

FLEX FLEX Your Ideas

FYI

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

FLEX Works Together to Reach Goals—Both Personally & Professionally

At the Annual Meeting in October, FLEX launched the FLEX Your Goals Program with a goal to help young professionals develop in both their career and personal lives. In just about three months, the Membership Committee has taken this idea to help young professionals succeed and turned it into a strong program that continues to grow.

First, FLEX began utilizing the app Goalify, as a way for members to set goals and get reminders for taking steps towards those goals each day. Through Goalify, participants can encourage one another by sending challenges and messaging. To join the FLEX Your Goals group in Goalify, download the app and use the access code YKK HLH 4A6.

Goalify's basic version is free, but many benefits come with a paid subscription. FLEX will reimburse any member for their first three months of the app—just email acowles@venangochamber.org.

FLEX then started a book group, beginning with the book *The*

Compound Effect by Darren Hardy. Once every one to two weeks, those reading the book gather together to go over the chapters read, complete worksheets, and discuss topics, such as habit setting, core values, and reaching goals.

Discussions are held in person, but FLEX also has an ongoing chat in Google Hangouts, which can be accessed by visiting bit.ly/FLEXBookChat. After the first book, FLEX plans to start another, and is always taking suggestions for great books related to professional and personal development.

Going forward, the group is excited to expand the FLEX Your Goals program to include a speaker series, online resources and tools, workshops, and teambuilding events. There are many topics FLEX knows young professionals are interested in that we plan to focus on, such as entrepreneurship, finance and budgeting, non-profit involvement and volunteering, goal setting, time management, and effective leadership.



“This program isn’t only about providing advice and information to young professionals,” said Alan McBride, Membership Committee Chair. “We’re here to support one another as we all work towards our personal and professional goals.”

FLEX members are encouraged to share videos, TEDx talks, book and podcast recommendations, and more, with one another. Additional information will be distributed on social media and in the FYI newsletter over the coming months, and feel free to reach out to Alan at alan.mcbride@komatsu.mining.

FLEX Presents Nominations are due February 16. We invite you to nominate young professionals you see making a difference in our area. Find the form at venangochamber.org/flex-presents-nomination

FLEX Presents
YOUNG PROFESSIONALS of the YEAR



Rachel Stiller is no stranger to FLEX, but she was profiled a few years ago and quite a bit has changed since then.

Rachel is the Inventory Accountant at Borchers Americas, Inc., where she started working upon graduating from Clarion University with her bachelor's degree in

accounting and monetary economics. She grew up in the Franklin and Oil City area and is proud to call Venango County home (she shares her testimonial on the Be Here website at beherevenango.org).

As our 2018 president, Rachel looks forward to building on the progress of FLEX and plans to take her leadership experience gained from serving as last year's Membership Committee Chair into action.

One of Rachel's biggest achievements through FLEX is launching the FLEX Your Goals program, which continues to develop and become a vital program of the group.

Rachel's responsibilities at work have grown and evolved, giving her a wide variety of experience within the field of accounting, as well as other aspects of manufacturing. She looks forward to developing in her accounting career.

While FLEX and her career take up a lot of her time, Rachel also enjoys downhill skiing, kayaking, hiking, spending time with family and friends, volunteering for YMCA youth soccer, teaching piano, and teaching Sunday school at Saint Patrick Church. Her favorite spots in the area are the local coffee shops, the bike trail, and Two Mile Run County Park.

"Here is where I feel welcomed, appreciated, and a part of a strong community," she told us. "I enjoy the personal and professional relationships I have been able to build here in the Venango area and I am grateful for the opportunity to have a leadership role in the young professional's organization."

We're not only glad to have Rachel as a young professional in Venango County, but we're excited to see where she takes FLEX this year!

Podcast Recommendation: Modern Love

Described as "stories of love, loss and redemption," *The New York Times'* podcast *Modern Love* delivers weekly tales of humanity's most powerful emotion, be it romantic, platonic or familial.

Adapted from essays that have appeared in *The Times*, podcast host Meghna Chakrabarti invites well-known actors to bring each story to life. Interviews with the essayist, actor and *Modern Love* columnist editor Daniel Jones follow and offer insight to the emotions

packed within each episode, which are about 20 minutes long.



Some of the best episodes capture a snapshot of the author's life, often during a moment of weakness or major life change. These have included diving into online dating, dealing with the aftereffects of divorce and finding love again after the death of a spouse.

