

FLEX FLEX Your Ideas

FYI

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

FLEX Networking Leads to Volunteer Partnerships

Over ten young professionals gathered to enjoy dinner, drinks, and networking at FLEX's winter dinner social at Dawndi's Restaurant in Franklin last month. Discussion ranged from what winter activities they enjoy around the region to current civic engagement.

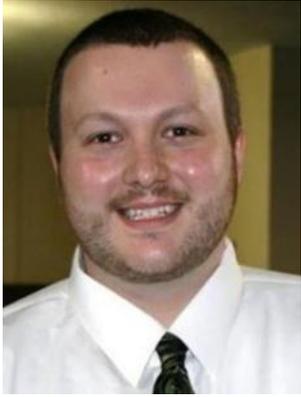
During conversations, two members found a unique overlap between their extra-curricular volunteer activities. Jessica Salyer of Sandy K. Hovis' State Farm Insurance office and Casey McVay, Assistant Director of Admissions at Clarion University's Venango Campus, are volunteers for two separate events supporting women in Venango County.

Jessica is working with a team on the third annual Womankind's Dignity Project, a collection effort to benefit the ABC Life Center and local domestic violence services. The event is a collection effort for items such as toothbrushes, personal sanitary items, and other toiletries for women who may be homeless, dislocated, or struggling to purchase these necessities. The collection will happen the entire month of February, and items can be dropped off at the SNYP Clinic (720 Atlantic Avenue in Franklin), Bahama Breeze, and the Grove City, Oil City, Franklin, and Clarion YMCA's.

Casey is the Production Manager for the Oil Region V-Day event, a movement to end violence against women and girls by promoting creative events to increase awareness, raise money, and revitalize the spirit of existing anti-violence organizations. Venango Campus' ALLIES Club is sponsoring benefit performances of Eve Ensler's *The Vagina Monologues* on February 17 and 18 at 7:30 p.m. in the Robert W. Rhoades Auditorium to generate attention for the fight to stop violence. The performances are open to the public and tickets are \$10 at the door. Clarion University students will enter at no cost with a valid ID. Proceeds from the show will also benefit local domestic violence services. Annually, Oil Region V-Day has donated almost \$1,000 per year, and they hope to double that amount in 2017.

Jessica and Casey were moved by their networking experience and are planning support for each other's projects throughout February, and beyond.





FLEX is excited to highlight **Kyle Vickers**, a young professional who lives in Venango County and works as a learning skills specialist and the Academic Center Coordinator at Clarion University's Venango Campus in Oil City. Kyle's hometown is just outside Venango County in Kittanning, PA. After high school, he earned a Bachelor's of Science in Elementary Education with a minor in Special Education from Slippery Rock University.

In his professional life, he has had several impressive achievements including becoming a Pennsylvania certified teacher, obtaining a CRLA Level 3 Master Certification for Tutoring, and becoming a Test Center Administrator for CLEP and PRAXIS exams. You will also see Kyle on the upcoming season of TLC's *Return to Amish* television series as a GED tutor.

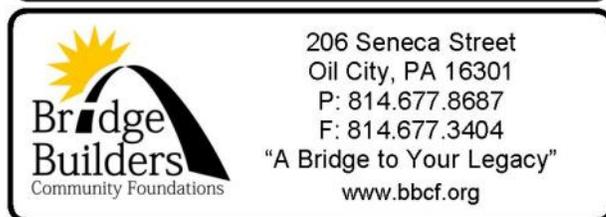
Outside of work, Kyle assists local students as a tutor privately and at Good Hope Lutheran Church's Stay and Play program at the Oil City Library. He also teaches a session for Clarion University's paraprofessional certificate program and instructs grades 6-8 for the Kids in College program on campus.

Kyle spends his free time with his fiancé Becky and their dog, Oliver. He is a football fanatic whose favorite place outside the area is the Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio. He says he encourages visitors to the area to see the Drake Well Museum. Many of Kyle's family has worked in the natural gas and oil industry, so he appreciates the area's contribution to the industry.

In the future, Kyle plans to continue coursework for a master's degree and strengthen his service to the campus and community. FLEX thanks Kyle for being here!

Become a Member of FLEX!

Although you can always attend our social events and meetings, we invite you to become an official member of our organization! By becoming a member and truly investing yourself into this group, you can gain leadership experience by joining a committee, vote on decisions at meetings, and wear your official FLEX nametag with pride. To join, you just have to fill out a form and pay a one-time membership fee of \$15. Join online: www.venangochamber.org/catalog/membership.



