



**BILLINGS'**  
**best**  
**&**  
**brightest**

**40**  
UNDER  
**FORTY**

**2020**





# 40 Under 40 keeps growing yearly

The measurements for our annual “40 Under 40” sections have shifted, mostly from the traditional to the bizarre.

Not too many years ago, we used to measure the number of nominations by the number. Pretty straightforward, right?

You know — we got 100 or 200 nominations. Simple.



But as the popularity of the annual award grew, we had to make some new terms.

First, the nominations took up a binder; then two; then three.

We now live in a post-binder world.

This year, The Billings Gazette started measuring nominations by the number of reams of paper and toner cartridges we shot through in order to print off the nominations.

That’s probably not a traditional way to measure participation and interest in an annual award, but it’s likely the most telling way to describe the growing popularity of it. We continue to see the number of nominations rise every year.

Our nomination period is the same — it begins in early October and usually lasts for eight weeks. This year, like others, the awards poured in at a record clip. In one day alone, we got more than five dozen nominations.

Some people are nominated just once, others get nominated several dozen times. Unlike other contests and events sponsored by The Billings Gazette, this is not a matter of sheer voting. In other words, even 100 nominations wouldn’t automatically secure a spot on the 40-Under-40 roster.

We take days to pore through the nominations. We make phone

calls. We read stories. We look at businesses or organizations involved.

As the number of nominations grows yearly, so does the corresponding amount of awe we have when selecting our annual group. We have a tremendous core of young professionals. The future is in pretty darn good shape with these young-ish leaders.

But just recognizing them for their age alone would be an insult to their achievements. It is indeed impressive to read their accomplishments, goals and motivation. One of the striking characteristics about this year’s group of candidates was how consistently — almost uniformly — public service was listed on their nominations. If any general comment about these 40-under-40 winners can be said, it is that they value giving back and getting involved.

This is all a long and probably obvious way of telling readers that as the pile of nominations grows, the competition is getting pretty darn tough. That’s a good problem to have. And, it shows that Billings continues to develop the next generation of leaders and doers, many of whom have amazing vision for what we will become in the upcoming decades.

We hope you’ll be impressed with the 40 community members we’ve selected. Like any packed contest, the decisions were tough and there may be some out there who need to be included. Luckily, we have just the solution for that: Nominate them again in October when we start collecting for the next batch of outstanding community members.

Until then, we’ll be replenishing the binders, the paper and the ink.

Congratulations to all the award winners — you make our job wonderfully tough.

**DARRELL EHRLICK**  
dehrlick@billingsgazette.com



**PUBLISHER**

Dave Worstell

**EDITOR**

Darrell Ehrlick

**CONTENT EDITOR**

Charity Dewing

**SALES**

**ADVERTISING DIRECTOR**

Ryan Brosseau

**DESIGN**

**COVER DESIGN**

Nadine Bittner

**PAGE DESIGN**

Emily Shullaw

**ADVERTISING**

For retail advertising  
call Arcadea Scott, 657-1244.

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CJorgensen@billingsgazette.com

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# ERIN ALLEN | Work hard, play harder

**Age:** 39  
**Hometown:** Billings, Montana  
**Company and title:**  
Pediatrician, Billings Clinic

*Erin Allen has always loved science. After graduating from West High in 1999, she attended medical school in Texas and her residency in pediatrics at Northwestern University McGaw Medical Center, Chicago in 2010. It was more than a love of science that drew her to the medical field. It was her love of people, specifically children. She knew pediatrics was just the ticket. Now, a pediatrician at Billings Clinic, she gets to study and think like a scientist while interacting daily with and advocating for kids and their families.*

## What other passions/callings are part of your life?

I am passionate about being a strong advocate for children. Children hold the keys to our future, and they rely on us to ensure that we create a vibrant society that offers them opportunities for growth. Currently, I have the honor of chairing the board for Explorers Academy (Head Start), a wonderful organization that provides comprehensive services for young chil-

dren and their families to achieve school readiness and lifelong success.

## What is the worst advice you've received and why?

"You can have it all!" I am a working mom and my husband has an equally demanding career. Striking a balance between work and family is a daily struggle. The better advice I received was "you can have it all but not all at one time." Some days I need to focus on being a wife and mom; some days I need to focus on being a pediatrician. My husband is a great partner, and together we have found a way to balance our roles so we can be there for our family and our patients.

## What advice would you have given yourself as a teenager?

Have the courage and confidence to try new things and don't worry about failing. I am much more willing to try things now that I never would have dreamed of doing. I do regret not embracing that philosophy earlier in my life.

## What was the last show you binge watched?

"The Office."

## What is the most challenging aspect of your occupation?

Medicine is always changing; there is always new information and new research. To be your best requires you to never stop learning.

## Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?

I have three – my residency mentor Karen Sheehan, MD, who is a professor of pediatrics and preventative medicine at Northwestern University McGaw Medical Center for showing me how to be a true advocate for kids; and my parents John and Cheryl Murphy for teaching me the importance of family.

## What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?

Running, reading, and skiing, hiking and camping with my family

## What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start a new business or excel in a business or field?

Find people who inspire you. It is no coincidence to me that the profession I love is filled with the amazing colleagues I am privileged to work with every day. We are a group of dedicated working parents



– many of whom are working moms like me – who equally value their work and their families. We share similar passions, and it is easy for us to align our goals.

# RYAN ANDERSON | If you take care of others, they will take care of you



**Age:** 33  
**Hometown:** Billings, Montana  
**Company and title:** President of Montana Tire Distributors, Inc.

*As the President of Montana Tire Distributors, Inc., Ryan Anderson says the profession chose him. He grew up running around a tire shop. After graduating college with a bachelor's degree in business, he returned to the industry he held close to his heart – learning the ins and outs of the business and working fulltime for his father. Now, he brings a new vision to the company, welcoming new challenges and years ahead.*

## What other passions/callings are part of your life?

As I am sure most young professionals experience, work has become my main focus and aside from spending time with my family, I have regretfully pushed my other passions aside. I love doing anything outdoors and Montana has so much to offer. It's a goal of mine to start balancing work, play and family more evenly.

## What is the worst advice you've received and why?

I had a professor in college tell us that if you were to start a business and it failed, simply file for bankruptcy like it was no big deal and try again. It has stayed with me over the years and to this day I question why he felt that was good advice – I could not disagree with that statement more.

## What's your guilty pleasure?

'80s and '90s country music. It still is and always will be the best music.

## What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?

Montana is a large state with a lot of miles between towns. Eventually I would like to add another location so we can service our customers better.

## How do you measure your own success?

My mind is constantly running with ways to improve the business. I have high expectations of myself and know if running a company was easy, everyone would be doing it. I set goals I want to accomplish and work as hard as I can to complete those goals. If along the way I make mistakes, I acknowledge there is room for improvement, reset my strategy, and get back to

working towards my goal. If I achieve what I set out to do, I consider that a success.

## What is the most challenging aspect of your occupation?

Being a small independent company it is challenging to stay competitive with the larger companies and internet. People often prefer the "buy now" option and convenience of purchasing off the internet, they often don't realize the services you get along with the product when purchasing from a local business.

## Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?

My dad. Growing up, I watched him start a successful business at a young age and while working side-by-side with him, I learned a lot about the tire business and the importance of running a noble business. I would not be where I am today if it wasn't for the knowledge he has passed down over the years.

## What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why?

My wife and kids. They encourage me to be a better person and motivate me to work hard and create the life I feel they deserve.



# RACHAEL BROWER | Creating a business plan isn't just an exercise, its setting goals and direction for your ideas to channel themselves

**Age:** 38  
**Hometown:** Grand Haven, Michigan  
**Company and title:** Rock Creek Soaps, Owner

*Rachael Brower, owner of Rock Creek Soaps, gets to spend her days doing what she loves: creating. Through the highs and lows of being a business entrepreneur, she has learned not to measure herself on a scale of failures and successes but instead she takes it one bar of soap at a time. Since 2015, she has watched her company grow and improve. With a goal to expand the business and open a retail store, Brower has recently joined forces with the Her Campaign, and also plans to partner with Hannah House Ministries to help empower and protect women.*

## What other passions/callings are part of your life?

I love listening to and playing music. I've been a percussionist for 20 years. I enjoy playing with our church worship team. Until this year, I had not played the drums, only the hand

percussion instruments, but earlier this year I started to play the drum kit and I've been taking lessons.

## What is the hardest part of your job?

The hardest part of being an owner of a local business is competing against the big guys who have endless budgets. I think it's true for our business as well as the other local businesses around Billings. There is a lot of choice for where you shop and what you buy. There is the ease of Amazon, and there are discount stores everywhere. But global shopping takes the money out of our community. When you shop local, proceeds go back into the community, our business supports local families, we work with local programs, and sponsor school athletics.

## What is the most challenging aspect of your occupation?

Building a successful business from ground zero and trying to maintain a good work/home life balance as a wife and mom of four school-aged girls.

## Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?

I come from a long line of hardworking, stubborn women. They have taught me so many things: how to be strong, stand up for what I believe in, how to be independent and still love wholeheartedly. Their lives are testament to who they are and are inspiring to me. It has shaped who I am and has given me the passion and purpose I work toward.

## What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?

I enjoy spending time with my family and friends, being outdoors, camping, hiking and cycling.

## What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why?

My husband bought me my first real soap mold for Christmas one year because he knew I enjoyed making soap. At the time, he didn't realize what we would create with it, and while the soap mold was the physical gift, I'd say the daily encouragement, the support I get from him to chase after this business and the sacrifices he, and our family have made to support this dream of mine is a pretty great gift and I'm thankful for it.



# IGNACIO BARRÓN VIELA | Everything for a good purpose

**Age:** 32  
**Hometown:** Zaragoza, Spain  
**Company and title:** Executive Director, Billings Symphony Orchestra & Chorale

*Ignacio Barrón Viela was born in Zaragoza, Spain, a beautiful city between Madrid and Barcelona. He spent much of his childhood in Suances, a small sea village north of Spain. Over the last 10 years he has lived in four different countries and over 15 cities. His love of music and arts management, along with a background as a consultant and project manager for prominent energy companies has provided him with a skillset that is both creative and business inclined.*

## Why did you choose this profession?

It was quite a journey to get to where I am now. Prior to my career in arts management, I worked for seven years as an engineer, senior management consultant and project manager specializing in operational excellence and performance management – skills I am excited to bring to the orchestra field now. Before switching industries, I had my day job in the corporate world as a consultant traveling around the world, but in the evenings, I would release tension



through music, collaborating/playing with local orchestras, finding the challenges of a musician. Then, at some point, I started to ask myself... could I combine both?

Music became an important part of my life at a very young age. In fact, I actu-

ally listened to classical music before I was born, as my father used to play Mozart and Beethoven while my mother was pregnant. I chose this profession because I love to promote and spread my passion for the musical arts and enable others to grow through music. I truly believe in the power of music to heal and serve our communities. Music was always a way for me to connect with my inner self and become more self-aware.

## What other passions/callings are part of your life?

I love to watch documentaries and read all kinds of book, from science to spirituality, biographies of leaders, philosophy, history, etc. I also love cooking with others, traveling, experiencing and understanding other cultures, and learning new languages.

## What advice would you give yourself as a teenager?

Do not be afraid to fail, experiment and put yourself out there. Do not let the fear of making mistakes paralyze you – in fact, make mistakes because you will learn from them. Ask more questions, do not overthink, be patient and most importantly just

allow yourself to enjoy being a teenager.

## How do you view failure and success?

I see failure as an incredible way to learn, grow and be molded as individuals. Many of the brilliant minds in our world today failed at some point in their lives, if not multiple times. Yet, they still found success through the failures.

Leonardo Da Vinci once said. "Life is pretty simple: You do some stuff. Most fails. Some works."

## What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?

When I am not playing cello, I enjoy exploring Montana's great outdoors, running road races, and learning from and engaging with people from all walks of life.

## What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why?

At age 5, I received a small cello as a Christmas gift. This gift changed my life. I started to play and I really enjoyed it. Not only that, it gave me self-esteem and confidence, awakened my senses, influenced my values and provided emotional development. I would encourage every parent to give a musical instrument to their children.



# MILES BENNETT | Helping communities across the globe

**Age:** 39

**Hometown:** Billings, Montana

**Company and title:** Sunflash, LLC  
– Managing Member

After graduating the Civil Engineering program at Montana State University, Miles Bennett needed a break. He began searching for interesting job opportunities, which led him to a company specializing in steel detailing, a particular form of drafting where the architectural and physical design of a structure is created with a 3D computer. Soon, an old dream of running a business with his brother emerged when he realized between the two of them, they could operate their own steel detailing company and before long, Sunflash, LLC was established.

