

PBN PROVIDENCE BUSINESS NEWS
**BUSINESS
EXCELLENCE**
2018 AWARDS

BROWN UNIVERSITY'S
CHRISTINA H. PAXSON

PAGE 6 | PEOPLE-FIRST
APPROACH LEADS TO
GROWTH, INNOVATION
FOR BUSINESS
LEADERSHIP WINNER

PRESENTING SPONSOR

blumshapiro
accounting • tax • advisory

PARTNER SPONSORS



Bryant University
INSPIRED TO EXCEL



PARTRIDGE
SNOW &
HAHN LLP





blumshapiro

accounting • tax • advisory

Inspired solutions to move you forward

blumshapiro.com →

At blumshapiro we're channeling our 35 year legacy into inspired solutions to help our clients step forward. We're helping clients find the questions that haven't been asked, the outcomes that haven't been anticipated and the solutions that haven't been tried.

At blum, wherever you choose to go, your future has a home.

blumshapiro
step forward

(401) 272-5600
Rhode Island
Massachusetts
Connecticut

An independent member of Baker Tilly International

PBN PROVIDENCE BUSINESS NEWS
**BUSINESS
EXCELLENCE**
2018 AWARDS



SPONSOR MESSAGES



PRESENTING SPONSOR



blumshapiro
accounting • tax • advisory

blumshapiro is proud to continue our presenting sponsorship of the Business Excellence Awards. Congratulations to all the 2018 honorees! As exemplified by your companies, blum believes that to succeed as a business we must develop deep relationships, examine our past, and provide a platform to imagine the future. As a fellow Rhode Island business, we applaud your vision, drive and passion for business excellence. Bravo!



PARTNER SPONSORS



Bryant University
INSPIRED TO EXCEL

Bryant University congratulates the winners of the 2018 Providence Business News Business Excellence Awards. We applaud their commitment to excellence and salute their accomplishments and inspiration to excel. Visit www.bryant.edu to learn more about the top-ranked programs offered by Bryant's College of Business, College of Arts and Sciences, School of Health Sciences, and Executive Development Center.



Cox Business is proud to continue its long standing sponsorship of Providence Business News' Business Excellence Awards. We applaud all the businesses being honored and wish them continued success!



BROWN

The success of Brown University and Rhode Island have been intertwined from the Industrial Age to the Knowledge Economy. Working together, we launch new ventures; advance discoveries in science, health care and technology; and educate the next generation of leaders, locally and globally. Brown University is proud to be part of the Providence business community. Visit brown.edu.

PARTRIDGE
SNOW &
HAHN LLP

Partridge Snow & Hahn is proud to recognize the winners of the 2018 Business Excellence Awards. The dedication, vision, hard work and commitment shown by those being recognized is exemplary. Congratulations to all honorees.

PUBLISHER'S LETTER

LEADERS IN TODAY'S BUSINESS WORLD are required to master skills across many disciplines. But perhaps none is so important



as the ability to build teams that mix different talents, personalities and perspectives to produce the best outcomes.

This reality is made clear through the

successive profiles of the honorees in this year's Business Excellence Awards program, the 18th edition of PBN's flagship recognition program.

Nowhere is the need to use collaboration as a tool for advancement made more clear than in the profile of this year's winner for Business Leadership, Brown University President Christina H. Paxson.

A distinguished economist and expert in public health, Paxson leads a sprawling enterprise, one that ranges from offering a world-class undergraduate education to training the next generation of engineers, physicians, public health practitioners, and researchers and teachers in the arts and sciences. As if that were not enough, today's

universities are seen as significant economic engines for their communities.

As Paxson said, "bringing people together to develop a consensus around priorities and plans" is a must in order to move any enterprise forward. And she is doing just that, to the great benefit of Rhode Island and the region.

So even as her successes are singular, they are also a testament to the power of collaboration, just like for all the rest of the 2018 BEA winners.

The BEA program would not be able to shine a spotlight on the region's high-achieving business leaders and enterprises without the help of corporate sponsorship. Their support testifies to their commitment to the health of the region's business community. Returning as presenting sponsor of the Business Excellence Awards for the third consecutive year is blumshapiro. Partner sponsors this year are Brown University, Bryant University, Cox Business and Partridge Snow & Hahn LLP.

Roger C. Bergenheim

Roger C. Bergenheim
President and Publisher

TABLE OF CONTENTS

BUSINESS LEADERSHIP pg. 6
Christina H. Paxson, President | Brown University

CORPORATE CITIZENSHIP pg. 8
Dr. Timothy J. Babineau, President and CEO | Lifespan Corp.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT pg. 10, 11
National Grid Rhode Island

EXCELLENCE AT AN ENTERPRISE COMPANYpg. 12
Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island

EXCELLENCE AT A LARGE COMPANY.....pg. 14
Starkweather & Shepley Insurance Brokerage Inc.

EXCELLENCE AT A MIDSIZE COMPANYpg. 18
Trinity Repertory Company

EXCELLENCE AT A SMALL COMPANY pg. 20, 21
Capital Good Fund

EXCELLENCE AT A SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCY pg. 22
Adoption Rhode Island

EXCELLENCE AT A NONPROFIT pg. 23
Local Initiatives Support Corp. Rhode Island

EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION AND LEARNING..... pg. 24
Project GOAL Inc.

EXCELLENCE IN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT pg. 25
William M. Davies Jr. Career and Technical High School

EXCELLENCE IN WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESS pg. 28
Gil's Appliances

EXCELLENCE IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP pg. 29
Renaud Megard, Nameplates For Industry Corp.

EXCELLENCE IN FAMILY-OWNED BUSINESS pg. 30
Ocean State Job Lot



PBN PROVIDENCE BUSINESS NEWS
BUSINESS EXCELLENCE
2018 AWARD *winner*

Excellence matters for
Rhode Island employers

Collaboration • Accountability • Integrity • Respect

These four values are what excellent companies strive for—and what our customers expect of us. So we're honored to earn this Excellence at an Enterprise Company award. We take these values to heart as we help Rhode Island employers develop new benefits strategies that make their businesses stronger.



Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.
10/18 EC-281300

Brown University congratulates the **2018 Business Excellence Award honorees.**

As an anchor of Rhode Island's economy, Brown honors the spirit of collaboration and community engagement among the Providence business and nonprofit sectors.



BROWN



Paxson charts Brown's future in collaborative effort

BY PAUL E. KANDARIAN | Contributing Writer

CHRISTINA H. PAXSON, PRESIDENT OF BROWN UNIVERSITY since 2012, knows “you can’t just do what you want to do” when it comes to leading a business or an Ivy League university.

But you can delegate, she said, “bringing people together to develop a consensus around priorities and plans,” adding she learned some of those leadership tools when she was dean of the Woodrow Wilson School of International and Public Affairs at Princeton before being named Brown’s 19th president.

The additions to and expansion of the university during her tenure have been many and varied, including investing in its College Hill campus and Providence’s Jewelry District, and being an anchor tenant in the \$220 million South Street Landing Project.

She also worked with students, faculty and staff to develop “Building on Distinction,” a 10-year strategic plan launched in 2014 to shape the university’s growth and progress.

“That was built around the premise that by targeting investments playing to Brown’s strengths, we can be a greater university with a stronger international reputation and a more impactful presence in society,” Paxson said.

That plan stresses aggressive experimentation in new modes of education that rely on online learning and the use of other digital technologies, which Paxson says is happening at Brown.

“Institutions take differing paths of using online tools, and our approach is still evolving, but we’ve developed a number of executive master’s degree programs and can have students from all over the world getting their degrees,” she said. “We’re also doing more online teaching of Brown students, more courses in edX [an online learning destination and massive open online course, or MMOC provider], a great platform for producing shorter pieces so content can be used for certificate pro-

grams.”

Under her leadership, Brown opened a new School of Public Health, launched the Institute at Brown for Environment and Society, and is experiencing a renaissance in social sciences in connection with the Watson Institute for Public and International Affairs.

“It’s important for us to be at the forefront of those key issues, because you look at them, public health, the environment and society and so forth, these are the major challenges of our time,” she said, adding that Brown’s School of Public Health and Brown’s Warren Alpert Medical School are addressing the nation’s opioid crisis as well. “And we’re looking at climate change, not by just addressing it but seeing how to protect the environment.”

She also pointed to the creation in 2015 of Brown University’s Hasenfeld Child Health Innovation Institute,

CHRISTINA H. PAXSON
PRESIDENT,
BROWN UNIVERSITY

DYNAMIC DIRECTION:

Christina H. Paxson, president of Brown University, in the Bruhn Room in the university’s John Hay Library.

PBN PHOTO/RUPERT WHITELEY

which focuses on discovering and applying strategies to improve the lives of children, and not just in Rhode Island.

“The institute’s emphasis is on childhood obesity, autism and asthma, and we’re doing our work in Rhode Island for the benefit of those here,” she said, “but the lessons we draw are global. These issues affect Rhode Island, the country and the world, and we’re very proud to be doing this work.”

Paxson is the second female president of Brown. According to the 2017 American College President Survey, women comprised 30 percent of college presidents in the United States and women of color just 5 percent.

“When I go to Association of American Universities’ meetings, there aren’t many women around,” Paxson said. “It’s disturbing. But look at the pipeline of women in sciences and the environment, social sciences that had been very male-dominated for 30 years, and things are getting better. It’s a matter of time.

“On the other hand,” she added, “You can’t count on time to make it happen. You need a board when looking for a new president to think hard about building pools of diversity. There are a lot of great people out there.”

As to any legacy she’d like to leave at Brown, she said, “I want Brown to be significantly stronger than when I came. We’ve made a lot of progress in six years and hope to keep at the same pace.” ■

‘Public health, the environment and society and so forth, these are the major challenges of our time.’

CHRISTINA H. PAXSON,
Brown University president



EXCELLENCE DOESN'T COME EASY.
You make it look like it does.

CONGRATULATIONS TO PBN'S 2018 BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARD WINNERS!

At Partridge Snow & Hahn, we understand how important it is to have lawyers on your team who are always one step ahead. You need lawyers who operate like true business partners; lawyers who work hard to get things done. We can help. Call us.

Find the experience you're looking for at psh.com.

**PARTRIDGE
SNOW &
HAHN LLP**

BOSTON | PROVIDENCE | SOUTHCOAST 401-861-8200



Service ethic comes full circle for Babineau

BY PAUL E. KANDARIAN | Contributing Writer

WHEN IT COMES TO CREATING A CAREER, sometimes family influence is the most powerful of all. For Dr. Timothy J. Babineau, president and CEO of **Lifespan Corp.** since 2012, that influence included happily carrying his father's medical bag during house calls, back in the day when such things existed.

It's also where Babineau saw firsthand the power of community service and helping others.

"I remember one instance when I was sitting at the table with a large, extended family of French Canadians," Babineau said. "We were playing gin rummy to keep me occupied while my father was in the bedroom of his patient, who was passing away."

"When he came out, all the ladies and men hugged my dad and thanked him for helping," he continued. "As a young boy, I was confused as to why they thanked him, considering his patient died. I get it now."

Babineau just marked 10 years since coming to Rhode Island, and "looking back, some of the most gratifying moments have been my involvement in the community."

Prior to his appointment leading Lifespan, he'd served as president and CEO of Rhode Island Hospital and The Miriam Hospital and, before coming to Rhode Island in 2008, was senior vice president and chief medical officer for the University of Maryland Medical Center and School of Medicine in Baltimore.

His community involvement mirrors Lifespan's, with the company's myriad activities in the state. Babineau is proud of them all, he said, but a few "rise to the top, such as the Year-Up program. ... The work they do with youth and giving them jobs is extraordinary."

That program this year worked with more than 60 interns from neighborhoods around Rhode Island Hospital, and Lifespan hired most of them

upon completing the program, Babineau said.

"Nearly 20 initiatives, such as Lifespan's mentoring and youth-employment programs, are intended to mitigate the effects of social determinants on health," he said. "They not only educate young people about healthy behaviors but also provide examples of ways in which a young person can find a path to improved income, and thus a healthier life situation in general."

He said raising the economic status of young people in poverty strengthens the state's workforce and benefits Rhode Island by "creating jobs and adding to income tax coffers. Most importantly, the programs improve the health and well-being of populations across our service areas."

According to the Lifespan website, under Babineau's leadership, Lifespan contributes an average of \$900,000 in partnerships and sponsorships annually. Earlier this year, the company became

DR. TIMOTHY J. BABINEAU
PRESIDENT AND CEO,
LIFESPAN CORP.

DEVOTED LEADER: Dr. Timothy J. Babineau, right, sees service as not just his profession but as a way of life he is passing along to his children, as it was passed on to him as a boy, Babineau speaks with David Levesque, media relations, Lifespan.

PBN PHOTO/RUPERT WHITELEY

the co-sponsor of the Providence JUMP Bike Share System and uses a Prescribe a Bike program to benefit patients in need of transportation options and better access to physical-fitness opportunities.

Lifespan's hospitals and programs are designed to care for the sick. But the company also has a slew of preventive measures in the community to keep people healthy, Babineau says, including oral health screenings for children; a demonstration kitchen to teach people how to cook healthy and affordable meals; a health-literacy program; smoking-cessation programs; and Bradley Hospital's Parenting Matters and Tamas Familiares (Spanish Parenting Matters).

Babineau was the last of seven children in a family that had helping others in its DNA, he says. And now with two teenage girls of his own, that legacy of community involvement continues.

"There's a constant reminder to my girls about how fortunate we are as a family and how important it is to give back," he said. "My oldest, Kate, has volunteered two summers in a row with the Lifespan Community Health Institute. My youngest, Marina, has been actively involved in food and clothing drives in the Barrington public school system."

Doing these things, he says, is not so much an afterthought as a way of life.

"It's how I was raised," Babineau said, "so it's how I try to raise my daughters." ■

'There's a constant reminder to my girls about ... how important it is to give back.'

DR. TIMOTHY J. BABINEAU,
Lifespan Corp. president and CEO



Bryant University

INSPIRED TO EXCEL

GRADUATE BUSINESS DEGREE PROGRAMS: MBA ONLINE, MBA, MPAC, MPAC-TAX

Bryant's AACSB-accredited programs combine the latest in business theory with essential management skills to advance your career. Earn the Bryant MBA Online, One- or Two-Year MBA degree (specializations in Global Supply Chain Management, Global Finance, Business Analytics, and International Business), the Master of Professional Accountancy (MPAc), or Master of Professional Accountancy with Tax Concentration (MPAc-Tax) and be in demand.



GRADUATE PROGRAMS IN ARTS AND SCIENCES: MACOM, CGS IN COMMUNICATION, CGS IN SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICES

The Master of Arts in Communication (MACom) distinguishes you by helping you master the full set of communication skills employers require, and enables you to launch a new career, enhance your abilities, or make a career change. Bryant's MACom allows you to specialize in Organizational Communication, Health Communication, or an area of study designed for your particular interests. Bryant also offers a Certificate of Graduate Studies (CGS) in Communication as well as a CGS in Sustainability Practices.



SCHOOL OF HEALTH SCIENCES: MSPAS

Exceptional medical education demands exceptional hands-on training. In Bryant's fully-accredited Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies (MSPAS) program, you'll benefit from high-tech classrooms and laboratories, work with patients in an unprecedented 12 clinical specialty rotations, and be paired with preeminent doctors.



EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT CENTER

The Executive Development Center empowers individuals and organizations to gain business advantage through its professional certification and certificate programs. Programs are available online, onsite, or on campus- providing you with flexibility to meet the demands of your schedule. The online Innovative Healthcare Leadership Graduate Certificate provides discounts for veterans.



TO LEARN MORE VISIT WWW.BRYANT.EDU.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT



PITCHING IN: From left, National Grid Rhode Island employees Walter Palmer and Chelsea Perkins help paint a room at a homeless shelter for the Community Care Alliance in Woonsocket on Oct. 19. National Grid employees volunteer their time for a variety of causes throughout the state.
 PBN PHOTO/RUPERT WHITELEY

NATIONAL GRID RHODE ISLAND

Energized service aids community

BY SUSAN SHALHOUB | Contributing Writer

NATIONAL GRID RHODE ISLAND dives right in when it comes to community service – or at least wades in – as volunteers did recently with Save The Bay, to help the organization replace eelgrass. Many eelgrass beds have been lost due to pollution and other factors, and it's a food source for marine life. So a National Grid team donned waders – and got involved.

“We’re taking a boat from Charlestown beach and ... working in Ninigret Pond,” said National Grid’s Marisa Albanese, manager of community and customer management, before the excursion.

SS STARKWEATHER & SHEPLEY
INSURANCE BROKERAGE INC.



Est. 1879

PBN PROVIDENCE BUSINESS NEWS
BUSINESS EXCELLENCE
 2018 AWARD *winner*

TPA Affiliates
 & Divisions:

RISCO
 insurance brokerage inc.



- Personal Insurance • Business Insurance • Employee Benefits
- Surety/Bonding • Financial Services/Risk Solutions

Starshep.com

trinity rep



Providence's Tony Award-winning theater is **your home for dramatic discoveries.**

Consider Trinity Rep for group outings, employee rewards, and client entertainment.



We are proud to be among this impressive company. **Congratulations to all the winners.**

(401) 351-4242 • TRINITYREP.COM • 201 WASHINGTON ST. • PROVIDENCE

FROM TOP: WILKIE FERGUSON III, MIA ELLIS, THE CAST OF PRIDE AND PREJUDICE, ANNE SCURRIA, TIMOTHY CROWE, DANIEL DUQUE-ESTRADA & MARÍA, GABRIELA ROSADO GONZÁLEZ

Environmental projects – such as eelgrass restoration – and community service, education and safety are the four main areas National Grid commits to in the areas it serves.

“These are areas we feel are pretty key to our customers,” said Timothy F. Horan, president of National Grid Rhode Island.

Specific examples include the gas and electric company’s Lunch on Us program, through which it provides and serves lunch to the needy at McAuley House in Providence for the month of May; a City Year Rhode Island event at Gilbert Stuart Middle School to assemble teacher-appreciation packets; and promotion of the United Way 211 emergency line for storm preparedness.

These efforts are all part of the company’s Power To Serve program. Last year, 30 percent of National Grid’s 950 Rhode Island employees volunteered in the community.

It has a core group of agencies it serves in ways that often overlap, Horan and Albanese said. In addition to volunteer work, its leaders serve on the boards of numerous nonprofits, including Horan being

on the board of the Rhode Island Public Expenditure Council, for example.

And the ways the company gives back are varied and diverse, Albanese said.

“Sometimes employees give us ideas. ... In our Lincoln office, they like to collect hats and mittens for kids.” Others like to buy other gifts for children’s charities, she said.

In other instances, the culture of community service and dedication spills over in less-structured ways. Albanese tells of the team at the National Grid Dexter Street location in Providence jumping in with a Bobcat one winter when someone there noticed the principal of the Alfred Lima Elementary School nearby, shoveling snow.

Albanese said National Grid has an advantage working in Rhode Island, a small state where connections seem to come easier. She said vetting the nonprofits National Grid supports is simple due to the company’s already high level of local involvement.

“We don’t ask for very formal reports,” she said. “Though we aren’t just writing a check. We’re involved in what they are doing.”

Often this results in lasting con-

nections. In North Kingstown, for example, National Grid does volunteer work with Davisville Middle School. It was able to connect Davisville with a United Way grant program to help it continue some of its after-school programming over the summer, said Albanese.

Specifically, in the area of education, National Grid supports STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) efforts.

Last year, National Grid also put volunteer employees out there as mentors, joining with Big Brothers Big Sisters for the Beyond School Walls program. Fifteen students from Providence’s Lillian Feinstein Elementary School were matched up with employee mentors and did

STEM-related activities with them for the first half of the year.

National Grid’s local involvement benefits the community, but it also benefits the company and its team members, Albanese said.

Company-sponsored projects often put those who are not in leadership roles in the company into leadership roles for these community efforts, she said. The National Grid locations in Rhode Island also help out at each other’s local projects when possible.

“It allows people from different parts of the state to meet,” she said. “It builds teamwork and camaraderie. It feels good to support these projects and our communities in general.” ■

‘It feels good to **support** these **projects and our communities** in general.’

