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**BUSINESS REVIEW**

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2022

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The IDAHO BUSINESS REVIEW [ISSN 8750-4022] is a newspaper of general circulation published biweekly. Subscription is \$149 annually. (Includes Idaho sales tax for Idaho residents.) The IDAHO BUSINESS REVIEW is an Idaho Corporation doing business at 4696 W. Overland Rd., Suite 180, Boise, ID 83705. Periodical postage paid at Boise, ID. Send address changes to IDAHO BUSINESS REVIEW, P.O. Box 8866, Boise, ID 83707. Entire contents copyrighted 2022 by IDAHO BUSINESS REVIEW. All rights reserved. Material published in the IDAHO BUSINESS REVIEW may not be republished, resold, recorded or used in any manner, in whole or in part, without the publisher's express written consent. Reprints available at reprints@idahobusinessreview.com. Opinions expressed by the columnists are not necessarily the opinions or the policy of the IDAHO BUSINESS REVIEW. The IDAHO BUSINESS REVIEW is an affiliate of BridgeTower Media.



EDITOR'S LETTER.....	4	NIRMALA KANDADAI.....	29
TJ BLISS.....	6	JESSICA LEWIS.....	30
LINDSEY BRIST.....	7	JEFF LINGWALL.....	31
ALLISON BRUCE.....	8	MADISON MILES.....	32
CATHERINE CANTLEY.....	9	KUNAL MONDAL.....	33
RACHEL FLACHBART.....	10	HOPE MORROW.....	34
CATHERINE FREEMAN.....	11	AJ OSBORNE.....	36
STEPHANY GALBREATH.....	12	NIKKI O'TOOLE.....	37
MIKE GARCIA.....	13	TINA POLISHCHUK.....	38
CRISTINA GONZALEZ FROUDE.....	14	ALEXIS RANKIN.....	39
CRISPIN GRAVATT.....	16	TIAM RASTEGAR.....	40
DEBRA GROBERG.....	17	ANTONINA ROBLES.....	41
JESSE HARRIS.....	18	MEGAN SCHOMER.....	42
HANNALORE HEIN.....	19	TAI SIMPSON.....	43
LIZ HOBSON.....	20	ERIN SORENSEN.....	44
CHERIE HOEGER.....	21	NICASIO USABEL.....	46
REECE HRIZUK.....	22	KIRA VAN DE MOERE.....	47
LUIS ISLAS.....	23	KATIE VILA.....	48
JENNIFER JENSEN.....	24	MEGAN WILSON WOLLER.....	49
KYLE JENSEN.....	26	PAST WINNERS.....	50
AMY JONES.....	27		
NOEMI JUAREZ.....	28		



### BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS



Within these pages you will read about 40 Idahoans who have demonstrated impressive professional achievement, leadership, mentorship and community service. The College of Business and Economics at Boise State University is honored

to support and congratulate these accomplished individuals.

We have strong ties with the Idaho business community and are committed to producing and supporting its future leaders.

- Five of the Accomplished Under 40 are COBE graduates (12 total Boise State graduates and two faculty).
- Our Bronco Corps program pays student interns to work for local

small businesses and nonprofits.

- Student teams complete projects for local businesses and nonprofits like the Meridian Library, Idaho Fish and Game and many more.
- The Idaho Small Business Development Center and TechHelp (manufacturing specialists), hosted in COBE, work state-wide to serve Idaho businesses.
- In May of 2022, 600+ COBE students graduated ready to join the workforce and contribute to society.

From groundbreaking research to how we reimagine higher education, at Boise State University we do things like they've never been done before. The impact we have on the Idaho community is our responsibility and privilege. Together, we can help make Idaho's future brighter. **Congratulations award winners!**

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# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR



**T**his year's Accomplished Under 40 honorees have truly impressed me. Not only are they leading companies, nonprofits and government organizations, making huge strides in science and engineering, teaching the next generation and building their own businesses, but they are also doing amazing things for their communities and serving as shining examples for others to follow.

Many of the individuals in the subsequent pages sit on multiple boards in their spare time and volunteer for the good their communities, whether that is fundraising, providing their services pro bono or offering their time to help make positive change and break down barriers for others.

They say and live by phrases like: stand in support of others; always push forward with a positive attitude; continually learn; be objective; never give up; leave things better than you find them; show kindness; see the best in others; always look for opportunities to help others achieve their goals; be better each day; and, most importantly, give back.

I am so blown away by the incredible talent, compassion, leadership, mentoring and overall success exhibited by this year's list of honorees, and I wish each of them continued success in their future endeavors. I hope you enjoying reading all about these accomplished individuals and that you are as inspired by them as I am.

— Lauren Bonneau, Editor, Idaho Business Review

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# Congratulations!

We believe it's important to recognize the achievements of people who've had a positive effect on others and the communities where they work and live.

KeyBank congratulates Lindsey Brist on your IBR honor. We're all proud of what you've accomplished.



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# TJ BLISS

Chief Academic Officer  
Idaho State Board of Education



**T**J Bliss is a change-maker for education in communities around the world. After graduating from college less than a decade ago with a bachelor's, a master's and a doctorate degree, he has been working hard to do his part to make the world of education a place that gives students the tools to realize their potential and walk their path with confidence.

Bliss said his greatest influence in his life is his father, who demonstrated what it meant to lead with compassion, kindness and humility. Seeing this modeled during his formative years helped instill in him a passion to lead with the same qualities.

In 2017, Bliss joined the Idaho State Board of Education, where he currently serves as the chief academic officer. In this role, he has been especially focused on building a culture of relationships between the board and the various colleges and universities around the state. His many notable achievements there include leading the development of Idaho's new policy related to academic freedom. He also directed the work of Idaho's new Online Idaho initiative, which is bringing remarkable changes to how higher education is accomplished in the state.

Throughout Bliss's career, his ability to champion for the best of the best in education has been apparent. Because of his advocacy, he helped get Project Z-Degree off the ground, a \$1 million initiative funded by the Idaho Legislature and Gov. Little. This will dramatically reduce or even eliminate the cost of course materials for community college students as they pursue their degrees. However, his most significant career achievement to date was securing the passage of a UNESCO Recommendation on Open Educational Resources (OER), which requires every country in the world to report on their efforts to make education more accessible and affordable through OER.

"My primary professional goal is to be a change-maker in higher education," said Bliss. "While such a goal is never fully accomplished, I have enjoyed a lot of success in change-making over the past decade. In all these efforts, I have leveraged my core philosophies of 'go far together' and 'kindness and compassion.'"

Outside of work, Bliss is a devoted father of six. He also serves on several boards, including working as the advisory board chair of the Wiki Education Foundation, as a member of the Boise chapter of the BYU Alumni Association, and as a member of the Renew America Movement Foundation.

Jonathan Lashley, associate chief academic officer for the Idaho State Board of Education described Bliss as "a fierce champion of public education in Idaho." He added, "TJ is shameless in his promotion of Idaho's successes. Whether it is advocating on behalf of individual staff/faculty, drawing attention to the laudable qualities of the policies we coordinate or honestly advising state decision-makers on the stark realities faced by our education community, positive news coverage about and from Idaho education leaders usually traces back to TJ's influential efforts to unapologetically promote the value of public education in Idaho."

— Brooke Strickland

"I HAVE ENJOYED A LOT OF SUCCESS IN CHANGE-MAKING OVER THE PAST DECADE. IN ALL THESE EFFORTS, I HAVE LEVERAGED MY CORE PHILOSOPHIES OF 'GO FAR TOGETHER' AND 'KINDNESS AND COMPASSION.'"

# LINDSEY BRIST

Vice President of Business Banking  
KeyBank

Lindsey Brist is a self-described “networker and do-er,” which are traits she attributes her success to and that she believes will lead her to continued success.

Not only has Brist demonstrated a knack for business, transitioning through four unique roles at three companies over the past five years, she is heavily involved in the community through her volunteering on many boards. She also can be found regularly attending events and gatherings to support local nonprofits.

“Lindsey’s dedication to the community continues to grow and is an example to many,” said Steve Storey, Idaho market president at KeyBank. “She does not shy away from charity golf tournaments, fundraising lunches or fun runs/walks.”

Brist’s passion for business started at an early age. While growing up in the Boise valley, her father helped run a local company.

Because her mom wasn’t thrilled about attending business events, that meant Brist would often get to attend as her dad’s plus-one. She was also taught to get involved with the nonprofit world early, starting with an internship in 10th grade under the leadership of Cathy Silak at The Idaho Community Foundation, instilling in her a love for being involved in her local community.

In 2011, Brist started her career with KeyBank in a business development role, which she held for six years before taking positions with Wells Fargo’s Business Banking team and PayneWest Insurance. In 2021, she rejoined KeyBank in her present role, as vice president of business banking, which entails working directly with clients to help them and their businesses reach their financial goals.

Though she said she loves her job, it is the ability to network and get involved in the community that truly lights Brist up. “Working in



the commercial banking world has not only allowed me to engage with large companies, but to also be a leader and mentor in the community,” she said. “What I love above everything is just the opportunity to connect people.”

Her willingness to spend great time and care on friends, family, clients, co-workers, community members and even complete strangers is what has made Brist such a success in all aspects of her life, according to Scott Schlange, a senior vice president at KeyBank. “Lindsey has an uncanny ability to make friends across generations, across business lines and across areas of differing views of the world,” he said.

Brist’s long list of current community involvement includes sitting on the Idaho Women’s Business Center advisory council, the Famous Idaho Potato Bowl executive committee and the boards for Fundsy and CREW Idaho. She is also a Leadership Boise alum, a Key4Women certified advisor and Key4Women leader for the state of Idaho and a mentor for the B Wise program, hosted by Boise Young Professionals.

In what spare time this go-getting, accomplished woman has, Brist enjoys spending time with her husband and their Great Dane. She loves cooking — just ask her Instagram following — and accruing reward points she can use for travel.

— Hayden Seder

“WORKING IN THE COMMERCIAL BANKING WORLD HAS NOT ONLY ALLOWED ME TO ENGAGE WITH LARGE COMPANIES, BUT TO ALSO BE A LEADER AND MENTOR IN THE COMMUNITY.”

# ALLISON BRUCE

Partner and Vice President of Recruiting  
TalentSpark



**A**llison Bruce is a woman deeply embedded within her community and shows an abundance of dedication to encouraging others to be their authentic selves while enhancing the innerworkings of Idaho-based companies.

Bruce graduated college from the University of Colorado with a degree in communications. Her recruiting career began in Denver, brought her to Chicago and then landed her in The City of Trees, where she now calls home. Prior to coming to Boise, she volunteered for the Lance Armstrong Foundation for six months.

Today, Bruce is a proud co-owner of TalentSpark, a Boise-based company with a nationwide reach that has seen 25% growth each year since its founding in 2015.

“TalentSpark is a women-owned recruiting firm focusing on professional and executive searches for Idaho-based companies,” Bruce said. The firm was established to assist in providing best-in-class service to Idaho businesses — clients include recognizable names like Simplot, Micron, Blue Cross of Idaho, Boise Cascade and many more.

“As an entrepreneur, I want to create the opportunity for people to have challenging and engaging work that they are proud of while feeling they can be their authentic selves at work,” Bruce said. “I believe that employees should be trusted and empowered to manage their own work and their own schedules.”

TJ Huestis, senior talent acquisition director for Truckstop.com, who has worked with Bruce for 15 years, said, “Even at the start of her career Allison was involved in the community — working with the Denver Young Professionals, coaching high school track and field and helping coordinate the scholarship program with Qwest.”

Some of Bruce’s proudest professional accomplishments in her recruiting career demonstrate common themes: immense leadership skills and massive impacts. She played an active role as a recruiting

manager for a Fortune 100 biotech company, the Shire, which focused on serving people affected by rare diseases and highly specialized conditions. She was also the executive recruiter for St. Luke’s Health System, where she was responsible for executive recruiting and partnering with nurse leadership to create recruiting strategies and planning.

“In addition to my work at TalentSpark, I want to work to better our community through nonprofit volunteerism, committees, advocacy and mentorship,” said Bruce, who currently sits on three Treasure Valley boards: Idaho Youth Ranch, Boise Valley Economic Partnership (BVEP) and American Association of Finance and Accounting (AFAA). She is actively involved in these boards, which work to ensure prosperity and encourage healthy transformations within their communities. You can also find her speaking to companies about recruiting best practices and workforce data — for instance, she was the closing speaker at the Boise Metro Chamber’s 2021 Leadership Conference.

“I believe we can all benefit by supporting each other versus competing with each other,” Bruce said.

TalentSpark is widely known for being the first company people reach out to when they need assistance finding Treasure Valley jobs. Creating successful opportunities for people and staying determined to make Boise a better place is what Bruce loves to do.

— Gabrielle Gibson

“AS AN ENTREPRENEUR, I WANT TO CREATE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR PEOPLE TO HAVE CHALLENGING AND ENGAGING WORK THAT THEY ARE PROUD OF WHILE FEELING THEY CAN BE THEIR AUTHENTIC SELVES AT WORK.”



# CATHERINE CANTLEY

Food Processing Specialist  
TechHelp Idaho  
Assistant Professor  
University of Idaho



**N**ot many of us can say that we created 100 jobs and brought \$4 million into Idaho, but Catherine Cantley can. At TechHelp Idaho, she works with about 50 small- to medium-sized Idaho food manufacturers a year, including Litehouse, Clif Bar, Idahoan, Simplot, Teton Valley and others.

If Cantley has one defining characteristic, it's that she always wants to keep learning — not just new details about her field, but completely different fields, according to people who know her.

"As a process engineer for Lays Potato Chips at PepsiCo, she made use of research principles, experimental design, operational efficiencies and equipment design, acquiring patents and trade secrets that recovered millions of dollars in efficiencies," said Steve Hatten, executive director of TechHelp Idaho at Boise State University. "It would have been easy to continue on that path, but Ms. Cantley elected to pivot to a new side of the business."

That new field was sensory science — the scientific discipline used to evoke, measure, analyze and interpret reactions to those characteristics of foods and materials as they are perceived by the five senses, as defined by the University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources.

"When she came to Simplot, she was given managerial control over a discipline that was completely alien to her, that being sensory science," said Kevin R. Browning, senior director for food safety at JR Simplot Co. "Not only did she become proficient in learning the hard science and becoming a subject matter expert, but maybe more importantly she built up a program with expanded capabilities."

After developing her expertise in that new field, Cantley pivoted to yet another one. "When she joined my team at TechHelp, Idaho's Manufacturing Extension Partnership center, she was new to food safety

and new to consulting," Hatten said. "After studying the legal requirements and quality and food safety systems, she is now a sought-after food safety and sensory expert consultant and lead instructor."

Professionally, Cantley is an assistant professor at University of Idaho's Animal, Veterinary & Food Science Extension. She has served as communications chair of the Intermountain Section of The Institute of Food Technologists, an ambassador to the Women in Foodservice Forum at Simplot and committee chair for leadership development for the Women's Inclusion Network at PepsiCo Americas Foods. She has also been a volunteer in science, technology, engineering and math education for a variety of forums including the Future Farmers of America, science centers and school career fairs and festivals.

Up until recently, these parts of her life were separate, but Cantley's new position allows her to bring her "whole self" to work, as she described it. For her, this meant "the combination of (a) a love for science and technology, (b) a love for professional development, especially as that extends to achieving greater diversity- engaging young girls and women in technical leadership roles, and (c) making a difference in the day-to-day lives of my community members," she said. "I feel that I'm helping make a difference."