## What other passions/callings are part of your life?

Helping people is a big part of my life. I'm not professionally trained but I meet with a lot of people to provide council and comfort. I've also enjoyed helping out around Billings with all kinds of community projects.

I'm a big proponent of leadership development and absolutely love the Global Leadership Summit. I make sure I attend that every year and encourage everyone I can to go.

Additionally, I've been going on and leading mission teams to Ethiopia with Harvest Church for the past five years. My passions of helping people and leadership development have meshed very well with these trips. We have been helping present the Global Leadership Summit all around the country but more importantly, we're training and equipping the Ethiopian people to do it themselves. We've had the honor of being part of helping a number of sites become completely independent.

## What's your guilty pleasure?

My number one would have to be baked goods, especially cookies and pastries. On my latest trip back from Ethiopia, we had a layover in Germany and we passed by a bakery. It got the best of me and I had to try five different pastries. A close second would be a DQ blizzard – I like all kinds of flavors.

## What was the last show you binge watched?

“Jack Ryan.”

## What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?

I like to do a variety of things when I have the time. Being outdoors is very recharging. I like to Bow hunt, camp, fish and hike. When I have some down time at home, I like to read and do artwork. I've recently started back up doing watercolor painting and that has been very refreshing. Oh, and I enjoy cooking but I'm bad at planning so I tend to decide to cook after I'm already really hungry.

## Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?

Overall, my parents would be the greatest in my life. I've watched them in life and have seen both success and failure. I've seen them work hard, learn, change and grow. They did very well to challenge me and teaching me a ton of life skills. They also instilled so many ethics and values in me that have helped me along the way. Thanks, Mom and Dad.



  
**Billings Clinic**



**Erin Allen, MD**  
Pediatrician

**Congratulations**  
for being named 40 Under Forty.



**Whitney Gum, MD**  
Medical Director, MedFlight



**Anna Howard**  
Lead Oncology Clinical Pharmacist

Billings Clinic is Montana's largest health care organization with more than 4,400 employees. We have excellent opportunities for both clinically trained and non-medical professionals.

Learn more about our career opportunities at [billingsclinic.com/careers](http://billingsclinic.com/careers).



# MATT BLAKESLEE | Be present. Be honest. Be open. Be love(d).

**Age:** 36

**Hometown:** Billings, Montana

**Company and title:** Executive Director/ Founder - Art House Cinema & Babcock Theatre

*Before he was the executive director and founder of Art House Cinema & Babcock Theatre, Matt Blakeslee was a church pastor for 10 years. When he and his wife, Kate, were determining what the next chapter of life would look like, they knew a few things for sure – they loved and wanted to stay in Billings, and they wanted to create something that had inspired them in other cities: independent cinemas. In March 2015, Art House Cinema opened its doors, offering independent, beautifully produced movies – and it was unlike anything Billings had seen before.*

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?**

I love music and have had the opportunity to be a part of producing some really amazing talent (Alder Lights, Grant Jones, Parker Brown). I would love to invest more of my time into music production and helping artists create incredible work.

My wife and I also started a new church

in Billings (CMYK Church) that has become a beautiful community of individuals gathering together on Sundays to live a more beautiful way forward together. Last, but certainly not least, we have two kids (5 years and 18 months) who are the greatest passion and calling I could ever dream of.

**What's your guilty pleasure?**

Large spoonfuls of peanut butter. JIF. Creamy. Not the “trying to be healthy” kind that you have to stir for an hour before you eat it. The creamy, peanuty, created in a laboratory sugar rush in the red, blue and green-striped jar.

**What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?**

The complete build out of Art House Phase 2. We have been fundraising to bring our full Art House vision to Billings and are so excited to be breaking ground on it soon. From there, we believe Art House can become an incredible beacon and support for more and greater films, arts and culture in Billings.

**What is the hardest part of your job?**

Fundraising. As a leader of a nonprofit

organization, it has been such a joy to see so many people in our community support our work at Art House. However I am excited for the day when so much of my time and energy isn't about fundraising for our Phase 2 expansion. Our long term goal for Art House is to be sustainable through our work and not need to host large fundraisers and consistently ask for money. As we look to build out Phase 2, my life can hopefully change away from the needed focus at the moment.

**What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?**

I believe in the work of film (and all art) to expand our world views. We are connected to stories outside ourselves. We experience the world through someone else eyes. It helps us grow in empathy towards one another. It builds a more rounded world view. It can educate us on topics we have never thought about before. This is what I love most about our work. We believe we are stirring great conversations through great film, art and culture – and this helps us all grow in our humanity.



# KARI BOITER | Empathy, perseverance, passion



**Age:** 39

**Hometown:** Billings, Montana

**Company and title:** Development Coordinator at the Mental Health Center

*Shortly after graduating high school, Kari Boiter became a broadcast journalist at KULR-8 television. Her career took her to KATU in Portland and KOMO in Seattle. After 10 years in newscasting, she decided she need a change and took a hand at politics. She began working as a legislative assistant to Washington State Representative Mary Lou Dickerson. She learned about policy reform, advocacy, and community organizing, as well as helping pass laws on the local, state and federal level. Now, back in her hometown, Boiter's desire to use the skills she has gained in journalism, politics and advocacy to help foster a healthy, vibrant and thriving community.*

**Why did you choose this profession?**

I choose to work in nonprofit administration because it allows me to devote my time and energy to values and beliefs that I hold dear. Since moving back to Billings, I have been able to lend my skills and passion to a variety of causes that I care about from ending youth homelessness and human trafficking to hunger and poverty

reduction. Most recently, I helped create an Energy and Conservation Commission for the City of Billings, as well as help launch the Yellowstone Valley Food Hub, which is a cooperative of local farmers and ranchers who sell delicious and nutritious homegrown vegetables, meat, eggs and other products directly to consumers on a year-round basis. Currently, I work for the Mental Health Center, where we are actively tackling complex substance abuse and mental health concerns in Billings and 10 surrounding counties.

**What failure have you learned the most from?**

The failure of my body. I have a genetic condition that went undiagnosed until I was 30 years old, although I began struggling with the symptoms at a very young age. I'm not going to gloss over the challenges and pretend it's been easy, but there are so many powerful traits that I have gained along the way. Empathy, first and foremost; my kind heart and giving spirit are the result of not always having the same courtesy extended to me. Tenacity is another example of a quality that might not have developed without the trials I've encountered in life. I don't give up easily, that's for sure. I've

also been forced to learn the vital importance of managing my work-life balance. When I neglect to take care of my wellness, my health has a not-so-gentle way of reminding me what's important in life.

**What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?**

I love visiting Bozeman Hot Springs for a quick, relaxing getaway. I never get bored exploring Montana's wilderness, whether by car, boat, bike or on foot. I also enjoy live music, dancing and karaoke, as well as comedy, art, culture and community events.

**What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why?**

The birth of my son, Bennett, who brings immeasurable joy to my life in ways I never could have comprehended before having a child. His mischievous grin when I walk into the room makes every sleepless night and dirty diaper worth it. My son only magnifies my desire to make our community the best that it can possibly be. I want Bennett to have all the things that I had as a child growing up in Billings and all the things that I didn't have. He's my greatest gift and my greatest inspiration.



## GARTH BRAND | Being a successful physician is taking ownership for the patient's concerns

**Age:** 36

**Hometown:** Monument, Colorado

**Company and title:** Riverstone Health, Associate Program Director of the Montana Family Medicine Residency

*With a Bachelor of Arts Degree in biochemistry, biophysics and molecular biology from Whitman College, Walla Walla Washington and a medical degree from Ross University, Portsmouth Dominica, Garth Brand is the kind of physician we all hope for – he believes in listening to his patient's concerns, providing meticulous evaluations of each and every one. For Brand, being smart doesn't make a good physician – being thorough, trusting and validating is key.*

### Why did you choose this profession?

I went into medicine with the goal of using my interest in science and communication to help improve people's lives. I decided to work in medical education because I think it is the responsibility of all physicians to educate both their patients and the next generation of physicians.

### If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?

I would open a brewery.

### What other passions/callings are part of your life?

First and foremost is my family. Being in the outdoors is a major passion and a large part of why I live in Montana. Cooking and eating good food has grown as a passion over the past few years. I like to relax by making a meal or learning a new recipe.

### What's your guilty pleasure?

Video games, Sci-Fi movies and Justin Timberlake songs.

### What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?

I would like to be a program director of a residency program.

### How do you measure your own success?

If my patients are able to improve their health, and if my medical residents are able to go into the careers they desire.

### What is the hardest part of your job?

Coping with death and loss. I believe you need to be able to have a strong connection with your patients to be an effective physician, at the same time you need to maintain professional boundaries.



### What was the last show you binge watched?

"The Mandalorian." It was awesome!

### What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?

The most rewarding part of my job is seeing a patient get better, take charge of their health, and be able to live the life they

want because of a treatment plan we created together. Similarly, is watching a resident physician grow from a medical student into a physician who is able to go out into our community and care for patients.

### What is the most challenging aspect of your occupation?

It is very challenging to not be affected by secondary trauma when your patients have been repeatedly traumatized.

### Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?

Roxanne Fahrenwald, former program director at MFMR. When I have a challenging case I think what Roxanne would do in this situation. She has a very kind approach to caring for patients, and is an inspiring leader in rural health care.

### What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why?

The gift that meant the most to me was my parents paying for college. My undergrad equipped me with the tools to learn and seek out answers that are essential to my role as a physician educator. From this gift, I realized that education is essential to improving our lives and those around us.

## MEHMET L. CASEY | Always find humor in what you do and never succumb to the fear of others judging you

**Age:** 37

**Hometown:** Baghdad, Iraq

**Company and title:** Downtown Billings Partnership / Development Director

*With a background in linguistics and public relations, business recruitment, retention, and diversification, Mehmet L. Casey is a self-proclaimed extrovert who enjoys networking and communication in general. His fascination with language and how we communicate as a species led him to pursue a degree in English literature and linguistics and a master's degree in public relations. He loves bringing people together, which is ideal for his position as Development Director at the DBA.*

### What other passions/callings are part of your life?

Kevin Richardson (The Lion Whisperer) and Dr. Evan Antin are two of my role models. Therefore, you can safely assume that animals are a passion of mine. Another passion of mine that runs in my blood due to my upbringing is soccer.

### What is the worst advice you've received and why?

Don't be a weirdo and try to fit in. Never

worked for me growing up and still doesn't work in this day and age. Embrace who you are and capitalize on your strengths instead of trying to improve your weaknesses.

### What failure have you learned the most from?

I really dislike regretting not having tried something. I have been adventurous with my career since I graduated from college but if I were to do it again, I'd start earlier and potentially change the direction of my education. I try not to miss out on opportunities for meaningful engagements and impactful resolutions that I could be a part of. I also think being flexible professionally broadens my skill set and widens my network of relations.

### What was the last show you binge watched?

"Good Omens."

### What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?

Seeing progress come to fruition whether it satisfies me personally or whom I work with on a daily basis or the community as a whole. Whenever there is an improvement

(regardless of what the context is) for the common good as a result of your efforts, that feeling is indescribably rewarding.

### What is the most challenging aspect of your occupation?

Working anonymously in the background while also maintaining a presence in public to be acknowledged and known as a place of resources.

### Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?

I look up to my parents for all they have had to endure to facilitate my journey in life thus far.

### What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start a new business or excel in a business or field?

Consider your options in terms of pros and cons as well as your strengths and how they can leverage what you can do, then think about what you may gain versus lose while also surrounding yourself by believers, supporters, and a team of allies. Subsequently, tread with perseverance and learn from your experience to modify as you continue your pursuit of success, fame, happiness, solitude, peace, or what-



ever you may seek.

### What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?

Playing board games, traveling, and spending quality time with family and friends (including our furry children).

### What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why?

Honestly, I'm grateful for the gift of having met and been with my fiancée who ignites my creativity and supports me all the way, making us truly a strong unity.



# GENIA CASTRO WALLER |

## You can't be what you can't see

**Age:** 31  
**Hometown:** Billings, Montana  
**Company and title:**  
 Graphic Finesse - Project Coordinator & Co-Owner

*For Genia Castro Waller, she always knew she was destined to be a business owner. She had generations of business owners in her family with her parents and grandparents demonstrating the balance of a married couple who works together. It seemed only inevitable that she and her husband would end up working together too. Now the Project Coordinator & Co-Owner of Graphic Finesse, Waller helps businesses grow by using creative thinking, research and strategy – and she'll get a little scrappy if need be.*

### What other passions/callings are part of your life?

Learning and education mean a lot to me, both have helped me get to where I am today and given me the confidence I needed to speak up and realize I have so much to offer the world. I'm on the Board of Directors for Explorers Academy (Head Start) for that very reason. The education you're

exposed to at a young age can set the foundation for your entire life, so helping kiddos that need it the most in our community has meant so much to me.

