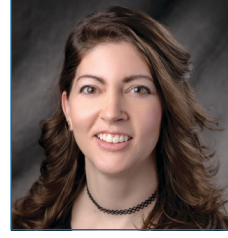




GREATER FORT WAYNE
Business Weekly
FORTY
UNDER

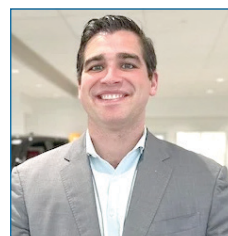
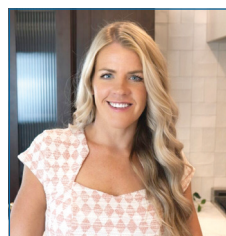
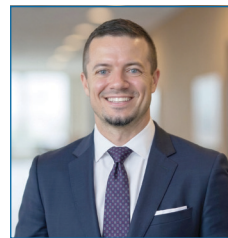
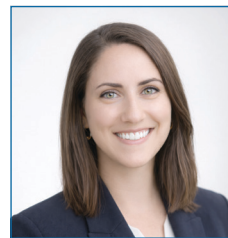


4 **2026**™



FORT WAYNE
NEWSPAPERS
 FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

Event and special
 publication by Fort
 Wayne Newspapers





Surack
Enterprises

**Congratulations,
Kelsie Weber**

*Controller, Surack Enterprises
Fort Wayne Business Weekly Forty Under 40 Honoree*

We're proud to recognize Kelsie Weber, head of our accounting team, on being named one of Fort Wayne Business Weekly's Forty Under 40! Since 2018, her leadership and dedication have been instrumental in supporting our continued growth and investment in this city. Every new business endeavor is built on the strong financial foundation she and her team ensure.

Congratulations, Kelsie, on this well-deserved honor! We're lucky to have you.



Surack Enterprises is driving Fort Wayne forward, leading the charge in community revitalization and projects that create a lasting impact.

Business Weekly
FORTY4
UNDER TWENTY26

Kelsie Weber

Age: 34

**Surack Enterprises
Controller**



What is your education?

B.A: Accounting, Manchester University, 2014

What community organizations are you involved with?

Garrett-Keyser-Butler Education Foundation; Leadership Fort Wayne – Greater Fort Wayne, Inc.

What are your hobbies?

I enjoy spending time with my family and I love the beach. When you mix those two things together, that's as good as it gets.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I attended Manchester University, which first introduced me to the Fort Wayne area. My husband is originally from northeast Indiana, and we've called the area home since 2015. Over time it's become a place where we've been able to build our careers and grow our family.

What is it about your profession you enjoy and why?

I really enjoy the problem-solving aspect of my profession and the opportunity to work closely with the managers across our businesses. As controller at Surack Enterprises, I help analyze information and support

leaders as they make decisions that move their teams forward. Being part of that process and seeing the impact of those decisions is what makes the work rewarding.

What does success mean to you?

To me, success means making a positive impact both professionally and in the community. It's about doing meaningful work, building strong relationships, and supporting the people and organizations around you. If the work I do helps move our community forward or makes someone else's job easier, that feels like success.

Where did your first paycheck come from, and what was your job then?

My first paycheck came from working for my local soccer club. I helped open and clean the indoor facility and made sure the teams had everything they needed before games and practices. It was a great early lesson in responsibility and taking pride in doing the small things well.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

My husband has been

SEE WEBER, PAGE 60

Table of Contents

Paige Aselage..... 24 Corey McSweeney 18
 Brian Avery 62 Ashley Muldoon 20
 Marc Baumann 10 Jenna Nelson 10
 Amanda Brock..... 22 Matt Pettit..... 12
 Jessa Campbell..... 49 Travis Pope 46
 Ashley Casey..... 30 Matthew Ransbottom. 36
 Edwin Chow 34 Amy Reidhaar..... 42
 Ashley Emerick..... 26 Connor Rohrman 14
 Lea Gamble 28 Kelsey Rowe..... 42
 Kristen Ginder 44 Sarah Schreiber 9
 Emily Harris..... 26 Karis Schwab 12
 Jocelynn Hartwig 18 Sarah Serna 50
 Chad Hunter..... 38 Cory Simon..... 50
 Janelle Johannsen 38 Lexie Staten 24
 Justin J. Kaler 48 Kody Tinnel 4
 Manveer Khatana 40 Brice Vance..... 14
 Brooke Kinzer..... 20 Preston Wallace 16
 Adam M. Kurtz..... 28 Kelsie Weber 3
 Emily Land 8 Emily K. White 4
 Erin Martin 40 Megan Zwick 6

Konrad LaPrade
President and CEO, Fort Wayne Newspapers

Jenny Ernsberger
 jernsberger@kpcmedia.com
Advertising Director, Fort Wayne Newspapers

Ann Saggars
 asaggars@kpcmedia.com
Print & Design Manager, Business Weekly

Stevie Lockridge
 slockridge@kpcmedia.com
Special Sections Graphic Designer, Business Weekly

Emily Venderly
 evenderly@fwn.fortwayne.com
Partnership Director

Lisa Esquivel Long
 llong@fwbusiness.com
Editor, Business Weekly

ACCOUNT EXECUTIVES
 Dave Kuntz • Michele Trowbridge
 Elijah Balek • Jeff Pieper
 James Briggs • Angela Brent
 Machele Waid • Mitch Andersen
 Fort Under 40 is a special supplement to Business Weekly,
 which is a publication of Fort Wayne Newspapers.
 ©2026 All rights reserved



Emily K. White

Age: 38
Turnstone
Director of
Therapy



What is your education? and why?

Masters of Occupational Therapy

What community organizations are you involved with?

Wheels for the World

What are your hobbies?

Riding bikes, playing board games with my kids, doing puzzles

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I grew up here and enjoy living close to my family

What is it about your profession you enjoy

and why?

I love seeing my team and their clients be empowered! Seeing people get the spark in their eye, whether it is a team member pursuing finding a specialty that they love or a client learning a new skill, that “ah ha” moment is something that I love drawing out of people!

What does success mean to you?

Success to me means finding fulfillment and joy in doing what your doing, aligning with your personal values.

Where did your first

paycheck come from, and what was your job then?

I worked as a receptionist for a local landscaping company through-out high school.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

My professional coach, Sally Stitzer. She has helped me develop my leadership skills, growing in confidence as I stepped into new responsibilities.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

My biggest accomplishment has been growing the therapy team at Turnstone to a point that can support innovative treatments, like therapy intensives which are meeting a need for people with disabilities in Fort Wayne.

What has been your biggest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

I have made many mistakes in my leadership journey but I learn from

each one of them. I have learned through mistakes that I cannot underestimate people. Most times they will rise to the occasion if given the opportunity.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I wanted to be a teacher, like my mom!

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

I rely on my team! By prioritizing growth through continuing education on my team, I can stay up to date on the most prevalent treatments and approaches in the therapy world. I also continue to see clients on a limited basis so I can keep my occupational therapy skills active and know, firsthand, what I am asking my team to do day to day.

How do you balance your career, family life, and community service?

There is give and take continually to balance these things. My husband is incredibly supportive and takes over our family responsibilities when needed! I think it's just being

willing to give and take when each responsibility calls for it.

What do you do to relax?

I go for a walk or ride my bike — I love nature walks in any weather! Rain and snow just make it more interesting in my opinion.

What book do you recommend?

I would highly recommend “Humbler Leadership” — I love Josh's approach to leadership and rallying people along side you even when providing feedback and coaching.

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

I would tell my high school self to be more confident. To be proud of my quiriness and lean into coming along side the people that were seen as “outcasts.” Just be ok not being the most popular or prettiest person in the room. Don't stifle your voice because it's not the popular opinion. Find your people and leave behind the ones that are trying to change you.

Kody Tinnel

Age: 37
Arts United
Vice
President of
Community
Development



What is your education?

South Side High School | 2007 | Academic Honors Diploma
Indiana University, Fort

Wayne | 2012 | Bachelor of Science in Public Affairs
Indiana University, Fort Wayne | 2015 | Master of Public Affairs

What community organizations are you involved with?

My current involvement includes:

Tree Canopy Growth Fund

Community Foundation of Greater Fort Wayne Board of Directors

Fort Wayne Animal Care and Control Commission
Packard Area Planning Alliance

Foster Park Neighborhood Association
City Utilities Advisory Group

Women's Fund of Greater Fort Wayne

Allen County Democratic Party

In the past, I was also involved with:

Fort Wayne Metropolitan

Human Relations Commission

Southwest Area Partnership

Audiences Unlimited Inc.
Board of Directors

IPFW Student Government

Young Leaders of Northeast Indiana

What are your hobbies?

My current hobbies include spending time exploring the 07 area with my dog Miley, gardening/landscaping, current events, and politics.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I've been a lifelong resident of Fort Wayne and am fortunate to have a great community of people in my life who continue to make

this region feel like home. I've loved seeing the positive momentum in Northeast Indiana over the past couple decades and through my personal and professional roles, I'm able to be a small part of keeping that progress moving forward.

What is it about your profession you enjoy and why?

I've always found myself in professional roles, including my current one, where I have the opportunity to meet and collaborate with a really diverse array of people. It is rewarding to connect dots within the community, do the work, and see cool things materialize as a result.



Emily White

DIRECTOR OF THERAPY



Scan the QR code to learn more about Turnstone's adult therapy services.

Turnstone congratulates Emily White, a 40 Under 40 honoree!

Emily's tireless dedication and passion for Turnstone's mission has made a profound impact on Turnstone and the lives of those we serve. Thanks to her hard work, more people in our community have access to the therapeutic services and resources they need to thrive.

As a result of Emily's leadership, the therapy program at Turnstone has evolved. An increase in specialized services and growth within the therapy team has greatly benefited the Fort Wayne community.

Emily, this honor is a reflection of your impact and leadership. May this recognition be a symbol of how much you are valued and the bright future ahead.



Turnstone



Megan Zwick

Age: 37

**MKM
Architecture
+ Design**

**Director of
Operations**



What is your education?

It's Northeast Indiana — we proudly claim our high school alma maters — and I'm a South Side alum through and through ('07!). After eight years of exploring various courses and curricula, I was ready to wrap things up and then earned my Bachelor of Business Administration & Management from Trine University. Since then, I've continued learning through courses with Harvard Online, Indiana Tech, and

South Bend Code School.

What community organizations are you involved with?

I absolutely love Fort Wayne and the sense of community here. I actively volunteer and serve on several boards and committees. One I especially love highlighting is Eco Fest, a nonprofit founded by one of my best friends. I've been with Eco Fest since Day One — we focus on sustainability education for all ages,

helping inspire a greener future for our community.

What are your hobbies?

I love reading, spending time with my friends and family (human and feline), and gaming and puzzling with my husband. I'm also a very proud aunt — being "Aunt Meggy" might actually be my favorite title. Lately, I've been playing D&D with my nephews, which has been wonderfully chaotic and an unexpectedly great outlet for creative storytelling.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I was born and raised in Fort Wayne. I gave Indianapolis a try after high school, but it never felt like home — and when my mom broke both of her legs, I knew where I needed to be. Coming back turned out to be a win-win.

What is it about your profession you enjoy and why?

My work bestie recently asked me this. I work in finance, strategy, and IT — and while those fields are

interesting, they aren't the part I love most. What I truly enjoy is working with my team to reach our goals, advance our mission, and make their work lives easier. Simply put, problem-solving (especially with people I admire) is the most rewarding part of what I do.

What does success mean to you?

To me, success means being who you are, doing work that matters to you, and not apologizing for the space you've earned. It's finding fulfillment in both the big wins and the tiny moments — and knowing that your life aligns with your values.

Where did your first paycheck come from, and what was your job then?

My first paycheck came from KFC in Southgate Plaza, where I worked as a cashier on mostly closing shifts when I was in high school. We always had a line out the door on Tuesdays, thanks to the \$1.99 country fried steak meal (an era I don't exactly miss).

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

My mom, my husband, and my BFF have been supporting me from the very beginning, believing in me even when I didn't think much of myself. My mentor, Zachary, has been a huge part of my growth — pushing me, challenging me, and helping me break bad habits. And in true "my people" fashion, none of them have ever been afraid to give me the tough feedback (or tough love) I needed.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

My biggest accomplishment so far is finding my forever job — my place at MKM. It is incredibly

important to find an organization whose mission you connect with, whose people you respect, and whose leadership truly wants you to succeed. When you find that, work becomes something to look forward to, even on challenging days.

What has been your biggest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

My career has been (and will continue to be) full of mistakes — the trick is not repeating the same one twice. I've learned the value of being willing to fail, taking accountability, and growing from every experience.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

As a child, I wanted to be a lawyer, but when I was a teenager, I realized that spending that much of my life in school wasn't my dream. It was the first sign that I was more motivated by hands-on experience and real-world challenges.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

My employer is excellent at keeping me curious and engaged — always encouraging continued thinking, learning, and researching, and never letting me get too comfortable. They know that change fuels growth and that complacency is where things start to fall apart.

How do you balance your career, family life, and community service?

I get this question often, which still surprises me because I don't feel old enough to give meaningful life advice. My answer is that life moves in seasons — work, home, and community commitments all ebb and flow. When you find a career and employer you truly love, balance becomes easier (and I'm lucky to have a



COME SEE US AT UNIVERSITY PARK VISION CENTER

CURRENTLY ACCEPTING NEW PATIENTS,
SCHEDULE YOUR APPOINTMENT TODAY!

UPVISIONCENTER.COM
(260) 471-2000

AMY REIDHAAR O.D.

1221 MEDICAL PARK DR.
FORT WAYNE, IN 46825

- Pediatric Eye Exams
- Contact and Glasses Exams
- Comprehensive Eye Exams
- Medical Eye Care
- Emergency Eye Care & More



Congratulations, Megan!

We're proud to celebrate
MEGAN ZWICK as one of
Fort Wayne's **40 UNDER 40**
HONOREES.

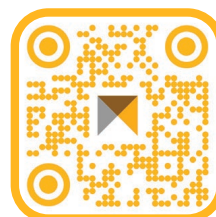
Her dedication, creativity, and
leadership inspire everyone
around her.

We're lucky to have
her on our team.



MKM
architecture + design

We design meaningful places.



Emily Land

Age: 23

Asher Agency

Social Media Specialist



What is your education?

I graduated from Angola High School in 2020. I graduated cum laude from Hillsdale College in 2024 with a major in Marketing/Management and a minor in Politics

What community organizations are you involved with?

Over the past year, I have volunteered with Habitat for Humanity, Community Harvest Food Bank, and United Way of Allen County.

I have also supported the pro-life missions of Women's Care Center and Compassion Pregnancy Center by attending fundraising events.

What are your hobbies?

In my free time I enjoy spending time on the lake, working on my amateur golf game, being with family and friends, trying new coffee spots, traveling to warmer places, going to concerts, practicing hot yoga, and staying active at the gym.

Why are you in

Northeast Indiana?

Most importantly, home is where my loved ones are, my whole family (on both sides) lives here, along with my closest friends who are more like sisters to me. This region is a place where life moves just a little slower than the rest of the world, and the things that truly matter still feel important here. I love to travel, but I couldn't see myself planting roots anywhere else.

What is it about your profession you enjoy and why?

Social media moves fast, and if you know me, you know I thrive in that kind of energy. It keeps me on my toes creatively, constantly challenging me to adapt, think like professionals across industries, and step into their audiences' shoes. I love that my work lets me be social, tell meaningful stories, and connect with people.

What does success mean to you?

Success to me means using my talents and passions to serve the purpose that God has

uniquely placed on my life. My faith keeps me grounded and reminds me that success isn't just achievement, but using my gifts to serve and make a meaningful impact.

Where did your first paycheck come from, and what was your job then?

My first paycheck came from a jewelry company my best friend, Kayla Knox, and I started called EK Stamped Jewelry. We even had the exciting opportunity to be featured on 21 Alive as Young Entrepreneurs of the Month, which was such a memorable experience and really sparked my love for creating.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

Professionally, my biggest supporter has been Jen Roberts, Asher's VP of Creative. She's incredibly creative, savvy, and inspiring in every way, and I've learned so much from her example. I am so grateful she gave me a shot as an intern at Asher and has guided me every step of the way. And of course, I wouldn't be where I am or who I am today without the unwavering support and encouragement of my AWESOME parents.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

One of my greatest accomplishments has been growing into the role of Asher's Social Media Specialist and truly making it my own. I'm proud of becoming someone my team can rely on while consistently delivering thoughtful, strategic work that drives meaningful results for our clients.

What has been your biggest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

As an eager person, I

often make the mistake of thinking growth means saying yes to every opportunity. While it has pushed me to learn quickly, it also taught me that being strategic with my time and energy leads to stronger results. I try to focus on being intentional about prioritizing, communicating clearly, and focusing on the work that creates the greatest impact.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

Honestly, what didn't I want to be is probably the easier question. I imagined being a lawyer, the president, a fashion designer, and just about everything in between. I've always had a lot of interests and sometimes wish I had a few extra lifetimes to try them all.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

Remaining current and relevant is ESSENTIAL to my role as a social media specialist. I keep a close pulse on trends and conversations happening across platforms while also following industry newsletters and Substacks, along with platform data and analytics, to understand what's actually resonating with audiences. Combining cultural awareness with data helps ensure the content I create is both timely and effective.

How do you balance your career, family life, and community service?

My faith helps keep my priorities in the right order. It reminds me to focus on serving others, staying grounded in gratitude, and making time for the people and things that matter most.

What do you do to relax?

Relaxation for me is going on a walk with my

 **Forty Under 40 Winner!**

And she's
Just Getting Started.

Emily Land

Congratulations to Asher Social Media Specialist Emily Land for being the youngest A-Team member to be named to the Greater Fort Wayne Business Weekly Forty Under 40! She may be young, but she's already a social media powerhouse who is always willing to lend a hand and her expertise to community causes.

We can't wait to see what the future brings. Congratulations from everyone at Asher.

asher
asheragency.com

• Advertising, Marketing, Public Relations



Sarah Schreiber

Age: 37

**Barrett
McNagny
LLP**

**Partner
(Labor &
Employment
Practice
Group)**



What is your education?

B.A., magna cum laude, University of Illinois at Urbana- Champaign; and J.D., magna cum laude, Valparaiso University School of Law.

What community/ organizations are you involved with?

I enjoyed building a relationship with my “Little Sister” through Big Brothers Big Sisters for a decade. I am a current member of the Erin’s House for Grieving Children Board of Directors

What are your hobbies?

I enjoy spending time and traveling with my family (we are Disney enthusiasts!), jogging, and reading.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

My husband (from

Wisconsin) and I (from Illinois) moved to Fort Wayne for work following law school. We fell in love with Fort Wayne and decided to make it our forever home, the place we would raise our family.

What is it about your profession you enjoy and why?

The practice of law is a noble (and exciting) profession that allows me to help people. Every day is different.

What does success mean to you?

Success means providing strength, love and support to my family while making them proud.

Where did your first paycheck come from, and what was your job then?

The Limestone

Community High School baseball diamonds. I worked (and socialized) at the concession stands.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

My family has always been my biggest support system, but my most important professional mentors (to whom I will be forever grateful) are Mark E. GiaQuinta, Chief Judge Holly A. Brady, and Tony M. Stites.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

My greatest accomplishments in my career have been helping companies for nearly 13 years solve complex employment issues and being elected partner at two reputable law firms.

