



# 2020 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 high-level business leaders to support each other's 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, we have matched nearly 1,000 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 recognize the value to learning and growth that comes with having a diverse and inclusive program. We strive to increase the diversity of participants and to ensure that the learning environment is equitable, respectful and appreciative of difference. We also strive to develop programming that represents the breadth of our Capital Region community.

We are pleased to present the 2020 Executive Mentorship Handbook for your use throughout your experience. Within this handbook, you will find important dates, guidelines and required and suggested activities. If at any point throughout the program you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to Brandi Landy, Director, Talent Development 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 that reads "Mark N. Eagan". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

**Mark N. Eagan, CCE**  
President and CEO  
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.

"As expected, as the mentor I got as much out of this as I think the mentee did. It was very rewarding to see the two of us come from different perspectives on things and become better leaders as an outcome."

*-Paul Milton, President and CEO, Ellis Medicine*

## 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.

The Executive Mentorship Program's mission is to strengthen the Capital Region workforce through pairing young professionals with experienced and successful individuals in our community. This program provides both parties the opportunity for personal and professional development, growth, fulfillment, and empowerment.

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. As a mentee, you will get the insight and guidance from an experienced professional. 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 meeting with your mentee or mentor at least six times throughout the program. We suggest that you consider making scheduled appointments on a regular basis, and attend the mentorship 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

Attendance at these events is highly suggested; it helps lay the foundation and promotes growth of the mentoring partnership:

Thursday, January 16 | 7:30- 9 a.m.  
Location: The Century House

Thursday, March 19 | 7:30-9 a.m.  
Location: Rivers Casino

Thursday, May 14 | 7:30- 9 a.m.  
Location: TBA

\*Event details subject to change

"Being involved in the YPN Executive Mentorship Program was very rewarding. It provided me with an opportunity to think purposefully about what I have to offer to a young professional - as well as what I could learn from her. I also found the planned programs to be of great value - offering useful information as well as additional opportunities to meet other Executives and young professionals. A great way to further build our community!"

*-Robin Perry, Vice President of Learning and Development, Bishop House Consulting, Inc.*

**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/mentee.

## Company Tour

- Take a company tour with your mentor/mentee 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/mentee at work. Learn about his or her industry, company, role, and career path.



Capital Region Chamber

# YPN Mentorship Ambassadors

Upon confirmation of your mentorship pair, you will also be matched with an Ambassador. This person will provide guidance and support throughout the program and will be available to answer any questions that you have. We want to ensure you have a rewarding and meaningful experience and therefore encourage you to connect with your Ambassador as needed.



**2020  
Committee Chair**

**Ann Marie Walpole** is the Development Coordinator for the American Red Cross of Northeastern New York and this year's Executive Mentorship Committee Chair. Ann Marie attended college at Johnson & Wales University, earning her Bachelor of Science in Administrative Management and a minor in Marketing. After college, Ann Marie relocated to the Capital Region to be closer to family and grow roots. Over the past 10 years, Ann Marie has worked in both the for-profit and not-for-profit sectors, growing her skills in customer service, sales, development and networking to name a few. This will be Ann Marie's third year on the Executive Mentorship Committee, and she is very excited to connect young professionals in the region to help keep great talent right here in what she calls Home.

[anmarie.walpole@redcross.org](mailto:anmarie.walpole@redcross.org)



**2020  
Committee Co-Chair**

**Emily Dessingue** is the Workforce Development Specialist at SEAT Center and is this year's Co-Chair of the Executive Mentorship Committee. Emily graduated from the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts in 2014, with a bachelor's degree in English Communications. Since starting her career, Emily has become heavily involved in the Capital Region, such as joining the Women's Business Council Engagement Committee and volunteering with the Girls Inc. Erueka! Program and is always looking to help young professionals with expanding their network. This is Emily's second year as part of the Executive Mentorship Committee.

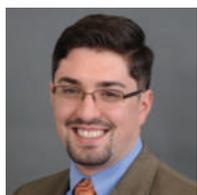
[edessingue@seatcenter.org](mailto:edessingue@seatcenter.org)



**2020  
Chair of YPN**

**Geoff Miller** is the Workforce Development Specialist at the SEAT Center in Schenectady. His work focuses on career placement for students that graduate its programs and business and community development to strengthen SEAT's position in the Capital District. Before coming to SEAT, Geoff was the Director of Development at the Albany Symphony and Director of Development at Hudson Valley Community College. In 2017, he received the Association of Fundraising Professionals Outstanding Young Professional Fundraiser award. Geoff earned a Bachelor of Arts in piano performance and a Master of Education in higher education administration and leadership from the College of Saint Rose.

[gmillers@seatcenter.org](mailto:gmillers@seatcenter.org)



**Mike Himpele** is a Business Banking Relationship Manager for M&T Bank. Mike works with business of all sizes helping them achieve financial wellness and provide support for continued growth. Mike originally grew up in the Capital Region and attended SUNY Potsdam in 2008 in pursuit of a Business Degree. Upon graduation in 2011, Mike transferred to Clarkson University to complete his MBA in Innovation and New Venture Management. From there, Mike travelled and lived in various cities including Pittsburgh, New York City, and Sydney Australia. Coming back to his roots, Mike wants to use his experiences and knowledge to help keep the Capital Region growing. This is Mike's second year on the Executive Mentorship Committee.

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**Schyler Houck** is the Director of Human Resources and Labor Relations at the Saratoga Casino Hotel where he leads the HR team to drive employee and guest relations. Schyler Houck has a MBA from Clarkson University and a BS in Marketing and Management from Siena College. He is certified as a Senior Professional of Human Resources (SPHR) through HRCI and SHRM-SCP through the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM). Schyler has been recognized as a leader within his profession and was selected as one of the "Top 30 Under 30 HR Professionals" by SHRM in 2016. When not at work, you can find Schyler serving as Immediate-Past President of the Capital Region Association for Talent Development, volunteering with the Capital Region Human Resource Association, spending time with his wife and kids or hunting down the world's best burger.

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# YPN Mentorship Ambassadors



**Coleton Kirchner**, a native of the Capital Region, is a licensed real estate salesperson specializing in commercial and investment real estate for Sunrise Realty Advisors. He is a graduate of Boston University with a degree in Mechanical Engineering. After graduating BU, Coleton was the Midwest Region Manager for an engineering firm responsible for determining cost effective solutions to meet the technical needs of corporations. He discovered his ability to connect with clients and his team on an interpersonal level was integral to their combined success. That experience encouraged his transition into real estate which allows him to use his analytical skills to best serve his clients. Coleton is on the board for the Capital Alliance of Young Professionals and is a member of the Glenville Rotary. In his free time, you can either find Coleton on the golf course or up at Lake George.  
ckirchner@sunrisera.com



**Cassie Papandrea**, Cassie Papandrea is the Events Director for the Albany Business Review. In her role, she manages all aspects of the Business Review's calendar of events – from Power Breakfasts to signature awards – and has been an integral part of their continued event growth. Cassie spent over 10 years in sales and marketing in the hospitality industry, growing revenue and developing sales teams, before transitioning into planning. Prior to her current role, she worked with an association management group planning and executing events for their clients both regionally and nationally. Cassie has received several awards for her accomplishments in revenue management and events. Most recently, she was honored as a Smart Women in Meetings Rising Star by Smart Meetings Magazine. A native of the Capital Region, Cassie resides in Niskayuna with her husband, son, and dogs.  
cpapandrea@bizjournals.com



**David Pearson**, a Troy native, has his BS in Management with a Concentration in Marketing from RPI. Dave has worked in various areas of the financial services industry for over 20 years and has spent the last 11 years at CAP COM Federal Credit Union. In every role Dave has ever served, his true passion is helping people. He loves bringing people together and building internal culture. He is an integral part of the culture committee at CAP COM and has spearheaded multiple programs to help build internal service throughout the organization. It's not uncommon to hear Dave say, "I have a crazy idea...". Dave also serves on the New York Credit Union Association Young Professionals Commission, where he works to bring together other credit union young professionals and advocate throughout the state. In his spare time, Dave enjoys playing and competing in all types of sports, but his true love is soccer, which he has played since childhood. Dave is also an avid Buffalo Bills fan and swears that he has never participated in table breaking (but would!).  
dpearson@CapComFCU.org

# YPN Mentorship Ambassadors



**Fran Pickles**, originally from Utica, NY, earned her B.S. in Hospitality Administration at Boston University in 2011. Fran relocated to the Capital Region following graduation to pursue a development career with St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and currently serves as Regional Development Director for their Albany, NY office. She recently completed her M.Ed. in Instructional Design from the University of Massachusetts Boston. In addition to supporting St. Jude, Fran serves on the Board of Directors of the Junior League of Albany as a way to give back in her local community.  
Frances.Pickles@stjude.org



**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.  
Courtney@thoroughbredadvisors.com



**Brenton Smith**, a Capital Region native, attended University at Buffalo where he earned his bachelor's degree in Business Administration. He specializes in Wealth Management and Comprehensive Financial Planning at Professional Planning Group, LLC. Brent is dedicated to providing exemplary service to his clients, educating them, and working hard to help them achieve all of their financial goals. Brent is very involved in the community as a certified IAABO basketball official and a coach in the Albany Twilight League. He enjoys spending time with family and friends, playing basketball, golf, and reading.  
brentonsmith9788@gmail.com



**Audrey Stone** is the Foundation Administrator for the Sunmark Charitable Community Foundation. Audrey, with her passion for helping others, has been a major contributor in the creation of the Sunmark foundation which began in 2015. With her guidance, the foundation expanded Sunmark Credit Union's ability to support local, nonprofit organizations in the Capital Region. Audrey is currently supporting others by serving as a member of the Association of Fundraising Professionals Young Professionals Committee and New York Credit Union Association Chapter Council and Young Professionals Committee. With 13 years in the financial industry, Audrey is a Credit Union Certified Marketing Executive and has been recognized nationally by receiving a Diamond Award from the National Credit Union Association as well as the Mastercard Community Institutions Doing Well by Doing Good Award.  
astone@sunmarkfcu.org

# 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



For more information about YPN, please contact:

**Brandi Landy**

*Director, Talent Development*

Capital Region Chamber

518.431.1414

[blandy@capitalregionchamber.com](mailto:blandy@capitalregionchamber.com)

### Supporting Sponsors

Bishop House Consulting, Transfinder, VENT & Verizon

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

