



2021
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 2021 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".

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, fulfilment, 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:

January 14, 2021

Time & Location: TBA

March 18, 2021

Time & Location: TBA

May 13, 2021

Time & Location: TBA

***Event details subject to change. Events may be held in-person or virtually, more information will be provided as we get closer to the event date.**

"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 virtual Chamber event 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 or Virtual 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.

Meet Virtually for a Cup of Coffee

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.



2021
Committee Chair

Emily Dessingue is the Northeast Regional Philanthropy Officer at the American Red Cross and is this year's 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 being the Women's Business Council Co-Chair for the Engagement Committee and being an advisor for the SEAT Center advisory committee. Emily is always looking to help young professionals with expanding their network and advancing in their careers. This is Emily's third year being a part of the Executive Mentorship Committee.
Emily.Dessingue@redcross.org



2021
Committee Co-Chair

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 more than 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



2020
Chair of YPN

Geoffrey Miller is an award-winning fundraising professional currently serving as the Assistant Director of the Office of Corporate, Government and Foundation Relations for Sage Colleges. A higher education professional who believes in the power of economic mobility through professional and educational development, Geoff is passionate about creating opportunities for others through nurturing philanthropic relationships within our community. Prior to Sage, Geoff worked for the Albany Symphony and Hudson Valley Community College Foundation in leadership fundraising roles. By connecting partners with crucial programs, Geoff has enjoyed a career committed to improving the quality of life for citizens in the Capital Region. Geoff is also an active volunteer. He is the 2020 Chair of the Capital Region Chamber of Commerce's Tech Valley Young Professional Network and volunteer for the Capital Region Sponsor-a-Scholar and Albany Symphony. Geoff earned his bachelor's degree in piano performance at SUNY at Fredonia and master's in Higher Education Administration and Leadership at the College of Saint Rose.
milleg3@sage.edu



2021
Chair of YPN

Challen DeMartino is the 2020 Vice Chair of the Capital Region Chamber's Young Professional's Network and will be Chair of YPN in 2021. Challen has been involved with YPN for several years, having served as an Ambassador and Chair of the Mentorship Committee. She grew up in the Capital Region and attended Siena College, graduating with a Bachelor's Degree in Marketing with double minors in German and Globalization Studies and a certificate in International Business. Today, Challen is the Product Communications Manager at SI Group. Since starting her Marketing career, Challen has held a variety of different roles spanning from global branding to product management at SI Group. Challen lives in Ballston Lake with her husband and two dogs.
Challen.DeMartino@siigroup.com.



Heather-Liz Coppins serves as the Associate Director of Alumni Engagement and Annual Giving at Albany Law School. She is responsible for regional and affinity-based programming, as well as the school's Alumni In Mentoring program. Prior to joining Albany Law School, she was the Development Manager for Ronald McDonald House Charities of the Capital Region, where she was in charge of fund development work, stewardship, and organizing all signature events. She has also worked for Capital Bank and the Capital District Women's Bar Association. Heather-Liz is very active in volunteering in the community, working with such organizations as the Capital Alliance for Young Professionals (Past-President), Albany Civic Theatre, and Schenectady Light Opera Company. She earned her bachelor's degree from Marymount Manhattan College and her master's from The Catholic University of America.
hcopp@albanylaw.edu

YPN Mentorship Ambassadors



Michael Himpele is a Commercial Credit Analyst for Health Care and Non-Profits for M&T Bank. Mike has worked in both sales and credit analysis for the past 5 years. 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 third year on the Executive Mentorship Committee.

Mhimpele@mtb.com



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



Joelle Monaco is passionate about educating others from a People First Principle, an organization's employees are their most valuable asset — each with their own experiences, assets, and purpose. Joelle's expertise expands over ten years in organizational development across the for-profit and non-profit sectors, with extensive experience in planning, directing, and training enhancements for employee and organizational success. Currently, Joelle is the Director of Outreach & Business Engagement at the Mental Health Association in New York State, Inc (MHANYS). Joelle oversees training and development for universities and organizations in addition to MHANYS Workforce Development & Outreach Programming within the Capital Region and across the Mental Health Association Affiliate Network. Joelle received her MBA and BS in Psychology with a minor in Education from the University at Albany, New York.

jmonaco@mhany.org



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 in their Albany, NY office. In December 2018, she completed her M.Ed. in Instructional Design from the University of Massachusetts Boston. She currently serves as Senior Liaison on the Training and Employee Experience team at St. Jude. 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 to her local community. Fran participated in the Executive Mentorship Program as a mentee in 2018 and remains connected with her mentor to this day.

Frances.Pickles@stjude.org



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



Ann Marie Walpole is the Development Manager for the American Red Cross of Northeastern New York . 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 4th 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.

annmarie.walpole@redcross.org



James Wighaus, originally from Long Island, moved to the Capital Region in July 2018 after graduating from the Maurice A. Deane School of Law at Hofstra University. James is an Associate Attorney at Lavelle & Finn, LLP in Latham, New York. In practice, James assists clients in their estate planning and long-term care needs, business planning objectives, real estate transactions and tax matters. He has a passion for being able to help individuals and their families in situations where they may not be able to help themselves. That passion is what drives James' work ethic each day. At Lavelle & Finn, James sees every day as a new opportunity to work together with his co-workers, learn, solve problems, and provide a sense of comfort to each client. Out of the office, he is an avid sports fan and enjoys competing or watching his favorite teams. Although being a Jets fan is more difficult than not, James is a loyal fan that hopes one day he can attend a Super Bowl Parade in New York City.

james@lavelleandfinn.com

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

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.