What has been your biggest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

Panicking. Everyone makes mistakes. But, the

key is to keep a level head, evaluate how to best solve the problem, and implement the fix.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

As a small child, I really believed I would be the first female president. By 8th grade, I knew I wanted to be a lawyer (but briefly explored broadcast journalism in college).

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

CLEs, presentations at HR seminars, publications, awareness of AI, and collaboration with my Labor and Employment practice group.

How do you balance your career, family life, and community service?

I don’t believe “work life balance” exists when it comes to practicing law and having a family. I strive instead for work-life integration, ensuring my work and personal life compliment and support each other. And, frankly,

it helps having a husband willing to take on some of the “traditional female roles.” It’s not uncommon for us to be folding laundry together after spending the evening playing with our amazing kids.

What do you do to relax?

I spend time with my family and especially enjoy our Friday Family Movie Nights.

What book do you recommend?

I’m sure many in my Forty Under 40 class will suggest an intellectual or deep text. Not me. If you haven’t read “The Thursday Murder Club” series by Richard Osman, you are missing out!

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

The meaningful advice: keep working hard, but please stop taking yourself so seriously. Some lighthearted fun: start thinking about a skincare routine now – don’t wait until you’re 25!

BARRETT McNAGNY CONGRATULATES Sarah Schreiber

on being named to *Greater Fort Wayne Business Weekly’s Forty Under 40 Class of 2026.*



A labor and employment attorney with Barrett McNagny, Sarah partners with company leadership and HR professionals at organizations of all sizes to help prevent and solve employment-related challenges.

Congratulations to Sarah and to all of the 2026 *Forty Under 40* recipients!

Celebrating the 2026 Forty Under 40 Congratulations!



BarrettMcNagny LLP

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

215 E. Berry St., Fort Wayne, IN 46802 | barrettlaw.com

Jenna Nelson

Age: 39

**Coldwell
Banker
Real Estate
Group
Realtor**



What is your education?

Bachelor in Business, minor in travel and hospitality

What community organizations are you involved with?

I volunteer with NeighborLink and Habitat for Humanity. I'm starting a volunteer project with my brokerage called Coldwell Banker Cares, where we will serve the community in four different ways each year.

Our first project is helping a single mom recover after her house flooded. The second will be building ramps in the summertime. The third will be helping a veteran, and around the holidays, we will bring joy to a nursing

home.

I'm hoping many other offices will follow suit so we can eventually take this project nationwide.

What are your hobbies?

I enjoy spending time with my husband and children, playing pickleball, and working out.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I was born and raised here. The city has changed so much over the years, and I love it.

What is it about your profession you enjoy and why?

What I love most about my profession is supporting people through some of the biggest moments of

their lives. Whether they're navigating a tough season or chasing a dream they once thought was out of reach, I'm grateful to walk alongside them. Helping turn those goals into reality is incredibly rewarding.

What does success mean to you?

Success to me means serving families in my community with heart and purpose. It's watching my clients reach their goals and knowing I played a small part in their journey. There's nothing more rewarding than handing over the keys on closing day and seeing their excitement for what's ahead.

Where did your first paycheck come from, and what was your job then?

My first paycheck was for \$85 for cornhusking in Woodburn when I was 15.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

I've been incredibly blessed with so much support throughout my career, but my biggest supporter has been my husband. He encouraged me to take the leap and pursue real estate full-time. Without his support and the ability to focus 100% on my business, I wouldn't be

where I am today.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

I won Rookie of the Year for Coldwell Banker Real Estate Group, was in the Top 200 out of 2,000 agents in NE Indiana in 2025, and was honored with the 2025 Community Service Award from my local board of Realtors.

What has been your biggest mistake thus far, and what lessons did you learn from it?

My biggest mistake was not trusting my gut and aligning myself with people I couldn't relate to in the very beginning. I did, however, learn a lot from that situation, and I'm more grateful for my team and my brokerage because of that situation.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I wanted to be a nurse.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

I stay current in my profession by always looking for opportunities to learn and grow within the real estate industry. From the beginning of my career, I've invested in specialty

courses and continuing education so I can better serve my clients. I also stay active on social media and in marketing, which helps me stay connected with my community and keep people informed about the real estate market.

How do you balance your career, family life, and community service?

I'm blessed to have a job where I can work at home a majority of the time, so I can be there with my kids a lot. I also involve my kids in my career and community service projects, and they really enjoy it! They love seeing the different houses and making listing videos.

What do you do to relax?

I go on vacation or to Woodhouse Spa.

What book do you recommend?

"The Go-Giver" by Bob Burg and John David Mann

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

Don't let people's negative words stop you from trying to do something. If you work hard enough, you can achieve anything!

Marc Baumann

Age: 39

**Sweetwater
Sound
Vice
President
of Finance**



What is your education?

Undergraduate in Finance and Accounting from Anderson University; Master's in Business Administration (MBA) from Anderson University; Certified Public Accountant (CPA)

What community organizations are you involved with?

My wife and I founded a 501©3 called Remembering Rowan. Our non-profit pays for funeral/medical expenses for families that have lost a child and has raised almost \$600,000 in the last 7 years.

I am also a member of the finance committee for our local church, Pathway Community Church.

What are your hobbies?

This stage of life can be very difficult to fit in hobbies, but I do make time to golf and enjoy playing the piano.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I relocated from Wisconsin to Indiana to attend Anderson University for my undergraduate and graduate programs. After graduating, I relocated to Fort Wayne for my first job in 2010.

What is it about your profession you enjoy and why?

My favorite thing I get to do is to bring others together and solve problems. There is something very satisfying about finding something and making it better than it was.

What does success mean to you?

I always liked the quote from Robert Collier, "Success is the sum of small efforts, repeated day in and day out." I would apply this to the

SEE BAUMANN, PAGE 36

Congratulations Jenna! We are proud of you.

You are a great representative of Coldwell Banker and the embodiment of our mission of helping people live the life they want to live.

Thank you for pouring all of your positive energy into your clients' needs and our community.

We are so grateful to be a part of your journey!

Your CB Family~
Bernice Helman,
Tony Didier,
Sarah Sutter



COLDWELL BANKER
REAL ESTATE GROUP

11625 Coldwater Rd, Fort
Wayne, IN 46845
www.coldwellhomes.com

Matt Pettit

Age: 31

Lutheran Hospital
Assistant Chief Executive Officer



What is your education?

BS from BYU and MS from Trinity University

What community organizations are you involved with?

Believe in a Dream, Habitat for Humanity, Hopes Harbor

What are your hobbies?

Cooking, music, sports

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I originally moved here from Texas to start working with Lutheran Health Network and have been here ever since! NE Indiana is a great place to raise kids and the people are incredible.

What is it about your profession you enjoy and why?

I really enjoy being involved in all aspects of running a hospital and getting to “wear a lot of hats” throughout the day. It is pretty normal for me to sit in a finance/capital meeting and then go into a patient experience or clinical quality meeting within a few hours. You get to see all the behind the scenes work it takes to make sure patients, staff, and the community are well taken care of.

What does success mean to you?

Success to me is multifaceted. For me, success in my career looks like taking care of our Fort Wayne community, and building a sustainable organization with happy employees and patients. Personally, success looks like happy, healthy kids and a well supported spouse

who feels like we share the load of raising children well.

Where did your first paycheck come from, and what was your job then?

My first paycheck came from cleaning clinic offices when I was probably 12 or 13. My mom worked there and convinced the provider there to pay me \$25 a week to go in on a Saturday and clean up the space. That felt like a ton of money back then and I was stoked!

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

My wife has always been by biggest supporter and has always pushed me to “take the job,” even if it was going to be inconvenient for her. She has sacrificed and moved a lot to allow me to get to where I am now.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

I think it has been the mentorship opportunities I have been able to have with younger leaders and students. I really enjoy helping new leaders become great leaders and build good cultures within their teams.

What has been your biggest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

Like any people leader, I think my biggest mistakes have been in not leading my employees in the best way for them earlier in my career. I don’t think any textbook or college course prepares you to lead people, and you get a lot of bumps and bruises along the way while you figure out how to do it effectively. Leadership definitely is a lifelong pursuit and requires continual improvement especially as we navigate leading different generations and in different economic or social environments.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I always wanted to be a doctor when I grew up because I always wanted to help people. I really only thought about the other avenues you can take to help people when I sat in an accounting class in College and the professor mentioned that her favorite thing about accounting was being able to help people. That class really shifted my perspective how various professions allow you to help people without being the person behind the scalpel.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

I have tried to remain active in professional groups like the American College of Healthcare Executives and

also read a lot of literature on leadership, culture, and professional development. I also stay pretty active in mentorship from both my graduate program and various student organizations and competitions.

How do you balance your career, family life, and community service?

The best advice I ever got as a younger professional was to “manage your calendar or it will manage you.” I have tried to be very diligent in blocking off big school/family events, important community service meetings or projects I am involved in, or other family plans on my calendar so I don’t get pulled away from them and can be present where I am needed most.

What do you do to relax?

I enjoy cooking, and its a way to both relax and provide value to our household and take a chore away from my wife. I have played the drums for a long time, and have been trying to learn the piano. Drumming is more cathartic while playing the piano is much more relaxing, so it has been a good balance.

What book do you recommend?

I really enjoy Jim Collins (“Good to Great” and

SEE PETTIT, PAGE 61

Karis Schwab

Age: 41

Sweetwater Sound
HR Business Partner



What is your education?

Bachelor of Arts in Music, Bluffton University

What community organizations are you involved with?

Founder — Beat Making for Girls, Board Member — Vincent Village

What are your hobbies?

Working out, gardening/houseplants, and singing/playing keytar in my two bands (Whoa, Man and Save Karis!)

Why are you in Northeast

Indiana?

I moved here in 2020 for a career with Sweetwater

What is it about your profession you enjoy and why?

Every day is completely different, with different challenges and ways to support our employees

What does success mean to you?

Being a little bit better everyday – little things add up to big things!

Where did your first

paycheck come from, and what was your job then?

Stratton Greenhouses (Bluffton, Ohio) – I was a landscaper

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

I have had several incredible managers who recognized my skills and desire to grow and gave me the opportunity. Most recently, Jordan Applegate has helped me shape my career at Sweetwater

SEE SCHWAB, PAGE 61

Lutheran Hospital Congratulates

Matt Pettit, Assistant CEO



Congratulations, Matt, on being recognized as one of **Business Weekly's 2026 Forty Under 40**.

We commend your achievements and look forward to witnessing your continued growth and future accomplishments.



**Lutheran
Health Network**

Lutheran Hospital

lutheranhospital.com

Brice Vance

Age: 32

NEI (Northeast
Indiana
Regional
Partnership)

Copywriter &
Brand
Strategist



What is your education?

BA in Communication at Purdue Fort Wayne in 2016, MA in Sports Leadership at Indiana Wesleyan University in 2022.

What community organizations are you involved with?

I'm a member of Young

Leaders of Northeast Indiana (YLNI) and American Advertising Federation of Fort Wayne (AAF).

What are your hobbies?

Podcasting, doing projects around the house, and hanging out with my kids.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I'm here because of my family and the people in the region.

What is it about your profession you enjoy and why?

I love being able to hear people's stories and telling them.

What does success mean to you?

Success for me is feeling satisfied at the end of the day knowing I've put in the effort to get the job done.

Where did your first paycheck come from, and what was your job then?

My first job was at the Kendallville Pizza Hut. I did just about every job in the place, except for waiter.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

My family has supported me throughout my entire career.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

I won an HSPA Award in 2018.

What has been your biggest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

The biggest mistake was the major I chose in college. I wish I would have chosen a different one that would have allowed me to be better prepared for the line of work I'm in.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I wanted to be a professional baseball player.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

Constantly reading the local, regional, and national news and analyzing marketing strategies.

How do you balance your career, family life, and community service?

Trying to plan with my family as much as possible.

What do you do to relax?

I either watch sports, listen to music, or work out.

What book do you recommend?

I'm fascinated with the '90s punk music scene so "Sellout: The Major-Label Feeding Frenzy That Swept Punk, Emo, and Hardcore."

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

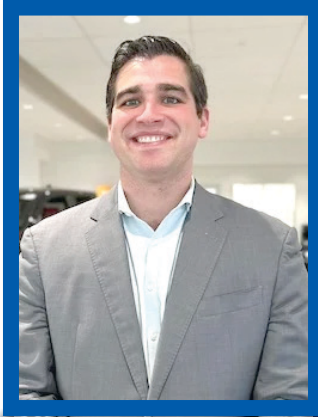
Grow your network as much as possible.

Connor Rohrman

Age: 31

Fort Wayne
Toyota/
Rohrman
Auto Group

General
Manager



What is your education?

St. Jude for elementary (Indianapolis)
Roncalli for high school (Indy)
Purdue for college

What community organizations are you involved with?

Humane Ft Wayne, Blood Cancer United (formerly LLS), Kate's Kart,

Samaritan's Purse, Junior Achievement, Ft Wayne Ballet, TinCaps

What are your hobbies?

Walking/ hangin with the dogs, hanging out with my wonderful wife Andria, enjoying a movie/show, golf, watching just about any sporting event, time with family, listening to audiobooks (mainly business or leadership

related... BORING!)

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I moved here from Chicago where I worked for the family business at a Toyota store. Left during COVID to "find myself" and ended up being offered a spot in Ft Wayne by our CEO after about 8 months off the job. That offer along with Chicago being what it was during COVID made the decision to try Ft Wayne out a little easier. Now, we've been here for almost 5 years and LOVE it. The people, the community, the food... what a great place to live!

What is it about your profession you enjoy and why?

The people — I have a unique opportunity to affect many lives and I derive great joy from seeing an employee make strides in their life. Whether that be personal or professional. There are few better feelings than helping

someone achieve their goals.

What does success mean to you?

Success means that a person left their mark on a place or a community in a positive way. This doesn't mean you have to have a statue built or wing of a building named after you. Rather, the simple fact of making the people you around and community you reside in better. Whether through donation, time donated, or a simply a friendly gesture to a stranger there are many ways to impact those around us in a positive way and continue to make a successful life by being a light to others.

Where did your first paycheck come from, and what was your job then?

Guess, LOL. I started at Indy Honda as a porter 15 years ago when I was in high school. A porter basically is the get-it-done

person around a store. Duties included lawn care, cleaning new vehicle deliveries, picking up the lot (so many cigarette butts then), and whatever else was asked of me.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

My parents and wife. They continue to push me to be better in all facets of life while encouraging me along. Appreciate the heck out of them for their advice, love, and sacrifices.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

I received the "Rohrman Impact" award for 2025. An inaugural award in our auto group, which was given to the person who made the biggest impact in their community.

What has been your

SEE ROHRMAN, PAGE 58

Congratulations on **Forty Under 40!**



Brice Vance

Copywriter & Brand Strategist

Thank you for all of your leadership, accomplishments and impact in our 11-county region. You are a true Pioneer!



Preston Wallace

Age: 31

**Downtown
Fort Wayne**

**Director of
Marketing**



What is your education?

Carroll High School; University of Saint Francis — Bachelor of Arts in Communication: Public Relations

What community organizations are you involved with?

Be Better Hospitality — Founder & Vice President; PBS Fort Wayne — Community Advisory Board Member; Northeast Indiana Hospitality Association — Honorary Board Member; Fort Wayne Cinema Center — Board Member; Purdue Fort Wayne — Community Partner for Professional Development

What are your hobbies?

I spend a lot of my time outside of work with my family, whether that's traveling or just being present and unplugged. I enjoy checking out new restaurants, bars, and concepts, partly out of curiosity and partly because I genuinely appreciate great hospitality and how it makes people feel. I'm especially interested in exploring other communities to understand their culture and what makes each place

unique. Outside of that, I value time to reset and step away from the pace of day-to-day work.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I'm in Northeast Indiana because I believe in the opportunity here. This is a community with real momentum, strong partnerships, and a shared commitment to growth. For me, it's about being part of that progress and helping shape what comes next. There's a genuine sense of ownership and accessibility here. You can make an impact, and you can see it.

What is it about your profession you enjoy and why?

I enjoy the ability to shape how people experience a place and how they feel about it. My work sits at the intersection of strategy and execution, which means I don't just help develop ideas, I get to see them come to life. What I find most rewarding is when something actually resonates with people and creates a sense of connection, not just attention.

What does success mean to you?

Success, to me, is

doing meaningful work that creates a real, visible impact over time. It's about alignment, consistency, and following through on what you set out to do. It also means building something that lasts, whether that's in a place, an organization, or the people you work with, while still being present for the people who matter most outside of work.

Where did your first paycheck come from, and what was your job then?

My first paycheck came from a small birdhouse business I started when I was younger. My first official job was at Marco's Pizza in Leo, IN, where I worked as a delivery driver. Both experiences taught me early on the value of hard work, initiative, and how you show up for people.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

My biggest supporter has been my mom, hands down. She has always pushed me to expect more of myself, stay disciplined, and follow through on what I commit to. She's been a constant source of support and accountability, and a big reason I've been able to grow in my career.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

My biggest accomplishment has been the role I've played in helping elevate the visibility and momentum of Downtown Fort Wayne. Through communications, marketing, and partnerships, I've contributed to initiatives that bring people downtown and shape how they experience

the city. What I'm most proud of is the consistency of execution and being part of real, visible progress over time.

What has been your biggest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

One of my biggest mistakes early on was trying to take on too much myself instead of trusting others to step in. I felt a need to prove myself through doing, which at times slowed things down. Over time, I've learned that being effective isn't about doing everything, it's about focusing on what matters most and trusting the people around you. That shift has made me a better leader and improved the overall work.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

As a kid, I always knew I wanted to be an entrepreneur. I was drawn to the idea of every day looking different and being part of something fast-paced, even if I didn't know exactly what that would look like.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

I stay current by paying attention to what's actually working, both locally and in other communities.

I spend time observing how people engage with places, experiences, and content, and I'm always looking at how ideas are being executed in real time. I also value conversations with peers and partners, and staying close to the work itself. Being hands-on and constantly evaluating what resonates helps me stay relevant.

How do you balance your career, family life, and community

service?

I don't think there's a perfect balance, but I try to be intentional with my time and where my energy goes. My work, family, and community are all important to me, so it comes down to being present in each and knowing when to shift focus. I prioritize what matters most in the moment, communicate clearly, and make sure I'm not spreading myself too thin. It's something I'm always working on, but being intentional has made a big difference.

What do you do to relax?

To relax, I try to step away from the pace of work and disconnect for a bit. That might mean keeping things low-key, spending time with people close to me, or just getting out of my usual environment. For me, it's about creating space to reset and clear my head.

What book do you recommend?

