

BILLINGS'

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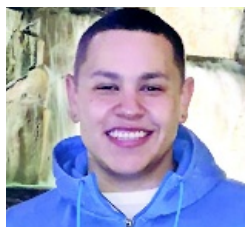
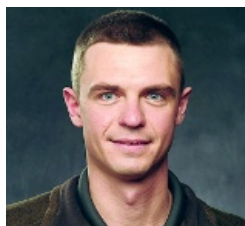
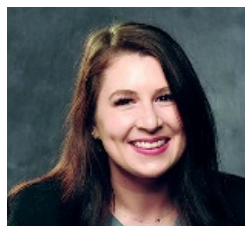
brightest

40
UNDER
FORTY

2021



BILLINGS GAZETTE
COMMUNICATIONS



From the editor:

A difficult year in which everyone pitched in

For decades, The Billings Gazette has celebrated our community's best and brightest young achievers, both white collar and blue collar, in our annual 40 Under Forty publication

But, there is something extra special about this year's group of winners, who were all nominated by their peers, many of them more than once. This year's top 40 not only excelled in their professions, but they did it during one of the most trying years in recent history.

Confronting the pandemic has cost us jobs, income, businesses, and took all the fun out of public gatherings like concerts, reunions, picnics and weddings. It kept us from each other when we needed each other most, for events like funerals and worship services. It has stressed our hospitals, our care homes, our families, and our physical and mental well-being, and it has cost too many lives.

Members of the 2021 class of 40 Under Forty not only thrived during our troubling times, but even more impressively they each played a role in their own way in helping others struggling to get through it.

Many of the winners in this issue work in health care, joining the thousands of front-line workers who threw themselves into harm's way to keep us safe and healthy, and to help us recover. Billings Clinic's chair of emergency medicine, Nathan Allen, described helping people during their most vulnerable time as "an incredible privilege." And, lucky for St. Vincent Healthcare, the hospital's Jordan Zepeda happened to have an expertise in epidemiology.

Others played an important role in the banking industry,

working long days to help local businesses and employers get the federal financial help they needed to keep their doors open and their paychecks flowing. The day before the federal program was launched, leaders at one bank worked through the night to prepare applications ahead of the launch.

Other specialists made their own contributions, in unexpected ways. Kirk Gordon is one of those guys you don't know you need until you're sitting in the dark. He's NorthWestern Energy's operations planning supervisor. When storms roll through, or other emergencies, he's the one who marshals the repair crews. He loves nothing more than to stand on the Rims at night and see all the lights aglow.

And, Mike Thayer, a chemical engineer at ExxonMobil, spent his nights writing fantasy novels, offering all of us a much-needed alternative universe to escape into.

There is another thread that runs through the pandemic and the responses of nearly every one of the 40 Under Forty winners — an appreciation of family. One of the cruelest costs of the pandemic was its separation of families: the elderly alone in their care homes, COVID patients in the ICU who could visit with family only by video; and quarantines that split up some families in their own homes.

Almost without exception, when winners were asked what they valued most, they said family, including the furry members of their family.

Maybe the silver lining in this disastrous pandemic is that it has helped us appreciate how much we need each other. Thanks to each of the 40 Under Forty winners.

Editor's note: For space reasons, many of the very insightful and informative responses from the winners were shortened for our print edition. The winners' fuller responses appear with their profiles online at billingsgazette.com.



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Nathan Allen | Find the thing at the intersection of your skills, your passion, and an unmet need that others have

Age: 39

Company and title: Billings Clinic – department chair emergency medicine, medical director for healthcare ethics

Hometown: Glen Ellyn, Illinois

Education and/or background: Bachelor's of arts degree in history from Rice University; MD from University of Texas Southwestern; residency and fellowship training at University of Chicago.

As the department chair of emergency medicine and medical director for healthcare ethics at Billings Clinic, Nathan Allen wears many hats that require him to be ready for anything at a moment's notice.

"Emergency medicine is an anyone, anything, anytime specialty. I get to meet and help people during an incredibly intimate moment of their lives, when they are sick or injured, it's an incredible privilege."

If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead? A civil rights lawyer or a public defender.

What advice would you give to a



teenager about success? That life is long and you should make choices that expand your future opportunities rather than limit them.

What's your guilty pleasure? Rewatching movies from the '80s and '90s that I've seen countless times before: "The Princess Bride," "The Breakfast Club,"

"Road House," "Starship Troopers."

What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve? To be able to keep doing what I do for a full career and to continue to enjoy it. To retire not having lost the love of what I do or my passion for learning to do it better.

How do you measure your own success? By my intentions, what I learned, and how it impacted others.

What failure have you learned the most from? I ran for president of my college against my best friend, we both lost. It made our friendship closer and it helped me learn to see failures as opportunities to do something else rewarding and pursue new directions.

What is the hardest part of your job? Wearing lots of different hats. On any given day I might be taking care of patients in the ER, managing emergency department operations, or leading an ethics committee meeting.

What was the last show you binge watched? "The Good Place."

What is your favorite book? "World War Z," by Max Brooks.

What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation? Being part of a great team. Medicine is a team sport, I feel so privileged to work alongside talented and compassionate nurses, EMTs, technicians, clerks, EVS staff, and others. They do the real hard work that makes everything else possible.

What is the most challenging aspect of your occupation? Emergency medicine is very fast and with constant interruptions, you have to be able to task switch very quickly and think on your feet.

Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration? My grandfather Sherrill Cleland, a Purple Heart/Bronze Star for Valor WWII veteran who was an economist, professor, college president, and tireless advocate for equality, education, and others.

Congratulations

to Jon Lorash of
Billings OB-GYN

Billings
OB GYN
ASSOCIATES

*To all the 2021
40 Under Forty honorees,
you make Billings proud!*



40
UNDER
FORTY

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Guinevere Ayers | Remember your why

Age: 27

Company and title: Billings Clinic marketing media research liaison

Hometown: Billings

Education and/or background: Biology and medical anthropology

Guinevere Ayers didn't plan a profession in marketing and communications. In college, she was studying medical anthropology and biology in pursuit of a career in medicine. During her senior year at university, she began diving into marketing as a pastime for a club and realized that creative brainstorming, campaign planning, and philanthropy filled her cup more than any other venture – and that passion is still going strong, today.

If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead? I'd want to be an event planner. One, because it's rewarding to get to bring people's visions to life, and two, it would be a great use of my healthy Pinterest addiction.

What other passions/callings are part of your life? A desire to serve and give back has always been a calling in my life.

What is the worst advice you've received and why? "Just say no." I've been known to over commit, which creates extra

stress in my life. But without saying yes to new opportunities, going outside my comfort zone, and creating growing pains, I don't believe I'd be the person I am today.

What advice would you give to a teenager about success? Don't let someone else's expectations define the choices you make or the path you follow.

What's your guilty pleasure? Ben & Jerry's Cherry Garcia ice cream and cheesy Hallmark movies.

What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve? I'd love to complete a master's degree before I turn 30.

How do you measure your own success? By how I support others and make them feel.

What failure have you learned from? Before being hired in my current position, I applied for four jobs that I wasn't chosen for. While at the moment my heart was broken, looking back now, I couldn't be happier with my journey. Each job interview taught me a little more about myself, motivated me to learn new skills, and allowed me time to hone in on the passions

that I have the privilege to practice in my job today.

What is the hardest part of your job? Staying ahead of the curve. Health care, technology, and knowledge are constantly changing. I start every day knowing I don't have all the answers and there's always something new around the corner, but the opportunity to learn is also incredibly rewarding.

What was the last show you binge watched? "S.W.A.T." on Hulu.

What is your favorite book? "Bossypants," by Tina Fey.

What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation? Connecting with others. There is so much heart in health care.

Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration? When I graduated college, I started an internship at Billings Clinic. I was new to the field but was eager to learn and develop new ideas. During that time, two female leaders took me under their wing.

Do you have a motto that you live by? "We're not meant for small things."



What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start new business or excel in a business or field? Remember your why.

How do you view failure and success? An aspect I love about marketing is the data. There's the ability to access metrics, view performance, and be responsive to that feedback.

Angela Douglas Babcock | My greatest passion lies in the art of storytelling

Age: 34

Company and title: SCL Health, SCL Health Montana region communications manager

Hometown: Plymouth, Minnesota

Education and/or background: Bachelor's of arts degree in mass communications with an emphasis in broadcast journalism, minor in travel and tourism.

As a communications professional in the field of health care, Angela Douglas Babcock hears the heartfelt stories of patients, families and coworkers on a daily basis.

"I consider it a great honor to be able to share someone's personal journey, experience and/or accomplishment. Through storytelling, I am able to inspire, educate and influence – but even more than that, I'm able to help create a human-to-human connection, which can ignite change, build trust, develop compassion and provide a better understanding of each other," said Babcock.

If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead? During college, I studied broadcast journalism and travel and tour-

ism. More than 10 years later, those two areas of focus still deeply resonate with me.

What other passions/callings are part of your life? My young family of six. My husband and I have four kiddos age 5 and under.

What advice would you give to a teenager about success? Think about what you're most passionate about and figure out how you can make a living doing it. A lot of the things that excite us as a child/teenager stay with us into adulthood. In my case, I've always loved writing and storytelling – so I pursued a path that would allow me to use and grow those skills. As long as you have passion for your work, your job will bring you satisfaction, joy – and success.

What's your guilty pleasure? Candy and cookies are my weakness, for sure.

What is the hardest part of your job? Navigating the challenges and unknowns of a global pandemic. In addition to developing and managing day-to-day internal

and external messaging to support one of Montana's largest health care systems, I also serve as the Public Information Officer (PIO) for St. Vincent Healthcare, Holy Rosary Healthcare in Miles City and provide support to St. James Healthcare in Butte.

Beyond my PIO role within SCL Health, I also have the privilege to collaborate with the Unified Health Command (UHC) in Yellowstone County and work closely with my fellow UHC PIOs on bringing forward important messages to our community regarding their safety and health amidst COVID-19.

What was the last show you binge watched? "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel."

What is your favorite book? These days, I'm really into reading classics – you know – "The Very Hungry Caterpillar," "Corduroy," "Berenstain Bears," "Good Night Moon," "The Giving Tree," etc.

What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation? To share someone's personal journey, experience



and/or accomplishment.

Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration? My uncle Todd. I've always greatly admired his work ethic, determination, independence, and the subtle guidance he has provided me throughout life.

Do you have a motto that you live by? Appreciate life. Express gratitude. Pray daily. Choose happiness. Remember to play.

Katherine “Katie” Delaney Berst | Having my own practice allows me to explore different areas of law and challenge myself

Age: 32

Company and title: Berst Law Firm, PLLC, owner

Hometown: Billings

Education and/or background: West High School class of 2006, Rocky Mountain College class of 2010 – double majored in communication studies and literary studies, University of Idaho School of Law class of 2013.

When Katie Delaney Berst was a junior in high school, she read “A Time to Kill,” by John Grisham. In the book’s introduction, Grisham wrote that great dramas take place in courtrooms. Her aspiration is to help people move forward and find a new chapter in their own story.

If you couldn’t do this, what would you do instead? Pursuing a third major while in college in education. I had thought a lot about being a teacher.

What other passions/callings are part of your life? I have been in love with speech and debate since I was 16.

What is the worst advice you’ve received and why? The advice of “you can always do one more thing” at times has been very hard on me. Self-care is crucial and without it everything suffers.

What advice would you give to a teenager about success? Very few decisions in life are permanent. Make mistakes.

What’s your guilty pleasure? I am shamelessly addicted to show tunes.

What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve? I want to grow my firm by exploring new areas of the law and begin taking on more civil litigation cases.

How do you measure your own success? Learning and growing, and by the enjoyment I find in my work.

What failure have you learned the most from? All the setbacks and failures I experienced on the way to becoming an at-



torney caused me to pause and reflect and continue to check in as to what I wanted.

What is the hardest part of your job? The business side of running a small business.

What was the last show you binge watched? “Law and Order: SVU.”

What is your favorite book? I love Jenny Lawson’s book “Furiously Happy.”

What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation? I love having my own practice because it allows me to explore different areas of the law and challenge myself.

What is the most challenging aspect of your occupation? Accepting that not everything is within my control. When I have a trial or a hearing, I spend hours preparing and playing through various scenarios in my mind and how to respond and ultimately so much of what will happen in court is out of my control.

Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration? My parents have been an incredible inspiration.

Do you have a motto that you live by? A couple of people have pointed out to me that I end most conversations with the phrase “moving forward.”



Congratulations

for being named 40 Under Forty.



Nathan Allen, MD
Emergency Medicine



Guinevere Ayers
Marketing Media Research Liaison



Amanda Haithcox, RN
Hospital Nurse Manager



Jennifer Potts
Manager, Organizational Continuous Improvement

Billings Clinic is Montana’s largest health care system with more than 4,700 employees. We have excellent opportunities for both clinically trained and non-medical professionals. Learn more about our career opportunities at billingsclinic.com/careers.

Will Blakeley | People will only eat at your table if they feel safe

Age: 32

Company and title: Children and Family Futures - Program Associate (as of November 2020), previously (until October 2020) Yellowstone Family Recovery Court - Court Coordinator.

Hometown: I have lived in Connecticut, Virginia, Indiana, Ohio, Tennessee, and even Japan, but Billings is my home. My wife is from Billings, my son was born here, and my daughter will soon be born here.

Education and/or background: University of Dayton, with a bachelor's degree in human rights studies; master's degree in the arts of teaching from Christian Brothers University.

When Will Blakeley moved to Billings, he wanted to work with youth. He knew little about the child welfare system, but decided to take a job with Child Protective Services, which led to a coordinator position with the Fathers Up Front program under Judge Gregory Todd, with the Yellowstone Family Recovery Court.

If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead? I would be teaching. Teachers, like my wife, Michelle, transform our world, making it a better place for all of us.

What other passions/callings are



part of your life? Sports - football was my first love.

What is the worst advice you've received and why? Any time someone says, "We have always done it that way."

What advice would you give to a teenager about success? Try new things. Read a lot. Ask questions. Listen to people who know more than you. Be kind to all. Do your best. Have fun.

What's your guilty pleasure? I could watch "The Office" over and over.

What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve? I want to live in a world where jobs like mine are no longer needed.

How do you measure your own success? I will try a metaphor: We get the opportunity to set the table for these families. People will only eat at your table if they feel safe, secure.

What failure have you learned the most from? Failure is such a tricky word here. I have tried to think through success versus failure in my field, and the truth is we oftentimes do not know. Anytime someone's life is a little bit better after we have walked with them for a time.

What was the last show you binge watched? I feel like "Toy Story" is the only thing on our TV these days.

What is your favorite book? I love any book by Pat Conroy or Leon Uris.

What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation? In a single day, I get the honor of walking through the highest highs and lowest lows with people, and get to offer support, love, and hope (sometimes for the first time).

What is the most challenging aspect of your occupation? Humility. Sometimes we want to grab someone and force them to make the right choice.

Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration? I really admire all the members of the Yellowstone Family Recovery Court Team.

I also so, so admire the families they serve.

Do you have a motto you live by? "Keep me away from the wisdom which does not cry, the philosophy which does not laugh, and the greatness which does not bow before children." - Khalil Gibran

How does it feel to be nominated and selected for Forty under 40? It is a great honor to be on this list with such amazing people in Billings.

What advice would you give to anyone wanting to excel in their field? For someone interested in social work, I would tell them: give yourself some grace. Self-care is so important.

What do you do for fun/relax/hobby? I love to get outside with my family, whether hiking, just playing in our backyard, or enjoying time with friends.

Ali Brock | Pay attention to what fills your heart with joy

Age: 36

Company and title: RiverStone Health, faculty physician

Hometown: Beloit, Wisconsin

Education and/or background: Undergrad: Goucher College, music major (cello performance), Post-bac premed program: Goucher College, Med school: Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University

Ali Brock had not planned on a career in medicine. She studied cello performance as an undergrad and then worked for several years as an AmeriCorps member. It took time for Brock to realize that medicine was an important means of advocacy for marginalized communities. Once she understood that, becoming a family doctor just made sense.

If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead? I would be a hospital or nursing home chaplain. Sitting, listening, and holding space.

What other passions/callings are part of your life? Dogs and houseplants are probably not the answer you are looking for here. But it's the truth.

What is the worst advice you've received and why? A specialist in medical school once told me that he didn't think family medicine would be interesting enough for me. I am humbled every day by the complexity of illness my patients experience and navigate. We need to be sending our best and brightest students into primary care. Full stop.

What advice would you give to a teenager about success? Pay attention to what fills your heart with joy. Seek out work that allows you to do these things in service to your community.

What's your guilty pleasure? Talenti Peppermint Bark gelato.

What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve? I would like to complete the Society for Post-Acute and Long-term Care's program for Certified Medical Directors (CMD).

How do you measure your own success? Whether I am living all aspects of my life in line with what I value.



What is the hardest part of your job? It has been particularly challenging to work in the nursing home setting during the pandemic. While I have lost patients to COVID-19, I have watched many more patients deal with fear, isolation, confusion, and sadness that their quality of life has been so significantly disrupted. If you have friends or family living in a skilled nursing setting or assisted living facility, please do whatever you can to remind them that they are loved. They need it.

What was the last show you binge watched? "Schitt's Creek." I have no regrets.

What is your favorite book? Any and all of Mary Oliver's poetry collections.

What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation? It is a privilege and a joy to get to know a panel of patients over time. Walking into the room of a patient I know well and being able to understand the context for their concerns is incredibly rewarding.

What is the most challenging aspect of your occupation? Working in medicine exposes the breadth of human suffering. Sometimes we are able to relieve that suffering. I find the times that we are not able to do so the most challenging.

Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration? I am incredibly grateful for the generation of female physicians before me. They faced significant challenges and paved the way for my career.

Please see Brock, Page 31

Cara Carter | You cannot take care of others if you do not take care of yourself



Age: 31
Company and title: Clarity Counseling MT and LCPC, LAC, CCTP
Hometown: Jacksonville, Illinois
Education and/or background: Counselor at the Boys & Girls Club, line therapist at Skill Sprout Counseling & Mental Health, Aware Inc., Tumbleweed Runaway Program, and Rimrock Foundation.

Cara Carter knew at a young age that she wanted a career helping others. She began her journey working at the Boys & Girls Club as a counselor. From there, her skills grew, and she became a Line Therapist at Skill Sprout, where she provided ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis) training to families and children with autism. Carter also worked at Aware Inc., while undertaking an internship at the Tumbleweed Runaway Program.

If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead? A professor of psychology or researcher in the mental health field.

What other passions/callings are part of your life? I enjoy traveling, learning, and getting to know people.

What is the worst advice you've received and why? I have worked with people who haven't created a balance between their professional and personal life. When you notice that, it can feel like that is the expectation that has been set in-

stead of allowing for self-care.

What advice would you give to a teenager about success? Keep trying even when there are bumps along the way and it is OK if your definition of success looks different than someone else's.

What's your guilty pleasure? "The Great British Baking Show."

What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve? Go back to school and get a few more certifications like an EMDR (eye movement desensitization and reprocessing).

How do you measure your own success? If I can provide quality care without feeling drained.

What failure have you learned the most from? They are bumps that happened that I wish had not, but helped me gain perspective and clarity, which I thankfully was able to learn from.

What is the hardest part of your job? I am also a human helping others. I make mistakes and I don't always have the answers.

What was the last show you binge watched? I am terrible when it comes to staying up to date on TV shows. I still

haven't watched "Tiger King."

What is your favorite book? "The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma" by Bessel van der Kolk M.D.

What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation? Anything that normalizes going to therapy or asking for help I think is a huge reward.

What is the most challenging aspect of your occupation? Unfortunately, mental health, trauma, and addiction all have stigmas attached and that can make my job difficult.

Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration? I have had so many, starting with my family. I had excellent college professors, supervisors, friends, and colleagues that helped me along the way.

Do you have a motto that you live by? I have two: "You can't pour from an

empty cup" and "Be kind."

What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start new business or excel in a business or field? I wouldn't have been able to do this without talking to others and learning from others. I had to ask for help and a lot of questions, but it was worth it.

How do you view failure and success? I view success as trying, no matter how small the progress may feel.

What do you do for fun/relax/hobby? It can be anything from skiing to baking. I love trying new things from different exercises to hiking, and being outside. I like new experiences.

What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why? Whenever I am learning something new and there are those natural growing pains that happen with learning, and someone offers their patience instead of getting angry or short.



Jami Clark | Mistakes can teach you what doesn't work, and success can teach you what does

Age: 39

Company and title: Century 21 Home-town Brokers, Realtor

Hometown: Eau Claire, Wisconsin

Education and/or background: I grew up in Wisconsin and came out West for the first time after high school to work in Yellowstone National Park during the summers. That led to my eventual move to Billings.

Fourteen years ago, Jami Clark decided to obtain a real estate license because she loved the idea of having a career that was rewarding and challenging while offering independence and flexibility.

"I feel blessed to have a career I still enjoy," said Clark.

If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead? Hmm, maybe kitchen design.

What other passions/callings are part of your life? I feel strongly that we all need to give back to the community in one way or another. The flexibility of my job has allowed me to be involved in several organi-



zations over the years.

What is the worst advice you've received and why? You shouldn't mix friends or family with business. I'm honored when I get to serve people I already know.

What advice would you give to a teenager about success? Your success is defined by you. What kind of life do you want to live? Who do you want to be?

What's your guilty pleasure? The bread pudding at Stacked, A Montana Grill.

What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve? I plan to obtain my broker's license.

How do you measure your own success? How I feel when I lay in bed at night. Did I do everything I could for my clients that day?

What failure have you learned the most from? I had a personal failure a few years ago that made me realize I'm stronger than I knew.

What is the hardest part of your job? Occasionally having to be the bearer of bad news. "Your offer wasn't accepted," or, "the buyers are backing out." Real estate transactions can be very emotional for buy-

ers and sellers.

What was the last show you binge watched? "Queen's Gambit."

What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation? I enjoy the relationships created with my clients.

What is the most challenging aspect of your occupation? Finding balance. As an agent, especially with today's technology, we are essentially on call all day every day. There is rarely a true day off.

Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration? My broker, Mark Dawson. Mark is such an advocate for professional and personal growth. He stresses following the golden rule in our business and I know he has my back. I've definitely learned a lot from him over the years.

Do you have a motto that you live by? As the Rolling Stones song says, "You Can't Always Get What You Want." Often you can, indeed, get what you want.

Brittany Cremer | Lead with kindness and a listening ear, everything else will fall into place

Age: Turned 40 in January

Company and title: AVP, PR/Communications Manager at First Interstate Bank

Hometown: Miles City

Education and/or background: Bachelor's degree in journalism with a minor in political science (University of Montana); master's degree in public relations and applied communication (MSU Billings).

Writing, communicating, and working with people have been longstanding passions for Brittany Cremer. Whether chatting with a friend, crafting content for social media, or enhancing First Interstate's brand voice through communication channels, Cremer says she loves the power and relatability of storytelling.

If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead? My pie-in-the-sky dream gig would be to write for SNL. Back-up dream gig: President of the Harry Potter Fan Club.

What other passions/callings are

part of your life? My husband Bobby and I are parents to 9-year-old twin boys who share my passion for sports (football, basketball, baseball), good food (anything UberEats delivers), and spending time with family.

What is the worst advice you've received and why? While in college, a family friend tried steering me away from pursuing a degree in journalism. Follow your passion; the label/job title will work itself out.

What advice would you give to a teenager about success? Success is temporary. (repeat). There is always a new hill to climb, obstacle to overcome, task to complete.

What's your guilty pleasure? Making up songs/jingles and interjecting them into conversation.

What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve? I speak Spanish but would love to learn a new language.



What was the last show you binge watched? "The Man in the High Castle"

What is your favorite book? Ooh—that's tough. Top 3: "The Alchemist," "Catch-22," and "The 7 1/2 Deaths of Evelyn

Hardcastle" (my right-now favorite).

What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation? I'm fortunate to work for a company with a heart, a bank whose service model is anchored in doing what's right — not what's easy.

What is the most challenging aspect of your occupation? The expectation of communications professionals is that information is created and accessible at a moment's notice.

Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration? One of my favorite journalism professors, Michael Downs, told me to always "write with authority."

What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start new business or excel in a business or field? Step 1: conduct market research, do a SWOT analysis, and tap local resources/templates to map out a

Please see **Cremer**, Page 31

Bryan Dake | Success is when justice is achieved

Age: 37

Company and title: United States Attorney's office, assistant U.S. attorney.

Hometown: Aurora, Colorado

This happens sometimes, your career path seems settled and then you meet people who seem to embody exactly what you want. That happened to Bryan Dake when he clerked for a U.S. District Judge and watched assistant U.S. Attorneys in action. He admired their dignity and hard work and his future became more clear.

Education and/or background: Bachelor's of arts and political science from University of Colorado at Denver; juris doctor from the University of Montana School of Law.

Why did you choose this profession?

I was inspired to work in the United States Attorney's Office by the attorneys who were already working there. I never considered taking on this kind of work until I observed these AUSAs in action while clerking for U.S. District Judge Sam E. Had-don.

If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead? Maybe work for another governmental entity or in private practice. The pipe dream would be to run a T-shirt shop in Hawaii.

What other passions/callings are part of your life? I like to help and educate people to see them advance in their careers. Beyond that, I am a devoted dog owner and love being outdoors.

What is the worst advice you've received and why? I do not think there is really bad advice, just some that is not applicable to me or my situation, so I take it and leave it as appropriate.

What advice would you give to a teenager about success? Hard work and perseverance will allow you to accomplish basically anything you want to do. Adversity in your life is good for you and will motivate you to grow.

What's your guilty pleasure? I like caramel and cinnamon rolls more than I should.

What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve? I want to continue to advance my career in such a way that I have the opportunity to



educate and work with new and younger prosecutors. I want to be able to share my experiences — mostly my failures — to help cultivate a younger generation of prosecutors and instill a mentality of integrity in every aspect of this profession.

How do you measure your own success? When I feel like I have done my best and reached a just outcome.

What failure have you learned the most from? Denial to numerous law schools because it motivated me to prove myself at the school I got into and continues to motivate me to prove people wrong and to shift the idea that success is only going to be measured by how well you perform on a standardized test.

What is the hardest part of your job? The role of a prosecutor carries a lot of responsibility to defendants, victims, and the public at large.

