

# FLEX FLEX Your Ideas

FYI

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## FLEX Leadership Reflects on Another Successful Year

As 2018 comes to an end, we reflect on the successes of FLEX this year. We've had great events, launched a speaker series, welcomed new members and officers, and gained skills and experience together.

This year, we celebrated Young Professional of the Year Charlie Cotherman, and recognized a group of amazing nominees, who represent only a fraction of the successful young professionals (YPs) in our region.

We began the FLEX Speaker Series and had presentations about health, self development, boardsmanship, and community involvement.

Many events and socials were held, including another successful Bike 'n Brew, bringing hundreds of people to Oil City for activities, food, and entertainment.

We grew substantially in numbers, in which we welcomed almost 50 new FLEX members.

Most of our officers are stepping down, but it allows new YPs the opportunity to learn what it takes to be a leader. Our outgoing officers shared what they gained from their experience:

**Zachary Covington:** "I thoroughly enjoyed my time as Vice President/Secretary of FLEX this year! Our community is full of so many vibrant,



capable young professionals, and it has been a pleasure meeting so many of them!"

**Casey McVay:** "My involvement with FLEX has propelled me into a Board of Directors experience where I'm contributing at a high-level and filling leadership roles. It's endless the ways FLEX has impacted my life and career. I've met some of the best people in my life through FLEX, and now my experience is full circle as I work with another YP to teach skills to be a leader within the group. It's an honor to pass the torch and watch others grow and succeed."

**Jessica Ewing-Falco:** "Contributing to an organization that is helping YPs in our area is a wonderful experience. I am thankful for such a strong team of leaders to serve with and the opportunity to make a difference."

**Alan McBride:** "I enjoyed getting to know other YPs and understand why they want to network and make a difference. We have strong leadership from a variety of YPs and to connect on both a professional and personal level has made a profound impact on

me. As an officer, I gained confidence and authenticity with my leadership style, and enjoyed being supportive of other YPs in their own developmental paths."

**Marissa Dechant:** "Acting in a FLEX leadership position made me more organized and communicative and a better leader. I gained skills in event coordination and planning, all while working alongside friends. My role as marketing/community partnerships chair ultimately helped me gain employment in a new city, something for which I'll always be grateful."

Thanks officers for your commitment, and welcome new leadership! Next year will be full of even more opportunities for networking, leadership, and skill building.

The FLEX website will be redesigned, events will be added, and new young professionals will be welcomed. FLEX has taken feedback from our Annual Survey and will continue to work to make this organization the best it can be for the future leaders of Venango County. Thank you to those who made this another great year!

*"The Future of Venango Area Business!"*



**Ashley Smith** is originally from Venango County and is passionate about helping our region thrive.

She grew up in Sandycreek Township and graduated from Franklin Area High School. She then went on to attend Clarion University, where she got an associate's degree in Industrial Technology (specialized in

Computer Aided Drafting) and her bachelor's degree in Technology Leadership.

Ashley is currently a Land Use Planner at the Venango County Regional Planning Commission and is also studying towards a bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering Technology from Youngstown State University.

Some of Ashley's proudest achievements include being a feature majorette baton twirler her junior and senior year of high school, then going on to twirl at a college level. At college, she was a member of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society and graduated Cum Laude.

With her husband, Jake, Ashley lives happily in the historic district of downtown Franklin and looks forward to being a more active member of the community. She is a Be Here Ambassador and a member of the Leadership

Venango Class of 2019, and she plans to take part in volunteering for more Franklin events and groups.

In her free time, Ashley is a Franklin High School Marching Band Bandfront advisor and volunteers with the Franklin Middle School Basketball and Wrestling Cheerleaders. She also enjoys spending time playing video games with her husband.

Ashley can often be found on the Allegheny River and French Creek fishing with her dad, at Leonardo's or Trails to Ales enjoying dinner, or at a downtown event.

Professionally, Ashley is working toward grant writing with staff of the Planning Commission and plans to hone in on that knowledge to better serve the community that she is very passionate about. She has also been thinking about obtaining a PA Real Estate Salesman License and would like to become a part-time evening and weekend real estate agent within the next few years.

When asked what she enjoyed most about working in Venango County, Ashley said: "Since a majority of Venango County workers also reside in the area, employees are dedicated to creating a better community for their friends and families." Thanks, Ashley, for being one of those community members with a goal to make this area a great place to live!

We had a fun FLEX Happy Hour at Double Play in November, despite the snowy weather. Thanks to those who attended! Hope to see you at our Christmas Party on December 6th.




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### Book Review: Give a Sh\*t

Many people set goals or resolutions as a new year begins. These can involve eating better, exercising more, becoming organized, or learning a new skill. In Ashlee Piper's book *Give a Sh\*t*, she says: "It's time to give a sh\*t—about your health, your footprint, and your planet," and you don't need the new year to start!



Her book guides you through a transition to a kinder, healthier, more conscious, and sustainable life.

Whether it's how to create a more ethical wardrobe, reduce your waste, have a more natural beauty routine, or cook healthier meals, this book is full of ways you can live and be better each day.



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**Hannah McCarthy** wears many hats in Venango County—she’s an Arbonne International consultant, part-time employee at Caldwell Signage Solutions, performer and producer at the Barrow-Civic Theatre, and incoming FLEX Events & Fundraising Committee Chair.

She was born in Centerville, PA, then lived in Granada, MN, for a few years before moving to Venango County when she was four years old. Hannah was a homeschool student and, while in high school, competed nationally in speech and debate all over the country.

For five months, Hannah interned with Youth With A Mission (YWAM) in Houston, TX, where she traveled to Madrid, Spain, and New Orleans, LA. She also worked at Child Development Centers, Inc. during high school and at the start of her career, where she earned her Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential—the most

widely recognized credential in early childhood education.