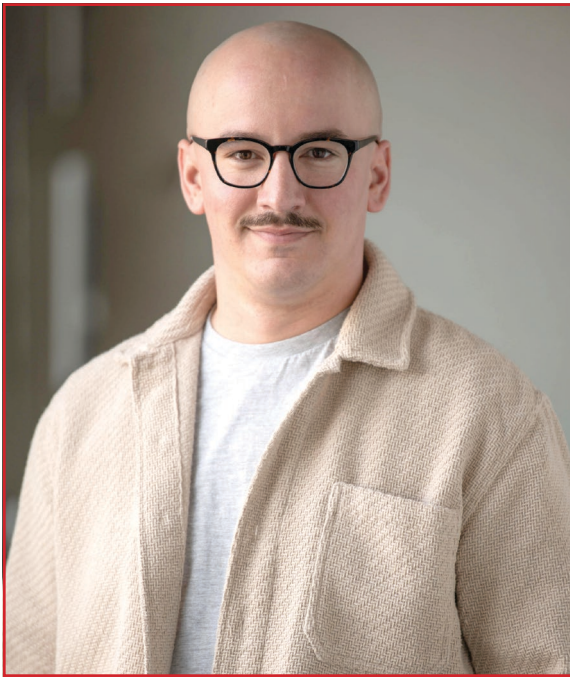
I'd recommend "Unreasonable Hospitality" by Will Guidara. It reinforces the idea that what people remember most is how you make them feel, and the importance of going beyond expectations to create meaningful experiences.

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

I'd tell my high school self to stop trying to prove something all the time. I used to think success meant getting everything right and constantly pushing for more, but I've learned it's more about being real, continuing to grow, and using your voice in a way that actually makes an impact.

PRESTON WALLACE

Brand Storyteller | Community Advocate | Hospitality Entrepreneur



Congratulations, Preston, on your well-deserved recognition! Your work as our Director of Marketing & Communications goes far beyond strategy—you bring brands to life through authentic storytelling, build meaningful connections as a passionate community advocate, and elevate experiences as a visionary in hospitality entrepreneurship. Your ability to blend creativity with purpose has not only strengthened the brands you represent but also leaves a lasting impact on the people and communities you serve. Your recognition as a Forty Under 40 recipient is a true reflection of your dedication, innovation, and leadership!

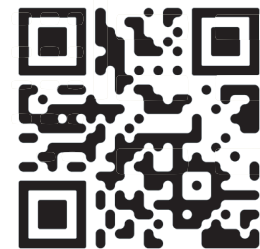
DOWNTOWN
Fort Wayne



LIVE LARGE

SHOP SMALL

WHERE LOCAL LIVES



DOWNTOWNFORTWAYNE.COM

Corey McSweeney

Age: 36

**KSM (Katz,
Sapper &
Miller)**

**Audit &
Assurance
Director/
CPA**



What is your education?

IPFW, Bachelor's in Accounting

University of Michigan, Masters in Accounting

What community organizations are you involved with?

Hemophilia of Indiana – Board Treasurer

University of Michigan Alumni Club Fort Wayne Chapter – Board Member

CFMA of Northern Indiana – Board Secretary

Building Contractors Association of NE Indiana – Program Committee Member

AGC of Indiana – Programming Task Force Committee Member

What are your hobbies?

I am a huge sports fan. I have University of Michigan

football season tickets, and attend as many games as I can. I'm a fan of all U-M sports, as well as all Detroit teams. My kids are getting to the age where they are playing sports, and usually you will find us on the weekend at a kids football or baseball game. I also enjoy coaching them when I can.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I have lived here my whole life. Northeast Indiana offers a strong sense of community, growing business opportunities, and the ability to make a meaningful impact both professionally and personally. It's a region where relationships matter and where you can truly invest long-term.

What is it about your profession you enjoy and why?

I enjoy helping businesses understand their numbers and use them to make informed financial decisions. The work is intellectually challenging and constantly evolving, and I learn something new every day. I work a lot with construction companies, and really enjoy learning how the businesses work and what makes them successful.

What does success mean to you?

Success means creating measurable impact. Professionally, it's about being trusted. Personally, it's about balance and building something for my kid's future.

Where did your first paycheck come from, and what was your job then?

Freshman year in college, I worked at my old elementary school in their after school program.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

Definitely my wife. She has been very supportive and willing to take on things needed at home when I've had to focus on my career.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

In 2024, I won KSM's Vision Award. This was recognition for my community involvement which I am very proud of, especially service with Hemophilia of Indiana. I serve as Board Treasurer for this organization. It is very near and dear to me as my middle son, Jack, was diagnosed with hemophilia as a baby so being able to positively impact that community and be recognized for it has been very fulfilling.

What has been your biggest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

Earlier in my career, I found it easy to over-promise at times, and after a few instances of over promising and under delivering, I felt how much damage that could do. I learned how to navigate through these instances and manage expectations so that everyone comes out happy in the end.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I wanted to be a professional athlete.

How do you remain

current/relevant in your profession?

Trying to find a good balance of adapting to emerging trends like AI and remote work, while using my experience of what has worked well up to this point in my career to be an example to our younger team members.

How do you balance your career, family life, and community service?

Being intentional with time. Setting boundaries where needed and staying organized. I also try to blend them together when I can, whether it's working from home, or bringing family to community events.

What do you do to relax?

Most of the time it'll be watching sports. I listen to a lot of podcasts and music as well. I'd also be lying if I said I didn't enjoy a nice cigar from time to time.

What book do you recommend?

"Liar's Poker" by Michael Lewis.

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

Don't rush the process. Focus on building skills, relationships, and reputation.

Jocelynn Hartwig

Age: 32

**AI Solution
Engineering
- Federal
Workforce**

**Microsoft
Director**



What is your education?

High School: Carroll High School; College: Ball State University, Bachelor's in Logistics and Supply Chain Management

What community organizations are you involved with?

Marginal Entropy — I co-founded this organization with two other engineers. We teach technical skills to kids at no cost.

What are your hobbies?

Pilates, video games, travel, hiking, and discovering new

food

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I was raised in Fort Wayne, and my family is here. I am also excited to be part of the growth and momentum the city is experiencing.

What is it about your profession you enjoy and why?

I enjoy helping government agencies achieve their missions through AI technologies. It is a high-impact role that allows me to work on innovative projects with forward-thinking

customers.

What does success mean to you?

Success means spending time on work that I am passionate about while creating meaningful, high-impact outcomes that align with my goals and my team's goals.

Where did your first paycheck come from, and what was your job then?

My first paycheck came from Hartwig Construction, my father's business, where I helped clean construction sites.

SEE HARTWIG, PAGE 61

Congratulations, Corey McSweeney!

Your leadership, insight, and contributions continue to make a meaningful impact on our clients, our team, and the northeast Indiana community. Through your commitment to excellence and your dedication to helping others succeed, you lead by example every day.

From all of us at KSM, congratulations on being named to the Greater Fort Wayne Business Weekly's Forty Under 40 class of 2026!

ksmcpa.com

ksm
CPAs & Advisors



Ashley Muldoon

Age: 34

Grote
Automotive

Executive
Assistant
to the
President



What is your education?

I graduated from Wayne High School with academic honors and some college. My education gave me a strong foundation in discipline, accountability, and the importance of always continuing to learn.

What community organizations are you involved with?

I am a member of Fort Wayne Youth Leadership. Being involved in the community is important to me because it allows me to contribute to the growth and development of the next generation in our city.

What are your hobbies?

I enjoy reading and continuously learning new things. Most importantly, I value

spending quality time with family and friends because those relationships are what truly keep life grounded and meaningful.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I was born and raised in Fort Wayne, Indiana, so this will always feel like home to me. It's a community that has shaped who I am, both personally and professionally.

What is it about your profession you enjoy and why?

I genuinely enjoy the culture and fast-paced environment of the automotive industry.

There is a deeper meaning behind it, helping people move forward in life, whether that's through

reliable transportation, career opportunities, or personal growth within the business.

What does success mean to you?

Success to me means never hitting the ceiling. Once a goal is achieved, it's time to set a new one and continue pushing forward. Growth is limitless when you stay disciplined and committed to improving.

Where did your first paycheck come from, and what was your job then?

My first official paycheck came from Subway where I worked as a sandwich artist. However, I had been working since I was 13 years old every weekend at my family's diner, which is where I first learned the value of hard work and responsibility.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

My biggest supporter has honestly been myself. I didn't have a lot of external guidance early on, but the challenges I faced pushed me to work harder and build something better for my life. Those experiences created the drive I still carry today.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

One of my biggest accomplishments has been earning the trust and responsibility that comes with my role supporting executive leadership at Grote Automotive. Being able to contribute to high-level decision making and operational growth has been incredibly rewarding.

What has been your biggest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

One of my biggest mistakes early in my career was not speaking up when I should have. I learned that staying silent can hold not only yourself back but also the progress of the organization. Since then, I've learned the importance of communication, confidence, and advocating for the right decisions.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

As a child, I wanted to become a nurse. I've always had a natural desire to help people, and in many ways that mindset still carries over into the work I do today.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

I stay current by listening to industry podcasts and following automotive communities and professional networks online. Staying

connected to what others in the industry are doing helps keep ideas fresh and perspectives evolving.

How do you balance your career, family life, and community service?

Organization is everything. I plan my workdays the night before and make sure I set clear boundaries so I know when it's time to focus on work and when it's time to disconnect and be present with family and community.

What do you do to relax?

Relaxing for me usually means putting on a comfy set of pajamas, grabbing a soft blanket, and unwinding after a busy day. Sometimes it's just the simplest moments.

What book do you recommend?

I recommend "The 5 AM Club" by Robin Sharma. It's a powerful book about discipline, routines, and how starting your day with intention can completely change your productivity and mindset.

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

I would tell my high school self to never underestimate your own potential. Everything you want in life is possible with discipline, focus, and hard work, so know your worth and never be afraid to go after big goals.

Brooke Kinzer

Age: 39

Parkview
Health -
Packnett Family
Cancer Institute

Director of
Infusion
Services



What is your education?

Bachelor of Science in Nursing from IPFW; Master of Science in Nursing from WGU

What community organizations are you involved with?

I am a member of the Northeast Indiana Organization for Nursing Leaders and stay actively involved as a parent volunteer within Northwest Allen County Schools—where my four young children keep me busy.

Beyond that, my husband and I lead a Blessing Bag

initiative, with the goal of assembling and distributing 100 backpacks annually for individuals experiencing homelessness in Fort Wayne. This effort brings together community donations and partnerships with local organizations to serve our Fort Wayne community.

What are your hobbies?

I enjoy traveling with my family, golfing with my husband, and taking on creative projects. I'm drawn to experiences that allow me to explore new places, spend time with family and friends, and bring creativity into

everyday life through home design and personal projects.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

Northeast Indiana is home. It's where my family is rooted and where I have the privilege of serving the community that has shaped me. I am passionate about building strong local health-care systems so patients can access excellent care without leaving their support networks. Investing my career here is my way of giving back to the community my



Congrats! **Ashley** **Muldoon**

**Executive Assistant
to the President**

For being named to
Fort Wayne Business
Weekly's
2026 40 Under 40



Contact us only at:
www.grotemitsubishi.com



Amanda Brock

Age: 38

Trilogy Health Services

Vice President of Clinical Operations



What is your education?

Associates in Science of Nursing - Ivy Tech Fort Wayne

Bachelors in Science of Nursing - Purdue

MBA - Purdue Fort Wayne

What community organizations are you involved with?

Trilogy Health Services has a BRG for Veterans and Supports. We have started a standard of having a veterans garden at the Independent Living Villas throughout the company. Additionally, we've created an Honor Wall at the Trilogy home office honoring all past and current veteran staff members.

The American Legion Post 47 — member of

the Event Committee and Communications Committee

What are your hobbies?

I like to read books and spend time with my kids and husband. We are attempting to travel to all 50 states together as a family.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I moved here when I was 13 and have been here ever since. I graduated from Northport High School.

What is it about your profession you enjoy and why?

I impact the quality of life of seniors in 5 states. Together with my team, we make decisions around policies, systems and processes to create a better experience for our residents. I am extremely passionate about the quality we provide and continuously improving this.

What does success

mean to you?

Success, to me, is multifaceted. First and foremost, it is defined by the success of my family. As a mother of three, my children inspire and motivate me each day to be my best. Together with my husband, we prioritize building a strong, supportive foundation for our family, recognizing that balancing professional responsibilities and family life requires constant intention and resilience. Like many working mothers, we often navigate competing demands, and I am grateful for trusted peers, such as Cassandra Rosene, who help keep me grounded and balanced day to day. Professionally, I define success by the ability to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those I serve. I am continually asking how we can do better—how we can improve, evolve, and adapt to deliver higher-quality care. In a world that moves

quickly, staying proactive, innovative, and focused on continuous improvement is essential to making a lasting impact.

Where did your first paycheck come from, and what was your job then?

My first job was at Baskin-Robbins. I was an ice cream scooper!

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

My biggest supporter in my career has been Lindsay Broyles and Rhonda Dempsey. Lindsay was the best executive director I've ever had. Rhonda has constantly encouraged me both academically and professionally. She encourages all of my ideas and pushes me to be better and think bigger each day.

SEE BROCK, PAGE 62

ANY shape material color size

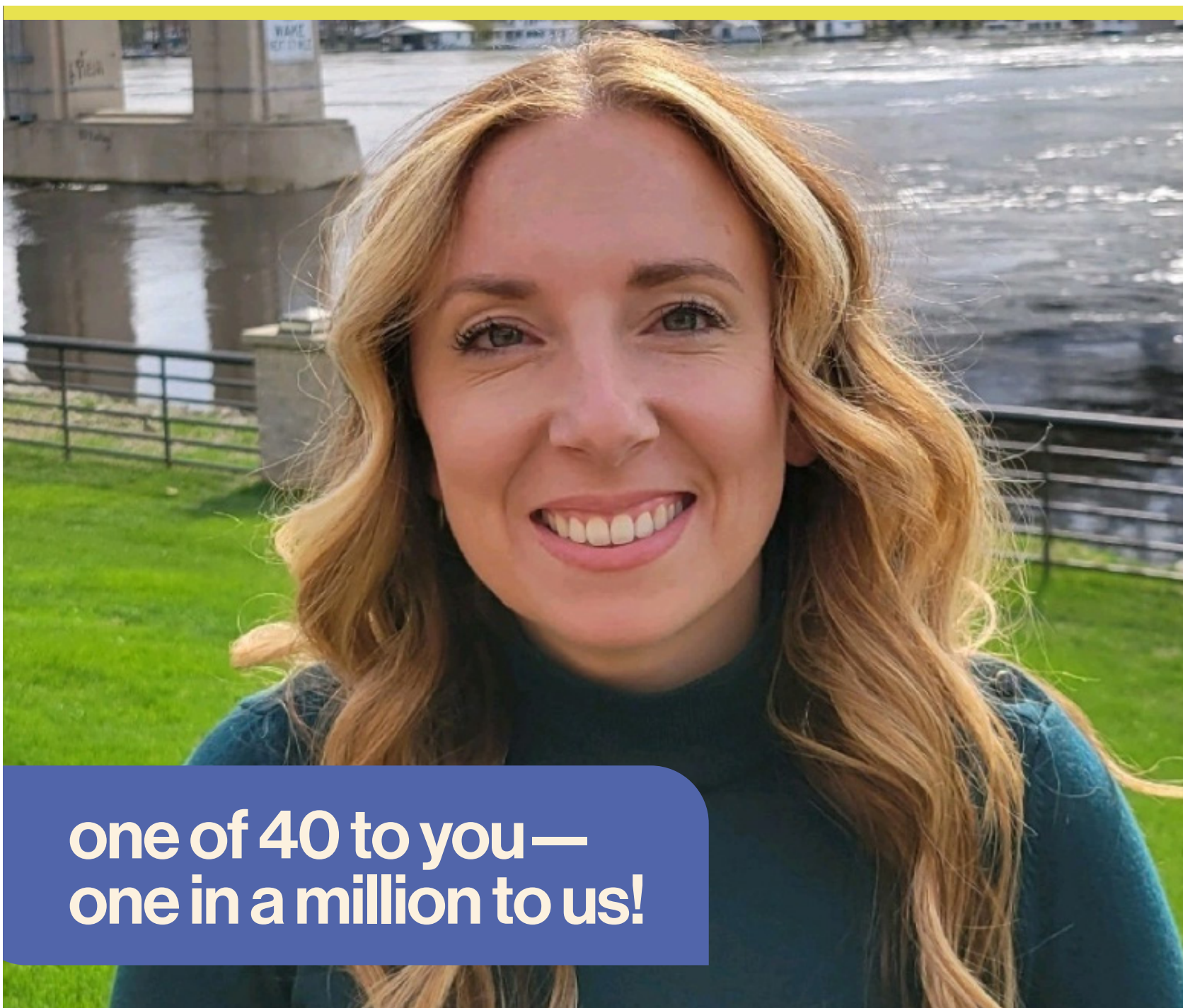
Your design, or ours, we make it!
Fully customizable signs at standard prices.

Diskey Architectural Signage, Inc. • 260.424.0233 • www.DiskeySign.com

DISKEY

SIGNS

Established 1924



**one of 40 to you—
one in a million to us!**

**Congratulations to Amanda Brock,
Vice President of Clinical Operations,
at Trilogy Health Services!**

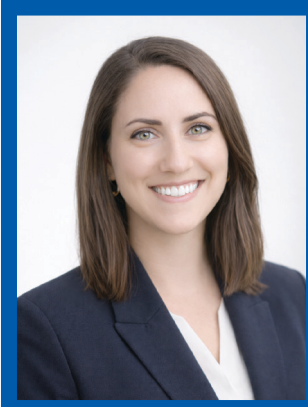
Thank you for your commitment to our
residents, staff, and community at large.
Trilogy is lucky to have you!



Lexie Staten

Age: 33

Trine University
Vice President for Academic Affairs



What is your education?

I earned my bachelor's degree in Dietetics from Purdue University and my master's degree in Nutrition Science from Texas Woman's University. I am currently pursuing a PhD in Education, Leadership, and Organization at Texas Woman's University.

What community organizations are you involved with?

I'm a member of the Academy of Nutrition

and Dietetics and attend Dayspring Church in Auburn.

What are your hobbies?

What are hobbies? :) Most of my free time is spent with my family. Between work, graduate school, and being a mom, life stays pretty full.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I grew up in Waterloo and now live in Auburn with my family. My husband and I spent four

years in Houston during and after graduate school, but wanted to move back to be closer to family and enjoy the close-knit feel of a smaller town.

What is it about your profession you enjoy and why?

I love the atmosphere of higher education where learning, curiosity, and new ideas are always present. Being surrounded by educators who care deeply about students and their success makes the work even more meaningful. I'm especially grateful for the people at Trine and the collaborative, growth-minded culture.

What does success mean to you?

Success, to me, is doing work that feels meaningful while continuing to grow along the way. It's about being proud of the effort I've put in and knowing the work helped create opportunities or move things forward for others.

Where did your first paycheck come from, and what was your job

then?

I started working at 16 at a local pizza place and as a lifeguard. Those jobs were very different from what I do today, but I gained so much from those early experiences. They taught me to appreciate constructive feedback, adapt quickly, and recognize that everyone brings different strengths to the table.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

My parents and my husband have been my biggest supporters. My parents instilled a growth mindset in me early on and encouraged me to set high expectations for myself in a healthy way. My husband is my biggest encourager and the first person to remind me what I'm capable of.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

Becoming the vice president for Academic Affairs at Trine Univer-

sity has been my biggest professional accomplishment. The role has given me the opportunity to work with so many incredible colleagues, expand opportunities for students, and help move the university's mission forward.

What has been your biggest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

I thought leadership meant having all the answers and being capable of doing everything myself. Over time, I've learned that leadership is more about connecting people and ideas, creating space for collaboration, and trusting the strengths of the people around you.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I always wanted to work in health care and was drawn to careers that involved helping people improve their health and well-being.

How do you remain

SEE STATEN, PAGE 30

Paige Aselage

Age: 22

Trine University / Brotherhood Mutual Insurance Company
Student/ Accountant I - Tax/Compliance



What is your education?

I am currently finishing my degree, a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with a major in Accounting and Finance, at Trine University. I am also working on my Master of Business Adminis-

tration at Trine University in conjunction with my undergrad. I am set to graduate with both degrees in May 2026.

What community organizations are you

involved with?

At Trine, I was involved in the Women's Triathlon team, Accounting Club, Student Athletic Advisory Committee (SAAC), and the Ehinger Fellows. I volunteered on campus as a tour guide and served as an accounting tutor. I also actively help lead our Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program at Trine University. I volunteer with the C26 Youth Tri program and the Bishop Dwenger Track and Field program.

What are your hobbies?

My hobbies include swimming, biking, and running in training for triathlons. I love spending time with family and friends. I also enjoy reading, cooking, and baking as well.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I grew up in Fort Wayne, so when it came to making a decision on where to go to school, Trine University was a no brainer for me. After graduation, I plan to move back to the Fort Wayne area as I start my career at Brotherhood Mutual and start a family with my fiancé.

What is it about your profession you enjoy and why?

I am constantly learning. There are always new laws to learn and understand. Working at the VITA site has provided me the opportunity to help others in my community navigate the oftentimes cumbersome task of taxes. Helping them understand new tax laws and providing them with knowledge going forward has been extremely rewarding.

What does success

mean to you?

Success means knowing that one's work is making a real impact. It requires continuous growth and determination. I feel most successful when I take on a new challenge, apply what I have learned, and contribute to outcomes that benefit the people or organization I serve.

Where did your first paycheck come from, and what was your job then?

In high school, my first job was with Stuckey's Greenhouse working as a cashier. I held a variety of responsibilities, from working the register during busy seasons to planting new flowers for the next year.

Who was your biggest

SEE ASELAG, PAGE 57

Trine University salutes our members of
the Greater Fort Wayne Business Weekly

FORTY UNDER 40

Class of 2026



Lexie Staten
Vice President for Academic Affairs



Paige Aselage
Corporate Tax Accountant, Brotherhood Mutual,
Trine University Class of 2026

Emily Harris

Age: 39

Two-EE's Winery and The Regan Ferguson Group

Co-Owner (Two-EE's) and Realtor (Regan Ferguson Group)



What is your education?

Bachelor's Degree in Interior Design from IPFW

What community organizations are you involved with?

Through Two-EE's Winery, I'm actively involved in supporting local organizations through sponsorships, donations, and fundraising events. I was honored to be named the 2024 Visionary of the Year with Blood Cancer United after helping raise over \$150,000 to support their mission.

What are your hobbies?

Interior design, spending time with my family, finding creative ways to bring people together through food and wine, and making sourdough.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

This is home. Our families are here, we built our businesses here, and it's where we're raising our kids. There's something really special about being part of a community where you know people and feel connected to what's happening around you.

What is it about your profession you enjoy and why?

I love creating spaces where people can come in, take a breath, and just enjoy themselves. Whether it's at the winery or helping someone find a home, it's about creating experiences and being part of meaningful moments in people's lives.

What does success mean to you?

Success is building something that lasts. Something that supports our family, our team, and gives back to the community. It's not just about growth, it's about doing it in a way that has staying power for us and those around us.

Where did your first paycheck come from, and what was your job then?

My first job was at Stein Mart when I was 17. Not long after that, I was working as an interior design assistant while still in high school. I've always been working and learning at the same time, which is what shaped me early on to always feel like I'm making a contribution.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

My dad. He played a huge role in building the foundation of what the winery is today. He believed in us, supported us, and shared a love for winemaking with my husband. We miss him every day.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

Watching Two-EE's grow into a place where people come to celebrate, relax, and spend time together. Seeing it become part of people's traditions and memories is something I'm really proud of. I also had the opportunity to represent Indiana at Miss USA in 2013, which helped build confidence and opened doors that shaped who I am today.

What has been your biggest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

Trying to do everything myself early on. I've learned that you can't grow anything meaningful without trusting people and building a strong team around you.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I always wanted to be in design, either interior or fashion. I was constantly sketching, rearranging rooms, and giving my parents opinions they probably didn't ask for. That creativity never really went away.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

Staying relevant requires paying attention. Listening to customers and clients, watching what people respond to, and being

willing to adjust when something isn't working.

How do you balance your career, family life, and community service?

Some days better than others. It's not perfect, but I try to stay focused on what matters most and be present when I'm with my family. Having a supportive team makes a big difference.

What do you do to relax?

Spending time with my family, being outside, baking sourdough, and occasionally just sitting down with a glass of wine and slowing down for a minute.

What book do you recommend?

That's like asking me my favorite wine, or my favorite kid, it depends on the day. I tend to reach for books that help me unplug and reset, whether that's something creative or just an easy, enjoyable read. Oftentimes that's the Holy Bible.

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

You don't need to have everything figured out. Just keep going, take opportunities when they come, and trust that it will make sense later.

Ashley Emerick

Age: 39

Parkview Health

Manager of Laboratory Services



What is your education?

Bachelor of Science, Biology
Medical Laboratory Scientist (MLS), ASCPCM
Medicolegal Death Investigator (MDI)

What community organizations are you involved with?

Stauben County Cancer Association
CASA
Trine University Academic Advisory Board
Stauben County Republican Women
Junior Achievement

Instructor

What are your hobbies?

Traveling, hiking, Pilates, painting, and being my daughter's ultimate cheerleader.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I was born and raised here, and I've just never left.

What is it about your profession you enjoy and why?

I thrive on leading projects that improve laboratory efficiency and patient safety,

turning goals into tangible results that make a real difference in healthcare.

What does success mean to you?

Success is having the ability to overcome challenges, sustain progress, and complete objectives with a strong sense of pride.

Where did your first paycheck come from, and what was your job then?

Smith Farms Manor —

SEE EMERICK, PAGE 57



TWO·EE'S
WINERY®

—
Voted
Indiana's Winery
of the Year

Two-EE's Winery | 6808 N. US 24 E Huntington, IN | @twoeeswinery

Lea Gamble

Age: 30

**Weigand
Construction /
Young Leaders
of Northeast
Indiana**

**BIM Coordinator
(Weigand)**

**Board Vice
President (YLNI)**



What is your education?

I have an Associate of Applied Science in Building Construction Management and Associate of Applied Science in Design Technology, both from Ivy Tech Community College, Fort Wayne. I am also a LEED AP BD+C.

What community organizations are you involved with?

I am currently Board Vice President at Young Leaders of Northeast Indiana and have been involved with several of its volunteer committees. I serve on the Young Professionals Forum Committee and the Government Affairs Committee at the Building Contractors Association of Northeast Indiana.

What are your hobbies?

I enjoy reading, video games, attending concerts, enjoying live theater and ballet performances, and playing sand volleyball in the summer. I also love being on a dragonboat team each year.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I grew up in Warren, Indiana, and went to college in Fort Wayne. I went on to pursue my career in Fort Wayne, fell in love with this city, and decided to make it my home.

What is it about your profession you enjoy and why?

Every day and project is different, and I learn

new things all the time. I enjoy getting to meet and work with other people on our projects. It is also an amazing feeling to see the impact buildings have on people and communities, and to have had a part in the process.

What does success mean to you?

Having community and the ability to serve and make an impact is very meaningful to me. I wish to leave a space better than I found it.

Where did your first paycheck come from, and what was your job then?

My first job was my full-time internship in project management with Hamilton Hunter Builders, in which I'd continued with them as an assistant project manager for a combined four years.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

My parents are my biggest supporters who told me I can accomplish anything I set my mind to. I became interested in construction watching my dad transform spaces through drywall and painting, learning the trade from him. My mom has always encouraged me to be the best version of myself I

can be.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

I feel my biggest accomplishment has been the relationships I have built over the years. I have even had the opportunity to mentor some incredible young professionals in my industry and it is so exciting to hear from them and see them thrive. It is incredibly touching to know when you've made an impact on others, big or small.

What has been your biggest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

My biggest mistake during a phase of my early career was not prioritizing my own self-care. We cannot show up as our best selves if we do not take care of ourselves physically, mentally, and emotionally. We also cannot serve others while our own cup is empty.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I wanted to be a veterinarian when I was a child. I still have a deep love for animals to this day, as evidenced by my three very spoiled cats.

How do you remain

current/relevant in your profession?

I continually seek out learning opportunities and read. I love learning and try to spend time figuring out how to do something new.

How do you balance your career, family life, and community service?

I think this is a continual learning process and not an exact science. Our lives are ever-changing and I think the important thing is to prioritize. Setting Do Not Disturb hours on technology helps too.

What do you do to relax?

To relax, I like to listen to music, play a cozy game, or read a book. All of these are even more relaxing when my cats are snuggled up with me.

What book do you recommend?

"The Serviceberry" by Robin Wall Kimmerer.

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

You are going to make mistakes and that is OK. Learning is lifelong. Give yourself grace.

Adam M. Kurtz

Age: 38

**Parkview
Health**

**Vice
President -
Community
Mental
Health**



What is your education?

East Noble High School, Trine University – Bachelors of Science w Majors in Business Mgmt and Accounting

What community organizations are you involved with?

Allen County Justice Reinvestment Advisory Council, Classic City Church in Auburn, Indiana Council of Community Mental Health Centers, Inc.

What are your hobbies?

Fishing, coaching son's

sports teams.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

Grew up in Kendallville and wanted to raise my son near family.

What is it about your profession you enjoy and why?

I enjoy the sense of fulfillment that comes with helping individuals in need. Getting to see the direct impact of our work on our community. Health care is constantly evolving and requiring change

management, which keeps me motivated. I also have an unbelievable group of leaders and staff that I get to support.

What does success mean to you?

Success to me is having meaningful purpose in your life. Not just occupationally, but spiritually. I want to look back at the end of the day/week/month/year and know the efforts I have made, impacted others in a positive way.



COMMUNITY



We're excited to recognize **BIM Coordinator Lea Gamble** for being named to the Fort Wayne Business Weekly Forty Under 40 Class of 2026. At Weigand Construction, Lea develops and manages 3D models that help identify constructability challenges early in the design process. Outside of her role, she is actively involved in the Building Contractors Association of Northeast Indiana and serves as Vice President on the Board of Directors for Young Leaders of Northeast Indiana. We are proud to have a team member like Lea, who exemplifies our core values by investing in the people and places she calls home. We believe that by supporting and building up our people, we can have a lasting impact on the lives and communities we serve.

Ashley Casey

Age: 34

YMCA of
Greater Fort
Wayne

Director
of Human
Resources



What is your education?

I earned my bachelor's degree in Public Policy from Indiana University—Fort Wayne, followed by master's degrees in Business, Management & Leadership, and Human Resources Management from Western Governors University.

What community organizations are you involved with?

I have honorably served on the board for BABE of Whitley County since 2022 and currently sit as board chair.

What are your hobbies?

I cherish spending time with my fun, goofy family. I also enjoy traveling and experiencing new cultures—we make it a goal to visit at least one new country each year. In the fall, I allow the Green Bay Packers to have a significant impact on my overall mood, and I'll rarely admit how many times I've seen the Dave Matthews Band in concert.

STATEN

FROM PAGE 24

current/relevant in your profession?

Continuing my education certainly helps, but one of the most valuable ways I stay current is through collaboration with colleagues. I'm

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I grew up in Columbia City (Go Eagles!) and had always planned to leave the area after graduating college. After meeting my now-husband my senior year, we both felt as though Northeast Indiana, specifically Columbia City, would be the most fitting place to start and raise our family.

What is it about your profession you enjoy and why?

I enjoy the daily interaction with people and helping navigate complex situations. I take pride in being a problem-solver and offering multiple paths toward positive outcomes. At the core, most people simply want to feel heard. While HR is often seen as a thankless role, it's the people that truly make the work worthwhile.

What does success mean to you?

There are many ways to define success. For me, it

fortunate to be surrounded by people who care deeply about higher education and enjoy discussing ideas, trends, and opportunities in education.

How do you balance your career, family life, and community service?

With a lot of help and

means being in a position to positively impact the lives of others—both professionally and personally.

Where did your first paycheck come from, and what was your job then?

My first job was at the DQ Grill & Chill in Columbia City. Fun fact: I can still make a sick ice cream cone!

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

My husband, Nick. He has supported me through all of my higher education pursuits and career growth. On days when I feel uncertain, he reassures me that I'm capable of achieving anything I set my mind to.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

My biggest accomplishment thus far would be successfully navigating the transition into a new industry. This move required me to quickly aim for mastery across all HR functions while adapting to a new organizational culture. Leveraging my background in high-stakes environments, I've been able to help shape process, introduce impactful policies, and make other meaningful changes within my organization.

What has been your biggest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

One of my biggest professional mistakes, especially earlier in my career, was

support from family. I try to set clear boundaries around family time and remind myself that perfection isn't the goal.

What do you do to relax?

A Saturday morning walk with a coffee and my family is the best kind of relaxation. I love trying new restaurants, a good

not trusting my instincts when they pointed me in a different direction. Instead of relying on my knowledge and experience, I focused more on identifying possible resolutions than on fully understanding the situation at hand. Over time, I've learned to pay closer attention when something feels "off" and to investigate further rather than dismiss that instinct. While I believe in the "duck test"—if it looks, swims, and quacks like a duck, it likely is—I also make a point to validate my assumptions. I've found that balancing intuition with thoughtful verification leads to better, more informed decisions.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I always wanted to be an anesthesiologist; however, chemistry was my admitted nemesis.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

Because my field is constantly evolving, I make it a priority to stay current on ongoing legal updates and participate in HR-focused education and development opportunities. Equally important, I maintain a strong presence with colleagues at all levels to better understand their day-to-day experiences and how I can best support them.

How do you balance your career, family life, and community service?

Achieving balance is definitely an art. I use my calendar intentionally,

book or podcast, and playing tennis.

What book do you recommend?

I'm reading "The Nightingale" by Kristin Hannah, a historical fiction novel, and would definitely recommend it. I always enjoy Malcolm Gladwell's books, which explore how people think, make

blocking off dedicated time for family and activities outside of work. I'm also grateful to be part of an organization that values and respects work-life balance.

What do you do to relax?

An afternoon at Woodhouse Day Spa or an evening out with the girls can literally melt all my worries away.

What book do you recommend?

"When Pride Still Mattered: A Life of Vince Lombardi" by David Maraniss

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

If I could go back and talk to my high school self, I'd remind myself not to stress over things that are completely out of my control. I would emphasize the importance of enjoying the journey rather than focusing so heavily on the goal or result. I'd encourage myself to meet new people, build meaningful relationships, and take chances even when they feel uncomfortable or uncertain. I'd also add that not everything will go according to plan, and that's ok! Some of the most valuable growth comes from unexpected turns and challenges. Trust your instincts, stay open to new opportunities, and give yourself grace along the way. You don't have to have everything figured out to be on the right path.

decisions, and understand the world.

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

I'd tell my high school self that hard work, strong values, and good priorities matter more than having everything figured out.

Congratulations **ASHLEY CASEY**

Thank you for the meaningful impact you make through your leadership, empowering our team and strengthening the YMCA's mission in our community.



ASHLEY CASEY
Director of Human Resources,
YMCA of Greater Fort Wayne

fwymca.org



FORTY UNDER 40

20
26



Congratulations to our Forty Under 40 winners

As Forty Under 40 winners, Ashley Emerick, Brooke Kinzer, and Adam Kurtz have been recognized by *Greater Fort Wayne Business Weekly* for making a difference in their careers and our community. We are honored that they have chosen to share their talents with Parkview, where they help strengthen our healthcare system and ensure the well-being of the people who call our region home.

Ashley Emerick

Manager of Laboratory Services

Brooke Kinzer

Director of Infusion Services

Adam Kurtz

Vice President of Community Mental Health



Edwin Chow

Age: 31

Summit City Climbing Co.

Owner



What is your education?

Bachelor of Arts, Huntington University
Bachelor of Science, Huntington University
TESOL Certification, Huntington University
Project Management Professional (PMP) 2025
Westmont High School

What community organizations are you involved with?

City Church Youth Group, The Rescue Mission, Fort Wayne Community Schools

What are your hobbies?

Ironmans, rock climbing, cooking, and long walks on

the beach

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

Fort Wayne may not have dramatic terrain, but it's one of the best training grounds for an Ironman because of its people, the kind who will ride 100 miles through cornfields and call it a good day.

What is it about your profession you enjoy and why?

There aren't many places — or sports — where parents and kids can participate at the same time, on the same level. Even more meaningful is creating a

space where kids can watch their parents fail, get back up, try again, and work together to solve the puzzle on the wall together.

What does success mean to you?

Faith, family, & farming

Where did your first paycheck come from, and what was your job then?

Yogurtland. I worked as a professional yogurt weigher and topping aficionado.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

Bless my mum and dad. They had high hopes I'd become a doctor. Instead, I studied youth ministry, started selling teddy bears out of my car, launched a food truck, joined the Army and deployed to a conflict zone, and eventually maxed out seven credit cards to open a rock climbing gym. Through every pivot, risk, and unconventional decision, they kept loving and supporting me — even when none of it made sense on paper.

What has been your biggest accomplishment

thus far in your career?

Collecting and donating over \$50,000 in resources, in-kind contributions, and financial donations to local Fort Wayne nonprofits in our first year of business at Summit City Climbing Co.

What has been your biggest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

Not investing in Bitcoin in 2000. I learned that there was only one “get-rich-quick” opportunity, and I blew it.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I wanted to live in a van down by the river and hunt and gather my own resources.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

By staying curious and listening to the next generation. Yes, that includes TikTok reels and social media trends — but more importantly, it means paying attention to how people connect, what they value, and how community is evolving.

How do you balance

your career, family life, and community service?

I left traditional employment to build something meaningful. I'm single, so my time is flexible — and I intentionally invest that margin into community service. For me, integration works better than balance. My business is my vehicle for impact.

What do you do to relax?

There's a route to Defiance, Ohio that I love biking. There's a small coffee shop there with incredible coffee and cinnamon rolls. I ride out, sit for a bit, and then make the ride back to Fort Wayne. It's only about 110 miles round trip.

What book do you recommend?

The Bible. It's the best-selling book of all time for a reason. There's a book and chapter, John 3, changed my life and will likely change yours.

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

Have fun. Meet cool people. Take risks. Go on sick adventures.

KURTZ

FROM PAGE 28

Where did your first paycheck come from, and what was your job then?

My first paycheck came from Kendallville Youth Baseball League and I was an umpire for the little league teams.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

My mom is and always has been my biggest supporter. Professionally, there are so many individuals to give credit to, but

a two who deserve specific mention are Mark Hull, Partner – Crowe and Trent Miller – Chief PPG Ops & Specialty SL – Parkview.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

Getting to lead such an amazing team at Parkview Behavioral Health Institute.

What has been your biggest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

My biggest mistakes have come from making decisions without all the relevant information. I have learned that it is always worth the

extra time to gain a full/better understanding of a situation before determining next steps.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

A lawyer.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

Networking, participation in Indiana Council of Community Mental Health Centers, Inc., attending webinars, workshops and reading professional newsletters as well as following local/state/federal legislature.

How do you balance your career, family life,

and community service?