My reinvigoration started during the One Big Sky District planning and public discussions last year. I was invited to testify in support of the 406 Impact District bill in Helena on behalf of Millennial Business Owners. I joined a dozen or so business owners and leaders in a van at 4:30 a.m., headed north. As we drove throughout the morning, we discussed all of the opportunity that exists for Billings, I don't want to sound corny or anything but it was amazing. That opportunity single-handedly helped solidify my passion for helping my community in any way I can.

### How do you measure your own success?

By how well my houseplants and garden are doing. When they're thriving, typically I am too. There's something about going back to the basics and sticking to a routine that helps me stay grounded, gets my creative juices flowing, and my work done.

### What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?

I love that by helping other local businesses grow, we contribute to the growth of our community. People come to us for a logo and we get to help them build a brand.

### What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start a new business or excel in a business or field?

"The genius thing that we did was, we didn't give up." Jay-Z

Whoever says, "It's easy," is full of it. There's no such thing as an overnight success. They may seem as if they came out of nowhere but they've been there the whole time. They've been there countless nights, showing up before anyone else, leaving last, taking extra classes, tackling their next project, volunteering, learning, hustling, and grinding. It won't be easy. But the difference between everyone else and you will be that you're actually doing something about it not just talking about it. So remember that by doing, you're already ahead of the curve and don't give up. I'm going to say it again, don't give up. Get comfortable with writing when no one is reading, creating when no one is consuming, putting in the hours when you know no one is clapping, no one is listening, and no one is watching. That's it, that's the difference... keep learning, keep doing it and don't give up.





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# KODY CHRISTENSEN-LINTON |

## Fill up your cup and let it overflow to others

**Age:** 29  
**Hometown:** Billings, Montana  
**Company and title:** H'Om Wellness - Owner

*Kody Christensen-Linton has a passion for health and wellness, and helping others achieve that within themselves. His background includes training through the National Academy of Sports Medicine and the Yoga Alliance. But, his passions don't end there. He is an active member of the Billings community, giving back in as many ways as possible – and the only reward he is seeking is knowing he has made a difference.*

### What other passions/callings are part of your life?

I have a love for our community. I am the chair of the City of Billings Human Relations Commission, I am a CASA advocate and Peer Coordinator, I am on the board of Family Promise of Yellowstone Valley, I volunteer at the Moss Mansion, and I enjoy helping Tumbleweed. I have fun working with youth in our community as a PE/Health Teacher at Sunrise Montessori School, children in the foster system through CASA of Yellowstone County, youth at Tumbleweed, and helping plan events at Moss Mansion for children. I am an advocate for the homeless in our community through Family Promise of Yellowstone Valley and My Backyard. I am a coordinator for the CAMO and STEER treatment court and created the FIGHT Program (Finding Independence with Guidance and Health Treatment). I am a yoga instructor and have had classes to benefit other local non-profits including the Yellowstone Valley Animal Shelter and 100Strong Billings.

### What's your guilty pleasure?

Definitely pizza.

### What is the hardest part of your job?

Knowing there will never be enough hours in the day to help everyone. To keep from sacrificing quality for quantity you need to set boundaries in your schedule as a personal trainer and understand that you also need to take time for yourself.

### What was the last show you binge watched?

"The Witcher."

### What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?

Seeing the mental and emotional changes in someone who is finding a lasting lifestyle change. The energy around them



shifts when they finally embrace a healthier version of themselves.

### What is the most challenging aspect of your occupation?

I love learning new things and will be the first to admit I don't know everything. When a new client comes in with an injury or a challenge with their health I am excited for the new experience and to learn as much as I can about it. It keeps my job interesting and prevents that monotonous feeling. Any field of health and wellness is a continued learning experience.

### What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?

Watch a scary movie with my husband and talk after a long week. I like to read. Currently reading "The Righteous Mind – Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion."

I also like to bake, it's very meditative to me.

### What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why?

I have grown to be less fascinated by 'things' and more thankful for time spent with loved ones. I am very fortunate to have such amazing family and friends. My husband is my biggest support system and always knows what to say. He is my anchor and I am so lucky to have someone who helps me grow every day, challenges me, and encourages me to be the best version of myself.

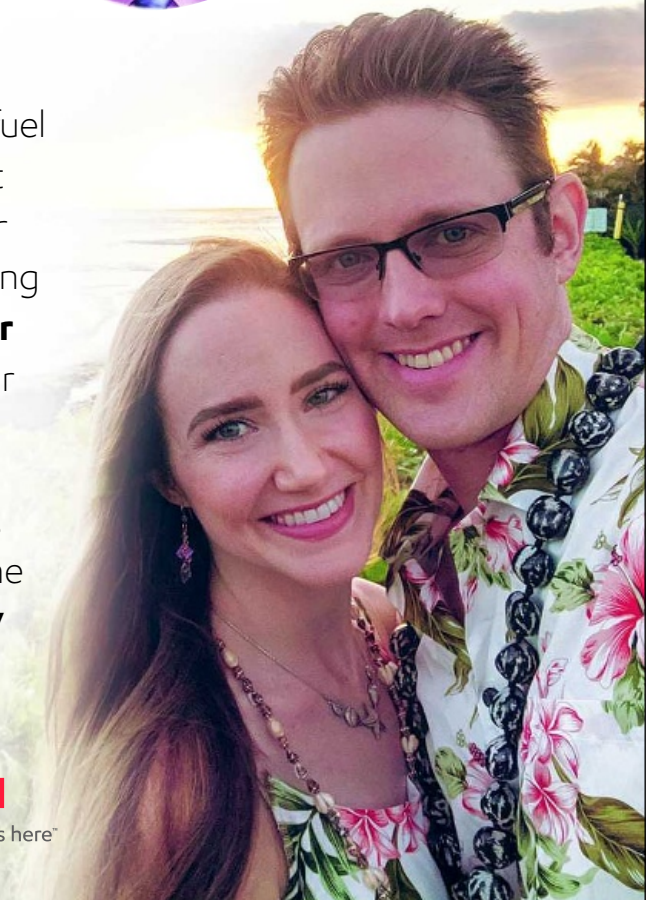
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# JESSE FERAGEN | Keep going. It's never easy, but it is worth it

**Age:** 35

**Hometown:** Huntley, Montana

**Company and title:** Tiska Chic Boutique

*With a bachelor's degree in business marketing and management, Jesse Feragen knows how to oversee and produce effective results in both of her fulltime jobs. Feragen is a bookkeeper, HR Rep, and payroll administrator at Aaron's and Blaze Pizza. But, her other fulltime job is labor of love – her very own business venture Tiska Chic Boutique, a clothing store offering everything from boho chic to professional wear and all at an affordable price. Her work ethic, charisma, kindness and care for her clients are just some of the many reasons she was nominated and selected as one of this year's 40 under forty.*

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?**

I love spending time with my husband Randy and our two boys, Ryker (6) and Brecken (2). We love to go camping and boating, spending time together and with our extended family. Most recently, our favorite pastime is watching Ryker play hockey.

**What advice would you give yourself as a teenager?**

Never give up. Life will throw you some loops, but keep striving forward toward what you want.

**What's your guilty pleasure?**

Netflix documentaries

**What is the hardest part of your job?**

Having essentially two full-time jobs makes time management a priority and a challenge. I have a pretty good system down, but it has taken some time to get there. I value my family above all, so turning my brain from work responsibilities to home life was hard to get used to, but it has been worth the battle.

**What was the last show you binge watched?**

"Cold Case Files." Murder mysteries are my favorite!

**What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?**

I absolutely love when women come into the store and ask for advice or help picking out an outfit. They come in dreading the "shopping experience" and I do my best

to help them find what they are looking for and leave feeling great about their purchase and themselves.

**What is the most challenging aspect of your occupation?**

Keeping up with Facebook's changing policies and building and maintaining a website have proven to be the most difficult. Technology is always changing, and it is my main selling platform, so staying on top of it has been a learning experience.

**Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?**

My dad and my brother are also entrepreneurs. Watching them work so hard to build a business that they love is truly inspiring. They have also been a great sounding board for me when I run into an obstacle with my own business.

My mom taught me the value of working hard and showing up to work each day, giving it your all and working up the corporate ladder.

My boss in my 8-5 job is also an entrepreneur. Working for him for the last 13 years has really taught me a lot about the do's and don'ts of owning and operating a small business.



**What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why?**

The love and support I have from my friends and family is truly unparalleled. Without that, I wouldn't be where I am today.

# PAMELA GARMAN | Create a plan, even if it is with the smallest step – just keep moving forward

**Hometown:** Townsend, Montana

**Age:** 30

**Company and title:** Crowley Fleck PLLP, Commercial and Natural Resource Litigation Associate

*With a bachelor of arts from Lewis and Clark College and a Juris Doctorate from the University Of Montana School Of Law, Pamela Garman says her love for law began at an early age with her love for John Grisham books. The books sparked an interest in the research and questioning processes – which she used to her benefit while participating in high school and college debate. Now, she spends her time helping others with legal needs and is passionate about giving back to the community through pro bono work. She believes everyone should have access to the justice system and that it's an important professional responsibility she should ensure.*

**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?**

When I did a study abroad trip prior to



law school in Central America, one of the field trips was to a turtle nesting beach in Trinidad. We spent the entire night rescuing hatching turtles stuck in the sand. As I watched them run into the ocean, I thought about whether law school was the right

choice. While staying on that beach to save turtles might not be a practical option, I do think if I were not a lawyer, I would do something in the environmental preservation field.

**What failure have you learned the most from?**

All of them. What seems like failure at a given point in time may change with time and a new perspective, so it is hard to pinpoint a single moment. Each "failure" is a learning opportunity to grow and learn. Embrace it and move forward.

**What is the hardest and the most rewarding aspects of your occupation?**

I think one of the hardest parts of my job is also the most rewarding. I am lucky to work at a firm with a strong interest in giving back to the community. We are the only firm in the state with two full time pro bono attorneys, and a really strong firm-wide pro bono program. This program is what initially led me to Crowley Fleck, and I try to do as much pro bono work as I can

each year. In many ways, these cases have always been the hardest, but the most rewarding.

**What was the last show you binge watched?**

"Project Runway."

**Do you have a motto that you live by?**

In the words of Sandra Day O'Connor: "Be Strong."

**What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?**

Most of my free time is dedicated to playing with my puppy, Ruthie. I also love traveling, reading and puzzling. Any time spent with my friends or dog is really time well spent.

**What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why?**

Scholarships. Without the assistance of scholarships, I would never have been able to complete my undergraduate degree and law school. I cannot think of another gift more valuable, well beyond the price tag.



# BRIAN HAFNER | Nothing worthwhile is going to just come to you

**Age:** 36

**Hometown:** Laurel, Montana

**Company and title:** Mortgage Loan Originator at Universal Lending Home Loans

*Brian Hafner says he didn't chose his profession – more so, it chose him. He wanted a career with freedom and allowed him to have a place in the community. He found just that as a mortgage loan originator at Universal Lending Home Loans. He proclaims that he has fallen in love with the people: coworkers, clients, partners, and community members. For Hafner, guiding people through the process of buying a home is an incredibly rewarding job. He just wants to make a difference in people's lives.*

## **What other passions/callings are part of your life?**

Family, friends, and sports. I feel most energized when I'm surrounded by people that I care about and who motivate me. I also love sports. Nothing beats going to a live game and cheering on your favorite team. Or a day out on the course.

## **What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?**

Every day is a new day in this business. I am constantly learning and working to be better. I'm proud of what I've accomplished in the past three years, but also know I can't get complacent.

## **How do you measure your own success?**

When I get messages from past clients thanking me for helping them through the process. That's when I know I'm truly making a difference.

## **What is the hardest part of your job?**

The ever-changing guidelines. You think you have something figured out and then they go and change it the next day. This has also given me an advantage. I'm always trying to learn. So, even though I've only been in the business for a few years, I've learned a lot of things. I also am surrounded by some amazing co-workers, so if I don't know something, I can ask.

## **What was the last show you binge watched?**

My daughter and I love watching "Survivor" and "The Voice." I'm thankful for DVR allowing us to watch it when we have time.

**What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?**

I get to help people buy homes! I absolutely love this part of the job. Whether it be helping a first-time homebuyer or someone buying their 5th home, it is so rewarding. This process can be stressful at times, so I try to be a calming influence and guide my clients. I want them to know they can always come to me with questions or concerns. And then on closing day we get to celebrate!