— Sharon Fisher

"I FEEL THAT I'M HELPING MAKE A DIFFERENCE (THROUGH) A LOVE FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, A LOVE FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT...AND IN THE DAY-TO-DAY LIVES OF MY COMMUNITY MEMBERS."

# RACHEL FLACHBART

Development Coordinator  
Bishop Kelly High School



**R**achel Flachbart's biggest goal in life is to be the ultimate includer — both personally and professionally. This goal guides her purpose in life, is a core part of who she is, and it is demonstrated in her work and community involvement.

Flachbart began her career in Washington, D.C., serving as an intern for a governor and a congressman. Then, she was hired as a senior staff assistant for Sen. Mike Crapo. From there, she began work as a policy analyst and technical writer for Athlos Academies, where she served for over a year. Then, in June 2019, she was hired to be a development manager for CATCH, which is a nonprofit dedicated to helping families experiencing homelessness get back on their feet. She was soon promoted to director of development, where she designed, implemented and managed the annual development plan.

While Flachbart was working for CATCH, she was intentional about connecting with others, especially for vulnerable members of the community. She also played a key role in fundraising efforts. In her first year, (June 2019 to June 2020), she helped bring in over \$925,971. Then, between June 2020 and January 2021, she raised more than \$480,983.

In June 2021, Flachbart began her current position as development coordinator for Bishop Kelly High School, where she is responsible for database management and volunteer management. She is also directly involved in fundraising and creating marketing materials.

"I am a compassionate, genuine, engaging communicator, and I am sincere in all I do," Flachbart explained. "My biggest personal and professional accomplishment now is working and giving back to the community that made me who I am."

To do this, Flachbart serves on the board of directors for Go Lead

Idaho and is the outreach chair for Boise Young Professionals. She has also made a commitment to volunteer with the Alzheimer's Association of Idaho for the last several years. This is something that is a passion of hers, having lost her dad to the disease just four years ago. Her prior volunteer experience includes serving as an intern for the Idaho Meth Project, where she helped raise awareness of the dangers of meth use in Idaho.

Michael Willits, who worked closely with Flachbart during his board involvement with CATCH, said, "Rachel has real depth. She is one to seriously engage with the tough challenges that we face and offer fresh and compelling solutions. She is not afraid of putting in the hard work and battling tough challenges. As we look to what our community will look like in the coming years, I have no doubt that Rachel will leave her fingerprints on it. She has a heart for sincere service. I can only imagine the lives she will impact"

Flachbart holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in history with minors in Spanish, education and natural sciences from the College of Idaho. She is currently working on completing a Master of Science degree in communications from Purdue University and intends to graduate in September 2022.

— Brooke Strickland

**"I AM A COMPASSIONATE, GENUINE, ENGAGING COMMUNICATOR, AND I AM SINCERE IN ALL I DO. MY BIGGEST PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENT NOW IS WORKING AND GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY THAT MADE ME WHO I AM."**

# CATHERINE FREEMAN

Attorney  
Gjording Fouser PLLC



**C**atherine Freeman is a trial lawyer who represents businesses and professionals in complex business and employment litigation. Her colleagues at Gjording Fouser PLLC say she does all she can to raise the bar for attorney ethics and to lift others up.

She has been with Gjording Fouser since September 2021, having taken her current position after more than eight years as a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney III with the Ada County Prosecutor's Office.

Freeman earned the Idaho State Bar's 2018 Outstanding Young Lawyer distinction, recognizing young lawyers who have provided service to the profession and the community. She has served on the Idaho State Bar Professionalism and Ethics section since 2013. Currently, she is secretary and chair of the section's Anti-Discrimination Anti-Harassment committee, where she leads a team of 13 Idaho lawyers in the important work of amending the Idaho Rules of Professional Conduct to add an anti-discrimination provision.

Trudy Hanson Fouser, member attorney of Gjording Fouser, said, "In the past year, Catie spent hundreds of volunteer hours helping draft the proposed anti-discrimination rule, educating Idaho lawyers about the proposed rule through continuing legal education programs, publishing an article in the Idaho State Bar's magazine, meeting with lawyers throughout the state and drafting the briefs that were submitted to the Idaho Supreme Court."

Freeman said, "The last several years through my work on the Anti-Discrimination Anti-Harassment Committee, I have become especially passionate about doing what I can to increase equality and civility in the legal profession." She added, "The attorney ethics rules in Idaho provide that lawyers have a special responsibility for the quality of justice."

Cathy Silak, a practicing attorney for Hawley Troxell, said, "Catie is truly a leader in trying to improve the climate of the Idaho State

Bar so that all people can practice law and serve their clients in a collegial and professional setting, free from unprofessional conduct such as discrimination, harassment and bullying."

Freeman, who has been a member of Idaho Women Lawyers since 2018, served as the co-chair of the 2022 Idaho Women Lawyers Gala. She has been a member of the Idaho Association of Defense Counsel and the Defense Research Institute since 2021; a barrister and team captain for the American Inns of Court No. 130 since 2020; a former chair of the Idaho State Bar Young Lawyers Section from 2013-2020; and volunteer for the University of Idaho School of Law's New Student Ethics Orientation since 2017.

Jane Gordon, a personal injury attorney who has known Freeman since law school, said her commitment to being a leader among her peers is inspiring. "Catie donates her time to institutions she values, and her roles in those institutions reflect the respect her peers and colleagues have for her," she said.

"I have been fortunate to have a happy, successful legal career, and I attribute this in large part to many mentors who have been generous in sharing knowledge, war stories and encouragement," Freeman said. "Because of this, I spend much of my career giving back to the legal community and helping encourage others in this same way."

— Ken Levy

**“I HAVE BEEN FORTUNATE TO HAVE A HAPPY, SUCCESSFUL LEGAL CAREER, AND I ATTRIBUTE THIS IN LARGE PART TO MANY MENTORS WHO HAVE BEEN GENEROUS IN SHARING KNOWLEDGE, WAR STORIES AND ENCOURAGEMENT.”**

# STEPHANY GALBREATH

Communications Manager  
City of Meridian



**A** caring Idahoan whose fire is fueled by her beloved family and community, Stephany Galbreath is nothing shy of a determined leader, a hardworking businesswoman and a dedicated mother.

Staying close to her home roots, Galbreath attended Boise State University to earn an associate degree in sociology and criminal justice and then earned a bachelor's degree in social science. She is currently the communications manager with the City of Meridian, and she has not only found success throughout her many accomplishments but also finds an incredible amount of joy within them.

When working as a public information officer for the Meridian Police Department, Galbreath "dominated" the space and was trusted with not only important but confidential information, according to Tracy Basterrechea, the department's chief of police. While in that position, she not only "got the job done" but was highly valued among her peers.

Galbreath has proven to be a dedicated community member by being as involved as possible. She is currently a member of the Association of Idaho Cities, Ada County External Communications, Meridian Anti-Drug Coalition and Meridian Kiwanis, among other organizations. She has also achieved designations and recognitions such as ILE Administration Police Media Relations Certification, Idaho Crime Prevention Association Professional Designation and the Service Leadership Award, Meridian Kiwanis.

Galbreath's personal and professional accomplishments exemplify her unmatched dedication to the community. In 2021 and 2022, she developed a new onboarding model for City of Meridian's communications team to include branding kits, communication plans, standard operating procedures, media training and ongoing leadership development. In addition, she created and organized the City of Meridian's 24-page annual report for residents and

coordinated Meridian's State of the City with the Meridian Chamber of Commerce.

"One of my personal philosophies is to be a servant leader," said Galbreath. "I prioritize serving the greater good, serving my communications team and the City of Meridian first."

Creating specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound (a.k.a. SMART) goals is one of Galbreath's keys to success. "In addition to my professional accomplishments, I have been able to grow resiliency skills personally," she said.

When life gives Galbreath lemons, she said she enjoys counting every blessing and making the sweetest lemonade. Her family, including her husband and two sons, enjoy staying busy as proud, active members of their congregation at church while balancing a homelife filled with homework, family game nights and many outdoor activities, such as camping and skiing at Brundage Mountain.

"Serving my community sets my heart on fire," Galbreath said. "I believe in giving back more than I receive and am always looking for opportunities to help others achieve their goals."

Galbreath's ability to communicate efficiently, listen actively and seek out solutions to better her community as well as herself set the bar for what a community leader should be. She said, "I will continue to develop as a leader, mother and servant to the Meridian community."

— Gabrielle Gibson

**"SERVING MY COMMUNITY SETS MY HEART ON FIRE. I BELIEVE IN GIVING BACK MORE THAN I RECEIVE AND AM ALWAYS LOOKING FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO HELP OTHERS ACHIEVE THEIR GOALS."**

# MIKE GARCIA

Owner  
Loose Screw Beer Company



Five years ago, Mike Garcia set a goal. The vision was simple: Create a better quality of life, someplace with a safe and fun environment for his wife and their two kids. Pursuit of that goal led him and his family to move from Northern California to Idaho, where their newly planted Idaho roots have already started to take hold.

Garcia and his wife recently purchased the Loose Screw Beer Company, the only brewery in Meridian. “We’re looking forward to further improving the brewery to become a staple in the Meridian community through community work, family engagement and partnering with local businesses,” he said.

Previously earning a bachelor’s degree in business administration, with a focus in finance, from the University of Phoenix, Garcia is currently enrolled at the University of Washington’s PCBS, Fosters Business School of Business.

“I believe in the power of collaboration to create a collective vision of the goal at hand and leveraging everyone’s best attributes,” Garcia said. “I am by no means an expert in every aspect of business, community or life, so why not build a tribe to support you in your quest, whatever it may be?”

While in California, Garcia was the lending agent for Dust Bowl Brewing Company, where he was instrumental in the business’s success, according to the company’s owner, Brent Honore. “Without a doubt, Mike’s work ethic and skill is a major reason our brewery is the success it is today,” he said. “Mike is a strong self-starter who is going to do great things.”

Peter Oliver, partner with TOK Commercial, a Boise-based commercial real estate advisory services provider, called Garcia a “motivated, well-rounded individual” and “consummate team player who has already accomplished much in life.”

“Mike has managed to do this on both a professional and community level while maintaining his focus on his long-term personal goals,” Oliver added. “I am convinced Mike will continue to grow as an asset to his community, his family and those he works with on a daily basis.”

Garcia indeed has more goals to achieve. For one, he wants to give back to Idaho. “My next goal is to give back to this amazing community 10 times of what we’ve taken out of it by moving here,” he said. “We want nothing more than to retain the many strong values of Idaho that gave us the reasons to move here.”

One way Garcia plans to do that is through the Loose Screw Beer Company, which he envisions as a place where residents of Meridian, and beyond, can go to enjoy an inviting atmosphere and the camaraderie of others. He and his wife already have ideas in motion for their brewery operation in Meridian and want to open another family-friendly taproom. He also plans to follow the spirit of collaboration as he settles into his new home and community.

“I love continuing to learn from others who are masters of their craft. This could be local community leaders, books and/or podcasts,” Garcia said. “I don’t think I’ll ever be done learning in life as it’s continually evolving around us.”

— Ryan Lowery

**“I BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF COLLABORATION TO CREATE A COLLECTIVE VISION OF THE GOAL AT HAND AND LEVERAGING EVERYONE’S BEST ATTRIBUTES. I AM BY NO MEANS AN EXPERT IN EVERY ASPECT OF BUSINESS, COMMUNITY OR LIFE, SO WHY NOT BUILD A TRIBE TO SUPPORT YOU IN YOUR QUEST, WHATEVER IT MAY BE?”**

# CRISTINA GONZALEZ FROUDE

Chief Operating Officer  
Spark! Strategic Solutions



**A** common theme of accomplished individuals under the age of 40 is an extreme drive to succeed, and Cristina Gonzalez Froude is no exception.

Coming from another country, Gonzalez Froude did not speak English until she learned it in primary school. She quickly excelled, seeing that education was the best way out of the poverty she saw her parents face. "By the second grade, I tested into the gifted program at school," she said. "In the third grade, I was recommended to get moved up to the fifth grade. I was accepted into the magnet middle school for gifted children."

Through supporting herself financially, Gonzalez Froude went to college and pursued a career in public service. Feeling a need to give back to what was given to her, she said, "It was an honor that the first place I got to practice as a social worker was where my family once received government assistance."

Becoming a social worker is indicative of Gonzalez Froude's upbringing. "I conquered poverty, abuse, neglect and household dysfunction. What I learned from those experiences was responsibility, compassion, empathy, resilience, gratitude, humility and a strong work ethic," she said. "I am successful today because those experiences lead me to achieve."

Since moving to Idaho, Gonzalez Froude has held many important positions in her community. At Terry Reilly Health Services, she helped develop the organization's Community Health Worker Program and structure its partnership with Saint Alphonsus Mobile Health Clinics. She oversaw the behavioral health contracts at Southwest District Health and managed the opening of the Western Idaho Community Crisis Center, the first for the region.

Today, Gonzalez Froude works at Spark! Strategic Solutions, where

she helps community leaders build vibrant communities. "(I) most recently helped the Idaho Behavioral Health Council develop its strategic action plan and implementation plan," she said. "I lead a team that backbones the Idaho Resilience Project."

There are many influences on Gonzalez Froude's goals and philosophies. She said she primarily believes in leaving the world better than when she found it. "Mr. Rogers was an influence in my life. I was drawn to his altruistic soul. . . Oprah was another show I watched as a kid and continued to follow her as an adult. She introduced me to people's stories, some like mine. She opened my eyes to many authors who also guided me through life," she explained.

Gonzalez Froude said her greatest accomplishment and what she finds most fulfilling is her role as a mother. "Giving life is like no other accomplishment. It is sacred, magical and exhilarating," she said. "The privilege of guiding another human life into their own existence is by far my greatest achievement. Motherhood is what motivates me every day to be a better person. I strive to be a better person for my daughter and my community."

Whether it's acting as a parent or a community leader, Gonzalez Froude will continue to follow her calling, guiding anyone in need.

— Karsten Thayer

**"THE PRIVILEGE OF GUIDING ANOTHER HUMAN LIFE INTO THEIR OWN EXISTENCE IS BY FAR MY GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT. MOTHERHOOD IS WHAT MOTIVATES ME EVERY DAY TO BE A BETTER PERSON. I STRIVE TO BE A BETTER PERSON FOR MY DAUGHTER AND MY COMMUNITY."**

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# CRISPIN GRAVATT

Senior Research Analyst  
Idaho STEM Action Center



**P**eople who met Crispin Gravatt when he was running for Boise City Council in 2021 probably wouldn't forget him. Aside from his policy proposals, the man could really rock a suit.

But Gravatt is more than just a snappy dresser. "At the candidate's forum, I was able to listen to Crispin's responses to some of the top concerns in the city of Boise," said Mary Beth Nutting, a Boise representative to the Ada County Highway Department's Bicycle Advisory Committee. "To be frank, I was truly blown away by Crispin's knowledge of the inner workings of the city and their solutions to the many problems that our city was experiencing at that time."

That goes professionally as well. "He has been instrumental in providing access for Idaho's students to science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education," said Kaitlin Maguire, executive director of the Idaho STEM Action Center. "He has developed and implemented numerous STEM programs across the state. And he helped establish the STEM Action Center, creating protocols and procedures to ensure that the work impacts all students in the state. When I stepped into the director role, I leaned heavily on Crispin's ability to work collaboratively with our colleagues to develop a new vision for STEM education in Idaho."

Starting out in human rights work, Gravatt said that he transitioned into a public service career in education, identifying ways to navigate professional networks and enable positive actors to reach students and communities across the state. He is also pushing for new and creative engagement methods with underrepresented populations to boost education pathways that promote the vitality of communities of all shapes and sizes.

Gravatt holds bachelor's degrees in French, sociology, economics

and gender studies from Boise State University, and served as the Western/Pacific Region Human Rights Delegate to the French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs Institut français. Also, in 2021 he was named as a LGBTQ+ Pride Month Keynote Honoree by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.

In addition, Gravatt holds a staggering collection of civic and board affiliations, including Boards and Commissions Fellowship Program Mentor for Conservation Voters for Idaho, chair of the City of Boise Public Works Commission, board member of the West Downtown Neighborhood Association, LGBTQ+ outreach advisor for the Women's and Children's Alliance and member of the Boise Watershed Strategic Advisory Group. In addition to running for City Council, he also served as strategic advisor for the Cindy Wilson for Idaho campaign.

"My biggest goal is to make Boise the community I imagined it to be growing up," Gravatt said. "As a young queer raised in rural Idaho, I used to imagine that if I could make it to Boise, I could break free from the fear and anxiety I experienced every day. After arriving here, expectations did not match my new reality, so I knew I had to do all I could to create the community someone else like me would need."

— Sharon Fisher

**"MY BIGGEST GOAL IS TO MAKE BOISE THE COMMUNITY I IMAGINED IT TO BE GROWING UP...I KNEW I HAD TO DO ALL I COULD TO CREATE THE COMMUNITY SOMEONE ELSE LIKE ME WOULD NEED."**



# DEBRA GROBERG

Attorney  
Nevin, Benjamin & McKay LLP



**D**ebra Groberg is a big-picture thinker who is the perfect blend of tenacious and compassionate. She is not only generous with her time and advice, but she also makes it a point to recognize the value in each person she meets. She uses her inherent love for people and her passion for service in her role as a criminal defense attorney for Nevin, Benjamin & McKay LLP.

“I often think of the future and how things could and should be. I think of ways to improve my life, the lives of those around me, the lives of those I have yet to meet and those I will never meet — and I do my best to take action to implement those ideas,” Groberg said. “I believe in people’s worth — even those who have made profound mistakes. Advocating for people in hard circumstances is a privilege.”

Groberg explained that her role model is her grandfather, an orphan who worked hard to become a successful land developer in Idaho Falls. As a child, she saw him demonstrate what it meant to use the resources at his disposal to work hard and help those around him who were struggling. This behavior was instilled in her at a young age, and it is something she said she holds to today as she represents her clients. For her, it is not just about advocating for them legally, but advocating for them to take back control of their lives, as many of them are living with mental health issues, addiction or have simply made a life-changing mistake.

Groberg walks alongside each client with empathy and encouragement, helping them get the help they need to become productive, healthy members of the local community.

Mike French, partner at Bartlett & French PLLP, said that Groberg

undertakes the practice of criminal defense with the highest degree of integrity. She added, “Debra addresses every client’s case with scrupulous attention to detail, creativity and compassion. I have no doubt she will continue to lead, because I have no doubt about her commitment to her community and recognition of the responsibilities that come with being a member of the bar. Debra is everything a community hopes for as a person and as an attorney.”

Outside of work, Groberg is a dedicated wife and mother. She and her husband of nearly 10 years recently adopted three foster children. She is also active in the local community, volunteering as a coach for the Boise State speech and debate team and at the Idaho Trial Lawyers Association Street Law Clinic, as well as serving as a member of the Idaho Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, Idaho Women Lawyers and the Idaho State Bar Young Lawyers Section.

“Simply put, I strongly believe that one of the greatest joys in life is (being in) the service of others,” Groberg explained. “My goal in life is to keep that outlook and to continue to be a positive influence in as many lives as possible.”

— Brooke Strickland

“I OFTEN THINK OF THE FUTURE AND HOW THINGS COULD AND SHOULD BE...I BELIEVE IN PEOPLE’S WORTH — EVEN THOSE WHO HAVE MADE PROFOUND MISTAKES. ADVOCATING FOR PEOPLE IN HARD CIRCUMSTANCES IS A PRIVILEGE.”

# JESSE HARRIS

Director of Accounting/Controller  
Bish's RV



**J**esse Harris has the skills of a leader with plenty of experience and the analytical mind of an accountant. With these abilities and talents, he has been a major contributor to the success of several companies. “I have been blessed to be successful in most companies I have worked at and have received promotions and positive feedback routinely,” he said regarding his business experience.

After earning a bachelor’s degree in accountancy and finance at Boise State University (BSU) in 2005, Harris has since made an impact at every role he has worked in, including his current position as the director of accounting/controller at Bish’s RV.

Previously, Harris worked as a staff accountant and financial analyst at Albertsons Companies and SuperValu, as a controller at Aramark and the College of Idaho and as the vice president of finance at Icon Credit Union (which is now Horizon Credit Union).

Harris’s accomplishments go beyond just the titles of his various positions. As his former and current coworkers can attest, he is a great addition to any team, always willing to cooperate and coordinate success. Richard W. Erne, vice president for finance & administration at the College of Idaho, said, “Jesse possesses all the inherent qualities...of a successful senior executive...Early in his career with the College of Idaho, he successfully transformed a dysfunctional department into a positive, collaborative team that totally changed the relationship and interaction with other operating segments at the college.”

By working closely with other executives and continuing positive interaction, Harris addressed operational issues, achieving exceptional results in revenue growth, cost manage-

ment and process improvement across functional lines.

Lisa Gardner, the executive director of the Alumni Association at BSU, also spoke highly about Harris’s ability to work with others. “I first encountered Jesse when I served in a volunteer role alongside him on the Alumni Association board of directors,” she said. “Jesse’s leadership has positively impacted our board by clearly communicating the interests of our alumni to the university, and that has led to the association becoming an integral part of the decision-making happening at the university level.”

When Harris is not working, he can be found reading a book, learning how to become a better leader. “As an avid reader, I strongly believe in learning from history, so I have set a goal of reading through every U.S. president’s biography to learn what made them successful,” he said. He is currently through 15 presidents — a third of the way to his target.

What Harris has studied has impacted his philosophy and goals, and he has been applying his learnings to continue to positively affect people’s lives. He said, “I would like to continue being a positive influence in the Treasure Valley community while expanding my entrepreneurial businesses, which will allow me to continue to give back financially and with my time.”

Harris will continue to do everything he can to be the best leader and team player he can be.

— Karsten Thayer

“AS AN AVID READER, I STRONGLY BELIEVE IN LEARNING FROM HISTORY, SO I HAVE SET A GOAL OF READING THROUGH EVERY U.S. PRESIDENT’S BIOGRAPHY TO LEARN WHAT MADE THEM SUCCESSFUL.”

# HANNALORE HEIN

State Historian  
Idaho State Historical Society



**T**raditionally, people don't start appreciating history until their later years. That's why it's so noteworthy that Hannalore Hein is not just employed by the Idaho State Historical Society but is, in fact, Idaho's State Historian — the youngest one ever when she was named in 2019 at 31, and the first woman in the role's 70-year history.

Hein didn't major in history out of some deep, overriding love for the subject, at least not at first. After entering second grade not able to read, she selected history as her college major, "not knowing what I would do with a liberal arts degree but knowing that studying the past would make me an informed citizen with excellent writing, analytical and critical-thinking skills," she said.

At 12, Hein's family became expatriates in Jalisco, Mexico, where she lived for seven years. "I was American, but I embraced the Mexican culture and language," she said. "I was White, but I could pass for Latina. I would not exchange my seven years living abroad for anything." That experience led her to focus on the history of the American West at the University of Colorado in Boulder, studying under renowned Western American historian Patricia Limerick, Ph.D., and writing her undergraduate thesis on "The Mexican Invasion...By Invitation Only: A Critical Look at the Legacy and Consequences of the Bracero Program, 1942-1964."

Coming to Boise State University for a master's degree in applied historical research, Hein focused not only on the American West but also on digital applications and community engagement — studies that have stood her in good stead as state historian. In that position, her roles have ranged from creating and participating in several events associated with the 2020 centennial of American women receiving the right to vote to equipping Gov. Brad Little and his staff with research and

historical context related to a global pandemic, according to Mark Breske, Idaho State Historical Society's marketing and communications officer.

Previously, Hein worked as research historian and director of business development for the Boise-based Stevens Historical Research Associates for five years, a position she achieved immediately after graduating with her master's degree.

In addition to history, Hein has served with a wide variety of civic and nonprofit organizations, including the Idaho Women's Charitable Foundation, the Boise State University Venture College Advisory Committee and Tango Boise. Most notably, she has been involved with the Junior League of Boise, serving as nominations committee chair, fundraising committee chair and president-elect, meaning she will become president and chair of the board on June 1. She also received a community service award from the organization.

According to Michelle Wooten, who was formerly president of the Junior League, a previous fundraising committee "had been disbanded due to burnout of its members, which is in strong contrast to the nearly 100% of committee members who elected to stay on the committee after Hannalore's leadership."

Overall, Hein sees her work as making history relevant and essential every day.

— Sharon Fisher

“(I MAJORED IN HISTORY) KNOWING THAT STUDYING THE PAST WOULD MAKE ME AN INFORMED CITIZEN WITH EXCELLENT WRITING, ANALYTICAL AND CRITICAL-THINKING SKILLS.”

# LIZ HOBSON

Museum Administrator  
Idaho State Museum



**W**hen you see 700 to 800 local historians running around Boise in September 2023, remember that you have Liz Hobson to thank for it.

Hobson was instrumental in getting the American Association for State and Local History to hold its annual conference in Boise, according to Bethany Hawkins, chief of operations for the organization. Hobson will also serve as the Idaho ambassador to the conference, after serving on the program committee for the organization's Buffalo, New York, conference and as the region chair for the organization's award committee.

"In my years of working with Liz from her time with a National Heritage Area in Kansas to her current position, I have found her to be positive, responsible and committed to improving whatever cause she is leading," Hawkins said.

That's just one example of what Hobson does. She joined the Idaho State Museum in 2018, six months before it reopened, after shutting down in 2014 for a major retooling and expansion. Under her leadership, attendance gradually increased, reaching nearly 3,500 visitors a month by winter 2020.

Then COVID-19 happened. "There was no training to prepare for what we faced and its continual presence," Hobson said. She needed to pivot, turning live events to virtual ones.

"Of course, like most organizations, our museum changed course to respond to the drastic circumstances of the pandemic," said Janet Gallimore, Idaho State Historical Society's executive director and state historic preservation officer. "Liz led the museum through this tumultuous time. She concurrently played a critical role in virtual programming for the museum and on the agency's leadership team, advancing the entire organization and ensuring its relevance with our community, members and donors as well as our state government

leadership."

Now, Hobson is responsible for leading and managing the museum and its core program areas, including operations, programming, exhibitions, collections and staff, including providing oversight in strategic planning, staffing, community engagement, public programming, business and operations management, budget management and fund development and promotion.

Hobson came to Idaho after growing up near Philadelphia, receiving her Bachelor of Arts in history from California University of Pennsylvania and her Master of Arts in history with a concentration in public history and an emphasis in historic preservation from Middle Tennessee State University. After graduating, she served as a daily programs coordinator and collections manager for the Mahaffie Stagecoach Stop and Farm Historic Site in Olathe, Kansas and education and interpretation manager and then special projects coordinator for Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area in Lawrence, Kansas. She came to Boise in 2017 to serve as urban trails coordinator for the Boise City Department of Arts and History.

In addition, Hobson also serves as an accreditation peer reviewer for the American Alliance of Museums, and as a member of the Board of Idaho Association of Museums.

"I know I won't always know the answer to everything, but I strive to always know who to ask," Hobson said.

— Sharon Fisher

**"I KNOW I WON'T ALWAYS KNOW THE ANSWER TO EVERYTHING,  
BUT I STRIVE TO ALWAYS KNOW WHO TO ASK."**

# CHERIE HOEGER

CEO and Co-Founder  
Saalt



**W**hen discussing gender equity in education, an issue that doesn't always come up is that of period poverty. That's the inability of menstruating girls to get access to feminine hygiene supplies. And it's more than just a matter of embarrassment. According to a 2014 UNESCO report, 1 out of every 10 menstruating youth misses school during their menstrual cycle due to lack of access to menstrual products and resources.

This isn't just a Third World problem, either. In one U.S. survey of 1,000 menstruating teens, 1 in 5 struggled to afford period products and 4 in 5 either missed or knew someone who missed class time because they did not have access to period products.

It's a problem that Cherie Hoeger is working to solve with her Meridian company, Saalt, which not only makes economical, reusable cups for menstruating women and girls, but has donated more than 30,000 of the products to women and girls in 35 countries.

Saalt, where Hoeger serves as CEO and cofounder, is a B corporation, meaning businesses that are certified for a high level of social and environmental performance. It boasts an 85% female workforce. "It's up to female leaders to create real solutions for working mothers and to be deliberate in establishing a pro-family workplace culture that fosters women's capacity to occupy leadership roles without sacrificing family needs," she said.

According to Melanie G. Rubocki, a partner with Perkins Coie who worked closely with Hoeger from the early days of Saalt's vision, the company also commits 2% of its revenue to socially responsible projects in line with its mission.

For example, Saalt offers a free, on-site preschool for all

team members, with two full-time preschool teachers, to enable mothers in the workplace to be both strong parents and contributors. In addition, Saalt has no set vacation or paid time-off policy. "You just take the time you need, when you need it, to care for family needs," Hoeger said. That led to the company being named to Inc. magazine's list of Best Workplaces in 2020.

Outside the office, Hoeger is a member of the Young Presidents Organization, served as a foster parent from 2009 to 2019 and has acted as governance lead for Idaho for Good, an organization for B corporations, since 2019.

"I've watched as Cherie's taken a leadership role in creating Idaho for Good," said Russ Stoddard, founder and president of Oliver Russell, itself a B corporation. "Cherie saw a need in the community, stepped up and acted on it."

In addition, Hoeger's husband Jon serves as president of the company, and they are parents to five daughters. "She is a tremendous role model," Rubocki said. "She has made a point of including her kids in her vision, bestowing upon them lessons some will never have."

Hoeger said, "I am working to create a world where menstruation is no longer a barrier for women and girls, and where gender parity affords equal opportunity for all to accomplish their dreams."

— Sharon Fisher

**"I AM WORKING TO CREATE A WORLD WHERE MENSTRUATION IS NO LONGER A BARRIER...WHERE GENDER PARITY AFFORDS EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL TO ACCOMPLISH THEIR DREAMS."**

# REECE HRIZUK

Owner

Reece M. Hrizuk, Attorney at Law



**R**eece Hrizuk is a man well known for his dedication to his roots and his profound love for his community of Fruitland. His determination to make a difference and become successful began while he was just in grade school. His undeniable work ethic, dedication to his studies and ability to converse with his teachers and peers showcased the leader he would soon become.

"Even as early as middle school, it was evident that Reece had a bright future," said Stuart Grimes, administrator for City of Fruitland.

Hrizuk earned a Bachelor of Arts from Oregon State University and then continued his studies at Gonzaga University School of Law, where he then earned a Juris Doctor. Following his academic accomplishments, he passed his bar exam and moved back to Fruitland to pursue his dreams. "I had a dream, and that dream was to build a hometown-oriented, client-focused law firm," he said.

In October of 2012, Hrizuk began his journey by establishing his private practice, Reece M. Hrizuk, Attorney at Law. With hard work and dedication, he went from having only one client during his first two months of business to being voted the best attorney in the Western Treasure Valley in the Argus Observer reader poll, as well as winning "Best Lawyer" and "Best Law Firm" in 2020 and 2021.

"My main philosophy has always been to work tirelessly to improve the Fruitland community, as well as the surrounding area," said Hrizuk.

Hrizuk's leadership skills extend beyond his role as an attorney. For nearly a decade, he has sat on numerous councils and is an active board member for Western Idaho Community Action Partnership as well as the Third Judicial District Magistrate Selection Commission.

"My current goal as a Payette County Commissioner is to

encourage economic development while balancing growth with preservation of agricultural ground and open space," Hrizuk said.

Outside of his community efforts and board involvement, Hrizuk has also found joy in restoring much of his hometown of Fruitland and renovating multiple landmarks within the city. As a member of the board of Alma Matter Inc. and a Fruitland City councilperson, he has played a vital role in raising money and receiving federal grant funding to replace and improve sidewalks, lighting and trees in Fruitland. In addition, his efforts helped save what is known as "the anchor of Fruitland," the high school (operated by a nonprofit as a community center), from foreclosure, and it is now restored and continues to be an anchor for the city.

"Reece has been instrumental in refurbishing and preserving some of the historic buildings in our downtown area," said Grimes. "This has been a passion of Reece's, and it's a great fit as he has become a de facto local historian in our community."

Hrizuk has purchased five historical properties in Fruitland that he will be restoring and plans to purchase more in the future. He and his wife have one son, 2 years old, which he considers to be his proudest accomplishment. They hope to expand their family in years to come.

— Gabrielle Gibson

**"MY CURRENT GOAL IS TO ENCOURAGE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT...  
BALANCING GROWTH WITH PRESERVATION OF OPEN SPACE."**

# LUIS ISLAS

Director of Development  
Montana State University Alumni Foundation



**B**orn into an undocumented immigrant family, Luis Islas got used to moving around (Oregon and California), while his parents looked for work to put food on the table. The northern California area where his family ultimately settled was rife with crime and violence. At 12, he was asked to join his first gang, and by 14, his parents realized they needed to relocate to secure a better future for him.

The family moved to Boise, where Islas attended Les Bois Junior High School and graduated from Timberline High School. “Talk about culture shock. This couldn’t be real. I thought these schools only existed in movies,” he said. “In Boise, for the first time in my life, I was able to walk to school and ride a bike around the neighborhood (without fear). I even joined my first extracurricular activities — basketball, soccer and track.”

Islas called his parents heroes for bringing him to Idaho, where he found opportunities, tools and privileges he never knew existed. “Had they not taken me out of that environment, I very well could have ended up in prison or worse,” he said.

In contrast to his early years, today, Islas has two places to call home. He resides in both Southeast Boise and Livingston, Montana, which makes his work-life manageable. His current role is the director of development for Montana State University’s Alumni Foundation, and he is responsible for fundraising in the regions of Idaho and Oregon.

Islas said his parents always stressed the importance of education. “My mother would say, ‘You may lose your house one day, you may even lose us one day, but one thing you’ll never lose is what you learn,’” he said. He was the first person in his family to even think about — yet attend — college. He went to William Penn University in Iowa, where he received his bachelor’s and master’s degrees. (He is currently enrolled online at the University of Montana, working toward master’s degrees in public health and public administration.)

In 2016, Islas went abroad to work with the Peace Corps in Africa and then came back to Idaho to be with his family and immerse himself in the nonprofit sector to help address food security and disaster relief in his local community. “That’s

where my passion lies — in giving back. If it hadn’t been for the opportunities and resources that Boise provided me, I don’t know where I would have ended up,” he said. “I credit everything I am to this community.”

His community involvement has included working as a development coordinator for Idaho Foodbank and regional philanthropy officer for American Red Cross of Idaho and Montana. He has been a mentor with Jannus Economic Opportunity, a member of multiple committees for Idaho Community Foundation (ICF), a chamber ambassador for Boise Metro Chamber of Commerce, a member of Boise Young Professionals and vice president of Idaho Returned Peace Corps Volunteers.

Lisa Bearg, senior philanthropic advisor for ICF, described Islas as an “outstanding and active public servant.” She added, “Luis does all he does — building a people-centered career, volunteering, learning about our community, etc. — because he cares, because the condition of the people around him matters to him and because dedicating himself to the community is how he can personally make a difference.”

Islas concluded most of his board commitments at the end of 2021, taking a short hiatus to devote himself to his growing family, as he and his partner are expecting their first child. However, his focus on philanthropy and volunteerism will remain as strong as ever. “My philosophy is to always remember the kindness shown to me, so that I too can help someone someday,” he said. “I’m thankful and grateful to work with amazing, great people in the nonprofit sector and those in Idaho who are living in underserved communities.”

— Lauren Bonneau

“IF IT HADN’T BEEN FOR THE OPPORTUNITIES BOISE PROVIDED ME,  
I DON’T KNOW WHERE I WOULD HAVE ENDED UP.”

# JENNIFER JENSEN

Of Counsel  
Holland & Hart LLP



**T**o Jennifer Jensen, the practice of law is a calling, and as a lawyer, she puts to use her talents, training and passion for justice to serve her clients.

After graduating with a bachelor's degree in English from Boise State University, Jensen went on to graduate summa cum laude with a Juris Doctor at the University of Idaho College of Law. Currently, she serves as Of Counsel at Holland & Hart, where she has experience handling criminal appeals on behalf of the state, in addition to providing litigation in complex commercial disputes, class certification and more.

In 2015, Jensen was appointed by the Idaho State Bar Association Bar of Commissioners as Idaho's first Young Lawyer Delegate to the American Bar Association's House of Delegates. She was reappointed twice after her initial term, serving through the end of 2021. In this role, some of her responsibilities included participation in policy decisions and lobbying Congress to preserve federally funded non-profit Legal Services Corporation's appropriations, which helped provide free legal services to people in need.

When Jensen's tenure was up, she ran for the position of Idaho's state delegate and was elected to a four-year term. Currently, she leads Idaho's delegation and represents the state before the House of Delegates. In just seven years of officially practicing law, Jensen has already established herself as a knowledgeable, experienced attorney who connects with her clients. Some of her daily duties include handling business disputes involving breach of contract, business torts, employment discrimination and wage, hour and other commercial claims.

"I believe that people do their best work when they are passionate about the cause and see the best in others,"

said Jensen. "I have always had high standards and never stop striving to perform to them. And I care about my clients, both personally and about their causes and issues that trouble them."

Jensen is an active part of the Idaho Volunteer Lawyers Program, doing pro bono work. She primarily assists women with immigration issues, including petitions for U visas. She also helps with petitions for humanitarian parole for family members who are refugees from Afghanistan.

Dean Bennett, partner for Holland & Hart's Boise office, said Jensen has demonstrated legal abilities beyond her years. "By way of only a few examples, Jenn has given an opening at a jury trial, she has handled hearings on her own for significant clients and she has interacted directly and often with other significant firm clients where she is always well received," he said. "She is a terrific person, an astute lawyer and a great teammate. I look forward to having Jenn as a colleague for many years to come."

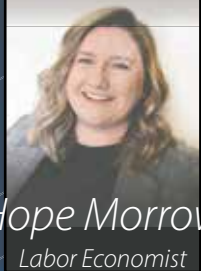
As an Idaho native, Jensen said she loves this state and is committed to being a legal leader who does her part to give back. In the end, her goal is to help make Idaho and each community within it a stronger, more inclusive place — one case at a time.

— Brooke Strickland

**"I BELIEVE THAT PEOPLE DO THEIR BEST WORK WHEN THEY ARE  
PASSIONATE ABOUT THE CAUSE AND SEE THE BEST IN OTHERS."**



# CONGRATULATIONS



*Hope Morrow*  
Labor Economist  
Workforce Development Lead



*Kunal Mondal*  
Staff  
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# ACCOMPLISHED UNDER

# 40

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# CONGRATULATIONS! “ACCOMPLISHED UNDER 40”



**HANNALORE HEIN**  
STATE HISTORIAN



**LIZ HOBSON**  
IDAHO STATE MUSEUM ADMINISTRATOR

State Historian HannaLore Hein and Idaho State Museum Administrator Liz Hobson are standouts in the history field. They exemplify what it means to serve Idahoans and positively impact communities through their leadership, volunteerism, and preservation of Idaho’s heritage. Thank you for being so dedicated to ISHS and the State of Idaho!

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*Congratulations,  
Catie!*  
AND TO ALL THE  
ACCOMPLISHED UNDER 40  
HONOREES!



**Catie Freeman is a trial and appellate lawyer**, Past President of the University of Idaho Alumni Association (go Vandals!), Chairperson of the Idaho State Bar’s Anti-Discrimination Anti-Harassment Committee, and skier, golfer, camper, murder podcast fanatic, and artisan sourdough baker. We’re so proud to have her on our team!



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**GJORDING | FOUSER**  
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

# KYLE JENSEN

Vice President and Community Banking  
Relationship Manager  
Zions Bank



**K**yle Jensen was honored with Zions Bank's 2021 Top Performer Portfolio Growth award as well as the Top SBA Lender award in 2019 for his role as the bank's vice president and community banking relationship manager in Idaho Falls.

"I am passionate about using my strengths in finance to help entrepreneurs grow small businesses," Jensen said. "According to the most recent report from the U.S. Small Business Administration, Idaho is home to over 176,000 small businesses that employ more than half of the Gem State's workers. I have worked diligently throughout my career because I want to help my clients create new jobs and bring economic prosperity to their communities."

That formula has brought enthusiastic kudos from his clients. For example, J.L. and Lisa Parker, who run Kimble Oil and Gas in Challis, said Jensen's help in obtaining a loan to purchase a gas station demonstrated his "superior level of honesty, integrity, expertise and innovative, out-of-the-box thinking that was absolutely critical to us receiving our loan and closing on our business."

Dana Russell, who runs Sunny Days Childcare and Pre-school in Ammon, said Jensen "helped us make knowledgeable and informed decisions for our financial future." She said she considers Jensen "to be a key component in our current and future financial success."

After starting his banking career in 2015, Jensen was invited to participate in Boise State University's Leadership Development Program. "This program was designed to mentor rising leaders in the organization and included courses on personal development, managing high quality work processes and creating a competent work culture," he said. "The insights I gained have helped me advance in my career as I managed client relationships and supported my teammates in their lending activities."

Jensen said he values and supports financial literacy. He taught financial skills to participants in the Distinguished Young Women pageant for three years, and financial literacy to young men through the Scouting program, "planning various activities to teach them about credit, interest rates and loans," he said.

Bryant Searle, commercial banking relationship manager and senior vice president at Zions Bank, said Jensen "continues to be a top producer in the region for SBA loan production, helping many small businesses along the way. He was a leader within the bank when the SBA Paycheck Protection Program loans were rolled out and helped other bankers learn and understand the process, procedures and frequently changing guidelines associated with these loans. Kyle often volunteers to take on additional responsibilities to help, train and lift the rest of the team."

Colby Cook, another senior executive at Zions Bank, said Jensen "has the ability to discern and analyze complex details while creating an environment where those around him feel at ease and valued. He inspires others, exhibits compassion, and is an intuitive professional."

Jensen has also served his community well, including stints as chairman of the Young Professionals Network of Greater Idaho Falls and co-chair of the planning committee of the Idaho Falls Kiwanis Club. He also volunteered with the local food pantry, raising funds through the Goodfellow Drive to buy holiday meals for those in need.

— Ken Levy

**“I AM PASSIONATE ABOUT USING MY STRENGTHS IN FINANCE TO  
HELP ENTREPRENEURS GROW SMALL BUSINESSES.”**

# AMY JONES

Vice President of Talent and Organizational Effectiveness  
Reynolds, Smith & Hills (RS&H)



**A**my Jones puts the “human” into human resources. “Anyone can read about Amy’s professional accomplishments on LinkedIn, but the story that isn’t shared there is about her quiet, steadfast commitment to supporting important social causes, her impeccable ethics and sharp wit,” said Deni Hoehne, director of talent development for WinCo Foods — whom Jones described as her primary professional influence.

Currently vice president, talent and organizational effectiveness for the Boise office of RS&H Inc., a Jacksonville, Florida-based facilities and infrastructure consulting firm, Jones has also served as director of compensation for St. Luke’s Health System, director of human resources (HR) and organizational effectiveness for AECOM Corp. and manager of Total Rewards for the Saint Alphonsus Health System.

“When I first met her, she was the director of compensation for St. Luke’s Health System, the largest employer in Idaho,” said Kim Schraven, senior HR initiatives manager for RS&H. “I was immediately impressed by her ability to influence and elevate the role of compensation to be a trusted advisor and strategic partner to the organization.”

Jones has also served in a variety of roles since 2011 in the Southern Idaho Compensation and Benefits Association, including treasurer, advisor, president and past president. “It is not an understatement to say that she has been instrumental in keeping that organization alive and thriving,” Schraven said.

Other civic organizations with which Jones has been involved include being a state judge for Business Professionals of America, a corporate committee member for United Way and a member of the Hope Society for the Women’s and Children’s Alliance.

As part of her goal to help other women professionals and leaders, Jones was instrumental in setting up an annual celebration of women on International Women’s Day at two of her employers to educate people about women in science, technology, engineering and math fields. “We made sure to lift up the voices of women and show everyone what we are capable of,” she said. “Each year, we would make a commitment to supporting women and honor the amazing women in our lives.”

Jones has earned a Master of Business Administration degree and a Bachelor of Business Administration degree with an emphasis in human resources management, both from Boise State University. She also holds a wide variety of professional certifications, including as a Master Storytelling certified trainer, a StandOut certified trainer and a Prosci certified change practitioner. She was named as HR Professional of the Year in 2014 by the Human Resources Association of the Treasure Valley.

Citing her mother as her primary personal influence, Jones hopes to do the same for her own daughter. “My goal is to help my daughter recognize and own her value,” she said. “She’s 4 years old and she tells everyone that her mom is a boss, and when people ask what that means, she says that I help people. She wants to be a boss someday too, and I couldn’t be prouder.”

— Sharon Fisher

**“MY 4-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER TELLS EVERYONE THAT HER MOM IS A BOSS, (WHICH) MEANS THAT I HELP PEOPLE. SHE WANTS TO BE A BOSS SOMEDAY TOO, AND I COULDN’T BE PROUDER.”**

# NOEMI JUAREZ

## Community and Client Director Voices Against Violence



**F**rom a young age, Noemi Juarez knew adversity, but it didn't stop her from rising above it and building a life that she is proud of, as well as empowering others to reach their full potential.

Raised by immigrant parents who worked hard to give her a life of opportunity in America, Juarez became a resilient, strong and passionate advocate for the underprivileged. Growing up, she experienced hardships, but has taken those experiences and turned them into something positive that helps people around the state of Idaho.

"I believe that past experiences do not define a person (nor) decide the outcome of an individual's life," Juarez said. "I believe that by providing quality care and resources, you can make a life-lasting impact for many individuals struggling to overcome barriers that are out of their control. I believe that success comes from a foundation of guidance, empowerment and quality resources."

Currently, Juarez works for Voices Against Violence. She began there almost three years ago as a community advocate, before working her way up to outreach and education coordinator. Since November 2021, she has served as the organization's community and client director. In this position, she has provided supervision and support to staff members, while also providing relevant training on how to work with victims. She has also reevaluated the client care process to make it smoother and less traumatizing for them. Her goal in each interaction with staff members or victims is to provide dignity, respect and compassion.

Before her work at Voices Against Violence, Juarez was a general education development (GED) educator who helped more than 100 seasonal and migrant farmers graduate from

the GED program. There, she traveled to different parts of Idaho to teach GED courses and ensure students got the education they deserved.

Outside of her job, Juarez is an active board member for the Idaho Coalition Against Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault, where she works with survivors to provide hope. She is also a member of the Diversity & Inclusion Committee for Twin Falls, where she and the team brainstorm ways to act as liaisons between the city manager and the marginalized communities within Twin Falls County.

Juarez was recently able to purchase her own home, and in 2019, finished her Bachelor of Science degree in family consumer sciences from the University of Idaho.

The executive director of Voices Against Violence, Reylene Abbott, described Juarez as "having the kindest heart." She added, "Working in crisis care every day often produces large amounts of burnout. Noemi does a great job balancing life and work to ensure she shows up for clients at 100% every day. I have been extremely thankful for Noemi's partnership this year. She not only revolutionizes crisis care daily, but she is a kind and compassionate individual who keeps the entire community in mind when making decisions. All who know her cannot help but be inspired by who she is."

— Brooke Strickland

**"I BELIEVE THAT PAST EXPERIENCES DO NOT DEFINE A PERSON...  
I BELIEVE THAT SUCCESS COMES FROM A FOUNDATION OF  
GUIDANCE, EMPOWERMENT AND QUALITY RESOURCES."**

# NIRMALA KANDADAI

Assistant Professor  
Boise State University



**A** world-renowned expert on lasers and optics, Nirmala Kandadai, Ph.D., assistant professor at Boise State University (BSU), has made a name for herself in a male-dominated field. Her status as a female engineer within the field has given her the platform to advocate for women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), something that she and her female colleagues often wished they had earlier in their careers.

Hailing from India, where she completed her undergraduate degree in electrical and communication engineering, Kandadai often encountered gender bias. Her parents' passion for education ensured she received a degree, a rarity for girls in India. This privilege inspired her to not only extend her education as far as it would take her, but to be a voice for other women in her field.

"Over the years, I have been told many times that due to my gender I don't belong, or I should quit or focus on my family," said Kandadai. "I have seen female students forced to give up their dreams, careers and lives as the environment grew more hostile. I strongly believe gender, race or nationality do not determine a person's ability in any field."

After completing her undergrad education, Kandadai transferred to University of Texas, Austin to complete her master's in electrical engineering, then earned her doctorate and stayed on as a postdoctoral fellow until June 2013.

Before coming to BSU as a research assistant professor in 2016, Kandadai worked in several positions that gave her industry experience, something few academics choose to do. She spent three years at National Energetics designing laser systems for the Air Force Research Laboratory.

In her role as assistant professor — she became a tenure track professor in 2019 — Kandadai holds many responsibilities: directing the Fiber-Optics Lasers and Integrated Photonics Research Lab (FLAIR); mentoring several graduate, undergraduate and postdoctoral fellow students; publishing and reviewing peer-reviewed journal articles and teaching mul-

iple courses. She has been awarded a patent and currently has two provisional patents pending. She has also applied her work on lasers and optics in interesting ways, such as helping the Idaho National Laboratory develop techniques to improve nuclear reactor performance.

"Dr. Kandadai is a very skilled woman and has done more in five years than many faculty do in their whole career," said Elisa Barney Smith, a professor in BSU's Electrical and Computer Engineering Department. "She is a hard worker and has plenty to show for the effort she expends."

Kandadai said one of her most rewarding roles at BSU is as chair for the Boise section, Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Women in Engineering (IEEE WIE) society, a chapter she founded. After seeing harassment against women in engineering firsthand, particularly the harassment and subsequent suicide of a colleague, Kandadai was motivated to help women in her field and community. As a result, she has brought many famous female engineers to give seminars to BSU engineering students and works with the Idaho Girl Scouts to create STEM workshops for young girls. She also leads inter-departmental discussions to ensure students have a safe channel to report abuse.

"As a female STEM faculty (member), I believe success, in addition to the number of patents, grants, publications and ratings, is measured by how many I can inspire to dream and enable to achieve in the STEM field who either don't dare to or have been explicitly told not to," said Kandadai.

— Hayden Seder

**"I HAVE BEEN TOLD MANY TIMES THAT DUE TO MY GENDER I DON'T BELONG...I STRONGLY BELIEVE GENDER, RACE OR NATIONALITY DO NOT DETERMINE A PERSON'S ABILITY IN ANY FIELD."**

# JESSICA LEWIS

Commissioner  
Bingham County



**B**orn and raised in Bingham County, in Blackfoot, where she has resided and celebrated many of her professional accomplishments, Jessica Lewis is loyal to her community, a leader to all and an individual who allows no barrier to slow her down.

Lewis earned her Bachelor of Science in political science as well as a Master of Public Administration from Idaho State University (ISU). She often volunteers at ISU in Pocatello, where she is known as a role model and goes out of her way to help others whenever she can.

“Jessica participated as a volunteer in multiple events on campus and was always willing to serve others. Her first and primary interest has always been to advocate for increased opportunities for all Idahoans,” said Holly Kartchner, director of outreach and retention at ISU’s College of Arts and Letters.

Following college, Lewis began working for Bingham County for the elected County Clerk Sara Staub, who always encouraged her to aim high and advance in her career. From her early days at Bingham County, Lewis has always been determined to understand the statutes and rules that are required to succeed in the field, according to Staub, who said, “As an employee, Jessica far exceeded my expectations. Her natural intelligence was evident from the beginning.”

Lewis, now a commissioner for Bingham County, has made a powerful impact since 2010. Her peers selected her to serve on the Idaho Association of Counties Board of Directors, as an alternate representing District 5 on the Idaho Association of Counties Legislative Committee and as a member of the Idaho Association of Counties Value Litigation Fund Committee.

“Throughout the state of Idaho, it is apparent that I am in the minority when it comes to my gender, age and education,” said Lewis. “I am younger than most, female in a field that has historically been dominated by men and I also have a degree specifically dedicated to administration in the public sector.”

When Lewis was elected to the Bingham County Commissioners in 2018, she took her seat as the first female Bingham County Commissioner and one of the youngest commissioners in the state of Idaho. Kartchner said, “Jessica brings variety and a unique perspective to the county as its first female commissioner under the age of 40.”

Lewis sits on multiple organizations’ boards, such as for 3B Juvenile Detention, Bingham Memorial Hospital, Southeast Idaho Council of Governments and Bingham County Board of Guardians.

With constant improvement for the community of Bingham County on her mind, Lewis has made exceptional impacts and accomplishments over the last decade.

“I strive to use my education to ensure that my decisions are based on research, the law and fairness,” said Lewis. “I often find myself doing what is right or fair, knowing that it is not the easy or popular opinion.”

— Gabrielle Gibson

**“I STRIVE TO USE MY EDUCATION TO ENSURE THAT MY DECISIONS ARE BASED ON RESEARCH, THE LAW AND FAIRNESS. I OFTEN FIND MYSELF DOING WHAT IS RIGHT OR FAIR, KNOWING THAT IT IS NOT THE EASY OR POPULAR OPINION.”**

# JEFF LINGWALL

Assistant Professor  
Boise State University  
Partner at Redfish Metrics LLC



**A**fter earning degrees from Yale Law School, Carnegie Mellon University and Brigham Young University, Jeff Lingwall now teaches law at Boise State University (BSU) and is partner at the consulting services firm Redfish Metrics LLC.

These successes, Lingwall said, are possible because his parents taught him the value of hard work. “My father taught elementary school, and my mother recently retired as a high school janitor. They worked hard, budgeted and managed to raise seven children on those salaries,” he said. “I was told that if I wanted to pay for college, I would need a scholarship. So I studied.”

Throughout his education, Lingwall said he’s realized that success is achieved by stretching limits and by having an internal compass that directs you and tells you when to press harder or when you need to relax.

For Lingwall, that compass comes from his faith and spiritual connection with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. “We seek truth on earth through scholarship, and in heaven through faith,” he said. “We try to succeed in community with others. Finally, we share what we’ve learned through teaching others.”

R. John Azimi, owner of Azimi Law Firm LLC, who previously worked with Lingwall at a global law firm, where they collaborated on many cases (including several class-action suits), said Lingwall is successful because he understands working as counsel in defending business interests, and protecting consumers because he’s also a business owner.

“Beyond fighting goliaths in the legal arena, Jeff has also advanced the causes of little businesses by setting up nested or series limited liability companies,” Azimi said. “In doing so, he has provided mom-and-pop businesses the maximum legal protection from a litigious world.”

TJ Bliss, a partner at Redfish Metrics and the chief academ-

ic officer for the Idaho State Board of Education (also a fellow honoree of this year’s Accomplished Under 40 awards) who has known Lingwall since he moved to Idaho in 2019, recalled being “incredibly impressed” as soon as they met. He said, “I was particularly impressed when Jeff finally told me about his educational and career background: That he completed a Ph.D. in economics and public policy from the Carnegie Mellon University while he was simultaneously enrolled in the Yale School of Law.”

Bliss added, “I was even more impressed when Jeff told me he decided to leave the prestigious path he was on for a more humble career in academia, allowing him to spend more time raising his children and serving his community and church.”

Ruth Jebe, associate professor at BSU, said that Lingwall’s knowledge and interpersonal skills help him excel as a teacher. “Teaching a variety of courses in a variety of formats (including online), Jeff succeeds in connecting with his students and enriching their education experience, as the student comments on his curriculum vitae attest,” she said.

Lingwall said the most fulfilling part of his career comes from mentoring young business students and other professionals, helping guide them in making law and ethics a foundation for their careers — something he said benefits all of Idaho. “We are working hard at Boise State to train the professionals that will bring Idaho success for decades to come,” he said.

— Ryan Lowery

“WE ARE WORKING HARD AT BOISE STATE TO TRAIN THE  
PROFESSIONALS THAT WILL BRING IDAHO SUCCESS  
FOR DECADES TO COME.”

# MADISON MILES

Lead Deputy Attorney General  
Idaho Office of the Attorney General



**F**or Madison Miles, her legal career is truly about people. While advocating for justice is a big part of her work, serving the community and the individuals she meets with empathy and respect is her end goal.

After serving as a legal intern, Miles began her work as a deputy prosecuting attorney for Canyon County, a role she worked in for six years. In this position, she was immersed in cases of all kinds — handling felony domestic violence caseloads and serving as a liaison to several law enforcement agencies, working extensively with crime victims. Then, she transitioned to working with the Attorney General's Division of Health and Human Services. It didn't take long for her to prove herself as a master of the law as she navigated a variety of challenging situations.

Today, Miles is the lead deputy attorney general, where she is responsible for providing legal services to the family and community services program of the Department of Health and Welfare.

"My personal philosophy is that to effect change in the world, you have to start with yourself, your home, your community," Miles said. "I have always prided myself on being personable and able to make connections with others, both in my personal and professional life. I always want to leave people better than when I found them."

Outside of the office, Miles contributes her time to the community. She is a regular participant with the Idaho State Bar's Child Protection Section and has worked with the Idaho Supreme Court's Child Protection Committee. She is also a member of the Governor's Children at Risk Task Force.

While her professional accomplishments are significant, Miles said she believes that there is no greater reward or

responsibility than raising children. She is a dedicated mother of a 2-year-old daughter and cherishes time at home watching her learn and grow. She said she credits her family — her parents and husband — for their unwavering support and encouragement to do what she was called to do.

"My family has been extremely influential and always encouraged me to be who I am and to work for the things I want," Miles explained. "My grandfather and father taught me how to debate by frequently taking a position opposite of mine, even when they agreed. They helped me develop a belief structure that was all my own, regardless of their personal beliefs and opinions. My mother taught me by example how to be kind, caring and giving. My husband challenges me intellectually, as well as supports me emotionally."

Chelsea Kidney, division chief for the Idaho Office of the Attorney General, said that Miles's ability to bring parties together in a collaborative and respectful manner is "truly a rare gift." She added, "In so many ways, Madison serves as a great role model for everyone around her, including myself. She stands out among her peers as one who is professional, wise, knowledgeable and kind. She is also simply a joy to be around."

— Brooke Strickland

**"I HAVE ALWAYS PRIDED MYSELF ON BEING PERSONABLE AND  
ABLE TO MAKE CONNECTIONS WITH OTHERS... I ALWAYS WANT TO  
LEAVE PEOPLE BETTER THAN WHEN I FOUND THEM."**



# KUNAL MONDAL

Staff Scientist  
Idaho National Laboratory

It tells you something about Kunal Mondal when you realize that his curriculum vitae is 15 pages long.

Now a staff scientist at Idaho National Laboratory (INL), Mondal holds two master's degrees, in materials engineering and applied physics with a specialization in nuclear physics, from the Indian Institute of Engineering Science and Technology, as well as a Ph.D. in chemical engineering from the Indian Institute of Technology. He earned his Bachelor of Science degree in physics from the University of Burdwan. He is also a member of the affiliate faculty and the allied graduate faculty at Idaho State University (ISU) in the department of civil and environmental engineering.

"As an adjunct faculty member at ISU, he leads and mentors students through the discovery of new engineering concepts," said Thomas Walters, group lead in material science and manufacturing at INL. He added that he's known Mondal for about four years, both at INL and ISU.

"To perform successfully in the education field requires both a calling and dedication to the art," Walters said. "Dr. Mondal has answered this calling and is now helping our community, at a truly local level, cultivate the next generation of engineers that will pass through the doors of research entities and businesses in our state requiring expertise in his field."

Mondal's specialty is in additive manufacturing — what the rest of us call 3D printing — as well as carbon and metal oxide nanomaterials, energy and coatings for harsh environments. Other interests are micro/nano fabrication of functional materials, soft and stretchable electronics, microfluidics, liquid metal, colloids and interfaces of soft nanostructures, self and directed assembly, photovoltaics, polymer thin-films, carbon nanomaterials, energy and environmental and health sensors, nuclear sensors, soft electronic skin and flexible transistors,



according to his INL biography.

After earning his degrees, Mondal went on to serve as a postdoctoral research associate and a postdoctoral fellow, respectively, at North Carolina State University in Raleigh and Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton. He has also received a variety of awards including, most recently, a collaboration finding reward from the Centre for Advanced Energy Studies in Idaho.

Mondal also serves as assistant editor at the Elsevier journal *Sensors International*; an editorial board member for *Biosensors and Bioelectronics Open Access* and for *Materials Science for Energy Technologies* and as a member of the American Institutes of Chemical Engineers, Materials Research Society and American Nuclear Society. He has written seven book chapters, co-edited the book *Metal Oxides for Biomedical and Biosensor Applications* and more than 50 publications, as well as developed five patents.

"I am deeply interested in scientific and industrial research to solve basic problems in our society," Mondal said. "I would like to involve myself in multidisciplinary research to help the country's actual problems in the health care, agriculture and security sectors to reach a broad spectrum of society but using minimum resources."

— Sharon Fisher

**"I AM DEEPLY INTERESTED IN SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH TO SOLVE BASIC PROBLEMS IN OUR SOCIETY."**

# HOPE MORROW

Economist and Lead in Workforce Development  
Idaho National Laboratory



**H**ope Morrow sets a high bar for community advocacy in her community and leadership. She earned a Bachelor of Science in economics magna cum laude from Eastern Washington University before moving to Boise. With a great deal of hard work and dedication, she is now the economist and lead in workforce development for the Idaho National Laboratory (INL).

“Hope, as a labor economist, is our most valued interface when it comes to articulating the labor projections and understanding the workforce needs of the future,” said Amy Lientz, supply chain director at INL.

Morrow is recognized for her strong ability to build partnerships and find solutions to any question that comes her way. Her strategic and thoughtful mindset are valued among peers, and her leadership skills assist in nourishing relationships as a labor economist.

Currently, Morrow serves as a council member and committee chair for the Workforce Development Council; she is a liaison to INL for the College of Eastern Idaho (CEI) and is the education and workforce subcommittee lead for the Nuclear Contractor Consortium.

However, Morrow’s professional accomplishments do not stop there. She described her proudest professional moments so far as publishing work that created significant tidal waves in terms of positive community impact. She has published the following pieces: “Economic Driving Occupations Methodology,” “INL Workforce Projections Methodology” and “Inflation Mitigation Methodology,” and a great deal of this data is being used to develop courses and curricula to educate students as future leaders.

“My goal is to create and execute a strategic vision fiercely pursuing productive and innovative growth, workforce development and economic prowess in Idaho by utilizing knowl-

edge, data and relationships to bring objectivity to the table and find innovative drivers to make Idaho the ideal place to work and grow,” said Morrow.

Outside of Morrow’s outstanding professional developments, she also finds great joy in spending time involved in nonprofit affiliations and renovating homes. She is an advocate for Pride and sits as the board treasurer for the Idaho Falls Pride Organization, where she hosts safe local events supporting the LGBTQ community in Eastern Idaho.

You can find Morrow coaching girls rugby for the Idaho Falls Girls Program and the Centennial Girls Rugby Program and volunteering for the Community Food Basket of Idaho Falls and the CEI Foundation. “Non-traditional sports like Rugby and witnessing (the players’) success and growth has truly been one of my greatest personal accomplishments,” she said. “It is extremely rewarding to be a mentor to these young folks, even as a small part of their journey.”

Morrow finds joy in renovating old and historic homes, giving them a fresh start to re-sell them to families that will give them a new chapter. She is now renovating her third home.

“I have found accomplishment in revitalizing old homes into new glory and seeing families enjoy their new spaces,” she said.

There is no doubt that Morrow will continue to build upon her accomplishments and make outstanding strides in years to come.

— Gabrielle Gibson

**“MY GOAL IS TO BRING OBJECTIVITY TO THE TABLE AND FIND INNOVATIVE DRIVERS TO MAKE IDAHO THE IDEAL PLACE TO WORK AND GROW.”**

**Congratulations  
Megan Wilson Woller**



**Accomplished Under 40**



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# AJ OSBORNE

CEO  
Cedar Creek Wealth



**A**J Osborne is a fighter who has proven he has the determination and courage to keep going and find a solution no matter the odds. A survivor of Guillain-Barre syndrome, he has been described by those who know him best as “creative, visionary, enthusiastic, determined, courageous, extremely positive and caring,” “brilliant on so many levels” and “the perfect definition of a successful leader.”

Osborne said he believes that people do not have to be just participants in the world, but builders of the industry and future they want. For him, there is nothing that cannot be fixed or overcome. “We are not perfect but strive for perfection,” he said. “We will make mistakes but never give up... We believe in the long run. We never sacrifice the long-term for the short-term gains. No one project can have the ability to alter the course of our company. No one project can have the ability to take down others.”

An entrepreneur, businessman and investor, Osborne owns and manages his self-storage portfolio of over \$212 million of assets through his companies Cedar Creek Wealth, Bitterroot Holdings and Clearwater Benefits. Educated at Brigham Young University – Idaho, where he earned his bachelor’s degree, he then went on to receive his Master of Business Administration from University of Phoenix in 2008.

Stressing the idea that success does not happen on an island, Osborne said you can only go as far as the team you built around you. Such a view on cooperation and perseverance has led him to his many business positions. In addition to his role as CEO of Cedar Creek Wealth, he currently serves as founder of Bitterroot Holdings, owner of Clearwater Benefits and Keylock Storage and a founding member of both Storelocal Co-Op and Tenant Inc., and more.

Despite his busy schedule, Osborne finds time to give back to the community, working with various civic/nonprofit affiliations. For example, he created the Idaho Wilderness and Wild Life Protection and Preservation Fund. He also volunteers with Innovate Academy & Preparatory School and Innovate High Business School in Eagle. He also is a “hope dealer” for Chair The Hope, a humanitarian organization that delivers wheelchairs and medical devices to those with disabilities throughout the world, providing independence and mobility.

Osborne has a passion for teaching kids and adults; he is a best-selling author and he has an award-winning podcast about how to become financially independent. Maryanna Young, CEO of Aloha Publishing, said, “AJ is gaining national and international status as a real estate investor coach, podcaster and instructor through his podcasts, blogs and educational campaigns.”

Conner Skeen, director of project management at Cedar Creek Wealth, said, “Working with AJ every day is an adventure of inspiration, challenge, spontaneity and purpose. It’s an absolute honor to be a part of the legacy and the team that he’s built and continues to build.”

Wherever Osborne decides to go and whatever challenges he decides to take on, he always seems to leave a great impact on those who have the pleasure of cooperating with him. There’s still much left for him to conquer.

— Karsten Thayer

“NO ONE PROJECT CAN HAVE THE ABILITY TO ALTER THE COURSE OF  
OUR COMPANY (NOR) THE ABILITY TO TAKE DOWN OTHERS.”

# NIKKI O'TOOLE

Associate Attorney  
Hawley Troxell



**N**ikki O'Toole could be described as a bit of a Wonder Woman. She finished law school in the middle of a pandemic while never wavering in her dedication to her husband and three sons — two of them with special needs. Then, she passed the bar exam and secured her first job as an associate attorney at Hawley Troxell. Throughout it all, she navigated each step with grace, poise and fierce determination.

“My lifelong goal is to work hard, continually learn and strive to be better today than I was yesterday,” said O'Toole. And she has done exactly that.

Before beginning law school, O'Toole was a successful business owner, operating an e-commerce business for the last decade. Here, she thrived in developing relationships with overseas suppliers and navigated website design and copy writing work with ease. She also excelled in building the brand, which allowed her to increase profits year over year.

When O'Toole decided to begin law school, she was supported every step of the way by her family. “I would argue that one of my most significant accomplishments — both professionally and personally — was completing my final semester of law school, passing the Idaho State bar exam and beginning my career as an attorney in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, when all three of my boys were struggling with the transition to online learning and social isolation,” she explained. “I tirelessly advocated during this period to ensure my sons' educational plans were complied with and appropriate supports were in place...Fortunately, my efforts were successful as all three of my sons remain on target academically, and I was able to meet and exceed

my professional goals.”

In her role at Hawley Troxell, O'Toole's practice areas include litigation and worker's compensation. Using her legal training to help others is also important to her. In the past, she has volunteered as an intermediary with Idaho Trial Lawyers Association and the Intermountain Fair Housing Council, where she assisted with legal research and drafting memoranda. She is also actively involved in the special needs community as a support broker and advocate for children in Medicaid's developmental disability program.

Mark Peterson, an attorney at Hawley Troxell, described O'Toole as “everything you would hope for in an attorney.” He added, “Nikki is relentless in her work ethic, has a keen legal mind and is unwaveringly ethical in all she does. She is also dynamic in the way she interacts with others and inspires confidence in clients, and deservedly so. She is the type of person who steps up and takes on any challenge that is thrown in front of her and thrives in doing so. As an attorney, Nikki simply just gets it, which puts her in rare company.”

Outside of work, O'Toole is a gifted musician and is classically trained as an operatic vocalist and singer/songwriter. She is a member of Opera Idaho and has performed around the country, as well as in Europe and the Caribbean.

— Brooke Strickland

“MY LIFELONG GOAL IS TO WORK HARD, CONTINUALLY LEARN AND STRIVE TO BE BETTER TODAY THAN I WAS YESTERDAY.”

# TINA POLISHCHUK

Program Operations Manager, Idaho Job Corps  
Idaho Department of Labor



**O**ne sign of a good leader is that person's desire to help others become good leaders. So it is with Tina Polishchuk, program operations manager for the Idaho Job Corps, Idaho Department of Labor.

Polishchuk is leading a national demonstration project for the U.S. Department of Labor. The project serves underprivileged youth ages 16-24 "by connecting them to training and education in an effort to help them transition into the workforce at a livable wage," she said. She manages a multimillion-dollar budget and coaches 11 teams.

Previously, Polishchuk was the advanced opportunities coordinator for the Idaho Department of Education from 2015-2019. "Across the state, many like to take credit for a program called 'Advanced Opportunities,' but very few know what happened behind the scenes," she said. "It was the idea of politicians and practitioners that grew over time. When I was hired as the coordinator, there were four programs used by few students across the state that were loosely connected, and difficult to access."

Polishchuk came up with the \$4,125 concept for advanced educational opportunities for Idaho students. The concept provides those funds for Idaho public school students in grades seven through 12 to use for costs associated with overload and dual-credit courses, exams, workforce training courses and early graduation scholarships. Under her supervision, the program grew to serve more than 30,000 students each year "by connecting them to college and career opportunities while still in high school," she said. "This version of Advanced Opportunities literally changed the terrain of Idaho's high school experience all over the state."

Polishchuk's former supervisor Matt McCarter said, "She

has worked her way up through Idaho's public education systems as a classroom teacher, district level instructional coach, program coordinator of a multimillion (dollar) program paying for dual credits at the State Department of Education and currently as the designer and leader of Idaho's Job Corps program. At the same time as these professional accomplishments, she earned a Ph.D., is raising a family of three and is a leader in her congregation. She operates with a zest to learn and actively co-creates goals and vision with her colleagues."

At the age of 31, Polishchuk earned her doctorate degree in education with an emphasis on public administration from Boise State University in 2018. "With the help of friends and family, it felt good to check off this box so early," she said. She began her career as an elementary- and middle-school teacher in the Boise and Caldwell school districts and was a member of the administrative team, providing professional development to staff.

Polishchuk also runs Heritage Technical Services and Polishchuk Consulting and is the business owner of Heritage Beekeeping. "Meaningful relationships with the people around me is what fills my cup," she said. "God instilled so much potential and possibilities in people all around us, and to be able to discover these gifts inside other people at home, at work or in our community is the reason I get up every day."

— Ken Levy

**"MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE PEOPLE AROUND ME IS WHAT FILLS MY CUP...DISCOVERING THESE GIFTS INSIDE OTHERS AT HOME, WORK OR IN OUR COMMUNITY IS THE REASON I GET UP EVERY DAY."**

# ALEXIS RANKIN

CEO of Chillow Inc.  
Vice President  
Keller Williams Realty Boise



**A**lexis Rankin lives by five simple words, “one percent better every day.” This motto defines her philosophy on life and explains her drive to complete her goals. The source of Rankin’s fire comes from the influence of her uncle George Stephanopoulos. She said, “His increasing influence politically and now in everyday life on Good Morning America has given me my drive and passion toward making a positive influence on others every single day.”

Rankin started supporting herself at 18 years old and said she is proud of her first years of adulthood, explaining they taught her “the value of hard work much younger than most.” She added, “Not many people at my age would risk following their dreams by inventing a mobile app while choosing to live off of 12% of their income to make their dreams a reality.”

Rankin, who said that she endured a lot in her life and has persevered against all odds, is now striving for greater things. Alongside planning to be featured on Forbes 40 under 40, she wants to open/franchise a nonprofit animal shelter in U.S. states that have high kill rates and fight for animal cruelty to become a felony in all of them. She also plans to grow her own technology company, Chillow, a local startup she co-founded, to allow for a minimum of 100 jobs here in the state of Idaho. And she aims to do all this while maintaining her current position at Keller Williams Realty Boise, where she serves over 800 of her current agents and members of her leadership team.

Rankin’s drive and passion is noted to inspire those who work with her, and Keller Williams International has honored her with multiple awards. For instance, she took home the first-place prize of \$100,000 for her recruiting and servant leadership efforts, while 900 other Keller Williams offices were

in contention.

Chillow is known for innovative technology that allows roommates to review each other, providing reviews to the roommate sector for the first time. Through Rankin’s leadership as CEO, Chillow won Boise Entrepreneur Week’s annual pitch competition, out of 35 innovative startups in the Northwest.

Despite managing multiple companies, Rankin manages to spare time to volunteer at the Idaho Humane Society and give back to the community. Many of her employees find her qualities as a leader to be a cut above the rest. For example, Madelaine Kilroy, who was head of marketing at Chillow, said, “Leadership, hard work and dedication are three pillar qualities Alexis has exemplified throughout her career. From being vice president of Keller Williams Realty Boise to pursuing building her own company, her dedication is unmatched.”

Real estate professional Andrew Anderson added, “Success and influence seem to follow Alexis wherever she goes...The impact she is having on countless individuals, their careers and their families is unsurmountable.”

It seems that no matter what path Rankin takes in life, she will find a way to make it work, bettering herself one step at a time along the way.

— Karsten Thayer

“NOT MANY PEOPLE AT MY AGE WOULD RISK FOLLOWING THEIR DREAMS BY INVENTING A MOBILE APP WHILE CHOOSING TO LIVE OFF OF 12% OF THEIR INCOME TO MAKE THEIR DREAMS A REALITY.”

# TIAM RASTEGAR

Executive Director  
Trailhead



**A**s a servant leader who loves helping people, Tiam Rastegar has dedicated himself to assisting individuals as they take their business ideas to the next level — helping to grow companies and make a positive impact on his community.

At Trailhead, where he is executive director, Rastegar works with budding entrepreneurs to help turn their napkin-sketch ideas into profitable business ventures. An incredibly accomplished individual — he has the unique distinction of being named a CEO of Influence before he received this recognition from Idaho Business Review (IBR) for being Accomplished Under 40. In 2021, he was named in the top five of IBR's power list of individuals influencing Idaho's startup community. And (spoiler alert), this year, he is also named as one of the state's most powerful business leaders in IBR's latest 50 Most Influential power list.

An Iranian-German-American born into the Iran-Iraq War, Rastegar lived as an asylum-seeking refugee in Germany during the fall of the Berlin Wall, and he moved to the United States as a teenager just before the 9/11 terrorist attacks. His upbringing and experiences made him especially compassionate to those less fortunate, and as a result, he pays it forward by helping refugees — for example, he recently raised money to cover the tuition for two refugees to attend a coding school in Boise.

For his own schooling, Rastegar graduated from Boise State University (BSU) in 2005 with a bachelor's degree in international business and a minor in political science. He then went on to achieve his executive Master of Business Administration from BSU in 2015.

While his dream may be to become a professional soccer

coach and win the World Cup with Iran, Rastegar's immediate goals are cemented in Idaho. He and his wife are raising their two children in Boise, and his parents also live close by. "Being a good husband, father and son is what I am proud of and continue to aspire to," he said.

However, at just four months shy of 40, he can already list off several amazing accomplishments he achieved in his professional career that were no small feats. "At PKG, I launched a new business unit for Avionics applications, and, at Vacasa, I acquired strategic assets in new and challenging markets and helped grow the company significantly," he said. "Then, I was able to pull off a turnaround at Trailhead when it was on a downturn in 2018."

Rastegar follows a formal purpose and passion statement, titled "Man in the Mirror," which he shared: "Through love, strong relationships and leadership, I inspire myself and others to prosper from the world's collective love, spirit and consciousness, so that we realize the courage to experience who we really are by living the change we want to see in the world."

With an attitude like that — and the track-record of success he has already achieved in his 20s and 30s — it will be exciting to see what accomplishments Rastegar sets out to achieve in the next decade.

— Lauren Bonneau

**"THROUGH LOVE, STRONG RELATIONSHIPS AND LEADERSHIP, I  
INSPIRE MYSELF AND OTHERS TO PROSPER FROM THE WORLD'S  
COLLECTIVE LOVE, SPIRIT AND CONSCIOUSNESS."**



# ANTONINA ROBLES

Program Manager  
Hewlett-Packard



**A**ntonina Robles is working hard to be the change that she wants to see in the world. As a mother of five daughters, an accomplished businesswoman who has worked for Hewlett-Packard (HP) for more than two decades and an active member of her community, she is dedicated to using her talents to help others.

“As a minority, I had to overcome a lot of things, but I always pushed forward with a positive attitude,” Robles said. “We must be the change we want to see. We need to stop focusing on what others are not doing and start doing it. Stop complaining and provide solutions... I am a strong believer that we need to use our God-given talents to help others.”

Robles currently serves as a program manager for HP. She began at the company in 2000 in software, mechanical and firmware, working her way up from intern to firmware engineer, web content support project manager, social media program manager and customer experience program manager. For the last two years, she has worked as the out-of-the-box experience program manager, leading support content creation and providing training for agents. She has also been directly involved in helping recruit, retain and develop diverse talent at the company. At age 34, she was promoted to ‘expert,’ which is a job level that few achieve at that age. Since 2020, she has also served as the HP Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE) global ambassador chair.

However, Robles said that one of her biggest accomplishments was reviving the Boise State University SHPE student club while she was working toward her undergraduate degree in computer information systems. Under her leadership, she grew the club to be one of the best nationally.

Robles also speaks at conferences and classrooms around

Idaho about careers in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). Recently, she was involved with a high school event that provided first-generation Latinx students opportunities to network with other Latinx professionals. In the past, she worked with Idaho Latino Vote, where she contributed her time and talents to voter registration and immigrant rights and justice.

Trina Finley Ponce, diversity and inclusion director for Boise Cascade, who worked with Robles in her former role at HP, said that whether Robles is working as an appointed leader, an elected leader or a volunteer, she persistently finds ways to advocate for others, do the work that matters and make a positive impact. She said, “Antonina is one of the most genuine and kindest people I know, and she is passionate about ensuring no one is overlooked, left out or left behind. She is a humble and perpetually positive person who makes a meaningful impact in the workplace, in the community and all spaces where she contributes.”

Another colleague who has known Robles for 20 years, María González Cárdenas, owner of Power of Translation, described her as extremely positive, supportive and giving. She said, “Antonina is valued and respected by not only me, but by her peers and the community.”

— Brooke Strickland

“AS A MINORITY, I HAD TO OVERCOME A LOT OF THINGS,  
BUT I ALWAYS PUSHED FORWARD WITH A POSITIVE ATTITUDE.  
WE MUST BE THE CHANGE WE WANT TO SEE.”

# MEGAN SCHOMER

CEO and President  
Rays for Rare



**M**egan Schomer is known for her undeniable dedication to the community, her extraordinary entrepreneur and leadership skills and her ability to support families with medically fragile children.

Beginning her professional career as a Treasure Valley real estate agent, Schomer was well known for her people skills, professionalism and ability to find people what they wanted in their desired budget. Today, she works as CEO and president of Rays for Rare, a nonprofit organization she founded with the aim to help families cope with chronic complex and life-threatening issues for their children.

Schomer advocates for rare diseases, of which there are more than 7,000. She feels it doesn't matter what the diagnosis is, the journey is similar. She currently serves on several advisory councils at St. Luke's Children's Hospital as well as shares her message at speaking engagements to further awareness.

In 2017, Schomer experienced the loss of her son, Corwyn, who was born with a rare brain malformation that left him medically fragile. The family was in and out of the hospital on a regular basis, and when Corwyn was transferred to home care, Schomer found herself feeling isolated and quickly realized that this was "something she would like to bring to light."

Following Corwyn's passing, Rays for Rare (formerly Corwyn's Cause) was formed to raise awareness and help bring comfort to medically fragile children and their families. "Megan has created a philanthropic organization that directly identifies and provides support in deeply meaningful ways, while also creating a community from many otherwise isolated families," said Sean Timpane, M.D., a pediatric palliative care physician at St. Luke's Health System.

While people can often focus on the emotional challenges families face, Schomer puts her efforts and focus on the

practical support that the health care system cannot provide. "When Rays for Rare launched, Megan was working nonstop doing everything from networking to grant writing to being available to answer questions when families called to delivering baskets, coordinating services and developing policies and processes," said Sunrise Ayers, deputy director of Idaho Legal Aid Services.

Schomer has established a safe space for families and medically fragile children who need support and validation that they are not alone.

Timpane described Rays for Rare as "more than your typical nonprofit." He said, "It's a home for families to validate their unique life experience in the Treasure Valley. It is a family to connect with over shared experiences where you can be heard and understood. It is a repository of expertise and collective wisdom from which to draw. And it is an ambitious project to provide people with practical support that they would not or could not otherwise seek."

Determined to continue making her vision of Rays for Rare a reality by expanding both geographic scale and caregiving scope to more communities, Schomer said, "Stand in truth and love, have difficult conversations and stand in silent support when there are no words. Hold space for others during their difficult times, when there are no cures, when nothing can be done — grieve together."

— Gabrielle Gibson

**“STAND IN TRUTH AND LOVE, HAVE DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS AND STAND IN SILENT SUPPORT WHEN THERE ARE NO WORDS.”**

# TAI SIMPSON

Acting Co-Director  
Idaho Coalition Against Sexual &  
Domestic Violence

“I have a warrior spirit destined for work in social justice, politics and community organizing,” said tai simpson, who is the acting co-director at the Idaho Coalition Against Sexual & Domestic Violence, an anti-racism educator and consultant and a citizen of the Nimimipuu (Nez Perce Tribe) practicing contemporary and traditional storytelling.

Adan David Callsen, campaign development manager for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society, said, “tai is an anti-racism educator working with students from all over the Treasure Valley to provide them and the community with much-needed knowledge on such an important topic.” In a previous position, Callsen worked with One Stone, a Boise-based tuition-free independent school with which simpson regularly volunteers. He added, “I am always in awe of her ability to deeply engage with the next generation of leaders and provide them with such wisdom and guidance.”

Alyssa Wainaina, founder of Idaho’s Black Liberation Collective, had this to say of simpson: “In addition to the nationwide programming for Missing & Murdered Indigenous People led by tai and the immeasurable impacts that she has led throughout urban and rural Idaho as an organizer, distinguished lecturer and deeply-rooted descendent of Idaho’s colonized lands, we have been honored to be mentored by tai for our nonprofit organization led by Black trans youth who are African, disabled and queer survivors of violence amongst a multitude of other minoritized, intersectional identities.”

During her time studying political science and sociology at Boise State University, simpson served as president of the Intertribal Native Council, the Native American student organization that plans the annual Seven Arrows Powwow. In 2021, she was awarded as a “National Native American 40 Under



40” by the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development and was named Young Leader of the Year by the Boise Young Professionals in 2020.

In addition, simpson serves on the Missing & Murdered Indigenous People Subcommittee of the Idaho Criminal Justice Commission as well as the Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women Task Force of the National Congress of American Indians. She is cofounder and organizer of the Indigenous Idaho Alliance, and co-authored House Concurrent Resolution 33, recognizing missing and murdered indigenous people as a crisis in Idaho and designating May 5 as a day of awareness, which passed the Legislature in 2020.

Also, simpson is involved with grantmaking associations, including the Na’ah Ilahee Fund, a Seattle-based organization supporting and promoting leadership of Indigenous women and girls in the ongoing regeneration of indigenous communities; Social Justice Fund Northwest; and the Potlatch Fund, where she is a member of the board of directors as well as serving on the grantmaking and development committees.

“I have always believed that in the face of unrelenting violence and tragedy, my Black and Indigenous ancestors loved and prayed me into existence,” simpson said. “They carried their language, their joy, and their culture across centuries... for me. My work is couched in this deep ancestral connection and wisdom. I have a responsibility to honor them.”

— Sharon Fisher

“I HAVE A WARRIOR SPIRIT DESTINED FOR WORK IN SOCIAL  
JUSTICE, POLITICS AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZING.”

# ERIN SORENSEN

Vice President of Engineering and Construction  
Ethos Design+Build | Remodel



**W**hen Erin Sorensen was just a child, she showed signs of being an entrepreneur, browsing through local publications with her parents to find properties to purchase and renovate. At age 10, she already had her hand in remodeling homes and managing property alongside her parents, which gave her a vision for what her own business would look like someday. By age 20, she had purchased her own home, and her journey in business and the world of real estate was taking off.

Over the years, Sorensen launched several businesses, including a community preschool, a property management company and affordable housing made from shipping containers. From 2018 to 2020, she was part of a design and development team that helped build 93 affordable living units in Idaho, Colorado, Virginia and California. She also played an instrumental role in providing resettlement housing for 100 people in 100 days during the pandemic. Her passion, however, is advocating for creating homes that are not only affordable and beautiful but are healthy for the environment. It is her desire to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement, limiting the warming of the planet to 2 degrees Celsius, which means all buildings — including homes — need to be carbon neutral by 2050.

Sorensen's current role as the vice president of engineering and construction for Ethos Design+Build | Remodel gives her the opportunity to specialize in designing, engineering and building residential and commercial structures. It is her passion to create sustainable housing communities, and her five-year plan includes building eco-communities around Idaho that generate more energy than they consume. Most of all, she wants to provide homes that give people of all incomes a safe, healthy place to live.

“One thing that sets me apart from my peers is my ability

to plan and visualize ‘big picture’ while also being detail-oriented,” Sorensen said. “This helps me be creative, strategic and visionary, but I’m pretty darn excellent when I roll up my sleeves and do the planning and exacting work needed to build the vision.”

Sorensen, who holds a Bachelor of Science degree in engineering from Boise State University and is a certified Passive House Builder, is also active in her community. Since 2009, she has been involved with NeighborWorks Boise, where she has served in various board roles, including president, vice president and secretary. For the last eight years, she has served as the real estate committee chair. She has also been a member of the Canals Connect Communities Coalition, where she helps connect communities with safe, active transportation and recreation opportunities for Treasure Valley residents.

“Erin’s vision, determination and heart for underserved populations help make her an important asset in the ongoing efforts to create innovative, affordable and sustainable housing solutions within the Treasure Valley,” said Bud Compher Jr., CEO of NeighborWorks Boise. “Her advocacy for affordable housing and raising the quality of life for those living in it is exemplary, and it my sincere hope that more community members adopt this level of commitment as our state continues to grow.”

— Brooke Strickland

**“ONE THING THAT SETS ME APART FROM MY PEERS IS MY ABILITY TO PLAN AND VISUALIZE ‘BIG PICTURE’ WHILE ALSO BEING DETAIL-ORIENTED.”**

# IDAHO BUSINESS REVIEW AWARDS PROGRAMS



The Women of the Year award recognizes women who are shaping Idaho's economic and community well-being through their outstanding leadership, mentoring efforts and community involvement.

## TOP COMPANIES IN TREASURE VALLEY

Top Companies in Treasure Valley celebrates elite employers across the valley, including the capitol city of Boise, who are providing a positive environment and culture where employees love to work.

## CEO Of Influence

CEO of Influence is a special recognition program for talented business and nonprofit leaders throughout the state. Honorees are selected for consistently demonstrating strong leadership, integrity, values, commitment to excellence and diversity.

## IDAHO'S TOP PROJECTS

Top Projects honors the best Idaho construction projects completed the previous year — from infrastructure and transportation to renovations, private buildings and major public projects.

## ACCOMPLISHED UNDER 40

The Accomplished Under 40 program honors 40 Idaho business and professional leaders who have achieved success before the age of 40.

## EXCELLENCE IN FINANCE

The Excellence in Finance awards program celebrates financial professionals in banking, corporate, investment and professional spheres, whose fiscal accomplishments set a high bar for their organizations and Idaho's business economy.

## ICON AWARDS

The Icon Awards honor business leaders who are in a class of their own: the pioneers and change-makers who did things first and continue to kick-start innovation.

## LEADERS IN LAW

Experience counts. Dedication, hard work, skill, tenacity and excellence are expected. Compassion is essential. The Leaders in Law award recognizes all of these qualities and is dedicated to individuals whose leadership, both in the legal profession and in the community, has had a positive impact on Idaho.

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For more information about nominations and applications, contact Lauren Bonneau at 208-639-3518 or [lbonneau@idahobusinessreview.com](mailto:lbonneau@idahobusinessreview.com).

# NICASIO USABEL

Horticultural Extension Educator  
University Of Idaho/Canyon  
County Extension Office



One of the University of Idaho's key horticulture educators is devoted to helping garden aficionados, as well as their plots of ground, grow to ultimate fruition. In the university's Canyon County Extension Office in Caldwell, Nicasio Usabel specializes in urban and commercial horticulture, as well as the Junior Master Gardener and 4-H and Youth Development programs. He has developed numerous video productions on his own material and in collaboration with many others.

Usabel has also taught or presented materials in workshops, seminars and invited lectures on everything from indoor herb gardening to common weeds of Treasure Valley, vermicomposting (using worms), garden planning, harvesting and storing garden vegetables and a host of other topics. He has also presented many programs for Idaho Master Gardener Volunteer Development, ranging from understanding soils to plant propagation, botany and much more.

"(I) provide community clientele with research-based horticulture information and education and work collaboratively with colleagues to deliver relevant and useful programming to community clientele," Usabel said. He also provides Idaho Master Gardeners "with skills that allow them to serve their community in the realm of horticulture education."

Through his current role at the university, Usabel has provided multi-county technical expertise in the areas of commercial and consumer horticulture, according to Patrick Momont, southern district director of the University of Idaho Extension. "Nic has designed, marketed, recruited external partners for, conducted and evaluated innovative educational programs to reach growing and diverse audiences throughout the Treasure Valley," he said. "He conducts and teaches a considerable array of traditional extension programs, including Master Gardener and general horticulture trainings that serve large urban clientele groups. During the ongoing pandemic, Nic collaborated with other educators to offer high-quality virtual programming to remote audiences."

Usabel, working with colleagues, presented six virtual sessions on Coming Together for Racial Understanding through the Idaho Extension Dialogue Circles on Race and Ethnicity at University of Idaho Extension.

Colleagues describe him as a leader who works collaboratively with others to provide service within horticulture and to recruit team members for projects that are broad in scope. "In the summer of 2020, he began implementing a virtual gardening and horticulture series to provide real-time educational programming for adult learners throughout the Treasure Valley," said colleague Surine Greenway, family and consumer sciences extension educator for the University of Idaho's Owyhee County Extension Office.

"As the need for virtual learning experiences have only increased, Nicasio is now implementing his third year of this nationally-recognized work, now serving clientele across the nation," Greenway added. "He demonstrates a passion to educate in his ever-evolving programming and ability to connect with his audiences. He has been instrumental in carrying multiple key projects forward, providing not only high-quality output but true leadership."

As an advanced master gardener volunteer, Jana Garcia Haas said she serves under Usabel's guidance and support on the extension's Master Gardener social media team. "Nic is easy to work with, patient, well organized and flexible," she said, "as he engages with clientele from diverse backgrounds and experiences in home gardening."

— Ken Levy

“(I) PROVIDE COMMUNITY CLIENTELE WITH RESEARCH-BASED  
HORTICULTURE INFORMATION AND EDUCATION...”

# KIRA VAN DE MOERE

Director of HR  
C Squared Social



Kira Van De Moere has a heart for people, and it is reflected throughout her career. She lives by a few philosophies in life; the first being to always find “the why.” She said, “The key to understanding and true empathy is uncovering what experiences have led people to the position they have taken. The ‘whys’ make people people again. My heart is in service to people, whether it be my work in law enforcement, the state of Idaho, human resources, or my volunteer activities. I love giving! My passion and enthusiasm are the qualities that I believe set me apart from my peers.”

Van De Moere began her career as a deputy sheriff and then worked as a self-reliance specialist for the state of Idaho for almost seven years. She discovered that her passion was in human resources, and in 2021, she completed her undergraduate degree in business administration with a focus on human resource management at Boise State University (BSU). While working toward her degree, she was recognized as a 2021 Outstanding Student Leader and a College of Business and Economics (COBE) Outstanding Student.

Last year, Van De Moere began work at C Squared Social as a human resources specialist and was soon promoted to director of human resources. In her first six months on the job, she helped grow the company from 43 employees to 70. She also worked hard to update the company’s policies and fill positions that had been empty due to the pandemic.

In 2019, she co-founded a personal business called On Target Custom Bowstrings, where she assists in writing, executing and managing ongoing vendor contracts. She also provides business consulting on the side and has helped business owners with

advice in navigating a variety of human resources topics.

Outside of her work, Van De Moere is a dedicated mother who is actively involved in her children’s school parent teacher organization. Additionally, she is an active board member of Idaho Senior Health Insurance Benefits Advisors (SHIBA). In the past, she was the president and director of activities for the Human Resource Association (HRA) for BSU.

Chi Lan Nguyen, who was vice president of the HRA at BSU when Van De Moere was president, described her as a strong and audacious leader with a high sense of initiative and creativity. She added, “Kira implemented different recruiting strategies and grew the organization tremendously from 15 to more than 60 active members.”

C Squared Social’s human resources intern, Saede Briem, spoke highly of Van De Moere’s traits of passion, commitment and fierce loyalty. “Having Kira as a mentor has been such a pleasure,” she said. “Due to her inspiration and enthusiasm, I feel extremely lucky to be able to learn from her.”

Looking ahead, Van De Moere plans to continue developing her skillset to grow and scale her company. She also plans to pursue her graduate degree in business in the near future.

— Brooke Strickland

“THE KEY TO UNDERSTANDING AND TRUE EMPATHY IS  
UNCOVERING WHAT EXPERIENCES HAVE LED PEOPLE TO  
THE POSITION THEY HAVE TAKEN.”

# KATIE VILA

## Chief Operating Officer Roundhouse



**A**s chief operating officer of the multifamily investment and development company Roundhouse, Katie Vila has grown the Roundhouse platform from 1,500 to 6,000 units over the last six years. She has completed over \$1 billion in real estate transactions, including 10 new developments and 20 acquisitions in Idaho, California, Montana, Utah and Colorado.

Vila oversees the three verticals of Roundhouse — investments, development and property management — including all risk management and human resources oversight. She previously served as director of investments and as development manager for the business and, in 2022, was named as a company partner.

“Katie’s quick rise in the multifamily industry was a direct result of her continuous willingness and ability to take on new challenges, learn new things and advance Roundhouse’s mission to put humanity into housing,” said Casey Lynch, CEO of Roundhouse. “She is a purpose-driven leader with the grit and resourcefulness to build an enduring and market-leading business that has a long-term impact on the communities in which we work.”

Vila has been an instrumental part in the growth and success of Roundhouse, according to Clay Anderson, investment brokerage specialist for the Idaho Multifamily Team of Colliers International, who said, “I have seen her come into ‘hostile territory’ in negotiations of tough deals. She does a great job of listening, resolving concerns and finding solutions to getting deals done.”

A graduate of Georgia Institute of Technology, where she received a Bachelor of Science degree in civil engineering, Vila made the Dean’s List and graduated with honors. She then joined Kimley-Horn and Associates — a national multidisciplinary land development services firm — as a project manager, where she secured entitlements and completed civil design for a mixed-use development in Miami Beach, sought out new business opportunities, identified engineering innovations (such as a drainage variation) that saved over \$2

million, mentored staff and performed land use evaluations for a variety of clients, including Walmart and TD Bank.

After receiving her Professional Engineering license, Vila decided to make a career jump into the real estate development and investment profession. She received a Master of Business Administration degree from Columbia University, with a focus on real estate and finance. There, she also served as vice president of Summit for the Hispanic Business Association, vice president of events for the Real Estate Association and as a teaching assistant for the Real Estate Projects Class and the Real Estate Entrepreneurship Class.

“I have always considered myself lucky, but it still feels surreal to lead Roundhouse and to call the Treasure Valley ‘home,’” Vila said. “While every day brings new challenges, my end goal remains the same — to create the best living experience for our residents and to foster an organization that enables our associates to flourish. It doesn’t get better than this.”

Outside of work, Vila has participated in mission trips to the Dominican Republic to build infrastructure and organize pop-up clinics and is currently volunteering on a service project to help refugees relocating to Boise. She is a member of the Urban Land Institute, a 2022–23 Leadership Boise class member and recently began serving as a board member for the Boise City/Ada County Housing Authority.

Vila is interested in biking, skiing and running, having completed the Miami Half Marathon in 2014, the Brooklyn Half Marathon in 2016 and the Malibu Olympic Triathlon in 2017.

— Sharon Fisher

“WHILE EVERY DAY BRINGS NEW CHALLENGES, MY END GOAL REMAINS TO CREATE THE BEST LIVING EXPERIENCE FOR OUR RESIDENTS.”



# MEGAN WILSON WOLLER

Community Health and Well-Being Coordinator  
Saint Alphonsus Health System



If you want to get Megan Wilson Woller's attention, scare her.

"My philosophy, personally and professionally, is to pursue opportunities that scare me," Wilson Woller said. "The times I have experienced the most growth were the times I was taking a leap of faith. They are also the most memorable and rewarding."

In Wilson Woller's job, she coordinates mobile COVID-19 vaccination clinics, serves on the community engagement workshop in the Western Idaho Community Health Collaborative and serves on the Boise/Ada County Homeless Coalition. Previously, she served as a grant development specialist for the Saint Alphonsus Foundation, where she secured \$1.8 million in private and public grant funds. She has also worked for DrugFree Idaho; the Women's and Children's Alliance, on behalf of which she was invited to speak at a Boise State University (BSU) fundraiser, and the Idaho Hunger Relief Task Force, starting as an AmeriCorps Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) worker and now serving as a board member and fundraising committee lead.

"Megan steps up to lead through crisis while maintaining a vision and path for a better future for Idaho," said Kathy D. Gardner, the former director of the Idaho Hunger Relief Task Force, who supervised Wilson Woller. "Reviewing her resume will reflect an enduring engagement in issues of importance to Idaho and beyond."

In addition to her professional experience, Wilson Woller serves as a board member and member of the community outreach committee for Jesse Tree and is a member of BSU's Latino Alumni chapter. Her nonprofit and volunteer experience is so noteworthy that she was nominated for an Idaho's Brightest Star award, commemorating efforts in community service, as long ago as 2017.

Now holding a master's degree in public administration as well as a bachelor's degree in health education and promotion, both from BSU, Wilson Woller said that she is a first-generation college graduate. "My mother is a first-generation American whose parents and siblings began their lives in Idaho as migrant farmworkers," she said. "My father has worked in gold mines, poured concrete and led construction projects. Their hard work and experiences have shaped my career interests in policy advocacy and program development." Moreover, she earned her degrees debt-free through scholarships, savings and federal grants, and was able to buy her own home at the age of 24.

In Wilson Woller's spare time, she is a vocalist with the Chronology Entertainment Group, as well as a manager and performer with Hawaiian at Heart Idaho. In fact, in 2021 she sang the Star-Spangled Banner at the Snake River Stampede's Stampede for the Cure night.

"It's hard to find anything on Megan's extensive resume that doesn't involve her helping someone or some group of people in need," said David Ficks, manager of the BSU Testing Center as well as of one of the bands in which Wilson Woller performs. "She is driven, I believe, by an internal desire to help people achieve and thrive."

— Sharon Fisher

**"THE TIMES I HAVE EXPERIENCED THE MOST GROWTH WERE THE TIMES I WAS TAKING A LEAP OF FAITH. THEY ARE ALSO THE MOST MEMORABLE AND REWARDING."**

# PAST ACCOMPLISHED UNDER 40 WINNERS

This year's Accomplished Under 40 Awards represents the 23rd year that Idaho Business Review has been celebrating accomplished individuals under 40 across the state of Idaho. Below are the 200 individuals who were honored over the past five years.

## 2017 HONOREES

HAZEN ARMSTRON  
MATT BAUSCHER  
MARTINBILBAO  
MICHAEL BLAUER  
MATTHEW BRADSHAW  
WHITNEY CAPRICE SOKOL  
JACK CARPENTER  
JOSH CLEGHORN  
KIMBERLEY CLOUD  
EMILY FASCILLA  
KRISTINA FUGATE  
TRAVIS M. GERHARD  
MATT GUHO  
PAUL R. HALES  
ALICIA HOOBING  
SCOTT HOPKINS  
WILL HUGHES  
KENTON LEE  
CAITLIN LISTER  
CLAY LONG  
KELCI LYNN LUCIER  
GARRETT A. MCBRAYER  
MATTHEW M. MCDANIEL  
BOBBI-JO MEULEMAN  
MARISA NELSON  
MATT PIPKIN  
LYNN POPE  
SAMUEL PULLEN  
ANDREW RANDALL  
SARAH REED  
ERICKA RUPP  
MAUREEN RYAN BRALEY  
JOSHUA SCHLAICH  
SOPHIE SESTERO  
BRADLEY SMITH  
KELLI SOLL  
MEGHAN SWAN  
MISTY SWANSON  
BOB VAN ALLEN  
REID WIGGINS

## 2018 HONOREES

PATRICK BAGEANT  
KYLE BELLNAP  
MATT BLANDFORD  
BRITTANY BRAND  
DAVID CALLSEN  
SURBIR S. CHADHA  
JUSTIN CRANNEY  
GABRIELLE DAVIS  
LINDSAY ERB  
STEVEN FELDSTEIN  
EVA FITHEN  
ANDREW FLETCHER  
WILLIAM K. FLETCHER  
RIALIN FLORES  
CODY FRESTON  
ERIN GORRINGE  
ZACH HIGGINS  
LISA HOLLAND  
ALBERT KANG  
MINDY LIN  
MATTHEW MAES  
JESSE MALDONADO  
PHIL MCGRANE  
JULIE MORGAN  
TAYLOR MOSSMAN-FLETCHER  
NATHANIEL MUELLER  
EMILY PATCHIN  
JENNIFER PEREZ  
SHAYNA RANDALL  
GENIE REESE  
KELLI REESER  
CHRISTOPHER A. REID  
TERESA SANDROS  
CHRISTINA SHELL  
SARAH B. SHINN  
CATY SOLACE  
JILL TWEDT  
JASON VICKREY  
HOLLI WOODINGS  
AUSTIN ZANDER

## 2019 HONOREES

JOSH BARTLOME  
ISAAC BELDEN  
AMBER BIERLE  
KERRI BRYANT  
SARI BYERLY  
JOHN CARR  
COLETTE CHESTER  
BHASKAR CHITTOORI  
CAITLIN COPPLE MASINGILL  
BEN DAVIS  
FINIA DINH  
JONATHAN GILLEN  
SURINE GREENWAY  
KATHY GRIESMYER  
KEVIN KING  
KRISSEY LAMONT  
SONYA LOVEJOY  
KATHERINE MACFARLANE  
JESSE REESE MCKINNEY  
RHIANA MENEN  
DENNIS MIKELONIS  
KATHLEEN PALMER  
QUINN PERRY  
ADRIAN SANMIGUEL  
SHERI SCHMIDT  
HEIDI SCOTT  
BRYANT SEARLE  
MOLLY SEDLACEK  
MICHAEL DAVIDSPIEDEL  
SARA SPIEDEL  
ROBERT SQUIRE  
JACLYN ST. JOHN  
MEREDITH STEAD  
CONNIE STOPHER  
PETYA STOYANOVA JOHNSON  
ALEXIS TOWNSEND  
ADAM VELASQUEZ  
JACQUIE WATSON  
MEGHAN WOOD CARDOZA  
STEPHANIE YOUNG

## 2020 HONOREES

LINDSEY BOWSHIER  
MADELEINE BUMSTEAD  
JILLIAN CAIRES  
CHARLENE CARIOU  
MARIE CASTELLI  
CHRISTINA CERNANSKY  
PEACHES CHILANGA  
ADAM CHRISTENSON  
MICHELLE CRANE  
TRACY DARLING-DEMARCUS  
REBECCA DE LEÓN  
DIANA DEJESUS  
JOE ECK  
MEGAN EGBERT  
LUKE EINERSON  
BRADY ELLIS  
KAYCEE EMERY  
SYDNEY FREEMAN, JR.  
MATT FRYE  
BRITTENY GARDNER  
PETER GUERRERO  
LAUREN HAMILTON  
MATTHEW HARVEY  
SHANNON HAVINS  
NATALIE HODSON  
KATY JIBBEN PETERSON  
BRYANT JONES  
MATTHEW KUZIO  
DAN LANDUCCI  
MEGHAN MCMARTIN  
AMANDA MOORE  
STEPHEN PARROTT  
ALEXIS PICKERING  
MEGAN POSHKA  
SCOTT SCHLANGE  
ANTHONY SHALLAT  
LAURA WATSON  
ANDREA WECKER  
TIFFANY WHITWORTH  
WILLIAM YOUNG

## 2021 HONOREES

SARAH BETTWIESER  
NICK BLASIUS  
DREY CAMPBELL  
NICHOLAS CRABBS  
MARY CRONIN  
JENNIFER CUMMINS  
JEANINE DAILY  
BENJAMIN DALTON  
RACHEL FELTENBERGER  
JOSH FILZEN  
ZACH FULLER  
LANA GRAYBEAL  
HALEY HENNESSEY  
COLLIN HILL  
APRIL HOY  
DUSTIN KEYES  
CHELSEA KIDNEY  
TYLER KRAUPP  
KAITLIN MAGUIRE  
TARA MALEK  
JENNA MCCULLOCK  
WHITNEY MESTELLE  
GENEVIEVE NUTTING  
CAITLIN O'BRIEN  
SYDNEY OSBORNE  
KRISHNA PAKALA  
KARISSA PATTERSON  
CHELSEA PORTER  
ERIKA PORTER  
MELISSA SCHAFER  
ERIN SIMMS  
WILLIAM SMITH  
GRAYSON STONE  
TAYLER TIBBITTS  
BAYLEE TUCKER  
CHRISTINA TURPIN  
CORRINA WHITNEY  
DOUG WOODRUFF  
WILLIAM ZIMMERMAN  
ZACHARY ZOLLINGER

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**2022**

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