The first step to this for me is having a foundation in my priorities. What are my non-negotiables and working from there. Having an amazing wife who is aligned in priorities and helps me stay organized and on schedule. Additionally, being comfortable in telling people “no.”

What do you do to relax?

Spending time with family, fishing, watching sports, and spending time outdoors.

What book do you recommend?

“Outliers” by Malcom Gladwell. This book is about individuals who have been extraordinarily successful and breaks down that talent, hard work, opportunity, timing, culture, and environment all play a unique role in that success. It taught me at a young age that having one alone isn't enough. We need to be looking for our opportunities and taking advantage of them with hard work.

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

Be open to change and the way you treat others matters.

Emerging Leaders Start Here.

Congratulations

Edwin Chow • Lea Gamble
Erin Martin • Sarah Serna
Kody Tinnel • Brice Vance
For Being 2026
Forty Under 40 Winners

Being a member of YLNI means joining a community of emerging leaders dedicated to continuous personal and professional growth. Our 20 year legacy has enabled us to offer more than just leadership mentorship – we offer the opportunity to leave a meaningful impact on the world. Through our programs, initiatives and events, we provide the support and guidance needed to build a legacy of leadership while positively impacting our community.



YOUNG LEADERS
OF NORTHEAST INDIANA

ylni.org

Attracting, developing, and retaining young leaders in Northeast Indiana since 2005.

Matthew Ransbottom

Age: 38

**OmniSource,
LLC**

**Human
Resources
Manager**



What is your education?

Indiana State University, Terre Haute, Master of Science — Human Resource Development; Purdue University, Fort Wayne, Bachelor of Science — Organizational Leadership and Supervision

What community organizations are you involved with?

During my professional career, I have had the opportunity to serve on various boards and participate in multiple charitable organizations such as Purdue University Fort Wayne (Chair – Athletic Board and Organizational Leadership Advisory Board), Big Brothers Big Sisters (Real

Men Read), and coach youth baseball (Go Blacksnakes!)

What are your hobbies?

Outside of work, I enjoy hunting, fishing, golfing, spending time with family and friends, and cooking!

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I grew up in Warsaw, IN, and baseball & education led me to IPFW (currently Purdue Fort Wayne). While attending college, I really enjoyed the area — which led me to return to Fort Wayne after moving back to Warsaw after college.

What is it about your profession you enjoy and why?

growth to those around me at Sweetwater, and especially my manager. I was consistently challenged to take on a wide range of responsibilities, which pushed me to grow both personally and professionally. I was also given a high level of trust and autonomy, which allowed me to develop as a leader and contribute meaningfully across a variety of impactful projects.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

I'm most proud of building out a team that has scaled

It is the people! — working in Human Resources, I get to view and participate in various parts of our organization; help train and develop employees, engage with them, and to be a support for our leadership team.

What does success mean to you?

Enjoying what I do, day in and day out — I want to continue to grow, both personally and professionally, and being able to see my, big or small, wins help me know that I am being successful in life!

Where did your first paycheck come from, and what was your job then?

Working for a family friend — I grew up bailing hay in a small town, just south of where I grew up. I learned a lot about hard work, long days... but getting that “spending money” was worth it!

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

“No one creates success alone” — there have been many great people in my life that have been in my corner; I have had multiple mentors that have given me great advice, helped support my career goals, and are always

there to help! (Too many to name!)

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

Growth in my current role and seeing my team succeed — throughout my career, I have had the opportunity to grow my responsibilities; gaining the confidence and overall knowledge & experience in my profession is at the top of the list. If it wasn't for my team, it wouldn't be able to feel the successes!

What has been your biggest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

I have made many mistakes in my career — learning from those mistakes, not making them a second time, is the key! Lessons learned from taking risks only help build your confidence in the future!

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

If Batman was not an option, it was being a professional baseball player — so far, the baseball career is the only career path that has been closed!

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

Taking the time to

complete continuous education courses, attend seminars/webinars — I also am a Limited Term Lecture at PFW! I have taught four different HR courses over time, and that has helped keep me in the loop of changing laws, benefits, etc.

How do you balance your career, family life, and community service?

“You can only be where your feet are” — the biggest impact is being present; I try to do my best to be present in all aspects of my life. I work hard to balance my schedule, manage that schedule, and try to be the best version of myself!

What do you do to relax?

Nothing better than spending time in the woods hunting, on the golf course, or just spending quality time with my wife, family, and friends!

What book do you recommend?

“I Am Third”

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

Stay in the moment, enjoy the process, and stay focused on the relationships you have and the new ones you will gain.

BAUMANN

FROM PAGE 10

important things in life: Faith, family, community, and work.

Where did your first paycheck come from, and what was your job then?

At 14 I washed dishes at a local Italian restaurant.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

I owe much of my career

with the incredible growth at Sweetwater. We have added so many talented, high character people that are a joy to work with.

What has been your biggest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

Early in my career I lacked patience and jumped to a company that was not the right fit for me. I learned to be less emotional and more direct about my goals and growth paths.

As a child, what did you

want to be when you grew up?

A professional hockey player

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

Read, experiment with new technology, and lean into other professionals in “like” careers.

How do you balance your career, family life, and community service?

I could not do so without my wife. She builds an incredible calendar that fits

everything together, and we have found comfort in the chaos.

What do you do to relax?

Golf tends to be the most relaxing thing I do.

What book do you recommend?

“Everybody Always” – Bob Goff

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

Focus on being patient, working hard, and helping others and everything else will work out.



We Are Hiring

DISCOVER WHY OMNI IS
ALL YOU NEED IN
METALS RECYCLING

PLEASE VISIT

www.omnisource.com



Janelle Johannsen

Age: 39

Three Rivers
Federal
Credit Union

AVP of Risk
Management



What is your education?

Bachelor of Science in Business from Indiana University-Fort Wayne

What community organizations are you involved with?

Community Harvest Food Bank, 3Rivers Foundation, Blessings in a Backpack, Junior Achievement, Habitat for Humanity, Family Life Assembly of God — Kendallville

What are your hobbies?

I enjoy reading, attending Fort Wayne Komets or TinCaps games, and golf.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

My family came to Northeast Indiana when General Motors Fort Wayne Assembly plant first opened. When my husband and I first got married we looked at the community and decided we wanted to stay. We loved the diversity throughout the area and how much Fort Wayne had to offer.

What is it about your profession you enjoy and why?

I enjoy that every day I get to interact with several team members and help them make informed decisions. Every day is different and I enjoy the collaboration with others.

What does success mean to you?

Success to me is having an impact. From seeing light build moments in Junior Achievement classes, to helping make a project at 3Rivers come to existence, helping members achieve their financial goals, and watching my family grow and contribute to the community. Intentional interactions and impact with those around us.

Where did your first paycheck come from, and what was your job then?

My first paycheck came from Atz's Ice Cream shop where I waited tables in high school.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

My biggest supporter has been my mentor and friend DeAnna Vorndran. From a conversation one day after a project meeting telling her that I would like to work with her one day, to years of her teaching me everything thing she knows about risk management. Her time and energy invested in me has made all the difference.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

What has been your biggest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

My biggest accomplishment has been seeing success in others. There is nothing more impactful than seeing your team members take the next steps in their career growth and know that you were part of their journey.

What has been your biggest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

My biggest mistake has been not taking time to celebrate the wins. I found that not taking time to celebrate progress makes you forget all that you have done to get to the point you are at.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

Growing up I wanted to be a journalist or a lawyer. Risk management wasn't a phrase you heard too often at career fairs when I was in school. I feel like I found the perfect combination of sharing the facts and helping others with the work I do every day.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

To make sure that I stay current on trends and developments in the world of financial risk manage-

ment, I attend conferences, webinars, read books and blogs, as well as networking with risk management associations or area professionals.

How do you balance your career, family life, and community service?

For me, I really must focus on intentionality of my time. Read emails when I have time to address them, so I'm not reading them twice. Understand what items must be done by me and what can be done by others. Lean on my family for support.

What do you do to relax?

To relax I like to spend time with family, watch baseball, and go for walks.

What book do you recommend?

"Influence Elevated" by Stacey Hanke

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

I would tell my high school self that each set back is an opportunity to reevaluate the plan. Embrace the pause that it gives you and don't be afraid to try something new. It's not about filling shoes but making your own footprints.

Chad Hunter

Age: 30

Windows
Doors & More

Exterior
Representative
& Marketing



What is your education?

BS International & Developmental Studies – Huntington University

What community organizations are you involved with?

Myself and Windows Doors & More are involved with and support multiple little leagues, Junior Achievement, the BBB, and others.

What are your hobbies?

Family and friends, sports, and drinking good coffee

Why are you in Northeast

Indiana?

I was born and raised in NE Indiana and love the area. Its impressive development over the last 20 years speaks for itself.

What is it about your profession you enjoy and why?

Meeting customers in their homes is my favorite aspect of what I do. I am a firm believer that we have some of the best people in NE Indiana.

What does success mean to you?

Treating others the way

they deserve to be treated. Executing projects with honesty & professionalism to ensure satisfaction.

Where did your first paycheck come from, and what was your job then?

I've been helping Dad at Home & Garden Shows since I was 10, but my first "official" job was with the Fort Wayne TinCaps flipping burgers and hotdogs.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped

SEE HUNTER, PAGE 57



Janelle Johannsen
Assistant Vice President
of Risk Management

3Rivers Congratulates

Janelle Johannsen

for being recognized as part of **Business Weekly's 2026 Forty Under 40.**

Congratulations on your well deserved recognition as a **Forty Under 40, Janelle!** We're so proud of all your accomplishments thus far and are excited to see what you continue to achieve in the future. 3Rivers is grateful to have you on our team!



3riversfcu.org | 800.825.3641

Erin Martin

Age: 32

**Ash
Brokerage**

**Dir.
Retirement
Training &
Education**



What is your education?

Bachelor's degree in Interpersonal and Organizational Communications from Indiana University–Purdue University Fort Wayne (now Purdue Fort Wayne).

What community organizations are you involved with?

I am actively involved with Blood Cancer United (formerly the Northeast Indiana Leukemia & Lymphoma Society), Ronald McDonald House Charities of Northeast Indiana's Resource Committee, the Governance Committee for Young Leaders of Northeast Indiana, as well as an Advancement Committee and Board member for Concordia Lutheran

High School, and general volunteer work for Habitat for Humanity and Humane Fort Wayne. I also serve on Ash Brokerage's Impact committee, supporting employees and families in need, and mentoring young professionals.

What are your hobbies?

Outside of work, I enjoy traveling, staying active through fitness and intramural sand volleyball, hosting friends and family, spending time with my two rescue dogs, and volunteering in the Fort Wayne community.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

Even in the cold months, Northeast Indiana is home. I value the strong sense of community, opportunity

for professional growth and the ability to make a meaningful impact both in my career and through local organizations.

What is it about your profession you enjoy and why?

To no one's surprise who knows me, I love talking! But I really enjoy helping advisors and professionals communicate clearly and confidently so they can better serve families planning for retirement. I am passionate about connecting strategy, storytelling and education to create real impact for clients and teams.

What does success mean to you?

Success means building a career that creates opportunity for others while staying grounded in purpose and relationships. It's about growth, impact and helping people feel supported and empowered.

Where did your first paycheck come from, and what was your job then?

My first paycheck came from Dairy Queen at 15. It was a great experience and opportunity to meet new people. I put one heck of a swirl on those cones!

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your

career?

I credit my four parents, siblings, several mentors and leaders who believed in me early, challenged me to grow, and gave me opportunities to lead. I am especially grateful for the colleagues and leaders who continue to support my growth and encourage me to mentor others.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

Being able to grow into a leadership role while also making a meaningful impact in the community. I am proud to help drive initiatives that support advisors, employees and local families while mentoring the next generation of professionals.

What has been your biggest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

In my career, I tend to take on too much myself instead of delegating or asking for help. I've learned that strong leadership includes trusting others, collaborating and building a team that succeeds together.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

As a child, I thought I wanted to be a pediatrician or social worker to work with children. As I grew

up, that vision changed but I always knew I wanted to work with people and make a difference, though I didn't know exactly how. That passion naturally evolved into a career centered around communication, leadership and community impact.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

I stay current by continuously learning from industry leaders, attending conferences and trainings, and staying engaged with peers and mentors. I value listening to "younger" professionals to stay connected to emerging perspectives.

How do you balance your career, family life, and community service?

Balance comes from being intentional with time and priorities. I focus on being fully present wherever I am — at work, with loved ones or in the community — and give myself grace during busy seasons.

What do you do to relax?

I relax by reading a good book, spending time with friends and family, working out, or traveling. I also value quiet time to recharge and reset.

SEE MARTIN, PAGE 60

Manveer Khatana

Age: 38

**RP Khatana
Group
President**



What is your education?

Bachelor of Engineering in Computer Science and Post graduate Diploma in Wireless Telecommunications

What community organizations are you involved with?

Rescue Mission, Forgotten Children Worldwide, RP Khatana family foundation, Dashmesh Charitable Trust Fort Wayne

What are your hobbies?

Philanthropy and volunteering, social activism, civic engagement, real estate

and business Development

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

Northeast Indiana primarily due to my extensive business interests and real estate developments in the region

What is it about your profession you enjoy and why?

I enjoy the community-building and advocacy aspects of my work as I get to meet so many new people everyday, learn from their experiences and see myself

growing mentally.

What does success mean to you?

For me success means seeing my family growing in a peaceful environment, community resilience, economic growth, and standing up for the vulnerable.

Where did your first paycheck come from, and what was your job then?

My first paycheck came

SEE KHATANA, PAGE 44



Erin Martin
Director of Retirement Training
and Consumer Education

CONGRATS ERIN!

On being selected for Fort Wayne Business Weekly's Forty Under 40.

Erin's hard work, dedication and genuine care to teammates and advisors make her irreplaceable at Ash Brokerage.

What coworkers say about Erin:

"Erin Martin is an exemplary role model for me in and out of the workplace. Her commitment and willingness to go above and beyond does not go unnoticed! What truly sets her apart is her ability to make time for everyone despite her busy schedule. I am grateful to have her not only as a colleague, but a lifelong friend!"

(800) 589-3000



ASHBROKERAGE.COM

Amy Reidhaar

Age: 38

**University
Park Vision
Center, LLC**

**CEO/
Optometrist**



What is your education?

Doctor of Optometry 2014, Indiana University School of Optometry; Bachelor of Science Biology-Chemistry 2010, Manchester University

What community organizations are you involved with?

Northeast Indiana Optometric Association, Indiana Optometric Association, assist with my daughter's Girl Scout troop.

What are your hobbies?

Book club/ girls' night, running my own business and traveling with my family.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

My entire family is from Indiana and my mother's side is primarily in Fort Wayne. Family is very important to me, and I enjoy being very close to everyone.

What is it about your profession you enjoy and why?

I knew I wanted to be an optometrist in high school! I love being able to give the gift of sight, it is a very rewarding career. I did not know I wanted to be a business owner, but that has since become icing on

top. I can make my work fit my own pace and stay-patient-centered focus.

What does success mean to you?

Success means achieving your goals, no matter how big and/or small they may be.

Where did your first paycheck come from, and what was your job then?

My first paycheck came from Chuck E. Cheese. I was a cashier there during high school.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

Dr. Aaron Case with the VA Northern Indiana — he is a wonderful residency attending. He helped select me for my residency position and has been a wonderful mentor with any career/medical advice needed ever since.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

Converting a retiring optometry office into a successful optometry office with updated specialized equipment, satisfied patients,

happy staff and a work/life balance. I love setting goals and achieving them.

What has been your biggest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

Reading the fine print. Establishing a business is extremely hard work. The lesson I learned very quickly is that a simple service is not always simple when a contract is involved; everything is negotiable and don't be afraid to ask questions up front. Read the fine print.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

As a young child, I wanted to be a veterinarian. However, as I quickly learned I'm allergic to cats and scared of big dogs. I stuck with volunteer work at the shelter.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

Continuing education: I enjoy attending professional conferences sponsored by the American Academy of Optometry to learn new research findings, along with Indiana's Optometric Association Seminars.

How do you balance your career, family life, and community service?

I balance by prioritizing and scheduling — it all comes down to evaluating a tasks urgency and trying to have the right amount of work to family life balance. It is very difficult and I'm not sure I have the exact equation down. Each year it gets a little easier!

What do you do to relax?

I love to read. It helps provide a good distraction. I am also a part of a book club: AKA girls' night quarterly, through this I can make sure I have scheduled time to socialize.

What book do you recommend?

"Atomic Habits" by James Clear

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

Relax — take more time for yourself and live in the present moment. Continue to work hard, but you don't need to overdo it to get to your destination.

Kelsey Rowe

Age: 38

**Design
Collaborative**

**Director of
Engineering,
Partner**



What is your education?

BS Architectural Engineering from University of Kansas

What community organizations are you involved with?

Girl Scouts of Northern Indiana and Michiana, Alpha

Chi Omega Alumnae Chapter President

What are your hobbies?

I enjoy staying active through CrossFit and spending time outdoors with my husband and two daughters exploring Northeast Indiana. In the summer, I love gardening and preserving what we grow. I also enjoy arts and craft — these days usually kid-centered, but I'll never pass up a good DIY project.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I was recruited here right out of college thinking it would be temporary — 16 years later, I'm still here. I love the mix of small-town charm and vibrant community opportunities, from outdoor

recreation to local events. It's a place where you can truly make an impact, which I've experienced firsthand through community initiatives like founding Weather the Fort.

What is it about your profession you enjoy and why?

I love taking something highly technical like electrical engineering and using it to improve people's everyday experiences. Whether it's where people work, learn, or heal, I get to help create spaces that truly serve them. It's especially rewarding to see people interact with those spaces once they come to life.

What does success mean to you?

Success isn't a single milestone — it's ongoing

growth. To me, it means helping the people around me develop and succeed, because when they grow, we all do. Building a strong, trusted team is the clearest measure of success.

Where did your first paycheck come from, and what was your job then?

My first paycheck came from Papa Murphy's Take 'n' Bake Pizza. I worked part time in high school making pizzas, running the register, and opening and closing the store.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

SEE ROWE, PAGE 46

BOLD THINKING. TRUSTED LEADERSHIP. AND A BRIGHT SPARK THAT STANDS OUT.

Congratulations to **Kelsey Rowe** on being named to the **Forty Under 40 Class of 2026**—from all of us at DC!



People-first places.®

Kristen Ginder

Age: 32

**Don Ayres
Honda &
Don Ayres
Acura
Human
Resources
Manager**



What is your education?

I earned a Bachelor of Science in Financial Counseling and Planning from Purdue University's College of Health and Human Sciences in West Lafayette. I later completed my Master of Science in Human Resources Management at Indiana Wesleyan University.

What community organizations are you involved with?

My family and I attend County Line Church of God and I am a graduate of Greater Fort Wayne Inc.'s Leadership Fort Wayne 2024 cohort. I also recently served as a board intern for Iris Family Support Center (formerly SCAN), supporting their mission to strengthen families in our community. My husband and I are passionate about supporting organizations that pour

into children and families including Big Brothers Big Sisters, Kate's Kart, Women's Care Center, and A Mother's Hope.

What are your hobbies?

I enjoy boating with my family on Lake James and spending time as a T-ball and basketball mom. These moments allow me to unplug and focus on what matters most. I also enjoy attending Purdue basketball games whenever we get the chance.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I was born and raised in Indiana. Fort Wayne is a wonderful place to build a career, raise a family, and stay connected to a strong community.

