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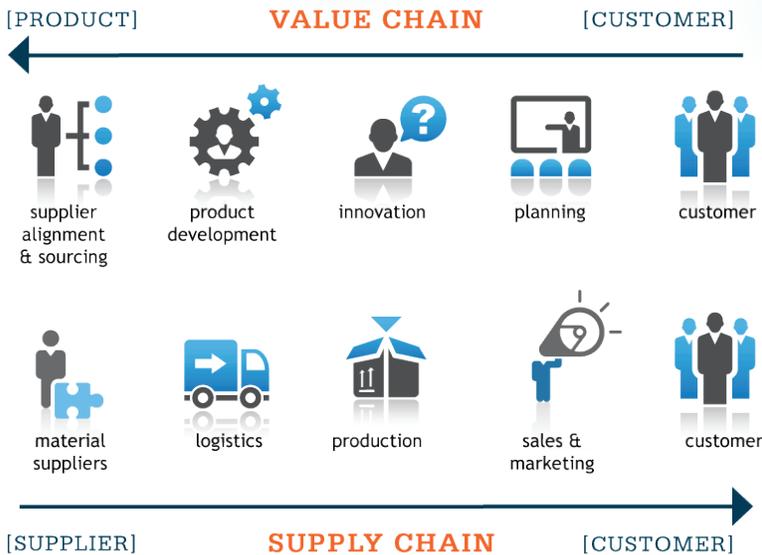


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*Students in the Food Bank of Delaware's Logistics, Operations, General Warehousing, and Inventory Control (LOGIC) training program.*

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## On The Cover

Hodgson VoTech High School students on site at the Barley Mill Plaza redevelopment.  
 Photos by Nick Wallace Photography

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# Message from the President



Michael J. Quaranta

In the January edition of *Delaware Business*, Rick Deadwyler of Corteva and chair of our affiliate—The Partnership, Inc.—described how we have been reimagining the programs that make up our workforce development platform: Delaware Principal for a Day, Superstars in Education and Training, Intern Delaware, and the Delaware Young Professionals Network. Superstars in Education and Training recently announced its 2022 award winners.

The high school winner is Paul M. Hodgson Vocational Technical School and their ACE (Architecture, Construction and Engineering) mentoring program. Student teams work directly with professionals from leading area firms who volunteer their time to mentor the student teams as they design hypothetical projects, tour local construction sites, and visit architectural, engineering and construction company offices. The honoree in the independent training and certificate provider category is Food Bank of Delaware for both their culinary and logistics, operations, general warehousing, and inventory control (LOGIC) skills training programs. Year Up Wilmington, in collaboration with Wilmington University, works to close the opportunity divide by empowering young adults with the skills, experiences, and support to reach their potential and obtain living wage careers. Zip Code Wilmington was also selected as the Award of Excellence recipient in the category of independent training and certificate provider.

My thanks go out to all the applicants and award recipients! They are doing some incredible things to prepare and fill the workforce needs of today and tomorrow.

Do you know of a classroom or school (high school, college, or university) program that should be recognized? Similarly, do you know of independent training programs and providers that are doing incredible work in preparing people for employment to fill the needs of employers? Please share that information with Helana Rodriguez and we'll reach out to those schools or programs. Congratulations to all!

# DELAWARE BUSINESS

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## LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY

# Legislative Hall Re-opens

BY VERITY WATSON

TWO YEARS AGO, Legislative Hall was closing their doors and transitioning to operating in a virtual format. The words “unchartered waters” were used with regularity. In a stark contrast, this spring brought the literal opening of doors within the state’s capital. Committee meetings returned to conducting business in person with the public physically in the room. Advocates and constituents were able to meet in person with their legislators in their offices. In the spirit of open government, both chambers have been able to keep a virtual option for both committees and session. It appears that the waters have calmed.

As expected, we have seen an uptick in legislative activity this session following two virtual sessions and an impending election.

