

# FLEX FLEX Your Ideas

## FYI

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

### CONGRATULATIONS TO CASEY MCVAY, OUR 2017 YOUNG PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR!



Check out photos from the event on Facebook ([Facebook.com/VenangoFLEX](https://www.facebook.com/VenangoFLEX)).  
We'll be sharing photos and details in the May FLEX FYI newsletter.

### Benefits of Non-Profit Board Membership

*By Alan McBride, Global Talent Manager at Joy Global*

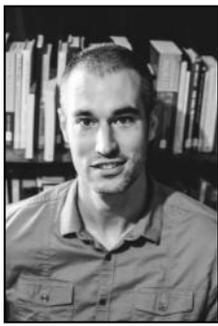
As a young professional in the Venango County area, I've always been interested in learning more about how certain organizations positively impact the region based on their strategic vision, mission and values. Several years ago I had the privilege to serve on the Board of Directors for a local non-profit organization and I quickly recognized the immense benefits of serving an agency in this type of capacity:

**Enhance your business acumen through networking** – You will garner insights into how a non-profit functions and the levels of financial and social influence they bring to an area. You will be able to connect with business leaders and other board members in establishing your own opinions, while assessing short-term and long-term viability and strategic initiatives of the organization. Not only can you contribute on several committees, you can build leadership prowess to assist in your personal and professional growth.

**Make ongoing positive impacts where you live** – Serving on a non-profit board can open up volunteering opportunities as you support the organization with your time and skills. You can work with local agencies to comprehend the broader scope of their respective missions, while also becoming acquainted with initiatives that are of keen interest to you. The intrinsic rewards you receive will enhance your self-worth and assist you as you continue to give back to the community regarding issues that motivate you and inspire change.

**Build upon your own experiences to support your development** – As an HR professional, I always look to see past professional experiences and additional personal opportunities a candidate has included on their resume to see if their passion and involvements match the position for which they are applying. What better way to support your own development than by connecting with organizations that share your mutual interests? Board membership is a strong resume builder but shows where your true community interests align outside of the workplace.

From my experiences serving on a Board of Directors, I can honestly say that community involvement and realizing the contributions of your own positive impact can continue to motivate what you do in your personal life and professional career. I encourage every young professional in the Venango County area to reach out to a local non-profit organization – to discuss board membership or even how you can volunteer – and gain insight into how they support the community and how your own dedicated involvement can fuel their success for years to come.



**Charlie Cotherman** grew up in Kossuth, just outside of Venango County, but had many ties to the Franklin and Oil City area because he attended Christian Life Academy for much of his elementary years and because his father worked for 37 years at Joy Global. Following his graduation from Keystone Jr/Sr High School, Charlie attended Grove City College where he majored in English and secondary education and played on the college's basketball team. Upon graduating from GCC, he worked for two years as a language arts teacher at Grove City High School. During this time he married his long-time friend, Aimee.

Hungry for some adventure and a chance to spread their wings, Charlie and Aimee moved to New Haven, CT to be a part of a non-profit doing community development work in the city. Unfortunately, the Great Recession hit shortly after the move. After spending time working in carpentry and as a server at Red Lobster, Charlie decided it was time to finally pursue his lifelong calling to ministry. He and Aimee moved back to western PA and both enrolled in Pittsburgh Theological Seminary on full scholarships. The nearly two-hour one-way commute from Knox to East Liberty three times a week proved conducive to some serious Greek flashcard studying with Aimee! In addition to full-time seminary work, Charlie also worked half-time as a pastor to twenty-somethings and young professionals at Grace E.C. Church in Knox. During this time Charlie and Aimee had their first child.

During his three years at seminary Charlie caught the academic bug from an inspirational professor and decided to pursue a PhD in Religious Studies. Charlie was accepted into the University of Virginia's PhD program with an emphasis on American religious history. He was also nominated to compete for the University's most prestigious graduate fellowship, which was awarded through the Jefferson Scholars Foundation. After a multi-day competition and interview process Charlie was one of 15 graduate students awarded the five-year fellowship, which included full tuition remittance, health insurance, and a living stipend capable of supporting his growing family. (A second and third child arrived during Charlie's four years in Charlottesville.) He is scheduled to defend his dissertation in April and graduate this May.

During Charlie's last two years in Charlottesville, he and Aimee began to discern a call to return home to "plant" a new church. After years of thought, prayer, and many conversations, Charlie and Aimee bought a house in Oil City in July of 2016 and began hosting worship gatherings the next month. In October of 2016 Oil City Vineyard (OCV) Church began holding Sunday morning worship in the Great Room of the National Transit Building. OCV hopes to be a church that not only helps people connect with God but also helps them connect better with each other and their community. Charlie does miss the academic world, but he is excited about what the future holds for OCV and the larger Oil City community. He hopes that eventually he may find a way to combine these two callings. He is also excited to be part of FLEX and the VACC.



## FLEX Committees

Looking for a way to get more involved in FLEX? We have three committees you can join:

- Events & Fundraising
- Membership
- Marketing & Community Partnerships

Email Ashley at [acowles@venangochamber.org](mailto:acowles@venangochamber.org) if interested!

## Shirts For Sale

Don't forget—we have FLEX polos for sale!