What is it about your profession you enjoy and why?

I love that my role allows me to lead a team, collaborate across departments, and be involved in everything from strategy to coordinating events. There's truly never a dull moment, and I enjoy being able to guide, support and connect with people across the organization.

What does success mean to you?

From my lens as a Christian wife and mother who works outside the home, success means faithfully stewarding what God has entrusted to me. My family, my work, and my influence. It looks like raising children with strong values, loving others well and using my God given gifts to serve with integrity both at home and beyond.

Where did your first paycheck come from, and what was your job then?

I started my own home cleaning business at age 14, serving friends' parents, teachers, and neighbors. The flexibility fit well with school and sports, and it reflected my early entrepreneurial drive. I continued the business throughout my undergraduate years at Purdue University in West Lafayette.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

My husband, Layton, has been my biggest supporter

throughout nearly a decade of marriage. As two driven individuals with shared goals, we have supported one another through career changes, advanced our education, and encouraged each other's growth. His partnership in balancing schedules, managing family life, and supporting my pursuit of a career has been instrumental.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

The ability to multitask. When I was finishing my master's program, I was also working full-time, pregnant with twins, moved, and switched jobs all within five months. Don't recommend it, but I never doubted myself.

What has been your biggest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

I'd call it more of a learning opportunity of knowing when to stay at the table, when to fold, and when to walk away (and being OK with it!).

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I wanted to work at Dolly Parton's Dixie Stampede and be a part of the dinner show, singing and dancing.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

I remain current by

staying informed on regulatory changes, best practices, and workplace trends through NIHRA, ongoing reading, and regular dialogue with other HR professionals.

How do you balance your career, family life, and community service?

This is a juggling act, to say the least. Being a working mom of two with a third joining us in May isn't for the faint of heart. I've learned that it takes intention, flexibility, and a strong tribe willing to pitch in. I'm thankful I don't have to do this all alone.

What do you do to relax?

Coffee on the back porch.

What book do you recommend?

The Bible, "Never Split the Difference" by Chris Voss and Tahl Raz, "Gone For Good" by Harlan Coben

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

Life will turn out differently than you imagine and that's okay! Trust that both the challenges and the victories will shape you into who you're meant to be. Continue to speak up, advocate for yourself and your family, and use what God has given you to encourage and support others.

KHATANA

FROM PAGE 40

from WIPRO (its an IT company) and I was the intern software developer.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

My Biggest supporter is my Dad. He never forced anything on me but just wanted me to complete my engineering.

What has been your

biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

Actually there are 2 biggest accomplishments I see in my career- one was getting in the process to develop the apartment complex and second one was the gas station which will open most likely in May of 2026 which is a ground up construction.

What has been your biggest mistake thus far and what lessons did you

learn from it?

My biggest mistake was to rush on some things without doing my due diligence by hiring someone unprofessional and that delayed my project and costed me time, money & mental stress.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I wanted to become a commercial pilot.

How do you remain

current/relevant in your profession?

I attend any conferences, seminars, read and research what's going to work and what not in my field of business and never shy away by asking for suggestions from the industry experts.

How do you balance your career, family life, and community service?

I devote my 6 days to work and 1 day to family and

community service is basically few hours in a week.

What do you do to relax?

I like to travel and spend my Sunday with my kids

What book do you recommend? -

"Rich Dad, Poor Dad"

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self? — I was a serious disciplined student and I think I should have enjoyed a little bit more.



CELEBRATING **55** YEARS

DON AYRES

Congratulations!

**Kristen
Ginder**

Business Weekly
**FORTY
UNDER**

40 2026[®]



Human Resource Manager

Travis Pope

Age: 37

WBOI -
NPR News
& Diverse
Music

President
& General
Manager



What is your education?

John Tyler Community College in Richmond, Virginia

What community organizations are you involved with?

Friends of the Allen County Public Library

What are your hobbies?

Coding mobile apps, seeking out great storytelling, listening to music with my headphones turned all the way up.

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I'm in Northeast Indiana because a group of community leaders asked me to take over running this region's only public radio station. Public media opened up the world to

this poor kid from the south, and I couldn't turn down an opportunity to ensure it was there for another generation of 6-year-olds to hear in the back of their parent's car.

What is it about your profession you enjoy and why?

Radio is magic. I enjoy making sure that all the behind the scenes things — staffing, apps, our broadcast tower, and member support — all come together to create that magic seamlessly. You haven't lived until you've had someone walk up to you on a street corner to tell you how much they enjoyed something they heard on our livestream or read on our website.

What does success mean

a meaningful milestone for both me and the organization. I'm proud to help shape the future of our firm while showing that leadership, family, and community involvement can all coexist.

What has been your biggest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

Early in my leadership journey, I assumed others would learn the same way I do instead of meeting them where they were. I've learned that growth happens best when you adapt your approach and find common ground. That lesson continues to shape how I lead today.

to you?

I'll know I've succeeded when this community's generation of storytellers are ready to take their places behind our microphones. I'll absolutely know that I'm successful when someone taps me on the shoulder and tells me that it's time to go. I'm not building a staff here, I'm building replacements.

Where did your first paycheck come from, and what was your job then?

My first job was at Target, and I still remember all the things that working in retail taught me about people.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

An untraditional family of teachers and mentors helped guide me in the right direction, from breaking into podcasting to transitioning to public media. Hi, Whitney and Gabrielle. Behind me every step of the way was my grandfather, Robert Moore.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

What has been your biggest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it? The biggest mistake I've ever made in my career was assuming that there's always a

sure bet. Sometimes you can't bet the sure thing. Sometimes, the best that you can do is to look at the data, trust your instincts, and ask yourself if you're wrong in the mirror each morning.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I only ever wanted to be a technology reporter. Thankfully, I got to live out that dream and I enjoyed almost every second of it.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

Surprising absolutely not one, I suppose, I stay current by consuming very, very large amounts of audio. Some weeks, I'm listening to other public media stations for music and big-picture takeaways. Other weeks, I'm listening to podcasts from the top 10 lists of Spotify and Apple Podcasts. Every week, I try to fit in at least one big picture learning opportunity.

How do you balance your career, family life, and community service?

In all honesty, I haven't managed to strike a balance. I have a feeling that when I look back on these years in my career, I'll conclude that providing important news, music for listeners to escape into, and opportuni-

ties for WBOI to engage its community were the most important things that I did in my career. So, some things have taken a backseat. That won't be the case forever, but it is the case today.

What do you do to relax?

Learning relaxes me, and it doesn't matter what form the learning takes. A good episode of "American Experience" will have me forgetting the world in no time at all. Nothing tops a good classical music listening session, though. Good literature can also take me away.

What book do you recommend?

A good friend gave me a copy of "The First 90 Days" when I landed in Fort Wayne. It's a go-to for me as I navigate transforming an organization that's been around since 1979. If I can recommend a second book, "Make Something Wonderful" is about simply appreciating your craft, no matter what it might be. I'm now reading it for the third time.

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

Knowing what I know now, I'd tell my high school self to be bolder and braver. I'd explain to him that making hard choices now has the benefit of making harder choices easier to make later. I'd also tell him to stay hydrated.

ROWE

FROM PAGE 42

My parents have been my biggest supporters from the very beginning. They encouraged me to pursue what I wanted, supported my education and career decisions, and continue to show up for me and my family today. Their belief in me has made all the difference

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

Becoming a Partner at my firm is my proudest accomplishment. As the first female Partner, it was

a meaningful milestone for both me and the organization. I'm proud to help shape the future of our firm while showing that leadership, family, and community involvement can all coexist.

What has been your biggest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

Early in my leadership journey, I assumed others would learn the same way I do instead of meeting them where they were. I've learned that growth happens best when you adapt your approach and find common ground. That lesson continues to shape how I lead today.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I've wanted to be an engineer for as long as I can remember. At one point, I imagined designing roller coasters or building movie sets, but engineering was always the common thread.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

I stay curious and always look for the "why" behind things. Continuous learning and challenging the status quo help me grow and stay relevant.

How do you balance your career, family life, and community service?

I don't think of it as balance so much as filling my bucket. As long as I'm doing things that energize me — whether that's time with my kids, community involvement, or meaningful work — I feel fulfilled. It's about making space for what matters most.

What do you do to relax?

I enjoy listening to audiobooks and podcasts during my daily commute. It's a simple way to unwind and learn at the same time.

What book do you

recommend?

I'd recommend "Permission to Screw Up" by Kristen Hadeed. It's a reminder that growth doesn't come from getting everything right, but from creating an environment where people can try, learn, and improve.

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

Put in the extra effort early — it builds a foundation that will serve you for years to come. It's not just about working longer, but about being intentional and learning as much as you can along the way.



npr news and diverse music

**Congratulates President and
General Manager **Travis Pope** on
being named one of Fort Wayne's
2026 40 Under 40.**

Justin J. Kaler

Age: 38

Exodus New Ventures

Chief Commercialization Officer



What is your education?

Bachelor of Science in Marketing & Sales – Indiana Tech University; Master of Business Administration (MBA) – Indiana University

What community organizations are you involved with?

Board Member for Lifewise; Head Coach for Mad Apple Basketball; Head Coach for Club 1 Prime Basketball; Advisory Board Member for Homestead Youth Football Program; Head Coach for Homestead Youth Football Program; Head Football Coach for National Football League (NFL) Flag; Assistant Head Coach for Police Athletic League (PAL) football; Sunday School Class Leader for Thrive Community Group at The Chapel; Leader of Warrior Ready Training for Offseason Football Conditioning

What are your hobbies?

Spending quality time with family and friends at the lake; Early morning wakeboard sessions with my sons and their friends; Coaching and mentoring youth through sports; Developing and supporting youth programs within the Fort Wayne community

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

Fort Wayne is home for me; it's where I grew up and

where I've been fortunate to build meaningful relationships with mentors, colleagues, and lifelong friends who have shaped both my personal and professional journey. On a personal level, having both my parents and in-laws here allows our children to grow up surrounded by family, which is incredibly important to us. That foundation, both professionally and personally, is why I've chosen to build my life and career here.

What is it about your profession you enjoy and why?

I truly enjoy working with people and building meaningful relationships. I've been fortunate to have a natural ability to connect with others, and throughout my career, that has been at the center of everything I do. What makes my profession especially rewarding is the opportunity to combine those relationships with innovation, bringing new technologies to surgeons that ultimately improve patient care. Knowing that the work we do can positively impact outcomes while also supporting the people I work with is what drives me every day.

What does success mean to you?

I used to think success was defined by how far I could advance in my career and how much money I

could make. In my late 20s, my perspective shifted, and I realized success is much more about the people you have around you and the life you're building with them. I wouldn't be where I am today without my wife, our three incredible sons, and the support of family and friends who mean everything to me. They are the reason I strive every day to be the best version of myself, not just professionally, but as a husband, father, and person. To me, success is about showing up for the people who matter most while building something meaningful along the way.

Where did your first paycheck come from, and what was your job then?

My first ever paycheck came from Bob Evans, where I was a grill cook.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

That's a tough question because I've been incredibly fortunate to have so many people support me along the way. My parents have always been my biggest fans and laid the foundation for who I am today. Over time, my wife has become my greatest supporter, constantly encouraging me and pushing me to be better both personally and professionally. I've also been lucky to have a few past leaders and mentors who continue to invest in me, offering guidance and support that have played a significant role in my growth – I wouldn't be where I am without all of them.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

There have been several meaningful accomplishments in my career, but one that stands out most centers around leadership. I had the opportunity

to build and develop a sales team that achieved over 100% year-over-year growth for two and a half consecutive years. What made that accomplishment especially rewarding wasn't just the performance, but the people. I was able to bring in incredible talent, develop them, and create an environment where they could exceed what they thought was possible. Seeing that growth, both professionally and personally, is what I'm most proud of.

What has been your biggest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

Early in my career, I made the mistake of prioritizing money and title over people and purpose. In doing so, I lost sight of who I was and became more focused on personal advancement than the relationships around me. That mindset negatively impacted both my professional and personal relationships. That period was a turning point for me – it forced me to reflect, take ownership, and realign my priorities. I learned that long-term success is built on trust, relationships, and staying grounded in your values, not just external achievements. That experience ultimately shaped the leader and person I strive to be today.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

Like most kids, I wanted to be a professional athlete. I've always been competitive and drawn to teamwork, and those early interests have carried over into my career today.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

One of the things I appreciate most about the medical device industry is that you're never done learning. There are always new techniques, technologies, and approaches

emerging. To stay current, I make it a priority to stay closely connected with surgeons, colleagues, and industry partners. Those conversations, along with hands-on exposure, help ensure I'm continuously learning and bringing the most relevant solutions forward.

How do you balance your career, family life, and community service?

If I'm honest, I don't always feel perfectly balanced, and I think that's part of the reality. What helps is having strong accountability, especially from people who challenge me regularly to stay focused on what matters most. My wife and I are often asked how we manage everything, and the truth is, it sometimes means sacrificing a little sleep and being very intentional with our time. I've found that I have the most energy when I'm investing in things I genuinely care about. I'm fortunate to have a career, family, and community that I love, and that passion is what keeps me going. Balance isn't always perfect, but I do my best to stay present and prioritize what matters most.

What do you do to relax?

With three active sons, there isn't a lot of downtime — but I wouldn't have it any other way. When I do get a chance to relax, my favorite way to spend that time is with my wife, whether it's a simple date night or just time together without the kids. Those moments help me recharge the most.

What book do you recommend?

I've been fortunate to have many great books recommended to me, so it's hard to choose just one. "Extreme Ownership" by Jocko Willink is one of my all-time favorites because of

Jessa Campbell

Age: 33

Visit Fort Wayne

**Director of
Destination
Development and
Communications**



What is your education?

Purdue University, Fort Wayne

What community organizations are you involved with?

Erin's House for Grieving Children (Volunteer Facilitator), Trinity English Lutheran Church, Women's Fund of Greater Fort Wayne

What are your hobbies?

Being outdoors, volleyball, reading, mahjong

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

Fort Wayne is home. It's where I was born, raised, went to school, grew up, and it's a place I continue to choose. I stay in Fort Wayne and Northeast Indiana because of my family, the sense of community, and the real opportunity to make an impact in both small and meaningful ways.

What is it about your profession you enjoy and why?

What I enjoy most about my profession is that at Visit Fort Wayne, we get to share the story of a community we truly love. I enjoy learning about the people, places, and experiences that make Fort Wayne special, and then getting to introduce those stories to new visitors. One of the most rewarding parts of

the job is seeing how our community surprises and delights people who are experiencing it for the first time.

What does success mean to you?

For me, success is measured by the positive impact I have on the people and communities around me. I feel most successful when I'm able to give back, create opportunities for others, and help people feel supported and connected. If I can bring people together, strengthen relationships, and contribute to something bigger than myself, that's success in my eyes.

Where did your first paycheck come from, and what was your job then?

My first paychecks came from two early jobs: babysitting and working as a sales associate at Pier 1 Imports.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

My supervisor, Kristen Guthrie, has been my biggest supporter, along with our CEO and President, Jill Boggs. What I appreciate most is that they've always trusted me to explore new ideas and take on meaningful projects. When the opportunity came to lead the Tourism Master

Plan and our destination development efforts, they gave me the confidence to step into it. Their support allowed me to take on work that strengthens our destination and builds long-term value for our community.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

My biggest accomplishment so far has been leading the development and launch of our Tourism Master Plan. It was a major undertaking and seeing it come to life has been incredibly meaningful. I'm also proud of the momentum we've built in elevating our destination's visibility, especially the significant media placements we've secured, including the recent Travel + Leisure feature.

What has been your biggest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

I've made many mistakes around incorporating accessibility into our organization, my role, and our

destination development efforts. I'm still learning, and I've realized that progress matters more than perfection. Instead of being afraid of getting it wrong, I'm learning to ask more questions, involve people with lived experience, and build accessibility into the process from the beginning.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

As a child, I thought I wanted to be a teacher. I loved the idea of helping kids learn and feel supported. Today, this translates into helping visitors learn about Fort Wayne and supporting our community development.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

I stay current by staying curious and asking questions. I'm always learning from peers in the industry and paying attention to what other destinations are doing. But just as important is listening to what's happening in our community through conversations and listening to the

needs that are emerging. Staying current, to me, really means staying connected.

How do you balance your career, family life, and community service?

I'm still learning what balance looks like, and I've realized it changes throughout different seasons of life. Family is incredibly important to me, and I'll always show up when I'm needed, especially for my nieces and the people I love. I also try to create space to step away, explore, or take a walk when I need to reset. Working in the travel industry reminds me to prioritize my own sense of adventure too, whether that's a weekend trip or discovering somewhere new.

What do you do to relax?

Yoga, walking the trails, time with my family, playing games, and spending time in Michigan are the things that help me relax.

What book do you recommend?

I really enjoyed "What

SEE CAMPBELL, PAGE 58

Congratulations to **Jessa Campbell**, Visit Fort Wayne's Director of Destination Development and Communications, on being selected as one of 2026's Forty Under 40 award honorees!



From the staff and board at Visit Fort Wayne



Sarah Serna

Age: 34

**Benchmark
Human
Services**

**Benefits
Administrator**



What is your education?

Masters Degree: MBA and HR, Indiana Tech, Bachelor Degree in Business Administration and HR, Associate's degree in Social Work, HVAC Certified, SHRM-SCP Certified

What community organizations are you involved with?

NIHRA/SHRM Indiana/YLNI/Hamilton Park Little League. Membership Retention Director for NIHRA, SHRM Foundation Director for Indiana SHRM, Secretary for Hamilton Park Little League

What are your hobbies?

Volunteering, vacationing

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

A great place to raise a family, opportunity to gain great friendships, and network

What is it about your profession you enjoy and why?

HR is a unique blend of helping others, strategic business impact, and constant variety

What does success mean to you?

Happiness from within

Where did your first paycheck come from, and what was your job then?

American Pool Management: Lifeguard

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

My son. We studied SHRM together, college together, he motivates me.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

Passing the SHRM exam, Benchmark winning the Rosie award for benefits plan

What has been your biggest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

Believing failure was an option

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

NIHRA, SHRM Indiana, Networking, Leadership and Development, and simply, asking questions.

How do you balance your career, family life, and community service?

You immerse it into who you are. If you love what you're doing, then the balance is having fun while doing it.

What do you do to relax?

Sing in the car

What book do you recommend?

"13 Fatal Errors Managers Make and How you Can Avoid Them," W. Steven Brown

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

Getting back up is the only backup plan you'll need.

Cory Simon

Age: 34

**Summers
Plumbing
Heating &
Cooling**

**Hiring Consul-
tant for Marion,
Huntington,
Kokomo & Peru
areas**



What is your education?

Mississinewa High School 2006-2010
Indiana State University 2010-2012

What community organizations are you involved with?

Fort Wayne Ivy Tech HVAC Advisory Board
Sigma Alpha Epsilon
Indiana DECA
Indy Ice Boosters

What are your hobbies?

Cooking, traveling, hiking

Why are you in Northeast Indiana?

I was born in Grant County and returned to be around family after college

What is it about your profession you enjoy and why?

What I enjoy most about my profession is the opportunity to introduce individuals to careers in the skilled trades. It is incredibly rewarding to identify people with strong potential who may have never considered this path, and help guide them toward a successful and fulfilling career.

