a unique leadership learning design rooted in faith and proven leadership development practices. Spring classes starting soon! For more information visit www.lovefortwayne.com/ignite.



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Congratulations,
FRANCIS JOMO

on being named into Greater Fort Wayne
Business Weekly's Forty Under 40 Class of 2024.

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BY LIFTING
OTHERS

SKY POINT SOCIAL SERVICES IS COMMITTED TO SUPPORT INDIVIDUALS WITH ALL ABILITIES IN REACHING THEIR FULLEST POTENTIAL BY PROVIDING THE CARE AND SERVICES THAT WILL ENABLE THEM TO LIVE ENRICHING LIVES IN THE COMMUNITIES WHERE THEY ARE VALUED AND RESPECTED FOR THEIR ABILITIES AND CONTRIBUTIONS.



President/CEO



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Kristy Lindeman

Age: 39

Victim Assistance, FWPd

Director



EMPLOYER: Victim Assistance, FWPd, Director

EDUCATION: BA Biblical Studies – Kentucky Christina University, BA Intercultural Studies – Kentucky Christian University, MA Organizational Leadership w/ Non-Profit emphasis – University of Saint Francis

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS: Executive Board Committee, Community Outreach Coordinator, & Volunteer Coordinator – Fort Wayne Pride Board of Directors, Events and Education Subcommittee Chair & Member – Mayor’s Commission on Domestic Violence, Sexual Harassment, and Rape, Cougars HOPE Coordinated Community Response Team (CCRT) – University of Saint Francis, Hidden Press Committee Chair, Diversity Subcommittee Member, & Resource Fair and Family Fun Night Committee – Allen County System of Care, Anti-trafficking Network of Northeast Indiana Committee Member, Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) member, Child Advocacy Center Community Response & Operations Team member, Allen County Trafficking Response Team (ACT RT) member, Women’s Fund Committee – Women’s Fund/Community Foundation, Family Domestic Violence Court Committee Member, Family Justice Taskforce Member, Area Planning Council on Homelessness Member, Great Kids Make Great Communities Leadership Academy Graduate

WORK HISTORY: SCAN, Inc., Whittington Homes and Services, Bethesda Lutheran Communities, Oak Street Health, Summit City Nursing/Rehab, Lamplight Communities, Amani Family Services, CONNECT Allen County, FWPd

HOBBIES: Traveling, reading,

See LINDEMAN, page B18

Travis Christman

Age: 37

Medartis Inc.

Vice President of Quality & Regulatory



EMPLOYER: Medartis Inc., Vice President of Quality & Regulatory

EDUCATION: Bachelors Degree, Ball State University, BS Industry & Technology

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS: KEDCO board member, KVDO board member, Whitko Career Academy Technology board member, YMCA Special Olympics volunteer, Fellowship Missions Volunteer, Sacred Heart Catholic Church Community Meal volunteer, FW22 volunteer

HOBBIES: Fishing, hunting, golfing, marksmanship, and playing with my kids.

WHY ARE YOU IN NORTHEAST INDIANA? Winona Lake, Indiana

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR PROFESSION THAT YOU ENJOY AND WHY? What I enjoy most about my profession is the ability to collaborate with a highly skilled team focused on achieving goals and executing at the highest level.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU? To me, success means not only completing the task at hand, but following up on the future needs and planning appropriately. Success is the combination of many small wins, moving towards the north star of world class in a given task.

AS A CHILD, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP? My first desire was to be a high school teacher.

WHERE DID YOUR FIRST PAYCHECK COME FROM AND WHAT WAS YOUR JOB THEN? My first official paycheck came from Pioneer Seed Company, in which I was a general laborer detasseling corn.

WHO WAS YOUR BIGGEST SUPPORTER WHO HELPED YOU ADVANCE IN YOUR CAREER? My biggest supporter early in my pursuit of higher education was my college CO-OP boss, Dale French, the manufacturing lead at Maxon Corporation, A Honeywell Company located in Muncie.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THUS FAR IN YOUR CAREER? My biggest professional accomplishment was leading Nextremity Solutions through its first ever FDA audit followed by the acquisition of that company.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR GREATEST MISTAKE THUS FAR AND WHAT LESSONS DID YOU LEARN FROM IT? My greatest mistake thus far in my career was not empathizing and losing my consistent support of my team. What I have learned from this is that your team not only relies on you for direction or guidance, but also needs you to listen and not react. This builds trust, allows for stronger engagement, and ultimately builds trust across the organization.

WHAT ARE YOUR CURRENT PROFESSIONAL GOALS? My ultimate goal would be to own and operate my own business in order to build generational security for my family. Titles are not important, but your legacy is.

HOW DO YOU REMAIN CURRENT/RELEVANT IN YOUR PROFESSION? The greatest way to say current/relevant in the medical device industry is to win. Constant assessment of the market growth and what the FDA is currently focusing on provides the direction. Use of intelligence reports to help analyze changes and how they may impact our industry and company.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR CAREER, FAMILY, LIFE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE? By always focusing on my priorities; 1. God, 2. my wife Lindsay, 3. my children, 4. family and friends, 5. my extended family, our community. Having the discipline to make time for those things that are most important to you sets the foundation for how I prioritize my life.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELAX? Spending alone time in my basement workshop helps me unwind and relax.

WHAT BOOK DO YOU RECOMMEND? 1. “Extreme Ownership” 2. “Dichotomy of Leadership” 3. “Atomic Habits”

BASED ON WHAT YOU KNOW NOW, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL YOUR HIGH SCHOOL SELF? Stay curious, be bold, take calculated risks, believe in yourself, and keep God as the foundation for all that you desire to achieve in the world.



The Victim Assistance, FWPd team sends *heartfelt congratulations* to our Executive Director, Kristy Lindeman. We admire your passion and dedication to our mission. Congrats to you and the entire Forty Under 40 Class of 2024.

www.fwpd.org/victim-assistance



Awards Reception

March 28 • 5:30-8:30 p.m.

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6601 Innovation Blvd.

Tenille M. Zartman

Age: 36

Grow Wabash County President & CEO



EMPLOYER: Grow Wabash County, President & CEO

EDUCATION: In 2012, I earned my Master’s in Business Administration from Indiana University–Purdue University Fort Wayne (IPFW). Prior to that, I obtained my Bachelor’s degree in Recreation and Tourism Management with a minor in Parks and Recreation Management from Indiana University Bloomington. Recently, I completed the Economic Development Institute program at the University of Oklahoma.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS: I am deeply engaged in community service, serving as board chairman for both the Learn More Center and the Kiwanis Club. Additionally, I lead Leadership Development Wabash County, nurturing future leaders over an eight-month program. As an active member of various boards including Downtown Wabash Inc, Grow Wabash County, and the Young Professionals of Wabash County, I contribute to organizational progress. I also advise and participate in numerous other groups such as Tri Kappa, Indiana Main Street Council, Heartland Career Center, and the Local Economic Development Organization (LEDO) Council.

HOBBIES: For me, there’s nothing better than hanging out with my family and friends and digging into some amazing food. Whether it’s enjoying a meal with a good bottle of wine or diving into the energy of community events, I’m all about those shared moments. Plus, giving back to my community through volunteering is really important to me. And when it comes to fun, there’s no shortage of options around here – whether it’s catching a comedy show at Honeywell Arts & Entertainment or simply soaking up nature on the trails at the reservoirs and parks nearby.

WHY ARE YOU IN NORTHEAST INDIANA? Having originally hailed from NE Indiana, I returned to Wabash County to pursue my graduate degree here. During my time away, I witnessed a remarkable surge of passion and determination driving positive growth in the area. It stirred something within me, compelling me to be a part of this transformative journey toward positive change.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR PROFESSION THAT YOU ENJOY AND WHY? In just the past seven years since I entered the Economic Development and Chamber of Commerce realm, the landscape has undergone significant transformations. This field now encompasses a wide array of community

development initiatives. Each day presents new challenges where I must immerse myself in continuous learning, collaborate with passionate individuals on various projects, leverage data-driven insights, and engage in strategic collaborations to drive forward major initiatives. It’s a dynamic environment where adaptability and innovation are key to making meaningful progress on large-scale projects.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU? Success, to me, is a perpetual journey rather than a final destination. Rooted in my innate optimism and belief in continuous improvement, I find it challenging to envision a point where complete satisfaction is achieved. However, at its core, success embodies the ability to make a meaningful impact on something that holds significance to you. For me, that something is the communities I’ve chosen to invest in and call home. Whether it’s through fostering positive change, contributing to growth, or simply enriching the lives of those around me, success is about leaving a lasting and positive imprint on the places and people I care about.

AS A CHILD, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP? As a child, I vividly recall a school assignment where we were tasked with envisioning our future selves. In my book, I ambitiously declared my aspirations to become both a nutritionist and a professional photographer.

WHERE DID YOUR FIRST PAYCHECK COME FROM AND WHAT WAS YOUR JOB THEN? My first paycheck came during my sophomore year at Manchester Community Schools, right after I received my letterman jacket. I decided to shift my focus from sports to employment, as I’ve always found satisfaction in working. I vividly remember those early days, and my first paycheck likely came from one of my friends’ family businesses. It could have been from building trophies at Johnson’s Engraving or whipping up milkshakes at Mr. Dave’s Restaurant in North Manchester. Both experiences taught me the value of hard work and responsibility from a young age.

WHO WAS YOUR BIGGEST SUPPORTER WHO HELPED YOU ADVANCE IN YOUR CAREER? I’m truly grateful for the incredible support system I have in my life. While there are too many amazing supporters to name them all, I must begin by acknowledging my husband, who serves as both my sounding board and my biggest cheerleader. Additionally, there

are several key figures who have played pivotal roles in helping me advance my career. These include my predecessor at Grow Wabash County, Keith Gillenwater, my supervisor during my four years at Visit Bloomington, Carol Wilson, and my dad, who consistently instilled in me the belief that I could achieve anything I set my mind to. Each of these individuals continues to show up and provide unwavering encouragement, inspiring me to reach even greater heights in my professional endeavors.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THUS FAR IN YOUR CAREER? My proudest achievement in my career to date is my recent promotion to president and CEO of Grow Wabash County. This nonprofit organization is committed to fostering economic and community development for the businesses and residents of Wabash County. Over the course of the past seven years, I’ve diligently climbed the ranks within the organization, and assuming this leadership role marks a significant milestone in my professional journey.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR GREATEST MISTAKE THUS FAR AND WHAT LESSONS DID YOU LEARN FROM IT? One of the most significant mistakes I’ve encountered in my career was experiencing a major project with a substantial budget fall through. The key lesson I learned from this setback is to never assume that all parties involved share the same understanding or priorities. I realized the importance of cultivating strong relationships with all stakeholders and the necessity of over-communicating to ensure alignment and progress. Moving forward, I’ve prioritized proactive communication and relationship-building to navigate projects successfully to completion.

WHAT ARE YOUR CURRENT PROFESSIONAL GOALS? Currently, my primary professional goal is to complete the final step towards becoming a Certified Economic Developer (CEcD) after successfully finishing the coursework portion of the Oklahoma University Economic Development Institute. I am dedicated to achieving this certification to further enhance my expertise and credibility in the field of economic development.