- Legislation was introduced to provide a \$300 rebate for all Delawareans who filed a 2020 tax return. This was done in light of the significant budgetary surplus of approximately one billion dollars coupled with the rise in inflation.
- House Majority Leader Valerie Longhurst introduced a package of bills focused on increasing access to mental health care and pertinent education programs within public schools.
- Senator Kyle Gay spearheaded an effort to prohibit the use of gender as a rating factor in personal automobile insurance policies.
- Representative Melissa Minor-Brown announced seven “Momnibus” bills related to maternal and infant health, child mortality, doulas, the incarceration of pregnant women, and aide to new parents.
- Representative Krista Griffith introduced her Cover All Delaware Children Act, which would ensure medical coverage for all children in Delaware regardless of their immigration status.

The Delaware State Chamber continues to engage and monitor numerous bills that impact members. Senator McBride’s Paid Family and Medical Leave Act passed the Senate with a party-line vote and a healthy dose of personal storytelling. Representative Krista Griffith’s legislation on data brokers was released from the House Technology and Telecommunications committee. As of this article’s writing, legislation to legalize recreational marijuana continues to struggle to pass the House by a close margin.

Many business groups, including the State Chamber, anxiously



await legislation that would aid in economic development efforts by shortening the permitting processes currently in place. The Ready in 6 initiative would reduce the current timing of 24 months down to six. These recommendations were made by professional services firm KPMG after reviewing Delaware’s process and comparing how competitive we are with other states. As it turns out, neighboring states—Pennsylvania and Maryland—have a permitting process that takes substantially less time.

We are heading into the final stretch of not only the current legislative session but also the 151st General Assembly. Bills that do not cross the legislative “finish line” will need to be re-introduced next year. May and June are notoriously chaotic. In addition to the impending expiration of bills, the legislature must pass a balanced budget by the conclusion of session on June 30th.

The State Chamber continues to advocate on behalf of the business community. Your voice and story is important and we encourage you to get involved by reaching out to Tyler Micik, manager of public policy and government relations, for assistance.



**Verity Watson**, Ruggerio, Willson & Associates



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# Member news & Notes

## BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: **Schlosser & Associates** BY REGINA DONATO

» When Schlosser Plumbing & Heating was founded in 1954, one gallon of gas cost only 22 cents. A lot has changed since then, but one thing has never wavered: their company's dedication to satisfying customers by always making sure a job is done right.

Paul Schlosser Sr. started his business with one goal in mind: to provide quality and affordable plumbing services to the Newark area. Since then, Schlosser & Associates Mechanical Contractors Inc. has grown to become a one-stop-shop for many residential, commercial, and industrial services, including HVAC, plumbing, carpentry, concrete work, interior restoration, and more.

As a legacy woman-owned company, Schlosser & Associates truly believes in the power of keeping it in the family. Garnet Schlosser Dennis—Paul's daughter—and her husband, Steve Dennis, are joint owners of the company. "I think there's something to be said for the consistency and history of a family business," said Garnet Dennis. "I've always been very proud to be a part of this and continue my father's business."

Traditionally, only 30-40 percent of family-owned businesses make the transition into a second generation. For Schlosser, a third generation is also now involved with Garnet and Steve's son, Justin, involved in the mix.

Darryl Remedio Sr., the company's third owner, has also passed the torch amongst family—his son Darryl Jr. now works at Schlosser. As a testament to the company's generational success, Schlosser & Associates was honored with *Delaware Business Time's* Family-Owned Business Legacy Award in 2019.



*Company Founder Paul Schlosser Sr. on a job site.*

If you ask the owners, the true power of Schlosser & Associates lies directly within the second half of their name—the associates. They employ around 50 full-time associates, some of whom have been with the company for nearly 40 years. The sheer versatility of Schlosser & Associates would not be possible without the dedication, talent, and skills of their associates, who are everything from plumbers to carpenters to welders.

"We pride ourselves in being able to do just about anything," Steve Dennis explained. "And the reason we can do

that is because of our talented people, we are nothing without them." For a small business, the range of services Schlosser & Associates offers is quite broad, setting them apart in a market so heavily saturated with single-service companies.

In an age where so many employers are struggling to find or maintain employees, Schlosser & Associates does not—a testament to the culture leadership has fostered over the years. They have implemented creative approaches to maintain positivity and encourage growth in the workplace, including the "Schlosser Way" internal reward program, a fun way to engage associates through rewarding them via yards gained on a football field. "We show loyalty to our associates, just like they have shown us over the years," said Garnet. The ownership team at Schlosser & Associates does everything in their power to make it known that their company is not just family-owned, but that their entire community of associates is a part of the family too.

As Schlosser & Associates moves into their eighth decade of business, there is a lot to reflect upon. "We are so grateful for our loyal customers, dedicated associates and trusted business affiliates," reflected Steve. "Everything they've done for us puts us in a great position moving into the future."



## NONPROFIT SPOTLIGHT: **Pathways to Success** BY SYDNEY MASON

» Second chances; that's Pathways to Success' purpose. Pathways to Success' mission is to provide underserved youth an array of academic, social, experiential, and emotional tools and services to enhance their academic and post-grad success. This nonprofit organization helps hundreds of children each year reach their academic potential.

Pathways to Success' programs are designed with the goal to help lower school dropout rates and build a strong community environment. Students enter the program in ninth grade and stay in it through their senior year plus one year after graduation to help with adjusting to either the work world, military, or college. Executive Director Fay Blake explains that "85-95 percent of participants are underserved youth." Of those students, "98 percent graduate from high school and 96 percent go on to either college, the military, or find full-time jobs and careers."

Pathways follows a platform called CARE (consistent, authentic, respectful empowerment). Their holistic programming allows students to voluntarily participate in the program. Pathways program coordinators interact with students to create a respectful, dependable, and authentically transparent relationship while providing the much needed academic, social, and emotional support to successfully navigate their school and communities.

One of the most popular "pathways" available is the After School Program at Sussex Technical High School, which falls under their much broader Youth Program. This after-school pathway mirrors what is taught in other schools but in a different format. The program incorporates volunteer tutors and speakers who teach life, study, work, and leadership skills in addition to financial literacy education and opportunities for paid work-based learning. Many of the educational interactions do not fit

into the rigors of the normal academic curricula. Oftentimes this is personalized to each student participant.

When asked what she enjoys most about Pathways to Success and what she finds most rewarding, Blake says, "Every day I get up, I'm excited about sowing wonderful seeds into the fabulous students that we serve. I think at the heart of me, I'm a servant leader which means giving the best of you that you can possibly give."

Pathways to Success is more than just a program, it's a place where many find comfort. Blake's main concern is not reaching the students who "fall through the cracks." Although sometimes a reality, her personal mission is to support as many young people as she can.

Currently, the organization operates in four schools—Milford High School, Cape Henlopen High School, Seaford High School, and Sussex Technical High School—with around 400 kids

each year. The nonprofit is also poised for growth with plans to expand into the Polytech School District next year. The expansion would be funded by the Delaware Department of Labor with a goal to create a “robust work experience program” that partners with local businesses. Blake also plans to implement internship opportunities and shape new programs to help prepare students who decide that college isn’t their path of choice.

The pandemic significantly affected underserved youth not just financially but emotionally. As a result, the nonprofit hired a clinical social worker to address the needs of both the students and staff. Although the pandemic has presented its challenges, Blake prefers to consider the moment as an opportunity to build a stronger support system for their students as they look beyond the scope of education and into mental health and well-being.

Blake summarizes, “My heart has always been with underserved youth—I was one of those kids. When I retired, I thought what can I do to give back? Honestly, I am thrilled every single day that I get to do this because I know that I’m helping to change the life of someone that deserves it. To me, it can’t get any better than that.”



**Sydney Mason** interned for the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce during the spring semester of her junior year.

She is a communications major at the University of Delaware.

## LaMotte Company Chooses Newark for Manufacturing and R&D Expansion

CONTRIBUTED BY DELAWARE PROSPERITY PARTNERSHIP

» LaMotte Company, a leading producer of water-quality testing instrumentation and reagents, headquartered in Chestertown, Maryland, has chosen Newark, Delaware, as the site for its expansion. Sales growth has prompted LaMotte to increase its manufacturing and research and development capacity.

The company plans to invest \$3.3 million to build out lab space at its new location in Pencader Corporate Center. The 79,000-square-foot site will also include office and production space.

“We are working hard to make Delaware more competitive so that we can compete and win every day,” said Governor John Carney. “That means making sure we have the best environment so businesses like LaMotte Company can grow and thrive here in Delaware. We are excited for this expansion and the new jobs it will bring. This investment shows that Delaware remains in demand for manufacturing and innovative development.”

LaMotte will hire more than 50 employees immediately with future plans to have more than 100 people working at the site within three years. Positions will include skilled technicians, production line and warehouse workers, administrative positions, and engineers and chemists.

Proximity to the intellectual resources of the University of Delaware was a key reason for LaMotte’s choice of Newark, Delaware, over other Mid-Atlantic

locations. The company intends to collaborate with the university’s College of Engineering and Lerner College of Business to develop an internship and employee pipeline. It also plans to partner with Delaware’s vocational high schools and Delaware Technical Community College to address its needs for technician and manufacturing personnel.

Founded in Baltimore, Maryland, LaMotte has manufactured specialized pH indicators and other analytical reagents for water-quality analysis worldwide since 1919. Today, the company produces analytical reagents, electronic instrumentation, and complete portable test kits for chemical analysis for hundreds of applications to serve the pool and spa; drinking water; industrial water; environmental science education; food and beverage; laundry and sanitation; water and wastewater; and aquarium and fish farming industries.

“We are thrilled to continue our expansion plans culminating in this investment in Delaware,” said LaMotte President and CEO Scott Amsbaugh. “The Newark location is highly valuable for us given the skilled and educated local workforce and its proximity to global shipping hubs. This investment is critical in our capacity expansion to meet our customers’ growing demands for LaMotte’s products.”

Delaware Prosperity Partnership began working with LaMotte in June 2021 on its site selection process.



## Delaware ESGR

### SERVING EMPLOYERS FOR FIFTY YEARS

BY KENNARD WIGGINS

» Several currents of history gave rise to the establishment of Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve. The early 1970s was a time of revolutionary change in military personnel management. The Vietnam War began winding down and the draft was abolished in favor of an all-volunteer force. It was no longer a “given” that manpower would be available for military service. Recruiting qualified people required offering benefits and compensation commensurate with the private sector competition. Military planners had to include more women and minorities in their calculations to meet the demand for qualified applicants. This broadened and diversified the cohort serving in uniform to an unprecedented degree.

A second significant trend was a renewed reliance upon the National

Guard and Reserve as partners in America’s defense. A “Total Force” policy was implemented and made the reserve forces full partners. In August 1973, Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger declared that the “Total Force” is now the policy which integrates the active Guard and Reserve forces into a homogeneous whole. This was the first step in transitioning the reserve forces from a strategic reserve towards an operational role as a full peer defending our country.

Delaware guardsmen and reservists rely upon their families and civilian employers. To do their duty, they require the support of both if they are to succeed. Our citizen-soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen need to know that their civilian jobs are protected and they can serve on military duty without fear

of loss. Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), a Department of Defense program, was established on June 22, 1972 to promote cooperation and understanding between Reserve Component Service members and their civilian employers and to assist in the resolution of conflicts arising from an employee’s military commitment.

Delaware is a small state, but it has a very significant population of Guardsmen and Reservists from every service component, numbering approximately 5,300 members in total. We estimate they are employed by virtually every employer in the state with more than 50 employees. The Delaware committee for ESGR is supported by more than 20 volunteers and officers in all three counties with backgrounds in business, industry, government, and education. Typically, many have prior military service, offering a wealth of experience and expertise on both sides of the civil/military equation.

ESGR has served our country for fifty years, fostering a culture in which all



employers support and value the employment and military service of members of the National Guard and Reserve in the United States. Thanks to their support, our state's employers are full partners in our nation's defense. These citizen warriors could not defend and protect us at home and abroad without the continued promise of meaningful civilian employment for themselves and their families.

ESGR has continued to adapt to meet the needs of Reserve Component members, their families, and America's employers by joining forces with a network of other national, state, and local government and professional trade organizations. Together, We All Serve!

Delaware ESGR is a Department of Defense volunteer organization. The State Chairman, Maj. Gen. (Ret) Hugh Broomall encourages all employers to sign a Statement of Support for the Guard and Reserve. Please contact Bernard Carter at 302-326-7608 or [bernard.c.carter.ctr@mail.mil](mailto:bernard.c.carter.ctr@mail.mil). Learn more at <https://www.esgr.mil/Employers/Statement-of-Support>.

# Every Business Needs Guidance

## DELAWARE SCORE OFFERS IT FREE OF CHARGE

BY JOHN C. FRANKE

» SCORE is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and resource partner of the U.S. Small Business Administration and is the nation's largest network of volunteer expert business mentors. Since 1964, SCORE has been helping small businesses get off the ground, grow, and achieve sustainability.

Represented by hundreds of chapters across the United States, encompassing 10,000 volunteer business mentors that provide in-depth resources and executive management support, SCORE's mission is to help entrepreneurs establish a small business and grow or enhance overall business operations.

SCORE has developed a proven, step-by-step approach, which helps clients define the benefits of their product or service; identify their ideal customers, goals, and objectives; draw up an executable business plan; and lay out the path for business success. SCORE also conducts educational workshops and one-on-one mentoring sessions that provide information and techniques for starting, managing, and growing a successful business.

Delaware SCORE maintains a core of experienced business mentors who have served in executive positions in a variety of retail, commercial, industrial,



educational, and nonprofit enterprises throughout the Delmarva region and nationwide. These mentors provide free, confidential business counseling to small business entrepreneurs to draft business plans, manage finances, assess operations, develop marketing strategies, and acquire funding. Mentors are an invaluable resource because their business expertise helps to guide entrepreneurs through what can be a complicated process. How to plan, how to market, what pitfalls to avoid, and how to maximize a small business owners' success are just some examples of how a mentor can help.

For small business guidance or to become a SCORE mentor, visit [www.delaware.score.org](http://www.delaware.score.org) or call 877-572-6555.



**John C. Franke** is vice chairman of Delaware SCORE.



## A Path to Success

### DELMARVA POWER CONNECTS DELAWARE STUDENTS TO ENERGY CAREERS BY KELLY ANN DECURTIS

Delmarva Power's Path to Success program provides Delaware high school seniors the opportunity to begin energy careers. Launched in 2020, the program provides an opportunity for students to take part in one-on-one career coaching, career exploration, and professional skill building opportunities. Upon successful completion of the eight-month program, students earn a job opportunity with Delmarva Power or a partnering contractor.

During the fall, students receive specialized tutoring focused on improving their GPA, learning financial literacy, developing a resume, and honing professional development skills. In the spring of their senior year, students then receive a paid internship with Delmarva Power and

study for the Construction and Skilled Trades (CAST) test, which is requirement for employment at Delmarva Power and other energy companies.

To recruit interested students, Delmarva Power worked in partnership with local schools and the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services. Delmarva Power also partnered with the Forum to Advance Minorities in Engineering (FAME) to create curriculum that focuses on human performance skills, as well as CAST test training. For additional support, Delmarva Power contracted three Delaware teachers to serve as tutors who focus on teambuilding, problem solving, and academic support through weekly meetings and workshops.

The program's first year saw tremendous success. Of the 12 students in the first cohort, 11 received job offers and one chose to attend college. A second class was started in the fall of 2021 with graduation and job interviewing scheduled for May 2022.