What does success mean to you?

Success, to me, is defined by continuous growth both personally and profession-

ally. It includes advancing in my career, strengthening my financial stability, building meaningful relationships, and continually developing new skills. Equally important, success means being able to create opportunities for my family and teaching them to never be complacent

Where did your first paycheck come from, and what was your job then?

My first actual job was at Sirloin Stockade in Marion. I started in the dish room and worked my way through multiple front and back of house positions before leaving for college.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

I've been fortunate to have several strong supporters throughout my career journey. Early on, my high school marketing teacher, Mrs. Kammeyer, and Principal Lezlie Winter played an important role in keeping me on the right path, and I still value staying in touch with them today. My mother and my fiancée have been my primary source of support, standing by me with whatever path I decide to venture down.

What has been your

SEE SIMON, PAGE 60

Congrats, Sarah Serna!

Benchmark Human Services is proud to celebrate our Benefits Administrator, Sarah Serna, as a Forty Under 40 winner.



Mrs. Serna is part of a team that connects people and potential. Thank you for all that you do!
Connecting People and Potential | BenchmarkHS.com



ROCK CLIMBING FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY



VISIT SUMMITCITYCLIMBING.COM



Midcareer strategies to fulfill your professional potential

BY METRO CREATIVE SERVICES

Professionals work hard to achieve their career goals. Each person's journey from young professional just starting out to seasoned expert on the cusp of retirement will feature its own unique challenges, and some of those may appear when least expected.

Midcareer professionals are generally comfortable in their careers. Such individuals have ample experience to help navigate any work-related challenges, and are far enough away from retirement to know there's still much they can accomplish before calling it a career. But it's not uncommon for professionals in their 50s to feel as though their careers have reached a plateau. That could explain why 34% of professionals in their 50s said they were unfulfilled in their jobs in response to a Phoenix Group poll conducted in 2023.

Some workers may decide a career change is their only pathway toward fulfilling their potential, but others may just need a few strategies to reinvigorate their passion within their current line of work.



METRO CREATIVE SERVICES

Taking advantage of opportunities to work alongside and mentor less experienced colleagues is one way for mid-career professionals to fulfill their potential.

- **Express a willingness to do more at your current place of employment.** It's easy for midcareer professionals to settle into a routine in which they manage similar projects each day, week, month, and year. That routine may be productive, but it can become less fulfilling over time and even a little monotonous. Midcareer professionals in such situations can spice

things up by expressing a willingness to participate in projects that make workdays a little less predictable. Many companies value versatility, so expanding your role can be a good way to reinvigorate your passion and make yourself even more valuable to the company.

- **Offer to mentor less experienced colleagues.** Sometimes all midcareer professionals need to

reinvigorate their passion is a chance to share their expertise with less experienced colleagues and witness those coworkers' progress. Partnering with less experienced professionals on projects and offering advice when requested can be a great way to utilize years of experience and also might provide some valuable insight into the future of your field that can spark

your passion once again.

- **Avoid going it alone.** Research from Indeed Flex released in 2025 found that 43% of businesses report being understaffed at least once per week, and 38% report struggling to recruit enough employees. That means there's likely ample opportunities for mid-career professionals dissatisfied with the current state of their careers to expand their responsibilities in-house, and those chances may be best identified by superiors or colleagues in human resources. Work with management and HR to identify where shortages are compromising deadlines and pinpoint ways the company can benefit from your experience. This may require taking on extra work and thus working longer hours, but it's also a possible pathway to fulfilling your potential and regaining your passion for your profession.

It's not uncommon for professionals in their 50s to feel a sense of malaise regarding their careers. But various strategies may help experienced professionals find a pathway to fulfilling their potential.

How to master remote work

BY METRO CREATIVE SERVICES

Remote working might not be as common as it was during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, when a significant percentage of working professionals were required to work from home as a safety precaution. A 2025 report from Wow Remote Teams estimated that 22% of American workers would spend the year working remotely, while the staffing and recruitment experts at Robert Half antici-

pated four in 10 workers being afforded some amount of remote work opportunities in 2025.

Those figures might be a far cry from remote work statistics earlier in the decade, but they still indicate that a significant percentage of professionals are spending at least some, if not all, of their workday working from home. Working from home poses some unique challenges that are not necessarily present when commuting to an

office each day. A few simple strategies can help remote workers overcome the unique issues that may arise when working from home.

- **Schedule each day.** A work calendar that includes daily tasks and meetings can help remote workers stay the course and avoid succumbing to distractions present at home that are not around in a typical office. In addition to listing tasks and meetings, add goals to a daily schedule, which can keep remote workers

motivated to continue working during lulls in the workday.

- **Minimize in-office distractions.** Remote workers who spend enough time working from home to merit a separate home office space should do what's necessary to minimize in-office distractions. For instance, a television in a home office can be a needless distraction that remote workers may turn on even when they have a full day's work on their

plate. Additional creature comforts also can be nice but distracting. Minimizing such distractions in a home office can ensure remote workers are as productive at home as they were when they commuted to an office each day.

- **Stay in touch.** One of the hurdles companies face when allowing workers to work from home is maintaining open lines of communication between staff members.

Tips for starting a home-based business

BY METRO CREATIVE SERVICES

Starting a home-based business can be a viable way to gain financial independence and pursue a passion. According to the U.S. Small Business Administration, 50% of all businesses start at home. The SBA also reports that 60% of all businesses without staff are home-based.

While the process of starting a home-based business may seem daunting, it can be broken down into manageable steps. Here's how to navigate the journey successfully.

- **Identify a business idea.** Individuals can assess their skills and passions as a starting off point for developing a home-based business. Then these passions can be paired with market research to determine if there is sufficient demand for the product or service.

- **Consider feasibility.** It's important to evaluate if a business idea can be realistically run from home. Certain business ideas, such as freelance writing, are much more conducive to being done from home than a wedding catering business.

- **Compile a business**



METRO CREATIVE SERVICES

Home-based businesses can be viable ways to make money and turn a passion into a profession.

- **plan.** Every business should have a well written and concise business plan. A plan should include a summary of the mission and goals of the business, a detailed description of the business and its legal structure, target audience, a clear explanation of what is being offered to customers, and an estimate of costs,

income and expenses.

- **Set it up legally.** Even though the business may be home-based, this doesn't mean one should take shortcuts around the proper channels for establishing the business. Decide if the business will be a sole proprietorship, partnership, limited liability company, or a corporation.

These designations come with different implications for taxes, liability and administrative complexity. Next, register the business name with the appropriate agencies. An Employer Identification Number likely will be needed for U.S.-based businesses. Licenses and permits, including a sales tax permit

if products will be sold, also may be required.

- **Secure your finances.** Decide what capital will be used to start the business, whether it is personal funds or from investors or a loan. Also, it is wise to open a dedicated business bank account and credit card to help separate personal and business finances. This will make accounting and filing taxes easier.

- **Reassess insurance policies.** One might consider business liability insurance to protect assets and the home from potential risks. A home insurance policy may not cover business-related incidents, even if they are at home.

- **Develop a marketing strategy.** As with any business, a home-based business requires a marketing plan. Develop a strategy to promote the business and reach the target market.

- **Retrofit the home.** While many home-based businesses can work seamlessly without home modifications, others may require some changes and a dedicated space. Assess needs and then make changes accordingly.

Did you know?

BY METRO CREATIVE SERVICES

The typical small business may be even smaller than many consumers recognize. According to the 2022 Annual Business Survey from the U.S. Census Bureau, 49% of small employer firms with fewer than 500 workers have between one and four employees. An additional 16% of such firms have between five and nine employees.

Such data indicates that nearly two-thirds of all small businesses feature nine or fewer employees. That might surprise many consumers, as might the findings regarding the nature of small businesses in relation to ownership.

Though it's common to view small businesses as "mom and pop" operations, just 10% of small businesses in the United States were jointly owned and operated equally by spouses in 2021.



METRO CREATIVE SERVICES

Nearly two-thirds of all small businesses have nine or fewer employees, according to census data.

Recent Forty Under 40 fun



FILE PHOTOS

Thirty-six members of the Greater Fort Wayne Business Weekly Forty Under 40 Class of 2025 are pictured.



Ferguson Agency employees at Greater Fort Wayne Business Weekly's 2025 Forty Under 40 ceremony March 27 make a toast.



It's time to party at the table of 2021 Forty Under 40 recipient Alexandra Hall, upper right.



Attendees of the 2024 Greater Fort Wayne Business Weekly Forty Under 40 look through the special section about each of the recipients.



FILE PHOTOS

Members of the Business Weekly Forty Under 40 Class of 2022 are seen after the ceremony.



A 2021 Forty Under 40 attendee checks out the special section on the Forty Under 40.



John Urbahns, president and CEO of Greater Fort Wayne Inc., told the Forty Under 40 Class of 2021 to put their certificates in a prominent place to remind themselves to be better leaders.



2024 keynote speaker John Dortch challenged the Forty Under 40 recipients to keep looking forward.

Nursing is a diverse field

BY METRO CREATIVE SERVICES

Nursing is a wise career choice for people looking for a challenging yet rewarding profession. Significant nursing shortages continue to pose a challenge within the health care industry, as the United States was expected to have a deficit of around 295,800 nurses by the end of 2025.

Nurses work in many different facilities and can focus on an array of specialties. Nurses may be categorized by their levels of education. Each level has a different scope of practice and responsibility. Those considering nursing as a career, or patients preparing to see a nursing provider for care, can explore these types of nurses.

Licensed practical nurse (LPN)

LPNs are health care professionals responsible for basic patient care and comfort. They typically are a patient's primary point of contact and relay information to the rest of the care team. One can think of LPNs as entry-level nurses, although their responsibilities are no less important than other medical professionals'. LPNs typically work under others' direct supervision and assist patients with eating, dressing and bathing.



METRO CREATIVE SERVICES

Nursing is an extensive field with many opportunities for individuals to find their niche.

LPNs also take vital signs and administer medications. The American Nursing Association says becoming an LPN or a licensed vocational nurse requires a high school diploma or GED and a vocational training course, and a passing grade on the National Council Licensure Examination for Practical Nurses is necessary.

Registered nurse (RN)

RNs require a higher level of education than LPNs and they can provide more complex and comprehen-

sive care for patients. RNs often handle a wider range of patient services and take on more responsibilities than LPNs. The ANA says two college degree paths available to aspiring RNs are an Associate Degree in Nursing (ADN) and a Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN). A BSN requires a greater financial commitment and a four-year undergraduate program takes time to complete. Many employers zero in on candidates with a BSN.

Nurses who have

advanced degrees are called Advanced Practice Registered Nurses. They have specialized training beyond that of a typical registered nurse and have broader scopes of practice. They may work with greater autonomy in certain specialties.

Certified nurse practitioner (CNP)

A CNP is a health partner of choice for many people. The American Association of Nurse Practitioners® says CNPs are clinicians

that blend clinical expertise in diagnosing and treating health conditions with an emphasis on disease prevention and health management. Advanced education, like a master's or doctoral degree, is required to become a CNP. He or she is able to prescribe medications, order diagnostic tests and manage chronic conditions.

Certified nurse-midwife (CNM)

CNMs provide gynecological and low-risk obstetrical care. These advance practice registered nurses focus their study and practices on gynecology, family planning, prenatal, labor, and postpartum care. In addition to an advanced degree, CNMs must complete an accredited midwifery education program and pass a national certification exam.

Certified registered nurse anesthetist (CRNA)

CRNAs have specialized training in anesthesia. The Cleveland Clinic notes CRNAs can administer anesthesia for procedures and surgeries. These professionals work with surgeons, anesthesiologists, dentists, podiatrists, and other providers. CRNAs often are the sole anesthesia providers in hospitals in rural areas and the U.S. armed forces.

Celebrating the 2026 Forty Under 40

These rising leaders are making a lasting impact across our community through their passion, commitment, and drive.

Greater Fort Wayne Business Weekly is proud to honor your achievements and the difference you make every day.

Congratulations to this year's class.

ASELAGE

FROM PAGE 24

supporter who helped you advance in your career?

Allen Beatty, known by “Al” to most, played a significant role in getting me to where I am today. He gave me the opportunity to join Trine’s VITA and develop it into the impressive program it is today. Not only that, but he also encouraged me to explore Trine’s career fair where I would meet my future employer. Al has been a wonderful mentor and motivator throughout my career at Trine University. I am eternally grateful for everything he has done for me.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

The biggest accomplishment I have had thus far was creating the VITA site at Trine University and helping it grow year after year. With our tax season nearing its end, we have a nearly 33% increase in tax returns produced for members of the community. As I prepare to graduate, it has been rewarding to see the program blossom into an impressive way to provide direct help to members in the community.

What has been your biggest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

It is hard to designate just

one mistake as my biggest mistake. Being that it is so early in my career I have made many mistakes, but it is through those mistakes that I was able to learn the most important lesson; that when mistakes are made, you are provided with the biggest opportunity to learn.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

As a child, I wanted to be a teacher. As the oldest daughter, I was always naturally inclined to teach and lead my sisters to what was right and wrong.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

The best way to remain

current in my profession is reading up on new laws and updates to tax laws. There are multiple platforms that I use to stay current in new tax codes.

How do you balance your career, family life, and community service?

I have learned to balance my time between working a job, being a full-time student, training as an athlete, and volunteering in my community by utilizing every part of my day. We all get the same 24 hours in a day, so I try to make the most of them. When focusing on an activity, I give my full attention.

What do you do to relax?

I enjoy reading thriller novels on my kindle, taking a nice walk around Fort Wayne,

or just going for hikes.

What book do you recommend?

I highly recommend reading “The Running Dream.” The book has a strong message of perseverance and gratitude. I first discovered this book in middle school, but its life lessons are ones that I have carried with me throughout my life.

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

Take advantage of every single opportunity you are given in college. Go to the career fairs, spend time getting to know your professors, and be involved, especially when it is out of your comfort zone.

EMERICK

FROM PAGE 26

provided meal service and dining support for residents.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

I credit my dad for guiding me to a successful career path. His support and encouragement, combined with lessons in curiosity, perseverance, and giving credit where it’s due, shaped not only my approach to life but also my growth as a leader.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

As manager of laboratory Services, I take pride in leading and mentoring professionals entering the field of laboratory science while driving large-scale improvements to laboratory processes across the health system. My work focuses on strengthening operations and supporting the teams that make high-quality patient care possible.

What has been your biggest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

During a death investigation, I made the mistake of speaking to a decedent’s loved one about the circumstances of the death, assuming they had already been notified of the death by law enforcement.

In reality, the family had not received a death notification, and my assumptions only added to their grief. From this experience, I learned never to assume that necessary steps have been taken and to approach difficult conversations with curiosity by assessing the other person’s awareness before proceeding. It was a humbling lesson in empathy, communication, and the importance of pausing to understand someone’s perspective.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

Accountant

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

Follow the latest research and guidelines through publications and webinars, participate in continuing education, and collaborate with colleagues to discover best practices and new technologies that enhance laboratory operations.

How do you balance your career, family life, and community service?

Stay organized and set priorities, allowing me to give my best at work while remaining connected to my loved ones and engaged in serving opportunities.

What do you do to relax?

My favorite way to relax is floating in a pool on a hot summer day.

What book do you recommend?

“Atomic Habits,” by James Clear, reinforces my belief that lasting personal growth comes from small, consistent actions and a focus on who you’re becoming, beyond simply reaching goals.

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

Take the time to enjoy your friends; you’ll appreciate those moments more than you realize. Keep working hard because future-you will be glad you did. And no matter what anyone says, the way you did math in high school still makes way more sense than whatever they replaced it with.

HUNTER

FROM PAGE 38

you advance in your career?

My parents have always been great supporters, but I owe a lot of thanks to Steve Stepp, Jan Diaz, and Rick Walz with the Better Business Bureau. My wife, Taylor, is my biggest supporter and I could not do what I do without her.

What has been your

biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

Being a part of many successful home improvement projects has been my greatest accomplishment thus far.

What has been your biggest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

I made an error when proposing a project. The best thing you can do is get in front of the customer, own it,

and make it right.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I would have accepted being a professional baseball or football player. I am much better suited for the home improvement industry.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

Being active on social media helps a lot, as well as

ensuring customer satisfaction so their family and friends want to work with me also.

How do you balance your career, family life, and community service?

The best advice I have received is being intentional with whatever you are doing. It is hard to create a true “balance” but being present and fully engaged is sufficient.

What do you do to relax?

I spend time with my

family, take long walks, and listen to good playlists or podcasts.

What book do you recommend?

“The Heart of Business” by Hubert Joly.

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

I would emphasize the importance of patience and waiting well. Things work on God’s timing, not ours.

KINZER

FROM PAGE 20

children call home.

What is it about your profession you enjoy and why?

I have always been drawn to oncology because it is deeply human work. Cancer care requires precision, innovation, and above all, compassion. It is truly an honor to be present during some of life's most vulnerable moments. As a nursing leader, I've had the opportunity to design systems that support both patients and nurses. I am a strong advocate for our oncology nurses within the cancer institute—a responsibility I do not take lightly and am proud to represent.

What does success mean to you?

Success is building something that outlasts you. It's creating teams that function well even when you're not in the room and developing leaders who grow beyond their current roles. At home, success means being present while raising kind, capable children and building a life that reflects our values.

Where did your first paycheck come from, and what was your job then?

My first official job was babysitting, caring for three young girls full time over the summer. I've had the joy of watching them grow into beautiful young women over the years.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

I have been fortunate to have strong mentors who have challenged me to think bigger and lead differently throughout my nursing leadership career. I've had the privilege of learning from exceptional leaders, including Erin LaCross, Linda Francis, and Christine Hepler, whose advocacy and leadership have helped shape the leader I

am today. My current leader, Megan Smith, has provided unwavering support during my time at the Packnett Family Cancer Institute, and I am grateful for the opportunity she provided me to serve our patients and teams as Infusion Director.

At home, my husband has been my steady support, encouraging me to pursue growth opportunities while reminding me that, even during life's most chaotic moments, our family remains grounded and connected.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

Building sustainable, high-quality infusion services for patients closer to home across our region has been a major professional milestone. I have a passion for mentoring and have had the privilege of supporting nurses who aspire to advance in their careers and have watched them confidently grow in leadership roles. Watching them grow and hearing them say that they look to me as an example for their own leadership journey is an indescribable honor and one of the most meaningful parts of my work.

What has been your biggest mistake thus far, and what lessons did you learn from it?

One of my biggest mistakes has been taking on too much myself. Leadership can be challenging on many levels, and my instinct to step in when others are struggling is rooted in a deep compassion for others. Over time, I've learned that trying to carry the workload to shield others is only preventing growth, both for myself and for my team. I've learned the importance of setting boundaries, trusting my teams, and supporting others in a way that allows them to grow.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I have known I wanted to be a nurse since kinder-

garten, and I never wavered from that path. It always felt instinctual, as though I inherently knew it was what I was meant to do.

How do you remain current and relevant in your profession?

Health care is constantly evolving, so staying current takes intention. I stay engaged through nursing leadership councils, working closely with colleagues across the organization, and staying connected to research through professional organizations. I also make a commitment to continued learning and growing in my role.

How do you balance your career, family life, and community service?

Balance is less about perfection and more about alignment. I build strong teams and delegate effectively at work, and at home I protect family time and stay present with my husband and our four children.