What was the last show you binge watched? "The Mandalorian."

What is your favorite book? As a former elementary school teacher turned attorney, I enjoy a large variety of books. My wife and I are currently re-reading Harry Potter to our newborn child.

What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation? When justice is achieved.

Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration? My grandfather, David Ris. He inspired me to always work hard, be honest, and persevere through hard times. He was also a good man who cared for his family and taught me to never take your family or the ones you love for granted.

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Ann Davey | Have the desire to keep moving forward

Age: 37

Company and title: Vincent Davey Law Firm, attorney/partner

Hometown: Riverton, Wyoming, currently residing in Columbus

Education and/or background: Bachelor's of science degree from Montana State University, J.D. University of Wyoming College of Law

Ann Davey has law in her blood. Her father was a lawyer, and she watched him help his clients through stressful legal conflicts. Even though she was too young to understand all aspects of law or the emotional toll of being an attorney, Davey was drawn to helping people, just like her dad.

If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead? If money and resources were no issue, I would love to build a greenhouse on my husband's family farm



and open a roadside café and coffee shop featuring fresh produce. My sister-in-law is also an amazing cook and quite artistic, so I'd rope her in some way so I could get her to move back to Montana.

What other passions/callings are part of your life? Travel, cooking, entertaining, and gardening.

What advice would you give to a teenager about success? It does not come easy and there are days when you may have to do things in your profession that you don't necessarily "like" or that cause you discomfort.

What is the hardest part of your job? Knowing that there are certain problems in a person's life that I can't resolve with the legal system. Oftentimes, I have clients who have endured a signifi-

cant trauma or wrong that I am not able to fix through the legal system, and that is difficult for me to accept.

What was the last show you binge watched? "Emily in Paris."

What is your favorite book? So many to choose from – I've read "To Kill a Mockingbird" more than once, so I'll settle on that.

What is the most challenging aspect of your occupation? Knowing when to say no and knowing when I am stretched too thin.

What do you do for fun/relax/hobby? My kids are 7 and 4 years old, and they are wonderful little people. I love to spend time with them.

Shannon Davis | You have the opportunity to change the trajectory of your life

Age: 36

Company and title: ESL and English Language Arts instructor at Billings Adult and Community Education

Hometown: Billings

Education and/or background: Bachelor's of arts degree and MEd from Ohio University.

Shannon Davis loved playing "school" as a child but never saw herself in the role of educator. Initially, she had aspirations to work in medical technology or medicine. But, the passion just wasn't there. By senior year of college, Davis felt lost and while taking one of her last required electives she was taken under the wing of an English professor.

If you couldn't do this, what would you do? I would have been a nurse. Almost my entire family is in a medical field.

What other passions/callings are part of your life? I love traveling. I studied abroad in Wales in college and met my husband there. We traveled a lot within Europe on a college budget. Once I finished my MEd program, we moved to the UAE to live and teach there, and it opened another part of the world to us.

What is the worst advice you've received and why? I was told not to major in English because I'd never get a job.

What advice would you give to a teenager about success? You need to find a mentor. In my job, I work with a lot of youth who are directionless.

What's your guilty pleasure? A nice glass of wine and chocolate.

What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve? My husband is finishing another degree, and with having young kids there is only enough time for one of us to pursue that. I'd like to get a reading endorsement and maybe do another master's program or PhD.

How do you measure your own success? For my English language learners, their acquisition improves. For my students who are completing their high school equivalency, they take the test and pass it. For my students who are going on to college, they pass the entrance exams.

What failure have you learned the most from? I used to try to hide my off days, but I feel that leveling with students has made me more accessible and relatable. For a lot of our students, school has not been a positive place for them.

What is the hardest part of your job? The students that we serve in Adult Ed come from all walks of life. They have struggles I can never imagine. It is so difficult to not

take it all on. We might see our students regularly for a few weeks, and then life intervenes, and we don't see them again.

What was the last show you binge watched? "The Crown."

What is your favorite book? A rediscovered favorite is the "Handmaid's Tale." I read it ages ago in college, and I recently re-read it after getting into the show.

What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation? The joy students feel with their breakthrough moments – be it graduating, passing the citizenship test, or entering college.

What is the most challenging aspect of your occupation? What's most challenging about our students is that sometimes education can no longer be a priority in their lives because of a barrier or an event that pulls them out.

Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration? My parents helped shape who I am. I grew up with a lot of siblings, and we're all so different. They did their best to help each of us find our way.

Do you have a motto that you live by? I truly believe that when you wake up, you have the opportunity to change the trajectory of your life. It may not happen in-



stantly, but it's the little decisions.

How do you view failure and success?

I work with students who have failed so many times, and their tenacity is inspiring. They come to our program with a lot of hope

What do you do for fun/relax/hobby?

I love to read; watch TV, cwtched (favorite Welsh word for cuddled) up on the couch; take our dogs on a walk.

What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why? My daughters. They're amazing and spirited, and I love to see them grow. Every day is a gift with them.

John Earley | Small Victories Lead to Lifetime Triumphs

Age: 37

Company and title: Earley Enterprises LLC, owner

Hometown: Born in Butte, raised in Billings

Education and/or background: Billings Central Catholic High School and Carroll College graduate with a bachelor's degree in public relations and communications.

John Earley loves telling stories. Owning his own video production company provides not only a way to create those stories, but it allows a cooperative method of artistic cinematography. From creative projects to scientific, historical, and medical documentation, Earley Enterprises LLC provides clients a platform for a variety of meaningful narratives.

Why did you choose this profession? I like telling stories.

If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead? Computer repair.

What other passions/callings are part of your life? Being a dad. I really enjoy wearing socks with sandals. Bar none a fantastic experience.

What is the worst advice you've received and why? Don't step on set for less than a grand. This is terrible advice for people starting out as young creators don't have the expertise to justify those wages.

What advice would you give to a teenager about success? Success is like a bag of Skittles. It is amazing when you've got it, but it never seems to last that long.

What's your guilty pleasure? Whiskey. I am a big fan of Headframe Spirits' NeverSweat out of Butte.

What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve? Manage a 100k project.

How do you measure your own success? If a client rehires me. Nothing says you did a good job like being brought back to do another one.

What failure have you learned the most from? Returns on the back end are not guaranteed. I lost about \$20k doing a

job in Phoenix, Arizona. I was out travel expense, production, post-production, and development cost. The cause was a fraudster invalidating the conference so the footage couldn't be used for continuing education credits.

What is the hardest part of your job?

Marrying clients and expectations to their budgetary restrictions and developing a feasible final product.

What was the last show you binge watched? "The Haunting of Bly Manor."

What is your favorite book? "American Gods."

What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation? Film work is about conveying messages to the public. During COVID-19, I've had to help create several public awareness messages for different community organizations.

What is the most challenging aspect of your occupation? Blending technical, mechanical, and abstract thinking to create powerful messages.

Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration? Marc Mendonca, PhD associate vice chancellor for research Indiana University School of Medicine.

Do you have a motto that you live by? Do good.

How do you view failure and success? Failure is the inability to achieve a desired goal. Success is what occurs when your ambitions align with reality and you are able to achieve outcomes that propagate an intellectual/emotional/spiritual growth of our species. Often these successes are small, but nevertheless, they make your community, work, or family objectively better.

What do you do for fun/relax/hobby? With COVID-19 going on, I've been playing a lot of video games. My sons and I are playing "Secret of Mana" remake on Steam.

What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why? Time. Over the years so many wonderful people have given me their afternoon to shoot a horror short, an



hour to council in business development, or seeing my friends play live music. I have many wonderful memories and experiences that have shaped me into the person I am

because people had time for me. My wife, my kids, my parents, my sisters, my friends have all given me so much time with them. I cherish that time.

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Kirk Gordon | Work hard, but don't forget to play hard

Age: 31

Company and title: NorthWestern Energy Operations planning supervisor

Hometown: Columbia Falls

Education and/or background: Civil engineering bachelor's degree from Montana State University

Kirk Gordon was employed as an engineer when the opportunity came up to be the operations planning supervisor at NorthWestern Energy. The diversity of duties and reactive work called to him and he made the career move that changed his life.

If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead? A hunting guide in Alaska or a wildlife biologist.

What other passions/callings are part of your life? Anytime I am not working I am doing something outdoors – hunting, rafting, skiing, fishing, hiking, etc.

What is the worst advice you've received and why? "That can wait until tomorrow." It rarely works out better than if you had just finished the work.

What advice would you give to a teenager about success? Keep your nose to the grindstone, it will pay off.



What's your guilty pleasure? Eating an entire large pizza in one sitting after a weekend of hard hiking.

What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve? This spring I want to take the PE exam and obtain my Professional Engineering License.

How do you measure your own success? When I drive across the Rims at night and see all the lights glowing in Billings, I get a strong feeling of success. Just knowing how many of us work so hard every day to keep the power on for our customers, that

view makes it really sink in.

What failure have you learned the most from? I have learned nothing good comes from procrastination, regardless if it's in school, work, relationships, home life, hobbies, etc.

What is the hardest part of your job? Finishing a project. New things always come up throughout the day and I end up with a dozen half-finished jobs spread across my desk.

What was the last show you binge watched? Probably "Breaking Bad" back in college.

What is your favorite book? "A River Runs Through It."

What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation? Working storm jobs and large outages. After a late night of many challenges and everyone on our team working hard to get customers back in power.

What is the most challenging aspect of your occupation? The people skills. Working through conflicts, whether it's with customers or my employees, is much

more challenging than the technical work.

Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration? My grandpa. Listening to all his adventure stories, which stretched from Panama to Alaska, definitely sparked a fire in me and a desire to explore wild places.

What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start new business or excel in a business or field? Always work your hardest, even when presented with opportunities to slack

How do you view failure and success? When I know I tried my hardest. Looking back on most failures, there was always more I could have done or things I could have worked harder at to make it a success.

What do you do for fun/relax/hobby? Head for the mountains.

What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why? A supporting family. Whether it was going to college, dropping out of college to work, going on a crazy adventure, or taking on a new job, they have always been very supportive of my dreams even when they didn't agree with my decisions.

Amanda Haithcox | Being a manager in healthcare means finding balance and educating others

Age: 36

Company and title: Inpatient medical nurse manager, Billings Clinic

Hometown: Twin Bridges

Education and/or background: Bachelor's of science in nursing degree from Montana State University in 2006.

Amanda Haithcox currently oversees 100 staff members and a 39-bed inpatient department at Billings Clinic hospital. When she isn't making rounds with patients and staff, Haithcox is also responsible for hiring, budget management, supply review, staff development and support, all while providing outstanding care to each patient.

Why did you choose this profession? When I was a junior in high school, I tore my ACL in my knee playing basketball. From that experience, I became interested in the medical field, and initially was leaning towards becoming a physical therapist. Once I started college, I ended up having emergency surgery to remove my appendix. It was

through that experience that I realized what nurses do and the impact they can have on the lives of patients.

If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead? I would love to be a travel photographer.

What other passions/callings are part of your life? I love to spend time outdoors being active hiking, biking, golfing, or skiing. I also love to cook and bake.

What is the worst advice you've received and why? "Don't get another dog."

What advice would you give to a teenager about success? Sometimes it's easier to just sit back and see what happens, but that's when you have to push forward and keep trying.

What's your guilty pleasure? I just got a virtual reality headset. It is incredibly fun, can be a little addicting, and is a great way to

escape for a while when I'm stressed.

What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve? While COVID is all I can focus on currently, I would like to move forward in my career someday and possibly become a director.

How do you measure your own success? It's based on the success of my team. When we accomplish something together and I can provide my staff the tools that they need to improve the care we provide our patients, I feel I have been successful.

What failure have you learned the most from? I truly believe that through failure, we continue to learn.

What is the hardest part of your job? Ensuring I am supporting my team through the pandemic. Each individual is different in how they learn, grieve, and handle stress,



Please see **Haithcox**, Page 31

Brandon Henckel | Failure doesn't have to be bad

Age: 38

Company and title: SCL Health Heart and Vascular Institute, interventional cardiologist

Hometown: Billings

Brandon Henckel wears his faith boldly on his sleeve. His Christian beliefs inform his personal life, and professional life. Asked if he has a motto he lives by, he said, not really. Rather, he lives more broadly by Biblical principles. And, while he counts his faith as his greatest gift, he also incorporates secular wisdom into his life, quoting Thomas Edison for inspiration.

Education and/or background: Undergraduate, Rocky Mountain College; medical school, University of Washington School of Medicine; residency, University of Michigan; fellowships, Ohio State University (cardiology); William Beaumont Hospital (Interventional cardiology).

Why did you choose this profession?

What is great about the field of medicine is that it combines multiple aspects of several professions. I have the opportunity to investigate and problem solve when new symptoms are present. I am able to be a

teacher to my patients and educate them on their conditions.

If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead? My faith is very important to me so being more involved in some kind of ministry service would be something I might be more dedicated to but hope I can still incorporate this no matter my profession.

What other passions/callings are part of your life? I very much want to keep a keen eye on how I can grow my role in our church and also reach the community.

What advice would you give to a teenager about success? It would be important for a teenager to know that if you want to be successful in any career, pay attention to detail and work your hardest even on the most minor task.

What's your guilty pleasure? I am a pizza junky.

