2022

COMMUNITY LEADERS

Top Under 40 and Up & Coming

Presented by:

EFFINGHAM DAILY NEWS
effinghamdailynews.com

EFFINGHAM COUNTY CHAMBER

TOP LEADERS AND UP & COMING LEADERS SHARE PASSION FOR COMMUNITY

They come from a wide variety of backgrounds – 20 Top Leaders Under 40 and 6 Up & Coming Leaders - people brought together in this publication with a common thread – all have been selected as this year's top leader winners!

As we received the nominations, it became obvious that these Top Community Leaders Under 40 are passionate about the community where they work, live and serve. In addition to passion, you will see common themes among them – balance in their life, importance of work ethic and the influence of family. These themes are also prominent with the Up & Coming Leaders.

You will learn much more about each of our young leaders on the following pages. From advice to today's youth to who had an influence on them early in life, take time to read their bios and really get to know them. We each have the opportunity to learn from and to be inspired by their stories. It is also reassuring to know the future of our community will be in great hands.

The Effingham County Chamber Board of Directors & Staff and The Effingham Daily News offers congratulations to this year's 2022 Top Community Leaders Under 40 and Up & Coming Leaders. We are grateful for their leadership and dedication to our community and look forward to how our community will benefit from their leadership in the years to come.

EFFINGHAM COUNTY CHAMBER

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Congratulations

to our 2022 Top Community Leaders

15th Annual Class | Under 40

Alecia Booher
Avery Braunecker
Matt Carpenter
Andrew Decker
Dana Devall
Joshua Douthit
Austin Eaton
Obie Farmer
Kelsey Frost
Chelsea Gouchenouer
Rachel Grunloh
Andrew Koester
Olivia Koester
Cayla Myers
Kristin Niemerg
Jessica Polk
Sara Ruholl
Jared Sudkamp
Meghan Wahl
Lindsay Wantuck

3rd Annual Class | Up & Coming

Callie Gephart | Dieterich
Gracie Heckert | Beecher City
Rosie Markham | Effingham
Elise Passalacqua | Teutopolis
Madison Splechter | Altamont
Connor Wines | St. Anthony

presented by

HSHS St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital
Washington Savings Bank
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Heartland Dental | Effingham Country Club | Taylor Law
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(217) 342-4147 | EffinghamCountyChamber.com

Alecia Booher

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER
VERSATECH AUTOMATION- A GENUEN COMPANY

BIRTH YEAR
1989

WHAT ORGANIZATIONS ARE YOU INVOLVED IN?
Blessings in a Backpack, Effingham Chapter
Society of Human Resource Management
Effingham County Chamber- MGF Day Committee
New Hope Church- Kids Ministry

EDUCATION/TRAINING
Southern Illinois University- Bachelor's in Speech Communication

WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF SUCCESS?
My definition of success is to strive daily to make a positive impact in those around me. For me that might look like assistance for an employee during a life change, serving children in the community through various organizations, or raising my children to be kind, positive members in the community.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TODAY'S YOUTH?
Be involved as much as you can, in as many different things as you can. School, clubs, sports, jobs, church, anything. Meet new people and experience new things. The lessons you learn about yourself and life are invaluable.

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IN LIVING A HAPPY LIFE?
Gratitude. In the world we live in there is always so much more to have. It is so easy to compare yourself to others. Reminding yourself daily of things you do have, or you are working towards, instead of looking around at others, is where happiness lies.

WHO HAS SERVED AS YOUR INSPIRATION OR ROLE MODEL? WHY?
I'm most inspired by qualities that a variety of individuals around me possess.
Grace- moving through life showing kindness and having compassion no matter the circumstances
Intentional living- choosing to live life in the way that fits ones beliefs and values
Optimism- believing and finding the best out of situations

WHAT QUALITIES DO YOU FEEL ARE MOST IMPORTANT IN A LEADERSHIP ROLE?
Honesty
Compassion
Resilience

WHAT ELEMENTS ARE NEEDED IN A COMMUNITY TO MAKE IT A PLACE PEOPLE WILL WANT TO CALL IT HOME?
Inclusivity, safety, and shared values.

"Reminding yourself daily of things you do have, or you are working towards, instead of looking around at others, is where happiness lies."

CONGRATULATIONS

ALECIA BOOHER

Thank you for your dedication to our company and your commitment to community service that makes our area a better place to live and raise a family.

2022 Top Community Leader Under 40 Award Winner

Versatech
A GENUEN COMPANY

1609 West Wernsing Avenue • Effingham IL 62401
217.342.3500 • versatech1.com

Andrew Decker

GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENT
EFFINGHAM COUNTRY CLUB

BIRTH YEAR
1986

WHAT ORGANIZATIONS ARE YOU INVOLVED IN?
Golf Course Superintendent Association of America National Chapter
Golf Course Superintendent Association of America Mississippi Valley Chapter
Golf Course Superintendent Association of America Southern Illinois Chapter
New Hope Church, Effingham

EDUCATION/TRAINING
I earned my Bachelor's degree in Plant and Soil Science with a specialization in Turf Management from Southern Illinois University, Carbondale.

WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF SUCCESS?
To me, success is finding a career that allows you to use your God-given talents to the best of your ability and ultimately leaving a positive impact on your position. Ultimately, success is creating a legacy in which I am remembered as being a good husband and father.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TODAY'S YOUTH?
Some advice I would lend to today's youth would be to take pride in your attitude, appearance, and work ethic. Invest in yourself, knowing you are responsible for your future. Pride yourself on working hard and knowing you gave it your all each day; then be at peace with the rest.

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IN LIVING A HAPPY LIFE?
The most important thing to me is continually putting my faith in God and being content with outcomes outside of my control. There is a certain peace that comes along with that.

WHO HAS SERVED AS YOUR INSPIRATION OR ROLE MODEL? WHY?
Steve Cook (Director of Agronomy - Medinah Country Club - Former Director of Agronomy at Oakland Hills Country Club) is definitely one of my role models. I can honestly say I would not be where I am today without his mentorship. In my early years of my career in the golf industry, Steve inspired me in many ways. He set a great example of how to manage people based on their individual personalities. "Treat people with respect and thankfulness and they will always do more than what they are asked."

WHAT QUALITIES DO YOU FEEL ARE MOST IMPORTANT IN A LEADERSHIP ROLE?
There are many qualities that make up a good leader, but a great leader invests in their employees, takes the time to get to know them on a deeper level, and manages/coaches/mentors them differently but fairly, based on how they respond the best.

WHAT ELEMENTS ARE NEEDED IN A COMMUNITY TO MAKE IT A PLACE PEOPLE WILL WANT TO CALL IT HOME?
The people are what make up a community and the community is what makes Effingham "home" for me and my family. The amount of generosity and genuine concern for others is something quite spectacular. I have never seen a community that rallies around those that are in need and are so quick to help. No matter the size, still having that small town feel is a special element in a community.

"...a great leader invests in their employees, takes the time to get to know them on a deeper level, and manages/coaches/mentors them differently but fairly, based on how they respond the best."

Congratulations Andrew Decker!

on being named a Top Community Leader Under 40!

EFFINGHAM CC
EST. 1923
100th ANNIVERSARY

The Members and Staff of Effingham Country Club would like to congratulate Andrew Decker, Golf Course Superintendent, on being selected as a Top Community Leader Under 40. What an outstanding achievement – congratulations Andrew!

2400 W. Country Club Drive | Effingham | 217-347-0423 | www.effinghamcc.com

Andrew Koester

ATTORNEY
TAYLOR LAW OFFICES, PC

BIRTH YEAR

1990

WHAT ORGANIZATIONS ARE YOU INVOLVED IN?

Effingham Noon Rotary
Effingham County CEO
Effingham Sportsbackers

EDUCATION/TRAINING

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2012 (Bachelor of Arts in Political Science)
University of Notre Dame Law School, 2015 (J.D.)
Go Irish and Illini!

WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF SUCCESS?

This is a big one! I would start by saying it is different (and should be) for everyone. Do not get pigeonholed into someone else's definition of success. Everybody in life is dealt a different hand, and, therefore, success is going to look different for everyone. For me, it is two simple questions: (1) What can you do today, with what you've got, to make yourself a better person? (2) What can you do today, with what you've got, to help someone else in your community? Being home with my family at the end of the day, knowing that I took a step or two to make myself and my community just a bit better that day, that is my definition of success. A good life is nothing more than a bunch of good days put together.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TODAY'S YOUTH?

