

FLEX FLEX Your Ideas

FYI

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FLEX Members Adapt During Crisis

We've encouraged you to dig into professional resources, join us on Virtual Hangouts, and try ways to be more productive while working at home, but what's most important to us right now is how you are doing.

This time has been hard and we know you're probably stressed, bored, and maybe lonely as you practice social distancing. We've loved connecting with FLEX members and wanted to give an update from some of them.

Like many, Lauren Lupinacci of Bridge Builders is working from home and said adapting has challenged her patience, but has helped her grow personally and professionally.

Business owners and leaders have switched to online services, including Bobbie with Trailasana Yoga Studio, Charlie with Oil City Vineyard Church, and Elizabeth with St. John's Episcopal Church.

Elizabeth is sharing videos, blogging often, and created booklets for those

not online. The Shepherd's Green Community Food Pantry at St. John's has also seen changes, as volunteers meet to pre-pack boxes.

Ben Hart, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Specialist with UPMC Northwest has been working closely with 28 EMS services to support operations and restock with personal protective equipment (PPE).

As a teacher, Alysha Graham is working to still provide a learning experience for her second graders. She even created a project similar to Flat Stanley, to encourage students to share photos of adventures they are having with her "mini me."

We're missing Valerie Perry as she's on a cruise ship at sea. Although her contract with Holland America Line is over, she stayed on board to limit contact with family (although there are no cases on the ship). She's been making and editing videos, using her skills from being a video editor in the past. We've enjoyed her soothing

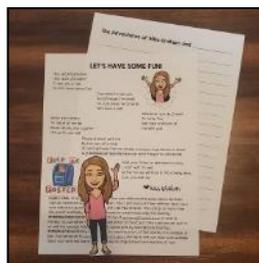
videos of the ocean on Facebook! She also recently completed her goal of visiting all 50 states.

With personal experiences, many shared how they've managed and supported others. Molly Minman with the Salvation Army has made checking in a priority. "I've realized the power of taking a few minutes to let someone know that you are thinking of them. It's been key to maintaining relationships," she said.

Kat Thompson and Laura Ordaz mentioned being in a "slump" sometimes and staying busy with hobbies. "We all need to do what we can to get through," said Kat.

It's been great to hear from some of you, and we invite you to reach out to us. Join us at our next Virtual Hangout or contact us directly. We miss you and hope you are staying healthy!

This article was shortened for this newsletter. Find the full article at venangochamber.org/flex-adapts



Professional Development Tip of the Month: Health at Home (Becca)

By Becca Weidle

FLEX Member Becca Weidle shared some tips for and protecting yourself from getting sick during this time:

Get Outside

Our internal environment resides in our gut. It's known as our microbiome and it consists of a vast amount of bacteria. It is a huge component of our immune system and we need it to be diverse. One of the easiest ways to do this is by getting fresh air.

The more variety of places we visit, you guessed it, the more variety in our microbiome. Since we are lucky enough to live in such a nature centric area we can take advantage of this while still keeping our suggested distance. Put simply—take a hike—the exercise doesn't hurt either, of course.

Green Tea

This is probably the easiest and best thing to incorporate into your daily regimen, if you don't



already. It contains catechins that help to disrupt bacteria AND viruses. Ramp it up by peeling some oranges that you've washed and boiling those in your water as well--it's more than just vitamin C.

Ease Stress and Fear

Naturally, most of us are concerned about the virus. Some of us are also dealing with

unemployment or the challenge of working at home (possibly with kids). These stressors have become constant and their end is uncertain. That's a lot of stress. It has been proven that chronic stressors "have negative effects on almost all functional measures of the immune system."

Combatting stress should not be another source of it. So, when you're feeling overwhelmed close your eyes, feel your feet on the floor and take slow, deep breaths. If it feels right, you could even come up with a mantra to recite, i.e.: I am safe, I am capable, I am calm.

Thanks Becca, for the tips!

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"Co-Worker" Stories

We asked young professionals working from home to share stories of their kids or pets, but told them to refer to them as "co-workers," and here's what we got:



"My co-worker Maisie got put in HR-mandated anger management therapy (aka the basement) after she bit my other coworker Starlight." - Aaron



"My co-worker demands m&ms and stickers whenever she goes to the bathroom (potty training)." - Tessa

"My co-worker was a shoo-in for employee of the month. Until she puked on the floor during a conference call. Didn't even clean it up herself." - Kat

"My co-workers pretended to be dinosaurs and threw all the crayons and colored pencils across the office." - Ashley G.

Find more stories on our [Facebook page!](#)



Molly Minman is a Pittsburgh native, now living in Meadville, and our newest FLEX member!

She earned her master's in public administration from Gannon University as well as a bachelor's in communication from Robert Morris University

and a certificate in nonprofit leadership from the Bayer Center for Nonprofit Leadership. Molly works as the Pathway of Hope Director for the Salvation Army, which she says is one of her greatest achievements.

Molly's role with the Salvation Army has her covering five counties and includes helping her clients find local resources, which she said has been going great in Venango County.

"Every organization I've reached out to has been incredibly helpful, which makes me really enjoy working in the area. People are so willing to collaborate," she says.

She says her other greatest achievement has been balancing her career with caring for her nine-month-old son in the midst of the current pandemic.

Molly's professional goals include going to law school so that she can "use her experience in the nonprofit sector to help low-income families with legal concerns."

One of her favorite things to do when she travels is to visit the local coffee shop, so she frequents Bossa Nova and Karma Coffee. Her other hobbies include reading, watching the news, volunteering, camping, and playing with her puppy.

Member Highlight: Charlie Cotherman

Congratulations to Charlie on the official release of his first solo-authored book on April 28th!

To Think Christianly provides compelling and comprehensive history in which Charlie traces the stories of notable study centers and networks, as well as their influence on a generation that would reshape twentieth-century Christianity.

This was a project that Charlie has been working on for more than six years and it's available on Amazon, as well as many independent book sellers. Learn more at ivpress.com/to-think-Christianly.

Charlie is a church-planter and pastor at Oil City Vineyard Church in Oil City, along with his wife Aimee. He was the FLEX Young Professional of the Year in 2018.



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We've had some great **Virtual Hangouts!** We plan to hold these often and we hope you'll join us. See [Facebook](#) and our weekly emails for upcoming event details.



Working from home? Some young professionals shared their workspaces with us. Share yours, too, on our post on our Facebook page!



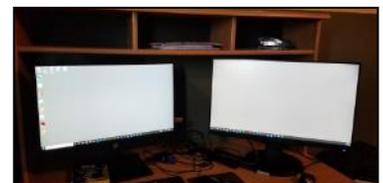
Kat Thompson



Ashley Sheffer



Laura Ordaz



**Ash Smith (top)
Saxon Daugherty (bottom)**

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:

In-person events and meetings have been postponed. We'll share updates about future virtual meet-ups in our weekly email and social media.

Are you on our email list? Click the button that says "Join the FLEX Email List" at the bottom of the page at venangoflex.org to be added.

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