MARISA ALBANESE, National Grid manager of community and customer management

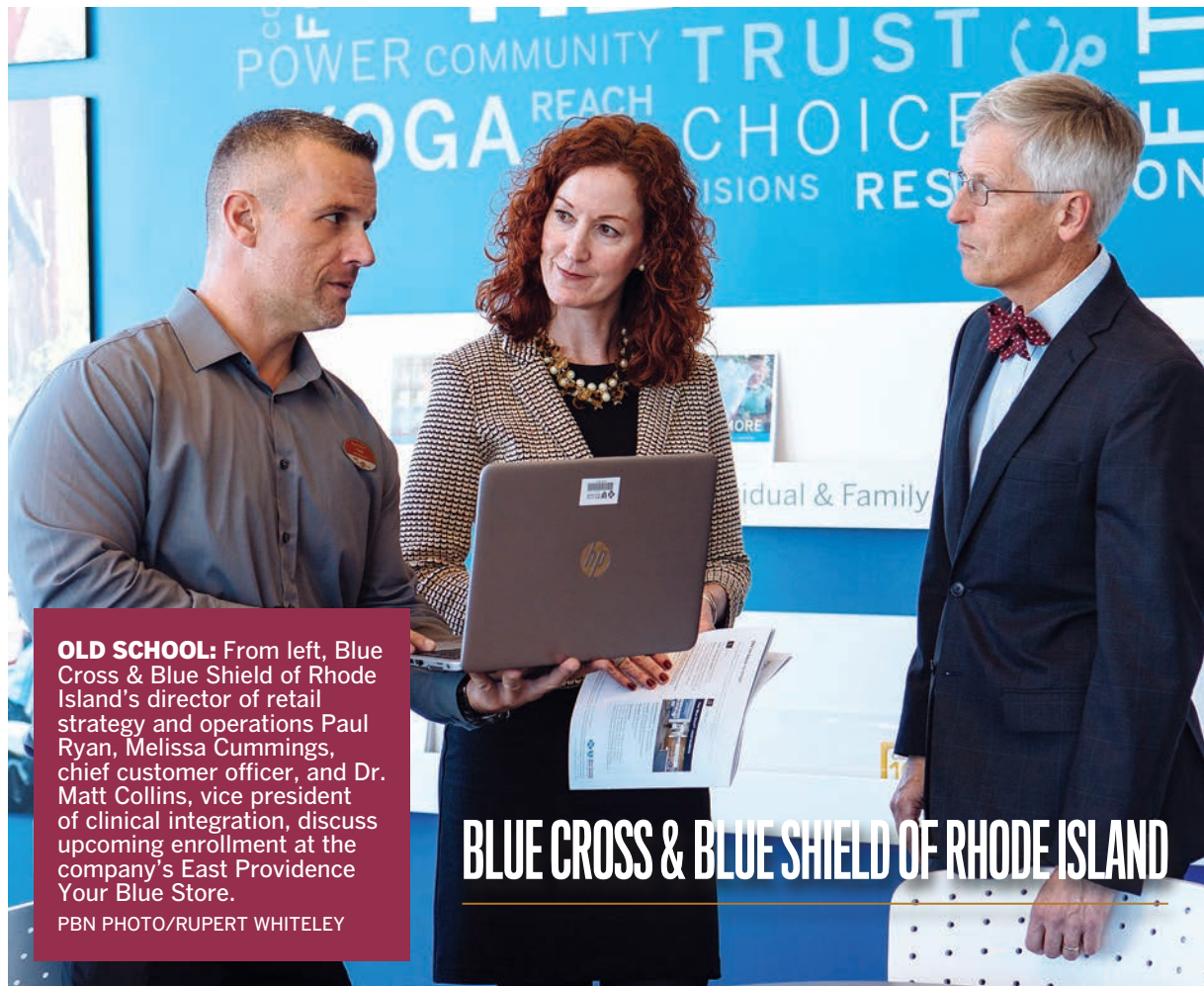


TUFTSHEALTHPLAN.COM

Tufts Health Plan congratulates Dr. Timothy J. Babineau of Lifespan and all of this year’s Business Excellence Award winners.

You live and breathe your business. Shouldn’t your health plan do the same? Find out more and request a quote at tuftshealthplan.com/allbusiness.

EXCELLENCE AT AN ENTERPRISE COMPANY



OLD SCHOOL: From left, Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island's director of retail strategy and operations Paul Ryan, Melissa Cummings, chief customer officer, and Dr. Matt Collins, vice president of clinical integration, discuss upcoming enrollment at the company's East Providence Your Blue Store.

PBN PHOTO/RUPERT WHITELEY

BLUE CROSS & BLUE SHIELD OF RHODE ISLAND

Blue Cross blends old, new to educate, increase value

BY WENDY PIERMAN MITZEL | Contributing Writer

BLUE CROSS & BLUE SHIELD OF RHODE ISLAND, a leading health insurance provider for nearly 80 years, is looking to the lessons of the past, as well as the opportunities of the future, to serve its nearly 400,000 members.

Take, for instance, the way the company is bucking the trend of online everything, instead opening brick-and-mortar stores in East Providence, Lincoln and Warwick. At Your Blue Stores, members speak in person with representatives about their plans, their care choices and even get advice from an on-site nurse. Community rooms offer places for members to meet for free exercise or well-being classes, including caregiver support groups. Since 2014, Rhode Islanders have made nearly 60,000 visits to these locations.

"We're making investments in our communities in meaningful ways," said Melissa Cummings, chief customer officer for Blue Cross. "We're in the business of providing for the health and well-being of Rhode Island."

As such, customization is a key part of Blue Cross' strategy to encourage customers to gain the most value they can for the money spent.

"The reality of the personalization of the stores is it is keeping pace with what we are able to do in our own lives," she said. "We personalize everything. Insurance has to keep pace."

New opportunities include accessibility to a podcast – the "Rhode to Health" – that explains complex health care issues for customers and highlights beneficial community partners.

Blue Cross also aims to give patients all the information they need to make informed decisions, including the recent LGBTQ Safe Zone program

that identifies health care practices providing safe, affirming and inclusive care to the LGBTQ community.

"Insurance is looking to help patients differentiate between excellent and average health care," said Dr. Matt Collins, vice president of clinical integration.

With the Affordable Care Act encouraging more individual plan choices and employers to offer the health plans, the need has never been greater. Blue Cross aims to show businesses how to grow and thrive by attracting talent, offering wellness incentives and using data-driven tools to provide choices and control costs.

"The ACA opened up the market and necessitated moving from business to business, to business to consumer," said Cummings. "It presents an important opportunity. There are changes in the consumption of health care when you, the consum-

er, are accountable for the costs."

The company leads by example. After watching its employee health care costs rise 56 percent in the early 2000s, leadership examined its own plan sustainability and reversed the cost trend by 20 percent.

As a result, in 2017 Blue Cross contributed \$23 million into reserves to pay future claims, although the single greatest factor was a one-time investment gain of \$10 million. From 2013 to 2017, the insurer says it averaged approximately \$21 million a year in operating gain but \$23 million a year in overall net loss.

Many new efficiencies come from a more patient-centered system and advanced primary care, linking patient care providers together virtually, or in a coordinated environment, with oversight from a primary care doctor.

"The more contact with the primary care doctor, the better the quality of care and the lower the cost," explained Collins, adding that Blue Cross is also helping members find affordable medication and manage treatment.

"Medications do no good if you're not taking them," said Collins.

Behavioral health is getting more attention, with Blue Cross encouraging doctors to screen patients at regular exams for behavioral health, substance abuse and depression, among other indicators. The company has removed the prior-approval requirement for in-network mental health or substance-use disorder services and lowered the copayment for outpatient office visits.

Health insurance offers a set of benefits and a network of physicians, Collins explained. "Now we customize and personalize those options to get individuals and employees to use them." ■

'We're in the business of providing for the **health and well-being of Rhode Island.**

MELISSA CUMMINGS,
 Blue Cross & Blue Shield of
 Rhode Island chief
 customer officer

A strong past, a brighter future

For brothers Tony and Dave Zelano, insurance is the family business. Established over fifty years ago by their father, Richard Zelano, the team has built off the foundation he set for them, expanding from one location to four in just over seven years and becoming the largest Nationwide agency in Rhode Island.

A family business

Zelano Insurance's roots date back to 1964, when Richard Zelano added Nationwide Insurance to his accounting practice. During that time rates were good, and there was less competition. It was a smart business decision that led to the laying of the foundation of the thriving insurance business that his two sons, Tony and Dave run today.

"I remember having conversations with Dad when I was in high school about taking over the insurance side of things," says Tony when asked how he decided to join the family business.

"As soon as I graduated college, I jumped right in, learning firsthand about sales and customer service."



By the time Tony's brother, Dave, joined the family business, the insurance industry was rapidly changing, with higher rates and competition from internet sales of insurance. Richard continued to run the accounting portion of the company, along with day-to-day operations while his two sons concentrated on growing the business through sales.

Building the foundation

When you meet Tony, it's easy to see why he's been so successful at the sales part of the business. For him, it's more than just selling insurance – it's about building lasting relationships with clients, and that's what makes him and his team different than the large internet based companies that are their competitors.

"We take the time to look at our client's holistic needs. We want to build a foundation so as their needs change; we're there for them and able to provide them with what they need at the best rates possible."

Over the last five decades, the Zelano's have built a foundation of trust with the Rhode Island community as the insurance agency that's 'always there for you.' When asked how they did it, Tony says, "Dad always taught us that if you work hard, everything will come."

Looking towards the future

Along with hard work, Tony gives this advice to other business owners, "Live for tomorrow, not today."

When Richard decided that his tomorrow would be retirement, he handed his business over to his sons, which transformed their roles. The brothers had both concentrated on sales, while their father ran the accounting and business end of operations.

"Dave shifted into management and operations. It's great," says Tony about the changes.

"He's very methodical and analytical, where with sales, I'm constantly the one who says 'yes' – Dave makes sure to balance me out."

Together, the brothers knew they wanted the business to grow. The team expanded through the acquisition of existing Nationwide offices throughout Rhode Island, going from five employees to nearly twenty with four locations.

"Dad had an existing relationship with Ken Martin [Chief Commercial Lending Officer] at Savings Institute. When we needed funding to acquire the new Cumberland location, the bank made it easy," Tony explains his experience with Savings Institute Bank & Trust. "I didn't need to invest a ton of my time into the transaction. The bank streamlined the process and made it easy for us."

Lending Made Simple

"When we needed funding to acquire the new Cumberland location, the bank made it easy, I didn't need to invest a ton of my time into the transaction. The bank streamlined the process and made it easy for us."

Savings Institute Bank & Trust is proud to have helped Zelano's Insurance continue to build lasting relationships with their clients in new markets. Just as the family strives to meet their client's needs now and in the future, the bank does the same. Give Dave Caruso a call at (401) 450-2955 to talk about how we can help your business thrive.

 **Savings Institute** BANK & TRUST

www.savingsinstitute.bank • (800) 423-0142

 Equal Housing Lender

Member FDIC



EXCELLENCE AT A LARGE COMPANY



TEAM CULTURE:
Starkweather & Shepley Insurance Brokerage CEO Larry Keefe speaks to sales staff during a morning meeting at the company's East Providence office.

PBN PHOTO/MICHAEL SALERNO

**STARKWEATHER & SHEPLEY
INSURANCE BROKERAGE INC.**

Looking out for clients' interests yields growth

BY WENDY PIERMAN MITZEL | Contributing Writer

IN JANUARY, Starkweather & Shepley Insurance Brokerage Inc. will celebrate 140 years of developing a standard of performance that combines tradition with a growing platform to offer insurance, risk management and related services in a global economy.

"The fundamentals of everyone here include three traits: passion, commitment and competency," said CEO Larry Keefe. "By maintaining those values, we can be thought leaders on behalf of our clients. ... Employers today need a resource partner when making business decisions."

From a small office in 1879 to 14 offices across four states, Starkweather & Shepley is one of the fastest-growing brokerage companies in the area. From 2015 to present, the company has reported more than 10 percent revenue increases each year, while the industry average is closer to 5 percent, according to Keefe, the result being annual revenue of \$55 million.

"Our growth is consistent," he said. "It's nearly double over our peers and the largest in Rhode Island. We are ranked nationally, now the 61st-largest broker in 2017."

Keefe said the ability to offer a hyper-diversified menu of 60 carriers and access to 200 options gives

the company an advantage. Pair that with 260 employees dedicated to serving client needs and a network of 26 unit managers who meet consistently, and the opportunity for success is profound.

"I tend to see it as a middle-up-and-out type of approach to leadership," explained Keefe. "I may not have all the great ideas, but I know a great idea when I see one."

At the forefront of company strategy is providing customers with more than a guarantee of insurance coverage. Stefan Petrella, director of corporate communications and media, said the East Providence agency hosts several conferences each year for clients and other business leaders,

most recently a seminar addressing workplace violence, bringing together a panel of law enforcement representatives, medical professionals, human resources talent and attorneys for 200 attendees.

"We are cognizant that as we grow and learn, our clients do as well," said Petrella. "We want to adapt to the landscape and take care of clients in their best interests."

At the end of the event, Starkweather & Shepley partnered with an insurance carrier partner to donate \$5,000 to a workplace violence nonprofit. It's typical of the company's commitment to charity. This year employees helped raise more than \$50,000 for various organizations.

Petrella and Keefe say the company culture is team-oriented, stemming from the fact that the private company is held in trust for the benefit of the associates and stakeholders. It's essential that all voices are listened to and new ideas considered.

For instance, within the last few years the company has seen a focus on employee satisfaction transitioning from accrued paid-time-off to what is called "beneficial time-off," a responsibly used, unlimited paid vacation plan.

"We are all adults and responsible," said Keefe. "As long as you get business done and in a thoughtful manner, take as much time as you need. If you have to take a child or your mother or father to the doctor's, we provide that flexibility."

The company also abides by a "Dress for Your Day" policy that allows employees to dress for either corporate meetings or a day at the desk.

Starkweather & Shepley recently held an annual outing at which all the employees traveled to Newport Vineyards for a day of lawn games, rest and relaxation.

"It's a way of getting to know each other so we feel more like family," said Keefe. "And it's a chance to take a breath." ■

'The fundamentals of everyone here includes three traits: **passion, commitment and competency.**

LARRY KEEFE,

Starkweather & Shepley Insurance Brokerage Inc. CEO



Children first, and always.

Helping one child may not change
the world, but it could change
the world for that child.



Adoption Rhode Island

Two Bradford Street • Providence, RI • 401-865-6000 • AdoptionRI.org



BOOK OF LISTS PREMIER EVENT

JANUARY 24

The best business networking event of the year! Business leaders and executives join PBN in honoring the many companies featured in the Book of Lists.



MANUFACTURING AWARDS

MARCH 13

Celebrate the Manufacturing Renaissance that is evolving regionally and across the country. The PBN Manufacturing Awards recognizes manufacturers in multiple award categories, and one individual receives the Leadership & Strategy Award.



C-SUITE AWARDS

APRIL 25

PBN's C-Suite Awards program recognizes top C-level executives for public, private and nonprofit companies who are innovators, trailblazers, role models and leaders in the community.



BUSINESS WOMEN AWARDS

MAY 23

PBN honors the success of women in a variety of industries and recognizes younger, professional women to watch as well as industry leaders. A career achiever and outstanding mentor are also honored.



BEST PLACES TO WORK IN RHODE ISLAND

JUNE 13

Celebrate the state's best employers, who are selected based on extensive employee surveys and feedback reports from Best Companies Group.



40 UNDER FORTY

JULY 18

Recognizes forty men and women, under the age of 40, who are successful in their careers and involved in their communities.



HEALTHIEST EMPLOYERS

AUGUST 8

Healthiest Employers in Rhode Island recognizes employers who have implemented worksite Health & Wellness programs and have shown a commitment to employee health and safety.



FASTEST GROWING/INNOVATIVE COMPANIES

SEPTEMBER 18

This program highlights the region's Fastest Growing Companies and those that are especially innovative in developing new processes, products and services that improve competitiveness and spur growth.



BUSINESS EXCELLENCE AWARDS

NOVEMBER 7

PBN's Premier Awards Event recognizes leadership and general excellence at private and public companies and nonprofit organizations.



PBN SUMMITS

Economic Trends
Health Care (spring)
Cybersecurity
Health Care (fall)
Diversity & Inclusion

FEBRUARY
APRIL
OCTOBER
OCTOBER
DECEMBER

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE | 401-680-4800 | Advertising@PBN.com

PBN Events 2019: Updated 11/1/2018

PBN 2019 EDITORIAL CALENDAR

DATE	LIST	FOCUS REPORT	SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT	EVENT
JANUARY	4 Private Secondary Schools	Education		
	11 International Tax Preparers; Foreign Owned Companies	Accounting		
	18 Employee Benefit Administrators	Insurance		
	25 Commercial/Industrial Services; Property Management Firms	Commercial Real Estate	Book of Lists	Book of Lists Premier Event, 1/24
FEBRUARY	1 Energy Companies	Energy		
	8 Residential Real Estate Agencies	High End Residential Real Estate		Economic Trends Summit, date TBD
	15 Hospitals; Rehab & Occupational Health Centers	Health Care	Summit Recap	
	22 Estate Planners	Law Review		
MARCH	1 RI Banks	Banking & Finance		
	8 Business Development Resources	Business Valuation & Succession		
	15 General Contractors	Construction, Design & Architecture	Manufacturing Awards	Manufacturing Awards, 3/13
	22 College Technology Programs; Regional IT Employers	Technology Careers		
	29 Providence Restaurants; RI Distilleries, Breweries & Vineyards	The Food Industry		
APRIL	5 Independent Insurance Agencies	Insurance		Health Care Summit, date TBD
	12 Adult Education	Adult Education	Summit Recap	
	19 Regional Hotels; Boutique Hotels	Meetings and Social Events		
	26 Comm RE Sales: Office, Retail & Industrial	Commercial Real Estate	C-Suite Awards	C-Suite Awards, 4/25
MAY	3 SBA Loans; SBA Lenders	Small Business		
	10 RI Health & Dental Insurers; MA Health & Dental Insurers	Health Care		
	17 IP Lawyers	Law Review		
	24 Veteran Employers	Veterans in the Workplace	Business Women	Business Women Awards, 5/23
	31 Health Care Educators	Health Care Employment		
JUNE	7 Tax Rates, RI	Construction, Design & Architecture		
	14 Manufacturers	Manufacturing	Best Places to Work	Best Places to Work Awards, 6/13
	21 Credit Unions, Regional Banks	Banking & Finance		
	28 IT Services; Biotech & Life Sciences Cos.	Technology		
JULY	5 Meeting Facilities, Caterers; Private Transportation Services	Corporate Outings		
	12 Cybersecurity Companies	Cybersecurity		
	19 Comm RE Leases: Office, Retail & Industrial	Commercial Real Estate	40 Under Forty	40 Under Forty Awards, 7/18
	26 Colleges & Universities	Education		
AUGUST	2 Engineering Firms	Engineering		
	9 Physician Groups; Diagnostic Imaging Centers	Health Care	Healthiest Employer	Healthiest Employer Awards, 8/8
	16 Software Dev. Cos; Web Development Cos.	Technology		
	23 Law Firms	Law Review		
	30 Executive Recruiters; Staffing Firms; Executive Compensation	Human Resources		
SEPTEMBER	6 Accounting Firms	Banking & Finance		
	13 MBA Programs	Education		
	20 Property & Casualty Insurers	Insurance	Fastest Growing & Innovative Companies	Fastest Growing & Innovative Companies Awards, 9/18
	27 Architectural Firms	Construction, Design & Architecture		
OCTOBER	4 Chief Security Officers; RI CIOs	Technology/Cybersecurity	STUFF Made in RI Book	
	11 Online Degrees/Programs	Education		Cybersecurity Summit, date TBD
	18 Addiction Treatment Centers	Mental Health	Summit Recap	
	25 Providence Employers; RI Employers	Workforce Development	The Giving Guide	
NOVEMBER	1 Chief Financial Officers	Accounting		Health Care Summit, 10/30
	8 Commercial RE Brokerage Firms	Commercial Real Estate	Business Excellence; Summit Recap	Business Excellence Awards, 11/7
	15 Top Private Companies	Law Review		
	22 Family Owned Businesses, Women Run Businesses	Small Business		
	29 Stock Brokerage Firms; Wealth Managers	Investments/Estate & Retirement Planning		
DECEMBER	6 Mortgage Bankers and Brokers	Banking & Finance	Diversity & Inclusion Summit & Awards	Diversity & Inclusion Summit & Awards, date TBD
	13 Urgent Care Centers; Clinics	Health Care		
	20 Highway Projects	Construction/Infrastructure	Profiles of Success	
	27 N/A	Economic Outlook		

EXCELLENCE AT A MIDSIZE COMPANY



A RICH, AND NOW PROSPEROUS

HISTORY: From left, Tom Parrish, executive director; Meg Donnelly, cutter/drafter; Curt Columbus, artistic director; and Amanda Downing Carney, costume shop director, review costumes for the upcoming production of "A Christmas Carol."

PBN PHOTO/RUPERT WHITELEY

gathering spaces," he said. "In the 21st century, we need some 'hangout' spaces and a more flexible theater." To that end, Trinity completed a master facilities plan, says Parrish, though Trinity must first assess the feasibility of a capital campaign to implement that plan.

At its core, each year Trinity engages with more than 100,000 audience members, thousands of students who participate in Project Discovery's student matinee program, the Brown/Trinity MFA students and its own staff of nearly 300 full-time, part-time and seasonal employees.

In recent years, Trinity's expanded social justice initiatives have engaged Providence police officers in creative workshops, hosted a staged reading and a community discussion about immigration issues and built deeper connections to Rhode Island's growing Hispanic community. TRAIN, Trinity Repertory Active Imagination Network, says Columbus, offers sensory-friendly shows for individuals on the autism spectrum and with spectrum processing disorders.

Trinity has been recognized for these sustained investments in community engagement and in advancing equity, diversity and inclusion. "We've been [committed] to create inclusive spaces and working toward EDI on our staff and in our programming," said Parrish, who aims to make Trinity a place where everyone feels welcome and respected.

Challenges notwithstanding, the ebullient Columbus finds joy in his work. "The kids from 'A Christmas Carol' cast come in and are so enthusiastic about being on stage. ... It's watching kids in the audience for [Trinity's gender-bending] 'Pride and Prejudice' and knowing that, for some of them, it will be a life-changing experience," he said. "Working with Brown/Trinity MFA students, it's so exciting for me. ... I'm surrounded by a great community of theater-makers." ■

TRINITY REPERTORY COMPANY

Fiscally secure, Trinity educates, stimulates

BY NANCY KIRSCH | Contributing Writer

FOUNDED IN 1963 and housed in a former vaudeville space, **Trinity Repertory Company** is transforming the ancient craft of theater as it begins to see the fruits of a long climb toward financial security.

