

FLEX FLEX Your Ideas

FYI

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Introducing the FLEX Leadership Development Resources Drive

We are pleased to announce the launch of the **FLEX Leadership Development Resources (LDR) Drive!**

The personal and professional development of young professionals (YP) is crucial to making a positive impact in the Venango area. The FLEX Leadership Development Resources Drive offers FLEX members access to videos, podcast recommendations, professional documents, books, and personal YP stories, and members can upload their favorite resources as

well. As we embark on our YP journeys in 2019, it's important we continue to learn, network, and grow from our experiences together—the FLEX LDR Drive is a great way to connect on one shared drive.

Please see the link below to access the drive and bookmark it in your browser. Let us know your thoughts!

bit.ly/FLEXLDR



BOOKS



PODCASTS



VIDEOS



STORIES

Young Professional of the Year Nominations Due February 22

We invite you to nominate a young professional for our Young Professional of the Year award! Nominees will be recognized at our annual FLEX Presents event on Friday, April 5, at the Barrow-Civic Theatre in Franklin.



This event is held to celebrate achievements of young professionals who contribute to our region through civic

engagement. Last year, we had 11 nominees and the winner was Charlie Cotherman, pastor at Oil City Vineyard Church.

If you know someone who is an up and coming leader or making significant contributions to their industry and the community, nominate them for Young Professional of the Year. The form is available online at bit.ly/FLEXNomination. Young Professional of the Year nominations will be accepted through February 22.

More information about FLEX Presents can be found at venangochamber.org/flex-presents.

"The Future of Venango Area Business!"



We're excited to introduce **Kat Thompson**, this year's FLEX Vice President/Secretary and the Talent Engagement Facilitator at CareerLink.

Kat grew up in Hydetown, just outside of Titusville, and moved to Oil City while in high school. From kindergarten through 12th grade, she attended Christian Life Academy (CLA), then went

on to Spring Arbor University in Michigan where she earned a bachelor's degree in business administration with a minor in global economic development. She also received her Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) certification through Oxford Seminars.

For three years, Kat lived in China teaching Oral English and Reading Comprehension at Sias International University. While in China, one of her fond memories is performing, usually choreographed dances. They would sometimes give performances in front of thousands of students and once on TV for a basketball tournament.

Kat has traveled and lived all over the world (she's been to 30 countries and over 40 states) and loves meeting new people and learning about different cultures, but she is happy to call our area home. "It's where my family is and I'm proud of way the community is growing here," she said.

As the new VP/Secretary of FLEX, Kat is looking forward to helping others get more involved in the organization and the community.

In her free time, she enjoys relaxing on her patio with her cat, Ellie, while bird watching. She also participates in outdoor recreation, like hiking, biking, and kayaking throughout the region. She loves watching wildlife, including deer, foxes, a bear, racoons, a porcupine, and a lot of birds just around her house. One of her favorite stops in our area is Core Goods, a new store in Oil City.

"I truly appreciate the sense of community in Venango County," she told us. "There is a strong network between businesses, economic development, and community organizations. There are so many people working towards improving the quality of life in this area and I'm happy to be a part of that." We're happy to have her a part of it, too, especially as a new officer of FLEX!

Your Body Language May Shape Who You Are

This month's recommended TED Talk is by Amy Cuddy, a social psychologist. Cuddy suffered a severe head injury from a car accident at the beginning of her college career. Doctors told her she may never again reach her full mental capacity and finishing her undergraduate degree was not likely. She decided to prove them wrong and today, Cuddy is a professor and researcher at Harvard. She studies social psychology, specifically how nonverbal behavior affects our judgement.

Cuddy suggests that body language affects not only how others see us, but also how we see ourselves. Her research shows that we can change the perceptions of others by simply changing our body positioning. The talk is just over 20 minutes long.

Find it here: bit.ly/CuddyTalkTED



Save the Date!
July 20, 2019



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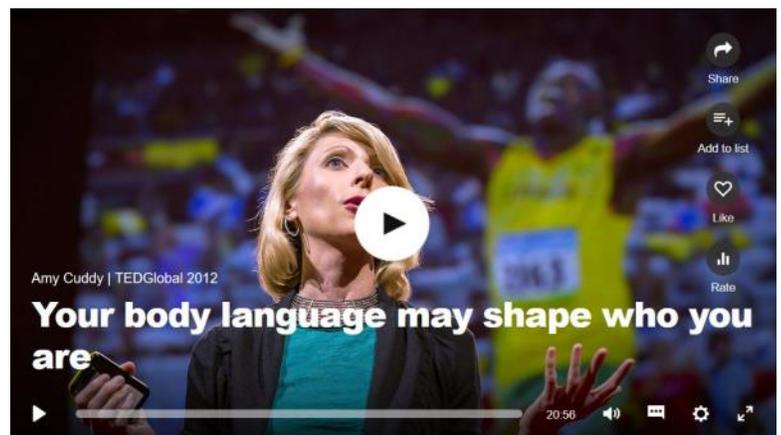
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Leah Walentosky is one of our newest FLEX members. Born and raised in Oil City, Leah has fond memories of going to the YMCA, getting ice cream at Butler's Candies, and biking to the Marina with her brother.

