

Contact: Samantha Roberts, Eugene Chamber of Commerce

Tel: 541-484-1314

Email: Samanthar@eugenechamber.com

OR

Contact: Paige Walters, Springfield Chamber of Commerce

Tel: 541-746-1651

Email: Paige@springfield-chamber.org



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

28 Participants Graduate from 2022-2023 Leadership Eugene-Springfield Program

Springfield and Eugene Chambers of Commerce finish their 36th annual leadership program

May 11, 2023

Eugene, OR - The Eugene and Springfield Chambers of Commerce announce the graduation of 28 participants from the 2022-2023 Leadership Eugene Springfield cohort. Graduates of this 8-month program, designed to create leaders who are informed on local issues, equipped with leadership skills, and involved in the community, received their certificates and presented final projects at the graduation ceremony held at Onward Eugene at 942 Olive St. in Eugene, OR.

Graduates at the ceremony received remarks from Eugene Mayor Lucy Vinis and Springfield Mayor Sean VanGordon, as well as Springfield Chamber of Commerce CEO, Vonnie Mikkelsen and Eugene Chamber of Commerce Board of Director executive, Erik Parrish of King Estate Winery. A steering committee of alumni plan the monthly programs which began in October of 2022 and concluded in May of 2023.

Throughout the program, class participants experience unique programming and interact with community leaders on the topics of local government, public safety, economic development, health and human services, land use and transportation planning, education, arts and culture. Over 800 community members have graduated from this program since beginning in 1986.

The graduates of the Leadership Eugene-Springfield 2022-2023 include:



Kate Acosta

Schwabe, Williamson & Wyatt

Katherine "Kate" Acosta counsels clients on a variety of employment concerns. With both state and federal trial experience, Kate is adept at the various stages of litigation. This experience, in combination with her substantive knowledge of employment law, keeps her advice practice cutting-edge. Kate recognizes that clients constantly face

novel legal issues, and she helps them understand their obligations while finding practical business solutions. Prior to joining Schwabe, Kate worked at a boutique litigation firm in Portland, Oregon. Before attending law school, Kate was a professional fundraiser for nonprofit organizations.



Thomas Ball

Summit Bank

Thomas Ball is an emerging leader with a passion for helping serve his community. Thomas started his career in commercial banking after graduation in 2018 when he was hired by Summit Bank as a Credit Analyst. Now acting as a Portfolio Manager with his own client-base, he is well-versed on commercial loans and works with business owners in varying industries including commercial real estate, manufacturing, and non-profits. Thomas is the current Associate Board President for A Family For Every Child (AFFEC), is on the board of the Eugene/Springfield RMA Chapter, and is a member of the Eugene Active 20-30 Club. During his spare time, Thomas enjoys playing/watching sports, traveling, and spending time in the outdoors.



Leilani Brewer

PacificSource Health Plans

Leilani received her bachelor's degree from the University of Oregon in Environmental Studies where she also participated in the Environmental Leadership Program. All throughout college, she worked full-time at Starbucks and took advantage of every community volunteer opportunity. Volunteering for Food for Lane County, Eugene Marathon and Bags of Love. In 2016, Leilani was accepted into one of the first cohorts of the Lane County Centralized Internship Program where she began to learn about county level government in the County Auditor's Office. Shortly after, Leilani began working for Lane County Health & Human Services where she would dedicate 5 years to advancing health equity, behavioral health, and community building initiatives. All of these experiences have lead Leilani to her current career with PacificSource in health equity and community health. In her work, Leilani has the pleasure of collaborating and partnering with various community based organizations, health organizations and local agencies to further establish a safe, nurturing and healthy environment for all. She has volunteered for the School Garden Project, which is PacificSource's charity of choice this year, and plans to continue in addition to the United Way Day of Caring. Leilani is a mother to a 4 year old son and a Shepard mix pup,

married to her partner of 7 years, and enjoys floating the river and food preservation practices.



Eric Carlson

Rainbow Water District

Eric Carlson is the Assistant Superintendent of the Rainbow Water District and has been in the utility industry for 20+ years. He served 7 years in the Army as an enlisted soldier, Noncommissioned officer, warrant officer, and a graduate of the coveted Army Ranger School. In 2009 he started working for the Rainbow Water District as a Water Operator, then lead Operator and promoted to Assistant Superintendent in 2020.

He is proud to share that he and his wife Nicky are celebrating their 20th year of marriage this year. He enjoys riding

motorcycles, both on and off road, and has traveled extensively in the western US, Latin America, and South America. He has logged over 60K miles by motorcycle, with a goal to ride in 6 of the 7 continents.



Fatemeh Fakhraie

Northwest Community Credit Union

My name is Fatemeh Fakhraie (pronounced: FA-te-may Fak-RA-ee) and I've lived in Eugene since 2016. I've worked in higher education, online media, and the financial industry. Currently, I'm the Marketing Assistant Manager at Northwest Community Credit Union and I sit on the Board of Directors for Ophelia's Place. I'm an avid reader and supporter of the Eugene Public Library. My other favorite things to do are walking along the River Path system and trying new restaurants or food carts.



John Garbett

Springfield Area Chamber of Commerce

I was raised in the Midwest; however, I have lived in Oregon for more than 20 years. Over the course of my career, I have worked with more than 40 non-profits to increase membership and to boost their non-dues revenue. I have developed and produced magazines, managed large events, led a team of sales reps and created fundraising programs. Currently, I work on

Membership Development for the Springfield Chamber of Commerce, helping members connect with Chamber programs and benefits. I enjoy bringing the community together for ribbon cuttings, networking breakfasts and after-hours events.



Adam Gutierrez

Willamalane Park and Recreation District

Adam is a recent transplant from Norman, Oklahoma (Go Sooners!). A graduate from the University of Oklahoma, Adam earned his Bachelors of Business Administration. He is currently employed with Willamalane Park and Recreation District as their Athletic Coordinator. Adam plans, coordinates, and implements youth athletics and recreation programs. Outside of workplace, he has a passion for sports and the outdoors, which makes serving the community through Willamalane enjoyable and rewarding.



Brent Heller

St. Vincent De Paul

I currently serve as the Business Development Director at St.Vincent de Paul Society of Lane County (SVdP), where I help steward the planning, management and expansion of the earned income projects that fund our human services mission. Prior to my work at SVdP, I served as a satellite communications operator and logistics officer during a 20-year career in the U.S. Army, leading groups of up to 100 soldiers in a wide array of missions across the globe. A passionate enthusiast of the outdoors, I enjoy exploring the wild spaces of the Pacific

Northwest, on my own or with my family.



David Hill

Mereté Hotel Management

David Hill is a native Oregonian and an enrolled member of the Coquille Indian Tribe. David spent the last several years in the Portland Metro area working as a Field Services Sales Executive for FedEx Services. In 2021 David returned to the Willamette Valley and now works for Mereté Hotel Management, an award-winning hotel management company based in Springfield. As a Senior Sales Manager, David manages local and national

corporate accounts for 6 hotels including the Hyatt Place Eugene, Residence Inn Eugene, Courtyard Springfield, Holiday Inn Express Springfield, Comfort Suites Springfield and La Quinta Springfield. David graduated from the University of Oregon with a Bachelor's degree in Family & Human Services, was a member of the University of Oregon Cheerleading team and was the recipient of a Diversity Building Scholar award. David is passionate about community engagement as a catalyst for economic development and growth. This passion comes from years of involvement in the hospitality and service industry as well as his experience in working with vulnerable populations. David is an active volunteer serving on the Board of Directors for Community Lending Works in Springfield, OR and on Mereté's culture committee. David lives in Springfield with his husband Joe and their two bulldogs – Reggie and Brittany. He enjoys camping, boating, all UO sporting events and spending time with family.



Kasandra Larsen

First Interstate Bank

Kasandra's greatest passion is bringing a sense of financial security to her clients which she has been doing since 2004. She is passionate about meeting her clients' needs for high quality financial products and dedicated to delivering them with the highest standards of client service. She is extremely knowledgeable of financial products and services: performance-oriented, deadline-driven, quality-conscious, and attentive to detail and focused on doing it right the first time. Kasandra is also dedicated to volunteering in her community. Her favorite is Junior Achievement. Kasandra's motto that she

lives by: Don't be afraid to fail, be afraid not to try.



Colleen Lawson

Kaiser Permanente

Colleen Lawson is a senior sales executive with Kaiser Permanente Northwest. As a University of Oregon alum, Colleen jumped at the opportunity to return to the Eugene-Springfield area and help expand Kaiser Permanente's Connected Care model to the community. Colleen routinely worked with physician and operational leaders to develop quality improvement, leadership, financial, marketing and sales communications. She brings 15 plus years plus of service in the

Northwest Region. Colleen enjoys the local hiking and biking trails, golf, fly fishing, wine tasting and Oregon sports!

**Annie Leadingham-Seay**

Habitat for Humanity of Central Lane

Annie Leadingham-Seay originally from Los Angeles, came to Eugene by way of West Virginia. She began her tenure at Habitat for Humanity of Central Lane seven years ago as a volunteer and is now the Development and Marketing Manager. She adores living in Eugene, you might find her at a concert, art gallery or recreating the perfect Jewish Deli pickle made with local cucumbers.

**Leigh Manning**

SAIF

Leigh Manning has been Senior Safety Management Consultant with SAIF Corporation since 2010 and has been working in occupational health and safety for over 17 years. She is an active member of the Cascade Chapter of the American Society of Safety Professionals, serving in many leadership roles over the years. Leigh has a BA from the University of Oregon in Journalism, Public Relations and Communications and a Master of Public Health from Portland State University. A 5th generation Oregonian, she loves hiking with her dog and her husband and cheering on the Oregon Ducks.

**Fernanda Martínez**

Downtown Languages

Fernanda Martínez was born and raised in Michoacán, Mexico. She emigrated to the U.S. in 2013 and has lived in Springfield since then. Fernanda started working at Centro Latino Americano (formerly Downtown Languages) in 2018 and has become the Education Program Manager of this non-profit organization. She works along with other administrative staff, instructors, and community partners to increase opportunities for immigrants and to build respect and understanding across cultures by providing language, literacy, and other educational programs.



Jason Miller

Douglas Fast Net

Jason Miller is the regional sales representative for Douglas Fast Net in Lane & Coos Counties, working with local businesses, organizations, and government entities to provide high speed fiber internet and telephone systems. Previously the manager of the Digital Marketing lab out of the Register-Guard and Commercial Producer at KMTR. He holds a degree from George Fox University in Business Economics and graduated from Thurston High School. He and his family produce a YouTube channel on cooking called "1000 Food Family".



Jan Montry

McKenzie-Willamette Medical Center

Jan Montry is the Emergency Department manager at McKenzie-Willamette Medical Center. He received his associate degree in nursing from Lane Community College in 2015 and his Bachelor of Science degree in nursing from Oregon Health and Science University in 2017. Prior to his work in health care, Jan earned a Bachelor of Science degree in journalism from the University of Oregon and worked in the newspaper industry for 10 years, including seven years at The Register-Guard. In the volunteer realm, Jan has been a Court Appointed Special Advocate for five years and currently serves as a peer coordinator. Jan has a wife, who is a pediatric nurse; two children, ages 4 and 7; and four cats.



Megan Moreland

Summit Bank

Megan Moreland originates from Eagle River, Alaska and moved to Springfield/Eugene to attend the University of Oregon where she received a degree in applied mathematics. She is currently a Business Client Advisor at Summit Bank. When attending events, she will commonly introduce you to an individual that she knows through her time volunteering with Springfield Twin Rivers Rotary Club, Kids FIRST board, or Eugene Active 20-30 Club.

**Odette Oppe**

Eugene Airport

Odette Oppe grew up in the Philippines and graduated from University of Santo Tomas, Manila with a Bachelor of Science Mathematics degree. She worked as a database programmer in Manila before moving to Vancouver BC, Canada in 2003. She met her husband and moved to the United States in 2009. She has lived in Texas, Washington and Oregon.

Odette is currently working for the City of Eugene, Eugene Airport as a Financial Compliance Officer managing the day to day financial operations of the airport, and ensures the organization is in compliance with rules and regulations of all grants, local, state and federal. Prior to coming to the airport, Odette was part of the Housing Team of the Planning and Development Department of the City of Eugene where she managed the Housing and Urban Development grants. Working for the City of Eugene, Odette has realized the importance of partnerships between local government, businesses, and charitable institutions in creating a thriving community.

**Adriel Pickar**

Oregon Community Credit Union

Adriel is an Assistant Branch Manager with OCCU. When she isn't enriching members lives by helping them reach their financial goal, she enjoys time with family and friends. Adriel is an avid runner and enjoys challenging herself to achieve new personal records. Although Adriel is a native Oregonian, she has traveled to many other states (45 to be exact) but found her way back home to Oregon, "because there is no place like home."

**Hailey Pratt**

Lane Transit District

Hailey Pratt is a Digital Marketing Specialist at Lane Transit District. She is a fourth-generation graduate of the University of Oregon, earning a degree in Advertising from the School of Journalism and Communication. A curious and pragmatic problem solver, Hailey gives structure to ideas by telling stories with data and communicating complex concepts in a simple way. She is an experienced

photographer and videographer with a knack for observing her surroundings and capturing personality on camera. Hailey is passionate about education and volunteers as a classroom helper and mentor in local K-12 schools and enrichment programs.



Stephanie Robert

PIVOT Architecture

Stephanie Robert, IIDA, NCIDQ, is the senior most interior designer at PIVOT Architecture. She sees projects as a puzzle and likes to find ways to creatively move pieces around to create a cohesive solution. It's a skill she began to develop early on space planning as a kid. She frequently rearranged her room to maximize space and create different looks. She is highly organized in her work and enjoys bringing calm to the chaos. When not at work she is drawn to sports cars and anything on the water.



Olivia Sorensen

SELCO Community Credit Union

Olivia Sorensen is a marketing professional with a sound background in (and love for) the nonprofit community. Originally from Idaho, Olivia graduated from Boise State University with a BA in Marketing and a certificate in Public Relations. Her career has meandered through a multitude of industries including transportation, nonprofits, healthcare, and finance. Olivia is the Community Development Specialist at SELCO Community Credit Union, serves on the Marketing Committee for Springfield Education Foundation, and is the past president of Two Rivers Dos Rios Elementary PTO.



Celine Swenson Harris

Oregon Legislature

Celine Swenson Harris works at the Oregon Legislature, where she serves as Legislative Director for Senator Lee Beyer. She received her bachelor's degree in political science from the University of Oregon in 2015. She volunteers as a member of the Lane Community College Budget Committee and on the executive committee of the Sierra Club Many Rivers Group. Celine and her husband Chris love living in Springfield with their two magnificent cats, and on the weekends you

can find them enjoying coffee at the Washburne Café or walking Willamalane's 29 miles of paths and trails.



Megan Temple

Travel Lane County

Megan Temple is the Senior Director of Partner and Community Engagement at Travel Lane County. Megan manages member benefits, trainings, and events for Travel Lane County's 600 members. She also oversees Visitor Services and Outreach. Megan graduated Magna Cum Laude from Northwest Christian University with her BA in Teacher Education and holds a Master's degree in Non-Profit Leadership from Bushnell University. A native Oregonian, Megan loves visiting local wineries, walking to nearby coffee shops with her dog,

and trying new restaurants with friends.



Cami Thompson

University of Oregon

Cami Thompson has found purpose, connection, and opportunity for growth in her work as the Assistant Director of Neighbor Relations at the University of Oregon, forging partnerships and strengthening ties between her alma mater and the town she's called home since childhood. Better understanding community dynamics and building trusting relationships across campus and Eugene-Springfield are the

goals of the moment, but her overall goals of being part of positive change and enriching the lives of others are always at the forefront. Leaning on a background in event coordination at Kesey Enterprises, she loves logistics, to-do lists, and bringing people and ideas together.



Brad Unger

OnPoint Community Credit Union

I am the Branch Manager of OnPoint's Springfield location. I have been in the financial services industry for 22 years, previously serving as a Branch Manager, Assistant Branch Manager, Mortgage Loan Officer and Personal Banker. I live in Eugene with my wife two daughters and two dogs. In my spare time, I love to run, play golf and travel with my family. I am a native Oregonian and love to cheer on the Portland Trail Blazers and the Ducks.



Steve Yamamori

Reveille Foundation

With a 25-year career working strategically across all sectors, Steve Yamamori brings innovation, energy and passion to assisting the underserved. Steve has honed his skills in developing successful programs, partnerships with business, civic and national stakeholders. Steve has a desire to lift the community by helping individuals and families break down traditional barriers, silos and systems. Steve serves as the Founder and CEO of the Reveille Foundation, a 501C3 that supports the underserved with a focus on transitioning military, veterans and spouses. Steve recently relocated to Eugene Oregon to expand Reveille Foundation services to the Pacific Northwest. He has a wife, Aimee and daughter, Lilly.



Summer Young-Jelinek

Community Care Partners/BestMed

Summer (she/her) is an experienced marketing and communications professional who recently returned to the medical field after spending her daughter's early years freelancing. She considers herself a "strategic creative" and loves developing and managing a company's brand voice to build connection with its audiences. She is currently a marketing manager at Community Care Partners, where her focus is internal communications. Summer graduated from the University of Oregon with a degree in art history and minors in architecture, landscape architecture and business administration. She is a lifelong volunteer and currently serves as chair of the Springfield Arts Commission. She and her husband, Wade, have a daughter in second grade and two tuxedo cats. Summer is an avid organic gardener and novice pastry chef who sees just about every occasion as a good excuse to bake a cake.

To learn more about Leadership Eugene Springfield visit

<https://www.eugenechamber.com/leadership-eugene-springfield.html>

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