What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve? To build a good CTO program in Billings. CTO stands for chronic total occlusion and is a



type of coronary artery disease in which the artery has been 100% blocked for at least 3 months.

How do you measure your own success? Often, it can be a long road to find the true problem and a cure may not be possible, so I feel that success is doing right by the patient throughout the whole process.

What failure have you learned the most from? Now that I no longer report to

"attending" physician having had these lessons makes me realize how important it is now for me to be prepared and dedicated to putting in the work for each patient so that I am doing right by them with each encounter.

What is the hardest part of your job? The affect it can have on my family.

What was the last show you binge watched? The Office.

What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation? To see immediate results in patients after undergoing a procedure and also share in the sustained, long-term benefits with them by maintaining continuity.

Do you have a motto that you live by? Philippians 4:13 "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

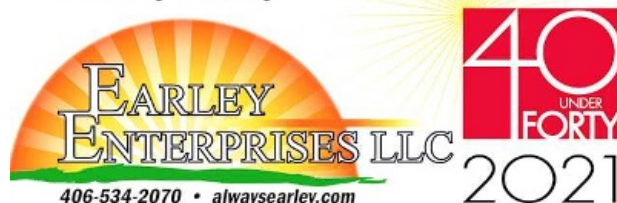
What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start new business or excel in a business or field? Pay attention to detail and work your hardest even on the most minor task. If you can do this with little things, it will translate to bigger and bigger things and won't go unnoticed.

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Thank you for believing in me.

Sincerely,
Johnny Earley



Rachel Heveron | I am doing something that I really enjoy

Age: 26

Company and title: Eagle Mount Billings, adaptive program director

Hometown: North Rose, New York

Education and/or background: Bachelor's degree from University of Northern Iowa.

Rachel Heveron was born and raised in North Rose, New York. Her family moved to Manchester, Iowa during her sophomore year in high school. After graduation, she attended Hawkeye Community College, earning an associate degree, and then moved on to University of Northern Iowa to obtain her bachelor's degree in leisure youth and human services with an emphasis in therapeutic recreation.

Why did you choose this profession?

After moving into a program coordinator position with an organization, I got to see the smiles on residents' faces when they had the opportunity to do things they were never able to do before. This experience inspired me to become a spokesperson for people with disabilities.

If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead? Be a baker.

What other passions/callings are part of your life? Growing up, I attended sailing camp and fell in love with sailing. This led to me becoming a certified adaptive sailing instructor.

What is the worst advice you've received and why? In college, I had a professor tell me not to apply for an internship at the National Ability Center because only "a small number of individuals have been accepted from UNI so the likelihood of you being accepted is very slim so I would keep looking."

What advice would you give to a teenager about success? To just go. I know it sounds cliché, but if I had the money at the time I would take the experience. I studied abroad and traveled for my internship and took the experience over having money at the time.

What's your guilty pleasure? Ben & Jerry's ice cream.

What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve? Start an adaptive sailing program for Eagle Mount Billings.

How do you measure your own success? Knowing that when I wake up and go to work, I'm doing something that I really enjoy. Some days it doesn't even feel like work.

What failure have you learned the most from? In college, I was originally going to school for a different major but wasn't able to pass one of the core classes. I ended up changing careers, which felt like a failure at first, but in the end, it truly led me to an amazing experience.

What is the hardest part of your job? Knowing that I can make a big impact but being limited by financial restraints because of the realities of non-profit work.

What was the last show you binge watched? "The Great Food Truck Race."



What is your favorite book? "Rainbow Fish."

What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation? Seeing my participants faces. Watching someone ride a bike who hasn't in 10 years or someone who has never been in a canoe finally get in a canoe is incredibly rewarding.

What is the most challenging aspect of your occupation? That our program time is the only chance a participant might have to be accepted or be able to experience

Please see **Heveron**, Page 31

Katherine Howland | Any interaction, even a small one, can leave a memorable and positive impact

Age: 38

Company and title: Apricot Lane Billings, manager

Hometown: Bellevue, Washington

Education and/or background: Bachelor's of arts in communication, University of Washington and bachelor's in business administration/accounting from MSU-Billings

As a child, Katherine Howland didn't play doctor, cook, singer or veterinarian. She played clothing store, and her parents were her regular shoppers.

If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead? I already have my dream job. Otherwise, working for a pro-sports team would be pretty amazing.

What other passions/callings are part of your life? I've been married for 13 years and have a teenage step-daughter as well as a tiny dog who thinks she's tough and one cat. I would be happy to be a full-on

crazy cat lady.

What is the worst advice you've received and why? There are multiple times in my career I've been told I think too "big picture."

What advice would you give to a teenager about success? Speak up for yourself.

What's your guilty pleasure? I love watching shows I've seen a million times, like "The Office" and "Friends."

What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve? I want to continue to grow Apricot Lane.

How do you measure your own success? In my role, I have had to transition from being on the sales floor all the time and knowing all "my" customers into more work in operations, buying, and marketing.

What failure have you learned the

most from? Not being direct enough as a manager. There have been many situations that I took too much of a "wait and see approach" or thought that I could resolve things and make everyone happy at the same time.

What is the hardest part of your job? Anything in sales is a rollercoaster. You're going to have days when you get tons of new inventory, the phone is ringing constantly, and the store is full of customers.

What was the last show you binge watched? "Schitt's Creek."

What is your favorite book? I like mystery/thrillers like "Gone Girl."

What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation? I love my customers and how many of them have become friends over the years.

Please see **Howland**, Page 31



Patrick Klugman | My influence and advocacy to support business and community projects is very important to me

Age: 31

Company and title: Big Sky Economic Development – community development project manager

Hometown: Dumont, Minnesota

Education and/or background: Undergrad degree from Minnesota State University Moorhead – political science, master's degree from Montana State University Billings – public administration.

Since childhood, Patrick Klugman has been interested in law and policy. For Klugman, the opportunity to engage within civic processes and involve public/private partnerships towards the better quality of life within the community was a no-brainer.

If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead? Aviation has always fascinated me, from small planes and helicopters to commercial jets and chinook helicopters.

What other passions/callings are part of your life? Family is always first, and to watch my 2-year-old daughter grow is a reward everyone said would happen,

but until you experience it firsthand, it is an overwhelming feeling and my biggest accomplishment in life.

What is the worst advice you've received and why? "Lower your expectations" – This was an attempt to protect me from failure. While failure is difficult, it also defines you and pushes you further towards success and goals.

What advice would you give to a teenager about success? Hard work is rewarded with success.

What's your guilty pleasure? Supporting the Montana Lottery and losing my \$10 bet for the Minnesota Vikings every Sunday.

What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve? Securing \$250k for a challenge grant to implement \$500,000 to the master plan and first phase of development at Coulson Park.

How do you measure your own suc-

cess? Development, momentum, and completion of projects is very important to me because often our projects influence creative placemaking and vibrant livable places.

What failure have you learned the most from? Botching the Law School Administration Test (LSAT). It completely changed the direction of my life.

What is the hardest part of your job? The typical timelines that come with the public sector.

What was the last show you binge watched? "The Last Dance." "The Office" seems to always be on in the background, as well.

What is your favorite book? "Into the Wild" by Jon Krakauer.

What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation? I am privileged to be engaged and a part of conversations with community leaders and



elected officials to make all of us "Better Off in Billings" and Yellowstone County.

What is the most challenging aspect of your occupation? Staying committed and leading projects with absolute full motivation and focus.

Please see **Klugman**, Page 31



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Chris Lockhart | Happiness comes from making people happy – with good food

Age: 38

Company and title: Prerogative Kitchen/owner/chef/GM

Hometown: Warwick, England

Education/background: High school education in England. Worked in hospitality since I was 18, starting in FOH and then switched to the kitchen nine years ago, no formal training.

The chef life is a hard one. Most restaurants have thin profit margins and the long hours on your feet can be grueling. But, for Chris Lockhart, all the hard work is worth it when his food makes his guests happy. The bonus is, getting to make people happy in a beautiful place like Red Lodge.

Why did you choose this profession?

I really love the atmosphere and energy of working in a restaurant/bar, making people happy through food and drink, seeing people arrive in a sour mood and leaving happy really makes you feel good. The teamwork and camaraderie between you and your co-workers is extremely rewarding, especially after a 12-hour shift on a busy night. Getting to eat great food at your place of work. Also my wife (Gena) always said she would marry a chef, when we met I had never worked in the kitchen, and now I do.

If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead? I would be a flight attendant, I have always found flying fascinating and I love to travel, plus it's still in the hospitality field.

What other passions/callings are part of your life? Travel, exploring and experiencing other cultures and traditions, DJ'ing electronic music.

What is the worst advice you've received and why? When a vendor tries to sell you on a pre-made food product, saying profits will be increased and labor will go down, but it goes against everything that we believe strongly in which is carefully sourcing ingredients and preparing items from scratch.

What advice would you give to a teenager about success? Work hard, show up early, be honest and listen, listen, listen.

What's your guilty pleasure? British pork scratchings, the ones with still a little bit of hair on.

What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?

I would like to be involved in opening a neighbourhood grocery store, that has cool house-cured meats, awesome pre-prepared meals, great local produce, cheeses, wine and beer.

How do you measure your own success? There is not too much of a monetary success in restaurant ownership. So definitely measure it from what customers say, reading reviews and keeping a happy staff.

What failure have you learned the most from? Failure is a state of mind. I believe all "failures" have only been lessons that have driven us to more successes.

What is the hardest part of your job? The physical side of it, some weeks working 60-70 hours and always being on your feet, your body takes a real beating.

What was the last show you binge watched? "Long Way Up."

What is your favorite book? Anything by Bill Bryson.

What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation? Definitely customer satisfaction, if people leave unhappy you have failed at your job.

What is the most challenging aspect of your occupation? Being in a tourist town in Red Lodge, finding the right balance to keep the business successful during busy season and off season.

Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration? My wife, Gena. Without her I would not be where I am today and she is the one always trying to drive the business forward.

Do you have a motto that you live by? Not all who wander are lost.

What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start new business or excel in a business or field? Watch, learn and listen. Research and study on your own time.

What do you do for fun/relax/hobby? This year with the pandemic, my family and I have done a lot of local camping, cooking on an open fire can't be beaten.



What's the greatest gift you ever received, and why? My parents gave me a Lego Pirate Island when I was a kid. I am not sure why this stands out as the best gift ever, but it sure did make me happy.



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Jon Lorash | Fail forward, not backward

Age: 38

Company and title: Billings OB/GYN Associates, CEO

Hometown: Joliet

Education and/or background: Montana State University – Billings, bachelor's of science in finance and University of Montana, master's of business (MBA)

Jon Lorash says he chose working in the healthcare industry because he likes connecting with people. As the CEO at Billings OB/GYN Associates, Lorash believes healthcare is an industry that not only needs great providers, but also needs good business personnel to help carry out the mission of providing exceptional care and to enhance patient's lives.

If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead? At one point in my life I wanted to be in banking, maybe a lender of some sort. I always felt that I had the perfect alias for banking. I would call myself Cash Lorash.

What other passions/callings are part of your life? My wife Tiffany and my four kids. Nothing else matters. I am a pretty simple homebody type-of person and feel the most passionate about my family responsibilities.

What is the worst advice you've received and why? I am sure that I have received a lot of bad advice. One that has always stuck out is when people say "fake it till you make it," meaning when you start a new job or anything in life, fake like you know what you are doing until you actually know what you are doing. I think faking it is a big mistake.

What advice would you give to a teenager about success? Never burn bridges. You never know when you may have to cross back over them.

What's your guilty pleasure? Wilcoxson's Mint Chocolate Chip Ice Cream.

What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve? I would potentially want to work on a Six Sigma Black Belt certification. I find it interesting to make processes more efficient to solve real world problems for a company.

How do you measure your own success? Based on my own personal satisfaction and try not to compare myself. I read a quote recently by John Wooden, one of



the most successful basketball coaches of all time, "Don't measure yourself by what you've accomplished, but rather by what you should have accomplished with your abilities."

What was the last show you binge watched? "The Office." I love that show. Dwight gives solid advice that I believe everyone should live by, "Whenever I'm about to do something, I think, would an idiot do that? And if they would, I do not do that thing."

What is your favorite book? "If You Give a Mouse a Cookie."

What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation? Helping people. If it be the team that I work with or the patients that we take care of, I really enjoy helping people.

Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration? My wife Tiffany. She is my best friend and is always rooting for my success.

Do you have a motto that you live by? Pride is concerned with who is right, humility is concerned with what is right.

What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start new business or excel in a business or field? Learn something from everyone you come into contact with. Build a network of people that support you and actually care about you and do not be afraid to make a new acquaintance.

What do you do for fun/relax/hobby? I love going to the movies with my family. Movie theater popcorn is the best.

CONGRATULATIONS Jenn

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Kassia Lyman | Serve others well enough that it makes their experience better

Age: 31

Company and title: Billings Family YMCA- health and wellness director

Hometown: Colstrip

Education and/or background: Bachelor's of science; MSUB-Billings

Kassia Lyman first joined the YMCA as a member. She was inspired by the people, the collective effort and welcoming environment. The impact was so great, she wanted to be part of it.

If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead? While serving as the director, I have completed my bachelor's degree and have applied to Rocky Mountain College with my eyes set on physician assistant school.