Leah graduated from Oil City High School in 2009 and attended Clarion University, where she earned a

bachelor's degree in library science and education. She currently works for both the Allegheny National Forest, and as a substitute teacher.

Leah enjoys reading and photography, she said she never leaves the house without a book or a camera. She also enjoys staying active by doing yoga once a week and hiking every day in the summer. In the colder months, she spends time at the YMCA and takes Taekwondo classes.

Among her favorite things to do in Venango County, Leah loves to visit galleries and enjoy the work of local artists. She tries to shop local as often as possible, and often grabs a bite to eat at the Taco Shack.

She is proud of her work with the forest service and was recognized by winning a Safety Award and Peer Recognition Award. Leah also completed the PA Hike 50 Challenge in 2018, which involved hiking at least 12.5 different miles in each of the four PA chapters of the North Country Trail Association.

As far as the future, Leah stated, "I am prepared for whatever life has." She hopes to land a full-time job with the government and earn her master's degree in archival science. Personally, she'd like to spend more time gardening and traveling, and eventually buy a house of her own.

Leah loves the arts community and rural landscapes of Venango County, and is proud to call it home. We are so excited to have Leah join FLEX and bring her fun-loving spirit and positive attitude to our organization.

Join a FLEX Committee

FLEX has three committees to get involved with, each led by a chair and holding different responsibilities. Joining a committee is a great way for FLEX members to get more engaged. Each committee holds their own monthly or quarterly meetings, which are always listed on the last page of the FYI. To join a committee, email the committee chair and they will add you to their mailing list. Find more information about each committee below:

Events & Fundraising

Chair: *Hannah McCarthy* (hannahbananam@hotmail.com)

Responsible for planning and executing events and fundraising activities (Events include: FLEX Presents, Annual Meeting, Socials, Summer Kick-Off, and more).

Membership

Chair: *Laura Ordaz* (Laura.Ordaz@mining.komatsu)

Responsible for growing the organization through outreach, collecting membership applications, and maintaining a list of the general membership.

Marketing & Community Partnerships

Chair: *Tessa Byham* (tbyham@venangochamber.org)

Responsible for seeking ways to promote FLEX through formal promotion and community involvement (Maintain social media, create FYI newsletter, organize volunteer efforts, and more).



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"The Future of Venango Area Business!"

Featured Article: *The Winter Project Blog*

The following is an excerpt of the blog post, "How Rituals Create Joy" by local freelance writer Hannah Kennedy. In this post, Kennedy looks at our cultural idea of the winter season, exploring how forming new rituals and traditions around winter can go a long way in increasing joy throughout the winter months. Kennedy, along with her friend and colleague Jenny Rice, coauthors the blog *The Winter Project*, which encourages winter weather positivity by building a community around finding the joy and coziness in the cold.

"Wintry weather in December is very nostalgic for us; it's connected to traditions like building snowmen, drinking cocoa, wrapping presents, and listening to Christmas carols. So it makes sense that once the new year hits, we have nothing to look forward to, except... President's Day? Soon, without events to anticipate or any seasonal traditions to observe, winter becomes a big blank space



which seems to drag on and on. The overwhelming hype of holiday joy gives us a joy hangover. We're too tired to be happy! excited! celebratory! Add some bitter cold and black ice, and winter becomes the scapegoat for it all.

Our culture doesn't really have major, centralized traditions. I think we tend to forget how important physical acts are to the health of our souls. But my opinion is that we need traditions (events, rituals, etc.) to mark our days, to realign ourselves with who we are and want to be. So this winter, I want to work on creating winter traditions that help me really take joy in the season.

And maybe, I also allow winter to be what it is: a quiet season, a cozy season. Maybe I dig in and treat winter like a retreat, a time where I don't do as much, where I spend time reading and writing and thinking. We all need seasons that are quieter, less rushed, more peaceful. And it seems as if one is ready-made for all that."

Visit winterprojectblog.com for more of Hannah's work.

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:

- **FLEX Presents Planning Meeting:** Monday, February 4, 5 p.m., Venango Chamber, Oil City
- **Events & Fundraising Committee Meeting:** Monday, February 11, 5 p.m., Bossa Nova Café, Franklin
- **Marketing & Community Partnerships Committee Meeting:** Tuesday, February 12, 5 p.m., Venango Chamber
- **Bike 'n Brew Meeting:** Tuesday, February 12, 6 p.m., Venango Chamber (after Marketing meeting)
- **Membership Committee Meeting:** Wednesday, February 13, 5 p.m., Bossa Nova
- **Monthly Meeting:** Tuesday, February 19, 5:30 p.m., Venango Chamber
- **Events & Fundraising Committee Call:** Tuesday, February 19, 10 a.m. Call Number: +1 712-832-8330; Access Code: 742 9689

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Please join us in welcoming our newest FLEX members:

Sarah MacBeth
Leah Walentosky

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

Connect with us:

