



# 2016 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 500 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,



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Mark N. Eagan".

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Charles P. Steiner".

**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
- Active in seeking challenging assignments and responsibility
- Able to learn from mistakes
- 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 14** (7:30 - 9 a.m.)  
Executive Mentorship Program Kick-Off  
Location: Radisson Hotel Albany, 205 Wolf Rd, Albany
- Wednesday, **March 30** (5:30 - 7 p.m.)  
Executive Mentorship Evening Mixer  
Location: Revolution Hall, 425 River St, Troy
- Thursday, **June 9** (7:30 - 9 a.m.)  
Concluding Program  
Location: Waters Edge Lighthouse, 2 Freemans Bridge Rd, 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



**2015  
Committee Chair**

**Kevin Baker** is a long-time resident of the Capital Region. He currently serves as a Vice President with the Schwartz Heslin Group, Inc., a boutique investment bank, headquartered in Latham, New York. Kevin currently serves on the Internal Affairs Committee for the Albany Barn, an arts incubator. He is a member of the board of directors for The Stakeholders, a volunteer-driven nonprofit in Albany. Kevin graduated cum laude with his B.S. from SUNY Albany in Business Administration with a concentration in finance and management. He maintains a Series 79 certification with FINRA.



**2015  
Chair of YPN**

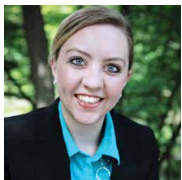
**Ryan Watroba** is the Vice President of Relocation and Business Development at Coldwell Banker Prime Properties where he oversees all relocation services, community outreach and business development efforts with various organizations on a local, regional, national and global level. Watroba is a licensed Realtor®, member of GCAR, Worldwide ERC® and has been awarded the Certified Relocation Professional (CRP®) designation for his extensive work and knowledge of the mobility industry. Alongside his work with Coldwell Banker Prime Properties, Watroba is active in various organizations including serving as the Chairman of the Worldwide ERC® YP40, young professional group. He is an active volunteer with several local and national organizations and is an adjunct instructor at Siena College.



**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 providing industry knowledge and expertise within the employee resource and recruiting fields.



**Chris Howard** is an EPM Consultant with Linium, an IT consulting and strategic staffing firm headquartered here in the Capital Region. Chris' consulting work is focused primarily around Oracle's EPM Suite of financial products. Before beginning his role as a consultant, Chris worked in business development for Linium's staffing branch in Albany. Chris is a graduate of both Shenendehowa '08 and Siena College '12, where he received degrees in accounting and marketing. This will be Chris' second year on the YPN Executive Mentorship committee; he looks forward to continuing the growth and success of the program.



**Heather Lawton** Heather Lawton is the Executive Director of Atria Crossgate, an Independent & Assisted Living community in Albany. Heather has a Bachelor's Degree from Russell Sage College and a Master's Degree in Health Services Administration from the Sage Graduate School. Additionally, Heather serves 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 and an active member of the Tawasentha Chapter of the DAR.

# YPN Mentorship Ambassadors



**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 on the Board of Directors for the Schenectady Theater for Children, and a volunteer with Out of the Pits as well as Upper Hudson Planned Parenthood. 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).



**Courtney Moore** is a Mechanical Engineer at Knolls Atomic Power Laboratory (KAPL) in Niskayuna. She graduated from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) in May 2010 with a dual degree in Aeronautical and Mechanical Engineering and a minor in Psychology. Courtney currently serves as the secretary on the Board of Directors for the Girl Scouts of Northeastern New York (GSNENY) and on the Board of Advisors for the Salvation Army. She is also a proud member of the Schenectady Rotary Club. Courtney is an alum of Leadership Tech Valley Class of 2014, and formerly served as the president of KAPL's chapter of Women in Nuclear (WiN). She encourages others to always reach for the stars and imagine the possibilities.



**Chris O'Connor** is the Engineering Operations Manager for EYP, Inc., a global architecture & engineering design firm headquartered here in the Capital Region. He has an engineering degree from the University at Buffalo and an MBA from UAlbany. Prior to entering the consulting world in 2011, he worked in the aerospace industry where he developed a passion for lean manufacturing, operations, and continuous improvement. Chris has been a participant of the Executive Mentorship Program since 2011 and continues serving on the organizing committee, which he also chaired in 2013. Chris is a member of YPN's Steering Committee and a graduate of Leadership Tech Valley class of 2014.



**Nicole Peterson** is the Corporate Relations and Events Manager at the Albany Institute of History & Art, New York State's oldest museum, where she began as an intern in 2011. 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 the 1791 Club at the Albany Institute, an outreach program dedicated to engaging local young professionals in the arts and 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** is 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.

# YPN Mentorship Ambassadors



**Johanna Schweitzer** is a Senior Accountant at Teal, Becker and Chiaramonte, CPAs. She has been with TBC since 2010. She graduated from the University at Albany in 2006 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Accounting. She serves TBC's commercial clients, performing audits, reviews, and compilations for entities in a variety of industries which include manufacturing, construction and not-for-profit. She also performs tax and accounting consulting on commercial entities and individuals. 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 and is a regular attendee at the Northeast Sub Contractor Association Young Professional events. As a mentor to younger accountants at the Firm and students/alumni at the University at Albany, Johanna enjoys connecting with professionals who are starting their career in the industry. Outside of the office, she is a committee member of the Tech Valley Young Professionals Campus Roadshow and the Executive Mentorship program, an initiative of the Capital Region Chamber.



**Kara Wilhelm** is a Sales Executive at RentPath, home of leading real estate websites including ApartmentGuide.com. Prior to joining RentPath she spent time at Repeat Business Systems and Panera Bread earning awards and breaking sales records. She has over a decade of experience in customer service and sales. Kara holds a Master of Business Administration from Saint Rose and a Bachelor of Arts from SUNY Oneonta. She is actively involved in the Albany-Colonie Regional Chamber, serving on the Ambassadors Committee and a part of the Tech Valley Young Professionals Network (YPN), an initiative of the Capital Region Chamber, since 2011. In addition, in 2013 she became a charter member for the Capital Region Rotary. Growing up in Saratoga County and residing in Albany County, she is determined to show other young professionals that the Capital Region is a great place to live and work.



**Chad Wildermuth** has been a successful Financial Representative for the last 7 years at Northwestern Mutual. Chad works with clients to identify their definitions of financial security and then focuses on solutions that can help make those financial goals a reality. He has been a member of the Tech Valley Young Professionals Network for over a year. Chad resides in Niskayuna with his wife Naomi and their two children. Chad is an avid sportsman and is especially passionate about the game of Golf.



**Challen Banach** grew up in the Capital Region. She attended Siena College and graduated in 2013 with a Bachelor's Degree in Marketing and double minored 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 chemical 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 second year with the Tech Valley Young Professionals Network and her first year on the Executive Mentorship Committee.



# 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:



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

For more information on YPN, please contact:

**Brandi Miller**  
*Business Council Manager*  
Capital Region Chamber  
518.431.1414  
[bmiller@capitalregionchamber.com](mailto:bmiller@capitalregionchamber.com)