What other passions/callings are part of your life? In 2009, and as a fairly new resident of Billings, I found a home at Harvest Church in the Heights. I have enjoyed serving through their many projects and services such as baking cookies for the homeless community.

What is the worst advice you've re-

ceived and why? "Don't care what other people think."

What advice would you give to a teenager about success? Success comes from showing up in the hard times, after a failure, and when nobody else does.

What's your guilty pleasure? I love a big plate of nachos, a perfect cup of coffee, a cute pair of workout shoes, and a relaxing Sunday where my family and I stay in our jammies all day.

What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve? I aspire for the day I can serve Billings on another level as a PA.

How do you measure your own success? By how I serve others.

What is the hardest part of your job? Time. I think anybody at the Y could tell you this isn't an 8-5 job.

What is your favorite book? My forever favorite book is, of course, the Bible.

What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation? I love my job at the Y. I don't mean this lightly. Wearing the Y logo on my chest and truly thinking about what the Y provides our community can bring me to tears. I have walked with people on their weight loss journey that isn't measured because of the size of their jeans. I've held the hands of a cancer patient as they told me their cancer came back and they have three months to live and want to stay working out until the very end. Kids learn to swim every day in our facility. Families get to spend quality time together. Kids learn teamwork through youth sports and discipline through programs like dance and karate. Stay-at-home moms get a break to work out while they drop their kids off at child watch, where the child makes new friends and crafts.

Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration? My husband. As high school sweetheart and marrying at a young age, he has always been right by my side.

Do you have a motto that you live by? Just show up.



What do you do for fun/relax/hobby? Probably to no surprise, a good workout always refreshes me.

Also being a mom of girls is absolutely the best.

What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why? Time. The world is busy and everybody is off trying to do their best in the world. Raising babies, launching careers, serving their community, and hustling to just stay afloat. I truly believe when somebody stops juggling everything they have to give you time, that this is the truest form of love.

Kate L. McDevitt | Show 'em what ya got

Age: 33

Company and title: Electrical Consultants, Inc. - associate engineer

Hometown: Anchorage, Alaska

Education and/or background: Master's degree in civil engineering from MSU

Kate L. McDevitt has always loved math, so a career in engineering seemed like the perfect fit. For McDevitt, the position combined problem solving aspects of mathematics with real world applications.

If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead? Brew my own beer and work at a brewery.

What other passions/callings are part of your life? I love spending time in the mountains, either by skiing, mountain biking or climbing. I'm looking forward to introducing my son to all of these passions as well.

What advice would you give to a teenager about success? You have to define success for yourself. No one else can define it for you.



What's your guilty pleasure? Beer.

What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve? Retirement.

How do you measure your own success? In my ability to balance my home life and work.

What is the hardest part of your job? Managing people and trying to help them to achieve what I know they can.

What was the last show you binge watched? "Schitts Creek."

What is your favorite book? "The Nick Adams Stories" by Ernest Hemingway.

What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation? Successfully completing a project and seeing our hard design work in the field.

What is the most challenging aspect of your occupation? Meeting the schedules and timelines of projects.

Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration? I was extremely fortunate in my early college years to have an internship at a woman-owned engineering company. I think it was an extremely rare opportunity and it gave me the confidence to finish my degree and pursue a career in engineering.

Do you have a motto that you live by? My mom would always tell me before my high school volleyball games to "show 'em what ya got," and I can hear her tell me that whenever things get challenging.

What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start a new business or excel in a field? Always strive to learn more and be a perpetual student.

How do you view failure and success? Failure is an opportunity to learn, you can't succeed without learning from your mistakes.

What do you do for fun/relax/hobby? I love knitting and painting, and wish that I had more time for both.

Tyson Middle | Billings needs more color

Age: 35

Hometown: Billings

Company and title: Underground Culture Krew, owner/operator

Tyson Middle has always had a passion for art. It began with his grandfather, LeRoy Payne, taking him to McIntosh Art for supplies. Now, the owner and operator of the graffiti art company, Underground Culture Krew, Middle spends his days nurturing local youth through various avenues of mentorship.

Why did you choose this profession?

I am inspired by art and creation. I thought Billings needed more color — or at least a different type. Graffiti art wasn't really part of Billings when I moved back here after high school. While providing the city a new and different art form, I always had goals and aspirations of involving the youth.

If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead? With my degree in psychology, I have always wanted to work with children through mentorships, counseling, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Tumbleweed, etc.

What other passions/callings are

part of your life? My son, wife, and step-daughter are very important in my life. My wife and I are extremely interested in becoming foster parents and helping kids. We have recently taken on a 16-year-old kid.

I also love skateboarding, snowboarding, tattoos, Nike Air Jordan's, HO scale train models, and I have a pretty impressive Hot Wheels collection.

What is the worst advice you have received and why? I don't feel that any advice that has been given to me is bad. Put it all together and pull away things from everyone's opinions.

What advice would you give to a teenager about success? Get involved, make a goal, build a team, focus on the positive, push yourself, believe in yourself, and continue to work.

What's your guilty pleasure? I am an adrenaline junkie. I like to do anything that gets the heart and blood pumping.

What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve? To develop a different type of youth center for kids.

How do you measure your own success? I don't — I know that sounds cheesy. I just do what I do. I am always wanting to continue to learn and grow and push my own goals. I don't want to be stuck in the past or an old way of doing things.

What failure have you learned the most from? I don't view things as failures. I look at it through a skateboarder's/ artist's mind (or basketball, golf, any sport) — if you try a trick and you fall or don't pull it off, you don't give up.

What is the hardest part of your job? Getting into a client's head when they are struggling to tell me what they want or they aren't sure of their own idea or themselves.

What was the last show you binge watched? "The Last Dance," a documentary about Michael Jordan.

What is your favorite book? "Heavier Than Heaven: A Biography of Kurt Cobain," by Charles R. Cross.

What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation? Seeing a client's (or the public's) reaction to a mural is



always great.

What is the most challenging aspect of your occupation? Creating from a client's imagination — to get them to believe and trust us.

Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration? My grandfather, who is no longer with us.

Also my mom. She is my best friend and business partner.

Do you have a motto that you live by? "Where there's a will, there's a way."



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Amber Pisk | It is what it is, but it is what you make of it

Age: 38

Company and title: St. Vincent Health-care, SCL Health – Director of Nursing Workforce Optimization

Hometown: Billings

Education and/or background: Skyview High School 2001, BAN Carroll College 2005

Amber Pisk never had that defining moment in choosing a career. Instead, she saw nursing as a practical opportunity, including job security.

“Nursing now, after 16 years, has become part of how I define myself,” she said. “It was a practical choice in college, but now is part of my ‘why’ in life.”

If you couldn’t do this, what would you do instead? I really like data, looking at trends and tracking outcomes. Maybe a statistician?

What other passions/callings are part of your life? Pediatric nursing is my passion.

What is the worst advice you’ve re-

ceived and why? “Leaders who constantly fail are not leaders.” I hate to fail, but I fail a lot. Sometimes I fail to complete simple tasks, sometimes my ideas fail and don’t work. Sometimes I don’t say the right things. I think leaders fail constantly. Real leaders take ownership for their failures, apologize if they need to, reflect on what could have been done better, and try again.

What advice would you give to a teenager about success? Don’t compare yourself to others. That really is the best way to make yourself miserable.

What’s your guilty pleasure? Binge watching documentaries.

What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve? I would like to obtain my master’s degree in nursing. I would love to get a PhD but I am not sure that will ever happen. I’ll take it one step (one loan) at a time.

How do you measure your own success? Comes if, in general, most things

went well.

What failure have you learned the most from? I didn’t get into nurse practitioner school. Not even two years, later I was offered the manager job on pediatrics. As cliché as it sounds, one door closed and the right door opened.

What is the hardest part of your job? Sometimes it is hard to be in the moment at home with my family after a long day.

What was the last show you binge watched? “The Crown.”

What is your favorite book? “As I Lay Dying.”

What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation? Every nurse will tell you the most important part of the job is patient care.

What is the most challenging aspect of your occupation? COVID has been the hardest thing nurses have come up against



in a long time. Severity of the illness along with the sheer volume of patients makes for a difficult situation.

Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration? My family is my inspiration and motivation for everything I do. I am so proud of them, especially my daughter. I am beyond blessed that such an amazingly weird kid is in my life.

Do you have a motto that you live by? Assume good intentions and as a great philosopher once said “It is what it is, but it is what you make of it.”

Jennifer Potts | Set audacious goals and work on them one step at a time

Age: 36

Company and title: Billings Clinic, organizational continuous improvement, manager

Hometown: Rapid City, South Dakota

Education and/or background: Master’s degree in occupational therapy

Jennifer Potts says being a part of the health care industry is a vocation – but being even a small part of another person’s healing journey is an honor.

If you couldn’t do this, what would you do instead? Occupational therapy is my first love as a job. Occupational therapy is about the activities that bring meaning to life and after ones abilities change, which happens throughout our life, an occupational therapist gets to be a partner of life and problem-solving how those important roles can be resumed.

What other passions/callings are part of your life? Music, I love to sing and play piano. Sometimes I get stuck in my

head and music is my way to communicate. Music can allow the important thoughts to emerge out of any anxiety, chaos or fear.

What is the worst advice you’ve received and why? “If you want something done right, you have to do it yourself.” While it is easier in some ways to do things alone, I believe that different perspectives working toward a common solution will always produce better results.

What advice would you give to a teenager about success? Don’t worry too much about finding your “just right” path.

What’s your guilty pleasure? I’m so lucky because I usually get to sleep in one weekend day.

What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve? When I notice that our organizational culture reflects our current focus – achieving and maintaining trust within our organization and with our patients by promoting

standard ways of teaming.

How do you measure your own success? Success comes in the small moments when I’ve accomplished the day’s goals or been just one bit better at the challenges that have come up.

What failure have you learned the most from? This year I experienced a spectacular, public failure. With an amazing team, we picked each other up, learned a few more skills, changed our tactics and met our goals.

What is the hardest part of your job? Balancing the energy I want to give to everything in my life. As I transitioned from being a professional to being a working mom almost everything I thought about myself changed. Honestly, work was one of the only places I knew who I was, and I would have stayed as long as I could to feel like I knew I was good at something.

What was the last show you binge



watched? “Ted Lasso.”

What is your favorite book? “Ready Player One.” Who doesn’t love a good adventure with some ‘80s trivia woven through?

Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration? I admire people who can craft good questions and help others feel so comfortable that they can show up with their authentic self.

Please see **Potts**, Page 32

Ashlynn Reynolds-Dyk | Success is an iteration of failure

Age: 34

Company and title: Rocky Mountain College, assistant professor of English

Hometown: Dillon

Education and/or background: PhD in technical communication and rhetoric from Texas Tech University; master's degree in communication studies from University of Montana.

Ashlynn Reynolds-Dyk began college thinking she wanted to become an attorney, which led to her taking classes like public speaking, political rhetoric, and persuasive communication. That's when she knew she wanted to become a college professor researching and teaching students about language, rhetoric, and communication.

If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead? Maybe something in marketing or graphic design.

What other passions/callings are part of your life? Writing – as someone who is pretty introverted, I find that I express myself best through writing whether it is a personal message to someone, an article I hope to share with a larger audience, or something else.

What is the worst advice you've received and why? The squeaky wheel gets the grease. While you should be an advocate for yourself (and those who support you), I do not think you have to shout it off the roof tops when you do your work.

What advice would you give to a teenager about success? Process over product: We all face adversity, have problems, etc. It's an inherent part of humanity. So, stop comparing yourself to others and find the problems that you enjoy having and enjoy solving.

What's your guilty pleasure? Chocolate, reality television, and Katy Perry.

What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve? I am still a couple years out from tenure so there is definitely that.

How do you measure your own success? Whether or not I am learning.



What failure have you learned the most from? Not taking a risk due to fear of failure and/or possible embarrassment.

What is the hardest part of your job? Motivating myself to grade daunting loads of student writing. Pandemic special: Not being able to sit side-by-side with a student, look at their work together, talk about their ideas and writing.

What was the last show you binge watched? "Virgin River."

What is your favorite book? This is not a fair question for someone who teaches writing. "East of Eden."

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

There are two: One is developing relationships with students where they trust and like me enough to joke around with me or give me a hard time. The other is working with and being challenged by colleagues who are intelligent, hilarious, sarcastic, etc.

What is the most challenging aspect of your occupation? Witnessing student self-doubt, harm, and mental health issues.

Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration? In my personal life, it is my mom. She is infuriatingly independent and works harder than anyone I know while taking care of everyone. In my professional life, Dr. Steve Schwarze who first taught me about rhetoric, writing, and communication at the University of Montana in Missoula.

Please see **Reynolds-Dyk**, Page 32

Actions speak just as loudly as words for Mike Thayer

Whether he's doing his part keeping our refinery working reliably or doing his part getting kids excited about writing, **Mike Thayer** is an asset to our community.

Congratulations to Mike and all the **40 Under Forty** honorees!

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Age: 24
Company and title: Manager of Collective Elevation Billings
Hometown: Billings

Justin Rock Above is the kind of son all mothers hope for. Asked what he'd like most to achieve, he said making enough money to take care of his family. And, when asked what he attributed his success to, he said it is the work ethic he was taught by his mother.

Why did you choose this profession?

Justin Rock Above | Not listening to doubters has been key to success

Because I like being able to help provide safe alternative medicine to people who are in need of it.

