

# FLEX FLEX Your Ideas

## FYI

brought to you by the **future leaders & entrepreneurs exchange**

### FLEX Presents Nomination Forms Due in January!



**Friday, March 31, 2017**  
**6:30 - 8:30 p.m.**  
**Location TBD**

Do you know a young professional, maybe a friend, family member, or co-worker, who has made an impact in the community? We encourage you to nominate them for FLEX Presents Young Professional of the Year! FLEX Presents is an annual event that celebrates the achievements of Venango County young professionals, those under 40 who contribute to the community through civic engagement.

Nominations will be accepted through **January 31** and all nominees will be recognized at FLEX Presents event in March. Please see the newsletter insert to nominate a young professional, or find the online form at [venangochamber.org/flex-presents-nomination](http://venangochamber.org/flex-presents-nomination)

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### FLEX Winter Social Schedule

FLEX has a busy schedule the next few months, filled with exciting new socials! We hope to see you at one of our winter socials:

**Dinner Social:** Fri. January 13, 6 p.m., Dawndi's Restaurant

**Coffee Chat:** Wed. February 8, 8 a.m., Karma Coffee Co.

**Wine Social:** Fri. February 24, 6 p.m. , Deer Creek Winery  
(transportation available)

**Ski Trip:** Sat. March 4, 10 a.m. at Peek n' Peak  
(transportation available)





If you frequent Spilling the Beans in Oil City, **Heather D'Souza** may be a young professional you recognize, in which she is a barista at the coffee shop several days a week. Heather has lived throughout the United States—she was born in Virginia, lived in Minnesota while in elementary school, moved to Oil City for two years during middle school, then headed to Florida, where she finished high school and attended college.

At the College of Central Florida, Heather studied Political Science and she was constantly busy with volunteer work. She was involved with the Boys & Girls Club, RotarAct (a 30 and under division of Rotary International), and various other charities and non-profits in central Florida. She also organized fundraisers and donations to children in Jamaica with her sailing club. They raised money to help young sailors start their own sailing team and provided the children with lessons and a small fleet of restored boats for them to take back to their home town to advocate in their youth advocacy program.

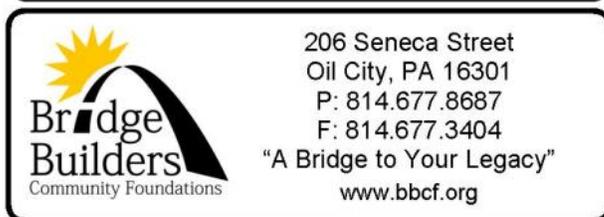
With all her experience volunteering, Heather decided she wanted to do even more, so she volunteered abroad with WorkAway and headed to southern Australia, where she lived for two months doing sustainability and eco-tourism projects.

Heather has family ties in the area and returned to Oil City after her time in Australia, where she's spending time experiencing all our area has to offer, including the hiking and biking trails and the river. "There are so many peaceful and scenic locations to just go relax with friends and have a nice fire or set up a hammock and read by myself," she said. The Villa has also always been a staple for her, where she regularly gets a homemade milkshake.

The small town feel is another plus for Heather. She enjoys the sense of community and seeing people she knows almost everywhere she goes. Heather has met so many interesting people who also happen to be her neighbor or someone she knew from her childhood and she likes to reconnect with them. "Being connected and actually knowing the names of your clients or customers and their families makes the work day more enjoyable and meaningful," she told us.

Heather appreciates living back in the area, and although she enthusiastically refers to Oil City as home, she still has the travel bug and plans to continue to visit new places and experience other cultures with as little environmental impact as possible while serving the local communities she visits. Professionally, she would

like to continue to do as much humanitarian work as she can and make a career of it. We're enjoying the time we get to spend with Heather while she's here, before she goes on her next adventure!



Thank you to everyone who joined us at the Cranberry Mall in November to wrap gifts with Community Services! We even took some names off the Giving Tree and purchased gifts for six different families in our area.

Have ideas for FLEX to get involved in the community and volunteer? We'd love to hear them! Join us at



Life-long Venango County resident **Saxon Daugherty** has used his familiarity with the area to his advantage as a reporter for The Derrick & The News-Herald newspapers in Oil City.

Saxon, who was originally born in Franklin, has had his name appearing in the paper for the last year and a half while covering all of Oil City and Forest County, in addition to crime and court news.

After graduating from Edinboro University in May 2015 with a Bachelor's Degree in Mass Communications and Media Studies, Saxon jumped on the opportunity to serve the community he grew up in as a messenger in print form. Saxon has worked with numerous people he developed relationships with as a teenager and has used those connections to create a more diverse collection of sources.

Since he already knows the area inside and out, Saxon has an appreciation for what hard-hitting issues people want him to look into as a reporter. His goal is to educate readers each and every day the pick up the newspaper.

In the short time he has been with The Derrick & The News-Herald, Saxon is proud of two assignments more than any others. The first significant accomplishment was having the opportunity to interview Governor Tom Wolf when he visited the newspaper's offices in April to promote his government reform plan.

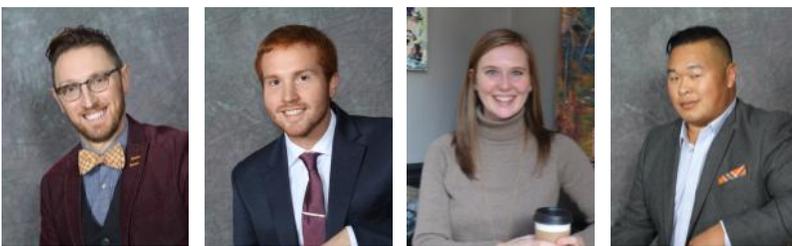
The second moment occurred four months later when Saxon made the trek to Williamsport to cover the Little League World Series with photographer Richard Sayer. Saxon and Rich joined some of the most well-known media organizations in the world, such as ESPN, at the event, but he was there specifically to tell the story of Seth Apel, whose recovery from losing an arm in a woodcutting accident last year has been told to many.

In the coming years, Saxon would like to make a transition into the sports sector. His experience in Williamsport validated that desire and he won't give up trying to earn chance covering one of his first true loves.

Regardless of where he ends up someday, Saxon developed the foundation for his career right here in Venango County. "I appreciate all of the opportunities I have had early in my career as a journalist and it's the people around me that have set me up for future success down the road," he said.

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## Meet Our Committee Chairs



FLEX is excited to announce our committee chairs for 2017! Zach Covington and Alan McBride will head the Events and Fundraising Committee, Rachel Stiller will head the Membership Committee, and Kurtis Bell will head the Marketing and Community Partnerships Committee.

Get involved and join a committee today! Just email us at [acowles@venangochamber.org](mailto:acowles@venangochamber.org) and let us know where you'd like to participate.



# The Young and The Worthless

by Kurtis Bell

Have you ever left a meeting and wondered if your input fell on deaf ears? Maybe you sit at your desk every day feeling that your talents and abilities are overshadowed by your age and others' perception of your lack of experience. The more I talk to other young professionals, the more I see this is not an isolated issue. Recently another young professional told me of an instance where she was asked if she was an assistant on a project where in fact, she is the lead. It really does seem to happen all the time. So, with more and more of us entering the workforce (and many of us entering positions of authority), what can we do to prove that we are not just "the new girl" or "the young guy"?

In an interview with a HubSpot colleague, Jessica McKenzie addresses some instances where she has been faced with ageism and how she overcomes the issue. One way Jessica combats ageism amongst colleagues is to always use proper language. This is of the utmost importance in the infancy of a professional relationship. If you start out as the model professional you can always relax slightly if it is appropriate and rebound easily, but digging yourself up from the bottom may prove a more daunting task.

Another tool for battling ageism is empathy. In some cases, you may be dealing with someone who feels threatened by you and your youth or has even experienced ageism first hand. Being empathetic can go a long way in establishing trust, developing a relationship, and ultimately breaking down the walls of ageism.

Although some may view age as a handicap, you do not have to subscribe to that same thoughts. Use your age you launch yourself in to the professional world. Just remember to be professional in all you do and say, be introspective, and definitely be empathetic.

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## Contribute to FYI!

Are you a writer or have information you'd like to share with other young professionals? We'd love to include your advice, recommended books, helpful information, or exciting news in an upcoming FYI edition! Even if you have something to share but you're not a fan of writing, we'd be happy to edit the article or meet with you and write it for you. Contact Ashley at [acowles@venangochamber.org](mailto:acowles@venangochamber.org) if interested.

## OUR MISSION

FLEX represents the needs and interests of Young Professionals by positioning ourselves as leaders, entrepreneurs and advocates for the sustainability of the Venango Area through civic engagement, leadership development, and networking.

## Where you'll find FLEX in January:

**Dinner Social:** Fri. Jan. 13, 6 p.m., Dawndi's Restaurant, 136 Warren Rd. Franklin

**Monthly Meeting:** Wed. Jan. 18, 12 - 1 p.m., Venango Area Chamber, 41 Main St. Oil City

Check out the Chamber's Calendar of Events: [www.venangochamber.org](http://www.venangochamber.org)

**email:** [flex@venangochamber.org](mailto:flex@venangochamber.org)



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