In addition to producing seven mainstage productions annually, Trinity offers a robust arts-education program for K-12 students, trains graduate theatrical-arts students in partnership with Brown University, and hosts community conversations on issues of race, gender and class, among others.

But if not for Trinity's commitment to developing patron revenue, focusing on its strategic plan, developing great works and building audiences, Trinity's long-term financial woes, which began before his arrival 13 years ago, might have led to the theater's demise, says Curt Columbus, the enterprise's artistic director.

"We've been working tirelessly for [more than] a decade to make strides toward financial stability. Our new leadership team ... has raised their game in the last two years, and we're seeing some great benefits from that," he said.

The numbers reveal that is indeed the case: Since 2015, ticket revenue has grown 26 percent and annual-fund income 23 percent. Trinity reversed its decline in full-season subscriptions, broke box office records and restructured long-term debt.

By eliminating its persistent \$1 million structural operating deficit in 2017, Trinity, with a \$10 million annual operating budget, generated positive operating cash flow for the first time in more than a decade. Those efforts earned Trinity a 2017 Initiative for Nonprofit Excellence Best Practice Award for Board/Staff Leadership from the Rhode Island Foundation and Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island.

"The team ... is focused on growing patron rev-

enue and ... on the lifetime value of the patron," said Tom Parrish, executive director, and a key new leadership team member. "We're investing more than we ever have on the stage. ... We deliver exciting and compelling work that reignites people's imaginations."

Building on these successes, including support from a Rhode Island Cultural Facilities bond to implement several physical plant upgrades, Trinity recently created its first consolidated database for ticketing and fundraising that, says Parrish, will help sustain its level of growth.

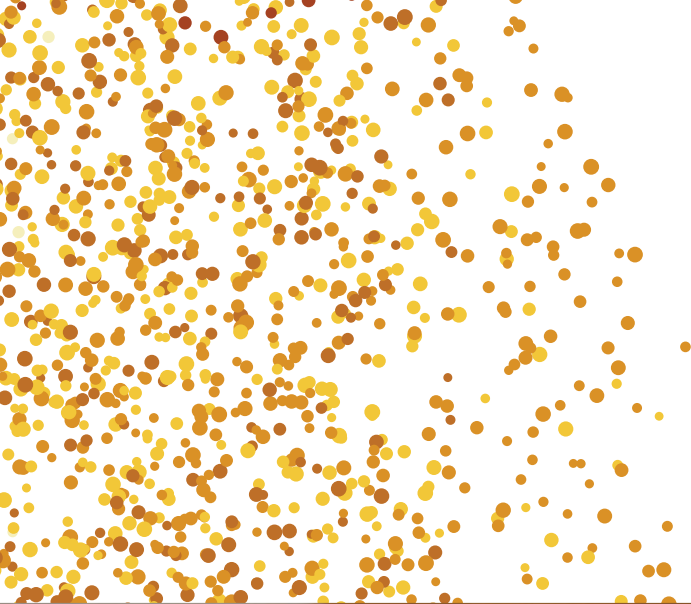
Columbus considers Trinity's building, to which the organization is 100 percent committed, one of its greatest liabilities, yet simultaneously a significant development opportunity.

"We're doing a lot of educational and community work. As we open our arms to more members of the community, we don't have enough

'We've been working tirelessly ... to make strides toward financial stability.'

CURT COLUMBUS,

Trinity Repertory Company artistic director



Congratulations

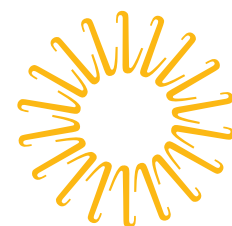
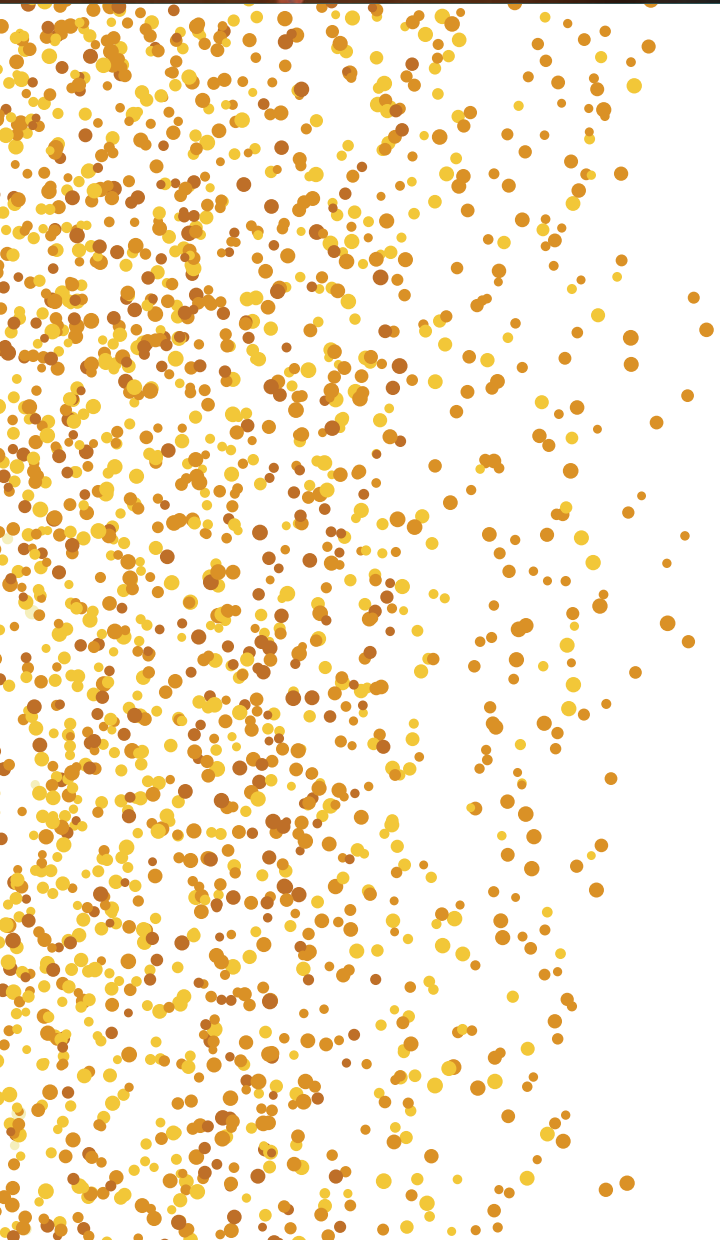
to Lifespan president and CEO

Dr. Timothy J. Babineau,

recipient of the 2018

Corporate Citizenship Award.

*Dr. Babineau is honored for leading
Lifespan initiatives that foster health
and wellness to benefit people in
Rhode Island communities.*



Lifespan

Delivering health with care.®

OVERALL EXCELLENCE AT A SMALL COMPANY



Blazing a trail out of poverty

BY NANCY KIRSCH | Contributing Writer

WITH NEARLY ONE-HALF OF THE U.S. population unable to tap \$400 in savings for an emergency, **Capital Good Fund**, a Providence-based nonprofit, serves a vital need, offering modest personal loans to people who can't get help from a bank.

Such loans – \$300 to \$25,000 – to individuals who can't get bank loans save people of meager means from disastrous decisions.

MONEY MATTERS: From left, Roxana Mercado and Ellie Parada, Capital Good Fund loan officers, and Andy Posner, founder and CEO, discuss strategies for helping clients navigate debt and personal finance at the company's office in Providence.
 PBN PHOTO/RUPERT WHITELEY

CAPITAL GOOD FUND

nationalgrid

**We're putting
 our energy behind
 the community.**



nationalgridus.com

LISC
 Rhode Island



LISC is committed to building strong and healthy communities where individuals, businesses and families can thrive.

Since 1991, we have invested \$373 million resulting in \$1.6 billion in investment in Rhode Island.

www.riLISC.org

OVERALL EXCELLENCE AT A SMALL COMPANY

PBN PROVIDENCE BUSINESS NEWS
**BUSINESS
EXCELLENCE**
2018 AWARDS

Operating in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Delaware and Florida – with Illinois on the near horizon – Capital Good Fund serves clients who otherwise resort to getting loans from payday lenders, pawnshops, check cashers, etc., which collectively comprise a \$141 billion predatory financial industry, says Andy Posner, founder and CEO. Capital Good Fund's loans enable borrowers to build credit, save money, invest in their futures and avoid being caught in predatory lenders' debt traps.

"Nationally, we're the only nonprofit offering these loans at equitable interest rates at this scale, though some credit unions, [such as] Navigant Credit Union, offer similar small-dollar loans in Rhode Island," said Posner. "Although the suggested interest rate cap [on such loans] is 36 percent, our highest rate is 24 percent APR [with some loans having lower rates]. Payday lenders typically charge around 300 percent APR," or annual percentage rate.

Capital Good Fund reports the borrowers' loan repayments to credit agencies, which raises a borrower's FICO score by 75 points on average, says Wally Okby, vice president, investor relations.

Its Financial & Health Coaching program offers borrowers valuable advice and guidance on banking, budgeting, credit, debt, savings and health.

"We're viewed as the lender of last resort, but ... we become the lender of first choice, as they graduate out of this space they're in," Posner said.

The U.S. Treasury, the Rhode Island Foundation and other corporate foundations have donated funds for Capital Good Fund's operating expenses, something that is standard with nonprofits.

But it also borrows funds to lend out to customers and repays them with interest. Several banks and credit unions, including Bank Newport, Centreville Bank, Navigant and Greenwood credit unions, as well as foundations and individuals, lend the company money, says Okby, who recently joined the nonprofit after working as a banker.

Capital Good Fund issues more than 100 loans a month, says Posner, who launched the nonprofit after witnessing how many people were impacted by the 2008 financial crisis. Then a Brown University graduate student, Posner was also empowered to act after reading works by Muhammad Yunus, a

Nobel Peace Prize awardee for pioneering the concepts of microcredit and microfinance.

"These are not to [pay off] a credit card ... [but] to become a citizen, buy a car to get to work or keep your job, move into a new apartment or avoid eviction," Posner said. Calling the loans, which have a 96 percent repayment rate, "transformational," Posner added, "Filling a massive market need is very satisfying."

The 9-year-old company is growing exponentially. In Rhode Island alone, it financed 99 loans for \$286,000 in 2016, 353 loans for \$590,000 in 2017 and 400 loans for \$620,000 through Sept. 30. Company-wide through Sept. 30, Capital Good Fund has financed more than 3,000

small-dollar personal loans totaling \$5.6 million and graduated more than 1,450 families from its coaching program.