Friday, March 31, 2017

6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Venango Museum
(270 Seneca St, Oil City)

RSVP: acowles@venangochamber.org
or (814) 676-8521



John Stoner recently relocated to Venango County and we're happy to have yet another motivated young professional in our area!

John grew up in Meadville and went on to attend the University at Buffalo where he earned a bachelor's degree in economics with a concentration in finance and banking. Upon graduation, he entered the Management Training Program for Northwest Bank and then returned to the Meadville area where he was a floating assistant manager. This past August, John was hired as assistant manager at Northwest Savings Bank in Oil City, and moved to Franklin in October.

John is a fan of the outdoors, in which he enjoys snowboarding, golfing, kayaking, and canoeing, as well as traveling to new places as often as possible. He can see the Allegheny River out the window of his apartment and looks forward to taking advantage of all of the outdoor activities that are readily available within a short distance from where he lives.

In the next 5 to 10 years, John hopes to become more involved in the Venango County community and become a recognizable face in our area. He enjoys working here because, even in his short time in our region, he has taken notice of the tight-knit community. "I hope to build relationships, both personally and professionally, with leaders and key figures in the Venango area," he told us. "For the most part, everyone has been very pleasant to work with and really show appreciation towards the help I can provide them."

His biggest obstacle right now is building new relationships throughout a new community where he knows virtually no one, and we're more than happy to help him as Venango County becomes his new home!

Bike 'n Brew Planning

We're already planning the 2017 Bike 'n Brew! We need help contacting brewers, getting sponsorships, deciding on food, and more. We're also looking for volunteers the day of the event to help set up, sell tickets, and secure entrances. If you'd like to get involved, join us in our Facebook group at facebook.com/groups/OilHeritageBikeBrew or contact Ashley at acowles@venangochamber.org.

Shirts For Sale

You can still get a FLEX polo shirt. Shirts are \$25 each and available in both men's and women's sizes. You can order one at an upcoming meeting or event, or buy one online: www.venangochamber.org/catalog/membership.





SAVE THE DATE!
July 15, 2017

*"P.S. * Personal Service Since 1928!"*

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The Young and The Worthless: Part II

by Kurtis Bell

We established last month that young professionals are subject to ageism in the workforce. There were also some great tips to combat ageism. But what happens when it is assumed you know more than you actually do because of your age?

Maybe you have been in this situation where you get assigned a job because it is assumed you are knowledgeable about the subject solely based on your age. It is often thought that we, as young professionals, are all knowing when it comes to technology (or anything that has a power button). I use an iPhone, iMac, and MacBook because they're easy and they work, not because I'm some kind of computer wizard. In fact, it is quite the opposite. I'm sure that given a PC and android phone I would have them both bricked within hours.

Now how does one go about admitting they might not be the most knowledgeable on a subject without being written off as totally incompetent? Next time you are in a situation where you must admit your ignorance; do so, but offer up a solution. "I don't know" is one of my most loathed statements to hear unless it is followed with "but I will find out". By offering a solution you show you are committed to the cause and willing to put in the time to educate yourself.

So, next time you find yourself in a situation where you are being asked to do something or offer input on a subject that is out of your realm, do not be afraid to admit your ignorance. Then, make sure you immediately let them know you will find out more on the subject so you can be a contributor. Interactions like this can go a long way in demonstrating your maturity and building a rapport amongst your peers. Most importantly, always stay hungry and know that your learning is never finished. This mindset will help you overcome ageism as a young professional. I will leave you with one of my favorite quotes; "I keep the white-belt mentality that I can learn from anyone, anywhere, anytime." – Georges St-Pierre

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 February:

Coffee Chat: Wed. Feb. 8, 8 - 9 a.m., Karma Coffee Co, 237 Seneca St. Oil City

Bike 'n Brew Call Session: Thursday, Feb. 9, 5 - ? p.m., Venango Area Chamber, 41 Main St. Oil City

Monthly Meeting: Wed. Feb. 15, 12 - 1 p.m., Venango Area Chamber, 41 Main St. Oil City

Wine Social: Fri. Feb. 24, 7 - 10 p.m., Deer Creek Winery, 3333 Soap Fat Rd. Shippenville
**transportation available*

Check out the Chamber's Calendar of Events: www.venangochamber.org

email: flex@venangochamber.org



VenangoFLEX