Hannah started selling Arbonne in early 2017 and hopes to continue to grow her business in this area and bring more awareness to health and wellness. She also has dreams to continue to travel internationally, especially Ireland, New Zealand, and Italy.

The majority of Hannah’s free time is spent at the Barrow-Civic Theatre performing or staying behind the scenes as a choreographer, producer, and next year a director for the first time. She also enjoys hiking, playing guitar, dancing, and visiting local business such as Trails to Ales, Printers Cabinet and Curiosities, and Core Goods.

“There’s always something exciting going on. I’ve always said we live in our own version of Stars Hollow (Gilmore Girls reference),” Hannah said. “I love seeing our area work together to make such wonderful things happen.” We’re happy to have Hannah playing a part in making those things happen!

## FLEX Member Highlight: Kasryn Kapp

Kasryn Kapp recently became a Licensed Professional Counselor! Kasryn attended Millersville University for her bachelor’s in psychology with a minor in sociology, then went directly into a master’s program at Towson University in Maryland for Counseling Psychology.

To become a Licensed Professional Counselor, you must graduate from an approved master’s program, pass the 200-item National Counselor Examination for Licensure and Certification (NCE), complete two years of supervised experience, and pass multiple background checks. Kasryn recently completed her two years of supervised clinical experience and received her license on November 1st.



Kasryn has worked at the Regional Counseling Center in Oil City as a Mental Health Therapist in outpatient. She sees individuals, families, and couples every few weeks and works toward improving mental health, communication, and similar needs.

Kasryn also runs groups including an LGBTQ+ Support Group, an insomnia reduction group, and a relaxation group. “My favorite part about my job is how fulfilling it is,” she said. “I get a sense of meaning and purpose from my work and I love to help people and be an advocate.” Speaking of being an advocate, LGBT people have some of

the poorest mental health outcomes mostly due to discrimination and social rejection. In Kasryn’s career, she hopes to make a dent in this statistic and to be an advocate, especially for the LGBTQ+ youth in this area who have little support.

Great job with all your hard work, Kasryn, and congratulations on getting your license!



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## 10 Things That Require ZERO Talent

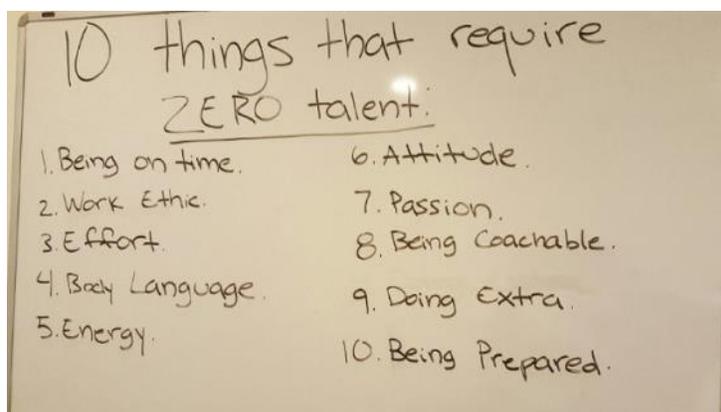
How often do we equate success with talent? All the time. But the reality is, success isn't created by talent alone. Just like we might see immense talent squandered, we also see underdogs unexpectedly overachieve. Here are 10 behaviors that we can always control that require zero talent yet have a huge impact on our success:

1. **Being on time.** Punctuality is a keystone habit that requires organization
2. **Work ethic.** This is the discipline of showing up consistently and making the best decisions that lead to peak performance.
3. **Effort.** This is a mindset as much as it is a behavior. Going the extra mile will always be noticed.
4. **Body language.** How you move and express yourself around others shapes who you are and how you are perceived.
5. **Energy.** Everyone has energy to devote to a goal, and the decision of how much to give.
6. **Attitude.** A great attitude maximizes the talent that you do have and offsets what you lack. You decide how you react to situations.
7. **Passion.** This is what keeps you going even when the task at hand might seem tedious.
8. **Being coachable.** Learn from feedback, and embrace the success of others.

9. **Doing extra.** That extra work and preparation fosters confidence. We can all learn from this approach and exceed our own expectations.
10. **Being prepared.** Only you can give yourself the time and space to be as ready as you can be. Make it a habit, and you will make the most of your talent. "Failing to prepare is preparing to fail."

**Your Game Changer Takeaway:** Remember that talent is never enough. The best of the best don't rest on what they were born with—they dig down to get the most they can. Try these 10 things (or just one!) and over time it will pay off.

*This was written by Molly Fletcher. Find the original article by visiting [mollyfletcher.com/zero-talent](http://mollyfletcher.com/zero-talent).*



### 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.

### Upcoming Events & Meetings:

- **Monthly Meeting:** Wednesday, December 19, 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m., Bella Cucina, Franklin | Lunch at 11:30, meeting begins at 12 | We will order from the lunch menu (found at [bellapa.com](http://bellapa.com)) | Please RSVP to Ashley at [acowles@venangochamber.org](mailto:acowles@venangochamber.org) if you plan to attend, and arrive by 11:30 if you plan to eat.
- **Ugly Holiday Sweater Party:** Thursday, December 6, 6 - 8 p.m., FoxTales Pub, Franklin | Please bring canned goods to donate to our food drive

Connect with us:



### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Please join us in welcoming our newest FLEX members:

*Matt Cesare*  
*Damien Cherico*

*Chris Matthews*  
*Jake Rayl*

Interested in becoming a member? Ask for a form at the next event or meeting, or join online at [bit.ly/flexmembership](http://bit.ly/flexmembership).