HOW DO YOU REMAIN CURRENT/RELEVANT IN YOUR PROFESSION? My aspiration is to continuously strive for excellence in the field of Economic Development. Upon completing the certification process, I am committed to fostering a culture of continuous learning within my team. It’s essential to me that we remain proactive in staying abreast of industry advancements

and evolving best practices. By prioritizing ongoing education and innovation, we can ensure that our services continually evolve to better serve and uplift our communities.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR CAREER, FAMILY, LIFE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE? Striking a balance between my career, family, personal life, and community service is a top priority for me. While achieving perfect equilibrium isn’t always feasible, I embrace the ebb and flow of each aspect. Some weeks may be predominantly focused on work commitments, while others prioritize quality time with my family, particularly attending my daughter’s activities. To maintain this balance, I rely heavily on organization and mindfulness, ensuring that I allocate time to each facet of my life in a meaningful way. It’s about being present and attentive, adapting to the needs of the moment while striving to fulfill all my responsibilities with dedication and care.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELAX? To unwind and relax, I indulge in a variety of activities that bring me joy and rejuvenation. Whether it’s catching up on sleep, unwinding in my sauna, or enjoying a good laugh at a comedy show. One of my favorite ways to unwind is to cozy up with my almost five-year-old daughter and husband for a relaxing Friday night filled with a Disney movie and an elaborate cheese board dinner. I also find solace in savoring a glass of red wine or taking leisurely walks along the river trail, especially when the weather is warm. These moments of relaxation allow me to recharge and find peace amid life’s hustle and bustle.

WHAT BOOK DO YOU RECOMMEND? I read a lot of leadership books since I facilitate a leadership development course and would recommend “The 15 Invaluable Laws of Growth” by John C. Maxwell. This insightful book provides invaluable principles for personal and professional development.

BASED ON WHAT YOU KNOW NOW, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL YOUR HIGH SCHOOL SELF? If I could speak to my high school self, I would offer these words of advice: Embrace and appreciate the community you’re in. Always strive to listen and understand others. Never underestimate the power of continuous learning and self-improvement. Lead by example, and prioritize collaboration and building strong relationships — they’re key to achieving great things. Seek out a life partner who shares your values and supports your dreams. And most importantly, set ambitious goals and envision the life you want to create for yourself.



CONGRATULATIONS TENILLE!



Wabash County is proud of you and the work you do every day to make our community GREAT!



James McFadden

Age: 37

YMCA, Youth Service Bureau

Senior Program Director



EMPLOYER: YMCA-Youth Service Bureau, Senior Program Director

EDUCATION: Bachelor’s degree in Continuing Education from Indiana University

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS: Assistant director of the James S. McFadden Resource Center

HOBBIES: Spending time with family and friends, traveling, music, running, being at the lake.

WHY ARE YOU IN NORTHEAST INDIANA? The majority of my support system resides in Northeast Indiana.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR PROFESSION THAT YOU ENJOY AND WHY? I love learning from those I work with and for. The youth and families we serve allow us into their lives and trust us to see them for not only who they are, but who they hope to become. In turn, we have a responsibility to be authentic in who we are. When dealing with people, no two days are ever the same which I love.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU? Success means treating those around you with respect and keeping your integrity no matter how difficult things may seem in the moment. Success means sacrificing who you are and what you stand for in order to reach an achievement. I recognize that the greatest successes I’ve experienced have always been positively influenced by the support of others in my life.

AS A CHILD, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP? Growing up, my mother ran a tutoring center out of our home. I was constantly surrounded by children of different ages and

backgrounds. When I was able, I began tutoring students as well and quickly realized that I enjoyed investing in people. It was controlled chaos and exciting and I knew I wanted to work in a field that challenged me to learn and adapt to the needs of those around me.

WHERE DID YOUR FIRST PAYCHECK COME FROM AND WHAT WAS YOUR JOB THEN? My first paycheck came when I was 16 and worked at a pet store that no longer exists here in Fort Wayne. In full transparency, there were numerous instances where some of the animals I was taking care of found themselves outside of their enclosures. Luckily, no animals were lost or harmed during my short work experience at the pet store. Lol.

WHO WAS YOUR BIGGEST SUPPORTER WHO HELPED YOU ADVANCE IN YOUR CAREER? I’ve been blessed to work with my family my entire life. My mother and I are best friends and business partners and have been fortunate enough to serve youth collectively for decades. Our work has given us the chance to invest heavily in our community as well as travel to several countries across the globe to learn from and work for others in need. Anything I do well in this field I’ve learned from her, but I also have mentors in my life that have greatly invested in my development. To those individuals I thank you. You know who you are.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THUS FAR IN YOUR CAREER? I take pride when those I serve are happy or achieve goals for themselves that they may have thought near impossible. Being

See MCFADDEN, page B17

Jackson R. Magdy

Age: 32

FORVIS

Audit Director



EMPLOYER: FORVIS, Audit Director

EDUCATION: I am a graduate of Carroll High School and I have a Bachelor of Science degree in Accounting and a minor in analytical consulting from Purdue University, West Lafayette.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS: I’m a board member and treasurer of Easterseals Arc of Northeast Indiana. I’m also on the finance committee of Humane Fort Wayne and sit on a specific fundraising event committee for Junior Achievement of Northern Indiana.

HOBBIES: When I’m not spending time with family or friends I love to work on cars and love to build things. Anything I can take apart or put together will keep me entertained for hours.

WHY ARE YOU IN NORTHEAST INDIANA? I moved here from southern Illinois when I was 8 years old due to my dad taking a new job. I’d done several internships back here in Fort Wayne during College and got a full-time job offer in Fort Wayne upon graduating and have been here ever since. Fort Wayne has always just felt right sized. We have all the great things that come with a big city but also have that small town feel.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR PROFESSION THAT YOU ENJOY AND WHY? I truly enjoy being an advisor to my clients. I specialize in nonprofit organizations and love how much I’m able to help. Nonprofits in general need more guidance compared to other highly regulated industries so I feel more like an advisor to them instead of an auditor. I love that advising role and helping them accomplish their mission.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU? I love the quote “Success is the ability to go from failure to failure without losing your enthusiasm.” Failure is so important to being innovative and innovation drives success. Apathetic failure leads to burn out, but enthusiastic failure leads to success.

AS A CHILD, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP? My mom loves telling the story that I was obsessed with James Bond when I was younger and had my heart set on being a spy. She convinced me that maybe that lifestyle was a little too dangerous and so I took that advice to the extreme and chose one of the least dangerous professions.

WHERE DID YOUR FIRST PAYCHECK COME FROM AND WHAT WAS YOUR JOB THEN? I worked at a construction company of sorts here in town as a general labor employee. We did things like

remove floor tile and carpet, sand/ sponge blasted equipment and buildings, and just a ton of other general things. That job really taught me the fundamentals of project management.

WHO WAS YOUR BIGGEST SUPPORTER WHO HELPED YOU ADVANCE IN YOUR CAREER? Personally, there is no way I’d be where I am without the support of my wife, my parents, and the rest of my family. Their support continues to be foundational to my career success. Professionally, it has been a few partners here at work. Our previous managing partner really taught me how to manage my career day to day. He taught me how to deal with the highs and the lows and all the stress that is associated with our careers. I often thought of him as a “work dad” that looked after me early in my career and always had my best interest at heart. Another partner in our nonprofit group trusted me early on in my career and that trust really allowed me to grow. I learned so many little things just by observing him early in my career. He gives me guidance when I need it but also pushes me to figure things out on my own. He allows me to succeed often, but also fail gracefully.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THUS FAR IN YOUR CAREER? The one that really stands out for me was when I was selected to be one of eight individuals out of over 1,000 audit professionals (at the time) to deconstruct our audit methodology and redesign it from the ground up. Our group spent the better part of a year and a half redesigning our audit methodology, creating new tools, and testing the product, all while doing our normal day jobs. It was great to work with individuals all over the firm and have discussions with key decision makers in the firm.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR GREATEST MISTAKE THUS FAR AND WHAT LESSONS DID YOU LEARN FROM IT? Not a specific example but most of my mistakes stem from being afraid to ask for help. It has put me and others in tough spots in the past when it comes to deadlines. I often try to shoulder what’s been given to me rather than saying, “maybe I bit off more than I can chew.” It took me a while to realize no one is going to think less of me if I asked for help.

WHAT ARE YOUR CURRENT PROFESSIONAL GOALS? Right now, I’m focused on continuing to grow our higher education practice and our team. Continued growth in those areas will give me an opportunity to realize a long-term goal of

See MAGDY, page B17



the

CONGRATULATIONS JAMES!

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fwymca.org



James McFadden

Senior Program Director

YMCA YOUTH SERVICE BUREAU



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Director Jackson Magdy, Forty Under 40 Honoree

Our experienced professionals work hard to anticipate client needs and outcomes. So, when the communities where we live and serve recognize one of our own, we're more than ready to make a toast. That's why **FORVIS** is excited to applaud the forward vision of Director Jackson Magdy and all the Forty Under 40 honorees.

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Amber Kolkman

Age: 37

MSKTD & Associates
Senior Associate/
Senior Interior Designer



EMPLOYER: MSKTD & Associates, Senior Associate/Senior Interior Designer

EDUCATION: I graduated from Northrop High School before attending Indiana University, where I obtained my Bachelor of Science in Interior Design with a Minor in Fine Arts. After college, I pursued my NCIDQ certification, becoming a registered progressional in my field.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS: I actively participate in various community organizations, including BCA Young Professionals, volunteering at the Rescue Mission, and supporting our local IIDA Chapter.

HOBBIES: My hobbies include practicing yoga, exploring new destinations through travel, embarking on outdoor adventures, tending to my garden, and cherishing moments with family and friends.

WHY ARE YOU IN NORTHEAST INDIANA? I reside in northeast Indiana because it's where I was born and raised. Despite my aspirations to relocate westward after college, the economic climate in 2010 made it impractical. Upon graduation, I gratefully accepted an interior design position here in Fort Wayne. Witnessing the remarkable transformation and revitalization efforts of downtown was truly inspiring. I take pride in contributing to the ongoing growth and development of our community.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR PROFESSION THAT YOU ENJOY AND WHY? I get immense enjoyment from my profession due to its dynamic nature, where every project presents unique challenges that keep me engaged and motivated. Collaborating with other creative individuals to study various solutions is incredibly inspiring, as it encourages innovative

thinking and fosters personal growth. Effective listening and communication are essential aspects of my work, allowing me to thoroughly understand our clients' needs and preferences. This understanding enables me to develop tailored solutions and deliver unique end results that exceed expectations, ultimately providing a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction in my profession.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU? Success, in my perspective, embodies the attainment of personal aspirations, the ability to positively inspire others, foster growth in our local community, and nurture relationships around empathy, kindness, and compassion.

AS A CHILD, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP? As a child there were a few professions I was interested in, one being interior design. From a young age, I developed a keen interest in the way forms, colors, and textures could impact and environment.

WHERE DID YOUR FIRST PAYCHECK COME FROM AND WHAT WAS YOUR JOB THEN? My first paycheck came from The Lunch Box Café, where I worked as a server.

WHO WAS YOUR BIGGEST SUPPORTER WHO HELPED YOU ADVANCE IN YOUR CAREER? The primary pillars of support propelling my career forward have been my direct supervisors. They not only inspire and encourage me but also challenge me to surpass my limits. Their unwavering belief in my abilities instills the confidence needed to accomplish the seemingly impossible.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THUS FAR IN YOUR CAREER? To date, my most significant career achievement has been attaining the position of a senior associate and earning

recognition as one of the Forty Under 40 recipients.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR GREATEST MISTAKE THUS FAR AND WHAT LESSONS DID YOU LEARN FROM IT? My greatest mistake was failing to take ownership of a situation when I recognized I had made an error. In hindsight, I realize that by avoiding accountability, I allowed a minor issue to escalate into a larger problem. This experience taught me the invaluable lesson that by addressing mistakes promptly and transparently, I can prevent them from snowballing into more significant issues in the future, fostering a culture of accountability and continuous improvement.

WHAT ARE YOUR CURRENT PROFESSIONAL GOALS? My professional goals are centered around building a strong local business network to establish a more prominent presence within our community. I am committed to managing and nurturing existing relationships while actively seeking opportunities to forge new partnerships that align with our vision and values. Additionally, I aspire to expand our business by building and enhancing our interior design department, leveraging creativity and innovation to deliver exceptional results for our clients. Ultimately, I aim to progress into an ownership position, where I can contribute to the long-term success and growth of the organization while fulfilling my personal and professional aspirations.

HOW DO YOU REMAIN CURRENT/RELEVANT IN YOUR PROFESSION? Remaining current and relevant in my profession is paramount to me, driven by my unwavering passion for design. I consistently stay abreast of the latest trends and innovations by immersing myself in industry knowledge through various channels. Attending trade

See **KOLKMAN**, page B17



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& Associates
ARCHITECTURE
ENGINEERING
INTERIOR DESIGN

Nicole M. Penar

Age: 37

Questa Education Foundation
Development Director



EMPLOYER: Questa Education Foundation, Development Director

EDUCATION: I have a Bachelor of Science in Organizational Leadership and Supervision with a concentration in Education.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS: Although I have served many organizations, I am currently active with Junior Achievement of Northeast Indiana, American Red Cross, Junior League of Fort Wayne, Fort Wayne Sports Club, More than Gymnastics, and Questa Education Foundation.

HOBBIES: My hobbies include golfing, cooking, painting, playing slow-pitch softball, hiking, and watching our kids play sports.

WHY ARE YOU IN NORTHEAST INDIANA? I'm in northeast Indiana for a multitude of reasons, each contributing to a sense of belonging and fulfillment. First off, the people

are just amazing – so friendly and generous. Secondly, commuting is a breeze, which means more time to enjoy all the events and activities happening here year-round! And don't even get me started on the food – there's such a variety of top-notch restaurants to explore. Ultimately, northeast Indiana is more than just a geographical location — it's my home and where my family is. It's a place where I've found comfort, connection, and endless opportunities for growth and enjoyment.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR PROFESSION THAT YOU ENJOY AND WHY? As the development director at Questa Education Foundation, I am privileged to play a pivotal role in sharing our mission, which is dedicated to help individuals to access postsecondary education, graduate with less debt, and become

See **PENAR**, page B17

Katrina “Katie” Lynn Scherer

Age: 39

Fort Wayne Allen County Airport Authority
Operations Manager



EMPLOYER: Fort Wayne Allen County Airport Authority, Operations Manager

EDUCATION: Belmont High School-2003; Tiffin University- Bachelor's in Criminal Justice 2007; Tiffin University- Master's of Science in Criminal Justice 2009

WHAT COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS ARE YOU INVOLVED IN? Decatur Girls Softball board member, Decatur Dynamite Travel Softball head coach; St. Joseph Catholic School - school board, Great Lakes Chapter of the American Association of Airport Executive - first vice president

HOBBIES: Softball, watching my kids sporting events (soccer, volleyball, wrestling, basketball, baseball & softball) and helping my kids with their 4H

livestock. With three small kids and living on a farm there is always something to do.

WHY ARE YOU IN NORTHEAST INDIANA? This area has always been home for me, aside from the 4 years I was away at college. For me it's simple, it's the people. Everyone is kind and welcoming, willing to go out of their way to help you. It's a small community, but big enough to have a wide variety of offerings for everyone.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR PROFESSION THAT YOU ENJOY AND WHY? I love the variety. With my current position I oversee airport operations, customer service, custodial, parking and various and assorted construction projects. There are new challenges

See **SCHERER**, page B16



CELEBRATES FORTY UNDER 40 WINNER, NICOLE PENAR

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CONGRATULATIONS!



Katie Scherer

OPERATIONS MANAGER

The Fort Wayne-AlLEN County Airport Authority congratulates Katie Scherer on being named one of Fort Wayne Business Weekly's Forty Under 40 recipients for the class of 2024! Katie is an exceptional leader, not only within the Airport Authority, but throughout her community. Her hard work and dedication do not go unnoticed, and we are proud to have her taking our organization to a whole new altitude!



Kelly Rentschler

Age: 33

Indiana
Michigan
Power

Work Plan
Manager



EMPLOYER: Indiana Michigan Power, Work Plan Manager

EDUCATION: Northrop High School, Indiana University – Bachelors of Science in Recreation, Ball State University – Masters of Urban and Regional Planning

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS: Early Childhood Alliance (ECA) – board member, Fort Wayne Rotary, Clean Drains Fort Wayne Committee

HOBBIES: Aside from making memories with my family or spending time with friends, my main hobby is probably working to launch and establish our Empowered Parents and Caregivers Employee Resource Group (ERG) within AEP. We formally became an ERG in July of 2023 and are working to grow our members and formalize chapters in all 11 states we operate in.

WHY ARE YOU IN NORTHEAST INDIANA? I consider myself a boomerang when it comes to North-east Indiana! I have lived several places including St. Maarten, BVI; Seattle; and Columbus Ohio, but every time I find myself back home. Once you've lived elsewhere you really come to appreciate the cost of living, the commute times, the proximity to family, and the incredible things this community has to offer when raising my children.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR PROFESSION THAT YOU ENJOY AND WHY? I really enjoy that I get to strategize and problem solve on a daily basis. That is very rewarding and fulfilling to me. I also love that I get to work in an industry that provides an essential service to the communities we serve and that I get to work with some incredible people.

See RENTSCHLER, page B18



Kelly Rentschler | I&M Distribution Work Plan Manager

CONGRATULATIONS KELLY!

For being named to Greater Fort Wayne Business Weekly's Forty Under 40



An AEP Company

Mary Shankster

Stillwater
Hospice

Chief
Development
Officer



EMPLOYER: Stillwater Hospice, Chief Development Officer

EDUCATION: Indiana Tech, MBA; University of Akron, M.A of Arts Administration (Nonprofit Management); Baldwin Wallace University, B.A. Theatre and Political Science

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS: I just completed board terms on Give-Hear and the Association of Fund-raising Professionals. Previously I was a member of Junior League as well.

HOBBIES: Running and reading, when I have the spare time to do either.

WHY ARE YOU IN NORTHEAST INDIANA? My husband was working in Fort Wayne when we first met and started dating – I had been living and working in the Cleveland area. He wasn't interested in Cleveland winters, so Fort Wayne is where we settled down and started our family.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR PROFESSION THAT YOU ENJOY AND WHY? I never thought I'd work for a hospice or healthcare organization for that matter. Learning more about this area of healthcare has been life-changing and impactful. Every day we hear stories of patients and families who are experiencing challenging situations and it's a blessing that our teams can support them through serious illnesses or unexpected losses of loved ones.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU? I think the meaning of success probably changes throughout your life and career. To me, right now, achieving success means doing well at home and at work. We are blessed to have the opportunity to raise 3 young sons and success to me means that we've provided a nurturing and supportive home so that they grow into respectful, hardworking, faithful and empathetic young men.

AS A CHILD, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP? As a child, I think I wanted to be a teacher. Now as an adult, I have all the admiration and respect in the world for teachers but know that was not my calling.

WHERE DID YOUR FIRST PAYCHECK COME FROM AND WHAT WAS YOUR JOB THEN? My first paycheck came when I was 15 and working at Rings Pharmacy in Montpelier, Ohio. I was a cashier for the pharmacy, and when I turned 16 and could drive, I would take medications to individual's homes that were unable to travel to the pharmacy.

WHO WAS YOUR BIGGEST SUPPORTER WHO HELPED YOU ADVANCE IN YOUR CAREER? The biggest supporter to helped me advance in my career has been my husband. He's always been supportive of career advancements, early morning meetings and late-night events. I'm thankful he's helped in so many ways as we both work full-time and raise our boys.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THUS FAR IN YOUR CAREER? Hands down it has been meeting, hiring, and retaining amazing talent. We have built an incredible team at Stillwater Hospice. Watching our team members grow and move through adversity, while still being committed to our mission, it has been the most amazing thing to experience.

WHAT HAS YOUR GREATEST MISTAKE THUS FAR AND WHAT LESSONS DID YOU LEARN FROM

See SHANKSTER, page B16

THE STILLWATER HOSPICE FAMILY
CONGRATULATES

Mary Shankster, MBA



Thank you for your vision, compassion and leadership.

Stillwater
HOSPICE

Jarred White

Age: 34

FW22

Founder



EMPLOYER: FW22, Founder

EDUCATION: Concordia Lutheran HS and currently in College for Homeland Security

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS: I am the founder of FW22. I work with Remedy Live, The Freedom Riders and any nonprofits that need my assistance.

HOBBIES: Hobbies usually include being my daughters taxi driver, I enjoy video games, bourbon, and community outreach

WHY ARE YOU IN NORTHEAST INDIANA? I lived all over the world in the Marines but nothing compares to Northeast Indiana

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR PROFESSION THAT YOU ENJOY AND WHY? Allowing myself to engage in meaningful conversations with someone struggling is the ultimate reward because it allows me to let them know that it's okay to not be okay. Struggle alongside them, and figure a solution to find their happiness again

WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU? Success to me is ensuring I constantly set an example to my daughter on what it looks like to be a good person, and to treat everyone as a human and show them love and respect

AS A CHILD, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP? When I was a kid I wanted to be a firefighter

WHERE DID YOUR FIRST PAYCHECK COME FROM AND WHAT WAS YOUR JOB THEN? My first paycheck came from the Marines.

WHO WAS YOUR BIGGEST SUPPORTER WHO HELPED YOU ADVANCE IN YOUR CAREER? My family and Tyler. They were there from the beginning and are apart of my circle

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THUS FAR IN YOUR CAREER? My biggest accomplishment thus far would be knowing I have saved human lives.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR GREATEST MISTAKE THUS FAR AND WHAT LESSONS DID YOU LEARN FROM IT? I know in the line of work I deal with, I understand there are times where I can't save someone and I would take it personally. I've learned to just be a good human and love everyone.

WHAT ARE YOUR CURRENT PROFESSIONAL GOALS? My current professional goals are to make FW22 the standard in veteran work. Creating quicker and more impactful changes in helping those with PTSD and TBI (traumatic brain injury).

HOW DO YOU REMAIN CURRENT/RELEVANT IN YOUR PROFESSION? I continue to network and build partnerships.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR CAREER, FAMILY, LIFE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE? I use the quiet times to spend time with my family and friends so that when duty calls I can be 100% involved in helping them.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELAX? To relax, I travel to sporting events, and go up to South Haven, Michigan.

See WHITE, page B16

Audrey M. Van Gilder

Age: 32

Fletcher
Van Gilder
LLP

Attorney



EMPLOYER: Fletcher Van Gilder LLP, attorney,

EDUCATION: Loyola University Chicago School of Law – JD 2019, American University – BA 2013, Carroll High School – 2009

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS: My most regular commitment is to Legal Line, a program of the Allen County Bar Association. Every Tuesday evening, members of the organization answer calls from people who need to speak with a lawyer. I volunteer once a month. Some callers have questions with quick, easy answers. Some callers need non-legal advice. And sometimes if the rights at stake are important, the best advice I can give to callers is to hire an attorney or apply for pro bono legal services. There are not enough lawyers who are willing

to volunteer their time in this manner, compared to the immensity of legal need in our community.

HOBBIES: I recently joined a cookbook club for inspiration to keep trying new things in the kitchen. I love to shop consignment and I'm a sucker for a good sale.

WHY ARE YOU IN NORTHEAST INDIANA? This place informs who I am because I grew up here. After college I lived and worked in New Orleans and often faced questions from Louisianans about why I chose to be there. While thinking through those issues it became important to me to return home and let the needs of this place guide my work.

See VAN GILDER, page B16



**FORT WAYNE HAS YOUR BACK
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THE WAR AT HOME**

**A MESSAGE FROM JARRED WHITE:
ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT IT'S OKAY TO NOT
BE OKAY. AND ALWAYS LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR
TO YOUR LEFT AND TO YOUR RIGHT.**

FW22.ORG

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CONGRATS AUDREY!

FVG applauds partner Audrey Van Gilder for her contributions to Fort Wayne's legal community and her recognition as a Forty Under 40 honoree.

436 E Wayne St, Fort Wayne, IN 46802 | www.fvglaw.com

Andrew “Andy” William Young

Age: 35

Galecki Financial Management

Owner/Principal, Senior Financial Planner



EMPLOYER: Galecki Financial Management, owner/principal, senior financial planner

EDUCATION: Homestead High School – 2006, IPFW 2010 bachelor’s accounting, 2011 bachelor’s finance

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS: Crossroad Child and Family Services – former treasurer

HOBBIES: Golf, yoga, exercise, playing cards/board games/spending time with family/friends.

WHY ARE YOU IN NORTHEAST INDIANA? This is an interesting question. I always thought that I’d complete freshman year at IPFW and then transfer somewhere with a more traditional college feel to it. One thing led to another. My friend group at the time

were on the cross country team and I was lucky enough to make it as a walk on. Then as I started to search for an internship, I was able to land one at a local CPA firm that eventually led to my first full-time professional job. Also, during our junior year I met Mollee and now we are still here today.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR PROFESSION THAT YOU ENJOY AND WHY? No two days or situations are the same. Every day is a different puzzle, one day it could be more investment-focused the next it could be more tax-focused. Helping clients of different backgrounds find financial stability as they work toward retirement is very rewarding. I enjoy finding ideas and solutions to client questions and getting to take them out on the golf course doesn’t hurt either.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU? Success is having earned the trust of our clients. It became very evident that we’ve earned their trust when they invite you to their house for dinner and introduce you to their friends and family.

AS A CHILD, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP? I think it just depended on my age. Outside of wanting to be a professional athlete – mainly hockey or baseball – I don’t remember anything standing out.

WHERE DID YOUR FIRST PAYCHECK COME FROM AND WHAT WAS YOUR JOB THEN? McDonald’s “disinterested teenager”... I mean crew member but my time was mainly spent working the cash register for the drive-thru line.

WHO WAS YOUR BIGGEST SUPPORTER WHO HELPED YOU ADVANCE IN YOUR CAREER? My wife, Mollee. She’s always been very understanding for the late nights/long hours whether in the office or studying for various exams as our careers were first starting.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THUS FAR IN YOUR CAREER? Either passing the CPA exam or making partner. I always say I wouldn’t have the job I have now if it wasn’t for the CPA designation, but making partner was equally as important to me.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR GREATEST MISTAKE THUS FAR AND WHAT LESSONS DID YOU LEARN FROM IT? Early in my career I wasn’t always the most patient person in the room. I had a hard time understanding that my expectations of my work shouldn’t translate to others. That created a lot of headaches for me that could have been avoided. It’s taught me to be more understanding and ensure that we communicate better.

WHAT ARE YOUR CURRENT PROFESSIONAL GOALS? Continue to stay relevant and find new ways to help clients. As a partner of GFM I find my most important goals are growing the firm by expanding the client base, finding new ways to make our office run more efficiently, and producing an even better product for our current clients.

HOW DO YOU REMAIN CURRENT/RELEVANT IN YOUR PROFESSION? We continuously enhance our education on new laws and techniques, which keeps us up to date on what’s trending in the industry. Networking with other professionals to connect our clients as they need outside specialists.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR CAREER, FAMILY, LIFE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE? In order to balance these things, I work to maintain a consistent schedule. While work demands may require shifts in that schedule, I focus on what’s most important and reprioritize when needed.

Mollee and I have a standing date night every week. It’s not a matter if we go do something, but what we are going to do/where are we going to eat. We usually carve out specific time(s) during the week as well that allows us to pursue our hobbies, community service and have a little “me time.”

WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELAX? Focusing on my hobbies and looking for ways to improve while doing them.

WHAT BOOK DO YOU RECOMMEND? Not much of a reader outside of work-related articles

BASED ON WHAT YOU KNOW NOW, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL YOUR HIGH SCHOOL SELF? Be more patient and understanding. Not everyone always feels as passionate about a certain item and that’s OK. Don’t let yourself get worked up over stuff you can’t control.



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CPA/PFS, CFP®
Owner / Principal



How to master time management

BY METRO CREATIVE SERVICES
There only are a set number of hours in a day and a lot of demands on personal time. Finding ways to use time more efficiently and effectively is a goal many people aspire to, whether they are business owners, students or anyone in between.

A hectic schedule quickly can get the better of anyone, but there are many individuals who seem to have it all together. It is likely they have figured out how to manage time better. According to Starling Bank’s “2020 Make Business Simple” report, small-business owners and solo entrepreneurs spend up to 31% of their weekly time sorting finances and doing other administrative work. Learning early on how to more effectively allot time for tasks is one of the key skills a person can learn.

Use a calendar and set reminders

There’s only so much the average person can remember. Putting events into a calendar will provide visual cues as to what needs to get done and when. It also may help illustrate a pattern of when blocks of time are more busy and when there are free moments so that tasks can be redistributed, serving as a time audit of sorts. Reminder functions



METRO CREATIVE SERVICES

are a great way to stay on top of things and avoid feeling stressed and rushed when responsibilities are accidentally overlooked.

Learn about the Eisenhower Matrix

The Eisenhower Matrix is a tool that helps people distinguish between tasks that are important, not important, urgent, and not urgent. The matrix is broken down into quadrants that correspond with the 4Ds of

execution: do, defer, delegate, and delete. This matrix can help a person prioritize tasks relevant to their goals.

Tackle difficult things first

Leadership expert Brian Tracy developed a productivity method called Eat That Frog. It is good for those who have trouble avoiding distractions or people who tend to procrastinate. The gist is tackling the most complicated or dreaded task first,

and only moving on to other things once you’ve “eaten that frog.”

Use the right tools

Certain tools work for some and not for others. While one person may like making paper to-do lists, another may prefer digital devices. Identifying the resources that help a person manage time better can be an asset.

Limit time spent on each task

According to Parkinson’s Law, “work expands to fill the time allotted to complete it.” People should set reasonable limits on how long to give each task; otherwise, they may spend more time than is necessary.

Multitasking is not the answer

Productivity is reduced when individuals multitask, says the American Psychological Association. Sticking to one job at a time puts full attention on that job and may help it get done more quickly and to a better level.

Time management is a skill like any other that needs to be mastered in order to put it to use effectively. After which, schedules may be more balanced and work better for all involved.

Illinois among most expensive states to open a restaurant, survey says

BY ANDREW HENSEL
The Center Square

THE CENTER SQUARE — High costs and strict regulations make Illinois one of the hardest states in which to open a restaurant.

A report by Restaurant Furniture that uses data sourced from the TaxFoundation.org, Tax-rates.org, Dol.gov and Cityfeet.com looks at what each state may cost an entrepreneur looking to run a restaurant there. The report breaks down each state’s total costs to open an eatery by looking at the rent of a commercial space and obtaining licenses. Illinois finished fourth highest behind California, New York and Colorado.

Nick Warren, head of Ecommerce at Restaurant Furniture, said prospective restaurant owners could avoid these states.

“Generally, the states listed in this top 10 present a mix of high living costs, competitive markets, and unique challenges contributing to the overall expense of establishing and maintaining a restaurant business. Prospective restaurant owners should carefully consider these factors and conduct thorough market research before venturing into the culinary landscape of these states,” Warren said.

Illinois had the highest state corporate tax rate out of the 10 most expensive states at 10%, with a 5% state sales tax rate. The study puts Illinois’ annual liquor license fee at \$750 and annual food service permit at \$450. The yearly rent per square foot in Illinois was at \$28.42.

Overall, the Restaurant Furniture study gave Illinois a score of 40.15 out of 100. The minimum wage for the 10 most expensive state ranged from \$12 to \$15.74. Illinois’ was \$13 an hour for the study. On Jan. 1, Illinois’ minimum wage increased to \$14 an hour.

State Rep. La Shawn Ford, D-Chicago, explained why some may have a difficult time in Illinois.

“You have several layers of regulations that make it more difficult for people to open restaurants in the state of Illinois,” Ford told The Center Square. “As well as the costs of doing business as it relates to doing business and insurance.”

Ford said when speaking to prospective restaurant owners, many are financially burdened just by the costs involved in attempting to open a restaurant.

“You have so many different departments people have to deal with when trying to open,” Ford said. “There are different departments in different municipalities that have to approve your license. You have to get the builders to approve your license, and that costs a lot of money to bring it up to code.”

If restaurants and businesses thrive, so does the rest of the state, Ford said.

“Restaurants are valuable because they are good for tourism,” Ford said. “It is up to us as a state to relieve some of these regulations or have a system in place to help businesses matriculate through the process.”



METRO CREATIVE SERVICES

Nearly a quarter of business owners start their venture with less than \$5,000.

Did you know?

BY METRO CREATIVE SERVICES

The cost of starting a new business is contingent on a host of variables unique to each startup, but prospective entrepreneurs can expect to spend a substantial sum to get a business off the ground. However, that sum may not be as considerable as first-time entrepreneurs anticipate. Using data from the U.S. Census Bureau, researchers at LendingTree estimate that 21% of business owners launch their venture with less than \$5,000. Those costs vary widely by industry. For example, LendingTree researchers note that the average new construction firm needs just under \$68,000 to get started, and 50% of such firms began with

less than \$12,390. Starting a firm that specializes in the management of companies and enterprises, which includes firms that hold securities or equity interests of another enterprise, required considerably more funding at startup. LendingTree researchers estimated that the average business in that industry required roughly \$441,000 in startup funding. Such disparities highlight the significance of determining startup costs prior to beginning a venture. The Small Business Administration notes that startup costs can cover a range of expenses, including office space, equipment and supplies, utilities, insurance, advertising, and marketing.

Successful career development tips

FROM THE TRINE UNIVERSITY CAREER CENTER

Create an effective resume that is geared toward each position. Use a Word document and save as a PDF. Do NOT use a template or Canva to create a resume.

Research positions and employers that interest you.

Build your personal brand on

LinkedIn and connect with alumni of any school you graduated from as well as recruiters and managers.

Network at career events and social gatherings. Attend employer presentations and tours.

Practice interviewing skills.

Make sure to follow up with a thank you or an interest email.

Awards Reception

March 28 • 5:30-8:30 p.m.

Ceruti’s Summit Park II

6601 Innovation Blvd.

SCHERER

FROM PAGE B11

that arise regularly within the aviation industry. I enjoy the opportunity to be strategic in how we approach them and specifically how FWA remains relevant to our community.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU? Success is all about what you make of yourself. To me, success is the ability to set a stretch goal and work to achieve it. Goals can be uncomfortable. We are trying new things, challenging ourselves to step outside our comfort zone. The gain is in the growth and that’s where success happens.

AS A CHILD, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP? As a child I always admired my dad, he owned and operated an electrical business. I always said I wanted to be an electrician when I grew up, but my Dad was quick to tell me I should set higher goals for myself. Looking back, I think what I was seeing wasn’t a job, it was my dad’s leadership of a company he was so passionate about that I desired for myself.

WHERE DID YOUR FIRST PAYCHECK COME FROM AND

WHAT WAS YOUR JOB THEN? I worked for my parents’ business filing paperwork but didn’t receive a paycheck, rather money was put into my college fund. My first official job was at The Galley in Decatur as a hostess.

WHO WAS YOUR BIGGEST SUPPORTER WHO HELPED YOU ADVANCE IN YOUR CAREER? Joe Marana and Scott Hinderman have provided me with countless opportunities throughout my 13-year tenure at FWACAA. I’ve been given opportunities to oversee different work groups, managed numerous projects outside of my area of expertise, mentored when seeking professional certifications and been supported to serve in a leadership position within our regions trade association group.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THUS FAR IN YOUR CAREER? I’m very proud of our team’s effort to have 9 years (and hopefully counting) so far with zero Part 139 discrepancies. This is unheard of for Airports and it really takes a team approach from several different work groups. So much of what I had the opportunity to do early in my career has helped pave the pathway to more efficient operations and recordkeeping for our organization

specific to FAA documentation. This was no small task and required cultural change and a shift toward meticulous documentation and inspection. We continue to put in place best management practices and are always looking for ways to improve. As someone who has played team sports for most of their life and am now coaching, I’m big on supporting team wins.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR GREATEST MISTAKE THUS FAR AND WHAT LESSONS DID YOU LEARN FROM IT? Early in my career I would compare myself to other people to measure my success. I was focusing on what they had that I didn’t. As I’ve grown in my career and become more confident I’ve learned that the only person I should be comparing myself to is the person I was yesterday.

HOW DO YOU REMAIN CURRENT/RELEVANT IN YOUR PROFESSION? Continuous professional development, building and fostering relationships with my peers at other airports and staying up to date with current events and trends within my industry.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR CAREER, FAMILY, LIFE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE? This is something I continue to work on

because to be honest I struggle with this. I need to get comfortable saying no, even if it’s to something I enjoy doing. I’m selective in what I choose to take on outside of my career and family life. I choose community service items that I’m passionate about and support the growth and development of my kids. This way when I’m not at work I’m doing something that I enjoy that my kids would already be doing or supports something that they spend time doing. I don’t have a lot of “free” time and I’m ok with that. I enjoy being active and keeping busy.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELAX? I enjoy watching my kids extracurricular activities whether it be sports or live-stock shows. As a working Mom with three young children I don’t get time to relax in the traditional sense.

WHAT BOOK DO YOU RECOMMEND? I really like Patrick Lencioni’s book “The Ideal Team Player.” This is a great read whether you are leading a team, building a team or self-reflecting and evaluating what kind of team player you are.

BASED ON WHAT YOU KNOW NOW, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL YOUR HIGH SCHOOL SELF? You will find your path, you just have to be patient and let God lead you.

VAN GILDER

FROM PAGE B13

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR PROFESSION THAT YOU ENJOY AND WHY? I enjoy almost everything about practicing law. I feel rewarded rising to the challenge of professional demands because I have law partners who demonstrate how to do it with energy, integrity, and level-headedness. In particular, being a woman in the law is gratifying because of the examples set by women judges and lawyers who demonstrate the self-actualization that is possible for women in this profession.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU? Professionally, success is defined by the outcomes achieved for my clients. Personally, success means overcoming defeatism and cynicism and having pride in myself and my choices at the end of the day.

AS A CHILD, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP? In elementary school I wanted to be an aerospace engineer and had an opportunity to job-shadow a woman who was an engineer at Raytheon.

WHERE DID YOUR FIRST PAYCHECK COME FROM AND

WHAT WAS YOUR JOB THEN? One of my first paychecks was from Cedar Point amusement park in Sandusky, Ohio, where I worked for a summer operating a roller coaster. The highlight of the summer was finding \$100 on the ground, which should give you an idea of how low the pay was.

WHO WAS YOUR BIGGEST SUPPORTER WHO HELPED YOU ADVANCE IN YOUR CAREER? There have been a lot of supporters and teachers in my life for whom I am very grateful. One in particular is Judge Paul Mathias, a man of great humanity. The lessons I learned as a clerk in his chambers are evergreen.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THUS FAR IN YOUR CAREER? I became a partner at Fletcher Van Gilder in January 2024, and this is the accomplishment I’m most proud of so far.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR GREATEST MISTAKE THUS FAR AND WHAT LESSONS DID YOU LEARN FROM IT? I’m learning that it’s usually a mistake to allow heightened emotions to seep into work. Being emotionally exhausted doesn’t improve my work product. On the other hand, women are often unfairly accused of being “too emotional” at

work. The fact that it’s necessary to find a balance is an ongoing lesson.

WHAT ARE YOUR CURRENT PROFESSIONAL GOALS? I want to grow our law firm and work with talented lawyers to meet the expressed and unexpressed legal needs of our region.

HOW DO YOU REMAIN CURRENT/RELEVANT IN YOUR PROFESSION? It goes without saying that lawyers remain current by reading cases handed down by courts. My membership in the National Organization of Social Security Claimants’ Representatives (NOSSCR) is a huge source of information for my practice. I regularly read The Indiana Lawyer and newsletters from the Indiana Trial Lawyers Association and Indiana State Bar Association. I also read the Journal Gazette, The New York Times, and listen to podcasts from The Wall Street Journal and Financial Times every day.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR CAREER, FAMILY, LIFE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE? For me, these categories are inevitably related and there is a lot of overlap. I feel organized, empowered, and accomplished when my personal and professional goals align. I also am a

direct beneficiary of the wisdom about “balance” to be learned from second- and third-wave feminism. My mom, Faith Van Gilder, and my sister, Annika Van Gilder, are my constant, beloved companions in this conversation.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELAX? I clear my mind by walking no matter what the weather is. I always feel better after taking a long walk.

WHAT BOOK DO YOU RECOMMEND? A recent book I’ve read and recommend is “The Best Minds: A Story of Friendship, Madness, and the Tragedy of Good Intentions” by Jonathan Rosen. That book led me to read “The Center Cannot Hold” by Elyn Saks, which was also excellent.

BASED ON WHAT YOU KNOW NOW, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL YOUR HIGH SCHOOL SELF? The most amazing surprise of my 30s so far has been reconnecting with my best friends from high school. I would tell my teenage self to be more generous with my friendships. My favorite high school teacher, Susan Thompson, who taught French, sadly died in 2010 shortly after I graduated, and I would also tell my high school self to thank her.

SHANKSTER

FROM PAGE B12

IT? I think the greatest mistake is one that a lot of individuals make and it’s just overcommitting myself to too many things, projects, committees, etc... at once. I’ve learned to pull back on how many times I’m saying “yes” and leaning into “no” a little more these days.

WHAT ARE YOUR CURRENT PROFESSIONAL GOALS? Professionally I want to continue to advance

in the field of healthcare as it relates to marketing, business strategy and acquisition work. In healthcare, it is an ever-changing field, and it has been an interesting one to be apart of!

HOW DO YOU REMAIN CURRENT/RELEVANT IN YOUR PROFESSION? I try to participate in ongoing leadership development and trainings that are relevant to my field and position.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR CAREER, FAMILY, LIFE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE? I could

always be doing a better job of being present where I am at. It’s so easy to blur the lines between work and home and everything in between. The way I have been trying to balance things is to create some better boundaries between career and home.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELAX? Between work and home with three young kids, there isn’t much time for relaxation!

WHAT BOOK DO YOU RECOMMEND? I’m currently reading “The Gifts of Grief” by Leslie Weirich. I think

it’s a book that everyone can relate to – by either connecting to the kinds of losses Leslie has experienced OR by understanding that at some point in your life, you will lose someone you’ve loved.

BASED ON WHAT YOU KNOW NOW, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL YOUR HIGH SCHOOL SELF? It gets better, the braces do eventually come off your teeth... And just keep running forward!

WHITE

FROM PAGE B13

WHAT BOOK DO YOU RECOMMEND? “Extreme Ownership” by

Jocko Willink and Leif Babin.
BASED ON WHAT YOU KNOW NOW, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL YOUR HIGH SCHOOL SELF? Looking back on life, I would say,

nothing matters except how much you love your friends and family and did you live a good life. Your social status doesn’t matter, the nights of partying don’t matter, being popular

doesn’t matter. Making a difference in the world and treating humans as humans and always showing respect and love, that’s what matters.

KOLKMAN

FROM PAGE B10

shows allows me to witness first-hand emerging trends and cutting-edge technologies. Moreover, I actively pursue continuing education courses to refine my skills and expand my expertise, ensuring that I am equipped with the latest techniques and knowledge. My dedication to research further fuels my quest for excellence, enabling me to push boundaries to deliver innovative

MCFADDEN

FROM PAGE B8

allowed to celebrate with youth at their highest moments while being present at their lowest of times is truly humbling. Helping to create a culture of consistency, support, and enthusiasm for those we serve is my biggest accomplishment thus far.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR GREATEST MISTAKE THUS FAR AND WHAT LESSONS DID YOU LEARN FROM IT? Thinking it is my job to have a solution for every problem that presents itself. With that I learned early on you don't have to be perfect, just authentic in who you

MAGDY

FROM PAGE B8

becoming a partner within our firm.

HOW DO YOU REMAIN CURRENT/RELEVANT IN YOUR PROFESSION? We are required to have a certain number of hours of training per year to maintain our licenses as CPAs but we have to go above and beyond that to remain relevant in our specialized fields. My colleagues know I'm an early riser and I like to take a little time in the mornings to read articles, new guidance, industry happenings, etc., to stay up to date so I can keep my clients informed.

PENAR

FROM PAGE B11

contributing members of northeast Indiana's workforce. What excites me most about my development profession is the opportunity to forge meaningful connections with donors, community leaders, and educational institutions, all with the shared goal of empowering individuals in our community to pursue their academic aspirations. By raising awareness of our nonprofit's mission, I not only contribute to the growth and success of our organization but also play a part in retaining talent within our region. The chance to make a tangible difference in the lives of others while fostering the development and prosperity of northeast Indiana is incredibly fulfilling and drives my enthusiasm for my profession.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU? Success, to me, has evolved over time. It's about finding peace within myself, being fully present with my family, contributing to my community in various ways, and genuinely enjoying what I do. It's about living a balanced and fulfilling life, where personal contentment and meaningful connections hold utmost importance.

AS A CHILD, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP? As a child, I dreamed of becoming an architect. I remember spending hours drawing residential floor plans on graph paper.

WHERE DID YOUR FIRST PAYCHECK COME FROM AND WHAT WAS YOUR JOB THEN? My first paycheck came from Casa Grille when I was 15 years old. I began

solutions that resonate with clients and stakeholders alike.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR CAREER, FAMILY, LIFE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE? To effectively balance the demands of career, family, personal life, and community service, it is crucial to plan ahead. This includes, establishing priorities, identifying non-negotiable commitments, then understanding what capacity you have left to spare.

are what you can provide.

WHAT ARE YOUR CURRENT PROFESSIONAL GOALS? I take immense pride in watching the growth and success of those I serve and my team at the Youth Service Bureau. As an organization, we are working towards opening and operating a youth shelter here in Allen County. I look forward to strengthening our existing programs while developing an environment where youth in crisis can be supported.

HOW DO YOU REMAIN CURRENT/RELEVANT IN YOUR PROFESSION? The beauty of working with youth is that they force you to stay current with what is going on in the

HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR CAREER, FAMILY, LIFE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE? I've always been told the balance is a cycle, not an achievement. It's impossible to ever achieve that balance fully. In a client service profession, work is 24/7. The emails, phone calls, "to do's" never stop. Because of this, I pause quite frequently and ask myself several questions. What's stressing me out? What am I sacrificing? What do I need to prioritize? How are my decisions affecting my personal or professional life? How do my decisions affect those around me? Once I've answered those I generally know where to focus.

working there as the only bus girl, learning the ropes and earning my first taste of financial independence.

WHO WAS YOUR BIGGEST SUPPORTER WHO HELPED YOU ADVANCE IN YOUR CAREER? I can't attribute my career advancement to just one supporter; I've been incredibly fortunate to have a supportive network that has played pivotal roles in my journey. Firstly, my husband, Chris Penar, has been an unwavering pillar of support. Whether I was receiving a promotion or taking on added responsibilities, his encouragement and true partnership have been invaluable. He taught me the importance of resilience, emphasizing that setbacks are merely temporary challenges, not failures. My parents, Todd and Laura Miller, instilled in me the values of hard work and determination from a young age. Their unwavering encouragement pushed me to strive for excellence and question the status quo. Lastly, Sandi Kemmish May, with her guidance as a mentor and belief in my abilities, has provided me with the confidence and reassurance I've needed along the way. I'm grateful to have such a supportive team behind me, each contributing in their own unique way to my career advancement.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THUS FAR IN YOUR CAREER? My biggest accomplishment thus far in my career was being promoted to a manager position for a program that had been declining. Within two years of leading the program, implementing strategic recruiting efforts, and streamlining processes, I successfully reversed the decline and achieved a remarkable 15% increase in performance and reach within that timeframe.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELAX? To unwind, I enjoy spending quality time with my family and friends, practicing yoga and meditation, delving into a good book, taking walks, indulging in a binge-worthy series, and immersing myself in feel-good music.

WHAT BOOK DO YOU RECOMMEND? For a quick daily read, "The Daily Stoic." For personal growth, "Atomic Habits." For pleasure, I enjoy reading psychological fiction, thrillers filled with suspense and mystery. One of my favorites is "The

world. Engaging with those we work with gives us insight on what life is like for youth today. Our organization greatly supports pursuing any training or learning experience that can help us better serve the community.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR CAREER, FAMILY, LIFE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE? Much of my career, family and community service experiences have naturally blended in many ways. The staff at YSB are my work family and in that we get to celebrate and support each other. Being able to share experiences together has helped tremendously in finding ways to balance all of the life

WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELAX? If you've watched the David Beckham documentary on Netflix then you will know that David Beckham loves putting together Legos. If they get the endorsement of an international superstar, I'm not embarrassed to admit that I, too, love Legos. There's just something about following those instructions and creating something from nothing just helps me relax. During the warmer months, I also relax by taking walks and bike rides with my wife and our golden retriever Frankie.

WHAT BOOK DO YOU RECOMMEND? "Wooden: A Lifetime of

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR GREATEST MISTAKE THUS FAR AND WHAT LESSONS DID YOU LEARN FROM IT? One of my greatest mistakes has been not trusting my intuition and data and letting others influence my decisions based on their feelings. I've learned the importance of self-trust and confidence, prioritizing data and my instincts over external pressures. I now recognize my worth and set boundaries to protect my well-being and integrity.

WHAT ARE YOUR CURRENT PROFESSIONAL GOALS? My current professional goals revolve around continuing to make a difference in our community through both my professional endeavors and volunteer positions. I aspire to contribute positively to the growth and betterment of our community while leveraging my leadership skills to inspire and empower others to do the same.

HOW DO YOU REMAIN CURRENT/RELEVANT IN YOUR PROFESSION? I actively seek out opportunities to enhance my skill set and stay informed about industry trends. This often involves participating in continuing education sessions at least once a month. Starting in March, I will begin classes through Indiana University's Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, which will allow me to deepen my knowledge and expertise in my field. I firmly believe that there is always room to grow and expand one's knowledge, especially when it comes to making a positive impact in both my profession and community.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR CAREER, FAMILY, LIFE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE? Balancing

Wife Between Us."

BASED ON WHAT YOU KNOW NOW, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL YOUR HIGH SCHOOL SELF? Knowing what I do today, I'd advise my high school self to cherish the small joys in life and avoid rushing things. Be open to new experiences, learning, and absorbing up all the knowledge possible. Embrace adventure, display compassion and empathy toward everyone, as you never fully know their struggles.

events.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELAX? Quality time with my wife, son and dog is huge! This always helps me relax and refocus my priorities.

WHAT BOOK DO YOU RECOMMEND? "Living Buddha, Living Christ" by Thich Nhat Hanh.

BASED ON WHAT YOU KNOW NOW, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL YOUR HIGH SCHOOL SELF? Strap in and embrace the crazy! Some of the best experiences come from moments of uncertainty. Don't be afraid to take chances and always make time for the people you care about.

Observations and Reflections On and Off the Court" by John Wooden. Everyone that knew him speaks about the profound impact he had on their life. The book is a great read about his core beliefs and how he employed those beliefs in everything he did.

BASED ON WHAT YOU KNOW NOW, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL YOUR HIGH SCHOOL SELF? You think about the future too much and you kind of forget about the present. Don't lose sight of the future completely, but slow down and enjoy where you are because you'll look back and wonder where it went.

my career, family, personal life, and community service is indeed a juggling act, but I've found that having a strong partnership built on mutual respect and understanding between my spouse and my employer is the key. My spouse and I communicate openly about our respective commitments and priorities, allowing us to support each other effectively. Similarly, having an understanding employer who values work-life balance and supports community involvement enables me to fulfill my professional responsibilities while also making time for my family and community service endeavors. Additionally, effective time management, setting boundaries, and prioritizing tasks help me maintain harmony across all aspects of my life.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELAX? To relax, I enjoy a variety of activities. Whether it's sipping coffee in our backyard, taking leisurely walks around the neighborhood, going on a family bike ride, hitting the golf course for a round with my husband, or simply unwinding with some TV time, I find comfort in these moments of calm and enjoyment.

BASED ON WHAT YOU KNOW NOW, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL YOUR HIGH SCHOOL SELF? You will grow into a strong, confident woman who loves her family dearly and is blessed with a wonderful husband and kids. Your definition of success will evolve, and once it does, you'll find the peace needed to balance your life. Believe in yourself, pray more often, and know that you are loved by far more people than you ever imagined you touched. Trust in the journey and embrace the person you are, knowing you have a wonderful journey ahead of you.

LINDEMAN

FROM PAGE B6

painting/crafting, going to sporting events, spending time with friends and my family

WHY ARE YOU IN NORTHEAST INDIANA? I was born & raised in Grayson, Kentucky, where I attended college. My roommate/best friend was born and raised in Fort Wayne. I visited often while attending college. Upon graduation my previous plans to move out of the country were put on hold and I moved here to Fort Wayne to be my best friend’s roommate for a year... I never left and Fort Wayne has been my home since 2007.

WHAT IS IT ABOUT YOUR PROFESSION THAT YOU ENJOY AND WHY? I am passionate about serving others, being a voice for those who need someone to do that for them and collaborating with other community leaders/organizations to provide the best possible services to those in need. My greatest passion, however, is serving the staff who are on the front lines. I was fortunate to have an amazing supervisor in my first job out of college, Erica Tarasovitch, who showed me the importance of pouring back into her team. She was uplifting, supportive and positive. I have always admired her for that. My first boss had a picture hanging in his office of the pond with the drop of water and the ripple effect. I have aspired to be that drop of water. I can only reach so many people on my own, but if I can be a supportive, servant leader to the teams I am fortunate enough to lead, then together we can reach so many more. As someone who has been on the front lines, myself, I have seen what the most positive support can do to help you succeed, and what the negative supervisors can do to tear you down and create trauma. I aspire to always be that safe place to land. That person that, even when giving corrective feedback, can do it in a way that feels like a positive experience in the long run.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU? Watching my team grow. Being able to see a spark in someone and helping cultivate that so that they can reach their fullest potential, sometimes even when they can’t see that on their own, has been so rewarding. Success is about lifting each other up, collaborating, working collectively for the greater good. No one individual can be successful on their own. We are stronger together. Imagine if a single bee tried to build its own hive and make its own honey... we would never have honey, flowers wouldn’t be pollinated, fruits and vegetables wouldn’t ripen... but when they work together – we are all rewarded.

RENTSCHLER

FROM PAGE B12

WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU? Success to me means I am accomplishing my goals which ebb and flow throughout my career. It can range from building a successful team, creating a new process, or tackling a new challenge to learn something new. I feel successful when I have a goal and execute that goal.

AS A CHILD, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP? I have been a scuba diver since I was 10 years old and always wanted to grow up to be a dive Instructor in the islands. Fun fact: I did become a dive Instructor when I was 18 and lived in the islands working as an instructor for a few years.... then needed a real job!

WHERE DID YOUR FIRST PAYCHECK COME FROM AND WHAT WAS YOUR JOB THEN? I grew up cleaning my parents’ office from the time I was around 10, but my first ‘real’ job was working at Deep Blue Divers as a scuba sales

I would also say that my breadth of professional experience is something I consider a success as well. I have been told, so often, that I “jump around” too much. That only staying with agencies for 1-4 years doesn’t show dedication or loyalty. However, I am a fast learner, a hard worker, someone who wants to get their hands on something and create/impact change. I think I have done that in so many ways. My background and experiences have given me this amazing opportunity to serve people from all walks of life, all backgrounds, races, religions, sexual orientation, ages, and trauma experiences. I have worked with the youngest babies, to the oldest adults. Those who are born without hardship and those who are born with a special ability (disability). Those who live comfortably and those who are unhoused. Those who speak English as a first language and those who do not. While one person may look at my resume and see a flaw, I look at my resume with pride and say, it has made me who I am today. Someone who can answer questions about resources in every corner of our community. Someone who has had the incredible privilege to network with so many amazing humans, doing some of the most amazing work in our community.

AS A CHILD, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP? I always wanted to be like my dad. He was such a hard worker – a full-time police officer and church minister, but always making time to be present as a dad, help my mom with anything at home, teaching me and my sister sports – fishing – how to build things. When I was 12, I felt called to missionary work and did travel out of the country on several trips, including living out of the country for a while during my internship, but after moving to Fort Wayne, life took a different direction. Fort Wayne kind of became my mission field and I decided I wanted to get into leadership – to make sure that the people pouring out had someone pouring back into them.

WHERE DID YOUR FIRST PAYCHECK COME FROM AND WHAT WAS YOUR JOB THEN? My first official paycheck came from working in the cafeteria at Kentucky Christian University when I was 14. Washing dishes and dumping plates full of food will teach you the value of a paycheck – that was back before minimum wage was even \$7.25 an hour.

WHO WAS YOUR BIGGEST SUPPORTER WHO HELPED YOU ADVANCE IN YOUR CAREER? My parents have always been supportive, my best friend – Carmella has been a huge cheerleader and advocate for me, Sister Michelle Toth who was one

associate.

WHO WAS YOUR BIGGEST SUPPORTER WHO HELPED YOU ADVANCE IN YOUR CAREER? I would not have my career and the ability to serve my community without the endless support and encouragement of my husband, Jake. When I doubt myself, he tells me to go for it. When I want to take on a new challenge that consumes a lot of my time, he steps up and runs things at home. Then when I inevitably have mom-guilt from time away, he takes on even more so I can have focused time with my kids. He makes my career and any subsequent advancements possible!

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THUS FAR IN YOUR CAREER? I think my biggest accomplishment in my career was when I was working in Ohio I was the expert witness in an Eminent Domain case for the company where my testimony was utilized to create case law in the State of Ohio.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR GREATEST MISTAKE THUS FAR AND WHAT LESSONS DID YOU

of my professors at St. Francis, Capt. Hunter, so many friends/colleagues, and especially my fiancé, Chrissy. I sometimes get wild ideas, but Chrissy always makes sure I know how much she believes in me and my ability to pull things off.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THUS FAR IN YOUR CAREER? Aside from being the first in my family to graduate with my master’s degree, assisting in building CONNECT Allen County, and being hired as the Director of Victim Assistance.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR GREATEST MISTAKE THUS FAR AND WHAT LESSONS DID YOU LEARN FROM IT? Getting too caught up in worrying about what others think of me. I have had some amazing leaders and some not so amazing leaders. It’s unfortunate that those negative experiences are often the ones that are the loudest in our minds. Being caught up in the anxiety of negativity and replaying negative comments over and over is exhausting. It’s taken me a long time to learn that I must remain confident in myself, my knowledge, and my abilities. Go with my gut and stand firm in who I am. There will always be someone who criticizes you, but if you are able to stay positive and true to yourself, you can’t go wrong. Those who know you best will always be there cheering you on and supporting you – they are the ones that matter most anyway.

WHAT ARE YOUR CURRENT PROFESSIONAL GOALS? Currently – just continuing to serve our community and ensuring that my team has support. I love what I’m doing right now, being able to be a part of supporting a team of people who can help others in their most vulnerable time of need is important. Continuing to work with all the amazing organizations I get to be a part of and advocating for better protections and laws for victims in the future. I am excited to grow our collaborative efforts, not just here in Fort Wayne, but across the country.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession? I love to learn. I am always seeking out new training opportunities, collaborating with other community leaders and learning from them, staying connected to the pulse of what our community needs, and listening to what my team needs.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR CAREER, FAMILY, LIFE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE? This was difficult for me for a very long time. The work I have been a part of is such important work that it’s sometimes hard to put it down. I have learned over the last few years that I need to

LEARN FROM IT? Early in my professional career I communicated an issue to a contractor very poorly where I unintentionally made them feel belittled. I learned very quickly that it’s not really what you say, but how you say it and how you make people feel is what people remember and what really matters.

WHAT ARE YOUR CURRENT PROFESSIONAL GOALS? My current professional goal would be to obtain my Project Management Professional (PMP) Certification.

HOW DO YOU REMAIN CURRENT/RELEVANT IN YOUR PROFESSION? I think the main thing that helps me remain relevant is to be a continuous learner. I absolutely love engaging with other departments, learning best practices, benchmarking across the industry, and keeping up on latest industry trends via news articles or podcasts.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR CAREER, FAMILY, LIFE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE? First off, there is NO SUCH THING as a work/life balance! If you are consistently

have good boundaries. I will always be there to answer the phone when I am needed for support, but making sure that others on my team are empowered to do their jobs without needing me to constantly look over them was a key factor in being able to step back. I try to attend almost all my kids’ sporting events, make it a priority to spend time with my niece when I can, I take a weeklong vacation each year with my mom & sister and our families, and the same with my fiancé’s family. We always make time to travel together without our kids at least once a year. Being an active part of a monthly book club with some amazing friends – this year we started an annual tradition of a long weekend book club retreat.

I allot myself the time needed to complete what needs done for the projects and work I am a part of, but when I have family time, I make sure that I give my focus and attention there. I also go to counseling regularly. I have since I was in college. It’s important to self-evaluate and make sure that when you are providing support to others, you are also providing support to yourself.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELAX? Read, take hot baths, create something with my hands, watch a good movie, have coffee with a friend, travel, and experience new things, go to the beach... water is ALWAYS good for the soul.

WHAT BOOK DO YOU RECOMMEND? There are so many good ones. I love Jodi Picoult – “Mad Honey” and “Small Great Things” are two of my favorites she has written (but you can’t go wrong with any of her books). I also recommend “Sugar Island” and “Born Confused” – both favorites since I was younger and great books to read if you’re interested in culture.

BASED ON WHAT YOU KNOW NOW, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL YOUR HIGH SCHOOL SELF? Life is full of ups and downs. There will always be someone fighting against you, manipulating you, tearing you down. Ignore the noise – focus on the good – stay true to yourself – maintain your character and integrity – “We rise by lifting others”. I promise you’ll get where you want to go. It might not be as fast as others, but you’ll make it and since you stay true to yourself, you will be all the prouder for it. And ALWAYS remember to try your best to take your own shoes off and stand in the shoes of those you’re serving. Judgment is human nature, and we snap to it all too often. Seeing things from another perspective is one of the greatest ways we can learn and grow. Last but not least, give yourself grace, keep being kind and loving others, but don’t forget to love yourself too!

giving 50-50 to these categories, you will constantly be feeling like you’re failing. My advice is to stop focusing on this idea of a ‘balance’ and start looking at all the items on your plate as critical vs non-critical across the spectrum of things going on in your life. This will help you focus your energy on the important things and free yourself from the guilt that can come from trying to do it all.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELAX? To relax I usually put my headphones in, listen to music and go for a walk with my dog.

WHAT BOOK DO YOU RECOMMEND? For work: “The Five Dysfunctions of a Team” by Patrick Lencioni. For personal enjoyment: Anything by Lysa Terkeurst or Max Lucado.

BASED ON WHAT YOU KNOW NOW, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL YOUR HIGH SCHOOL SELF? I would tell myself to make the most of this time of your life! You will never have this much freedom, time or energy again so use it wisely. Also, be nicer to your mom! You put her through a lot and she really does know best!

HOWARD

FROM PAGE B2

The most rewarding aspect of our consulting practice is witnessing the tangible impact we have on people’s lives. Knowing that we play a role in alleviating some of the burden for individuals facing the most daunting journey of their lives is both humbling and incredibly fulfilling. It’s a reminder that even in the face of adversity, there is hope, and by lending a helping hand, we can make a meaningful difference in the lives of others.

WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN TO YOU? To me, success is not just about personal achievements or accolades; it’s about making a positive impact on the lives of others and contributing to the greater good. It’s about continuous growth, learning, and self-improvement, while also lifting others along the way. Success, in its humblest form, is finding fulfillment and joy in what I do, knowing that I’ve made a difference, no matter how small, in the lives of those around me. It’s about living with integrity, empathy, and kindness, and leaving a lasting legacy of compassion and service.

AS A CHILD, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP? I wanted to be the right fielder for the Chicago Cubs. (Yes, I grew up during the Sammy Sosa vs. Mark McGwire era)

WHERE DID YOUR FIRST PAYCHECK COME FROM AND WHAT WAS YOUR JOB THEN? I started working at the DeKalb County YMCA as a desk clerk back when I was 17. I would have to open up the Garrett location (pre-JAM Center days) at 5:45 a.m. Mon.-Fri. I also had to work every other weekend, including the morning after my Junior Prom.

WHO WAS YOUR BIGGEST SUPPORTER WHO HELPED YOU ADVANCE IN YOUR CAREER? I have to give all the credit in the world to my amazing wife, Erin. Her unwavering support and boundless love have been the bedrock of my journey. Seeing her drive and passion every single day not only fills me with admiration but also pushes me to want to be a better version of myself. Her resilience in the face of challenges and her unwavering commitment to our family inspire me to reach higher and strive for excellence in

everything I do.

Erin’s strength and determination serve as a constant reminder of the importance of perseverance and staying true to our values. She is my partner in every sense of the word, and together, we navigate life’s ups and downs with grace and determination. Her belief in me fuels my own self-belief, and I am endlessly grateful for her presence in my life.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THUS FAR IN YOUR CAREER? As a benefits consultant, I’m truly humbled by the opportunity to serve my clients and help them navigate the complex world of employee benefits. While I’m proud of the many milestones and successes I’ve achieved along the way, I believe my biggest accomplishment lies in the relationships I’ve built and the trust I’ve earned from my clients. Knowing that I’ve made a positive impact on their businesses and the lives of their employees is incredibly rewarding and drives me to continue striving for excellence every day.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR GREATEST MISTAKE THUS FAR AND WHAT LESSONS DID YOU LEARN FROM IT? Having a natural desire to serve others, early on in my career I tried to also be a people pleaser at all times. I learned the hard way that assumptions can lead to misunderstandings and frustration among team members and clients alike.

The lesson I took away from this experience was the critical importance of transparent and open communication at every professional level.

WHAT ARE YOUR CURRENT PROFESSIONAL GOALS? In addition to becoming an equity partner at Gibson, my current professional goals center around continuing to grow and excel in my role at Gibson, with the ultimate aspiration of contributing to the success and growth of the company in a significant way. While becoming an equity partner and majority shareholder may seem like a lofty ambition, it’s a testament to the dedication and hard work I’ve poured into my career thus far. I remain humble and grateful for the opportunities I’ve been given, and I’m committed to continually striving for excellence and seizing every chance to learn

the good fortune of a couple very impactful leaders that helped me grow and believed in me, all credit goes to my dad. Growing up with a single father, he instilled in me a strong work ethic, treating people how you want to be treated and the ability to find laughter in every moment. While battling breast cancer at 27 while still fiercely driven to not let it impact my career, he came with me to every chemo and every appointment always reminding me how strong and capable I am.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST ACCOMPLISHMENT THUS FAR IN YOUR CAREER? I am extremely proud to be given the opportunity to work for such an impactful credit union at a leadership level. Leading the mortgage team at 3Rivers is truly a dream come true and my biggest accomplishment to date. Their passion to serve our membership and resilience during difficult times has been inspiring. I am proud to walk alongside them in the journey.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR GREATEST MISTAKE THUS FAR AND WHAT LESSONS DID YOU LEARN FROM IT? Early in my

and grow along the way.

HOW DO YOU REMAIN CURRENT/RELEVANT IN YOUR PROFESSION? Remaining current and relevant in my profession is a top priority for me. I achieve this by staying proactive and continuously seeking out opportunities for learning and growth. This includes staying abreast of industry trends, attending relevant conferences and workshops, pursuing advanced certifications or professional development courses, and actively engaging with my professional network.

Additionally, I make a concerted effort to stay connected with my clients and understand their evolving needs and challenges. This helps me tailor my approach and solutions to meet their specific requirements and ensures that I’m always delivering value and staying ahead of the curve.

Furthermore, I’m a firm believer in the power of collaboration and knowledge-sharing. By participating in industry forums, discussion groups, and mentorship programs, I not only expand my own expertise but also contribute to the collective advancement of our profession.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR CAREER, FAMILY, LIFE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE? My family is my priority, and being present for my children’s activities, whether it’s cheering them on at sports events or attending their dance recitals, brings me immense joy and fulfillment.

I believe in leading by example, so I strive to excel in my career while also being a dedicated husband and father. This means managing my time efficiently, prioritizing tasks, and ensuring that I am fully present in each aspect of my life. Communication with my family is key; we regularly discuss our schedules and commitments to ensure that everyone’s needs are met.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELAX? I try to mix personal hobbies along with family priorities as my escape to relaxation. One thing is our family over the last couple of years has taken up golf. While I’ve always been a fan of the sport, having the opportunity to connect with the family for a few hours on the weekend trying out a new golf course has been something we’ve really come to enjoy.

leadership journey I found myself quieting my voice. Especially as a young female leader, I would overthink how much of “me” I should bring to the table. I learned quickly that, if you are invited to have a seat at the table you should make sure you do something with it.

WHAT ARE YOUR CURRENT PROFESSIONAL GOALS? My personal mission statement is “To make a difference in the lives of my team; promoting a culture that allows people to grow, be impactful and have fun while doing it.” I don’t believe in putting myself into a box of what is next but believe in showing up every day serving my mission.

HOW DO YOU REMAIN CURRENT/RELEVANT IN YOUR PROFESSION? I block time for personal white boarding. Allowing myself that time to be creative in thought helps me to consistently question my now and what’s next.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR CAREER, FAMILY, LIFE AND COMMUNITY SERVICE? I try not to let myself focus on balancing it all, in some ways seeking balance for me can feel like settling. I believe if you are intentional with your time and

WHAT BOOK DO YOU RECOMMEND? The book I recommend is “Together is Better” by Simon Sinek. Sinek’s book beautifully articulates the idea that we are stronger together than we are alone. He illustrates this through inspiring stories and simple yet profound insights. The book encourages a humble yet effective approach to leadership and life, emphasizing the value of empathy, trust, and shared purpose.

In the context of balancing career, family, life, and community service, “Together is Better” offers valuable lessons. It reminds us that we don’t have to navigate these aspects of our lives alone. By fostering strong connections with our families, collaborating with colleagues, and engaging with our communities, we can create a support network that helps us thrive in all areas of life.

Ultimately, “Together is Better” serves as a reminder that the journey toward achieving our goals is enriched when we prioritize relationships and work together toward common objectives.

BASED ON WHAT YOU KNOW NOW, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL YOUR HIGH SCHOOL SELF? I would tell myself to embrace curiosity and never stop learning. High school is just the beginning of a lifelong journey of growth and discovery. I would encourage myself to explore different interests, take risks, and not be afraid of failure because it’s through those experiences that I truly learn and grow.

Secondly, I would emphasize the importance of being authentic and true to myself. High school can be a time of peer pressure and trying to fit in, but I would remind myself that it’s okay to be different and to embrace my uniqueness. I would encourage myself to surround myself with people who accept me for who I am and to not be afraid to stand up for my beliefs.

Lastly, I would remind myself to cherish the relationships I have and to invest time and effort into building meaningful connections with others. High school may seem like it lasts forever, but in reality, it’s just a small chapter of life. I would encourage myself to be present in the moment, to be kind and compassionate towards others, and to never take my friendships for granted.

energy you can have it all. I do my best to give 100% of myself in the moment when it’s needed.

WHAT DO YOU DO TO RELAX? While I could say anything else, those reading this that know me well would know I am lying if I say anything other than watching the worst Reality Tv. I am a glutton for terrible Reality TV, really the worse the better.

WHAT BOOK DO YOU RECOMMEND? Top of the list would be “212 the Extra Degree.” At 211 degrees water is hot, it’s just that one extra degree that it boils. As a shorter read, I find myself referring back to it often as a refresher. Always reminding myself it’s just the one extra degree. “Chief Joy Officer” is another favorite. Like most, I am also a huge Simon Sinek fan. If you or your team needs a short pick me up, I recommend “Together is Better.”

BASED ON WHAT YOU KNOW NOW, WHAT WOULD YOU TELL YOUR HIGH SCHOOL SELF? Hold on, it’s about to be a crazy ride. Never question the value you bring being you. Success doesn’t have to feel stuffy, say the quiet part out loud it’s usually the most important part.

KEEFER

FROM PAGE B2

believe great leaders develop great leaders.

AS A CHILD, WHAT DID YOU WANT TO BE WHEN YOU GREW UP? Interestingly enough, I grew up around real estate. I knew from an early age it was something I had a passion for. Other than Real Estate, I strongly considered fashion merchandising. I love to shop, not just for myself but for others and the idea you could make a career out of it was fascinating to me at a young age.

WHERE DID YOUR FIRST PAYCHECK COME FROM AND WHAT WAS YOUR JOB THEN? My first job was at European Technique Tanning Salon in Fort Wayne. I worked there all throughout high school eventually becoming manager while still a teenager. I credit that early experience of responsibility for helping to set the foundation of where I am now.

WHO WAS YOUR BIGGEST SUPPORTER WHO HELPED YOU ADVANCE IN YOUR CAREER? While I have had and still do have

Funded projects focus on blood clot removal, home energy management, pipeline safety and arthritis treatment

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. — Four researchers in Purdue University’s colleges of Engineering and Science, the Purdue Institute for Cancer Research and the Purdue Institute for Drug Discovery have received a total of \$150,000 from the Trask Innovation Fund to strengthen the appeal of their patent-pending intellectual property for commercial use.

The fund is managed by the Purdue Innovates Incubator, which provides programming for the Purdue University community to ideate, refine and support their solutions. The fund awards up to \$50,000 for short-term projects that enhance the commercial value of Purdue intellectual property.

The application deadline for the next round of funding is Feb. 16. Questions about applications can be submitted to trask@prf.org.

The fall 2023 Trask Innovation Fund recipients, their projects and award amounts are:



Mohammad Reza Jahanshahi, College of Engineering, “Autonomous Crack Assessment Software,” \$25,000.

Jahanshahi, an associate professor in the Lyles School of Civil Engineering, has developed a patent-pending, advanced

computer vision system to autonomously detect defects in pipelines, especially in the oil and gas industry.

“The primary goal of this system is to enhance pipeline safety by providing accurate detection of structural defects and anomalies,” Jahanshahi said. “Additionally, it aims to reduce operational costs and environmental risks by minimizing the need for manual inspections and enabling more efficient maintenance strategies.”

Jahanshahi said the system marks a significant leap in ensuring pipeline integrity and safety.

“Our innovative system utilizes cutting-edge, machine learning algorithms and deep learning techniques to analyze X-ray images with unprecedented accuracy and speed,” Jahanshahi said. “By leveraging sophisticated image-processing methods, the system can identify even the most subtle anomalies and defects that are often undetectable by traditional inspection methods.”

Jahanshahi said integration of the technology into regular maintenance protocols allows for monitoring and early detection of potential issues, drastically reducing the risk of leaks, ruptures and environmental hazards. He said its autonomous nature minimizes the need for human intervention, increasing efficiency and reducing operational costs.

“This system not only promises to revolutionize the way pipeline integrity is managed in the oil and gas sector but also sets a new standard for safety and environmental responsibility in the industry,” Jahanshahi said. “The Trask funding allows us to enhance the algorithm to detect defects in X-ray images of pipelines through a rigorous training and testing process where thousands

of X-ray images will be utilized to this end.”



Karava

Panagiota Karava, College of Engineering, “MySmartE — An Eco-feedback and Gaming Platform for Home Energy Management,” \$25,000.

Karava, a professor in the Lyles School of Civil Engineering, leads a multidisci-

plinary research team from the College of Engineering, College of Liberal Arts, Mitchell E. Daniels, Jr. School of Business and Purdue Polytechnic Institute that created patent-pending MySmartE, an eco-feedback and gaming system for residential energy management.

“MySmartE addresses the need to effectively deploy energy-efficiency and decarbonization programs in residential communities that would result in measurable, transferable and sustainable outcomes,” Karava said. “This is accomplished by actively engaging and incentivizing residents in understanding and reducing their home energy use.”

MySmartE achieved more than 80% residential engagement and 30% energy-use reduction when deployed in more than 130 households across the Indiana cities of Indianapolis, Fort Wayne, South Bend and New Albany.

Karava said the scope of the Trask-funded project will be to expand the MySmartE user map to include a management portal with dashboard features.

“The team is already engaging with partners, and the end goal of the project is for MySmartE to become a complete product ready for commercialization,” Karava said.



Lee

Hyowon Lee, College of Engineering, “Development of Thrombectomy Retraction Aspiration Platform (TRAP),” \$50,000.

Stroke is the second-leading cause of death around the globe; it kills about 140,000 Americans annually.

Almost 90% of stroke cases are caused by an obstruction of one of the arteries that supplies blood to the brain. Swiftly reestablishing blood flow is imperative to preserve neurological function. The current gold standard to remove an obstruction is a catheter with a self-expanding stent that acts like a rake. This method has a high risk of damaging thinner arterial walls.

Lee, an associate professor in the Weldon School of Biomedical Engineering and director of the Center for Implantable Devices, has worked with postdoctoral researcher Ángel Enríquez and clinical partners at Goodman Campbell Brain and Spine and NYU Langone Health to develop a patent-pending, novel clot-retrieving platform called Thrombectomy Retraction Aspiration Platform, or TRAP.

“The TRAP catheter integrates biomimetic design into the aspiration catheter tip to enhance forces to remove the obstruction and prioritizes safety,”

Lee said. “The design demonstrated a greater than 200% increase in occlusion removal force compared to a traditional catheter. We believe our simple, nature-inspired approach to this problem will disrupt the field of stroke treatment.”

Lee, in partnership with a new startup, Emboa Medical, will use the Trask funding to establish a manufacturing process to integrate microscale structures into the distal tip of catheters. They will conduct in vitro experiments to quantitatively demonstrate the advantages of TRAP catheters in increasing the effectiveness of extracting blood clots.

“The successful completion of these aims planned in this project will lead to early prototypes that can facilitate the transition to larger-scale verification activities toward regulatory approval,” Lee said.

Herman Sintim, College of Science, Purdue Institute for Cancer Research and Purdue Institute for Drug Development, “New Agents for Potential Treatment of Arthritis,” \$50,000.

According to the National Health Interview Survey, from 2019-21 more than 53 million Americans were diagnosed with some form of arthritis, fibromyalgia, gout, lupus or rheumatoid arthritis. This includes 26% of adults aged 45-64 and more than 47% of adults 65 or older.



Sintim

Sintim, the Richard B. Wetherill Professor of Chemistry and Drug Discovery and Distinguished Professor in Chemistry in the Department of Chemistry, said protein kinases play various important roles in a cell. Protein kinases

are enzymes that add phosphates to other proteins, which changes those proteins’ cellular location, enzyme activity or association with other proteins. He said kinases are potential targets for arthritis treatment.

“My colleagues and I have identified orally bioavailable compounds that inhibit key kinases that play crucial roles in the progression of inflammatory arthritis,” Sintim said. “The Trask funding will facilitate the evaluation of these compounds in reducing the severity of arthritis in an animal model of rheumatoid arthritis. Such animal studies are needed before a drug candidate can be evaluated in humans.”

Sintim’s compounds are patent-pending.

The impact of Trask funding: Crossing the ‘valley of death’

Matt Dressler, Purdue Innovates Incubator’s fund manager, said the Trask Innovation Fund supports researchers between the time of innovation creation and marketplace adoption, known as the “valley of death.”

“It can take years for an innovative idea to advance far enough to garner industry attention. There are many challenges to overcome during this time, including technology obsolescence and an innovator feeling

dispirited by a lack of progress,” Dressler said. “The Trask Innovation Fund can address these challenges by providing faculty with focused funds to translate a research discovery toward a viable product solution. It complements several other resources Purdue Innovates provides to university inventors and entrepreneurs.”

Abhijit Karve, the Purdue Innovates Office of Technology Commercialization’s director of business development, said Trask awards have been used several ways by recipients.

“Awardees have used the funding to support students, conduct tests, generate data and develop prototypes,” Karve said. “This additional level of validation of the research makes it more attractive to companies that want to license it and bring it to the marketplace.”

Between the 2013 and 2023 fiscal years, around \$3 million in Trask funding has been awarded to 81 projects. Forty percent of the technologies that have received Trask funding have been licensed or optioned to industry.

These and other innovations created by Purdue researchers across all academic disciplines and campuses are available for further development and licensing. Contact the Purdue Innovates Office of Technology Commercialization at otcip@prf.org for more information.

About Purdue Innovates Incubator
The Purdue Innovates Incubator is the front door to the rich ecosystem of programs and services designed to help early-stage startups take their next step. Programs provide settings for cohort work and one-on-one consultations with entrepreneurs-in-residence. Content includes clarifying problems from the customer’s perspective, developing a business model, conducting customer discovery interviews, team building, determining regulatory pathways and legal structures, and more. Purdue alumni and community members interested in becoming mentors are invited to contact the Incubator team.

About Purdue University

Purdue University is a public research institution with excellence at scale. Ranked among top 10 public universities and with two colleges in the top four in the United States, Purdue discovers and disseminates knowledge with a quality and at a scale second to none. More than 105,000 students study at Purdue across modalities and locations, with 50,000 in person on the West Lafayette campus. Committed to affordability and accessibility, Purdue’s main campus has frozen tuition 13 years in a row. See how Purdue never stops in the persistent pursuit of the next giant leap, including its first comprehensive urban campus in Indianapolis, the new Mitchell E. Daniels, Jr. School of Business, and Purdue Computes, at <https://www.purdue.edu/president/strategic-initiatives>.

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Abhi Karve, aakarve@prf.org

Awards Reception

March 28 • 5:30-8:30 p.m.

Ceruti’s Summit Park II

6601 Innovation Blvd.