In 2017, the organization tripled its 2016 loan volume of \$635,000 to \$2.1 million, with loan volume for 2018 anticipated to grow by another 50 percent.

Capital Good Fund is working with a consultant on a comprehensive customer-acquisition strategy, an essential component of the organization's forecast of operational self-sufficiency by 2023's end.

"We're excited about this self-sufficiency plan. We're closer to being less dependent on philanthropic donations, which can be whimsical," said Posner. ■

'These [loans] are not to [pay off] a credit card ... [but] to become a citizen, buy a car to get to work or keep your job.'

ANDY POSNER, Capital Good Fund founder and CEO

* DAVIES

IS LOOKING FOR NEW BUSINESSES TO BUILD STRONG PARTNERSHIPS WITH OUR OFFICE OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT.

Career and Technical Education requirements include 50 hours of work-based learning for our students.



HELP US DEVELOP R.I.'S WORKFORCE IN THE AREAS OF:

Automotive | Biomanufacturing Technology
Cosmetology | Electrical & Renewable Energy
Graphics & Interactive Media | Health | Hospitality
Machine Technology | Pre-Engineering Technology

—*Davies is a 9th-12th grade state-wide public high school.—



PBN PROVIDENCE BUSINESS NEWS
**BUSINESS
EXCELLENCE**
2018 AWARD WINNER

Call the Office of Workforce Development
at 401-728-1500 ext. 236 or email kmurphy@daviestech.org
William M. Davies, Jr. Career and Technical High School
50 Jenckes Hill Rd. | Lincoln, Rhode Island 02865
401.728.1500 | DaviesTech.org

Health insurance premiums keep rising?

At Neighborhood, we love
**Saving Your Small
Business Money!**



Contact us today to see
how much you can save!

1-855-321-9244 option 6
Request a quote via email:
groupquotes@nhpri.org

Adoption R.I. securing stable homes, futures

BY MICHAEL HARDMAN | Contributing Writer

FOR 34 YEARS, Adoption Rhode Island has been focused on permanently placing children with families, but its services go beyond just that part of its mission.

The nonprofit works in three areas: adoption and permanency services; children and family support; and youth transition services. The organization's goal is to promote and support the placement of children who are waiting for adoption, and to improve the well-being of foster and adopted children and their families.

"No. 1, the focus has been on getting the message out there to different people," said Darlene Allen, the CEO and executive director, who has been with the organization since 1999. "A lot of people didn't know what we do. We did an analysis with stakeholders, and we heard a lot of misconceptions. We have been building awareness of what we are."

As a business, Adoption Rhode Island increased revenue by more than 50 percent during the last five years, going from \$1.4 million in fiscal 2014 to \$2.2 million in fiscal 2018. And the fiscal 2019 budget is \$2.5 million.

Fifty-five percent of the nonprofit's revenue comes from public/government contracts, while the rest is from corporate, individual, and foundation support, and special fundraising events. The organization reports that only 10 percent to 12 percent of its revenue goes to administrative costs, with the remaining almost 90 percent going to services.

Adoption Rhode Island employs 27 people, while providing services to approximately 1,500 to 1,800 individuals and families, reaching at least 10,000 people across Rhode Island and the country. The organization says that every day in Rhode Island there are approximately

2,000 children in and out of home placements and under the care of the Department of Children, Youth, and Families.

"We have people with a lot of personal experience," said Allen. "Almost everyone has had some personal experience, whether it be through adoption or being an adoption family or being a mentor. This is personal and professional to them."

With its increases in revenue, Adoption Rhode Island has been able to expand investment, starting with the Wendy's Wonderful Kids program in 2015 and more recently in its Child and Family Support programming. And it has created the Youth Transition Services, which works with youth who are "aging out" of the program and finding themselves at risk.

When children age out of the system, they are at risk for an increased rate of unemployment, behavioral health symptomology, poor physical health, homelessness, unintended pregnancy and trouble with the law, according to Adoption Rhode Island.

"We spend a lot of effort getting them through high school and into post-high school," said Allen. "We want to give them job opportunities to break the cycle of child welfare."

To tackle this problem, Adoption

'We want to give them job opportunities to break the cycle of child welfare.'

DARLENE ALLEN,
 Adoption Rhode Island CEO and executive director



COMFORT ZONE: From left, Nick, adopted in 2015, and Matt St. Germain are among the many families Adoption Rhode Island has helped.

COURTESY ADOPTION RHODE ISLAND/
 MATT ST. GERMAIN

ADOPTION RHODE ISLAND

Rhode Island is using its resources and partnerships with stakeholders to provide more services through the Teen Focus program, which directly served 54 youths who were on track to exit the system without care and a high school diploma. It is the first of its kind in the state.

"Adoption Rhode Island was a key stakeholder in the development of, advocacy for, and passage of the Voluntary Extension Care Act legislation that increased the age of DCYF services from 18 years to 21 years of age and gives young adults access to improve their transition to independent adulthood," said Allen.

The program was funded by DCYF, and Adoption Rhode Island says it is already seeing positive results in its first year.

Working with the Judith McSoley Fund for Children at the Rhode Island Foundation, Adoption Rhode Island is launching the first Rhode Island chapter of the national foster care alumni association. Using their experiences as being part of the foster care system, the group is expected to bring perspective and ideas to the organization.

"They have personally experienced this," said Allen. "Hopefully, they will provide an invaluable resource to us." ■

LISC fosters relationships to build communities

BY MICHAEL HARDMAN | Contributing Writer

JEANNE COLA SAYS SHE HAS THE BEST JOB in Rhode Island at a company that is the best-kept secret in the state.

The secret part is something the executive director of **Local Initiatives Support Corp. Rhode Island** wants to change. A 27-year-old nonprofit, LISC is a financial intermediary, directing investments to neighborhoods to help with developing affordable housing, improving families' incomes and wealth, and fostering healthy environments.

"We look at how we can be of help," said Cola. "In Rhode Island, we work statewide across different areas by building relationships."

LISC supports local businesses to revitalize commercial corridors, providing workforce development and education, developing affordable housing solutions, and working to improve the health of residents.

Using its 2017 numbers, LISC invested \$24.5 million in real estate, awarded \$2.3 million in grants, provided 9,532 hours of Americorps service, and provided 2,077 hours of technical assistance to 133 groups.

As the organization has grown, LISC has expanded its focus from financing projects to using its expertise to better the communities.

"We want to look at all of it," said Cola. "We want to make safe places and see reductions in crime." LISC also looks at creating natural open spaces and learning spaces to benefit the communities.

LISC had been involved in several projects recently that have drawn attention around the state. This year, the organization provided nearly \$13 million in grant funding, loans and a tax credit to Central Falls Health Station, which is expected to be a \$15 million project. LISC also worked with the state's congressional delegation to get an additional \$1 million federal grant for the effort. When completed, the project will aim to positively change the health outcome of the residents living there and serve as a role model for future projects.

The organization also has managed the Health Equity Zone in Pawtucket and Central Falls, two underserved areas, improving the residents' lives in those areas. LISC says it coordinated nearly 40 partners, state agencies, municipal interests and resident advisers to launch the program, which is being used by the state as a positive example of resolving a problem.

LISC says it created a 102-item action plan, working with community partners to make improve-

ments in nutritional access, building a 172-plot community garden at Galego Court, renovating the community park and farmers market, offering senior nutrition classes, improving recreation areas, starting walking groups, and a walking school bus.

Some of the projects LISC has been involved with include the new WaterFire Arts complex and the Urban Greens Food Co-op, which is expected to transform one Providence neighborhood from a food desert to "a vibrant oasis." It has also redesigned child care facilities to make them safer, and worked with law enforcement to address crime hot spots. One of those areas, Aleppo Street in Providence, saw a

98 percent reduction in calls after LISC's input.

To achieve its goals, LISC says it has become a trusted partner with local businesses and government over the years. It is committed to building strong neighborhoods and healthy communities to allow them to thrive.

Cola says making sure housing is affordable should be a high priority for communities. While the state's economy has slowly been on the rise, there is a catch. As the real estate market improves, there is more pressure on vulnerable residents to find housing. When people

are aging and downsizing, they are in the market for affordable housing in safe areas.

"A lot of people are one paycheck away [from having housing problems]," said Cola. "Housing is so important to individuals and families. This is really a high priority across the state."

With its experience, LISC's leadership hopes to continue to be one of the organizations working to solve that problem.

"There is no secret sauce," said Cola. "We want to bring everyone together and accomplish the same results." ■

'We work statewide across different areas **by building relationships.**'

JEANNE COLA,
Local Initiatives Support Corp. Rhode Island
executive director



**LOCAL INITIATIVES SUPPORT
CORP. RHODE ISLAND**

HELPING HANDS: From left, Erin Cox, program officer; Cindy Larson, deputy director; Jeanne Cola, executive director; Megan Ressler, program assistant; and Deanna Bruno, program assistant, at LISC's Providence office.

PBN PHOTO/RUPERT WHITELEY

EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION AND LEARNING



ACTIVE LEARNING: From left, Sherry Lee L., fourth-grader at Veterans Elementary School; Mabel G., sixth-grader at Calcutt Middle School; Isabella R., seventh-grader at The Learning Community; Javier Centeno, co-founder, coach and director of soccer for Project GOAL; Carolina S., fifth-grader at The International Charter School; Gabriela N., fifth-grader at ICS; Christopher G., fifth-grader at ICS; and Julia M., fourth-grader at ICS.

PBN PHOTO/RUPERT WHITELEY

A careful balance of academics, athletics

BY SUSAN SHALHOUB | Contributing Writer

THE PHRASE “HAVING MULTIPLE BALLS IN THE AIR” can mean having many opportunities on the horizon.

For Providence nonprofit **Project GOAL Inc.** (Greater Opportunities for Athletes to Learn), soccer balls represent a portal to academic achievement and personal excellence.

Project GOAL gives children a chance, many for the first time, to be on soccer fields or in tutoring sessions, exploring colleges and career fields, and more, said Darius Shirzadi, Project GOAL co-founder and executive director.

In Project GOAL, students study during after-school hours to earn soccer time. Students in the program meet twice a week for three-hour sessions, including 90 minutes of classroom time, focused on goal setting and group interaction. Students working toward their academic goals and making responsible decisions are rewarded with 90 minutes of soccer training and teamwork instruction right after the class.

Project GOAL has spent 14 years connecting more than 1,500 disadvantaged Rhode Island middle schoolers with academic enrichment through soccer. Soccer has been a vehicle for life lessons on goals, responsibility, achievement and collaboration that carry into the classroom, setting kids up for success.

For kids who qualify, it's all

free.

“There were deficiencies in after-school programming, challenges with fees and transportation,” Shirzadi said. “It was always educational programming first and then developed from that.”