An episode with a lot of staying power is "You May Want to Marry My Husband" by Amy Krouse Rosenthal. She died last March from ovarian cancer, 10 days after her essay was published.

In her essay, Rosenthal praises her husband's attributes in an attempt to give him a second chance at love. It's warming, it's heartbreaking and it'll make you reevaluate your own intimate relationships.

So plug in, not just during the month that celebrates Valentine's Day, but year-round. *Modern Love* is much more than its title - it's about human connection.



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If you're looking to discuss books or politics, we suggest striking up a conversation with **Jaimi Hajzus**.

Jaimi was born in Buffalo, New York, then moved to Coudersport, PA—a town even smaller than Franklin. She studied Women's and Gender Studies during her undergraduate career at Penn State University, then went on to earn her master's degree for K-6 education at Duquesne University.

Jaimi acquired Neverending Stories, The Underground Bookstore, located on Liberty Street in Franklin, in July of 2017. She also plays a part in helping market her fiancé Matthew's law firm—Matthew C. Parson, Attorney at Law—which has been practicing family and criminal law for almost 15 years.

Jaimi and Matt coordinated a Take Back the Night march in 2000 that was attended by 300 people. She was also on *Weekend Edition* of NPR in 2016, talking

about racism in the area where she grew up. "I'm very proud to continue to be politically active here in Venango County with Oil Region Rising, our local Indivisible group," she said.

When she's not at her store or involved in community efforts, Jaimi enjoys spending time with her five-year-old son, Cael, especially swimming at the Franklin YMCA. At home, Jaimi loves to read, cook, and sew, and out in Venango County, she appreciates the food and friendly atmosphere at Bella Cucina's and the Liberty Street Ale House, and can also be found occasionally singing karaoke with friends in Oil City.

Jaimi appreciates the many opportunities for her family in the area, including free Pre-K for Cael and the ability to take over the bookstore, in which she gives great appreciation to the past owner, Leigh Protivnak.

Looking forward, Jaimi is excited to continue growing her business and being active in the community, and encourages people to support local businesses like hers.

Join a FLEX Committee

We invite you to get more involved with FLEX by joining a committee! The three committees and chairs are: Events & Fundraising - Casey McVay & Jessica Ewing-Falco, Membership - Alan McBride, and Marketing & Community Partnerships - Marissa Dechant. Contact us at flex@venangochamber.org to learn more!

Refer a Friend to FLEX



Have a friend or co-worker you think would be interested in joining FLEX? If you are a current FLEX member, you'll get \$5 off your FLEX Presents ticket for each young professional you refer to FLEX (they must join and pay the \$15 fee).

New young professionals can join online at bit.ly/flexmembership and tell them to write your name after the question "How did you hear about FLEX?"

Each FLEX member can receive this benefit three times (total of \$15). FLEX Presents is our annual young professional recognition event and will be held on Friday, April 6. With questions about referrals, contact Membership Committee Chair Alan McBride at alan.mcbride@komatsu.mining.



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FLEX had a great start to the year, with our Pottery & Sip social, meet-up with the Child Development Center, Coffee Chat, and Book Discussion. We hope to see you at a social in February!



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:

- **Events & Fundraising Committee Call:** Friday, February 2, 9 a.m. | Call info will be emailed to committee
- **Dinner & Show:** Friday, February 2, 5:30 p.m., Bella Cucina & Barrow Civic Theatre | This social is full. Email Ashley at acowles@venangochamber.org to be added to waiting list
- **Marketing & Community Partnerships Meeting:** Tuesday, February 6, 6:30 p.m., FoxTales Pub, Franklin
- **Monthly Meeting:** Thursday, February 15, 12 - 1 p.m., Topsy Chef, Oil City | Bring your own lunch
- **Happy Hour & Karaoke:** Thursday, February, 15, 6:30 p.m., The Purple Goose, Franklin
- **OCHS Career Fair:** Wednesday, February 28, 7 a.m., Oil City High School Gym | Email Ashley if you plan to volunteer

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Please join us in welcoming our newest FLEX members:

- Haleigh McDonald
- Kasryn Kapp
- Hannah McCarthy
- Kathryn Earls
- Laura Ordaz
- Saxon Daugherty

Interested in becoming a member? Ask for a form at the next event or meeting, or join online at bit.ly/flexmembership.

Find us on social media:

