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SUITE

2019 AWARDS

CAREER
ACHIEVER

ARTHUR SAMPSON

Hospital exec strikes
healthy balance

PG. 4



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ABOUT THE AWARDS

Good help leads to success

WHO ARE THE highest-performing CEOs? The ones with the best people around them, in other words, the best C-Suite.



For instance, without having a workforce that is talented, engaged and productive, how can a company execute a vision that a CEO lays out?

The answer, of course, is not at all. Enter the chief human resources officer.

Two of this year’s winners head their company’s HR operations, filling a pipeline that is growing rapidly – as Narragansett Bay Insurance Co.’s Kim McCauley does – or having to deal with baked-in staff turnover (due to the cyclical nature of grant funding) – something that Michelle Dexter at the Rhode Island Quality Institute accomplishes so well that former RIQI employees will greet her with a hug even after they have been laid off.

While one could characterize human resources professionals as adept with “soft skills,” chief financial officers have to be skilled with numbers, although the best go well beyond that.

For example, Brian Douglas, executive vice president of finance and administration at Wheaton College, is more likely to use visual tools over dry numbers to help bring complex subjects to life, allowing the liberal arts college to control expenses while growing its offerings.

And of course, our winner for Career Achievement in the C-Suite, Arthur Sampson, whose day job is running The Miriam Hospital, is a key member of Lifespan Corp. President and CEO Dr. Timothy J. Babineau’s CEO Council, allowing the leader of Rhode Island’s largest health care system to set the direction for the four-hospital group. It is not an easy task, for sure, but one that Sampson saw early on that he wanted.

Returning for the fourth year as presenting sponsor of the C-Suite Awards program is KPMG, while the partner sponsor is the Hilb Group of New England. And coming on for the first time as promotional sponsor is the PGA Tour event, the Travelers Championship.

Mark S. Murphy

Mark S. Murphy
Editor

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As long time sponsors of the program, we’re excited to recognize the Award winners who are innovators, trailblazers, role models and leaders in the Rhode Island business community.

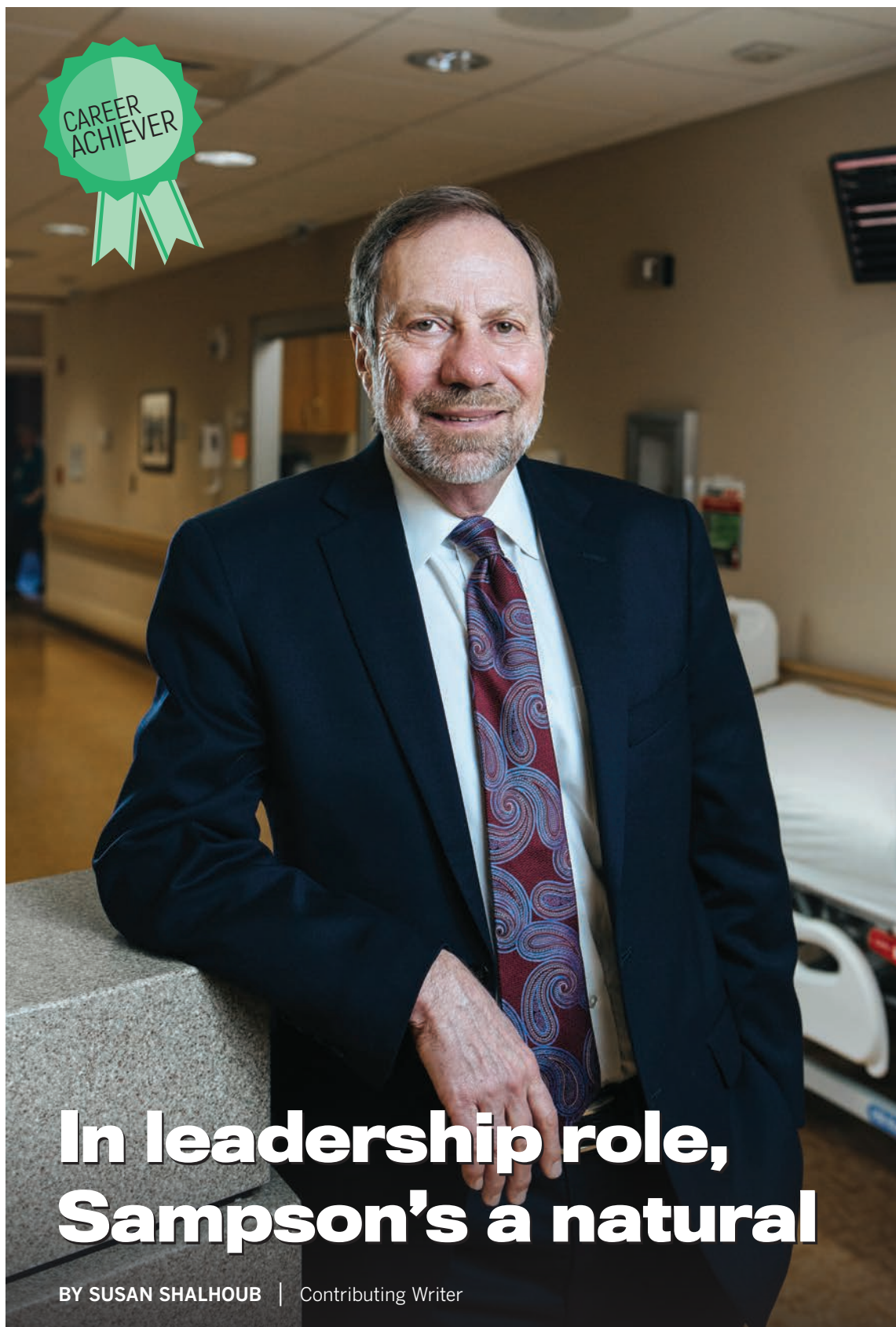
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Hilb Group of New England congratulates the winners of the 2019 C-Suite Awards. Innovation and growth are hallmarks of great companies and the Hilb Group of New England recognizes the commitment, foresight, and hard work exemplified to attain these goals. Congratulations on your remarkable achievements!

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In leadership role, Sampson's a natural

BY SUSAN SHALHOUB | Contributing Writer

HE'S A CLASSICAL PIANIST and a cooking enthusiast who happens to run a hospital really, really well.

Arthur Sampson is a member of the **Lifespan Corp.**'s CEO Council and president of The Miriam Hospital in Providence. But he's also well-rounded, and not afraid to learn new things or make the best use of resources on hand for the greater good.

"Leadership, to me, is getting a cohesive team working in the same direction," he said. "We have each other's backs and we protect patients."

Sampson, of Tiverton, has played piano by ear since he was a child. Music came easily.

It was when he tried to learn Baroque compositions – such as work by Bach and Handel – that he had to hire an instructor to learn how to read music. "I was using all the wrong fingers" all those years, he said.

Initially, his knowledge of hospital work was developed somewhat "by ear" as well.

In high school, he worked at a small hospital in his hometown of Gloucester, Mass. He loved

it. "I wasn't sure what hospital administration was," he acknowledged, but he knew he wanted to work in such a facility, exploring all aspects of the hospital environment.

Sampson earned a bachelor's degree in English at Union College in Kentucky, although by his junior year, he wondered whether an

HOSPITAL HONCHO: Arthur Sampson, a member of the Lifespan CEO Council and president of The Miriam Hospital, is successfully navigating Miriam through a disruptive period in the industry.

PBN PHOTO/RUPERT WHITELEY

English degree would be useful for the career he desired.

So he bolstered that degree with a master's in health care administration from George Washington University. He completed administration residencies at The Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, and at what is now Charlton Memorial Hospital in Fall River.

In Fall River, "I was given the opportunity to join the staff in the summer of 1975," said Sampson, "and I ended up staying for 10 years." He served in senior leadership before moving to Newport Hospital, where he rose to president and CEO.

In 15 years under Sampson's leadership, Newport Hospital, a Lifespan facility, acquired innovative medical and information technology, added an outpatient wing, underwent an extensive renovation and opened a diagnostic-imaging facility.

Sampson was named president at Miriam – a teaching affiliate of the Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University – in 2012 (he served as interim president at Newport for another two years), and he's made his mark.

Recognition includes the Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval for Advanced Certification for total hip and knee replacement in 2017 and 2018; a 2018 No. 1 ranking in the Providence area in U.S. News & World Report's Best Regional Hospitals list; and six consecutive "A" grades from The Leapfrog Group.