If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead? I would probably be working construction still. I still enjoy doing that but this is a way more rewarding profession

What other passions/callings are part of your life? Being healthy, whether that's weightlifting, running, or doing sports, I just like being active. Also traveling, I love being able to go out and explore new places and experience new things.

What is the worst advice you've received and why? To not go into the cannabis industry because I wouldn't be able to succeed in it.

What advice would you give to a teenager about success? Never stop working. Momentary success is awesome, but you need to keep working to get to the next level.

What's your guilty pleasure? Buying myself things I don't need that I want just because.

What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve? Making enough to take care of my family.

How do you measure your own success? By how many people I'm able to help out with cannabis and how it improves their everyday life.

What failure have you learned the most from? One time in high school wrestling I was pointed in under a minute and I vowed to never go down that easy every again

What is the hardest part of your job? Definitely the stress, having to make sure that everything we do is 100% legal with all the state laws and regulations.

What was the last show you binge watched? "The Wire" on HBO.

What is your favorite book? Probably "Game of Thrones." I love all the Medieval action and politics that are in it.

What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation? Being able to supply safe alternative medicine that changes people's lives.

Do you have a motto that you live by? Never give up and keep persevering no matter what happens.

How do you view failure and success? My views on failure and success are that you can only gain success from failure. No matter how many times you fail, if you keep working hard, success will find you.

What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why? The greatest gift I've received is my work ethic. I got it from my mom who taught me that hard work always pays off.

Shelly Rumsey | Be the best version of yourself

Age: 36
Company and title: Mental Health Center Program Coordinator for EPIC Montana — an early psychosis intervention clinic/first-episode psychosis program
Hometown: Billings
Education and/or background: Bachelor's degree in human services.

Shelly Rumsey wanted a career helping others. When she started college, she never thought that meant working in mental health.

"I have had the privilege of learning from and working with some of the best in the field and I wouldn't have wanted my journey any other way," said Rumsey.

If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead? I would want to work with animals in some capacity.

What other passions/callings are part of your life? Being a wife and a mom. My husband and my daughter are my everything.

What is the worst advice you've received and why? You get a lot of unsolicited advice as a mother. We need to be less critical of others and ourselves.

What advice would you give to a teen-



ager about success? Success is more significant when it is personal to you. It should mean something to you whether or not it does to others.

What's your guilty pleasure? Dark chocolate.

What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve? To see the EPIC program expand and have the capability of serving even more areas of Montana and even more people.

How do you measure your own success? How I feel at the end of a long day. If I know that I did everything I could and I did it

with integrity and kindness then I feel pretty successful.

What failure have you learned the most from? I would not call them failures, but I think I have learned the most from the times when I wasn't able to help someone. Accepting that sometimes you can only do so much is extremely difficult.

What is the hardest part of your job? Remembering to take care of myself.

What was the last show you binge watched? "The Masked Singer."

What is your favorite book? "Safe Haven" by Nicholas Sparks.

What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation? Being able to provide some hope for patients and their families. The possibility of being a glimpse of light in what may be some of their darkest days is what keeps me going.

What is the most challenging aspect of your occupation? Getting people to believe they are worth the work and not alone. The stigma that continues to surround mental health is real and powerful.

Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration? My dad. He was kind, selfless, and extremely resilient. Even though he is not here with me anymore, he inspires me every day.

Do you have a motto that you live by? You never know someone's story. Listen. Learn. Be kind.

What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start new business or excel in a business or field? Go for what you want but be the best version of yourself in the meantime. How you treat people matters and you never know when you might be making a difference.

How do you view failure and success? We should strive to learn from our failures. I believe a big key to success is how we view and handle our failures.

What do you do for fun/relax/hobby? I love hanging out at home and snuggling my fur babies. I also love spending time with family and friends.

What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why? My daughter. She reminds me of the innocence and openness that still exists in our world.

Jenn Schaff | A great many things can be resolved with kindness – even more with laughter. But some things just require cake



of a military wife. She interviewed with Q2 television and fell in love with the people. She went with her gut and has never looked back.

If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead? I would return to teaching without a second thought.

What other passions/callings are part of your life? Food. I love everything about food. I love cooking it. I love eating it. I love serving it to others.

What is the worst advice you've received and why? I was married very young at 19. My husband was a Marine and we were moving off to southern California. A well-meaning wedding guest advised me to have as many babies as I could in the next four years because "they were free."

What advice would you give to a teenager about success? Advice is one of the hardest gifts to give. Everyone's journey is different and we each have a different perspective on success and failure. One of the most important things in life, that I am still learning, is that we are going to make mistakes. Period. If we are not making mistakes, we aren't trying. Nothing will ever be perfect or easy.

What's your guilty pleasure? My guiltiest pleasure is sugar. I love it. To say I have a sweet tooth is an understatement. I love it in cakes, pies, pastries, and chocolate. You name it, if it's considered a dessert or indulgence...it is definitely my guilty pleasure.

What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve? Building and managing a team of people.

How do you measure your own success? I may have a project that is a complete "failure" but feel successful because I accomplished what I set out to do and did it to the best of my abilities, despite an outcome I may not have been able to control.

What failure have you learned the most from?

At one point in my career I accepted a job offer and on my first day, knew I had made a mistake. But from that mistake, or failure if you will, I discovered a side of myself

I didn't know existed. The side that accepts the mistake and isn't afraid to admit it.

What was the last show you binge watched? "Alone" on Hulu.

What is your favorite book? "The Nancy Drew Mysteries."

What is the most challenging aspect of your occupation? With each business I on-board, I give a little piece of myself. By personalizing their passion, I take a little piece of them too.

Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration? One of the men who first hired me at Q2 Television over 15 years ago. Tim Keating brought me into the world of marketing and has fostered my career ever since.

What advice would you give to anyone wanting to excel in their field? Do something, anything. I think we often get "analysis paralysis" when it comes to decisions and tasks.

What do you do for fun/relax/hobby? I lovingly refer to myself as a "city mouse." But this city mouse loves fresh mountain air and a roaring campfire.

What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why? Early on in my daughter's life, she learned to write her name. And then she learned to write mine, my new name that is, Mom. The first Christmas that I pulled a package from underneath the tree and on the tiny white tag was scrolled, in the squiggliest wobblest script you'll ever see, the name Mom.

Age: 38

Company and title: Arrowhead Marketing, media strategist

Hometown: Joliet

Education and/or background: Attended MSU Billings in elementary education program, 10 years with KTVQ as sales assistant and copywriter.

Jenn Schaff believes she didn't consciously choose a career in marketing, rather, it chose her. She began her journey pursuing an elementary education/special education double major. She married young and began the life



Eric Schmidt | Better late than never

Age: 29

Company and title: High Plains Architects, architect

Hometown: Woodinville, Washington

Education and/or background: Bachelor's of Arts in anthropology, Whitman College, Walla Walla, Washington, 2013; Syracuse University in Florence, Italy, 2012; Master's of Architecture, University of Oregon, Eugene, 2016.

In college, Eric Schmidt considered future career paths that blended art, science, history, problem solving and community involvement. So, when he had the opportunity to study architecture in France and Italy, he took it.

"After just a few days I was hooked and knew I wanted to be an architect," said Schmidt.

If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead? I would enjoy being a living-history re-enactor. I studied archaeology and theater and think it would be a blast to help people see and understand how we used to live.

What other passions/callings are part of your life? I have been involved in Scouting since I can remember and it instilled a love of the outdoors, community service, doing my best.

What is the worst advice you've received and why? "Practice makes perfect." I don't know when I first heard the saying but it's stuck with me as how not to approach projects and life. Excellence is achievable, not perfection.

What advice would you give to a teenager about success? It is important to reflect on your successes and understand how success was achieved, what sacrifices were made or what you might do differently next time, and then pass on that reflection to others to help them succeed too.

What's your guilty pleasure? I'm a big football fan and enjoy rooting for the Seattle

Seahawks.

What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve? I'm still at the beginning of my career and there is still so much in front of me.

How do you measure your own success? Normally when I'm doing my job my goal is to make sure other people are happy, pleased with the work, or they enjoy the performance.

What failure have you learned the most from? I bit off more than I could chew with my undergraduate thesis and learned the importance of setting realistic and achievable goals.

What is the hardest part of your job? Framing problems or setbacks in a project as opportunities is difficult. Try as we might to test numerous ideas, explore myriad design iterations, and plan for the unknown, surprises happen during a project and it is important to not panic and find the silver lining, the opportunities. It can be exhausting always trying to be an optimist.

What was the last show you binge watched? "The Queen's Gambit."

What is your favorite book? "A Pattern Language" by Christopher Alexander et al.

What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation? Solving a particularly challenging but essential design problem that my clients will not ever particularly notice.

Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration? I remember when I was young I discovered I had the same birthday as Leonardo da Vinci (over 400 years apart), and that sent me down a rabbit hole of learning a lot about him.

What advice would you give to anyone wanting to excel in their field? Build good relationships in the community, none of us can succeed alone.

What do you do for fun/relax/hobby? I love to ride my bike on the trails around Billings.

What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why? I was fortunate enough to be given piano lessons for my entire youth by my grandmother.

Adam Somers | It's a passion of mine to assist others in the growth and success of their careers

Age: 34

Company and title: C&B Operations, regional human resources manager; Montana Army National Guard Captain; president Montana Beyond the Classroom

Hometown: Billings

Education and/or background: Bachelor's degree in business, Montana State University Billings 2014.

Adam Somers wanted a professional business career that allowed him to interact with lots of people. As regional human resources manager at C&B Operations, Somers gets the best of both worlds. While there are challenging days that consist of counseling and terminations, Somers also finds joy in hiring promising new employees and promoting deserving candidates.

If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead? I would look into professional recruiting, teaching and counseling, something along those lines.

What other passions/callings are

part of your life? I feel it is my calling in life to be a support, assistant and servant to others.

What is the worst advice you've received and why? I've never received any specific horrible advice. I have been around individuals my entire life who always had a million reasons why not to do something. I've actively tried to avoid these types of individuals in order to not go along with that mindset.

What advice would you give to a teenager about success? Failure is normal. You should expect such. The difference between a successful person and a failure is how they learn and react to that failure. Stay resilient.

What's your guilty pleasure? My guilty pleasure is watching inappropriate comedies such as "The Office" and "Seinfeld" during my personal time.

What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve?

Obtain a director or vice president level position.

How do you measure your own success? I measure my success based on if I have achieved my goal or not.

What failure have you learned the most from? Years ago before I got into HR, I had a different career goal. I prepared myself for years. When the time was right, I put in my application. It devastated me that I had worked so hard and for so long and didn't even get an interview. After that, I decided to pursue a career in business.

What is the hardest part of your job? In my position I do a lot of counseling and terminations. The constant difficult conversations that I need to have would take a toll on most people. The hard part for me is not the conversations. It's the fact that I truly care for these individuals.

What was the last show you binge watched? "The Profit."



What is your favorite book? The Bible. Other than that, I'm a bit of an internet junkie. I read lots of news, publications and articles of interest.

What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation? Being able to hire or promote that perfect candidate or current employee.

What is the most challenging aspect of your occupation? When I counsel employees who are struggling in their positions and end up failing. My continual challenge

Please see Somers, Page 32

Megan Stippich |

I love being able to help our local businesses

Age: 29

Company and title: Stockman Bank of Montana; AVP commercial loan officer

Hometown: Hettinger, North Dakota

Education and/or background: Bachelor's degree in business administration – accounting.

When Megan Stippich began her banking career as a teller while still in high school, she was immediately hooked. With a love for numbers, finance and lending, she knew banking was the perfect career match. She applied as a teller at Stockman Bank in 2013 and has demonstrated impressive growth in the company, now is now an AVP Commercial Loan Officer.

If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead? Chemical engineer, or any engineering or math profession. I love numbers.

What other passions/callings are part of your life? I love to cook anything under the sun and spend time with family.

What advice would you give to a teenager about success? Don't ever give up on your dreams, and don't let obstacles or bumps in the road stop your path to success. I moved states and started college at 18 with a 3-month-old baby. Was it hard? Yes. Was it worth it to see where I am at today? Absolutely.

What's your guilty pleasure? Hanging out on the couch all day enjoying dog cuddles.

What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve? I want to keep growing in the company, as Stockman Bank is a wonderful company to work for.

How do you measure your own success? I look back over the last few years and all that I have accomplished

and the recognition I have received for everything I have done.

What was the last show you binge watched? "Modern Family." I love Phil Dunphy and all his "Philisms."

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

I love being able to help our local small businesses. It was very rewarding to be able to help small businesses obtain the SBA Paycheck Protection Program loans. For a lot of businesses, that money meant survival during the shutdown.

Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration? My greatest inspiration has to be my 10 year old daughter. She is the reason I have pushed myself so hard. I want to make sure she has the greatest life possible.

One of the best mentors I've had in my career is my previous boss, Tim Ludewig. He taught me a lot in my early times with Stockman Bank and I wouldn't be where I am if it wasn't for him.

Do you have a motto that you live by? "Stop letting people who do so little for you control so much of your mind, feelings, and emotions." – Will Smith

How does it feel to be nominated and selected for Forty under 40? I am completely honored that I was nominated and selected for Forty under 40. When I first heard of it when I moved to Billings, it was my goal to be selected one day. It feels great that I accomplished this so soon.

What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start new business or excel in a business or field? Never give up. Times may seem tough in the beginning and there will be bumps in the road, but it will always get better.



Thank you for everything you do at Tumbleweed! You uplift and support our youth wholeheartedly! Your passion for the community shines through all of your work! We are so proud and congratulate you on your accomplishment of Billings Gazette's 40 Under Forty!

"Those who are happiest are those who do the most for others." – Booker T. Washington



Tumbleweed





Mike Thayer | No regrets

problem-solving potential of chemical engineering and credits his choosing that profession to an influential chemistry teacher.

If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead? I actually already do it. I write children's fantasy novels. I have been writing in the evenings/nights for over 10 years now. Hammering away, honing the craft. When we moved from Australia to Billings in 2016, I shelved that first book and started "The Epic Adventures of the Techno Wizard" series.

What other passions/callings are part of your life? My family, first and foremost. I love public speaking. Doing school visits, whether huge assemblies or just a classroom, is my lifeblood. I have a passion for doing voice impressions and accents.

What is the worst advice you've received and why? When I was in college, I went to one of those timeshare presentations so I could get a free \$100 Visa gift card. They tried to convince me that going into \$30k of debt was the most important decision I could ever make for my family's lasting happiness.

What advice would you give to a teen-

ager about success? Find your passion, the thing you can't stop thinking about, and feed it awesomeness. Surround yourself with that awesomeness. You can spend your free time entertaining yourself, learning about something, or creating something. Also, get skills that the world values.

What's your guilty pleasure? For the most part, I've given up playing video games, but every Friday night I still play Apex Legends with my brother and my good buddy.

What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve? No. 1 New York Times bestseller. That, and having a movie or Netflix series made from one of my books.

How do you measure your own success? Whether I'm hitting my goals. I make them pretty ambitious, but they're all possible.

What failure have you learned the most from? Getting my books rejected well over 100 times before getting picked up by a major publisher has been a lesson in perseverance, patience, faith, humility, and grit.

What is the hardest part of your job?

My day job only leaves so much time for my night job. It also limits my time to pursue all my other ideas and personal projects I would like to do.

What was the last show you binge watched? Currently binging "Forged in Fire." It's a reality competition show where every episode four bladesmiths compete to make knives and swords.

What is your favorite book? "The Tree House" by my dad, Douglas Thayer. I loved the Beyonders series by Brandon Mull, and "Red Rising" by Pierce Brown.

What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation? With engineering, it's working with awesome people and training folks on Extreme Ownership. I love the program. With being an author it's connecting with and inspiring people, especially kids.

What is the most challenging aspect of your occupation? At the refinery, it's driving lasting cultural change. For writing, I think it's getting my work noticed by people.

Please see Thayer, Page 32

Ericka Garcia Travis | Be 1% better every day

Age: 30
Company and title: Tumbleweed Run-away Program, development manager
Hometown: Mexico City, Mexico
Education and/or background: Louisiana State University (LSU)

Ericka Garcia Travis was born and raised in Mexico. She moved to Louisiana in 2009 and attend Louisiana State University as a Division 1 student-athlete. She graduated in 2013 with a bachelor's degree in international studies. Travis began working at a foundation for a local children's hospital in Baton Rouge and during her five years there, she knew she wanted to help those in need, permanently. Now the development manager at Tumbleweed, her passion to help others improves the quality of life for at-risk youth and young adults in the community.

Why did you choose this profession? The work we do helps contribute to bettering our community and the lives of vulnerable and homeless youth and young adults.

If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead? The hospitality industry, or I would open my own business. Perhaps a restaurant, or a doggy daycare.

What other passions/callings are part of your life? I love traveling, understanding different cultures, meeting new people and learning about their journey.

What is the worst advice you've received and why? To not come to the United States to be a collegiate athlete because I didn't really speak the language and didn't know anyone.

What advice would you give to a teenager about success? Do not compare yourself to others. As long as you are moving forward you are going in the right direction.

What's your guilty pleasure? For food, a Saturday breakfast is not complete without a pain au chocolat from LeFournil. Also, I can't resist a true crime podcast.

What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve? To be an executive director for a nonprofit organization.

What failure have you learned the most from? Not making the Olympic team back in 2008. I learned to re-evaluate my goals and that was the moment I decided to



What is your favorite book? "The Alchemist" by Paulo Coelho.

What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation? To see a positive, lasting change in the life of a youth.

What is the most challenging aspect of your occupation? Overcoming COVID restrictions while growing and sustaining relationships with our supporters and our youth.

Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration? First of all, my mom. She has taught me to always finish what I start, to stand up for myself, the meaning of dedication and hard work and to find joy in everything I do.

What advice would you give to anyone wanting to excel in their field? To always stay true to yourself, be confident, plan strategically, and developed a strong a supportive network around you.

How do you view failure and success? I view both success and failure as learning opportunities. Each provide their own lessons and they help you identify areas of improvement either in your personal or professional life.

pursue my education in the U.S.

What is the hardest part of your job? We often see very hard situations involving youth. Sometimes it can be hard to compartmentalize.

What was the last show you binge watched? "The Office."

Erin Weenum | Do good things

Age: 37

Company and title: Leavitt Group, chief employee benefits strategist

Hometown: Cleveland, Ohio (but Billings is home now)

Education and/or background: Cleveland State University, bachelor's degree in organizational leadership

Erin Weenum's journey began when she landed an internship as a pharmacy technician. She had a knack for billing insurance and could memorize the local employers' benefits and special nuances to their programs. A job with Cleveland Clinic overseeing benefits for a self-funded health plan proved to be the definitive turning point.

If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead? When I was a child I was absolutely convinced I would become an astronaut. Is it too late to give that a try?

What other passions/callings are part of your life? Above all else, I am a mother to two amazing little girls. Lincoln is 6 and Remco ("Coco") is 4. Their father, Jarrod, and I are committed to raising them to care about our community and to recognize ways to help those who are most vulnerable.

What is the worst advice you've received and why? When I was expecting my first daughter, someone told me that I wouldn't want to return to work, suggesting that I should give up my career. Growing up with a single mother, I know it is a privilege to choose between a career and staying home.

What advice would you give to a teenager about success? It is entirely up to you whether you take the hard things in life and allow them to bring you down, or let those things drive your success.

What's your guilty pleasure? Perhaps it's a little old fashioned, but I still love to chat on the phone.

What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve? There is so much discussion and opinion on healthcare reform at the local and national level right now. Unfortunately, much of that discussion fails to capture the interest of small and mid-sized employers. Through my professional organizations, I hope to bring better representation to these discussions.

How do you measure your own suc-



cess? By how people remember me.

What failure have you learned the most from? There are probably several significant lessons I could share, but I'll choose a funnier one. When I was in 5th grade, everyone had to pick an instrument to learn. I didn't quite choose the clarinet, as much as my dad knew someone that had a gently used one for sale. The music teacher wanted me to pretend to play the songs at the Christmas concert so that I didn't ruin the songs for the other kids. I was devastated at first, but I showed up, I pretended along, and I never picked up the clarinet after that. The point is, we can't be good at everything.

What is the hardest part of your job? In more recent years, the hardest part has been keeping pace with constantly changing legislation.

What was the last show you binge watched? NBC's "This is Us."

What is your favorite book? The "Left Behind" series by Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins.

What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation? Working with my clients.

Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration? Early in my career at Cleveland Clinic, I had a director who shaped much of my personal outlook and moral compass in business. Mike Wascovich always seemed to invest in my success. My greatest inspiration comes from my children.

Do you have a motto that you live by? Every morning when I drop my girls off at school, I tell them "do good things."

What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start new business or excel in a business or field? The people you choose to surround yourself with matters.

Celebrating our very own 40 Under Forty.

Angela Douglas Babcock

SCL Health Montana – Communications

R. Brandon Henckel, MD

*SCL Health Heart & Vascular Institute –
Billings Cardiology*

Amber Pisk

St. Vincent Healthcare – Nursing Leadership

Jordan Zepeda

St. Vincent Healthcare – Infection Prevention

St. Vincent Healthcare is focused on quality, and driven to provide the best patient care experience in the region. Our core values are reflected in the work of these outstanding associates. *Congratulations!*



Nickolas Wong | Success is a long-term focus, a journey

Name: Nickolas Wong

Age: 28

Company and title: Wipfli CPAs & Consultants, senior manager

Hometown: Billings

Education and/or background: Bachelor's in business administration, accounting from Montana State University Billings; master's in business administration, Finance from Washington State University

Why did you choose this profession?

At some point in high school, I spoke with a CEO of a large organization who told me that "accounting is the language of business." Turns out I'm pretty fluent, and I can interpret for others in this profession.

If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead? I would likely be working in a technology field thinking I could build the next Facebook.

What other passions/callings are part of your life? I have a healthy dose of side projects that keep me busy. I still run the mobile DJ business I started in 2008, performing mostly at weddings.

What is the worst advice you've received and why? Apparently I have forgotten all the bad advice, or I was blessed



with only receiving the good.

What advice would you give to a teenager about success? Start by trying to define success for yourself, where you are right now. Then think about the next six months, then the next three years. What would make you feel like a success in each of these milestones?

What's your guilty pleasure? Oatmilk lattes and rap music.

What is one professional accom-

plishment you still want to achieve? At some point in my career I'd like to serve on a national board within the profession.

How do you measure your own success? Success is a long-term focus for me, more of a journey without a real destination. Always aiming for 10x better keeps the target at a fair distance.

What failure have you learned the most from? When I look back at my life, I struggle to point to failures in the traditional sense. When a business I started closed shop, even that didn't feel like a failure.

What is the hardest part of your job? Lately it has been keeping current on the changing rules and regulations. Usually there are annual or less frequent updates that come from a limited number of sources.

What was the last show you binge watched? My girlfriend and I just recently cruised through the "Queen's Gambit."

What is your favorite book? "So Good They Can't Ignore You" by Cal Newport. That book helped sharpen my framework for approaching career growth in a way that I hadn't been able to articulate.

What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation? Helping people make meaningful improvements to their efficiency, profitability, and effectiveness in pursuing their goals.

What is the most challenging aspect of your occupation? While the stereotypical accountant is buried under a pile of papers with a calculator, the reality is that the profession is truly a people-business. Managing expectations is critical and challenging.

Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration? My mom, Sandy Wong, is my go-to in a lot of things. She finds success in many avenues simultaneously, whether it's work, Rotary, or just being a grandma. The most amazing thing is she seems to do it tirelessly, and never misses the details.

Do you have a motto that you live by? Never be defined by a motto. Just kidding, no I don't have a motto.

What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start new business or excel? Provide so much value that people can't help but pay you for it. Give more than you take. Hire a CPA early and pay generously.

Julie Ann Wulfekuhle | Throw me to the wolves and I will become their alpha

Age: 39

Company and title: Elysian Mental Health Foundation

Education and/or background: Master's degree in social work from University of Southern California and a master's degree in health care leadership University of California.

Julie Ann Wulfekuhle is something of a phoenix. She has overcome adversity and risen from the ashes of trauma, depression and domestic violence and used it all as a motivational platform for her career. Now a licensed therapist at Elysian Mental Health Foundation, Wulfekuhle treats children with trauma, giving them a safe place to become their own phoenix – all while being a single mother to her amazing son.

Why did you choose this profession? I chose to become a therapist because I really wanted to help others. I have suffered from depression my whole life but didn't know I had depression until I was in my mid-

20s. Seeing a therapist really helped me and I wanted to give back and help others with mental health.

If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead? Go to law school and become an attorney.

What other passions/callings are part of your life? Animals, traveling, painting/art are other passions. Each one helps me keep grounded and appreciate the small things in life.

What is the worst advice you've received and why? "Get over it," when I went through some traumatic events. Nobody can "just get over" traumatic events.

What advice would you give to a teenager about success? Every action or behavior you choose has a positive or negative consequence. Choose wisely because it could follow you for the rest of your life.

What's your guilty pleasure? Deserts. Anything sweet, chocolate, or full of carbs.

What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve? I am in the process of having some work published. I want to write a book on clinical social work and art therapy.

How do you measure your own success? By what my reputations speaks of.

What failure have you learned the most from? Not taking on more than I can handle.

What is the hardest part of your job? Trying to please everyone. A therapist can only do so much and there are a lot of family dynamics that go into treating children with complex trauma.

What was the last show you binge watched? The last show I watched was



"Impractical Jokers."

What is your favorite book? "Killing the SS" by Bill O'Reiley.

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

The most rewarding aspect is watching people grow, heal, and overcome the challenges they have endured. Seeing a child smile or say "thank you for helping me, Ms. Julie" makes everything I do worth it.

What is the most challenging aspect of your occupation? Trying to keep up with the demand for mental health services. So many people need help and I have to turn people away because I am so busy.

Melissa Yackley | If they don't give you a seat at the table, bring a folding chair

Age: 39

Company and title: Stockman Bank, vice president-branch, manager/commercial lender

Hometown: Rapelje

Education and/or background: Rapelje High School; bachelor's degree in business administration/Management from University of North Dakota

Melissa Yackley became a bank teller straight out of college. She instantly connected with the banking world and within the first few weeks on the job, she inquired about how to advance into a business banker position.

"I have worked with hundreds of businesses over the years and seeing them succeed and cultivate their dreams never gets old," said Yackley.

If you couldn't do this, what would you do instead? Organize. It is how I relieve stress.

What other passions/callings are part of your life? I'm a huge advocate for women's rights and equality. I believe women need to speak up, get involved, support one another, and educate the next generation. I believe everyone, both men and women, can find opportunities where they can make a real difference in women's lives. It is one thing to be aligned with the movement of empowering women, but it is another to execute the movement in your everyday life. Everyone can empower the next generation to utilize leadership in both women and men.

What is the worst advice you've received and why? "Only someone new to their career needs a mentor." Completely untrue. Good mentors always find ways to stimulate our personal and professional growth.

What advice would you give to a teenager about success? When choosing a career path, don't chase the money, chase the feeling.

What's your guilty pleasure? Reality shows.

What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve? I would love to continue using my experiences and skills to be a servant leader in our community. I am a board member for both the Alberta Bair Theater and Billings Fam-

ily Services.

How do you measure your own success? I feel successful when I am consistently learning new things. It means I have mastered so many skills over the years that once felt confusing or impossible.

What failure have you learned the most from? I was turned down twice before I got my first commercial lending position. I am extremely competitive, so the rejection stung but it also drove me to work twice as hard.

What is the hardest part of your job? Seeing great people and businesses get dealt a bad hand. It is heartbreaking to see a business owner close their doors and watch their dreams vanish.

What was the last show you binge watched? "The Queen's Gambit" and "The Crown."

What is your favorite book? Any kind of murder mystery. I absolutely love the author, Karin Slaughter.

What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation? Small businesses are the backbone of our country. If they succeed, we all succeed.

Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration? When I first became a commercial lender, I had an amazing boss, Myron Aune, who taught me so much about not only my job, but about serving my community and creating a work-life balance. Tragically, he passed away a few years ago but when faced with a dilemma in my job I often ask myself "What would Myron do?"

Another person that inspires me is Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start new business or excel in a business or field? Put your ego aside and be humble enough to surround yourself with people who know more than you.

How do you view failure and success? Success is a feeling that you cannot replace with money or "materials."

What do you do for fun/relax/hobby? As a family, we love to get outside and enjoy nature by skiing and hiking.



What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why? In Bismarck, North Dakota, I co-founded a women's self-defense program called AWARE ND. At the end of one

of our weekend sessions, the women in the class created a book in which they all wrote different sections about their experience during the session.

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Jordan Zepeda | Find something to be grateful for every day

Age: 28

Company and title: SCL Health, St. Vincent Healthcare, manager of infection prevention

Hometown: Cascade

Education and/or background: Master's degree in public health from the University of Montana and bachelor's degree in health sciences from Carroll College. Infection prevention in acute care hospitals for six years.

In college, Jordan Zepeda took an epidemiology course "just for fun." Through that course, she uncovered her passion for public health and using a population-based approach to improve health outcomes.

"The infection prevention field is an intersection between health care and public health. It allows me to use my epidemiology and public health skills to improve outcomes for our patient population," said Zepeda.

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

I would be a microbiologist. That was one of my favorite courses in college and I considered pursuing it as career. As an IP, I still get to use some microbiology knowledge and every once in a while, I get to go to the lab to see all the cool bugs they're growing.

What other passions/callings are part of your life?

I value my family time and love being a mom and wife. We have a very energetic 2-year-old and our second daughter is due in January 2021. We enjoy spending time together outside, hiking & camping with our rambunctious dog.

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

I have learned so much from many mentors in my life and received a lot of great advice. There have been times I've been advised to approach a problem or relationship in a manner that does not match my personality. You can't force yourself to take on leadership styles that aren't consistent with who you are.

What advice would you give to a teenager about success? Don't measure your success against what you're seeing on social media.

What's your guilty pleasure? Red wine and dark chocolate.

What is one professional accomplishment you still want to achieve? There is a lot I still want to accomplish as I grow in my career. I hope to move into positions of greater responsibility while growing our infection prevention program. I also want to conduct research worthy of publication in peer reviewed journals.

How do you measure your own success?

When I have a positive impact on our patients and staff. I often see that impact via improved quality and safety metrics. I also measure my success by my ability to expand my relationships across our organization, leading to increased collaboration.

What failure have you learned the most from? I had a project at work go awry and I learned that I need to use my

resources and ask for help. I'm surrounded by incredibly skilled colleagues at St. Vincent's who are always willing to lend their expertise and help. Working together we accomplish much more than I can when I attempt to do it all myself.

What is the hardest part of your job? The COVID-19 pandemic has presented incredible challenges for public health and health care workers. As an infection preventionist, I play a crucial role in helping our hospital respond to this emergency by providing knowledge and data about the virus and how it's impacting our patients and healthcare workers. But the information is always changing, so the challenge right now is keeping up with and disseminating all the new information.

What was the last show you binge watched? "Psych."

What is your favorite book? According to my daughter, my favorite book is "Dr. Seuss's ABCs," which we've read so many times I think I have it all memorized. But once she's asleep, I have been reading "From Killer to Common Cold," a book written by Billings' own Dr. David Graham. It's an excellent quick read on COVID-19 and what the future may hold for us as we learn to live with this virus. I highly recommend it.

What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation? The most rewarding part is knowing that my work has helped keep our patients, staff, and visitors safe.

Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration? My parents are my greatest inspirations and mentors. I was fortunate to grow up watching both of my parents work hard to overcome barriers in their professional endeavors. They both pursued degrees later in life, while raising four children, and went on to achieve great success in their careers. They taught me to never give up. With great love and support, even the biggest of dreams is not out of reach.

How does it feel to be nominated and selected for Forty under 40? I am very flattered and honored to be recognized.

What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start new business or excel in a business or field? To start in a new field, you must be willing to admit what you don't know, ask lots of questions, and surround yourself with knowledgeable resources.

How do you view failure and success? Failure often leads to success. All my successes in life have been preceded by failure, usually more than one failure.

What do you do for fun/relax/hobby? Prior to COVID, most weekends you could find me playing board games with friends, with a glass of red wine and a charcuterie board. Weekends are a bit quieter these days. I have been enjoying the fresh air, camping and hiking with my family and dog.



What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why? My life is the love of my family. I am blessed to be surrounded by family who love me unconditionally and have provided so much support throughout this incredibly challenging year.

Congratulations!



ROCKY MOUNTAIN COLLEGE

Ashlynn Reynolds-Dyk, Ph.D.
Rocky Mountain College
Assistant Professor of English

BILLINGS GAZETTE'S 2021
Forty Under 40
WINNER

Brock

From 6

Respect your elders. Many of them fear they are a burden, and it is our job to remind them that they deserve care and support.

What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start new business or excel in a business or field? Never place profits over people. Seek to fill a need in your community.

What do you do for fun/relax/hobby? My partner Simon and I relax with our three-legged rescue pup, Sadie. We also have an unreasonable number of houseplants that bring us a lot of joy.

Cremer

From 8

business plan. Step 2: find someone you trust to mentor you/help you get started. Step 3: surround yourself with supportive, encouraging people (no haters allowed). Step 4: get back up after that first failure or bump in the road.

How do you view failure and success? Failure is like one big learning experience covered in camouflage wrapping paper.

What do you do for fun/relax/hobby? Skiing, fishing, and boating with my kids and husband, creative writing, singing karaoke (my go-to song is Pat Benatar's "Hit Me with Your Best Shot"), road-tripping, and connecting with friends.

What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why? I'm surrounded by so much love stands out the most. My children, husband, siblings, parents, extended family, friends, and colleagues, they all have my best interests at heart.

Haithcox

From 12

and I try very hard to make sure I'm supporting each of them.

What was the last show you binge watched? "Parks and Recreation." I absolutely love Ron.

What is your favorite book? The Harry Potter series.

What is the most rewarding/important aspect of your occupation? Anytime a patient recognizes the nurses and CNAs who took care of them for a kind act or excellent care is very rewarding.

What is the most challenging aspect of your occupation? Finding a good balance between the needs of my team, the needs of the patients, and the needs of the organization as a whole.

Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration? Edward Jenner and his initial discovery of vaccinations.

Do you have a motto that you live by? Right now, for work – "Just keep swimming."

What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start new business or excel in a business or field? Find something you are passionate about and push forward in that field.

How do you view failure and success? I believe you must go through many trials before you succeed.

What do you do for fun/relax/hobby? I love to spend time outdoors with my dogs. We hike, backpack, bike, and ski.

What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why? Probably my dog, Hunter. I picked out Rocky, but Hunter was given to me as a gift. Life can be stressful and overwhelming, and there are always bad days, but when I go home and see both of my pups so happy to see me – that brightens every single day.

Heveron

From 14

something that is easily accessible for people without disabilities.

Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration? My college professor, Joe Wilson.

Do you have a motto that you live by? "I can't change the direction of the wind, but I can adjust the sails to always reach my destination." – Jimmy Dean

What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start new business or excel in a business or field? Even when you start questioning why you are working over 40 hours, just keep doing it. Stay committed and put in the work and it will all be worth it in the end.

How do you view failure and success? Failure is an opportunity to learn rather than to beat yourself up.

What do you do for fun/relax/hobby? Hang with my pup Jax, go camping with friends and my boyfriend and snowboard.

What's the greatest gift you ever re-

ceived? Why? The gift of family.

Howland

From 14

What is the most challenging aspect of your occupation? It's difficult when people talk about how they order everything from Amazon so they don't have to leave their houses. Those major corporations will survive no matter what and small and local businesses need our support.

Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration? Michelle, the owner of Apricot Lane, has taught me so much over the years.

What advice would you give to anyone wanting to excel in their field? Do what you're passionate about and work hard at it. Prove your value in your job.

How do you view failure and success? I'm trying to learn that failure is something to grow from and not a reason to walk away, but it's a challenge.

What do you do for fun/relax/hobby? I love baseball and football and I hate February and March when neither of them are in the regular season.

What's the greatest gift you ever

received? Why? The year my husband and I got married, he let me get a kitten for Christmas even though he hates cats (or thought he did.) I had my cat for almost 12 years, so that's a pretty great gift.

Klugman

From 15

Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration? I am going to break the rules and list more than one person. Undoubtedly, my greatest inspiration is my mother.

Because I grew up without my biological father, I had incredible people step up.

Do you have a motto that you live by? Nothing that I live by, but if I am required, "fake it until you make it."

What advice would you give to anyone wanting to excel in their field? Go immediately to the Small Business Development Center at Big Sky Economic Development.

How do you view failure and success? Failure is very difficult to swallow and is never something we want. However, if you accept failure as an opportunity it can direct you toward a completely different lane in life and teach you better decisions in the future.



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What do you do for fun/relax/hobby? Time with my wife and daughter are undoubtedly the best times.

What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why? My greatest gift is my wife. We have been together since she was a junior in high-school.

Potts

From 20

What advice would you give to anyone wanting to excel in their field? Every interaction matters. How you treat every person that your path crosses matters. With a healthy passion for learning and an invisible path of kindness behind and in front of you it is hard not to find yourself in good places.

How do you view failure and success? Failure is giving up.

What do you do for fun/relax/hobby? I asked my 6-year-old what I do for fun and she said "clean."

What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why? My family. Starting with a very loving and stable family of origin who continue to believe and support me and then my husband of 13 years who truly

believes we can do anything together. And now with two girls.

Reynolds-Dyk

From 21

Do you have a motto that you live by? Don't lie, cheat, or steal (thanks, Dad).

What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start new business or excel in a business or field? (1) Sometimes good enough is good enough. We have a tendency of letting perfectionism get in the way of greatness.

(2) Choose something that lights the fire under your butt.

How do you view failure and success? Failure and success are not mutually exclusively.

What do you do for fun/relax/hobby? Running, skiing, camping, riding, traveling, all adrenaline-junkie activities (e.g. zip lining, sky diving, bungee jumping, etc.), and most of all, spending time with my husband and children.

What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why? This is a tossup between motherhood and my parents, but I'm going to go with the latter since the former is not

possible without my parents.

Somers

From 24

is finding ways to help drive that internal motivation to help them achieve success.

Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration? I currently have a great boss who is constantly challenging and inspiring us to not only be better human beings, but to learn and grow professionally.

Do you have a motto that you live by? As iron sharpens iron, so does one person sharpen another. Proverbs 27:17

What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start new business or excel in a business or field? Have a plan. Keep an open mind and never stop adapting to the changing business environment.

How do you view failure and success? It is only failure if you quit or didn't learn anything from it.

What do you do for fun/relax/hobby? I enjoy spending time with family and learning new things. I've made it one of my goals for 2021, to learn to play golf.

What's the greatest gift you ever received? Why? Salvation from my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. What gift could be better?

Thayer

From 26

Who is your greatest mentor/inspiration? It's cliché to say, but my late father. He worked alongside me to teach me hard work, the futility of complaining, the importance of dusting myself off and not wallowing in being a victim.

Do you have a motto that you live by? "I am hurt, but I am not slain; I'll lay me down and bleed awhile, and then I'll rise and fight again." - Thomas Moore

What advice would you give to anyone wanting to start new business or excel in a business or field? Be productively obsessed.

How do you view failure and success? Failure is not the opposite of success or even something that you have to overcome in order to find success. Failure is part of success.

What do you do for fun/relax/hobby? I'm a lifelong gamer.



Erin

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