Project GOAL's founders include Shirzadi, Peter Wheaton and Javier Centeno. The program is strengthened by partnerships they've forged, connecting kids with their community.

Shirzadi, a former soccer coach, is the former director of Latino and Cape Verdean Community Affairs with the New England Revolution. He is now a senior global markets manager at Cooley Group in Pawtucket.

Wheaton is chairman and CEO of CORE Business Technologies in East Providence.

Centeno, soccer director for Project GOAL and 2018 Boys Coach of the Year with Soccer Rhode Island, played All-New England and All-America soccer at Community College of Rhode Island. He is restoration director at Calcutt Middle School in Central Falls.

Thanks to their work and networking, GOAL students play at halftime at Brown University soccer games. Rhode Island College master's degree candidates tutor Project GOAL students.

Since Project GOAL kids are often the first generation in their families to consider higher education, said Shirzadi, Bank of America and BankNewport run financial college-planning workshops for their parents.

Adidas just held a soccer clinic for program participants with the New England Revolution's Andrew Farrell at Providence's Moses Brown School, during which Project GOAL athletes got cleats and new soccer balls.

“Moses Brown School has been

honored to serve as a host site for Project GOAL for the past 12 years,” said Headmaster Matt Glenndining. “We're proud to support the program, and even prouder to have enrolled some incredible students from Project GOAL at Moses Brown.”

Similarly, at the Wheeler School in Providence, Allison Gaines Pell, head of school, assists Project GOAL in getting students to apply for its scholarships. The nonprofit then pays the entrance-exam fee. About 60 program kids have gone to private schools on full scholarships in that fashion, Shirzadi said.

In an effort to increase female participation, Project GOAL is coordinating tutoring and training from women at Brown and Bryant universities. “This year we had the highest percentage of girls in the program,” said Shirzadi, 33 percent.

Last year, Project GOAL's Community Outreach program began. It welcomes volunteers into the classrooms or on the fields as mentors. It also exposes students to cultural and career offerings, such as a collaboration with Rhode Island Builders Association at the Rhode Island Home show last spring.

Ninety-six percent of Project GOAL members graduate high school, and 90 percent go to college.

Shirzadi said past participants, now adults, come back, visit and kick a soccer ball around. “There's a big sense of community in the organization. To see these kids come back? It's very nice for everybody.” ■

**‘It was always
 educational
 programming first
 and then
 developed from that.’**

DARIUS SHIRZADI,

Project GOAL Inc. co-founder and executive director

A HEALTHY EDUCATION:

William M. Davies Jr. Career and Technical High School seniors in the health careers program, front, from left, Claudia Tomczyk, Cortny Botelho, and back, from left, Emily-Rose Furtado and Destiny Torres, learn the technical skills required in many parts of the health care industry.

PBN PHOTO/MICHAEL SALERNO



WILLIAM M. DAVIES JR. CAREER
AND TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL

Education tailored to the needs of R.I.'s economy

BY JAIME LOWE | Contributing Writer

STUDENTS ATTENDING William M. Davies Jr. Career & Technical High School receive more than a comprehensive high school education. They get a head start on a career.

Located in Lincoln, Davies opened in 1971 and serves approximately 906 students, grades 9-12, and is open to high schoolers from across the state, although most of its students are from Central Falls, Lincoln, North Providence, Pawtucket and Smithfield. It is state-operated but governed by an independent, business-led board of trustees.

When finished, Davies graduates have received training in one of nine technical areas – automotive, biomanufacturing, cosmetology, electrical and renewable energy, graphics and interactive media, health careers, hospitality careers, machine technology, and pre-engineering technology. The comprehensive, work-based learning program caters its design to the needs of the state's economy.

The school has its own Office of Workforce Development, which focuses entirely on partnering with businesses throughout Rhode Island, many of which hire students after graduation. Those partners include Amica Mutual Insurance Co., AstroNova Inc., Brown Uni-

versity's Warren Alpert Medical School, CVS Pharmacy, General Dynamics Electric Boat, Tiffany & Co., Rhode Island Hospital and WaterFire Providence.

"Davies has benefited in working with and building solid industry partners," said Jax Adele, marketing and communications specialist at the school. "Many of our partners have been extremely impressed with the technical skills and 21st-century workforce readiness skills that are being taught in our programs. Davies understands the needs of the workforce and aligns our instruction to meet those needs."

Davies offers many hands-on opportunities within its programs.

The Patriots Dining Room in the school serves lunch on Thursdays and Fridays made by hospitality-careers students. Automotive-careers students receive cars from a police station to work on. The school's partnership with CVS allows students firsthand experience in pharmacies.

"We have a mock pharmacy in health careers where they are able to actually learn the skills that any CVS technician would have to know. It looks just like a real pharmacy," Adele said.

As interest in career technical education increases, the need for experts qualified to help ensure students gain the real-world

experiences they need for success increases as well. Individuals with industry expertise provide a perspective to students and can also help students explore and connect with career opportunities, said Susan Votto, supervisor of career and technical education.

At Davies, all career and technical programs have advisory boards that consist of industry partners contributing to and supporting curriculum development, equipment and resources, industry trends and developments, community engagement, administrative support, program advocacy, and showcase venues such as career fairs, she said.

And due to the practice of partnering with industry advisory boards, the school's programs have built-in partners and mentors, who serve not only as advisers but also contest judges, presentation audience members and work-based learning opportunities, Votto said.

"By collaborating with our industry partners, we are able to address, train and provide the necessary technical skills that align to meet the needs of our industry partners. Technical skills are applied, practiced and even perfected at times in real-world, industry-related situations through our work-based learning program," she said.

Future goals for Davies include the increased growth of its workforce-development curriculum, which has already grown from 50 to 80 instructional hours. The school also looks forward to continuing to make the Rhode Island community aware of the benefits of a technical education and make sure that it continues to keep its business partnerships strong, Adele said.

"We'd like to continue to add to [partnerships] so we have the ability to send our students out into a workforce training in not only any possible program our student is interested in but also where there is a need for that in Rhode Island," Adele added. ■

'Many of our partners have been **extremely impressed with the technical skills ...** being taught in our programs.'

JAX ADELE,

William M. Davies Jr. Career and Technical High School
marketing and communications specialist

PROVIDENCE BUSINESS NEWS

PBN BOOK of LISTS 2019

EXECUTIVE COMPENSATION IN PUBLIC COMPANIES
(ranked by total fiscal year 2016 compensation)

2017 Rank	Executive Name	Company	2016 Total Compensation	2016 Salary	2016 Bonus	2016 Other Compensation	2016 Total Compensation	2016 Salary	2016 Bonus	2016 Other Compensation	2016 Total Compensation	2016 Salary	2016 Bonus	2016 Other Compensation	2016 Total Compensation
1	Raymond M. Thomas	Aluminum Holdings Corp.	\$18,481,977	\$10,000,000	\$8,481,977	\$0	\$18,481,977	\$10,000,000	\$8,481,977	\$0	\$18,481,977	\$10,000,000	\$8,481,977	\$0	\$18,481,977
2	Larry J. Manta	CYS Health Corp.	\$16,156,277	\$10,000,000	\$6,156,277	\$0	\$16,156,277	\$10,000,000	\$6,156,277	\$0	\$16,156,277	\$10,000,000	\$6,156,277	\$0	\$16,156,277
3	Scott C. Donnelly	Shutterstock Inc.	\$12,729,275	\$10,000,000	\$2,729,275	\$0	\$12,729,275	\$10,000,000	\$2,729,275	\$0	\$12,729,275	\$10,000,000	\$2,729,275	\$0	\$12,729,275
4	Mark C. Tullberg	Blackrock PLC	\$12,561,746	\$10,000,000	\$2,561,746	\$0	\$12,561,746	\$10,000,000	\$2,561,746	\$0	\$12,561,746	\$10,000,000	\$2,561,746	\$0	\$12,561,746
5	John C. Gagliardi	Quanta Services Inc.	\$12,500,000	\$10,000,000	\$2,500,000	\$0	\$12,500,000	\$10,000,000	\$2,500,000	\$0	\$12,500,000	\$10,000,000	\$2,500,000	\$0	\$12,500,000
6	Ryan Van Sam	Colony Capital Corp.	\$12,229,524	\$10,000,000	\$2,229,524	\$0	\$12,229,524	\$10,000,000	\$2,229,524	\$0	\$12,229,524	\$10,000,000	\$2,229,524	\$0	\$12,229,524
7	Joseph C. Rinaldi	CYS Health Corp.	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541
8	Scott C. Donnelly	Shutterstock Inc.	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541
9	David M. Dunne	CYS Health Corp.	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541
10	Thomas M. Muehlen	CYS Health Corp.	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541
11	David M. Dunne	CYS Health Corp.	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541
12	David M. Dunne	CYS Health Corp.	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541
13	David M. Dunne	CYS Health Corp.	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541
14	David M. Dunne	CYS Health Corp.	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541
15	David M. Dunne	CYS Health Corp.	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541
16	David M. Dunne	CYS Health Corp.	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541
17	David M. Dunne	CYS Health Corp.	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541
18	David M. Dunne	CYS Health Corp.	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541
19	David M. Dunne	CYS Health Corp.	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541
20	David M. Dunne	CYS Health Corp.	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541
21	David M. Dunne	CYS Health Corp.	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541
22	David M. Dunne	CYS Health Corp.	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541	\$10,000,000	\$2,143,541	\$0	\$12,143,541

REACH THE PEOPLE WHO COUNT
Build your business with us.
Reserve now for 12 months of
exposure in the region's ultimate
business resource.

SPACE DEADLINE:
NOVEMBER 30, 2018

PUBLICATION DATE:
JANUARY 25, 2019

CONTACT YOUR ACCOUNT MANAGER OR 401.680.4800 | ADVERTISING@PBN.COM

PROVIDENCE BUSINESS NEWS

PBN BOOK of LISTS 2019

Premier Event

*Don't miss one of RI's
best networking events...
The 2019 PBN Book of
Lists Premier Event.*

REGISTER TODAY @PBN.COM



**SAVE THE DATE
JANUARY 24th 2019**



**PROVIDENCE
PUBLIC LIBRARY
5:30-8^{pm}**

EXCELLENCE AT A WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESS



DILIGENT DUO: From left, sisters Gail Almeida Parella and Lisa Almeida Sienkiewicz in their store, Gil's Appliances in Bristol. The two have worked to modernize the store and make it an integral part of the community.

PBN PHOTO/KATE WHITNEY LUCEY

GIL'S APPLIANCES

Sister-led family business connects to community

BY JAIME LOWE | Contributing Writer

SISTERS GAIL ALMEIDA PARELLA and Lisa Almeida Sienkiewicz take pride in the fact that their Bristol store, **Gil's Appliances**, is a family-owned business.

The store, which carries all major home-appliance brands, as well as luxury brands, started as an old-fashioned record store in 1961, launched by Gil and Sarah Almeida on Wood Street in Bristol. The family lived upstairs from the store, and their two daughters, Parella and Sienkiewicz, grew up in the store, which eventually shifted its focus from music to television and appliances. Not only did they learn from their parents about business and community, they watched their grandparents run a small grocery store nearby in town.

"Gil's is unique in that it is now both women- and family-run. Their mom was involved in the store, and their grandmother was at the grocery store, so they had some strong entrepreneurial role models in the family," said Marketing and Community Engagement Director Lisa Ferreira.

In 1976, Gil's moved to its current Bristol location on Metacom Avenue. Parella and Sienkiewicz graduated from high school in 1983 and 1987, respectively. In 1995, they took over the business. They have raised their families inside the world of Gil's, as their parents

once raised them. Parella's husband works at the store as well.

The sisters remain dedicated to reinvestment, retail growth and expansion. In 2016, they opened a second retail showroom on Aquidneck Avenue in Middletown. The location made it more accessible for its South County customers. That year also brought about the rebranding of Gil's to fit in with the digital era, with a new logo and redesigned website, which gave them a stronger presence on social media channels.

"It was a balance of not wanting to lose what is wonderful about

a family business that has been around forever but also not wanting to get stuck there," said Ferreira, referring to the company's shift to the digital age. In 2017, they expanded and renovated the Bristol location, adding a working demonstration kitchen and a larger showroom, which is now home to the new "Gil Loves Local" initiative.

"Gil Loves Local" began in 2018 as an effort to support and promote local businesses by showcasing chefs, artisans and farms from around the state. Planned in collaboration with Edible Rhody magazine, it features events in the new demonstration kitchen in Bristol. Additional events include seasonal cooking classes with local

chefs and ingredients and "Lunch & Learn" demonstrations for designers and builders.

"The emphasis on all things local is part of a broader community-engagement effort that aims to give back to the community while creating a buzz that keeps Gil's relevant for new generations of customers," said Ferreira.

Parella and Sienkiewicz's extensive work in the community has not gone unnoticed. Recent awards and recognition include an Excellence in Business Award for Women-Owned Business in 2017 by the Newport County Chamber of Commerce and by the U.S. Small Business Administration's Rhode Island office as the Jeffrey Butland Family-Owned Business of the Year. They were also recognized by the Women's Resource Center of Rhode Island as "Wild Women" in 2018 for being inspiring role models in the business world in Rhode Island.

Validating its approach, in the past two years, Gil's Appliances has posted revenue growth of 15 percent.

Looking toward the future, the sisters' goals include continuing to stay true to core family and community values while remaining competitive in a changing retail space.

"Community involvement is what sets small businesses apart these days. You have to have a reason why you're unique, why [the customer] is going to choose you, as opposed to going online or going somewhere and having a less-personal experience. ... The sisters really believe in that philosophy. They just have such a great story," said Ferreira. ■

'You have to have a reason why ... [the customer] is going to choose you.'

LISA FERREIRA,

Gil's Appliances marketing and community engagement director



RENAUD MEGARD
PRESIDENT & CEO,
NAMEPLATES FOR INDUSTRY CORP.

FOCUSED ON CUSTOMER

SUCCESS: From left, Daniel Mercado, digital printing tech, and Renaud Megard, CEO, consult on a printing job in the design studio at Nameplates For Industry Corp. in New Bedford.

PBN PHOTO/RUPERT WHITELEY

Career shifts lead to results and satisfaction

BY SUSAN SHALHOUB | Contributing Writer

RENAUD MEGARD IS SKILLED at recognizing opportunity and making it grow.

After earning his undergraduate degree in his home country of France, he was working for chemical giant BASF Corp. in New Jersey when the company offered to sponsor further education, which led to him earning a master's degree from New York University's Stern School of Business in 2008.

Once back on the job, he found himself traveling a lot. "I had 54 plants around the world" to oversee, he said. "I was on planes traveling 85 percent of the time." In 2009, Megard left BASF and began working for global supply-chain company Cabot Corp.

When it came time for his oldest daughter to go to college, he realized he didn't really know her. He also realized he had three younger children who would be off on their own before he knew it. He needed to make a change.

That is when he saw an opportunity to buy a smaller company. So, Megard left his position at Cabot and bought **Nameplates For Industry Corp.** in New Bedford almost four years ago.

"Priority was family," he said. "What a great change."

In addition to giving him more

time with his family, the company purchase was also a chance to get more directly involved in a smaller organization.

NFI started out as a screen-printing company and now offers custom digital and flexographic printing, producing products that include custom faceplates, barcode stickers and decals. Medical, manufacturing and transportation are some of the industries it serves. Megard said the company's ability to print on plastic sets it apart.

The company was making a profit when he acquired it, but it hadn't seen much growth. The majority of customers were repeat business. Megard set out to change that, giving NFI more exposure and resources via acquisitions.

He bought Massachusetts companies Design Mark – which

specializes in digital printing – in 2017 and Flexible Pack – which makes flexible pouches and plastic sleeves – earlier this year.

Now company growth is organic, systemized and streamlined since Megard put customer-relationship management software system HubSpot in place. There is a structure now, with the three companies sharing divisions such as accounting, finance and manufacturing to improve productivity, "but it has to be with the customer experience in mind," he said.

A shared vision between teams and clients is also part of Megard's leadership style.

"We are not saying 'products,' we say 'solutions,'" he said.

"We're here to make customers successful. It's not about selling them more products. It's about selling them solutions to sell more of their products."

In leading the three companies, Megard is more directly involved as opposed to delegating, as was common in his work for larger corporations. The benefit of this is quicker decisions.

In the corporate world, he said, it could take months to make a decision. There were layers of leadership to wade through, and the process could lead to missed opportunities. Now, he and his team can make a decision in a matter of hours, which is necessary in today's marketplace. They can also see quicker results.

NFI revenue was just over \$5 million when Megard became owner in 2015. Modest growth began, with the Design Mark acquisition giving it a boost. This year, anticipated NFI revenue is \$15 million.

NFI now offers new kinds of solutions for its clients. Megard added a design studio and invested in new printing processes for plastics, for example. But all the new offerings and technology don't mean much if there are workplace accidents.

Safety is a large focus at NFI and its sister companies. Protective eyewear, gloves and footwear are required. A safety-guard team was established, with no-injury days quickly racking up at the facilities.

Combined, the three companies have 128 employees. Megard knows all their names.

"I am very particular about that," he said. ■

"It's not about selling
[customers] more products.
**It's about selling them
solutions.'**

RENAUD MEGARD,
Nameplates for Industry Corp. CEO

OCEAN STATE JOB LOT



FAMILY MEETING: Marc Perlman, left, speaks during a recent Ocean State Job Lot owners meeting at the company's North Kingstown headquarters. Also attending are, from left, John Conforti, Richard Portno, Alan Perlman and Steve Aronow.

PBN PHOTO/DAVE HANSEN

Family connections build foundation for success

BY SUSAN SHALHOUB | Contributing Writer

WITH AN OFFICE IN CHINA and 133 stores in New England, it may be difficult to remember that close-out retailer **Ocean State Job Lot** is, at its core, a family business.

Brothers Marc and Alan Perlman founded the store in 1977 with their friend, Roy Dubs. Along with principal owner Steve Aronow, Chief Financial Officer John Conforti and Vice President of Operations Richard Portno, the Perlman brothers still run the company today. Sixteen members of the Perlman, Aronow, Conforti and Portno families work or have worked for the company in areas such as legal, information technology, buying, operations and human resources.

"All the kids are given a choice on whether or not they want to participate," said Paul Conforti, chief marketing officer and John Conforti's nephew. He said there are no built-in expectations to join the family business. Some relatives have worked in other places and come back to OSJL.

"Alan has said that it's a special aspect of the business, being able to work with family," said Paul Conforti. "But over the years, with a lot of the members of our team, it kind of feels that way as well. They are long-term relationships built on trust and shared experience."

Its company newsletter regu-

larly recognizes people who have been with the business for 30 and 35 years, he said – and there are dozens, adding to close-knit bonds. "It weaves its way through the com-

pany," he said. "It does seem to be a culture where people want to stay."

"From can openers to kayaks," is how the North Kingstown-based company describes its assortment of products.

OSJL has no particular customer demographic, just products that represent great values. As their packaging has changed, they've been discontinued, or are overstocked, ranging from nonrefrigerated foods to health and beauty aids to hardware and other goods. Company buyers travel the globe in search of deals on items to help its customers stretch their dollars.

At the same time, its leaders work hard to ensure the company maintains a balance between growing, staying successful and keeping a family-type culture that differentiates it from other stores in terms of employee workplace experience.

OSJL has free lunch for its 800 distribution-center employees each Friday, a tradition that started when the company was much, much smaller, said Conforti. The company practices diversity in hiring, with center employees hailing from multiple countries and speaking multiple languages.

"The best decisions are made with a diversity of opinion and experience," said Conforti. "That's Marc's style of problem-solving: Get all key stakeholders together and talk it through."

Now 5,000-employees strong, OSJL sales have risen from \$539 million in 2013 to \$685 million today. In the past five years, it has opened more than 20 stores. The company's recent Quonset distribution-center expansion created 100 jobs.

Conforti said that CEO Marc Perlman looks at all purchase orders, generating knowledge that allows the company to quickly take risks or move on time-sensitive opportunities if it benefits customers.

Community giving, especially for hunger causes, helps OSJL team members to see the community around them as family as well. The company's charitable foundation absorbs all administrative costs. Donations made at the register go directly to hunger relief, Conforti said.

OSJL has been known to buy refrigerated food it doesn't carry in its stores, such as frozen clam strips, at a fraction of the price and flip them to a food bank that can put them to good use.

This summer, OSJL teamed up with partners for its Dog Days of Summer Rhode Island Grill-Out, with OSJL volunteers serving 25,000 hot dogs at shelters and other hunger-relief groups, with ketchup and mustard and all the extras.

"Our associates want to work for a company that makes the world a better place," said Conforti. ■

**'It's a special aspect
 of the business,
 being able to work with family.'**

**PAUL CONFORTI,
 Ocean State Job Lot chief marketing officer**



The final 2018 PBN Issue: December 28, 2018

Be a part of this important and insightful issue and grow your business for 2019.

This issue will feature a year in review roundtable discussion with editor Mark Murphy and RI business leaders, as well as a look back from PBN reporters on how area businesses were affected by and have recovered from the great recession.

Several sectors will be included in the overview including:

- Financial Services
- Real Estate & Development
- Health Care
- Workforce Development & Education
- Technology & Manufacturing

**Deadline:
December 19, 2018**

**Contact your Account Manager
today to reserve your spot.
For more information:
Advertising@PBN.com * 401-680-4800**

Cox Business congratulates
all the recipients of the
**2018 Providence Business News'
Business Excellence Awards.**



www.coxbusiness.com