## **What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why?**

My daughter is by far the greatest gift I've ever received. She gave my life meaning and purpose at a very young age. I may be her dad, but I look up to her every day. She is the kindest, most caring, loving, and beautiful person I have met. She is only 13 but has taught me so much. I'm excited to see everything that she does with her life.



# KRYSTIN HANSARD | Failing doesn't mean you're a failure – it is proof that you were brave



**Age:** 35

**Hometown:** Wibaux, Montana

**Company and title:** Bauer & Clausen Optometry, Practice Manager

*Krystin Hansard moved to Billings from Helena in 2009, soon after the recession ended, and the job market was still struggling. With no experience in the optometry field, the team at Bauer & Clausen Optometry took a chance on Hansard. She became an important part of the company's evolution and established her role as practice manager in the business. Her inquisitiveness and passion for learning applies to both her personal and professional life. For Hansard, growing in knowledgeable is rewarding and allows her to help the company she loves continue to thrive.*

## **How do you measure your own success?**

I have the tendency to move on to the next challenge or project without acknowledging or celebrating my success. So I've had to practice looking for my successes and celebrating all wins, big and small. As someone who is invigorated by new, complex challenges, I never want to find myself in a situation where I feel like there is nothing left to

learn or achieve, that feels stifling to me. If I can leave work each evening satisfied that I've learned something new, checked off my to-do list, or helped someone solve a problem, then this counts as success to me.

## **What is the worst advice you've received and why?**

To follow your passion. That statement has caused me so much anxiety over the years. I don't believe most people are born with a passion – they're developed.

## **What's your guilty pleasure?**

Reading celebrity gossip magazines. I would call it a guilty pleasure because I know it's superficial and partly fake, but it's a fun form of escapism and gives me something to talk about that isn't boring like the weather, but not so polarizing like politics or the environment.

## **What was the last show you binge watched?**

"Mickey Mouse Clubhouse" seasons one through five, several times. I have a 2-year-old daughter and it's literally the only thing she wants to watch. 1 out of 5 stars, would not recommend.

## **Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?**

In my professional life, I would have to say Russ Cherry and I'm thankful for Robyn and David allowing me the opportunity to learn from him. He has faced a lot of medical challenges in his life and remains one of the most positive people I know. He has taught me so many valuable leadership concepts and tips throughout my career. I would say his fundamental message is that people are human and you can't blame them for having normal emotional reactions. Which logically everyone understands, but it's harder to process in the heat of the moment, unless you practice. He also says that "all feelings are allowed, but not all behaviors are allowed." Those two concepts have honestly changed the way that I lead and manage people.

## **Do you have a motto that you live by?**

Replace "I have to" with "I get to" when I start feeling tired, stressed, or irritated. It's a way to remind myself to be grateful for the everyday things we "have to do." Instead of telling myself I have to wash the dishes, I tell myself I get to wash the dishes. Reminding myself that I'm fortunate to have running water, a dishwasher and food in my fridge.



# JADE HAYNIE | No rest for the wicked

**Age:** 31

**Hometown:** Billings, Montana

**Company and title:** Billings Hardware & Service Center, store manager

*A graduate of Skyview High School and Montana State University Billings, Jade Haynie began his career at Billings Hardware & Service Center while in college and discovered he really enjoyed everything the businesses had to offer. Now the store manager, he is there every day – and when he's not there, he's either thinking, talking, or planning something to do with the store. For Haynie, hardware is life.*

## **Why did you choose this profession?**

The profession chose me. I started working at the hardware store when I was in college and found that I really enjoyed doing it.

## **If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?**

Since my other passion is beer, probably start a brewing company.

## **What other passions/callings are part of your life?**

Being a Broncos Fan and volunteering at the Moss Mansion

## **What advice would you give yourself as a teenager?**

Enjoy life, enjoy the moment and don't work so much.

## **What's your guilty pleasure?**

Drinking beer and working LOTS.

## **What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?**

To own my own store.

## **How do you measure your own success?**

I measure my own success by the number of hours I work. I am working on finding a way to balance that and to realize that I don't have to work 24/7. It is a constant struggle for me.

## **What is the hardest part of your job?**

Delegating and realizing that it is okay to take a day off work. I struggle at times to say "no" and commit to more than I should.

## **What was the last show you binge watched?**

"The Witcher" and "Good Girls."

## **What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?**

Customers and building a relationship with them

## **What is the most challenging aspect of your occupation?**

Planning for the seasonality of the business. Weather, economics, etc. all affect a person's shopping habits, and we must plan and predict what those habits will be.

## **Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?**

TJ Comstock

## **How does it feel to be nominated and selected as a 40 under 40?**

It feels great and to know that all my hard work is recognized. Everything I have done in my life is a result of a lot of hard work on my part.

## **What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start a new business or excel in a business or field?**

Find a comfortable work/life balance. That is something that I am still working on finding. Whether owning your own business or working for someone else, always treat your employees and customers with respect and kindness.

## **How do you view failure and success?**

Failure is a necessary evil of success. I don't really have a negative view on failure. It's just a different type of success if you can learn or better yourself from it. As far as success, I think just working every day to be a positive force in today's world and the folks around me is enough.

## **What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?**

I try and get out for a few rounds of golf in the summer. Everyone that knows me is aware that I'm almost always down for a cold beer, food and conversation. I also like to drive around with my dog and the radio in my truck at its highest volume setting.

## **What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why?**

My dog Lily. I bought her on Easter 2016 and she has been a great, faithful companion for myself and for the customers of the store.



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# JEREMY HANSEN | Mountains are crossed with one foot step at a time in the right direction

**Age:** 37

**Hometown:** Absarokee, Montana  
**Company and title:** CEO, Lovable Pets Bakery & Boutique

*With a degree in business finance, Jeremy Hansen always had the desire to be an entrepreneur. He and his wife wanted to create a business that catered to man's best friend and a dog bakery and boutique was just the ticket. Now with two locations, Lovable Pets Bakery & Boutique is more than just a place to pamper your pet. Hansen says one the most rewarding aspects of his job is helping pet lovers find solutions for dietary and health needs.*

## **If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?**

Honestly, I've been doing this for so long that I'm not sure. I've always had an interest in building a database or cloud-based software, and I think I could be really good at it.

## **What advice would you give yourself as a teenager?**

If someone tells you that you are not capable of doing something just smile and nod then prove them wrong by doing it.

## **What's your guilty pleasure?**

Once in a while I like to go out dancing and sing karaoke, and of course have a few drinks.

## **What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?**

Being able to own my own commercial building to put Lovable Pets into. It would take a lot of saving and a lot of planning but it would be good for Lovable Pets and for Montana, keeping the money in-state instead of giving it to out-of-state investors.

## **What failure have you learned the most from?**

Just because you are the owner doesn't mean you should be in charge of everything. I'm not very good at running a grooming salon because I'm not a groomer. If you have someone working for you that is the best at the job then you need to let go and trust them.

## **What was the last show you binge watched?**

My favorite show to watch every



night before bed is "Frasier." It's a comedy about two psychiatrists that give very sound advice to their clients but rarely follow it themselves. I can relate because I believe it is human nature.

## **Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?**

That would be my wife Ellie. She was the inspiration of Lovable Pets, deciding to start the business 13 years ago. She is a very kind and tough person that doesn't give up. If she wants to accomplish something she will keep trying until it's accomplished. I can't believe that I got to marry such an amazing person.

## **What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?**

During a recent vacation in the

Caribbean, I played steel drums for the first time and fell in love with the instrument. I sing and play island music, which makes me feel like I'm on vacation. I also love sailing. It's fun to just sit there and let the wind take you where you want to go. I've also been fishing and hunting my whole life.

## **What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start a new business or excel in a business or field?**

It's not easy. Most likely you are not going to be an overnight millionaire. If you love what you do just keep improving your business you'll make it and if you don't then try and try again. You only truly fail when you give up.

# Celebrating our very own 40 Under 40.

## **Michael Hickman, MD**

*SCL Health  
Medical Group - Urology*

## **Robert Lynagh, DO**

*St. Vincent Healthcare -  
Neuroscience Center*

## **Bo Stapler, MD**

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# MICHAEL HICKMAN | Be willing to adapt and persevere in order to succeed

**Age:** 37

**Hometown:** Aiken, South Carolina

**Company and title:** St. Vincent Hospital, Urologist

*Michael Hickman can't remember a time when he didn't want to be a physician. He does remember his mother gifting him a Fischer-Price doctor set she found at a garage sale, and the game Operation being key parts of his passion for medicine as a child. He completed residencies at the University of South Carolina and Temple University Hospital, where he specialized in urology. Now at St. Vincent Hospital, Hickman says urology allows a blend of surgical and medical treatments for his patients that help them live more comfortable lives.*

## **If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?**

If I wasn't a urologist or physician, I would have liked to have been a National Parks Ranger. The greatest idea this country has ever had is that everyone is created equal, but its second greatest ideas and it's a close second, are the national parks. The national parks are an American heritage and must be protected for the next generation. Park rangers are responsible for that protection of natural resources, ecosystems and wildlife within them, and introduce the visitors of the parks to their beauty and purpose. Not to mention they get to work in some of the most beautiful and magnificent landscapes in the world.

## **What advice would you give yourself as a teenager?**

Don't worry – you'll get better looking, braces are a game changer. I would also advise to invest as much money as possible in Apple or Amazon.

## **How do you measure your own success?**

I measure my own success by how I am able to positively affect the lives of my patients and the people I interact with throughout day. Medicine is a profession where success is measured by the improvement in the quality of life of your patients.

## **What failure have you learned the most from?**

Not getting into medical school the first year I applied. I had worked towards this one goal my whole life. I studied and worked hard in high school to be accepted into a good university, and in college graduated magna cum laude only to fail at the one goal all my work, time and effort had been directed towards in my young life. I was devastated. I applied again the next year and was accepted, but learned a great deal in that failure. I realized it wasn't going to be handed to me but it would have to be earned.

## **What is the hardest part of your job?**

The hardest part of my job is knowing that decisions I make will affect the quality of life for my patients and at times, the length of their lives. Often times we are able to achieve great success with improving a patient's life on a day-to-day basis with treatment and cure malignant cancers, but there are times when we do not accomplish those goals. Failure to accomplish a goal is difficult for any job, but in medicine, the burden of failure is shouldered by the patient. Admitting defeat to patients is the hardest part of my job.

## **Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?**

My parents, for instilling in me the belief that I could achieve my goals with dedication and hard work, and giving me the support and encouragement to achieve those goals.





# BRANDY HORTON | In a world where you can be anything, be kind

**Age:** 34  
**Hometown:** Billings, Montana  
**Company and title:** Hilton Garden Inn, Sales Manager

*After doing one of the hardest jobs possible, being a stay-at-home mom for 10 years, Brandy Horton was hired to work the front desk at the Hilton Garden Inn. The impressive young woman moved quickly through the company ladder to sales coordinator and now, sales manager. She fell in love with all aspects of the hotel, especially hospitality and the people she gets to meet every day.*

**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?**

I would be a child psychologist.

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?**

I love music, cars, football and any activities I can do with my daughters.

**What is the worst advice you've received and why?**

I have been told not to go out of your comfort zone. I disagree with this advice because in sales, you have to break out of your comfort zones in order to find new businesses and build relationships with new clients.

**What advice would you give yourself as a teenager?**

I would tell myself to slow down and take time making decisions, don't act on impulse. Also, to be confident and believe in myself.

**What's your guilty pleasure?**

Drinking pop – Dr. Pepper, in particular



**How do you measure your own success?**

When I leave work knowing I gave my clients the best experience they could have, and we get positive feedback about how wonderful their meeting or event was is always the goal and that is success to me.

**What failure have you learned the most from?**

Getting divorced at a young age has made me learn to work very hard to stay on my feet and provide a great life for my daughters.

**What is the hardest part of your job?**

Having to turn clients away due to lack of space or availability.

**What was the last show you binge watched?**

I don't watch much TV but I do watch a lot of football this time of year.

**What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?**

Building relationships with clients and providing them with the best events they could have.

**What is the most challenging aspect of your occupation?**

Finding new business in the competitive Billings market.

**Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?**

My greatest inspirations are my daughters. Everything I do is for them, so they have a happy healthy life. Being a single mom, I work very hard to show them that you can be anything you want to be if you work hard and believe in yourself.

**How does it feel to be nominated and selected as a 40 under 40?**

It's a complete honor. When I started at the front desk, I never thought I would work my way up management. I am proud to represent the hotel and all of our hardworking employees.

**How do you view failure and success?**

I think you can't have success without failure. Failing drives me to do better and strive for success, which always ends up in more success than failure.

**What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?**

I spend a lot of time with my daughters doing whatever makes them happy. Sometimes we go out and do things or just staying in the house playing. When I can, I like to travel with my boyfriend.

Each individual's success is a win for the whole team.

– Frank Ocean

*Congrats, Krystin!*

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# ANNA HOWARD | Think about those who come after you

**Age:** 33

**Hometown:** Billings, Montana

**Company and Title:** Billings Clinic Cancer Center, Lead Oncology Clinical Pharmacist

*Anna Howard had a love for science at a young age. As a student at Will James middle school, she was introduced to chemistry. Throughout school at Senior High, the most challenging aspects of chemistry were not daunting but intriguing. This fascination led her to pursue a degree in chemistry with an option in biochemistry and minor in biology at the University of Montana. Now, she is the lead oncology clinical pharmacist at Billings Clinic where she blends her devotion of science and her passion for helping others.*

## Why did you choose this profession?

My parents both have always stressed the importance of being compassionate and caring to others. My mom, as a hospice social worker, had what I think could be the hardest job of all: caring for people at the end of their life, easing their suffering and then letting them go. I learned a lot from her about the value of a good life and what that means. My dad, a divorce attorney, we've joked is almost like a family counselor, help-

ing each party understand what they want, what they need and finding a compromise between them. Each person has value and their opinions and feelings are real.

## What other passions/callings are part of your life?

I was a big sister in Big Brothers Big Sisters for a few years while I was in college and working at the local hospital in the lab. I wanted to help and show cool kitchen chemistry and hopefully inspire a love for math and science in a little girl.

I've volunteered for Forward Montana because they believe everyone should know about their right to vote and have access no matter who they vote for. I think this is so honorable and I wanted to support them.

I believe that volunteering is an important way to give back to a community that has given to you. I left Montana for residency training and I was worried I specialized too much to find a job in Montana. I love Montana and always wanted to come back.

## What's your guilty pleasure?

I'm binge reading the "Outlander" books. They are a mix of romance novel, time travel, mystery, a little cheesy but so delicious.

## Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?

I'm really lucky to work with one of my mentors: Jeannine Brant, a nurse clinician. She is an amazing person and professional.

## Do you have a motto that you live by?

We are human beings not human doings. What you do is important but it doesn't make you who you are.

## What do you do for fun/relaxation/hobby?

I love being in nature: backpacking, hiking, rock climbing. Rock climbing especially is one of my passions. I love walking/hiking with my dog. She is the cutest chocolate lab (Xena Warrior Princess). She has such spunk and personality. I couldn't imagine life without her!

## How does it feel to be nominated and selected as a 40 under 40?

It was really surprising. It's hard for me to think of anything I do as amazing enough to be recognized this way but that's something I am working on: how to recognize and appreciate all of the good things about yourself.



# JENNIFER JONES | Be a better person than you were the day before



**Age:** 39

**Hometown:** Billings, Montana

**Company and title:** Assistant Finance Director, Yellowstone County

*Jennifer Jones has found a balance between work and play. When she isn't enjoying outdoor activities like golf and jet boating, hanging out with her husband in their new motorhome, or playing with her 12-year-old golden retriever, Jones is working to help people understand how their tax dollars are being managed. As the assistant finance director for Yellowstone County, Jones remains transparent, understanding, patient and informative to the many citizens who need assurance that their money is being managed efficiently and in the best interest of everyone in the community.*

## What other passions/callings are part of your life?

My brother was Montana Highway Patrolman David DeLaittre, who lost his life in the line of duty. His death, and the increasingly common disrespect shown for the men and women who put their lives on the line to protect us, has really impressed upon me the need for the rest of us to support not just law enforcement, but

everyone who's chosen to wear a uniform. Along those lines, I help with various events supporting law enforcement and am also a board member of the Memorial Park honoring the sacrifice my brother made.

## What is the worst advice you've received and why?

When facing adversity, to just "roll with the punches." I believe that you need to be true to yourself, so sometimes you must stand up for your beliefs. It is worth taking a stand in life when circumstances run counter to or challenge your core beliefs. I may not always prevail, but I can be content that I stood on my principles and didn't just give in when facing adversity.

## What advice would you give yourself as a teenager?

Self-direction, discipline and determination are important, but so are patience and kindness. Remember to take some time, slow down and be patient – not just with others but with yourself, too.

## What's your guilty pleasure?

Chips and good salsa. I could eat it for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

## How do you measure your own success?

Success, for me, is getting up early in the morning happy and excited to take on the day and going to bed every night with my heart at peace.

## What was the last show you binge watched?

"The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel." I love her passion and can relate to her determination to not only crush the gender stereotypes, but also the boundaries those create.

## How does it feel to be nominated and selected as a 40 under 40?

Excited and amazed, but mostly humbled. I've been blessed with bosses throughout my career that have believed in me even during the times when I didn't believe in myself. I'm truly blessed with a wonderful support system in my personal and professional life.

## What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why?

Salvation—it's the true gift that keeps on giving every single day.



# CONNOR LORENZ | One word — momentum

**Age:** 22

**Hometown:** Billings, Montana

**Company and title:** Collective Elevation Billings, Owner; Extrinsic, Owner; Sugar Waxing Co., Owner; Purgatory Halloween, Co-Owner

*Connor Lorenz wears a lot of hats. His love of bringing people together and creating unforgettable and joyous memories is why he began hosting and promoting concerts. He chose the dispensary profession to help people suffering with medical conditions find alternative medicine to improve their day-to-day. He also took on the salon business because he loved watching confidence boosts in others. For Lorenz, his work is about helping others feel good – and that is no small thing.*

## What other passions/callings are part of your life?

My number one passion is building brands and helping people along the way. Traveling is a huge part of my life. I love experiencing other cultures, trying new food, and meeting new people.

## What is the worst advice you've received and why?

I've had multiple people around me (in-

cluding teachers) that have told me that not having a college education was a terrible idea and I have no chance at success without one. I think this mentality is super abundant in today's society and honestly a bit absurd.

## What advice would you give yourself as a teenager?

Disassociate yourself from others' expectations of you. Take risks and do not be afraid to go out of your comfort zone. Also that networking is super important and reputation is everything.

## What's your guilty pleasure?

Buying shoes. I'm a sucker for a cool pair of kicks and own an embarrassing amount of them.

## What is the hardest part of your job?

Society's negative stigma towards marijuana and hip hop music is definitely the hardest part of it all. Breaking past it is quite the task sometimes.

## What was the last show you binge watched?

Definitely "Friends." I can watch that show nonstop all day.

## What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?

I am able to directly help people, create opportunities for those around me, all while being able to influence other young entrepreneurs.

## Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?

I have multiple mentors and people that I look up to, however my mom will always top that list. She is very hard-working, and taught me how to multi-task extremely well!

## Do you have a motto that you live by?

It's not exactly a motto, however I'm super fond of the word momentum and its meaning. I 100% live by its meaning. I literally have it tattooed on my body and use it daily with my team.

## What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start a new business or excel in a business or field?

Don't be afraid to take leaps of faith and go outside of your comfort zone. That is hands down where I have had the most progression.



## What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?

I love to travel and see the world. I also love live music and attending music festivals.

## What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why?

The best gift I have ever received was a book called "The Third Circle Theory" from a childhood friend of mine named Brandon. It's the greatest gift simply because it inspired my entrepreneur lifestyle and mindset.

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# ROBERT LYNAGH | If you leave your putt short you will never make birdie

**Age:** 39

**Hometown:** Silver Spring, Maryland

**Company and title:** St. Vincent Healthcare, Neurosurgeon

*Robert Lynagh remembers how personable and comforting his childhood doctor was – and accredits his pediatrician as the reason he got into medicine. He aspired to be someone who may create a similar memory in another. He completed a neurological surgery residency at Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine and medical school at Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine. Based on his interest in brain and spinal cord injury, Lynagh chose to specialize in neurosurgery. Now a neurosurgeon at St. Vincent Healthcare, he works to help patients suffering from medical issues with the ability to return to the activities they once enjoyed.*

**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?**

I find the creative aspect of engineering quite fascinating and I am finding I would like to be my own boss. It's a little vague, but if I could combine the two I would do something along those lines.

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?**

I would have to say responsible stewardship of the environment and teaching. A huge part of recreation for my wife and I involves enjoyment of the outdoors. Now that we have our first child I want her to be able to enjoy all that we have, if not more. In terms of teaching, I enjoy the aspects of that which are involved with my profession or any little life lesson that I can pass on to others.

**What advice would you give yourself as a teenager?**

Learn how to save money. I really didn't understand the power of saving and investing money back then. I wouldn't have expected myself to be an investor of money as a teenager but learning how to save at that time would have probably put me on a track to understand managing money at a younger age.

**What's your guilty pleasure?**

New York style pizza and tacos.

**What is the hardest part of your job?**

That has to be telling families that their loved ones have a devastating injury in which there is nothing I can do to help.

**What was the last show you binge watched?**

"The Witcher" on Netflix.

**What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?**

I enjoy fly fishing, hiking and playing golf.

**What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why?**

My daughter. There's something very special when you get home after work and you see this little person looking up at you excited that you are home. She is a joy.

**How do you view failure and success?**

Failure is one of the greatest learning tools in life. It is inevitable and when it occurs you should grasp it and take anything you can out of it to learn a path toward greater success. Success is nice and re-affirming. However, I think failure is more valuable in learning how to come to a good life.





# WHITNEY GUM | Following dreams, making a difference.

**Age:** 35

**Hometown:** Billings, Montana

**Company and title:** Billings Clinic, Emergency Medicine Physician

*As a third grader, Whitney Gum knew she wanted to be an emergency room physician. She says a large part of that fascination grew by watching the television drama, "ER." Still, the show ignited a passion that stayed with her, leading her to medical school at the University of Washington and a residency at OHSU in Portland, Oregon. Now, Gum is an emergency medicine physician at Billings Clinic, assisting people with immediate medical needs.*

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?**

Travel and anything outdoors.

**What is the worst advice you've received and why?**

That my personality was too laid back and approachable and it would "shoot me in the foot." I think these traits are what make me good at my job in terms of team work with colleagues and with patients.

**What advice would you give yourself as a teenager?**

Loosen up a little bit, what others think doesn't really matter.

**What's your guilty pleasure?**

YouTube clips of "Pitch Perfect," "Sister Act 2," "Beyonce," and Oregon Duck clips.

**What failure have you learned the most from?**

I fail and make mistakes every day. Early on, I had to learn how get past them otherwise I wouldn't have made it out of med school.

**What is the most challenging aspect of your occupation?**

It all depends on the day, but we see a lot of difficult things in the ER and experience firsthand many of the limitations of our healthcare system.

**What was the last show you binge watched?**

Season three of "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel."

**What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?**

The people. Although certainly, there are times when people can be frustrating aspects of my job, the interactions with the people I work with and those that I get



to take care of end up being the most satisfying part of my job.

**Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?**

Several of my colleagues do a fantastic job of balancing efficiency, practicing up-to-date evidence-based medicine but always keeping patient care as their main focus.

**How do you view failure and success?**

On a day-to-day basis, success/failure mainly depends on those interactions

with patients. If I feel like I provided the best care possible, I see that as a success. On the bigger scale, I judge success by being lucky enough to genuinely enjoy what I do and also have the ability to spend time with family/friends traveling and adventuring.

**What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?**

My dog Bo and I need to get out in to the mountains at least a few times a month to stay sane. This can include hiking, snowshoeing, camping, skiing or trying to figure out how x-country skies work. When

we can't make it to the mountains, Norms and Zimmerman Park are fantastic.

**What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why**

Probably a ticket to the Oregon-Auburn National Championship football game from my dad and my uncle. This was the first time Oregon made it to the championship and also my last year of med school, so they got the ticket for a "graduation present." Absolutely no way I could have afforded a ticket since I was in school, but they didn't want me to miss out.



# JORDAN MCNAUGHT | Work to live, don't live to work

**Age:** 33

**Hometown:** Whitefish, Montana

**Company and title:** Northwestern Energy, Supervisor of Electric Operations

*With a Bachelor of Science in civil engineering from the Montana State University, Jordan McNaught spends his working life supervising electric operations at Northwestern Energy. For McNaught, his position in the industry is ideal – allowing him to explore the many aspects of construction and operations in the utility industry while living in his home state.*

**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?**

Ski resort and après connoisseur.

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?**

Getting outside and shredding the gnar.

**What is the worst advice you've received and why?**

We won't need that spare.

**What advice would you have given yourself as a teenager?**

Don't worry about trying to prove things to other people, do what makes you happy, be yourself and have fun.

**What's your guilty pleasure?**

Snowblading.

**What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?**

Obtaining my professional engineering license.



**How do you measure your own success?**

Getting maximum enjoyment out of everything I do.

**What failure have you learned the most from?**

Flunking classes in college and having to retake them.

**What is the hardest part of your job?**

Working with customers to find solu-

tions that meet the needs of the company as well as satisfying the customers.

**What was the last show you binge watched?**

"The Watchmen."

**What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?**

Working on major storms and other unplanned outages to get power restored as soon as possible.

**What is the most challenging aspect of your occupation?**

Coordinating the operations of the distribution and transmission system in the greater Billings area.

**Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?**

Shane McConkey.

**Do you have a motto that you live by?**

"You'll be fine."

**How does it feel to be nominated and selected as a 40 under 40?**

Great, it always feels good to be recognized for your professional and personal accomplishments.

**How do you view failure and success?**

Success or failure are based on the effort you put into something regardless of the outcome.

**What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?**

Showing my kids how to shred the gnar and teaching them to enjoy all the great things to do outside. Watching Montana State crush the Grizzlies.

**What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why?**

Growing up in Whitefish in the '90s before it started to turn into Aspen North. It gave me the opportunity to experience every outdoor activity possible in an outdoor mecca that still had a working class vibe.

## Congratulations Brandy Horton!

The Hilton Garden Inn- Billings is proud to host the 40 Under Forty reception and congratulates this year's winners!



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# BENJAMIN MEYER | If you ever think you've arrived, set the bar higher

**Age:** 29

**Hometown:** Born in Baytown, Texas. Lived near Laurel for 15 years.

**Company and title:** ExxonMobil Console Shift Supervisor

*As a child, Benjamin Meyer was home schooled and began working full-time as a ranch hand at 16. After ranching for a number of years, he worked for Western Sugar. In 2011, he was hired as a temp by ExxonMobil, after which was hired full time in 2012. He has worked his way up the company ladder and is now a Console Shift Supervisor for the company.*

*In his spare time, Meyer serves on the board of directors and performs at NOVA Center for the Performing Arts. He also loves spending time with his wife, who is expecting the couple's first child.*

## **Why did you choose this profession?**

Growing up around refineries with a family and lots of friends in the industry, it only seemed natural to be interested in and pursue a career in the industry as well.

## **If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?**

I would likely pursue a profession in the music, culinary or automobile industries.

## **What other passions/callings are part of your life?**

I love helping people. Whether they just need help with something, want advice or just want someone to talk to. Being a part of the performing arts scene in Billings is also special. To see people leave after a show with a big smile – that's worth a lot.

## **What is the worst advice you've received and**



## **why?**

"Follow your heart." This may seem odd, however, I've found that often the right thing to do isn't your gut feeling. Finding

the right thing to do comes with careful thought, planning and seeking counsel from those around you to make sure you're on the right track.

## **What's your guilty pleasure?**

Coffee, cheese and chocolate.

## **What was the last show you binge watched?**

"Duck Dynasty."

## **Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?**

I have been fortunate and blessed to have had plenty of good mentors through my life. The most influential recently has been Jocko Willink, author of "Extreme Ownership." His podcast, books and seminars are topnotch and have excellent advice for the real world that have really inspired me. Interestingly, some of the other most influential "mentors" I've had have indirectly taught me what not to do.

## **How do you view failure and success?**

Usually, I define failures to be not living up to my own expectations. Once a failure has occurred, it's time to go to the drawing

board and find out why I failed and fix it so it never happens again. As for success, it goes back to laying down at night knowing I gave it my best shot. This doesn't mean that everything went right, but that I handled those situations properly.

## **What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?**

I love music. I play several instruments and sing. My wife and I love to spend time together regardless of what we're doing. I also love hunting, camping, canoeing, and fast cars.

## **Do you have a motto that you live by?**

One of my mentors told me something once that really hit home. "Live your life in such a way that if someone says something bad about you – nobody believes them."

**Congratulations**

 **ROCKY MOUNTAIN COLLEGE**

**Dr. Delisha Patel, Ph.D.**  
Rocky Mountain College's Assistant Professor of Occupational Therapy and Director of Research

**BILLINGS GAZETTE'S 2020 Forty Under 40 NOMINEE**



# KORI MILLER | Treating patients with respect and kindness

**Age:** 38

**Hometown:** Hardin, Montana

**Company and title:** Albertsons Companies, Division-Patient Care Services Manager

*Kori Miller knew she wanted a career that helped people. She didn't understand the significance of what a pharmacist did or was until her aunt was diagnosed with cancer. Miller found admiration for the pharmacist that went above and beyond to take care of her aunt but also, the entire family. It was that experience that created the desire in Miller to offer comfort and kindness to those needing medications.*

**What advice would you have given yourself as a teenager?**

Read – a lot. Being good at reading would have made the rest of my entire education and adult life easier.

**What is the hardest part of your job?**

Appealing to so many different personalities. In my current role as an administrator, I oversee 72 pharmacies, meaning 72 Rx managers, plus their

staff pharmacists. Figuring out what motivates others and trying to get them all to buy in to whatever project we are working on is the hardest part.

**What was the last show you binge watched?**

Seasons one through 16 of “Survivor.” Currently on season 17.

**Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?**

Naming just one is impossible. From a young age, I have been inspired by Martin Luther King Junior, because he went against the status quo and fought for what he believed in. To this day, I will fight for what I believe in. I have been so blessed in life to have numerous people who have inspired me along the way and who have helped shape who I am today.

My mom and grandma have always been my most instrumental inspirations in life. Both women taught me many lessons that made me a financially responsible, caring, kind, and hard-working individual.

My 17-year-old daughter, Taylor, is

my current inspiration. Her courage and wisdom give me strength and inspiration to be my best self.

**What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?**

I love to do anything active in the sunshine. I am like one of those solar flowers– I just dance in the sun's rays. It is invigorating to me. I like to hike, bike, swim, throw the frisbee, and or just soak up the sun's rays. It is true, I am a born and raised Montanan, but I really, really wish we got more sunshine.

**What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why?**

The greatest gift I have ever received is having my family's belief in me. This gift has taught me to always get up and dust myself off when I fall down, it has instilled in me my own belief in myself, and it has allowed me to help others believe in themselves as well.

**Do you have a motto that you live by?**

“If you can dream it, you can do it!”  
– Walt Disney



# JAIDYN MILLIRON | Learn from leaders and mentors, but don't try to be them



**Age:** 24

**Hometown:** Laurel, Montana

**Company and title:** 41 Realty Group, Real Estate Broker

*Jaidyn Milliron has been around real estate all of her life. Her father was a home builder, so she had a natural gravitation towards the industry. She also had a strong desire to be an entrepreneur. After graduating college, she decided to give real estate a try while figuring out what her next steps would be. Little did she know, this decision would guide her to a successful and meaningful career.*

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?**

I am heavily involved in Exchange Club. Exchange's mission, The Prevention of Child Abuse, along with Americanism, Community, and Kids, is near and dear to my heart. I'm extremely passionate in those categories and this service club allows me to give back in so many ways. This year I'm the District President Elect for Montana and Idaho and I'm honored to lead 14 clubs in this mission.

**What's your guilty pleasure?**

Chocolate chip cookie dough.

**What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?**

I want to own my own brokerage one day. I know this will not be for a few years, but I hope I can accomplish that down the road.

**What was the last show you binge watched?**

“Nashville” – such a good drama about country stars.

**What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?**

The most rewarding aspect of my occupation is teaching a family that they can achieve homeownership. It is a dream so many believe they could never achieve, and I so often, get to mentor and help that family toward owning a home.

**What is the most challenging aspect of your occupation?**

The most challenging aspects of real estate are feeling like you need to work all the time and dealing with all kinds of personalities. I'm responsible for growing my business. I'm in complete control so there is always more work that can be completed. The emotional elements of a real estate transaction magnifies person-

alities and it's my job to navigate those personalities and respond accordingly. This can be extremely challenging.

**Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?**

My greatest mentor is my dad. I can count on his honest, fair and unbiased opinion anytime. He did not tell me how to live, he lives every day and lets me watch him do it. He has always been there for me and has shaped me into the person I am today.

**Do you have a motto that you live by?**

“Always be a first-rate version of yourself instead of a second-rate version of somebody else.”

**What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start a new business or excel in a business or field?**

I truly believe I've been as successful as I am today by surrounding myself with the right people. Every person around me, professionally and personally, maintain and execute similar values and beliefs which keep me on track with my goals and mindset. If you were to start a new business, make sure your “team” and support align with your values and goals.



## MEGAN MODEL | Success is a moving target. There is always room for growth and improvement

**Age:** 32

**Hometown:** Miles City, Montana

**Company and title:** Wipfli LLP- CPA, Senior Manager, Tax

*Megan Model attended college at the University of San Diego pursuing a degree in biology and chemistry. After spending hours in labs, she realized that perhaps it wasn't her calling after all and switched to the university's business college. Her accounting professor was also from Montana and took Model under his wing, teaching her how to have a successful career in accounting. Now, Model is the senior manager at Wipfli LLP- CPA helping clients with tax planning, preparation, accounting and financial reporting assistance.*

### What other passions/callings are part of your life?

I love volunteering and giving back to my community. I don't do well relaxing and enjoy staying busy. I serve on the board for the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Eastern Montana, Arts Without Boundaries, Risk Management Association, and the Billings Chapter of CPAs. I'm a beauty counter consultant and love advocating for safer skincare and cosmetics. Their mission

is extremely close to my heart as I've had many family members affected by cancer.

### What's your guilty pleasure?

"Gossip Girl." I've watched this series over and over on Netflix and it is my go-to whether I've had a good or a bad day. I've read all the books and hope that Netflix keep this series forever.

### What is the hardest part of your job?

As cliché as it sounds, tax season (busy season) is the hardest part of my job. It's not necessarily taxes that make it the hardest. The hardest part to me is that the other work doesn't stop just because it's tax season. You still are helping clients grow their business, planning for sales/purchases of businesses, etc. while having the 70+ hour work weeks filing taxes. Plus, life around you continues even during tax season so it's difficult to manage everyday things while working long hours. My friends and family know that from January through April, I tend to go missing.

### What was the last show you binge watched?

The Netflix series "You." It is so disturbing yet addicting at the same time.

### Do you have a motto that you live by?

"The best is yet to come." I went on a Search retreat in college and this was the theme. It has continued to stick with me. No matter where I am in life, I know it will continue to get better. Everything happens for a reason, even when I don't understand why at the time.

### What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?

I love Montana and all that the outdoors has to offer. Running has become one of my favorite past times and training for half marathons keeps me competitive with myself. My parents have a home on Flathead Lake where my husband and I love to spend time in the summer. You can find us boating, golfing, hiking and "working from the lake" many weekends in the summer.

### Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?

My dad has and continues to be the greatest mentor in my life. I look up to him and admire the success he has had owning a small business. He's worked hard for everything he has and achieved his success through his work ethic. Nothing was given to him, and I truly admire that.



## DANNY MOWATT | food for thought



**Age:** 27

**Hometown:** Absarokee, Montana

**Company and title:** Prerogative Kitchen, Partner and Co-Chef

*Danny Mowatt chose to go into the culinary arts as a result of a rough childhood. He wanted to learn how to feed himself with whatever food was available. Luckily, cooking turned into a passion and he felt at home in a kitchen. He attended the Oregon Coast Culinary Institute and is now the partner and co-chef at Prerogative Kitchen in Red Lodge - a hotspot for inventive and delicious cuisine. His desire to find sustenance has developed into a passion of creating delicious food for his customers and seeing the satisfaction on their faces after a good meal.*

### If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?

If I wasn't in the culinary industry, I think I would have liked to go into interior design. Making a space feel like home seems like a good way to bring joy into people's lives. You get to interact with people and learn their

story and their aesthetic and then you help them bring it all together into a livable space. Seems like another great way to make people happy.

As for other passions that I pursue, I would have to say that I thoroughly enjoy writing. I have self-published two books of poetry so far and am currently working on a short novel, and another poetry book. Living in Montana, it is easy to fall in love with nature and the natural beauty of its landscape. I try to use the landscape for inspiration when the words can't seem to find a way out.

### What's your guilty pleasure?

Take-out Mexican food. At the end of a long work week, it's nice to sit back on the couch, relax and eat good food.

### What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?

A professional accomplishment I would still like to achieve is owning and operating an ice cream truck. I just think that would be such a fun side gig.

### What failure have you learned the most from?

The failure that I've learned the most from was trying to move to California to chase the "American Dream." I thought I'd become this well-known chef who was always hired to cook for the stars. I ended up broke, accidentally totaled my car, and had to get a job in the oil fields to help pay off a bunch of bills. But starting at rock bottom is a great place to start building a sturdy foundation underneath you.

### Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?

My business partners Chris Lockhart and Gena Burghoff. They push me each and every day to become a better version of myself. And all of this wouldn't have been possible without their help. They're as deserving of this award as I am.

My little brother Jared, who always has my back and always will defend me, and my mom, Becky Gardiner, who listens to me vent every week and offers advice to help me get through every problem.



# SARAH MOYER | Environmentally and community minded

**Age:** 39

**Hometown:** Portland, Oregon

**Company and title:** Project Lunch Owner and Operator

When Sarah Moyer's daughter was in first grade, her teacher posted a need for a coffee delivery service on Facebook. Moyer

thought it would be a way to help the teachers out and make some pocket change. It became successful enough for the health department to notice and informed Moyer that she would need a certified kitchen to make coffee drinks. In fact, one of the inspectors suggested that she also serve lunch items.

She loved the idea but was unwilling to

add more trash to the landfills by serving food in Styrofoam containers. That's when she realized that there could be a market for fresh, healthy, delicious, crave-able food in reusable containers.

She says deciding to love and respect our planet is one of the most important decisions she has ever made.

## What other passions/callings are part of your life?

Absolutely and without question, my family. Number one. Specifically, modeling for my children. I want them to see that things worth doing are hard. I want them to learn the value of a life well lived and a job well done. I also want them to take time for joy and rest. I am passionate about leaving everything, every place, every person, better than I found them.

## What's your guilty pleasure?

A great stout or porter, preferably at the brewery where it was brewed. Always with my husband. Usually, with my children playing games.

## What was the last show you binge watched?

"The Man in the High Castle."

## Do you have a motto that you live by?

"Be a rainbow in someone else's cloud."  
– Maya Angelou

I carry with me my ancestors and all the people who have been a part of my life, whether good or bad. It is upon me to carry on a legacy. I do it in the simple lunch notes for my customers when I call them by name, ask them to enjoy their lunch and finish with "Love (a heart) Sarah." I hope that that is a rainbow in their cloud and I hope that it has some sort of ripple effect. I try to be rainbow for everyone I know.

## What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why?

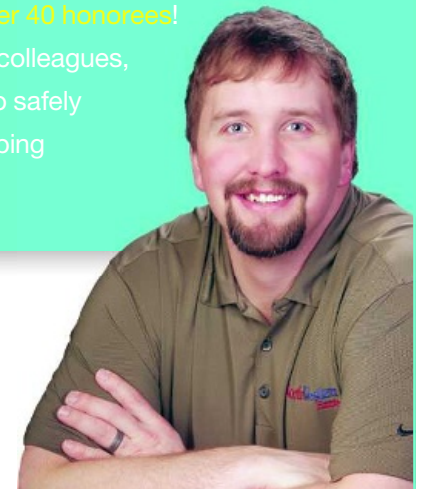
My husband. He is the gift. I truly believe that our meeting was written in the stars. I went through a difficult five year relationship before we met. We had mutual friends wanting us to date. We weren't interested, but time and circumstance brought us together. He was everything I didn't know I needed or wanted. He always has my back. Both of us have grown into better people in the 15+ years we have been together. Through every life change, he has given me the gift of his love, insight, support, intelligence, strength and so much more. He is the greatest gift I've ever received.



## Congratulations, Jordan!

From everyone at NorthWestern Energy, congratulations [Jordan McNaught](#) for your deserving recognition as one of [The Billings Gazette's 40 Under 40 honorees!](#) You are truly a leader for your fellow colleagues, ensuring they have what is needed to safely keep the lights on. Thank you for helping deliver a bright future.

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# DELISHA PATEL | Success is not final, failure is not fatal. It is the courage to continue that counts

**Age:** 30

**Hometown:** Mumbai, India

**Company and title:** Assistant Professor of Occupational Therapy and Director of Research at Rocky Mountain College

*With a PhD in microbiology and immunology, Delisha Patel is a third generation educator in her family. As an educator and researcher, Patel believes the profession has the responsibility and excitement to change the future. She says she has two primary roles as an educator: tour guide and facilitator. As a tour guide, she provides students with all of the necessary information required to expand their knowledge and skill set. As a facilitator, she provides the necessary road map to assimilate the knowledge provided in the curriculum, thereby giving students opportunity to ask intelligent questions, emphasizing the importance of research.*

**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?**

I would probably be in healthcare.

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?**

My family and celebrating each moment of life with them and keeping our culture alive.

**What advice would you have given yourself as a teenager?**

I would probably have advised myself to travel and spend time with friends and family.

**What's your guilty pleasure?**

Indian food.

**How do you measure your own success?**

Professionally, I compare the last version of my CV to the most current version. Personally, I consider myself successful if I have made a positive impact on someone else's life.

**What failure have you learned the most from?**

I think each failure has given me the strength and new vision towards life.

**What was the last show you binge watched?**

"The Crown."

**What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?** Seeing students succeed as professionals and making a difference in the community.

**What is the most challenging aspect of your occupation?**

To meet each student's learning needs and provide academic advising that will help foster their careers.

**Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?**

There are several people in my life that inspire me every day, but most importantly all the women in my life have a pivotal role in shaping who I am as a person.

**How does it feel to be nominated and selected as a 40 under 40?**

The feeling is amazing that I am able to inspire the community and adds additional responsibility to continue to pursue excellence.

**What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start new business or excel in a business or field?**

Always be present, self-reflect and take each challenge as an opportunity.

**How do you view failure and success?**

Failure is a critical ingredient on the path to success. I view success if my actions have made a positive impact on someone's life.

**What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?**

I like to spend all my fun time with my son and family.

**What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why?**

Life and its experiences. I believe that every experience I have had in life and every individual I encounter has taught me something valuable and continues to shape the individual that I am.





# MONICA PLECKER | There are two types of people in life: people who let things happen and people who make things happen. Don't be someone who lets things happen

**Age:** 32  
**Hometown:** Millboro, Virginia/ Roberts, Montana  
**Company and title:** City of Billings/ Yellowstone County, Planning Division Manager

*Monica Plecker has always had a passion for local government and policy. She believes community work has the greatest opportunity for a meaningful impact. She says she never set out for a career in planning – she stumbled into the profession through a college internship and was “accidentally” good at it. A decade later, Plecker is going strong, making a difference in Billings and Yellowstone county.*

## What other passions/callings are part of your life?

Four years ago, I received a call from my good friend Kristen Beck asking if I'd volunteer for the National Finals Ski Joring Races in Red Lodge. I happily obliged but had no idea what I was signing up for.

As we enter the 2020 race season, she and I are going on our fourth year as both competitors and co-organizers of the longest-running race in Montana.

Ski joring is an exhilarating sport where

a horse, a rider, and a skier or snowboarder work together in a timed race event that can only be described as a wild ride.

Since becoming involved in the sport, and more specifically the National Finals race, I have learned that ski joring is more than a weekend race. It's a deeply-rooted, unique community tradition that continues to happen because of awesome community support and countless volunteers. I'm proud to be part of an organization like Red Lodge Ski Joring Association.

## What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?

I was really honored when I was given the opportunity to lead the planning division at such a young age, I wasn't even 30. That's something I'm proud of. I haven't thought about what's next because I'm overwhelmed with opportunity in my current position.

## Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?

My grandparents are truly special, but I especially admire my Grandma Jackie. There is nothing she can't do. She is a business woman and I admire her success in a time period where women were not espe-

cially in leadership roles, especially in the construction industry. She is intelligent and confident, and she always lets people know what she thinks, a firecracker some might say. Amidst those strong qualities, she's also gracious, generous and compassionate.

## What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why?

A handsome, big boned, 16+ hand paint horse named Chief. He is the orneriest horse I've ever owned, but he sparked a passion inside of me that is unbridled. The lessons I have learned because of him are countless. Nothing about Chief was easy, “bomb-proof” or push button, all common words you see in horse sale ads. Every good ride we had was earned while every bad ride tested my patience and composure. I lost my “cool” more times than I can count, but I quickly realized getting frustrated never helped the situation. Instead, I had to become aware of every movement I made, my attitude and the way I was asking him to do things. Even then, it still might not be a “good” ride. Chief is a pusher. He pushed me to be better. After countless hours invested, Chief never became the easy horse but it is for that reason I like him so much. To this day, he's half wild and strong willed – just like me.



# JENNIFER QUANBECK | I get to meet and grow to love through this ministry



**Age:** 39  
**Hometown:** Eden Prairie, Minnesota  
**Company and title:** Co-Lead Pastor, King of Glory Lutheran Church

*As a child, Jennifer Quanbeck never envisioned herself as a pastor. It wasn't even something she considered as a career when in college. She thought she was going to be a doctor. She even went to seminary, not yet convinced she would become a pastor. Yet, through her graduate program, people around her took note of her leadership skills and encouraged her to consider the calling. Feeling led to be an agent of change in the world and in the church, she was ordained to the ministry of Word and Sacrament and began serving as a pastor at age 27.*

## If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?

Shaped by an interior-designer mother, an opera-singer grandmother, and a watercolor-artist grandfather, I have a passion for creating. I sometimes daydream about being a photographer, capturing beautiful moments in time for others. The

poet Mary Oliver's words have formed me into someone who tries to “be astonished” and “pay attention” to the gifts of ordinary life. In my imaginary world of being a photographer, I dream of traveling to far-off places, meeting extraordinary and diverse people, and never failing to get “the perfect shot.”

## What's your guilty pleasure?

Shoes. I used to enjoy wearing high heels regularly, but after becoming a mom, function and comfort jumped up the priority list. Now, I have at least one pair of dress shoes to correspond to each season of the church year. In my faith tradition, the calendar year is divided into different periods of time, or seasons, each with its own color. Advent is deep blue. Pentecost is red. Lent is purple. Leading worship with the occasional coordinating shoe allows me to share some of my personality with the congregation, albeit in a pretty nerdy way.

## What is the most challenging aspect of your occupation?

One of the challenges of ministry is

striving to live in a state of preparedness. I always desire to bring my “best self” when responding to pastoral care needs, which allows me to be engaged and open to the presence of God. Since pastoral emergencies unfold at all hours of the day, any day of the week, it can be challenging to shift out of “high alert” and truly relax.

## What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why?

Hands down, my husband, Ben. Both of us arrived to Luther Seminary in St. Paul, a little jaded, but wondering if God could use people like us. As we grew in our relationship, we sensed a calling to partnership and dreamed of one day leading a congregation together. We have different, but complementary gifts, which invite us to authentically lead in our own ways, while sharing vision, power, and responsibility. Ben reminds me not to take myself too seriously, can make me roll my eyes more than anyone else I know, and believes in me even when I doubt myself. Truly, to partner, pastor, and parent with Ben is the greatest gift of my life.



# STEPHANIE ROBINSON | Leadership is not a title, it's a lifestyle

**Age:** 32

**Hometown:** Colstrip, Montana

**Company and title:** The Phoenix- Program Coordinator and Fitness Instructor

*Stephanie Robinson has always had a passion for health and fitness. As personal trainer, yoga instructor, cycling instructor and currently in school for health and human performance, she has continuously had the instinct that movement is medicine and a great coping mechanism.*

*That belief has been a major staple in her own recovery. At the Phoenix Sober Active Gym, Robinson – or Stevie J Nix, as she's known – guides clients to their own authentic pathway to recovery.*

## **What other passions/callings are part of your life?**

I love helping others anyway that I can. Whether it's helping people grow or volunteering for community events, I just love human connections and being a part of the community. I also teach yoga and cycling at Black Orchid Yoga + Cycle.

## **What's your guilty pleasure?**

Dessert. I have such a sweet tooth at night.

## **How do you measure your own success?**

I measure my success by how close I stick to my core values, which include authenticity, perseverance and accountability. It's been important to me over the last five years to connect with my heart, become the real me, and trust myself.

## **What failure have you learned the most from?**

My 20s were full of failures, mostly due to my drinking problem. I failed at friendships, family and school. It helped ignite this movement of radical healing, really forcing me to take a deeper look inside.

## **What is the hardest part of your job?**

I work alone a lot of the time, so sometimes I get lonely. I am grateful for my volunteers and

team members.

## **What was the last show you binge watched?**

"Chernobyl" on Amazon Prime.

## **What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?**

Watching people heal. Watching the light come back into someone's eyes after their first yoga or boot-camp class. It's an honor to get to hang with vulnerable, transparent, people and watch them find hope again.

## **Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?**

So many great people have poured wisdom and inspiration into me, but I would have to say my sister, Tasha Miller. She is a leader in her community and sees the face of God in everyone she encounters. She leads with love.

## **Do you have a motto that you live by?**

Don't worry about what the world thinks of you, worry about what is true about you.

## **What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start a new business or excel in a business or field?**

Do it messy, don't wait until you feel like everything is perfect to start. Also, have grace and compassion for yourself, and for others.

## **What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?**

Snowboarding, running half marathons, shooting bow and chilling with my fur babies (Roxanne & Jovi) are some of my favorite things.

## **What's the greatest gift you ever received?**

My job. The Phoenix is the greatest gifts yet. I get to work with so many awesome people who have a genuine heart and thrive to bring healing to people. Providing fitness classes to drug courts, treatment centers, sober living homes and people in the community fills my heart.







**Age:** 27  
**Hometown:** Billings, Montana  
**Company and title:** Peacock Cleaning, Owner

*Kady Schell has a serious passion for cleanliness. If our environment is out of order, how can we successfully live a happy and productive life? She believes everyone's life can function much better if their home and place of work is clean and organized.*

**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?**

Be a lawyer.

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?**

Being a mother for my four children.

**What is the worst advice you've received and why?**

Play it safe. I know that without risk there is no reward.

**What advice would you have given yourself as a teenager?**

I would have said "stay focused — you are capable of so much more than what you can even imagine now." Don't settle.

**What's your guilty pleasure?**

Caramel cookie waffles. I'd eat there anytime and any day.

**What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?**

Further expansion to Bozeman.

**How do you measure your own success?**

By the ability to spend optimal time with my family and still be able to provide financially for them.

**What failure have you learned the most from?**

My first marriage and becoming a mortgage broker.

**What is the hardest part of your job?**

Running crews 24/7.

**What was the last show you binge watched?**

"Law and Order SVU."

**What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?**

Knowing that the homes and businesses we clean are up to our standards of perfection.

**What is the most challenging aspect of your occupation?**

Advertisement. Training new employees to the extremely high standards that we require.

**Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?**

Gary Vaynerchuk and myself.

**What advice would you**

**give to anyone wanting to start a business or excel in a business or field?**

Go for it. You will never regret the chances you did take, only the ones you didn't take.

**How do you view failure and success?**

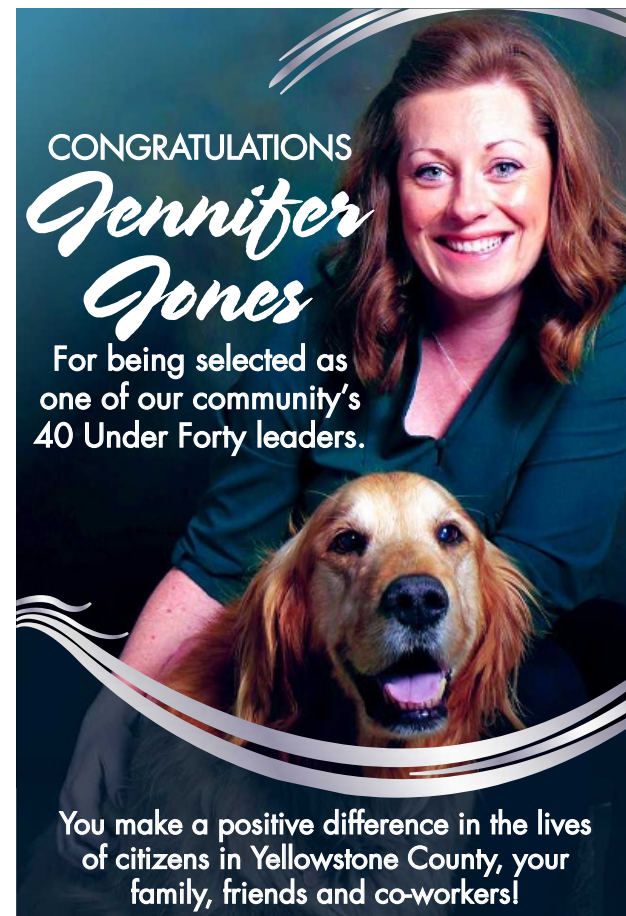
It's all part of life. It's a blessing just to be able to live this life. Failures we learn from and success we also learn from. There is beauty in both.

**What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?**

I love to soak at Chico Hot Springs. I will go any chance I get. I also enjoy music. I love to sing and play piano.

**What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why?**

The greatest gift I've ever received is my children. They are the joy and light of my life.





# BO STAPLER | I'm always looking for ways to improve the care I provide my patients because they trust me

**Age:** 34

**Hometown:** Atlanta, Georgia

**Company and title:** St. Vincent Hospital, Hospitalist Physician

*Bo Stapler's draw to the medical profession began on a personal note. As a child, his brother frequently saw a lot of different doctors. He admired and wanted to be like them. As he grew older, he began to appreciate the value of caring for someone personally in a time of need. Blended with his love of science and math, Stapler knew becoming a physician would provide him with the ability to care for others – and be really good at it. For him, it isn't a job – it is a privilege.*

## **If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?**

I'm not sure how realistic to make this answer, but I would like to play in the National Football League...but getting somewhat closer to reality...maybe as a kicker?

## **What other passions/callings are part of your life?**

I'm really passionate about being the best husband and father I can be, but besides that I also like to volunteer for some things at my church and children's school. I've gone on a few medical mission trips mostly to Spanish-speaking countries, providing medical care for people who otherwise couldn't afford it. The last two trips I went on were to Peru where I helped supervise a team of medical students. I'm looking forward to going there again.

## **What is the worst advice you've received and why?**

"You can do anything if you put your mind to it." It's not very good advice because, as it turns out, it's not true.

## **What's your guilty pleasure?**

The "I'm Your Huckleberry" burger at The Burger Dive. Although I suppose I don't actu-

ally start feeling guilty until after I've consumed the entirety of their "Flaming S'Mores" milkshake for dessert.

## **How do you measure your own success?**

Assists per game. I don't mean that literally, but when I am able to contribute in some small way to the success of another person, that makes me feel successful. Of course, there are some other more concrete and scientific ways I measure my own success, but I'm trying not to nerd out too much here. Perhaps it's too late?

## **What failure have you learned the most from?**

I failed to be accepted to medical school not once, but twice. I finally got in on the third try. As it turned out, if I had been accepted earlier, I would never have dated and married my fantastic wife (see below for more info on how amazing she is). I learned that my plans are not always best no matter how good they may seem at the time. Fortunately, there is someone with a master plan who knows my past, future, and precisely what I need. God doesn't promise a life free of disappointment or suffering, but he does promise to never leave or forsake those who call on him even in the midst of failure.

## **Do you have a motto that you live by?**

No, but if I did it would be "shake and bake" because it's just two main words: they rhyme, they're both verbs, and they were most famously uttered by the ever-eloquent Ricky Bobby and Cal Naughton Jr.

## **What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why?**

I totally hit the jackpot being married to my beautiful wife of 12 years. Besides having a mind like a diamond and being a stone cold fox, she is always impressing me with her thoughtfulness, kindness, foresight, and gracefulness. She's an amazing wife, mom, ballet/pilates instructor, and friend.



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# JENNIFER STARK | My clients call me whenever they need anything, and I will get it done for them

**Age:** 31

**Hometown:** Huntley, Montana

**Company and title:** Stockman Bank – Vice President Commercial Loan Officer

*Jennifer Stark has always loved math and numbers. With a bachelor's degree in accounting from the University of Montana, she had high hopes of being an accountant. She started in the banking industry right out of college and was fortunate enough to land a job at Stockman Bank. She says Stockman provided her with mentors early in her career and those individuals shaped her into the lender she is today.*

**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?**

Running some type of small business with my husband.

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?**

I am a working mom – so balancing work, family, and community are very important to me. I have been part of the Board of Directors for Head Start for the past six years and have enjoyed my involvement with that organization tremendously.

**What's your guilty pleasure?**

Starbucks.

**What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?**

Become a branch president.

**How do you measure your own success?**

I measure my own success by knowing that I did my best, that I was honest, ethical, and made the right choice even if it was hard.

**What failure have you learned the most from?**

I am a very competitive person and I hate to lose. The

banking world is also very competitive – there are times when the deal doesn't go your way. Those are the times when I can take a step back and re-evaluate my approach and learn for next time.

**What is the hardest part of your job?**

The hardest part of my job is balancing my career, family, and community involvement. There are times when I want to be in three places at once.

**What was the last show you binge watched?**

"Friends."

**What is the most challenging aspect of your occupation?**

As a commercial banker, there are so many different types of customers/industries and no loan is ever the same. Understanding all these diverse industries for each of my customers can be challenging.

**Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?**

My inspiration is my husband – without him I wouldn't be able to juggle having a career and being a mom. He steps in at times when I can't and we make a great team.

**Do you have a motto that you live by?**

I always tell my 5 year old that "nothing is impossible." Hard work will get you anywhere you want to go.

**What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?**

My family and I love to go to Crooked Creek for a weekend getaway of boating and fishing. If I'm not on the lake, I'm most likely out on the golf course.

**What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why?**

My children are my greatest gifts – becoming a mom is the best and most rewarding job I've ever experienced.





# MEMO ÜNDEŞ | Chase your passion and success will follow you

**Age:** 39

**Hometown:** Goppingen, Germany

**Company and title:** InterMountain Management LLC, Senior Regional Director of Operations

*Memo Ündeş says he is a Turkish-German immigrant living the American dream. With a degree in business management from Montana State University Billings, Ündeş was in his final semester in college when he had the opportunity to work outside of campus. He stumbled upon an ad for the former Holiday Grand Montana. He says that was the moment the hospitality bug bit him.*

**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?**

Anything in a fast-paced environment that does not involve sitting for longer than one hour.

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?**

Staying close to my family overseas, my 3-year-old daughter, and soccer.

**What advice would you have given yourself as a teenager?**

Focus on yourself and not others.

**What's your guilty pleasure?**

Peanut butter.

**What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?** Owing my own hotel.

**How do you measure your own success?**

"What you get by achieving your goals is not as important as what you become by achieving your goals." – Henry David Thoreau

**What is the hardest part of your job?**

Extensive traveling and being gone

from my family

**What was the last show you binge watched?**

"Game of Thrones."

**What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation?** Being a part of something bigger than myself.

**What is the most challenging aspect of your occupation?**

Never being able to disconnect. The hotel industry never sleeps. I have to be available 24/7, 365 days a year.

**Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?**

My dad.

**Do you have a motto that you live by?**

"Do it with passion or not at all."

**How does it feel to be nominated and selected as a 40 under 40?**

It's an honor to be recognized for something I work so hard at regardless of who is watching.

**What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start new business or excel in a business or field?**

Work for it. Believe in it and don't overthink it.

**How do you view failure and success?**

Failure is the stepping stone to success.

**What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?**

Spend quality time with my family, two boxer dogs, play soccer and cooking for my girls.

**What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why?**

My daughter. She's a better version of me and she's her own incredible person all in one beautiful tiny being.



*Congratulations,*

**Pamela!**



**Pamela Garman**

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# TUCKER VELTKAMP | Eyes on the prize

**Age:** 30  
**Hometown:** Billings, Montana  
**Company and title:** Topz Sandwich Company – Founder

*When he was going to college, Tucker Veltkamp knew he was going to own a business someday, but didn't know where to start. He began working six nights a week as a bartender while going to college to be financially prepared for when and if an opportunity would present itself. Three months after he graduated, The Spicy Pickle was for sale and it was the right price. Now, Veltkamp owns and operates one of the most popular sandwich shops in Billings.*

**If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead?**

I would open Topz Wingz.

**What other passions/callings are part of your life?**

I love my family and being a great husband and father to my two beautiful children.

**What is the worst advice you've received and why?**

In 2018, I was told by many people in my inner circle that the company could not survive without me physically building each sandwich. While they were saying that, I was focused on training/empowering my employees and building a second location. Same will be the case with the third location coming in 2021.

**What's your guilty pleasure?**

Sour Patch Kids.

**How do you measure your own success?**

I measure success based on the people closest to me. Providing happiness and opportunity for my family and employees. They are both directly important to any amount of financial success I will ever achieve and

I know that and try to build the company accordingly.

**What is the hardest part of your job?**

Managing the company through this period of growth, while very rewarding, is very challenging because I am learning while I am living it. And at the end of the day, the success, failure, and strategy along the way is 100% in my hands. That's a mental challenge that I deal with daily, but I embrace it and have learned to love it.

**Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration?**

My Dad. He definitely gave me my entrepreneur DNA and is very influential for my deep rooted self-belief.

**Do you have a motto that you live by?**

"Your legacy is being written by yourself. Make the right decisions." –Gary Vaynerchuk

**What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start a business or excel in a business or field?**

Don't start unless you have come to terms with the worst case scenario and feel confident that it will not break you. Respect and embrace the early struggle, great businesses are not built in two years. Your two year outlook could be miserable, but it's the only thing between you and a great five year outlook. The only one that can stop the entire business cycle is you.

**What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?**

Hanging out with my children and wife. We love traveling and experiencing new things.

**What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why?**

My wife and kids are my greatest gift. I just feel blessed to be here.