What do you do to relax?

I recharge by spending time with my family and focusing on creative projects. I enjoy getting lost in trying something new, especially through hands-on design and craft work.

What book do you recommend?

A couple of recent reads I've enjoyed are "The Next Conversation: Argue Less, Talk More" by Jefferson Fisher and "Unreasonable Hospitality" by Will Guidara. One focuses on techniques for handling conversations and conflict, and the other on leadership and creating meaningful experiences.

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

Trust the process. Growth takes time. Work hard, stay humble, and do not be afraid to step into opportunities that feel bigger than you.

CAMPBELL

FROM PAGE 49

We Carry: A Memoir." It's a powerful reminder of how the stories we share, and the ones we inherit, help shape who we become.

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

Purpose has always been so mething I wanted

ROHRMAN

FROM PAGE 14

biggest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

Hard to say. I like to use the quote "there are wins and there are lessons". The only way a mistake can be made is if you learn nothing from it. We're all human. Stuff happens. Just don't let history repeat itself.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

There were phases... Paleontologist, racecar driver, and physical therapist were a few.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

Consume industry related content daily. Listen to podcasts, audiobooks, attend trade shows,

LAND

FROM PAGE 8

best friend with an iced coffee in hand, or spending time on Lake James with my family.

What book do you recommend?

I would recommend "Nicomachean Ethics" by Aristotle. It was a fundamental part of my education and personal formation at Hillsdale

to find or have with my job, but I recently heard someone share that purpose is not found but built. I'd tell my high school self that you don't need to have everything figured out. You're creating your purpose through what you care about, how you show up, and the things you choose to spend your time on. We Carry: A Memoir." It's a powerful reminder of how the stories we share, and the ones we inherit, help shape who we become.

leverage connections to find different ways to approach situations, and research competitors regularly.

How do you balance your career, family life, and community service?

I'm not sure I do. Sorry, Andria.

What do you do to relax?

Hit the gym, the course, or just watch a show/ play a video game (Usually

What book do you recommend?

"Unreasonable Hospitality" — Will Guidara

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

Stay true to yourself and continue to be kind.

College and helped shape how I think about all aspects of life. The book's focus on virtue, character, and the formation of good habits left a lasting impact on how I approach both personal decisions and professional responsibility.

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self? I would tell myself to trust my gut and God's timing and not worry so much about having everything figured out.

TINNEL

FROM PAGE 4

What does success mean to you?

Success for me means using my time and talent to make the community around me better for everyone, as much as I can and however I can. I'd like to leave the world better than I found it.

Where did your first paycheck come from, and what was your job then?

My first real paycheck came from Hungry Howie's Pizza when I was 15. I started out answering the phones and taking orders, then eventually worked my way up to running the oven (cutting and boxing everything up).

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

I've been fortunate to have many professional cheerleaders over the years, but my biggest supporter in many aspects of life is my husband Cory. From a career advancement perspective, he helps me stay grounded, challenge myself, and find solutions to the challenges I encounter.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

I was recently honored by Mayor Tucker as the inaugural recipient of the Heart of the City Award, intended to recognize Fort Wayne citizens who demonstrate humility, kindness and compassion, as well as leadership abilities, representing the best of our city. I consider this my biggest accomplishment because it represents the combination of work I've done in the community through both professional and volunteer roles.

What has been your biggest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

I am not sure there was ever one big mistake, but lots of teachable moments and some missed opportunities. The key lessons I've learned are to be really thoughtful in my work and don't be afraid to take calculated risks.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I don't recall ever really thinking about adulthood as a young child. I was mainly just living in the moment and enjoying being a kid. In high school I explored potential hospitality careers, but ultimately landed on public affairs and political science.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

Beyond the usual training and webinars, I find it most helpful to actively collaborate with a diverse network of people and learn from each other's different perspectives and skills. When people work together to accomplish shared goals, there are plenty of built in learning opportunities throughout the process.

How do you balance your career, family life, and community service?

I am not sure I've mastered perfect balance quite yet, but keeping my time and priorities highly organized has been a key component. I make a lot of lists and use my calendar extensively. And I've gotten better over the years at declining opportunities when necessary to avoid maxing out my capacity.

What do you do to relax?

I'm most relaxed when

I'm spending time outside in nature, doing things like taking a walk around Foster Park or tackling landscaping projects. These help keep me grounded and clear my head.

What book do you recommend?

From a practical standpoint, I recommend "Crucial Conversations." It highlights the importance of communication and gives practical tools that can sustainably be woven into practice for both personal and professional situations. I had the opportunity to go through the Crucial Conversations and Crucial Accountability training and found it incredibly valuable.

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

Don't be afraid to speak up. Your voice matters more than you realize.



METRO CREATIVE SERVICES

Remote working remains a fact of life for millions of workers, who can employ various strategies to remain productive when working from home.

REMOTE

FROM PAGE 52

Remote workers should prioritize communication with colleagues and coworkers even if they no longer see them each day. Identify ways to remain in touch so productivity does not suffer and projects are completed on time and up to par. Utilize communication channels such as email, messaging apps, text messaging, and Zoom to remain connected with colleagues. Management personnel can consider daily or weekly meetings with necessary personnel to ensure workflow is not suffering and confirm everyone is on the same page with projects and expectations.

- **Remain flexible.** Flexibility is often cited as part of the appeal of remote work, but remote workers must recognize that's a two-way street. If employers and supervisors allow remote workers flex hours and other perks exclusive to working from home, then that flexibility must be reciprocated when the need arises. A willingness to work some late nights or even weekend hours is a good tradeoff for the benefits of working from home.

MARTIN

FROM PAGE 40

What book do you recommend?

I enjoy a mix of personal growth and storytelling, with favorites including, “The Purpose Driven Life” by Rick Warren for living intentionally and aligning daily work with a greater sense of purpose, and “Where the Crawdads

Sing” by Delia Owens for a reminder of resilience and self-reliance.

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

Trust God and yourself sooner and don’t be afraid to make mistakes. The path may not always be clear, but hard work, kindness and staying true to who you are will open the right doors.

SIMON

FROM PAGE 50

biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

Being a part of the team we are continuing to build and seeing Summers continue to thrive and grow year after year.

What has been your biggest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

I would say being complacent early on. After moving back home, I spent 4 years in a role I didn’t see much growth for me into the future before leaving and starting down the path I have been on currently.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I originally wanted to go into law enforcement all the way through grade school.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

Finding webinars, training seminars, and reaching out to peers from similar industries. Never doubt a supportive network.

How do you balance your career, family life, and community service?

For my family, using a shared calendar was a huge addition to keeping everyone working on the same page.

If it wasn’t on the calendar, it didn’t exist. Other than that, things have just worked out.

What do you do to relax?

We enjoy traveling, even though it may not always be considered “relaxing” with a 13- and 3-year-old. For us, it’s about breaking away from the routine, creating shared experiences, and making memories that give us something meaningful to talk about long after the trip ends.

What book do you recommend?

For a relaxing take your mind off read I really enjoyed “A Walk In The Woods” by Bill Bryson. For more of a professional recommendation Creativity, Inc. By Ed Catmull was a captivating read I would recommend for any leaders or management looking for overcoming hurdles and maintaining cultural expectations.

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

Other than the obvious normal life events and a stock tip or two, I know how I looked at the fear of failure back then and the cloud it hung over me. I would let him know to continue to strive for more and just because a conversation or move seems uncomfortable to not let it deter yourself from trying. Growth and comfort do not coexist.

ZWICK

FROM PAGE 6

team that supports me when things inevitably get a little uneven).

What do you do to relax?

Relaxing is... not my strong suit. I try to unwind with a good book or a walk around the block. I’m totally open to suggestions!

What book do you recommend?

I absolutely adore fiction — anything mysterious, intense, or adventurous. My book clubs usually lean toward nonfiction, which I also enjoy. My recommendation: “I’m Glad My Mom Died” by Jennette McCurdy. It’s honest, surprising, emotional, and brilliantly written.

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

Take the scholarship. You do not want to pay student loans for 20+ years after college. And listen to your mom — or whoever raised you — they know you better than you could ever imagine. Mine always has (and still does).

WEBER

FROM PAGE 3

my biggest supporter throughout my career, always encouraging me to take on new challenges and believing in my abilities. I’ve also been lucky to work alongside leaders at Surack Enterprises who have provided guidance, support, and opportunities that have helped shape my professional path.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

When I first joined Surack Enterprises, we were housed at Sweetwater, where I experienced that culture firsthand. As we transitioned to the Kaizen Center, I’ve been proud to help carry that same commitment of “always doing the right thing” across our businesses that touch many parts of our community. That sense of purpose comes directly from the leadership and people who make Surack Enterprises what it is.

What has been your biggest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

Early in my career, I sometimes felt like I needed to have all the answers before speaking up or asking questions.

Over time, I learned that collaboration and asking for input often leads to better outcomes. That experience taught me that growth often comes from being willing to learn openly and work through challenges with others. Ultimately, it is about the team you’re surrounded by that makes collaboration special.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

Like many kids, my ideas changed quite a bit as I grew up. I was always drawn to roles where I could help organize, solve problems, and work with people. Looking back, those interests translated pretty well into the career path I eventually chose.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

I try to stay curious and open to learning from others in the industry. Continuing education, professional development, and conversations with colleagues are all helpful ways to stay current. I also find that being involved in leadership and community organizations offers a broader perspective that’s valuable in my work.

How do you balance your career, family life, and community service?

Balance is something

I’m always working on, and it often requires being intentional with my time and priorities. Having supportive colleagues and family makes a big difference.

What do you do to relax?

To relax, I prioritize spending quality time with my family and friends, especially my two little girls. Their laughter and energy are the best reset I could ask for.

What book do you recommend?

One book I would recommend is “Unreasonable Hospitality” by Will Guidara. It’s all about creating exceptional experiences by truly caring about the people you serve. I think that philosophy applies well beyond the hospitality industry and is a great reminder of the impact thoughtful leadership can have.

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

When you’re young, it can feel like every decision has to be perfect. Over time I’ve learned that our paths, both personally and professionally, aren’t always linear, and that is part of the journey. Be willing to step outside of your comfort zone, work hard and trust that things will fall into place.

KALER

FROM PAGE 48

its focus on accountability and leadership. A close second is “The Ideal Team Player” by Patrick Lencioni, which really shaped how I think about building and developing strong teams.

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

I would tell myself that success isn't just about grades or getting into the biggest college, it's about developing strong relationships, emotional intelligence, and a willingness to never be outworked. Stay true to who you are, invest in people, and don't underestimate the value of having the right people in your corner. In the long run, relationships and consistency will take you further than anything else.

PETTIT

FROM PAGE 12

“Built to Last” are essential business reads), “County — Life, Death, and Politics at Chicago's Public Hospital” is an incredible insight into how messy healthcare is from a birds eye view at the busiest ER in America, and finally “The Dynasty” by Jeff Benedict. This is a bit of an odd one, but it follows the New England Patriots rise to “Dynasty Status” and is both fascinating and will resonate

with anyone trying to build a “winning” team, program, or organization.

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

Enjoy high school and college and the people around you right now! There will come a day where you will miss the amount of time you got to spend with friends and family, so prioritize those groups now and maintain those relationships.

Celebrating the 2026 Forty Under 40

These rising leaders are making a lasting impact across our community through their passion, commitment, and drive.

Greater Fort Wayne Business Weekly is proud to honor your achievements and the difference you make every day.

Congratulations to this year's class.

HARTWIG

FROM PAGE 18

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

I have had many incredible supporters, and it is difficult to narrow it down to just a few.

Brian Landress, my first corporate director, encouraged my technical curiosity and gave me the opportunity to build my first system, even though it was outside the scope of my role.

Nelson Peters, my first mentor at Aptera Software, taught me how to be a consulting business analyst, consistently offered thoughtful advice, and even took my first web development bootcamp alongside me.

Spencer Cummings helped me navigate the federal engineering landscape and supported my pursuit of data, AI innovation, and leadership growth.

And of course, David Federspiel, my partner, has supported me through many challenges and successes.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

Two accomplishments

stand out. In 2019, I transitioned from a business analyst to a software engineer through self-education and mentorship. Later, I joined Microsoft as a Data and AI Technical Specialist, which was a major milestone in my career.

What has been your biggest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

Earlier in my career, I said yes to opportunities without fully considering my level of commitment. I would take on exciting projects without thinking about how they fit alongside my other priorities. I have since learned to be more intentional, committing only to work that aligns with my goals and values, and being more disciplined with how I spend my time.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I wanted to be a journalist or a lawyer.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

I maintain a continuous learning mindset and draw from a variety of resources, including relationships with experts, online content,

articles, and hands-on side projects. Technology evolves quickly, and staying relevant requires a commitment to ongoing learning.

How do you balance your career, family life, and community service?

I prioritize working reasonable hours and make a conscious effort to be present when spending time with friends and family. During active seasons with Marginal Entropy, life becomes busier, but I rely on structure and scheduling to maintain balance and protect time for my personal life.

What do you do to relax?

I prioritize daily movement, whether through Pilates or using my walking pad. I also enjoy reading, watching television, and playing video games.

What book do you recommend?

“The Disordered Cosmos,” “Project Hail Mary,” and “Never Split the Difference.”

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

Most decisions are not permanent. It is always OK to experiment and change your mind as you gain more information.

SCHWAB

FROM PAGE 12

and grow from my first position in recruiting to my current role as Director of a team that supports employees and helps shape their careers.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

My growth in HR. I have been able to travel the world building and leading teams in the Recruitment Process Outsourcing (RPO) space, and in the past six years transitioned to settling down in Fort Wayne/Sweetwater and being able to grow my career in a completely different way

What has been your

biggest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

I wouldn't call it a mistake, but it took me some time to realize I thrive in a true HR role supporting a company directly, which was a career pivot after being in RPO for 11 years. Once I had that clarity, finding the right fit at Sweetwater was the next step, and I gained a lot of valuable experience along the way!

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

Musician!

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

Podcasts, HR and mental health training

How do you balance your career, family life, and community service? Lots of planning and organization, and much support from my fiancé Zach when things get the busiest

What do you do to relax?

Spend time in nature, play or listen to music

What book do you recommend?

“Dare to Lead,” Brene Brown

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

You are capable of SO much more than you could ever imagine!

Brian Avery

Age: 39

STAR
Financial

Chief
Technology
Officer



What is your education?

Northrop High School — 2005

BS of Public Affairs – Indiana University Fort Wayne — 2011

What community organizations are you involved with?

I currently serve on the board of the NIIC (Northeast Indiana Innovation Center), the community advisory board for the local public radio station WBOI, and in Governor Braun's Executive Council on Cybersecurity.

What are your hobbies?

I love to cook and spend a fair number of weekends attempting to make some new kind of dish. I also enjoy books, podcasts, and tv. I'm also a music lover and play the guitar.

Why are you in

Northeast Indiana?

I'm born and raised in Fort Wayne, I left briefly before returning to work for STAR. I've continued to say in northeast Indiana because I love the momentum that Fort Wayne has right now and different it is from the city I grew up in. We're continuing to grow and expand what we have to offer and its exciting to be a part of that.

What is it about your profession you enjoy and why?

I've always been intrigued by technology and how things work. Getting to spend my day solving problems or helping the people on my teams solve them is incredibly satisfying. As I've moved into more leadership focused roles, I've realized how much I enjoy

coaching people and helping grow and develop them.

What does success mean to you?

I'm a big fan of being intentional about defining success because I think it varies for different situations. If we're talking big picture, I think success is being happy, feeling loved and supported, and continuing to find joy.

Where did your first paycheck come from, and what was your job then?

My first real paycheck was from my job working at Rally's. I started on the grill flipping burgers and eventually learned all the different positions in the kitchen.

Who was your biggest supporter who helped you advance in your career?

My family has always been very supportive of me and encouraged me to do whatever I wanted. I've had a number of good mentors and bosses over the years but by far my current boss Kristin Marcuccilli Green has been by far my biggest cheerleader and the person who has pushed me to do things I might have been scared to do.

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

When I started college I wanted to be an attorney

and set out on that path. By the time I graduated I had already started a career in IT, enjoyed it, and wasn't real interested in taking on the debt to go to law school. I decided to stay in IT and set a goal to be a CIO or CTO before I turned 40, when I was able to check that one off it felt really good.

What has been your biggest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

I had a very rough transition from individual contributor to manager. I didn't fully understand the shift in responsibilities and tried to continue to do the work I had been doing while also leading a team. It was tough and took me a lot longer than it should have to realize I needed to redefine what success looked like in the new role.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

I wanted to be a police officer or a lawyer. I always found rules and law fascinating to me and have a very strong sense of justice.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

I attend conferences regularly and try to consume various media forms to keep updated. I also have a very strong peer network of other bank CIOs, COOs, and CTOs who I see regularly

and compare notes.

How do you balance your career, family life, and community service?

I've learned to be very protective of my time and only commit to things that I'm truly passionate about. So whether its career or community service related, I want to make sure that I'm fully engaged. That's helped prevent me from over extending myself.

What do you do to relax?

Cooking, TV, long walks, and occasional video games are all helpful to decompress. I also enjoy lifting weights and playing the guitar. A nice trip to a secluded cabin or the beach also doesn't hurt.

What book do you recommend?

I'm a big fan of Simon Sinek, so "Start with Why" or "The Infinite Game" are ones that I really enjoy. Verbal Judo is also one that I very regularly recommend to my teams when they need help with difficult conversations.

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

Figure out who's truly in your corner and make sure you give far more weight to their opinions than anyone else.

BROCK

FROM PAGE 22

What has been your biggest accomplishment thus far in your career?

My biggest accomplishment in my career is building the team I have today. Together we have greatly improved quality across multiple states. They are smart, driven and very successful. I take a lot of pride in knowing I was a

part of their journey.

What has been your biggest mistake thus far and what lessons did you learn from it?

My biggest mistake was moving too fast and not recognizing opportunities. It is important to slow down and see the room around you sometimes.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

Ha! I thought I'd have

many different jobs. I wanted to be a marine biologist, a lawyer and so much more. I wanted to do anything except health care. I was terrified of health care. Look where I landed.

How do you remain current/relevant in your profession?

I read a lot. I like to brainstorm with experts of other departments or groups. I feel like I am constantly looking for growth and ways to apply success to my own team and

approach.

How do you balance your career, family life, and community service?

I include my family in all areas. You can find my kids volunteering at different events or travelling needs together. They are growing up so it makes it fun instead of challenging. They like to be a part of my life as much as I enjoy being a part of theirs.

What do you do to

relax?

Reading and silence.

What book do you recommend?

There are so many great choices! Lately I've been very interested in Jeneva Rose for fiction.

Based on what you know now, what would you tell your high school self?

Girl. Trust the growth. It'll all work out just fine.

STAR Financial Bank congratulates
BRIAN AVERY



Chief Technology Officer



starfinancial.com



*Congratulations
to all of the
Forty Under 40
Winners!*

Greater Fort Wayne Business Weekly
**FORTY
UNDER**

40TM
2026

*Stop in and see
Indiana's largest
home improvement
showroom too!*

**OPEN
SATURDAYS 9-4**



**Windows
Doors
& More**

Mon. - Thur. 9-7 • Fri. 9-5 • Sat. 9-4 • Closed Sun.

1121 W. Washington Center Rd

260-422-7077

www.wdmfactorystore.com

