



# 2017 Executive Mentorship Program Handbook

## A Message from the Chamber

Thank you for your participation in our Executive Mentorship Program. As a workforce development initiative of the Capital Region Chamber, the Tech Valley Young Professionals Network (YPN) understands that nothing is more important to the growth of business or the region than attracting and retaining top talent.

The Executive Mentorship Program connects ambitious young professionals with seasoned, high-level business leaders to support their professional and personal development. The success of this program can be attributed to its growing popularity and the dedicated mentors. Since the program's inception in 2004, we have matched nearly 600 young professionals with local executives. YPN mentees have reported that, thanks to this initiative, they feel more rooted in the community. This is proof that YPN is achieving its goal of grooming and retaining our best and brightest young professionals.

We are pleased to present the Executive Mentorship Handbook for your use throughout your experience. Within this handbook, you will find important dates, guidelines and required and suggested activities. There is also a section that highlights the "Mentorship Ambassadors." Upon confirmation of your mentorship pair, you will also be matched with an Ambassador who will provide guidance and support throughout the program to ensure a rewarding and meaningful experience. If at any point throughout the program you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to Brandi Miller at the Capital Region Chamber, 518.431.1414.

We wish you great success and continued growth within the Tech Valley Region.

Sincerely,



Handwritten signature of Mark N. Eagan in black ink.

**Mark N. Eagan, CCE**  
CEO  
Capital Region Chamber

Handwritten signature of Charles P. Steiner in black ink.

**Charles P. Steiner, CCE**  
President  
Capital Region Chamber

# Executive Mentorship Program Overview

## What is Mentoring?

History gives many examples of the value of mentoring. The most famous instance was chronicled by Homer in The Odyssey. Homer tells us that around 1200 BC, the adventurer Odysseus made ready to leave for the siege of Troy. Before sailing, he appointed a guardian to his household. For the next 10 years, this guardian acted faithfully as a teacher, advisor, friend and surrogate father to Telemachus, son of Odysseus. The mythical guardian's name was Mentor.

Homer's story reflects one of the oldest attempts by a society to facilitate mentoring. The Greeks based these relationships on a basic principle of human survival: people learn skills, culture and values directly from other people whom they look up to or admire.

## YPN Executive Mentorship

The Executive Mentorship Program is a cornerstone of YPN's goal of developing the skills of young professionals. YPN began in 2004, and the Executive Mentorship Program soon followed.

This program connects young professionals with accomplished professionals from a broad array of commercial, nonprofit and governmental backgrounds. As a mentor, you will help shape a young professional's future by sharing your knowledge and providing a firsthand glimpse of life and work in Tech Valley. At the conclusion of the program, mentors and mentees often find that the learning has been mutual and that the relationship has grown in ways not foreseen at the start.

In order to establish a successful relationship, mentors and mentees need to be:

- Willing to be responsible for their own growth and development
- Receptive to feedback and coaching
- Self-aware
- Positive
- Goal-oriented
- Open and honest with each other

# 5 Tips for a Successful Mentor/Mentee Relationship

- 1. Define expectations.**

Be clear and honest about what you want to get out of the program. Establish realistic goals for the relationship and review them throughout the program. Set up a system to measure achievement and manage expectations.
- 2. Keep communication open.**

Consistent communication is one of the most important building blocks for a successful mentee/mentor relationship. Establish communication methods and frequency of contact from the beginning. Encourage open communication, and act as resources for one another.
- 3. Actively participate.**

Commit to actively meet with your mentee or mentor at least six times throughout the program. Keep scheduled appointments or reschedule if necessary, and attend the mandatory events. Approach your conversations with ideas/topics you would like to discuss, and be prepared to learn from one another. Share knowledge, personal experiences and advice. Offer suggestions and feedback and encourage one another to explore new ways of thinking and strategizing.
- 4. Be reliable and consistent.**

Mentoring takes time and implies sacrifices for both the mentee and mentor. Be respectful of each other's time. The more consistent you are, the more you will be trusted.
- 5. Maintain respect and express gratitude.**

Uphold core relationship values including privacy, confidentiality, honesty and integrity. Listen to the feedback provided. Be kind and considerate. Be supportive and recognize the progress made to achieve your goals.

# Required and Suggested Activities

The completion of these activities is mandatory; they help lay the foundation of the mentoring partnership:

- Thursday, **January 19** (7:30 - 9 a.m.)  
Executive Mentorship Program Kick-Off  
Location: Century House
- Thursday, **March 23** (7:30 - 9 a.m.)  
Executive Mentorship Breakfast  
Location: Glen Sanders Mansion
- Wednesday, **May 24** (5:30 - 7:30 p.m.)  
Concluding Program  
Location: Rivers Casino & Resort Schenectady



**Suggested activities to make the most of your mentorship experience:**

## Meet Other Professionals

- Attend a Chamber function to network with other professionals in order to hear different perspectives on business and the region.

## Regional Exposure

- Attend functions that expose mentees and mentors to regional assets such as cultural events, economic development programs or other social events.

## Project-Based Learning

- Discuss a project or issue with your mentor/mentee. Offer perspective based on professional experiences.

## On-Site Meeting

- Attend a business meeting with your mentor.

## Company Tour

- Take a company tour with your mentor to learn about his or her organizational culture and work environment.

## Professional Growth

- Discuss professional goals, share ideas and strategies for effective practice and professional and personal development.

## Future Planning

- Discuss what it takes to be a successful professional, how to move up the career ladder and balance work and life effectively.

## Career Shadowing

- Shadow your mentor at work. Learn about his or her industry, company, role, and career path.

# YPN Mentorship Ambassadors



**2017  
Committee Chair**

**Johanna C. Schweitzer** is a University at Albany 2006 graduate with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Accounting. Johanna has worked as an accountant at Teal, Becker and Chiaramonte, CPAs, P.C. since 2010. With experience providing auditing, review, compilation, and tax services, her clients cover a variety of industries including construction, manufacturing, and not-for-profit. Johanna is part of the TBC Accounting and Auditing Committee that assists with engagement quality control. She is also part of the Firm's internal Construction Committee. As a mentor to younger accountants at the Firm and students/alumni at the University at Albany, Johanna enjoys connecting with professionals who have a passion for their career. Outside of the office, she is an active member of the Capital Region Chamber's Young Professionals Network and Professional Women in Building of Northeastern New York, a group within CRBRA.



**2017  
Committee Co-Chair**

**Matt Ingold** joined the Benetech team in the fall of 2014 to direct Benetech's customer development strategy and Strategic Partnership Program. Graduating from the United States Naval Academy in 2006, Matt was commissioned in the United States Marine Corps and served seven years as a leader of Marines. During that time, he deployed twice overseas, and served his final three years as a combat instructor at the Marine Corps' officer development and ethical leadership school, The Basic School. Gaining expertise in the areas of strategic planning, communications, and team management, Matt's time in the military fostered key skills that have been a welcomed addition to his role as a Benetech Manager. Matt is happily married to his wife, Erin, and they are huge fans of their new Adirondack lifestyle!



**2017  
Chair of YPN**

**Angela Kelly** is a Sales Manager at The Desmond Hotel and Conference Center, an independent, family owned and operated hotel located in Colonie. In her sales role at The Desmond, her primary focus is to secure new business while retaining current client relationships specifically with the hotel's large union group base. Angela graduated from SUNY Oneonta with a B.S. in Communication Studies and has worked in the hospitality industry since 2005; six of them at The Desmond. She has been active in YPN since 2013 on the Programming and Communications Committee; in 2016 she accepted the role of Vice Chair which will lead her into her role as Chair. Angela has a personal and professional passion to serve others; she has been a member of Latham Kiwanis since 2010, a service organization dedicated to the community and its children. She, her husband Shaun, and son Logan reside in Latham with their beloved dog Jerry Rice.



**Challen Banach** is a marketing professional. Challen grew up in the Capital Region and attended Siena College. She graduated in 2013 with a Bachelor's Degree in Marketing with double minors in German and Globalization Studies. She also received a certificate in International Business from Siena College. Challen interned for, and eventually started her career, at SI Group, a global chemistry company headquartered in Schenectady. In 2013, Challen began as a Strategic Market Analyst and is now the Brand & Communications Coordinator at SI Group. This is Challen's third year with the Tech Valley Young Professionals Network and her second year on the Executive Mentorship Committee.



**James Dick**, a Schenectady native, is a member of the sales team at Merriam Insurance, Schenectady's oldest family-owned business. He specializes in property and liability insurance for non-profits and the hospitality industry. He loves representing some of Merriam's national programs because it allows him to travel around the country to meet clients and speak at conventions. In his spare time, James and his wife, Tiffany, love to travel and eat ice cream. They also speak at high schools and colleges about healthy relationships. James has been to 47 states and looks forward to visiting them all! They live in downtown Schenectady. James holds an Accredited Advisor in Insurance (AAI) designation and a BA in Classics from Washington and Lee University.



**David Gerth** is an Account Manager who heads up the Engineering and Scientific divisions for Aerotek's Capital Region office. Aerotek is the nation's largest staffing and recruiting company with over 250 offices throughout the country. David specializes in helping local companies find and onboard top technical talent, including contract, contract to hire, and direct placements. David is a valued partner to many of the largest and most established companies in the region by provides industry knowledge and expertise within the employee resource and recruiting fields.

# YPN Mentorship Ambassadors



**Ben Henderson** is a Senior Tax Specialist at Teal, Becker & Chiamonte, CPAs. Ben received his Bachelor's degree in Accounting from Marist College in 2011. He then pursued his Master's degree in Taxation at the University at Albany, graduating in 2012. Ben is a Certified Public Accountant licensed in the state of New York. Prior to joining TBC, Ben gained over 3 years experience in the Mergers & Acquisitions Tax practice at PricewaterhouseCoopers, LLP in New York, N.Y. Ben is excited to be back in the Capital Region servicing local clients and businesses. He is looking forward to building relationships with professionals and actively participating in the community. This is his first year joining the Executive Mentorship Committee.



**Heather Lawton** is the Executive Director of Atria Crossgate, an Independent & Assisted Living community in Albany. She holds a Bachelor's Degree from Russell Sage College and a Master's Degree in Health Service Administration from the Sage Graduate School. Additionally, Heather serves as Assistant Treasurer on the Steering Committee for the Capital District Senior Issues Forum, is a member of YPN and served as Chair of the Executive Mentorship Committee in 2014, is a volunteer with Proctors Theater, a member of the Troy Kiwanis Club and Chapter Regent of the Tawasentha Chapter DAR.



**Stacy McIlduff** is a nonprofit fundraising professional, currently serving as the Coordinator of Development at the Schenectady County Community College Foundation. In previous fundraising roles, Stacy managed Annual Fund and Special Events efforts at Equinox and Seton Health Foundation, now a part of St. Peter's Health Partners. Stacy is the Treasurer of the Schenectady Theater for Children. She holds a B.A. from SUNY Empire State College with a concentration in Event Design & Production, and is a graduate of The Leadership Institute (Class of 2013).



**Nicole Peterson** is the director of development at the Arts Center of the Capital Region. Prior to joining the Arts Center, she served as the Corporate Relations and Events Manager at the Albany Institute of History & Art. She is a graduate of The College of Saint Rose (2009, BA: Secondary Education, History) and the University of St. Andrews (2010, MA: European History). Nicole is the co-founder Social Media event series at the Arts Center, designed to introduce young professionals to art in different media and the 1791 Club at the Albany Institute, an outreach program dedicated to engaging local young professionals in the culture of the Capital Region. Nicole grew up in Rensselaer County, and is known for her witty sense of humor and knitting expertise.



**Justin Priddle** was born and raised in Averill Park NY, and now resides in Niskayuna NY with his wife Leanne and daughter Aria. Justin has 10 years of banking experience currently serving as a Vice President Relationship Manager with Berkshire Bank. Prior to Justin's role as a Relationship Manager he led Berkshire's Delmar office and their Regional Headquarters office in Downtown Albany. Before joining Berkshire, Justin was an Assistant Manager at Citizens Bank. Community involvement is important to Justin; he served on the Board for the Stakeholders and currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Albany Roundtable, Northern Rivers Family Services and is a past chair, current Steering Committee member of the Tech Valley Young Professionals Network; a workforce initiative of the Capital Region Chamber. Justin received his AA from Hudson Valley and a BA from SUNY Albany.



**Courtney Schingledecker** is a motivated HR professional who lives in the Capital Region. In May of 2011, Courtney earned her bachelor's degree from Le Moyne College with a dual major in Human Resources Management and Management and Leadership. Courtney joined Thoroughbred Advisors in May of 2015 as the Director of Selection and Development. In this role, she is utilizing her recruiting background to build a team of financial and insurance professionals, focusing in the areas of Latham and Queensbury where two of their offices are located. Courtney is also a member of the Capital Region Human Resource Association's Workforce Readiness Committee. She is responsible for organizing the committee to attend events throughout the year where they support job seekers in our area. Combining her positive attitude and optimistic outlook, Courtney is driven to succeed through empowering others to reach their full potential.



# YPN Overview

## CONNECT

Get connected to one another and to top business, governmental, and civic leaders in the region that are vital to success.

## DEVELOP

Attend programs that enable you to develop both professionally and personally.

## EMPOWER

Feel prepared to impact your place of employment and the community.

As a workforce development initiative of the Capital Region Chamber, the Tech Valley Young Professionals Network (YPN) exists to attract and retain a strong talent pipeline throughout Tech Valley. The council serves as a catalyst to connect, develop and empower young professionals.

What makes us unique is ultimately what brings us together. YPN provides people of all professions the opportunity to come together and share their ideas and vision for the future.

YPN is a dynamic and diverse group of young professionals with the desire to build lasting relationships, a willingness to learn and grow, and the enthusiasm and drive to get involved within the community.

### Presenting Sponsors



### Supporting Sponsor

## Transfinder

*The above organizations truly believe in the mission of YPN and understand that attracting talent is a top priority for the region.*

For more information about YPN, please contact:

**Brandi Landy**  
Business Council Manager  
Capital Region Chamber  
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