Lisa Abbott, Lifespan senior vice president of human resources, said Sampson has successfully guided the hospital amid turbulent times in the industry, such as when the closure of Pawtucket's Memorial Hospital in 2018 created additional demand for services at Miriam.

"In the nonprofit health care space ... Arthur has done a remarkable job managing the budget, which has contributed to the overall financial solvency of Lifespan," she said.

Sampson credits teamwork in the hospital's success.

"Growth of systems is a challenge. How we pay for health care is becoming increasingly difficult," he said. Add to the list of challenges, advances in technology, rising drug prices and labor shortages – such as those that exist with nurses – that are made that much more difficult to fill in a state with below-average reimbursements, Sampson said.

But understanding and maximizing available resources has become his formula for success.

For example, Miriam – located in a dense neighborhood on Providence's East Side – is running out of space, said Sampson. A master plan is underway for new construction that will remain within the hospital's existing footprint.

Solving such problems while celebrating successes keeps Sampson motivated.

"Three of us just [went] to a lab at Brown," he said. "I presented an Employee of the Month Award to a phlebotomist in the lab. That is the best part of my job." ■

'We have each other's backs and we protect patients.'

ARTHUR SAMPSON, Lifespan CEO Council member and Miriam Hospital president

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Leading the library into its next chapter

BY ROB BORKOWSKI | Contributing Writer

ONE FOR THE BOOKS: Aaron Peterman, Providence Public Library chief operating officer, has played a key role in the library's \$25 million renovation, including helping to get millions of dollars in tax credits and reimbursements for the project.

PBN PHOTO/RUPERT WHITELEY

AARON PETERMAN, chief operating officer at **Providence Public Library**, is excited about the \$25 million library overhaul he's been overseeing since 2016. And rightfully so.

A wing of the Washington Street building that was constructed in 1953 – more than one-third of the library's 145,000 square feet – is being gutted and remodeled to bring it into the 21st century, Peterman said. Wiring, data cabling and the heating, cooling and ventilation system, as well as the interior layout, are being replaced, he said.

The drop ceilings, partitions and numerous rooms that had filled the wing will be cleared away. The renovation will open the floor plan, Peterman said, allowing an unimpeded view of the building's interior, from one end to the other.

"It's like the library's awakened from a 30-year slumber," he gushed.

Peterman, an artist, was recruited for the massive project from his post as managing director at AS220, the nonprofit community arts group that owns three buildings in downtown Providence containing galleries, offices, workshops, living quarters and businesses.

AS220 was where Jack Martin, library executive director, met Peterman about five years ago during a tour of one of AS220's spaces. At the time, Peterman had just helped secure \$4 million in New Market tax credit equity for AS220's successful Mercantile Block rehab project on Washington Street.

"Without [those tax credits], we probably wouldn't have moved forward," Peterman recalled.

The accomplishment likely figured in his candidacy for the COO job, Peterman said. Indeed, when he took the library position in 2015, he went on to help secure \$4.2 million in New Market tax credit equity for the library renovation.

In fact, Martin said Peterman's role as the library's liaison with architects, engineers, the construction manager and consultants

required mastering complex state- and federal-level processes and programs. "Aaron's considerable contributions throughout the intricate, three-year planning and approval process for our renovation project cannot be overstated," Martin said.

Peterman was tasked with developing a thorough technical understanding of the library building, Martin said. It hadn't been updated in more than 30 years, and that presented numerous challenges throughout the design process with designLAB Architects, Martin said.

But Peterman was well prepared and familiarized himself with every aspect of the project. "I can close my eyes and see the detailed plans," Peterman said.

The dedication helped Providence Public Library in its application to the state Office of Library and Information Services' construction reimbursement program, ultimately winning nearly \$9 million for the project. "Without [that], our renovation would not be possible," Martin said. "Aaron has been integral to helping the organization navigate this transformation."

But Peterman's leadership goes beyond managing the renovation and securing crucial funding, Martin said. He has also helped ensure the library's future, spearheading the addition of a café into the renovation designs. The retail venture is projected to increase library revenue by more than \$300,000 within

five years.

Peterman also has led the improvement of financial controls, including hiring a controller to reform the library's finance office. He also implemented better budget tracking and quarterly budget-to-actuals statements at staff meetings for increased transparency.

Peterman implemented new financial and human resources software and made benefits tracking and time-off requests accessible to staff.

Peterman deftly handled communicating and fostering those changes, Martin said, a crucial ability for a leader in his position. Many of the current staff have worked there for more than 40 years.

Including his co-workers in the planning is part of his approach.

"If you could have more brains involved in solving a problem, why wouldn't you want them?" Peterman said.

"Aaron's thoughtful communication as COO has helped to ensure that our staff – the greatest asset of any organization – feels informed, respected and prepared to weather this period of change," Martin said. ■

'Aaron has been integral to helping the organization navigate this transformation.'

JACK MARTIN, Providence Public Library executive director

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
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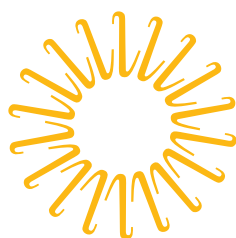


Arthur Sampson

President of The Miriam Hospital

On receiving the Providence Business News 2019 C-Suite Career Achiever Award

Through his 44 years in health care, Arthur Sampson has continuously demonstrated the essential qualities of a leader: strength, compassion, innovation, and diligence. Under his leadership, The Miriam Hospital consistently has been recognized at the national level for quality and exceptional patient care. We thank Arthur Sampson for being a strategic, purposeful leader who serves The Miriam Hospital and the community with humility and sincerity.



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Team spirit crucial to his game plan

BY ROB BORKOWSKI | Contributing Writer

SHARED GOALS: Noah Benedict, Rhode Island Primary Care Physicians chief operating officer, puts special emphasis on getting input from everyone on his team.

PBN PHOTO/RUPERT WHITELEY

SINCE BECOMING CHIEF operating officer of Rhode Island Primary Care Physicians Corp., Noah Benedict has quintupled the size of the staff to 62, led steady revenue growth, partnered with Care New England Health System and began standardizing members' electronic health records.

He and his team achieved those accomplishments during his seven years as COO, while maintaining a candid team atmosphere, said Andrea Galgay, director of accountable care organization development at the multispecialty independent practice.

"Noah fosters an environment where the leadership team drives the direction of the company," Galgay said. "We consistently work together and are comfortable sharing our expertise in an open and candid setting. Noah sets the tone that it is OK to disagree, and he values the input of everyone on the team," she said.

The mutual respect leads to increased productivity, Galgay said.

"Culture eats strategy for breakfast," Benedict said of the importance of a team being able to work comfortably and happily together.

Benedict said he believes in giving talented people the opportunity to create, innovate and challenge one another.

"The days of a single leader having all the answers [are] over and so is the thinking that you have that ability," Benedict said.

Benedict, who joined Rhode Island Primary Care Physicians 17 years ago, was elevated to COO when the staff numbered just 12. Rather than setting out to grow the business, Benedict said, "I focused on turning Rhode Island Primary Care into a leading organization," he said.

Galgay noted the practice's annual revenue has consistently increased since 2011, largely due to contracts negotiated by Benedict and work completed by the care team. From 2016 to 2018 alone, revenue grew 41%, she said.

The company's partnership with the hospital group Care New England was notable, Galgay said, as was Benedict's involvement in reaching

the agreement.

"I try to think of a way that we both can win," Benedict said of his approach to negotiation. "You should be able to accomplish that, if you are transparent about what your needs are and vice-versa."

Together, the entities formed the Integra Community Care Network LLC accountable care organization. Integra contracts with state, federal and commercial insurers, focused on containing health care costs, while also improving outcomes.

Benedict, who sits on Integra's board, said Rhode Island Primary Care's focus has always been on their patients and their health. "That [focus] alone is going to have a positive impact on the entire company and their bottom line," he said.

"Since taking over as chief operating officer, Noah's negotiation skills with insurers are unmatched," Galgay said.

Benedict's deal-making skills were also key in developing a relationship with UnitedHealthcare of New England about five years ago, she said. While United had a very corporate-centered approach to contracting, running all decisions through Minneapolis, Benedict has worked to create a collaborative relationship. In 2018, Rhode Island Primary Care was awarded the Innovation Award, which was one of six awards given to United accountable care organizations around the country, she said.

His long-term strategy for getting the practice's members aligned with the same electronic health records is also having a positive effect, Galgay said. Since 2014, more than 60% of Rhode Island Primary Care providers have migrated to Epic, the electronic health records software used by about 50% of U.S. hospitals.

"Noah serves as a key advocate, pushing our vendor, CNE, to maximize the build of Epic in a way that is most beneficial for our practices," Galgay said.

The uniformity Epic provides is very valuable, Benedict said. When one office makes an improvement, it's easily accessible to all the practices using Epic software.

Working to keep Rhode Island Primary Care running smoothly, providing the highest quality care as efficiently as possible in a challenging, respectful environment is a pleasure, Benedict said.

"It's professionally very satisfying," Benedict said. "I would imagine that the people that work here also feel the same way." ■

'The days of a single leader having **all the answers** [are] over.'

NOAH BENEDICT, Rhode Island Primary Care Physicians chief operating officer

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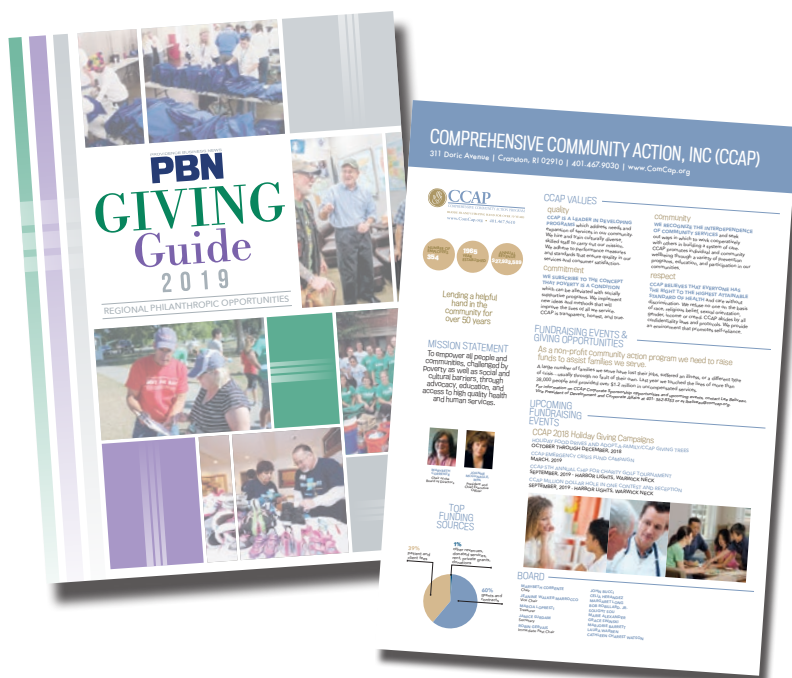
Melissa is as committed to our community as she is to our customers, devoting her time to the boards of the American Heart Association and Playworks New England.

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PROVIDENCE BUSINESS NEWS PBN GIVING Guide 2019 REGIONAL PHILANTHROPIC OPPORTUNITIES

The giving Guide connects top level business executives and their employees to the region's nonprofit offerings. Profiles of nonprofit organizations highlight their mission and position them as worthy of support by community leaders who can devote their time, talent and treasure.

In addition to the lasting value of the printed guide, additional distribution includes a digital edition on PBN.com for the year, and distribution of 500 copies to all attendees of the AFP-RI National Philanthropy Day Breakfast & Awards Ceremony in November.



Lathrop has thrived in the public eye

BY SUSAN SHALHOUB | Contributing Writer

NUMBERS CRUNCHER: North Kingstown Finance Director James Lathrop has developed more-readable financial reports and annual budgets to encourage more engagement from town residents.

PBN PHOTO/DAVE HANSEN

JAMES LATHROP, finance director for North Kingstown, is all about finding solutions and empowering people. It's paying off in terms of reduced town debt and staff turnover, and increased revenue and morale.

He creates professional-development opportunities for his department of 11, solicits feedback from his staff and makes a better work environment. He also works to get residents more engaged and welcomes opposing views.

"I want to have your opinion, and I like people who argue with me," said Lathrop, who added that he sees opposing viewpoints as a vehicle for insight and improvement.

North Kingstown Town Manager A. Ralph Mollis said Lathrop's technical knowledge is outstanding, and he's displayed top-notch management and leadership skills in two years on the job.

"I was town manager for just four months when I hired Jim to be part of my team," Mollis said. "The community was in the process of correcting a deteriorating financial picture."

Within a month, Lathrop had an internal audit completed, Mollis said, with heavy input from his team and solutions at the ready.

Lathrop, a Bryant University graduate from Connecticut, is a certified public accountant and earned a master's degree in public administration from New York University in 2017, while working full time.

He has been the New Shoreham town manager on Block Island, assistant town administrator in Portsmouth, and a finance director for Westerly and for its schools. Lathrop also had an accounting practice for more than a decade.

When he arrived in North Kingstown – which has a \$115 million budget – its issues included debt and high staff turnover in its finance department.

"I've been that guy who's kind of come in and fixed stuff, with a private-sector view," he

said. "I've worked for myself" and he's made decisions to maximize dollars and reduce expenses as he would for his own business.

Lathrop's success has included helping to get the town an AA+ rating from Standard & Poor's last year. The rating, one notch below the top rating, allowed the town to refinance debt, which is expected to save almost \$500,000 in borrowing costs over the next decade.

Another success: Lathrop introduced the idea of leasing equipment such as police cruisers. He used the same practice in Westerly, where the town leased bleachers for a municipal stadium.

"Many governments wait until everything is completely broken, then go borrow a lot of money to replace it," he said. "With municipal leasing, you can lease equipment and it is tax exempt at a 2.5% interest rate."

Lathrop isn't afraid of instituting change. To persuade others, he believes in the value of understanding one's audience and the best way to communicate with them.

He developed more-readable monthly financial reports and annual budgets so the community could more easily participate in spending discussions. And a tax late-fee abatement program for one-time late taxpayers costs the town very little, but it builds goodwill.

Lathrop has also reduced his department's turnover rate, which had been high. "It wasn't like they left the town; they just left the depart-

ment. They didn't receive training or a lot of support," said Lathrop. But since he's taken over, only one person has left, and that was a retirement.

Lathrop started annual performance reviews. He links team members with training programs so they can acquire skills they need to advance. "They have to explain how it will help their job," and they learn on their own time, he said. Reworking benefits to include flexible spending accounts for out-of-pocket health care expenses adds to morale, and costs the town nothing, said Mollis.

Lathrop likes his department to have fun, too, with events such as pumpkin decorating contests and "dress in pink" day on the schedule.

"I have a person here who decorates for every holiday," Lathrop said. "I tell her to go crazy. When you empower people, they do a better job." ■

'I want to have your opinion, and I like people who argue with me.'

JAMES LATHROP,
North Kingstown finance director

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PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

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Thomas E. Noret has been hired as the Executive Director of the South County YMCA where he will oversee fundraising efforts, membership, and community development. Noret is a retired Coventry Police Officer. He served as a Tax Investigator for the RI Division of Taxation, and also served for four years in the RI Air National Guard's 143d Air Lift Wing's Security Forces Squadron. A resident of Coventry, Noret was recently elected to Rhode Island House District 25. He serves on the Executive Board for the Blackrock Elementary School PTA and is a member of the Alan Shawn Feinstein Middle School PTA.



HEALTH CARE

Michelle Marchesseault has joined Saint Elizabeth Community's leadership as Director of Nursing. She previously served as Assistant Director of Nursing at a skilled nursing and rehab center in Rhode Island for eight years. A graduate of CCRI, Michelle is a wound care and rehab certified Registered Nurse. A graduate of CCRI, Michelle is a graduate of West Greenwich, RI. Saint Elizabeth Community is a skilled nursing and rehab center in West Greenwich and a member of Saint Elizabeth Community, a non-profit, non-sectarian, charitable organization that offers a full spectrum of care and services for older adults in Rhode Island.



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STEADY BALANCE: Mark Lo-
iselle, Saint Elizabeth Commu-
nity chief financial officer, keeps
an eye on the dollars and cents
while maintaining the quality of
care for the nonprofit company's
senior residents.

PBN PHOTO/DAVE HANSEN

The mission is never far from his mind

BY SUSAN SHALHOUB | Contributing Writer

MARK LOISELLE HAS BEEN chief financial officer at **Saint Elizabeth Community** – a nonprofit senior-care provider with 11 Rhode Island locations – since 2004, securing the community's stability and growing its services while overcoming the unique challenges of the industry.

"We're not accountable to shareholders; we're accountable to our mission," he said.

Loiselle's commitment to the Saint Elizabeth Community mission is clear when you consider that his mother was a resident in the Saint Elizabeth memory-care unit for eight years. The unit's bright, upbeat atmosphere was quite different from the dark and depressing nursing home his grandmother had lived in late in her life.

Loiselle wants to ensure families have better options for elderly loved ones, like his mother had.

"Come look at our facilities," he said. "They are very well maintained, like a hotel. These are homes where people come to live out the rest of their lives."

Loiselle, who earned his undergraduate degree and MBA from Bryant University, is not afraid to look at old problems through a new

lens.

"Our revenue is 70% or so reimbursement and doesn't change much," he said. "Sometimes, it goes down. It's a tough labor market. We have to continually recruit and retain our base. Labor is 75-80% of our costs."

Loiselle has been able to control labor expenses while maintaining ideal patient care, true to the mission of the organization. High turnover is not only costly, it's not good for the seniors, who need consistency. Respecting valued employees is crucial in recruitment and retention.

"We have to trust them to do their job," he said. "If staff members don't feel so rushed, they can spend extra time with a resident that the resident might really need."

Saint Elizabeth Community offers short-

term rehabilitation, adult day centers, an independent-housing apartment building, a home-care agency and four "Green House" homes, residences designed to look and feel like a real home instead of a traditional nursing home. There are only about 200 such residences in the United States.

Built in 2017 – for \$15 million – the Green House homes in East Greenwich offer residents private rooms with large dining rooms and common areas. They offer a homey feel to help combat loneliness and its mental toll, said Loiselle.

Saint Elizabeth Community has a full range of care and living options that Loiselle has worked to strengthen.

Under his tenure, the community has grown from three entities to seven. In 2016, for example, the nonprofit acquired the Cathleen Naughton Associates home-care agency.

"Mark was instrumental in both the negotiation ... and obtaining financing for the purchase," said Steven J. Horowitz, Saint Elizabeth Community president and CEO.

Loiselle also helped integrate new accounting systems, train personnel and he moved all seven entities under the Saint Elizabeth umbrella to one main payroll platform, according to Horowitz.

Along with the acquisitions, the Saint Elizabeth Community has undertaken multimillion-dollar construction projects during Loiselle's tenure as CFO, including a renovation and addition to Saint Elizabeth Manor, completed in 2016 at \$4.5 million, and the construction of the \$5.2 million Saint Elizabeth Terrace in Warwick, a senior apartment building funded by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Loiselle has also taken full advantage of information technology innovations.

"We constantly have tech things we have to do, reporting, with government regulations that require reports we can generate using different systems," he said. A certified public accountant, he's brought all IT functions, such as cost reporting, in-house, as opposed to paying an outside accounting firm. He oversees eight audits a year for Saint Elizabeth Community entities.

The technology comes with a few downsides, but they're far outweighed by the advantages.

"Like any organization, I've got 100 different passwords," Loiselle said. He's also got 100 different ways to keep Saint Elizabeth Community viable and ready to meet a future of aging seniors with myriad living options and opportunities. ■

'We're not
accountable to
shareholders; **we're
accountable to
our mission.**'

MARK LOISELLE, Saint Elizabeth
Community chief financial officer

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER
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Friday, May 24 Memorial Day Weekend Issue

PBN will include a full page next to the Veteran Employers List in the Veterans in the Workforce Focus Section. This 4-color page will be filled with company logos saluting these veteran employers.

Reservation and materials deadline: Friday, May 17



★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Friday, November 8 Veterans Day Weekend Issue

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Reservation and materials deadline: Friday, October 11

For the Cover Wrap issue, there will be website/employment information on sponsor companies to help veterans find meaningful jobs.

PBN also donates a portion of the revenue generated by the Veterans Day Cover Wrap to the SOSRI (Supporting Our Service Members of Rhode Island), a local nonprofit dedicated to financially supporting service members and their families.

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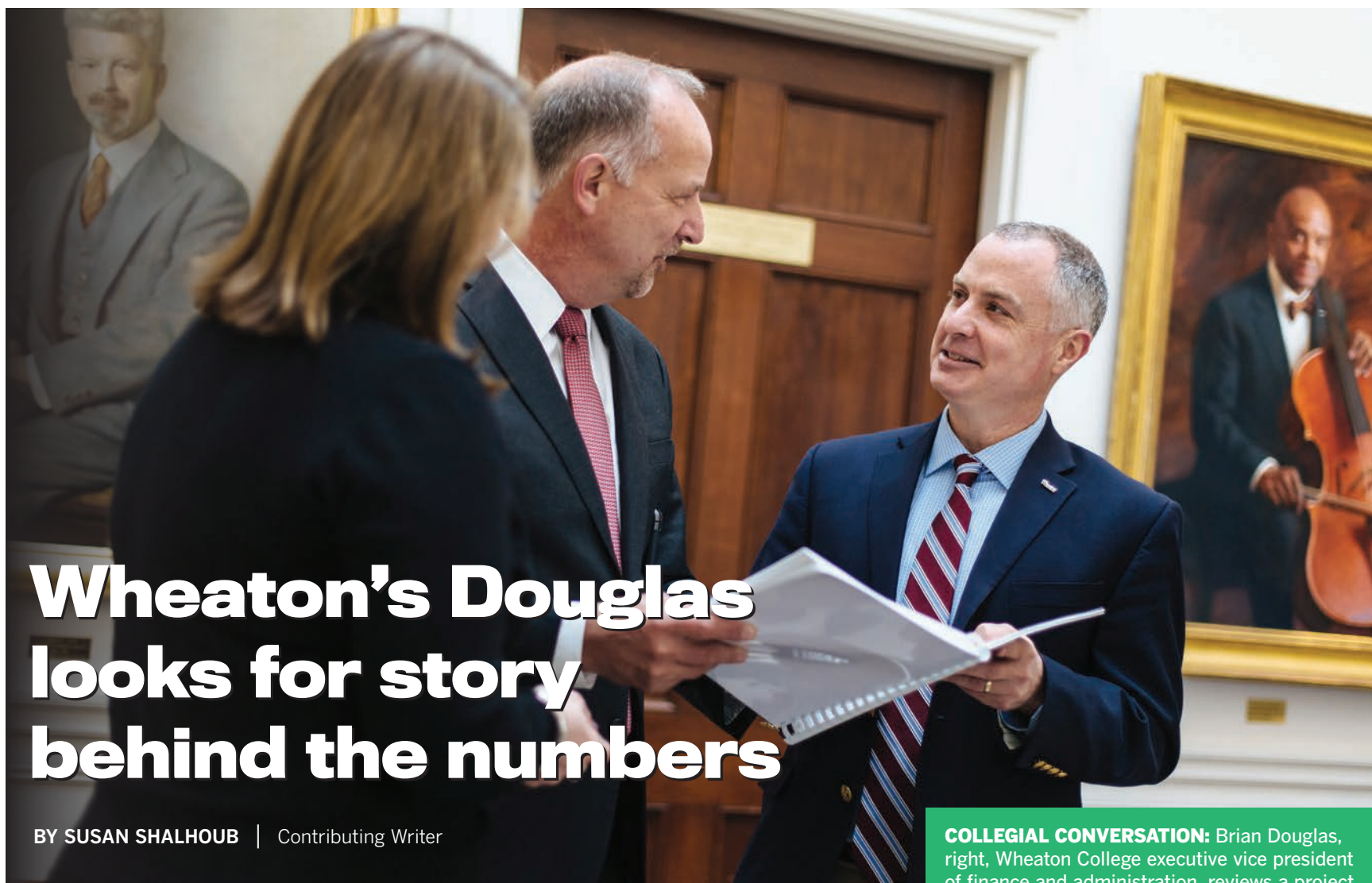
The RI Community Food Bank congratulates Lisa Roth Blackman for winning the 2019 PBN Chief Philanthropy Officer Award! We know she's the best and now everyone else does!

Lisa brings in the big checks like this one, but checks of all sizes keep the Food Bank running and hungry Rhode Islanders fed.



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Wheaton's Douglas looks for story behind the numbers

BY SUSAN SHALHOUB | Contributing Writer

COLLEGIAL CONVERSATION: Brian Douglas, right, Wheaton College executive vice president of finance and administration, reviews a project report with President Dennis Hanno, center, and Associate Provost Meg Kirkpatrick. PBN PHOTO/RUPERT WHITELEY

BRIAN DOUGLAS has been a force in **Wheaton College's** finance and administration for seven years, the past three as the department's executive vice president. But when it comes to presenting ideas to stakeholders of the private, liberal arts college in Norton, Douglas favors stories of the school's promising future over "columns of numbers" detailing the investments to get there.

A budget officer at the University of Massachusetts before coming to Wheaton, he is known for his superior ability to break things down.

"He is a master at explaining complex financial topics and this, coupled with his transparency, has helped to inform so many decisions on campus," said Wheaton College President Dennis Hanno.

Douglas relies on visuals more than rows of numbers, preferring illustrations such as line graphs and pie charts. His ability to communicate his goals for Wheaton College has elevated the school to new levels of success over the past decade. "It's about showing where we are coming from and where we are trying to go," he said.

In the midst of financial challenges for smaller colleges in terms of competition and revenue loss – with more families viewing higher education as a commodity – Wheaton is growing and implementing innovative practices while keeping expenses in check. During Douglas' tenure at Wheaton, operating revenue has increased from \$71 million in fiscal 2012 to projected revenue of \$80 million this year.

Debt refinancing in 2017 led to \$30 million in new-construction spending; Wheaton's new dormitory is slated for completion in July. The new residence hall is crucial for growth, said Douglas. While the architectural design follows a historic theme, it is being built at "passive house" energy-efficiency standards – the first residence hall in New England to do so.

The high cost of health insurance had been

another concern. Wheaton is now part of EdHealth, a consortium of educational institutions that's kept its three-year average premium increase at 0.5% for members. Douglas was instrumental in this move, said Hanno, with member schools now numbering 16.

Over the past six years, Wheaton's expenses have been kept below inflation without adversely affecting employee pay or benefits. Restructuring and strategic hiring played a role in this success, said Douglas. In terms of human resources practices, for example, he ushered Wheaton into a more performance-based framework.

"It was about helping managers instill accountability," said Douglas. "Showing the importance of performance against one's job description." This helps high performers feel valued, he said, and helps those who may be struggling in their positions to better align with their roles and improve their performance.

Two other places where Douglas' leadership resulted in true benefits have been in the areas of energy and ... eating.

In line with Douglas' commitment to sustainability, he's put filtered drinking fountains and LED lighting on campus, netting \$100,000 in annual savings. On his watch, a solar-panel field and roofing have been installed as well.

At the same time, the dining program was also modernized under Douglas' leadership,

another tool in the school's effort to attract prospective students.

Made-to-order meals with more options, including vegan and allergy-free foods, are now the norm in renovated dining facilities for students, staff and administrators.

Keys to Douglas' success include strong, competent staff members. "I help to identify where we want to go and then get out of their way," he said. "But they really lead the way in ... all we've accomplished."

A helpful practice that's benefited Wheaton is Douglas' ability to proactively handle projects that may be lagging.

"If there is a project that's struggling, we have a weekly standing meeting early in the day, say 7:30 a.m.," he said. "That gets us moving before we are off doing work for the day. ... The fact that it's every week – early in the day – makes it clear that it's our priority," he said.

Next on the horizon for Douglas and Wheaton College: a multimillion-dollar science-center renovation that will make more space for Wheaton psychology and business programs. ■

'He is a **master at explaining complex financial topics.**'

DENNIS HANNO, Wheaton College president

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER
EDUCATION

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RHODE ISLAND BUSINESS & INDUSTRIAL PARKS (ranked by acreage)

| RANK | PARK NAME | ACREAGE | LOCATION | CONTACT |
|------|------------------------------|---------|----------------|---------------|
| 1 | Providence Business Park | 1,200 | Providence, RI | John Smith |
| 2 | Providence Industrial Park | 800 | Providence, RI | Jane Doe |
| 3 | Providence Business Center | 600 | Providence, RI | Bob Johnson |
| 4 | Providence Industrial Center | 500 | Providence, RI | Alice Brown |
| 5 | Providence Business Plaza | 400 | Providence, RI | Charlie White |
| 6 | Providence Industrial Plaza | 300 | Providence, RI | Diana Green |
| 7 | Providence Business Square | 200 | Providence, RI | Frank Black |
| 8 | Providence Industrial Square | 150 | Providence, RI | Grace King |
| 9 | Providence Business Circle | 100 | Providence, RI | Henry Lee |
| 10 | Providence Industrial Circle | 80 | Providence, RI | Ivy Scott |
| 11 | Providence Business Drive | 70 | Providence, RI | Jack Hall |
| 12 | Providence Industrial Drive | 60 | Providence, RI | Karen Young |
| 13 | Providence Business Lane | 50 | Providence, RI | Leo Adams |
| 14 | Providence Industrial Lane | 40 | Providence, RI | Mia Baker |
| 15 | Providence Business Way | 30 | Providence, RI | Noah Clark |
| 16 | Providence Industrial Way | 20 | Providence, RI | Olivia Evans |
| 17 | Providence Business Court | 15 | Providence, RI | Peter Foster |
| 18 | Providence Industrial Court | 10 | Providence, RI | Quinn Gibson |
| 19 | Providence Business Road | 8 | Providence, RI | Rachel Harris |
| 20 | Providence Industrial Road | 5 | Providence, RI | Samuel King |
| 21 | Providence Business Street | 4 | Providence, RI | Tina Lee |
| 22 | Providence Industrial Street | 3 | Providence, RI | Uma Scott |
| 23 | Providence Business Avenue | 2 | Providence, RI | Victor Hall |
| 24 | Providence Industrial Avenue | 1 | Providence, RI | Wendy Young |

ARCHITECTURAL FIRMS (ranked by number of registered architects)

| RANK | FIRM NAME | REGISTERED ARCHITECTS | LOCATION | CONTACT |
|------|--------------------|-----------------------|----------------|---------------|
| 1 | Smith & Associates | 120 | Providence, RI | John Smith |
| 2 | Johnson & Partners | 80 | Providence, RI | Jane Doe |
| 3 | Williams & Co. | 60 | Providence, RI | Bob Johnson |
| 4 | Miller & Sons | 40 | Providence, RI | Alice Brown |
| 5 | Green & Green | 30 | Providence, RI | Charlie White |
| 6 | White & White | 20 | Providence, RI | Diana Green |
| 7 | Black & Black | 15 | Providence, RI | Frank Black |
| 8 | King & King | 10 | Providence, RI | Grace King |
| 9 | Lee & Lee | 8 | Providence, RI | Henry Lee |
| 10 | Scott & Scott | 5 | Providence, RI | Ivy Scott |
| 11 | Hall & Hall | 4 | Providence, RI | Jack Hall |
| 12 | Young & Young | 3 | Providence, RI | Karen Young |
| 13 | Adams & Adams | 2 | Providence, RI | Leo Adams |
| 14 | Baker & Baker | 1 | Providence, RI | Mia Baker |
| 15 | Clark & Clark | 1 | Providence, RI | Noah Clark |
| 16 | Evans & Evans | 1 | Providence, RI | Olivia Evans |
| 17 | Foster & Foster | 1 | Providence, RI | Peter Foster |
| 18 | Gibson & Gibson | 1 | Providence, RI | Quinn Gibson |
| 19 | Harris & Harris | 1 | Providence, RI | Rachel Harris |
| 20 | King & King | 1 | Providence, RI | Samuel King |
| 21 | Lee & Lee | 1 | Providence, RI | Tina Lee |
| 22 | Scott & Scott | 1 | Providence, RI | Uma Scott |
| 23 | Hall & Hall | 1 | Providence, RI | Victor Hall |
| 24 | Young & Young | 1 | Providence, RI | Wendy Young |



GOLF COURSES (ranked by USGA slope rating)

| RANK | COURSE NAME | USGA SLOPE RATING | LOCATION | CONTACT |
|------|---------------------------------|-------------------|----------------|---------------|
| 1 | Providence Golf Club | 72 | Providence, RI | John Smith |
| 2 | Providence Country Club | 70 | Providence, RI | Jane Doe |
| 3 | Providence Golf & Country Club | 68 | Providence, RI | Bob Johnson |
| 4 | Providence Golf Course | 65 | Providence, RI | Alice Brown |
| 5 | Providence Golf Links | 63 | Providence, RI | Charlie White |
| 6 | Providence Golf Estate | 60 | Providence, RI | Diana Green |
| 7 | Providence Golf Clubhouse | 58 | Providence, RI | Frank Black |
| 8 | Providence Golf Center | 55 | Providence, RI | Grace King |
| 9 | Providence Golf Pavilion | 52 | Providence, RI | Henry Lee |
| 10 | Providence Golf Shop | 50 | Providence, RI | Ivy Scott |
| 11 | Providence Golf Grill | 48 | Providence, RI | Jack Hall |
| 12 | Providence Golf Bar | 45 | Providence, RI | Karen Young |
| 13 | Providence Golf Lounge | 42 | Providence, RI | Leo Adams |
| 14 | Providence Golf Cafe | 40 | Providence, RI | Mia Baker |
| 15 | Providence Golf Deli | 38 | Providence, RI | Noah Clark |
| 16 | Providence Golf Bakery | 35 | Providence, RI | Olivia Evans |
| 17 | Providence Golf Pizzeria | 32 | Providence, RI | Peter Foster |
| 18 | Providence Golf Restaurant | 30 | Providence, RI | Quinn Gibson |
| 19 | Providence Golf Hotel | 28 | Providence, RI | Rachel Harris |
| 20 | Providence Golf Resort | 25 | Providence, RI | Samuel King |
| 21 | Providence Golf Spa | 22 | Providence, RI | Tina Lee |
| 22 | Providence Golf Salon | 20 | Providence, RI | Uma Scott |
| 23 | Providence Golf Day Spa | 18 | Providence, RI | Victor Hall |
| 24 | Providence Golf Wellness Center | 15 | Providence, RI | Wendy Young |

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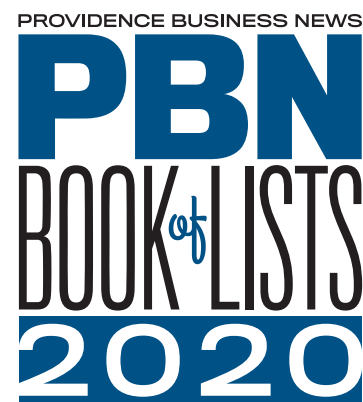
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Dexter is invaluable in her listening post

BY SUSAN SHALHOUB | Contributing Writer

MICHELLE DEXTER, senior director of human resources at the nonprofit **Rhode Island Quality Institute**, is a listener and a list-maker.

“Michelle’s listening skills are second to none,” said Laura Adams, former RIQI president and CEO. “She frequently counsels, mentors and guides employees and all levels of management. Staff will pour their heart out to Michelle because they know she will offer empathy, support and wise counsel.”

This ability to listen is part of the reason why the nonprofit’s HR department has become a pillar of the institution over the six years Dexter has been at RIQI, Adams said. Dexter’s ability to handle even difficult conversations with employees makes a difference in morale and gathering insight on ways the organization can improve.

Dexter is proud of RIQI’s progressive work environment, which includes flex time for staff to work from home. “It was a critical piece for me to have flexibility,” she said.

RIQI supports collaboration and innovation in health care and works to balance those efforts with the needs of the community in ways that improve quality and lower costs. It competes with larger, for-profit companies for talented people in information technology and big-data analytics. Dexter is a huge factor in RIQI’s successful recruitment efforts, Adams said.

According to Adams, Dexter was also the force behind RIQI winning a PBN Best Places to Work award for the past two years. The Employers Association of New England also named RIQI its Employer of Choice in 2017.

Dexter seeks input from employees about the workplace culture.

In another level of listening, Dexter started a values survey among the 65 or so employees about four years ago, she said, where they are asked what is working and

not working for them within the company. Senior leaders review the results and report back to employees.

“Our intent was to get feedback, share the information with staff and take a deeper dive,” said Dexter. “We feel employees should get a voice, allowing them to be a part of something.” She established an Organizational Excellence program for upper management to focus on elevating the office culture.

Dexter also set up a vehicle for RIQI team members to recognize each other’s good work.

“We created a High-Five Peer-to-Peer Recognition program,” Dexter said. Employees can go write an accolade about a co-worker on a designated office bulletin board – five instances of such recognition earn the employee a trophy.

But even that HR program has room for improvement. A suggestion box has been set up for feedback from employees.

“It’s not just leadership, it’s all levels looking at what’s working well,” Dexter said. “What can we do to refresh a program? What we can do next? We like to engage at all levels.”

Engaging at all levels includes using creativity and innovative thinking in order to make RIQI and its staff stronger. Without a robust budget for professional development, Dexter has become skilled at winning state

LENDING AN EAR: Michelle Dexter, Rhode Island Quality Institute senior director of human resources, invites all sorts of feedback from co-workers in her constant effort to improve the workplace culture.

PBN PHOTO/RUPERT WHITELEY

grants for that purpose.

“She works magic with a modest budget,” said Adams.

“It’s about applying for grants, building relationships with others in the community. You have to go out there and see what is available and then foster those opportunities,” said Dexter.

One of Dexter’s skills is time management; she relies on lists and carving out time to process the points of a meeting and prioritizing follow-up actions. She believes strongly in making time to reflect after a meeting or at the end of the day, reviewing what transpired and planning next steps.

No matter how busy she gets, there’s always time for Dexter to volunteer with the Epilepsy Foundation. Her daughter, 16, has been seizure-free for nine years.

“I want to give back for those going through it,” Dexter said. ■

‘Michelle’s listening skills are **second to none.**’

LAURA ADAMS, former Rhode Island Quality Institute president and CEO

CHIEF HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER
NONPROFIT



A fresh approach to the talent search

BY SUSAN SHALHOUB | Contributing Writer

TOP RECRUITER: Kim McCauley, Narragansett Bay Insurance chief human resources officer, emphasizes the insurance industry's cutting-edge technology, such as predictive modeling, when attempting to persuade young people to think about a career in insurance.

PBN PHOTO/RUPERT WHITELEY

RECRUITMENT IS A PASSION that drives Kim McCauley, chief human resources officer at **Narragansett Bay Insurance Co.** She specializes in getting younger people to visualize themselves succeeding in the insurance industry.

"It's my entire approach on talent acquisition," she said. "If you can grab the hearts and minds of young adults, it pays in dividends. If we can hook them young, it's how we close the gap with skills we can't fill today," she said. "The insurance industry can be very boring from a young, millennial perspective. It feels 'old.'"

McCauley understands that. And she's become a beacon in exposing young people to an industry full of opportunities they may not have considered or known about. Starting a robust internship program and partnering with local colleges, McCauley has shown students the work done in the insurance sector using artificial intelligence, predictive modeling and other technology.

She's even been known to explain the work without mentioning insurance right away.

"Sometimes I go to campuses and don't even use the word," said McCauley, who has been in the industry for more than 20 years, six with NBIC. "Instead, I'll say, 'Do you want to predict the future [as with data analytics]?'"

With McCauley's help, Johnston-based NBIC has found the right people and grown from 75 employees in 2016 to 132 in 2018. Under her guidance, senior leaders are encouraged to scour the industry each quarter in search of emerging talent, then put into motion.

Rather than having job descriptions for which NBIC finds candidates, McCauley introduced the idea of using an unconventional recruitment model: find talent and then explore ways to use those candidates' strengths.

"We plug and play with different rules," she said. "We've brought in part-timers, worked in others who could only do two days a week – we find ways to fit that talent. Otherwise, they would go untapped until ready to be full time. That doesn't help anyone, including the economy."

This open-minded approach to talent acquisition carries over to employment. McCauley and the NBIC management team consider how they can make positions work for employees who bring strengths to the organization. Employees are allowed to work from home, have a casual environment at work, and can work flexible hours.

"There are different styles of work and different styles of communication," McCauley said. "You have to create a job environment that works for that candidate."

Her forward-thinking mindset has also put the company in a good place from a cost and cultural standpoint, said Nick Steffey, NBIC chairman. "With the strong family/life balance culture she has fostered, the organization's turnover rate is extremely low. Employees comment on their last day that they hate to leave the company."

In addition to innovative efforts around recruitment and work-life balance, McCauley has also proven her value under pressure.

NBIC's revenue is on a steady rise now, but after the East Coast was hit by Superstorm Sandy in 2012, the company did not turn a profit for two years. McCauley worked with senior leadership on solutions, including a drastic reduction in the number of its relationships with insurance agencies – cut from 412 to 98 – putting the focus only on agencies and work that brought in the best return on investment.

It worked.

"Through this effort, the organization stabilized," said Steffey.

McCauley calls the storm a catalyst to reshape the business, a chance to sharpen operations and review inefficiencies. She welcomes this and other challenges.

"I just love my job and the HR profession," she said, adding that it's changed and evolved with the advent of technology. "We no longer need to do the older tasks, [such as] enroll people in benefits. We can now focus on inclusion, making sure every person is seen in terms of the unique gifts they bring to the table." ■

'You have to create a job environment that works for that candidate.'

KIM MCCAULEY, Narragansett Bay Insurance chief human resources officer

CHIEF HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER
PRIVATE COMPANY



Complex career shift ‘keeps it interesting’

BY MICHAEL HARDMAN | Contributing Writer

CHANGE OF DIRECTION: After 30 years performing information technology duties in other sectors, Lisa Blackmon leaped into the health care industry and is now chief information officer at Brown Physicians.

PBN PHOTO/RUPERT WHITELEY

LISA BLACKMON SAYS time management is one of her strongest skills, and she has needed it since becoming **Brown Physicians Inc.’s** chief information officer.

That’s because Blackmon has two jobs really. Two years ago, she was hired as director of information technology at University Surgical Associates, one of six member groups of the Brown Physicians organization.

In January, she was appointed as Brown Physicians’ CIO, and is now splitting her time between the two roles.

Blackmon made the jump to the health care industry after spending 30 years in other sectors, including previously working as director of information technology infrastructure and customer service at Providence-based Textron Inc.

“[Health care] was new to me,” Blackmon said. “I was looking for a change.”

When she joined University Surgical Associates, she got right to work on developing programs, policies and procedures, focusing on IT security, Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act compliance, data privacy, business continuity and emergency-mode operations.

While she was learning the ins and outs of the health care industry, Blackmon also worked on implementing process-improvement initiatives, tying it to patient engagement, data access and electronic records.

It was a challenge, having to become well-versed on health care terms, technology and the industry’s evolving restrictions.

“IT health care is very different with HIPAA compliance,” Blackmon said. “There are a lot of changes with the regulations and you have to work within those constraints.”

She credited her team with helping her pull off the balancing act between University Surgical Associates and Brown Physicians, but her people skills help, too.

“What impresses me about Lisa is her in-

nate leadership ability,” Tammy Lederer, chief human resources officer at Brown Physicians, said in an email. “She’s smart, approachable, listens and is received well by others.”

A community-based, nonprofit multispecialty practice group, Brown Physicians was founded by faculty affiliated with Brown University’s Warren Alpert Medical School and has about 1,200 employees and annual revenue of about \$7.5 million.

Aside from University Surgical Associates, Brown Physicians’ other member groups are Brown Dermatology, Brown Emergency Medicine, Brown Medicine, Brown Neurology and Brown Urology.

At Brown Physicians, Blackmon is now overseeing the IT operations and implementing shared electronic medical records, launching a referral platform and working to improve the patient experience with technology.

In her role at University Surgical Associates, Blackmon is in charge of managing technology infrastructure, compliance, security and risk management.

Blackmon is not the micromanaging type, instead allowing people to do their jobs and being there when they need help. “I want them to be able to grow and learn,” she said. “They can come back to me when they are stuck.”

Blackmon said she likes having her staff on hand rather than managing people across the country, as she did at Textron.

“She has a great way with people,” Lederer said.

Blackmon grew up in Rhode Island and at-

tended Bryant University in Smithfield. Even when she was traveling for work early in her career, she always stayed close to home.

“We [her first company] did the consulting with a software program,” she said. “I enjoyed traveling for work, but I always had an address here.”

The mother of two elementary- and middle-school students, Blackmon is involved in the local parent-teacher organization. She enjoys gardening and recently started boating.

In college, Blackmon – a 1989 graduate at Bryant, where she later got her master’s degree in business administration – was deciding between a career as an accountant or joining the relatively new field of information technology.

“IT seemed to be more exciting,” she said. “I took a course or two in high school when it was just starting.”

Blackmon found she liked solving problems and mastering new technologies and programs.

“Someone told me you should be updating your resume and taking on new things,” she said. “I am working on my skills, and that keeps it interesting.” ■

‘[Lisa] has a **great way with people.**’

TAMMY LEDERER, Brown Physicians chief human resources officer

CHIEF INFORMATION/ TECHNOLOGY OFFICER

NONPROFIT



Keeping capital flowing at the food bank

BY WENDY PIERMAN MITZEL | Contributing Writer

LISA ROTH BLACKMAN, chief philanthropy officer of the **Rhode Island Community Food Bank**, starts all her team meetings with good news. It's always good news first.

"We all know there are challenges at work – that's why we're meeting," she explained. "But if we can remember to celebrate our successes, it helps us work together to figure out the challenges."

Over the past 17 years, Blackman has climbed the organizational ladder from a part-time communications role to an executive fundraising position at the nonprofit that distributes 200,000 pounds of food weekly to people in need.

"In high school and college, I had been very involved with volunteer hunger-relief efforts but hadn't kept up with it in my early career. So I was thrilled to find the food bank opportunity," she said.

Blackman often jokes that she has the easiest fundraising job "because people get it – you need healthy food to survive and thrive," she said. "And too many families don't have enough income to meet their basic needs – housing, food, health care, etc."

Still, according to CEO Andrew Schiff, Blackman's ability to raise the visibility of the food bank and its mission has been crucial.

"There are so many good nonprofits in Rhode Island; you really need to stand out. Lisa's done this through creative events [such as] the Savor celebrity dinner with Jacques Pepin, and other extraordinary, innovative campaigns, as well as attention to stewardship," he said. "If you're a donor to the food bank, you feel your donation is important, and that's what she does better than anybody."

Schiff was quick to applaud Blackman's eight-person team, too.

"She recruited an incredible group of people and they stay because of her. She does a tremendous job keeping the team focused,"

he said.

Blackman said she was young and inexperienced when she began managing fundraising campaigns, so she followed a strategy to "hire smart people who are good at what they do, and listen to them."

"I want everyone on my team to feel that they have something to contribute because they do. I don't know everything and I don't have all of the ideas we need," she said. "I rely on the expertise and experience of my colleagues to make the best decisions for the organization."

Schiff said Blackman also developed a board of directors willing to devote time to the cause, even offering a matching-gift challenge to donors.

"People love knowing that their gift will go twice as far to help people in need," Blackman said. "It really inspired the board to give more, knowing that they would be inspiring others to give."

The Great Recession tested the fundraising skills of Blackman and her team as the need for the food bank grew and the ability of people to give shrank. In response, the food bank maintained its awareness campaigns and also developed a bigger online presence to reach a younger audience.

Another success story for Blackman's team: the Nothing campaign, in cooperation with Providence advertising firm Nail.

"We never imagined that they would pitch the idea of making 'nothing' into a brand,

CREDIT IS DUE: Lisa Roth Blackman, chief philanthropy officer at the Rhode Island Community Food Bank, and her team have been instrumental in raising the visibility of the nonprofit and its mission.

PBN PHOTO/RUPERT WHITELEY

and selling empty cans of Nothing in the grocery store as though they were a food item. I think they were shocked when we agreed to go along with it, and that Citizens Bank agreed to underwrite it," Blackman said. "Almost as an afterthought, I suggested that we put a donation slit in the top of the can. To this day, we still get people dropping off cans of Nothing full of money, even though the campaign was in 2010 and 2011!"

Beyond the food bank, Blackman serves as the chairwoman of the Economic Progress Institute, a nonpartisan research and policy organization dedicated to improving the economic well-being of low- and modest-income Rhode Islanders. She is active at her temple and the school her two children attend, as well as getting involved in numerous political issues and campaigns. ■

'She recruited an **incredible group of people** and they stay because of her.'

ANDREW SCHIFF, Rhode Island Community Food Bank CEO

CHIEF PHILANTHROPY OFFICER
NONPROFIT



Healthy customers fuel Cummings' happiness

BY MICHAEL HARDMAN | Contributing Writer

BIG IDEAS: Melissa Cummings, chief customer officer at Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island, helps implement the company's customer-service projects, such as opening Blue Cross & Blue Shield stores where members can get face-to-face service or take fitness classes.

PBN PHOTO/ RUPERT WHITELEY

WHEN MELISSA CUMMINGS walks into the office with an idea, Jeremy Duncan, **Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island** vice president of marketing, says he's certain of two things:

One, the idea will benefit the customer; two, it will be backed by strong data.

As executive vice president and chief customer officer, Cummings' role is to combine the efficiency and convenience of technology with the personal touch of face-to-face interactions to benefit Blue Cross members and the company.

"She has a deep understanding of the health care system and the ability to link to the customers," Duncan said. "She puts herself in the role of the customer [and] is able to translate that into an opportunity for us to pursue."

Duncan said Cummings' job is different from traditional C-level positions in that she is plugged into the entire company.

"She is open [and] accessible," said Duncan. "She's energetic, thoughtful and customer-centric. She has a lot of energy and provides valuable feedback to the team. As a Rhode Island native, she had the opportunity to make the lives of the people in the community better."

Cummings' focus on helping others was developed early on, as was an entrepreneurial spirit. She was shaped by her mother's career helping patients as a nurse and psychotherapist in private practice, and her father's career as a sales executive and small-business owner.

"A super-appealing part of the job was the nature of the position," said Cummings. "My parents passed that on. They also showed me the value of hard work."

Cummings has worked in the health insurance industry for 22 years. Since joining Blue

Cross in 2014, she has worked closely with her team and has become an ambassador in the community.

One of the projects she has implemented is the Your Blue Store, where members can visit a retail Blue Cross "store" for help with insurance plans and benefits. The stores – located in East Providence, Lincoln and Warwick – also offer free fitness classes, health screenings, and access to a nurse and a dietitian. In 2018, Blue Cross members visited the stores more than 51,000 times, and 15,426 people took 1,935 fitness classes.

"This went beyond expectations," Cummings said. "We are talking face-to-face with them and personalizing their health care."

In 2017, Cummings helped launch a partnership with corporate-wellness company Virgin Pulse, making Blue Cross the first health insurer to offer Virgin Pulse's customized health app to nearly 400,000 members.

Cummings also introduced a wellness rewards program to help small businesses lower their insurance premiums. Employers with fewer than 50 employees can earn as much as 8% back on their premiums, while employees who participate in the well-being program can earn as much as \$200 annually.

With the 2018 BlueCHIP for Medicare Value plan, seniors receive a no-cost activity tracker to use with the Virgin Pulse app and a \$100 annual wellness reimbursement to be used to participate in programs such as fitness classes, golf and sports lessons.

This year Blue Cross, in a partnership with

Oak Street Health, a network of primary care centers serving Medicare patients, will open two new centers in Providence and one in Warwick to provide holistic and preventive health care. The program provides free transportation, one-on-one time with health care professionals, as well as social and educational events.

Cummings also introduced regional BlueCHIP products that provide lowest-cost, multistate network options for Rhode Island companies with employees in neighboring states.

Under her guidance, digital tools have been added to Blue Cross' offerings, including a mobile app and text messaging that can give members benefit updates, money-saving tips and crucial health reminders.

Customers can expect additional offerings in the future.

"We have to look at the increasing technology and find the exact blend of local and technology," Cummings said. "It can't be all one or the other." ■

'She's energetic, thoughtful and customer-centric.'

JEREMY DUNCAN, Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island vice president of marketing

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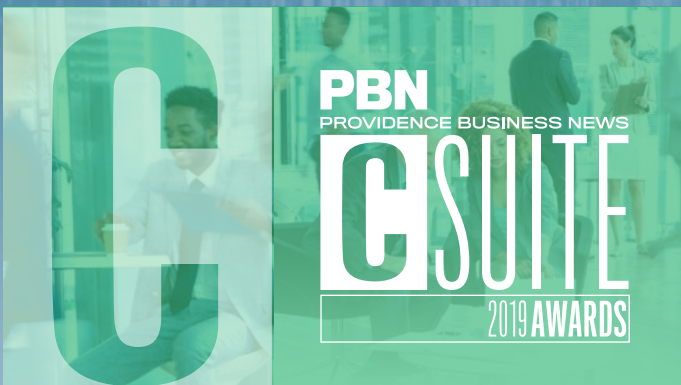
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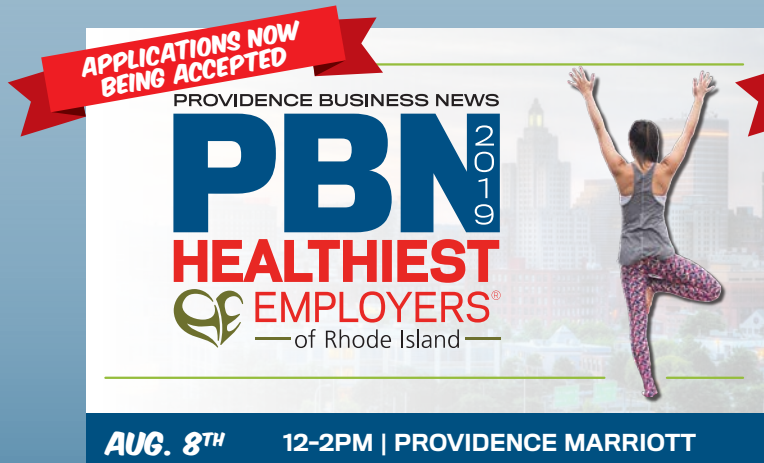
MAY 23RD 12 - 2PM | PROVIDENCE MARRIOTT



JUNE 13TH 5:30-8PM | CROWNE PLAZA



JULY 18TH 5:30-8PM | ALDRICH MANSION



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REACH THE PEOPLE THAT COUNT.



Community needs are her chief concern

BY JAIME LOWE | Contributing Writer

A GIVING PERSON: Angela Bannerman Ankoma, executive vice president and director of community investment for United Way of Rhode Island, oversees millions of dollars in grants to programs and organizations annually.

PBN PHOTO/RUPERT WHITELEY

“IF YOU WERE TO ASK ME two years ago if I would be here, I wouldn’t have told you that. I just wanted to help people,” said Angela Bannerman Ankoma, executive vice president and director of community investment at **United Way of Rhode Island**.

Bannerman Ankoma, born and raised in Providence, realized in fifth grade that she wanted to serve her community. She was inspired by her teacher at Gilbert Stuart Elementary School, Cheryl Fisher-Allen.

“She was my first teacher who looked like me; she was an African American woman and I absolutely loved her,” Bannerman Ankoma recalled. “We did a lot of community service in her classroom. She lived in my neighborhood. Normally, you do traditional Black History Month events in February. I think she did a whole year of Black History Month events. But that had such a huge impact on me and I knew that I wanted to serve.”

So that’s what she did.

After graduating from Connecticut College in 1997 with degrees in Africana studies and psychology, Bannerman Ankoma worked at a Providence group home for children who were aging out of foster care. “I was connected to the work; I was passionate about the work. That’s when I decided, ‘You know what, you like working with people, you like working with children and their families, so go to school for social work.’”

Bannerman Ankoma attended Columbia University in 2001, initially to obtain a master’s degree. She ended up graduating three years later with two master’s degrees – one in social work, the other in public health.

“I think that the social work/public health combination is excellent. The public health degree suited me well,” she said.

After a five-year stint conducting research

on HIV/AIDS at Columbia, she returned to Providence and joined the state Department of Health in 2008. She became the chief of minority health and co-director of the department’s Health Equity Institute.

Bannerman Ankoma arrived at United Way of Rhode Island in September 2017. As executive vice president and director of community investment, she manages the organization’s strategic direction to better address community needs. In 2018, she oversaw more than \$4 million in grants to programs and organizations across the state.

“At United Way of Rhode Island, we’re focused on community first – so my work here is an extension of my work in the community. So that doesn’t even feel like work,” said Bannerman Ankoma.

“Angie is truly a gift, not just to the United Way of Rhode Island, but moreover to the Rhode Island community,” said Cortney Nicolato, president and CEO of United Way of Rhode Island. “For Angie, she has a deep-rooted belief that the prosperity of our state can only happen if our residents have the tools they need to thrive. She not only fights against injustice, but she develops and implements the programs to help solve the problem.”

Bannerman Ankoma’s work goes well

beyond United Way. She is the immediate past president of West Elmwood Housing Development Corp. and a founding member of the Sankofa Initiative, a multimillion-dollar urban housing and agriculture project designed to improve health in Providence’s immigrant community.

For her community work, she’s earned numerous honors, such as the Providence NAACP’s Rosa Parks Award, the NeighborWorks America’s Dorothy Richardson Resident Leadership Award and the Women’s Development Institute’s Extraordinary Women Award.

Bannerman Ankoma still thinks about the influence her teacher, Cheryl Fisher-Allen, had on her life. Bannerman Ankoma learned after graduating college that she had died of cancer.

“I never got to tell her about her impact,” Bannerman Ankoma said. “She’s the reason why I stayed. If everybody who makes it leaves, then who’s left, right? I felt it was important for those of us who’ve been supported by and raised in the neighborhood to continue to stay and support. You know it’s not always easy. But if all of us leave, who else is left?” ■

‘My work here is an **extension of my work in the community.**’

ANGELA BANNERMAN ANKOMA,
United Way of Rhode Island executive vice president and director of community investment

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