You can order one at an upcoming event or meeting, or online at [venangochamber.org/catalog/membership/flex-polo](http://venangochamber.org/catalog/membership/flex-polo).



**Dr. Kate Eckert**  
 drkeckert@gmail.com  
 www.chirodrkate.com  
 1047 Allegheny Avenue  
 Oil City, PA 16301  
 P: 814.657.1854  
 F: 814.676.6200

**Bridge Builders**  
 Community Foundations  
 206 Seneca Street  
 Oil City, PA 16301  
 P: 814.677.8687  
 F: 814.677.3404  
 "A Bridge to Your Legacy"  
 www.bbcf.org



**Aimee Myers Cotherman** grew up in Clarion County just outside of Knox. For much of her life her scope of activity revolved around Clarion rather than Venango County. The one exception, however, was her more than ten-year involvement in the Oil City YMCA's gymnastics program. After spending years competing as a gymnast at the YMCA Aimee transitioned into coaching within the program during her college years and beyond.

After graduating from Keystone Jr/Sr High School Aimee enrolled at Grove City College, where she earned a BS in Biology and Secondary Education. Throughout her high school and college years Aimee was involved in sports and directed a crew of workers at Lavender Green, a small lavender farm outside of Knox. Rather than going straight into a teaching career Aimee followed up her college graduation by enrolling in Clarion University and earning an MS in Biology. As part of this program Aimee spent three months on a missionary trip to Namibia in southern Africa. While there her responsibilities included teaching science lessons at an afterschool program and developing science curriculum for the country's Ministry of Education.

Soon after she returned home Aimee married Charlie and took a job at Community Action's Clarion office. Working at Community Action offered Aimee the chance to build relationships with numerous church, government, and non-profit service agencies across the region. It also confirmed her sense of call to community development and service-oriented work.

After a short stint in New Haven, CT Aimee returned to western PA to pursue a Physician Assistant program at Chatham University. However, just weeks before she was going to start she felt that God was leading her to invest in ministry, especially ministry to teenagers. Rather than attend PA school Aimee enrolled in Pittsburgh Theological Seminary with Charlie, received a substantial academic scholarship, and eventually earned an MA.

Following her graduation from PTS Aimee gave birth to her first daughter and decided to devote more of her time to being a mom. Since then Aimee has worked part time as a dental assistant at Dale Myers Dentistry in Knox and as a gymnastics coach in Charlottesville, VA while balancing a full plate of work as a mom of three (Elliana, Anneliese, Benton).

Aimee and Charlie became homeowners in Oil City in July of 2016 and launched Oil City Vineyard Church shortly thereafter. When she's not taking care of her wonderful (and needy) children Aimee spends her time helping to plant Oil City Vineyard Church, playing the piano, coaching gymnastics, selling handmade items from women around the world through an organization called Trades of Hope, and working two days a week at Russ Black Insurance in Seneca. She is also a member of FLEX, and has her eye on being part of community development and beautification projects in Oil City.

---

## Womankind's Dignity Project



Did you read the article in our [February FYI](#) about the Dignity Project headed by FLEX member Jessica Salyer?

During the month of February, they collected more than 2,500 items, such as toothbrushes, personal sanitary items, and other toiletries.

With the help of Franklin High School football players, Jessica will be delivering items to the ABC Life Center, PPC Violence Free Network & Shelter, and Franklin High School, for women who may be homeless, dislocated, or struggling to purchase these necessities. What an awesome project!



**SAVE THE DATE!**

July 15, 2017  
Justus Park, Oil City

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

**ROSSBACHER**

**URBAN – SENECA AGENCY**

814-677-4095  
www.teamrossbacher.com  
7137US 322 • Cranberry, PA

## 5 Reasons You Should Volunteer

Volunteering can take your time and effort, but there are many benefits to volunteering with a local organization! Some reasons, from an article in *Psychology Today*, include:

1. Volunteers live longer and are healthier.
2. Volunteering establishes strong relationships.
3. Volunteering is good for your career.
4. Volunteering is good for society.
5. Volunteering gives you a sense of purpose.



FLEX occasionally plans outings to volunteer with a specific organization, such as our Christmas gift wrapping in December with Community Services. We've also been posting volunteer opportunities on Facebook ([facebook.com/VenangoFLEX](https://facebook.com/VenangoFLEX)) periodically to make you aware of ways to get involved in our area.

We encourage you to find a cause or organization in the community you are passionate about and VOLUNTEER! Know of a volunteer opportunity? Let us know and we'll share it with others! Just email Ashley at [acowles@venangochamber.org](mailto:acowles@venangochamber.org).

Find the full article "5 Reasons Why You Should Volunteer" at [psychologytoday.com/blog/the-third-age/201403/5-reasons-why-you-should-volunteer](http://psychologytoday.com/blog/the-third-age/201403/5-reasons-why-you-should-volunteer)

---

We had a blast at our Wine Social and Ski Trip! Thanks to all who came!



### 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 this month:

**Bike 'n Brew Meeting:** Thurs. April 6, 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. Venango Area Chamber, Oil City

**Monthly Meeting:** Wed. April 19, 12 - 1 p.m., Venango Area Chamber, Oil City

**Trivia Night:** Thurs. May 4, 7 - 8 p.m., Scierka's Tavern, Oil City

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



VenangoFLEX