

# FLEX FLEX Your Ideas

## FYI

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## The Importance of Connections

One thing that's become obvious over the last few months is that connections are just as important now as they ever have been. A huge focus of FLEX is networking, which isn't just about socializing and having fun, but building connections both personally and professionally.

While we haven't been able to hold in-person Coffee Chats, volunteer activities, and larger events, we've enjoyed our virtual events. They may be different, but they're just as important for keeping and building new connections.

Our first virtual event was a "Hangout" in April where we simply got together to chat. Since then, we've had two more, along with a Virtual Coffee Chat. Aaron Ritsig has attended most of the events and said: "I've been working from home, so the Zoom format has made it possible for me to attend events for the first time. There's been a mix of fun and professional topics and they have been an enjoyable addition to my social distancing routine."

Young professionals who have moved away have been able to reconnect with FLEX, like Leah Walenstosky who lives in Wisconsin.



"I like attending the virtual events and being able to hear from my friends and connect with my home community that I still love," she said.

A more specific event was held in May that attracted a lot of participation too—Virtual Trivia Night. Attendees were able to hear from hosts Casey McVay and Matt Beightol over Facebook Live, while also submitting their answers through the program Kahoot.

"I work a lot and don't get to partake in FLEX activities as often as I'd like, so having this online was a great way for me to 'hang out' with the group," Deanna Wolfgong said. "Just hearing familiar voices was calming and it was nice to laugh and joke even in a virtual space."

You don't need a FLEX hosted event in order to connect with other young professionals. Before this crisis, Rachel Stiller and Ashley Sheffer had coffee together each week and they're still "meeting up" over Zoom. Marissa Dechant who moved to Pittsburgh has been able to join, too, so this has also allowed all three of them to reconnect.

There's nothing quite like talking with someone in person, but we're so grateful for all the opportunities to continue connecting with one another. If you have questions or ideas for virtual events, please don't hesitate to contact us at [flex@venangochamber.org](mailto:flex@venangochamber.org). We can't wait to see you again, whether in person or online.

# Professional Development Tip of the Month: Managing Your Time

By Tessa Byham



It almost feels a little ironic for me to be writing an article about time management. For the last three months, I've been juggling working part-time from home with parenting full-time (and growing another human!) and to

say the least, it has not been easy. But, I figured I need the refresher and I love a "listicle" as much as the next millennial so here we go:

## Prioritize

I just love a good list. When I go grocery shopping I make an initial list and then I make another one that's organized by store and section (I know). Getting it all out of your head and onto paper is a great way to see what really needs to happen. Write it down, and then organize it by priority. I like to make a top 3 "must-do" list and then everything else goes below. That way, even if you only get those top 3 things done, you still feel accomplished.

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## The 45-15 Rule

Distractions are everywhere. How many of us have become avid bird-watchers since working from home? I can't be the only one who has started googling "what kind of bird is this" rather than focusing on my work. For this and many other reasons, I've tried to implement the 45-15 rule. For every hour of work, 45 minutes is focused on the task at hand, and the other 15 is for a break. A bathroom, snack, Facebook, or bird-watching break—whatever you need. And if 45 minutes feels daunting, start with 15 minutes of focus to 5 minutes of break and work your way up!

## Stop Multitasking

You would think to get more done, you should just do it all at once, right? Nope. We actually lose productivity by switching between tasks. Pick one task from your list and don't stop until it's done. So many of the things on my to-do list would and should only take me about 10 minutes of focused time, but when I am checking my phone, answering emails, and flipping between tasks, they end up taking so much longer.

Unfortunately, good time management might not be a skill we just *have*. Like drinking enough water or getting out of bed after that first alarm (I might need to write an article on that next), it's a learned skill requiring practice. The benefits of honing that skill will help professionally and personally, so let's give it a shot.

*Thanks Tessa, for the tips!*

## What Have You Been Cooking?

We asked on Facebook what delicious dishes you've been cooking at home. Some responses included:

- Chicken and Sausage Jambalaya and homemade pizza - Aaron Ritsig
- Mussels in a red wine sauce with homemade sourdough (grilled) - Yuri Miyazaki
- Homemade bread - Jenalee Schenk
- Vegan curry and Bouya (a Wisconsin soup) - Leah Walentosky



*Now we're hungry! Find more photos and recipes (and share your own) on our [Facebook page!](#)*





**Alysha Graham** is originally from Venango County, but lived in Florida for awhile, and we're so glad she's back!

She is currently working toward her master's degree at Edinboro University. She earned dual bachelor's degrees in Early Childhood Education and Special Education from Slippery Rock University and while at Slippery Rock, she was a part of a student teaching curriculum in Dublin, Ireland, for a month.

She is a lifelong learner sharing that: "Upon completion of my graduate degree, I would like to learn more about Dyslexia Intervention."

After graduation, Alysha relocated to Florida. She worked as a teacher and was asked to develop a classroom to work individually with students on goals outlined in their IEPs (Individualized Education Plans).

She is now working in the Franklin Area School District and has been continuing to communicate with her second graders through Google Classroom.

Alysha is happy to be back in the area and appreciates our local amenities, like the scenery. "I enjoy watching the seasons change through my drive to work," she said. She likes visiting local coffee shops, walking on the bike trail, dining at restaurants (especially Trails to Ales), attending events at the Barrow-Civic Theatre, and going to various festivals.

She hopes to buy a home with her significant other here and raise her children in the area. "There is nowhere else I would want to raise children," she said.

In her free time, Alysha enjoys playing with her dogs, sewing, crafting, camping, and riding a side-by-side. She also enjoys opening her home to friends and family to spend time together.

## Member Highlight: Saxon Daugherty



FLEX Vice President/Secretary Saxon Daugherty has had public speaking opportunities with many organizations in Pennsylvania lately through his job at Child Development Centers (CDC), where he is the Communications Specialist.

Saxon interviewed with 90.5 MHz, Pittsburgh's National Public Radio News Station, after education reporter Sarah Schneider reached out to inquire about CDC's announcement to re-open on May 11 and detail some of the safety measures put into place.

He talked with nearly 300 people at the Southeastern Pennsylvania Early Childhood Coalition Meeting alongside First Up, an organization focused on early education, and also spoke at the Early Head Start Child Care Partnership Health Services Advisory Council Meeting.

For each of the sessions, he talked about how CDC has navigated the public health crisis of COVID-19 to help set an example for other providers across the state on how to open safely during the pandemic. Nice work, Saxon!





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We had a blast at our first FLEX Virtual Trivia Night! If you didn't get a chance to participate, we wanted to share some of the interesting questions asked:

**What year was the current Venango County Courthouse built?** 1868

**According to the US Census Bureau, what percentage of Venango County's 683 square miles is water?** 1.3%

**How many incorporated municipalities (city, borough, township) make up Venango County?** 31



**What is the name of the man who struck oil just outside of Titusville, PA, in 1859?**  
Edwin Drake

**How long is the Kennerdell Bridge?** 905 feet

**Freedom Falls is located along which body of water in Rockland Township?** Shull Run

**What famous person signed his first film contract when performing at the Lyric Theatre?** Charles Chaplin

**How many acres are in the lake at Two Mile Run County Park?** 144



#### 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. We also plan to share a poll on Facebook, soon, for ideas for future meet-ups!

**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](http://venangoflex.org) to be added.

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