Two things: (1) Dream big and (2) Be active in the pursuit of whatever your goal is. There are so many times I see young, bright kids who could literally do whatever they set their mind to, settle because they are insecure or scared to dream big. You are way smarter and capable than you give yourself credit for. And second, make sure you stay active in your pursuit of that big dream! Break that big goal down into smaller, manageable steps and then take those steps one at a time. It is much easier to reach your goal by consistently moving toward it day after day than trying one big swing at it at the end. Do not wait until you "feel motivated." Consistent action wins every time.

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IN LIVING A HAPPY LIFE?

Fulfillment. There is a difference between feeling happy and being fulfilled. Sure, I feel happy in the moment when I decide to put off an important task in my life and procrastinate by watching TV or eating junk food, but that's a temporary feeling and does not serve my long-term happiness or fulfillment. Do things that fulfill you--whether that be important work, time spent with your family and friends, a hobby you enjoy, or anything else that matters to you. It may feel uncomfortable in the moment, or you may not "feel like doing it," but when you are done you will feel great, I promise!

WHO HAS SERVED AS YOUR INSPIRATION OR ROLE MODEL? WHY?

This is corny, but both my parents and so many other people in my community. I went through a phase in my life where I thought I knew it all, and I didn't try to learn from other people. What a mistake that was. Everyone you run into knows something you don't that you can potentially learn from them. My parents are just awesome, and the older I get, the more I realize how much they have gone through and done for me and my siblings. For a historical figure, my answer is Teddy Roosevelt. President Roosevelt lived an incredible life--he boxed, rode horses, fought in battle as a Rough Rider, was a voracious reader, served two terms as President, won the Nobel Peace Prize, was an amateur taxidermist, big-game hunter, among countless other interesting things. What a life! But more important than that, he had absolute integrity and was not afraid to go against the grain when he felt it was necessary to do so. He created the national park system, basically created anti-trust law, and broke with his political party after serving as President because he felt the party had lost its way-- all very unpopular with powerful people at the time. He didn't compromise his values for anyone or anything. He just did what he thought was right, no matter who it would potentially upset. That's admirable.

WHAT QUALITIES DO YOU FEEL ARE MOST IMPORTANT IN A LEADERSHIP ROLE?

Integrity, courage, consistency, and good habits.

WHAT ELEMENTS ARE NEEDED IN A COMMUNITY TO MAKE IT A PLACE PEOPLE WILL WANT TO CALL IT HOME?

Good people and opportunities for everyone. It takes all kinds to make the world go 'round. If we can create a community where many different people can find opportunity for themselves and see themselves living there, you have a vibrant community. Create the conditions to allow many different types of people (welders, artists, entrepreneurs, bankers, government employees, restaurant owners, etc.) to make a living, raise a family, and have activities to do in their free time, and you will have an outstanding community.

TAYLOR
LAW OFFICES PC

The Attorneys and Staff of

Taylor Law Offices, PC

would like to congratulate both

Andrew Koester and Olivia Koester

on being selected as

2022 Top Community Leaders

UNDER 40

Austin Eaton

PROJECT MANAGER/SAFETY DIRECTOR
GRUNLOH CONSTRUCTION, INC

BIRTH YEAR
1991

WHAT ORGANIZATIONS ARE YOU INVOLVED IN?
Toledo Volunteer Fire Department.
Head Coach Mattoon Youth Soccer & T-Ball.

EDUCATION/TRAINING
Bachelor Degree Fire Science.
International Fire Service Accreditation Congress I & II.
Emergency Medical Technician Basic
OSHA 30

WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF SUCCESS?
Success means achievement. You are successful if you can achieve what you've always wanted to do. If you have a goal and when you make a plan to achieve it and then you finally achieve it, that is called success. For me success is making my own personal goals whether they are big or small and fulfilling them.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TODAY'S YOUTH?
Every person you meet is a potential door to a new opportunity. This may be personally or professionally. Build good bridges, even in that just-for-now job, because you never know how they'll weave into the larger picture of your life.

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IN LIVING A HAPPY LIFE?
Gratitude for yourself and others.

WHO HAS SERVED AS YOUR INSPIRATION OR ROLE MODEL? WHY?
My mother and father. They taught me as a young man to work hard for what I want in life. Nothing is easy. Nothing will ever be given to you. If there is something you want, you have to work to achieve these desires.

WHAT QUALITIES DO YOU FEEL ARE MOST IMPORTANT IN A LEADERSHIP ROLE?
Organization
Responsibility
Dependability
Social Skills/Affective Communication

WHAT ELEMENTS ARE NEEDED IN A COMMUNITY TO MAKE IT A PLACE PEOPLE WILL WANT TO CALL IT HOME?
Members of a community having a sense of trust, belonging, safety, and caring for one another. Career opportunities for the young youth of our community.

"Nothing is easy. Nothing will ever be given to you. If there is something you want, you have to work to achieve these desires."

Heartfelt Congratulations, Austin on being Named
one of Effingham's Top Community Leaders!
Your hard work has not gone unnoticed.
So pleased you are part of the GCI Team.
Here is to more Success!

Grunloh Construction Inc.
101 W. Temple Ave
Effingham, IL 62401
217-342-4157

Avery Braunecker

SOCIAL WORKER AT DAVITA DIALYSIS
BUSINESS OWNER/INSTRUCTOR AT LARA OF DANCE

BIRTH YEAR
1993

WHAT ORGANIZATIONS ARE YOU INVOLVED IN?
Advocacy for Young Women

EDUCATION/TRAINING
Bachelors in Social Work at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign
Masters in Social Work – Leadership & Social Change at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
IL Licensed Social Worker
Progressing Ballet Technique L1 Certified

WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF SUCCESS?
My definition of success is being happy and passionate about what you do while helping others be their best selves.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TODAY'S YOUTH?
I would advise today's youth to be patient and learn the skill of time management.

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IN LIVING A HAPPY LIFE?
Positively contributing in all lanes of life – family, friendships, work, living community and spiritual community.

WHO HAS SERVED AS YOUR INSPIRATION OR ROLE MODEL? WHY?
My parents and in-laws each possess qualities I wish to have every day:
My mom's passion and dedication to all that she does
My mother-in-law's faith and acts of service
My dad's light-heartedness and tenderness
My father-in-law's love for family, desire to improve and lend a hand even when not asked

WHAT QUALITIES DO YOU FEEL ARE MOST IMPORTANT IN A LEADERSHIP ROLE?
The ability to effectively communicate and have empathy towards others

WHAT ELEMENTS ARE NEEDED IN A COMMUNITY TO MAKE IT A PLACE PEOPLE WILL WANT TO CALL IT HOME?
Support from those around you and a sense of purpose to feel like you belong and are contributing to improve your community.

"My definition of success is being happy and passionate about what you do while helping others be their best selves."

Congratulations

Avery Braunecker

TOP COMMUNITY LEADER
UNDER 40

We are so proud of you!

Avery is a special social worker who cares about her patients at DaVita Effingham Dialysis -
Proud Co-Owner of LARA of Dance in Effingham -
Plus a Talented Dancer & Dance Instructor Who Loves To Teach Her Students

Love from your Braunecker Family and Friends

Cayla Myers

OWNER/INSTRUCTOR/PROGRAM DIRECTOR
CAYLA'S POWER TUMBLING, CHEER & DANCE CENTER

BIRTH YEAR
1985

WHAT ORGANIZATIONS ARE YOU INVOLVED IN?
100+ Women Who Care of Effingham County
Amateur Athletic Union (AAU)
United States Trampoline & Tumbling Association (USTA)
U.S. All Star Federation (USASF)

EDUCATION/TRAINING
Associate Degree Nursing

WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF SUCCESS?
I believe that success is something you attract by the person you become and when you change, everything changes for you. The true meaning of success comes when you get to watch your passion, hard work, and dedication feed and nurture others' success.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TODAY'S YOUTH?
Always be kind to yourself and others. Be proud to be made just the way you are. Continue to educate yourself through all stages of life. Learning should never stop. Realize that failing is not the opposite of success, but actually a huge part of success. Search to find what sets your soul on fire and use the resources around you to help you do what you love. Never let anyone tell you that you can't do something. If you are willing to put in the work, anything is possible.

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IN LIVING A HAPPY LIFE?
A personal relationship with God.

WHO HAS SERVED AS YOUR INSPIRATION OR ROLE MODEL? WHY?
My great grandpa Mac McCoy served as a huge inspiration in my life. My grandpa Mac was living proof of the impact someone can have on a child's life. When I was growing up, my grandpa impacted my life in many ways. He was a man of his word, and I knew that I could trust him. He left a huge impact on my life in the way he made me feel anytime that I was around him, and it made me crave more time with him. My grandpa was someone who cherished family and always found the value in the simple pleasures of life. Grandpa was a very straight forward and honest person, and I highly respected him for that. My grandpa always believed in me, and I can still feel that love and support from heaven. Grandpa always had a giving heart, and he would have done anything for those he loved. He valued his relationships with other people and enjoyed getting to know everyone on a deeper level so that he could genuinely connect. Grandpa ran a trucking company and started a family farm due to his "get it done" attitude and determination. I knew when I started my own business, that even if I could impact one life and make a lasting impact like my grandpa made on my life, that all the work would be worth it.

WHAT QUALITIES DO YOU FEEL ARE MOST IMPORTANT IN A LEADERSHIP ROLE?
Selfless-Determination-Dedication-Resiliency-Strong Work Ethic-Integrity

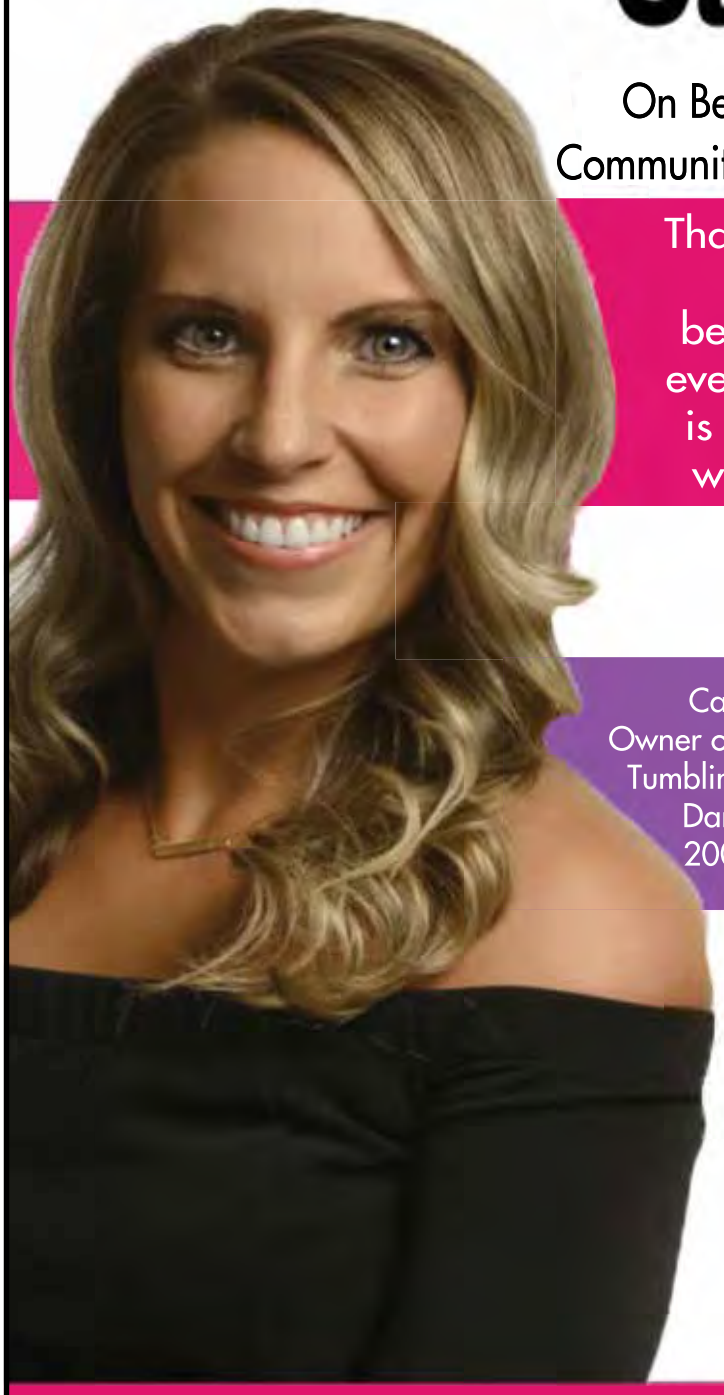
WHAT ELEMENTS ARE NEEDED IN A COMMUNITY TO MAKE IT A PLACE PEOPLE WILL WANT TO CALL IT HOME?
Effective Community Leadership, Sense of Community, Support of Healthy Families, Individuals, & Youth, Lifelong Education & Learning, Community Service, Recreational Activities, Entrepreneur Investment & Support, Economic Opportunity

"Never let anyone tell you that you cant do something. If you are willing to put in the work, anything is possible."

Congratulations

Cayla Myers

On Being Named One of Effingham's Top Community Leaders Under 40! So Well Deserved!



Thank you for having a positive impact on thousands of athletes and for being an inspiration to entrepreneurs everywhere! The Effingham community is lucky to have you and your legacy will live on for generations to come!

Cayla Myers
Owner of Cayla's Power Tumbling, Cheer, and Dance Center
2003-present

Cayla's

You Truly Make Every Child Feel Like A STAR!

"Always Be The Hardest Worker In The Room"

217-347-2691 ★ **Caylas_stars@yahoo.com**

Chelsea Gouchenouer

NURSE MANAGER
HSHS ST. ANTHONY'S MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

BIRTH YEAR
1991

WHAT ORGANIZATIONS ARE YOU INVOLVED IN?
HSHS St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital

EDUCATION/TRAINING
Effingham High School (2009)
Associate Degree in Nursing - Lake Land College of Nursing (2012)
Bachelor's Science in Nursing - SIUE (2015)
Master's Science in Nursing Administration - McKendree University (2020)

WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF SUCCESS?
To me, being successful is tied to recognizing the blessings in my life regularly and learning something new every single day!

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TODAY'S YOUTH?
Take social media breaks when you're feeling overwhelmed or upset.

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IN LIVING A HAPPY LIFE?
Being surrounded by uplifting and loving people

WHO HAS SERVED AS YOUR INSPIRATION OR ROLE MODEL? WHY?
Bobbi Kinkelaar
Bobbi is honest, caring, and sets a great example for me and for many others. She's the first person to offer a helping hand and works hard every day to ensure that patients and colleagues are cared for. I'm very lucky to have her in my life, and I appreciate her always believing in me!

WHAT QUALITIES DO YOU FEEL ARE MOST IMPORTANT IN A LEADERSHIP ROLE?
Compassion, honesty, and a strong work ethic

WHAT ELEMENTS ARE NEEDED IN A COMMUNITY TO MAKE IT A PLACE PEOPLE WILL WANT TO CALL IT HOME?
Locally-owned businesses, community events, and engaged community leaders

"To me, being successful is tied to recognizing the blessings in my life regularly and learning something new every single day!"

Dana Devall

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT SPECIALIST AT HSHS ST. ANTHONY'S MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
YOGA INSTRUCTOR AT LOTUS ROOM YOGA

BIRTH YEAR
1983

WHAT ORGANIZATIONS ARE YOU INVOLVED IN?
HSHS St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital
Lotus Room Yoga

EDUCATION/TRAINING:
Bachelor of Science – Mercy College of Ohio
Associates in Applied Science – Kaskaskia College, Centralia
Registered Yoga Teacher 500 hour

WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF SUCCESS?
Finding balance and being happy with your life's progress

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TODAY'S YOUTH?
Continue to have goals throughout life, making new ones along the way as your life changes

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IN LIVING A HAPPY LIFE?
Living in the present moment and enjoying life as it happens

WHO HAS SERVED AS YOUR INSPIRATION OR ROLE MODEL? WHY?
My family inspires me to be better every day. My mother has been a great role model in my life and taught me so much.

WHAT QUALITIES DO YOU FEEL ARE MOST IMPORTANT IN A LEADERSHIP ROLE?
I believe being your genuine self, having effective communication, being competent in your abilities, and showing respect to others are all important in a leadership role.

WHAT ELEMENTS ARE NEEDED IN A COMMUNITY TO MAKE IT A PLACE PEOPLE WILL WANT TO CALL IT HOME?
Important elements in a community include safety, support, connection and compassion.

"I believe being your genuine self, having effective communication, being competent in your abilities, and showing respect to others are all important in a leadership role."

Kelsey Frost

NURSE PRACTITIONER
HSHS HOME CARE ILLINOIS

BIRTH YEAR

1990

WHAT ORGANIZATIONS ARE YOU INVOLVED IN?

Hope 4 Horses, New Purpose, Christ's Church

EDUCATION/TRAINING

Graduated from Effingham High School in 2008

Attended Lake Land Community College and graduated with an Associates in Applied Science (Registered Nurse) in 2011

Attended Walden University 2014-2017 and graduated with a Master's Degree in Nursing (Advanced Practice Registered Nurse- Adult Gerontology)

WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF SUCCESS?

Success is making a positive difference in the lives of the people around you, while doing something you love and are passionate about.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TODAY'S YOUTH?

Don't limit yourself and your possibilities. People are always going to tell you what you can and cannot be or what you can and cannot do. But only you hold the power to decide what you can and cannot be or do.

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IN LIVING A HAPPY LIFE?

The most important factor in living a happy life is knowing who you are, knowing your strengths and your weaknesses (and owning them), loving freely, and surrounding yourself with people that motivate you and push you to be a better version of yourself every day.

WHO HAS SERVED AS YOUR INSPIRATION OR ROLE MODEL? WHY?

My parents are my biggest role models. My parents never quit. They are always working towards and accomplishing their goals both individually and as a couple. They are great examples of love, hard work, intelligence, and perseverance.

WHAT QUALITIES DO YOU FEEL ARE MOST IMPORTANT IN A LEADERSHIP ROLE?

Self-awareness, humility, credibility, and authenticity.

WHAT ELEMENTS ARE NEEDED IN A COMMUNITY TO MAKE IT A PLACE PEOPLE WILL WANT TO CALL IT HOME?

Friendliness, a variety of activities, safety, competitive jobs, and affordability are all elements needed to make a community a place people want to call home.

"The most important factor in living a happy life is knowing who you are, knowing your strengths and your weaknesses (and owning them), loving freely, and surrounding yourself with people that motivate you and push you to be a better version of yourself every day."

Congratulations to the leaders at HSHS St. Anthony's Receiving Top Community Leaders Under 40 Designation

We appreciate your dedication to our ministry and the community. These young professionals embody the HSHS mission and spirit. They are committed to excellence and promise to make a healthy difference every day.

Dana Devall, BS, RT, RDMS, RVT
Quality Improvement Specialist

Kelsey Frost, APN, CDP
HSHS Home Care & Hospice Illinois

Chelsea Gouchenouer, RN, MSN
Nursing Manager

HSHS
St. Anthony's
Memorial Hospital

STANTHONYSHOSPITAL.ORG

Jared Sudkamp

DIRECTOR OF COMMERCIAL OPERATIONS
J.B. ESKER & SONS INC.

BIRTH YEAR
1987

WHAT ORGANIZATIONS ARE YOU INVOLVED IN?
Effingham County Chambe
Teutopolis Fire Protection District - Volunteer Firefighter
St. Michael School Building Committee
Park District T-Ball/Soccer Coach
Sigel Knights of Columbus

EDUCATION/TRAINING
Sigel St. Michael School
Teutopolis High School
Lake Land College Pre-Engineering
University of Illinois Civil Engineering
Lake Land College Leadership Series
Firefighter II Certified

WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF SUCCESS?
Success is being happy with an outcome and feeling accomplished when something is finished. Success is not all about money but completing goals and being proud of them.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TODAY'S YOUTH?
Develop good relationships with as many people as you can. Try to complete difficult tasks routinely (Exercise, home projects, etc.). Completing these difficult tasks makes everything else in life seem easy and more enjoyable.

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IN LIVING A HAPPY LIFE?
The most important factor to living a happy life is relationships. A good group of family, friends, and community is the key to happiness.

WHO HAS SERVED AS YOUR INSPIRATION OR ROLE MODEL? WHY?
My father, Phil Sudkamp. He has taught me the value of hard work and dedication. He inspired me to never give up. He has showed me that if you want something to go and get it. If you can help other people along the way, you will receive help when needed.

WHAT QUALITIES DO YOU FEEL ARE MOST IMPORTANT IN A LEADERSHIP ROLE?
Lead by example
Communication
Enthusiasm
Confidence

WHAT ELEMENTS ARE NEEDED IN A COMMUNITY TO MAKE IT A PLACE PEOPLE WILL WANT TO CALL IT HOME?
Kind people. Friendships. Everyone looking out for one another. Organizations that bring people together and help people become better people.

"The most important factor to living a happy life is relationships. A good group of family, friends, and community is the key to happiness."

Congratulations Jared Sudkamp for being named one of Effingham's Top Community Leaders Under 40.

Thank You for your dedication and contributions to J B Esker & Sons and to the community.

J. B. Esker & Sons, Inc.
Concrete Construction

212 W. Main • P.O. Box 490
Teutopolis, Illinois 62467

217-857-6543

Jessica Polk

DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION
TEUTOPOLIS AUTO SALES

BIRTH YEAR
1989

WHAT ORGANIZATIONS ARE YOU INVOLVED IN?
Altamont Chamber of Commerce Board President
Altamont Sesquicentennial Committee Chair
Effingham County Chamber

EDUCATION/TRAINING
Altamont Community High School
Parkland College (Business)
Lake Land College (Practical Nursing)

WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF SUCCESS?
Success to me means ultimate happiness. Find your purpose and your passion and live those out to the full extent.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TODAY'S YOUTH?
If your dreams don't scare you, they're not big enough. Dream big, work hard, and everything else will fall into place.

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IN LIVING A HAPPY LIFE?
Balance! For me, finding the right balance of work, family, and friends has been the game changer.

WHO HAS SERVED AS YOUR INSPIRATION OR ROLE MODEL? WHY?
My husband. He has shown me and continues to show me that hard work pays off. Since we were just teenagers, he's taught me the importance of patience, dedication, and perseverance both professionally and personally.

WHAT QUALITIES DO YOU FEEL ARE MOST IMPORTANT IN A LEADERSHIP ROLE?
Positivity, trust, accountability, and empathy are key. I want to work FOR my team, not against them. As Dave Ramsey said, "Bosses push, leaders pull. Real leadership is servant leadership."

WHAT ELEMENTS ARE NEEDED IN A COMMUNITY TO MAKE IT A PLACE PEOPLE WILL WANT TO CALL IT HOME?
I believe people will choose to call a community home when it offers safety, growth, and opportunity. We all want home to be a place where we feel a part of and can work together to push forward.

"If your dreams don't scare you, they're not big enough. Dream big, work hard, and everything else will fall into place."

Congratulations, Jessica

on being named one of Effingham's Top Community Leaders Under 40.

We are proud of you!

We are so thankful to have you on our team.

WEBSTER TIRE & AUTO SERVICE

Teutopolis Auto Sales

104 Automotive St, Teutopolis, IL 62467 • (217)857-6807

Joshua Douthit

POLICE SERGEANT
EFFINGHAM POLICE DEPARTMENT

BIRTH YEAR
1982

WHAT ORGANIZATIONS ARE YOU INVOLVED IN?
Owner of The Lincoln Agency, LLC- Personal Business
Specializing in Real Estate Investments
Knights of Columbus-Member
American Legion Post 120-Member
Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 209-Secretary/Treasurer
Effingham County Republican Central Committee-Treasurer
Elected Republican Central Committeeman-Douglas 7
Elected Republican Candidate Effingham County Board- District B
St. Anthony of Paduah Catholic Church- Parishioner
Christ's Church of Effingham-Member
Effingham Sportsbackers- Member
St. Anthony Sportsbackers- Member

EDUCATION/TRAINING
Effingham High School Graduate
Olney Central College Graduate- Associates Science and Arts with Honors
Eastern Illinois University Graduate- Bachelor of Arts-Sociology/Psychology Minor
Western Governor's University Graduate- Master of Science Management/ Leadership
Police Training Institute Graduate
Certified Forensic Interviewer
Licensed Insurance Producer

WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF SUCCESS?
Success can be defined in many ways, but for me I feel successful by making a positive impact on others and helping them achieve the goals they set.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TODAY'S YOUTH?
My advice to today's youth is quite simple- Do not wait! Start taking the steps to achieve your goal(s) today!

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IN LIVING A HAPPY LIFE?
Life is full of many possibilities, and happiness for me is not one thing, it's spending time with my family who I love and sharing experiences with friends I meet along the way.

WHO HAS SERVED AS YOUR INSPIRATION OR ROLE MODEL? WHY?
My children inspire me to be a better person each day. With that said, surely there is no greater role model than a parent. I am thankful to have been blessed with loving parents- Dennis & Carla Douthit and Jim & Kim Siemer.

WHAT QUALITIES DO YOU FEEL ARE MOST IMPORTANT IN A LEADERSHIP ROLE?
Leaders must have integrity and be trusted by those around him or her. Leaders should be genuinely invested in those he or she leads. Leaders should inspire others not only by setting the example, but challenging others to learn, develop, and in-turn influence others to do the same.

WHAT ELEMENTS ARE NEEDED IN A COMMUNITY TO MAKE IT A PLACE PEOPLE WILL WANT TO CALL IT HOME?
A community needs entrepreneurial leaders with diverse backgrounds that are guided by a strong moral compass. Effingham is a sought-after community to call home because it is centrally located in the Midwest. The people who live here and work here have strong Christian values, are focused on education, and are motivated to grow businesses and promote economic stability resulting in a high quality of life for its members. I can think of no better place to call home and raise a family than Effingham, Illinois.

"Leaders should inspire others not only by setting the example, but challenging others to learn, develop, and in-turn influence others to do the same."

The City of Effingham Illinois

POLICE EFFINGHAM

TOP COMMUNITY LEADER UNDER 40

SERGEANT JOSH DOUTHIT

Thank you for your dedication to our community and your commitment to excellence.

CONGRATULATIONS

JOSH DOUTHIT

The City of Effingham Illinois

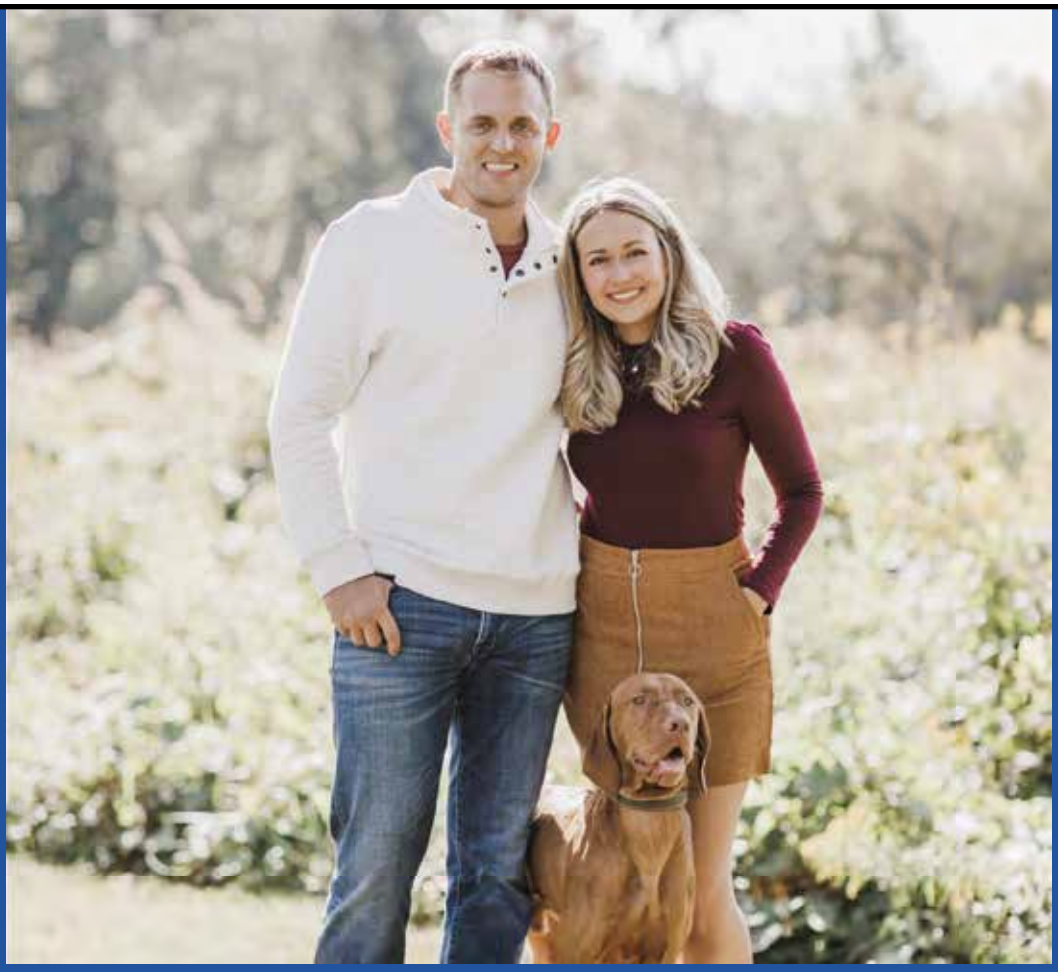
TOP COMMUNITY LEADER UNDER 40

SERGEANT
JOSH DOUTHIT

Josh is a go-getter and a born leader. Whether in his personal or professional life, he strives to be the best he can be. Not to mention, his loyalty is unmatched. There is no denying his unconditional love for his family and dedication to his faith.

Congratulations, Josh! Your hard work and perseverance haven't gone unnoticed! You're an inspiration to us all!

We love you and are so proud of you!
Love,
Your Family



On behalf of the Grunloh Building Team, Congratulations to Rachel on being named one of Effingham's Top Community Leaders. Whether you are at work, teaching, giving back to your community, or being a dog mom, you are an inspiration to others. We are thankful to be able to call you a member of our family.

GRUNLOH
BUILDING, INC.

Grunloh Building, Inc.
901 North Second Street
Effingham, IL. 62401
217-342-2221
www.grunlohbuilding.com

Rachel Grunloh

SENIOR AUDIT ANALYST
ENERGIZER HOLDINGS, INC.

BIRTH YEAR
1992

WHAT ORGANIZATIONS ARE YOU INVOLVED IN?
Big Brothers Big Sisters
Lumpkin College GOLD Board

EDUCATION/TRAINING
Bachelors of Science in Accounting
Master of Business Administration
Certified Public Accountant

WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF SUCCESS?
Success is feeling proud of your accomplishments and being grateful for what life has given you.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TODAY'S YOUTH?
I would recommend them to step outside their comfort zone when they have the opportunity. It is important to continue to challenge yourself without fear of failure.

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IN LIVING A HAPPY LIFE?
In my opinion, the most important factor in living a happy life is being true to your authentic self. For me, this means pursuing my passions, prioritizing people and activities that bring me joy, and making decisions that align with my values.

WHO HAS SERVED AS YOUR INSPIRATION OR ROLE MODEL? WHY?
I feel fortunate to have had many role models throughout my life and from a young age. I've been inspired most by those that have reached their goals and volunteer their time to help others do the same.

WHAT QUALITIES DO YOU FEEL ARE MOST IMPORTANT IN A LEADERSHIP ROLE?
My favorite leaders have always been both confident and humble. They know their strengths but are not arrogant about their abilities. This makes them knowledgeable and approachable, creating the best people to learn from and listen to.

WHAT ELEMENTS ARE NEEDED IN A COMMUNITY TO MAKE IT A PLACE PEOPLE WILL WANT TO CALL IT HOME?
To me, community means being surrounded by people that care for one another and are willing to help each other. A community provides the ability to build a supportive network of family, friends, and neighbors.

"I've been inspired most by those that have reached their goals and volunteer their time to help others do the same."

Congratulations Rachel on being named one of Effingham's Top Community Leaders!

We are very proud to have you part of the Energizer Internal Audit Team!

Kristin Niemerg

ACCOUNTING MANAGER
WASHINGTON SAVINGS BANK

BIRTH YEAR

1990

WHAT ORGANIZATIONS ARE YOU INVOLVED IN?

St. John's Lutheran Church, Effingham - specifically, Board of Christian Education

Washington Savings Bank - Employee Action Committee

An informal organization - Farm Wife/ Mom

EDUCATION/TRAINING

Effingham High School - 2008

Associate in Science Degree in Business Administration, Lake Land College - 2010

Bachelor of Science Degree in Accounting, Eastern Illinois University – 2012

WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF SUCCESS?

I consider myself successful because I work hard to achieve my personal goals, and at the same time, I get to be a role model for my two daughters. I have the best family and friend support team to share in my successes.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TODAY'S YOUTH?

Stay committed to your goals. Stay committed to your personal growth and your relationships. Focus on your contributions rather than your achievements.

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IN LIVING A HAPPY LIFE?

The commitment you make to your most meaningful relationships.

WHO HAS SERVED AS YOUR INSPIRATION OR ROLE MODEL? WHY?

My parents are my biggest role models, and my husband and two daughters are my biggest inspiration. My parents have instilled in me compassion as well as a hard work ethic. They have laid the foundation for me to be the best role model for my children.

WHAT QUALITIES DO YOU FEEL ARE MOST IMPORTANT IN A LEADERSHIP ROLE?

A leader must be authoritative and approachable and possess the ability to develop and motivate others.

WHAT ELEMENTS ARE NEEDED IN A COMMUNITY TO MAKE IT A PLACE PEOPLE WILL WANT TO CALL IT HOME?

Opportunities for enrichment, a sense of security, and fellowship

"A leader must be authoritative and approachable and possess the ability to develop and motivate others."

Congratulations!

Kristin Niemerg

Top Community Leader
of Effingham County

Member FDIC

www.washingtonsavings.net

Lindsay Wantuck

ASSOCIATE ATTORNEY
ORR LAW, LLC

BIRTH YEAR
1996

WHAT ORGANIZATIONS ARE YOU INVOLVED IN?
I am involved in a few organizations such as: Heartland Human Services, the Effingham County Chamber, and the United Way Board of Directors.

EDUCATION/TRAINING
I attended Miami University in Ohio for undergrad where I earned two degrees: one in History and one in Spanish. I also earned a minor in Black World Studies. After undergrad, I attended SUI School of Law. I graduated law school a semester early and passed the bar on the first go!

WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF SUCCESS?
I define success as working hard to achieve goals and understanding that failure is temporary. All of our experiences bring value to our life. It is important to keep a strong circle of supporters around you as they help create balance in your life.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TODAY'S YOUTH?
Be present in the moment, enjoy life, and focus on what is important to you and your future.

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IN LIVING A HAPPY LIFE?
I believe the most important factor in living a happy life is to surround yourself with people who support you.

WHO HAS SERVED AS YOUR INSPIRATION OR ROLE MODEL? WHY?
My role model is my grandmother. She stayed true to herself, she loved unconditionally, and she supported me with every fiber of her being.

WHAT QUALITIES DO YOU FEEL ARE MOST IMPORTANT IN A LEADERSHIP ROLE?
I believe that confidence is key. Confidence gives a person the ability to take a setback in stride and move forward with grace. Confidence also allows a leader to reach out to team members to handle difficult situations.

WHAT ELEMENTS ARE NEEDED IN A COMMUNITY TO MAKE IT A PLACE PEOPLE WILL WANT TO CALL IT HOME?
A community becomes a home when it begins to feel like family.

"I believe the most important factor in living a happy life is to surround yourself with people who support you."

Congratulations

Lindsay Wantuck

Top Community Leader Under 40

We are proud of you and all that you have accomplished!

ORR LAW, LLC

215 N. Fourth St. I Effingham I 217-342-1212

(Located just One Block from the Effingham Courthouse)

www.OrrLawLLC.com

Matt Carpenter

FIREFIGHTER
CITY OF EFFINGHAM FIRE DEPARTMENT

BIRTH YEAR
1985

WHAT ORGANIZATIONS ARE YOU INVOLVED IN?
New Hope Church
Veteran's Honor Flight of Southern Illinois
University of Illinois Fire Service Institute

EDUCATION/TRAINING
Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education (SIU-Carbondale)
Bachelor's Degree in Fire Science (Purdue Global)

WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF SUCCESS?
Success is achieved by setting personal and professional goals and working to achieve them. Success can be found many times along the way to your ultimate goals. Success is defined by yourself and not others perception.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TODAY'S YOUTH?
Seek pain! Put yourself outside your comfort zone, whether it is in your personal life or professional life. This is where we learn. Learn about things you don't know, have tough conversations, be the first to volunteer and push yourself in everything you do. Only concentrate on what you can control.

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IN LIVING A HAPPY LIFE?
Faith. This world has too much to throw at us to fight it alone.

WHO HAS SERVED AS YOUR INSPIRATION OR ROLE MODEL? WHY?
My first role models were my parents and grandparents. They showed me how to work hard with balancing a family. I have many role models in my current career. Some I have worked with closely and others I view from afar.

WHAT QUALITIES DO YOU FEEL ARE MOST IMPORTANT IN A LEADERSHIP ROLE?
Servant leadership puts others first for the greater good by empowering others and listening. Lead by example, be passionate and inspire passion in others.

WHAT ELEMENTS ARE NEEDED IN A COMMUNITY TO MAKE IT A PLACE PEOPLE WILL WANT TO CALL IT HOME?
Strong, faith-based leaders with a clear vision
Individual and business community involvement
Pride
Willingness/passion to help

"Learn about things you dont know, have tough conversations, be the first to volunteer and push yourself in everything you do."

The City of Effingham Illinois

FIRE Effingham RESCUE

TOP COMMUNITY LEADER UNDER 40

FIREFIGHTER MATT CARPENTER

Thank you for your dedication to our community and your commitment to excellence.

Meghan Wahl

TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT MANAGER, PATIENT SERVICES
HEARTLAND DENTAL

BIRTH YEAR

1993

WHAT ORGANIZATIONS ARE YOU INVOLVED IN?

Effingham Unit #40 Educational Foundation
Preschool For All Board
SBL Women Connected
St. John's Lutheran Church Praise Band
St. John's Lutheran Church K/1st Grade Sunday School Teacher

EDUCATION/TRAINING

Eastern Illinois University - BS Healthcare Administration
Western Governors University - MS Healthcare Leadership

WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF SUCCESS?

Success is feeling that I have made a long-lasting, positive impact. The impact could be made to an individual, a process, my organization, a team, or my family. My definition of success is not stagnant, but instead continuously evolving as I grow and develop as a leader.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TODAY'S YOUTH?

Be involved! Find groups and committees that you are passionate about and make connections along the way. You will be surprised at how often you will use those connections in your personal and professional life. You cannot grow as a professional by surrounding yourself with the same people every day. Branch out and be involved in your community! Be hungry for knowledge, and feed that hunger daily. Stay positive and build up those that surround you. Most importantly, work hard and do the right thing even if you think no one is watching.

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IN LIVING A HAPPY LIFE?

To always 'see the light'. It is so easy to fall into a rut of focusing only on the negatives in your life. However, when you step back and look at your life as a 'big picture', you can appreciate all the blessings that surround you. Making a conscious effort to focus on the positive, even in tough times, will ultimately result in a happy life.

WHO HAS SERVED AS YOUR INSPIRATION OR ROLE MODEL? WHY?

I have been incredibly blessed with countless mentors throughout my life, both personally and professionally. Cynthia Wise was notably my first professional mentor that took a chance on me and offered me my first internship and job after college. Her leadership, knowledge and support created the groundwork for my professional success and future opportunities. She pushed me out of my comfort zone and inspired me to always put my best foot forward. During my time at Sarah Bush Lincoln, Brooke Zerrusen was a true inspiration. She supported me both professionally and personally as a leader, but also a friend. I learned so much from her and was inspired by the way she processed issues and handled herself in stressful times. I continue to be inspired by the work that she is doing and enjoy relating to her as a leader but also as a working mom with young children. My mom, Julie Scott, has also been a life-long inspiration and role model. Her positivity, faith, support, work ethic and perseverance I've witnessed from my child to adult life has made a lasting impact on me. I am so blessed to have the unconditional love and support that I have received from my parents. Beyond the three mentioned, I am humbled as I reflect back on those that have made an impact on my life. I would not be who or where I am today without the support and guidance of my lifetime mentors and role models.

WHAT QUALITIES DO YOU FEEL ARE MOST IMPORTANT IN A LEADERSHIP ROLE?

To be a successful leader, you must first be able to create strong, trusting relationships. You cannot lead a team that does not trust in what you are doing. The ability to relate to your team members, listen to feedback, leverage team strengths and support team members through change is imperative for future success. The best leaders uplift their teams and lead by example, while continuously working on their own personal development.

WHAT ELEMENTS ARE NEEDED IN A COMMUNITY TO MAKE IT A PLACE PEOPLE WILL WANT TO CALL IT HOME?

A community that supports continuous growth and development, but also nurtures the 'small-town' feel that the community members are emotionally connected to, is a community that people will want to call home.

CONGRATULATIONS MEGHAN WAHL

Meghan serves as a Patient Services Training and Development Manager. Her passion for training and developing people aligns so well with our core values, and her strong background in healthcare will help evolve the program. We congratulate her for being recognized as a community leader and look forward to her bright future!

HEARTLAND DENTAL

Obie Farmer, Jr.

TEACHER / COACH
EFFINGHAM UNIT 40

BIRTH YEAR
1988

WHAT ORGANIZATIONS ARE YOU INVOLVED IN?
Effingham Boys Basketball
Effingham Football
Illinois Basketball Coaches Association
National Education Association
Illinois Education Association

EDUCATION/TRAINING
Bachelors of Education - Blackburn College
Certified Driving Endorsement - Eastern Illinois University

WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF SUCCESS?
Success is growth: Becoming a little better today than you were, or your programs were, yesterday. If a little improvement is made every day, even if by the slightest margin, you will achieve greatness in due time. Have patience, be persistent and give the perfect effort, and anything is possible.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TODAY'S YOUTH?
Be intentional about your goals. Success is not achieved on accident. Set goals, make a plan and live every day trying to achieve them. Mentors are important, and it is okay to ask them for help and advice.

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IN LIVING A HAPPY LIFE?
Knowing that there are no such things as problems in life, only situations. Navigate through the adversity. The circumstance is only a hurdle in life, not a wall.

WHO HAS SERVED AS YOUR INSPIRATION OR ROLE MODEL? WHY?
My role models in life are my parents, Kelly and Obie Farmer, Sr. My father is an over-the-road driver that sacrificed his time at home to provide for his family, driving long hours in often perilous conditions. My mother raised three children, essentially on her own, while my father was away all week at work. She never failed to get us to where we needed to be, help us with homework, manage our home and all while working a full-time job of her own. My inspiration is my two little girls, Emerson Ruth Ann and Ella Grace. Everything I do, I do for them, and they are my entire world.

WHAT QUALITIES DO YOU FEEL ARE MOST IMPORTANT IN A LEADERSHIP ROLE?
I feel the most important quality of a leader is to teach others to become leaders as well. As a teacher and coach, it is our job to positively impact the students and athletes in our programs and classes, instilling them with the qualities and knowledge to become successful members of our community. If we teach them to follow, our positive influence is added to the community, but if we teach them to lead, our influence is multiplied.

WHAT ELEMENTS ARE NEEDED IN A COMMUNITY TO MAKE IT A PLACE PEOPLE WILL WANT TO CALL IT HOME?
Obvious and intentional growth. Community leadership that is never satisfied with the resources and facilities that their community can utilize. Programs and initiatives that work to involve our youth in our community. While I am a strong believer in the importance of youth sports, a community also needs programs available for our children to be involved in other than sports such as reading, science, technology, etc.

"As a teacher and coach, it is our job to positively impact the students and athletes in our programs and classes, instilling them with the qualities and knowledge to become successful members of our community."

CONGRATULATIONS

OBIE FARMER, JR.

for being named one of Effingham's

TOP COMMUNITY LEADERS UNDER 40

Thank you for your dedication and
commitment to making our community great!
Effingham Community School District # 40
is proud of your achievement.

Sara Ruholl

CEO AND OWNER
THE BEANSTALK BOUTIQUE & HUMBLED SOUL BOUTIQUE

BIRTH YEAR
1991

WHAT ORGANIZATIONS ARE YOU INVOLVED IN?
I am the Co-President of the Downtown Effingham Business Group and a chair on the Marketing committee for the group. I am a member of the Effingham County Chamber.

EDUCATION/TRAINING
Associates degree in Applied Science.

WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF SUCCESS?
Do what you love, and love what you do.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TODAY'S YOUTH?
Follow your heart. Put your mind to what you want to do and make it happen. You will have to work extremely hard to follow your dreams. Just keep up with it and push through the hard times.

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IN LIVING A HAPPY LIFE?
Family and perseverance.

WHO HAS SERVED AS YOUR INSPIRATION OR ROLE MODEL? WHY?
My father, Bob Siemer, has always pushed me to follow my dreams and do anything I put my mind to. He has always been such a huge supporter and made me have a positive outlook on life and owning businesses. He has inspired me with his positivity and the way he has taken on life and did the things he has wanted to do. I have helped him with a small business growing up and will never forget the things I learned while doing that. He gave me the keys to help customers and the experience to learn about the many tasks it takes to run a business.

WHAT QUALITIES DO YOU FEEL ARE MOST IMPORTANT IN A LEADERSHIP ROLE?
Positivity.
Communication.
Delegation.
Motivation.
Navigation.
These are so important. I'm still learning how to lead my team of employees the best I can. And sometimes, it's simple things to show my appreciation, like thanking them with coffee or buying lunch! They need to know how valued they are.

WHAT ELEMENTS ARE NEEDED IN A COMMUNITY TO MAKE IT A PLACE PEOPLE WILL WANT TO CALL IT HOME?
A community needs to support one another. It needs to show positivity and community over competition. It needs a feeling of togetherness. Our community has just that. 🙂

"A community needs to support one another. It needs to show positivity and community over competition. It needs a feeling of togetherness."

The Beanstalk BOUTIQUE

Personalized Gifts for All Ages

&

Humbled Soul BOUTIQUE

Thank you!

I never dreamed of owning not one, but two small businesses. My vision for these stores has exceeded everything I could of imagined! And I couldn't do it without my amazing, supportive customers, employees, and family!

In 2017, I purchased an existing business, knowing I could make it what I wanted - but liked the fact that I had a good base to start from. A year into the business a new location came up and I jumped on it. I tripled the size and was able to make it my own with re-branding to what is now The Beanstalk Boutique, located in downtown Effingham. We are now Effingham's embroidery boutique. Our focus is personalization with a huge selection of items that you can choose how to personalize! We also carry a huge selection of children's clothing, adult tees, baby items, and so much more.

My customers always share with me what they wish they could find in my store...maternity clothes, curvy, women's, tween, and more boy items. With busting at the seams at TBB, I took advantage of the spot opening up so close to the Beanstalk Boutique to open a second store to expand my options for my customers. I opened a second store in August 2022, Humbled Soul Boutique, to give my customers the items they've been asking for that I couldn't fit into the Beanstalk.

I'm so happy to be able to give our small town two fun, unique businesses to shop! And I thank you all for your continued support!

Sara Ruholl

The Beanstalk Boutique
314 West Jefferson Ave., Effingham | 217-821-1971
Embroidery, printed tees, bulk orders, single orders, kids clothing, adult tees, and much more!

Humbled Soul Boutique
115 S. Banker St., Effingham | 217-994-0687
Women's, curvy, maternity, baby, tween, kids clothing

Hours for both stores Monday thru Thursday 10-5:30
Friday 10-5 I Saturday 10-1

Shop our website! Download our free app in the App Store!
Like us on Facebook!

Olivia Koester

PROGRAM MANAGER FOR THE HEARTLAND DENTAL FOUNDATION
HEARTLAND DENTAL

BIRTH YEAR
1991

WHAT ORGANIZATIONS ARE YOU INVOLVED IN?
Neoga Partnership for Progress
Effingham Sportsbackers
Effingham County CEO
Effingham County 100 Women Who Care
Lake Land College Alumni Board
Southeastern Illinois Community Foundation Board

EDUCATION/TRAINING
Associates of Arts at Lake Land College
Bachelor of Science at Stony Brook University
Master of College Student Personal Services at Arkansas State University

WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF SUCCESS?
My definition of success is seeing the people, communities, and organizations I am involved in thrive.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TODAY'S YOUTH?
My advice for today's youth is to get involved. I think it is easy to think that so many amazing parts of the communities you grow up in just happen. However, it takes hundreds of dedicated individuals and businesses that put hours and dollars behind them. Being open to volunteering makes an immense difference, or even coming back to the communities you grew up in post-high school when plans are completed are important! I would also say to be advocates for your hometowns and sharing all your positive experiences whenever the chance arises.

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR IN LIVING A HAPPY LIFE?
I think the most important factor in living a happy life is not relying on others for your happiness. It can be tough, but finding small pleasures in your day-to-day is key. It is also crucial to support those around you and to give back!

WHO HAS SERVED AS YOUR INSPIRATION OR ROLE MODEL? WHY?
My parents have always been the most supportive people of any and all my shenanigans. They blazed the path for me to see what being involved in communities, philanthropy, and involvement have looked like. They provided me with the understanding that giving back and supporting others is also crucial in who you are and the success you seek.

WHAT QUALITIES DO YOU FEEL ARE MOST IMPORTANT IN A LEADERSHIP ROLE?
I think balance and understanding are crucial in being in leadership roles. A true leader knows when to take the reins or when to let others with more experience share their ideas. Teamwork plays a huge factor in any leadership role as well.

WHAT ELEMENTS ARE NEEDED IN A COMMUNITY TO MAKE IT A PLACE PEOPLE WILL WANT TO CALL IT HOME?
I think a sense of belonging, no matter where you come from, is what people crave when they reference home. Being able to come together during times of prosperity as well as times of need can make the difference. Also, a sense of togetherness, understanding, and support are all characteristics in my ideal "home."

"I think the most important factor in living a happy life is not relying on others for your happiness."

CONGRATULATIONS OLIVIA KOESTER

Olivia is a valued team member at Heartland Dental, serving as the first Program Manager for the Heartland Dental Foundation. Her passion for finding ways to make assistance available to others in need is matched only by her willingness to go above and beyond to bring to life the Foundation's mission and vision. We congratulate her for being recognized as a community leader and look forward to her bright future!

HEARTLAND DENTAL

HEARTLAND DENTAL FOUNDATION

Madison Splechter

Up & Coming Leader

BIRTH YEAR 2004

SCHOOL Altamont High School

GRADE LEVEL 12

WHAT ORGANIZATIONS ARE YOU INVOLVED IN?

I'm involved in FCA, FCCLA, Student Council, Yearbook and NHS!

WHAT LEADERSHIP ADVICE HAS HELPED SHAPE YOU INTO AN UP & COMING LEADER?

Being a leader isn't just being involved in a bunch of different organizations, but it is following through in your convictions to make the world a better place! It is not just going through the path of everyone else, but stepping aside and helping lead others by achieving something for the greater good!

WHAT QUALITIES DO YOU FEEL ARE MOST IMPORTANT IN A LEADER?

I feel a leader needs a servant's heart, selflessness, integrity, empathy, supportiveness, drive and compassionate!

WHO HAS SERVED AS YOUR INSPIRATION OR ROLE MODEL? WHY?

I would say that Michelle Eaton has been a big role model in my life! I have always enjoyed watching her love on others! She is so welcoming and hospitable, and I have always appreciated that about her! It is so heartwarming! Her love and willingness to help definitely doesn't go unnoticed! Sadie Robertson has been someone who is very inspiring! Over the years I have listened to her podcasts! Seeing how she lives for the Lord, and the knowledge and advice she has, is amazing! I love it!

Gracie Heckert

Up & Coming Leader

BIRTH YEAR 2005

SCHOOL Beecher City Jr-Sr High School

GRADE LEVEL 12

WHAT ORGANIZATIONS ARE YOU INVOLVED IN?

CHBC Girls Basketball team
CHBC Volleyball team
Indiana Elite Havoc AAU Basketball
National Honor Society
Student Council
History Club
Library Club

WHAT LEADERSHIP ADVICE HAS HELPED SHAPE YOU INTO AN UP & COMING LEADER?

Stay true to yourself no matter if it is the popular decision.
Wolves don't lose sleep over the opinion of sheep.
Eagles soar. Crows flock. Be an eagle.

WHAT QUALITIES DO YOU FEEL ARE MOST IMPORTANT IN A LEADER?

Commitment to success
Effective communication skills
Personable
Brave
Good moral compass
Trustworthy

WHO HAS SERVED AS YOUR INSPIRATION OR ROLE MODEL? WHY?

Mr. Friese was my science teacher for 5 years. He is now our school's Dean of Students. Mr. Friese has been a big inspiration to me. He has always encouraged me to stay true to myself, while doing the right thing, no matter if it is the popular choice. He and I have shared a similar lifestyle. We both have grown up in a small community participating in athletics. Mr. Friese was able to use his athletic ability to further his education and used that as an opportunity to travel, gaining life experiences. I hope to be able to do the same.

Rosie Markham

Up & Coming Leader

BIRTH YEAR 2005

SCHOOL Effingham High School

GRADE LEVEL 12

WHAT ORGANIZATIONS ARE YOU INVOLVED IN?

I am a part of the EHS Red Regiment as a part of the color guard, the EHS Drama Club, the Effingham County National Honors Society and the Effingham County CEO program.

WHAT LEADERSHIP ADVICE HAS HELPED SHAPE YOU INTO AN UP & COMING LEADER?

It's not necessarily advice, but watching my dad over the years has taught me that nothing enables you to lead others more than kindness. Treating everyone as an equal, no matter the position you are in, shows them you care about them as a person and have their best interest at heart when making decisions.

WHAT QUALITIES DO YOU FEEL ARE MOST IMPORTANT IN A LEADER?

Compassion and an open mind. Many conflicts can be resolved if you just take the time to hear others out and make sure they know they are heard. Things aren't always as they seem, and listening to others is just as important when leading and problem solving as speaking is, if not more.

WHO HAS SERVED AS YOUR INSPIRATION OR ROLE MODEL? WHY?

My dad is such a big inspiration to me and my primary role model as a leader. His work ethic combined with his respect for others, his love for his work and community, and his balance of professional and personal life are all things I aspire to. He is the most outgoing, social, and eager to learn person I know, and never stops trying to improve himself. I've never met anyone who knows my dad and doesn't love or respect him. He worked hard to get where he is today, not only because of his love for his family, but because of his love for people. I am incredibly lucky to have him, not only as a role model, but as a father.

Callie Gephart

Up & Coming Leader

BIRTH YEAR 2005

SCHOOL Dieterich High School

GRADE LEVEL 12

WHAT ORGANIZATIONS ARE YOU INVOLVED IN?

I have been the Treasurer of my class for the past four years, and I currently serve as the Vice President for DHS Student Council. I have been involved in Student Council since junior high. Along with those two, I am a member of Dieterich's National Honor Society, FCA, and FFA. I am also one of the captains on our cheer team, and I am involved in a youth ministry group.

WHAT LEADERSHIP ADVICE HAS HELPED SHAPE YOU INTO AN UP & COMING LEADER?

The best advice I've been given is to be kind and treat everybody as you would like to be treated. You never know what somebody is going through. Some more advice I've been given is to put yourself out there and be open to new opportunities.

WHAT QUALITIES DO YOU FEEL ARE MOST IMPORTANT IN A LEADER?

I believe that leaders need to be kind, compassionate, and outgoing. They need to be able to listen and take everybody's ideas into consideration.

WHO HAS SERVED AS YOUR INSPIRATION OR ROLE MODEL? WHY?

My biggest role model is my sister Taylor. She is never afraid to try something new and is the prime example of what it looks like to follow your dream. In the future I aspire to be just like her.

Connor Wines

Up & Coming Leader

BIRTH YEAR 2004

SCHOOL St. Anthony High School

GRADE LEVEL 12

WHAT ORGANIZATIONS ARE YOU INVOLVED IN?

C.T.E.C., Pep Club, Technology Applications, Yearbook, Effingham Park District

WHAT LEADERSHIP ADVICE HAS HELPED SHAPE YOU INTO AN UP & COMING LEADER?

Don't ever let anyone out-work you. If you see someone working harder than you, that should motivate you to do more. Do what makes you happy. Don't chase the money.

WHAT QUALITIES DO YOU FEEL ARE MOST IMPORTANT IN A LEADER?

The ability to make a plan of your own but be willing to listen to others. Be able to lead by example. Be a leader, not a boss.

WHO HAS SERVED AS YOUR INSPIRATION OR ROLE MODEL? WHY?

My dad and grandpas. They all show up with a can-do attitude. They show up and will out-work anyone with them. Not only do they work hard, but they do everything with skill and precision. If it's not done properly or not done the way they like it, they will take it all apart and redo it until they are happy with the result.

Elise Passalacqua

Up & Coming Leader

BIRTH YEAR 2004

SCHOOL Teutopolis High School

GRADE LEVEL 12

WHAT ORGANIZATIONS ARE YOU INVOLVED IN?

Throughout my life, it has been important to me to be involved. I have been a member of the Girl Scouts of America for the past twelve years. I also have been a member of competitive club swimming for thirteen years. Currently I am in Student Council, National Honor Society, Science Club, Art Club, Varsity Club, and Drama Club. I am a part of the following bands: concert band, marching band, pep band, choir, and jazz band.

WHAT LEADERSHIP ADVICE HAS HELPED SHAPE YOU INTO AN UP & COMING LEADER?

It's not where you go in life, it's how you act when you get there. This advice has been repeated to me by my grandma and my mom throughout my life. I cannot predict or control the outcome of situations while in any leadership position, but I take great solace in knowing that I at least have control over myself and my actions. Being able to control my composure and approach any situation gone awry with kindness, calmness, and focus is important to me. I have learned sometimes the opportunities to lead or be a part of something great can present themselves when you least expect. I plan to continue looking for these opportunities and jump in whenever they present themselves.

WHAT QUALITIES DO YOU FEEL ARE MOST IMPORTANT IN A LEADER?

Every great leader I have known exemplifies servant leadership. I feel if a leader is doing something important to them, he or she can better see how it can be important to other team members. Learning to recognize others' contributions and acknowledge them helps people to feel more invested in the ideals you're trying to achieve. Being able to objectively recognize team members' talents and different work styles helps to allocate them to the most optimal position for success.

WHO HAS SERVED AS YOUR INSPIRATION OR ROLE MODEL? WHY?

My good friend, Claire Bushur, has been a huge inspiration in my life. She holds herself with such beauty and grace, which I aspire to do. I truly admire her determination and mental resilience she possesses. She uses her mental strength to show kindness and compassion to everyone. Claire is also a hardworking go-getter. She is willing to jump in, take action, and lead. In the case of others wanting to lead, she is able to step back and fully support them. Even with her multitude of gifts, she is humble. She does not ever boast about herself. Instead, it is always her goal to build others up. Claire is a loyal friend, and she never ceases to inspire me to better myself.

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Awards Dinner
Wednesday, November 16, 2022
at Thelma Keller Convention Center
Presented by:

Washington Savings Bank

HSHS St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital

Top Community Leader photos by:

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Art Director:
Natalie Reidford

Also, Special Thanks to:
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COMMUNITY LEADERS

Top Under 40 and Up & Coming

We congratulate you and thank you for your leadership, dedication and inspiration to Effingham and the surrounding communities! You make us proud to call this area our home!

EFFINGHAM

DAILY NEWS

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