The Path to Success commitment for students is in addition to traditional school responsibilities. Students interested in making the commitment beginning in their junior year should contact their school counselor for more information. To learn more about Delmarva Power and the program, visit *The Source*, Delmarva Power's online newsroom. Find additional information by visiting [delmarva.com](http://delmarva.com).



**Kelly Ann DeCurtis** is the director of talent management at Delmarva Power.

## COMMITTEE SPOTLIGHT:

# Environmental Committee

BY TYLER MICIK

»» The State Chamber's Environmental Committee met in early March and was joined by DNREC Secretary Shawn Garvin and Angela Marconi, director of DNREC's Division of Air Quality.

Marconi discussed HB 257, a proposal to increase Natural Minor (Reg. 1102) permitting fees. It would impact smaller emitters like dry cleaners and auto body shops. The current fees haven't been adjusted since they were established in 1991 and only fund 25 percent of program's costs.

DNREC planned to increase the fees in 2021. The State Chamber reacted by submitting a letter requesting that any increase be delayed until 2022 to support businesses recovering from the pandemic. DNREC took the State Chamber's concerns into consideration and subsequently delayed introducing the proposal until this year. The State Chamber is now supportive of the proposed increase.

DNREC's current plan is for the increase to occur in three phases. Phase one would take effect in January 2023 and increase fees to fund 50 percent of program costs. The second phase would propose to cover 75 percent and the third phase would suggest covering 100 percent of program costs. It also requires evaluations to occur every three years in which the Department will conduct a cost assessment and make recommendations to the General Assembly regarding fee adjustments.

The Division of Air Quality hosted a

virtual workshop in February to talk about the proposal. To learn more and watch the recording, visit <https://dnrec.alpha.delaware.gov/air/permitting/fee-initiative>.

Secretary Garvin provided information about the Department's partnership with DeIDOT to allocate the \$17 million in funds the state is set to receive over the next few years towards electric transportation infrastructure. He also shared plans for a new state-of-the-art DNREC lab and site readiness.

Last year the General Assembly passed SB 127, which created the Site Readiness Fund—a \$10 million investment by Governor John Carney. The Fund's goal is to accelerate site readiness and attract companies by making sites "shovel-ready", meaning water, electric, and other utilities are

brought near the site to accelerate the development process. This legislation was a goal of the Ready in 6 coalition.

Delaware may be small, but we can't be small and slow. Being Ready in 6 means a project can be off the ground in no longer than six months. It is a key factor in site selectors' decisions when determining where to locate and is essential for Delaware to remain competitive and create new job opportunities.

While this legislation goes a long way in helping establish shovel-ready sites, there is still much work to be done. The State Chamber supports these efforts and looks forward to advocating for changes in the permitting or regulatory barriers to economic development projects.



## DSCC Welcomes Kerri Welcher

The Delaware State Chamber of Commerce welcomes its newest team member, Kerri Welcher, who stepped into the role of events manager in March. Kerri will help to advance the organization's mission of networking and advocacy through planning and managing our calendar of proactive and responsive events.

A Delaware native, Kerri has spent most of her life in the First State. She recently graduated from the University of Delaware with a degree in Hospitality Business Management. Prior to joining the State Chamber, she worked at the Brandywine Zoo helping to plan and manage their events.

Kerri resides in New Castle, DE with her husband and our two "fur babies" who enjoy taking nature walks. In her spare time, Kerri loves to paint and entertain friends and family where she shows off her impressive cooking skills.

## The Warehouse Introduces RISE: Reaching and Investing in Youth for Sustainable Employment

»» In partnership with Barclays US Consumer Bank, The Warehouse—a service partner of The WRK Group, which also includes REACH Riverside and Kingswood Community Center—announced the official kick-off of RISE, The Warehouse’s flagship program. The event featured a \$500,000 check presentation from Barclays, the largest supporter of RISE.

RISE, which stands for Reaching and Investing in Youth for Sustainable

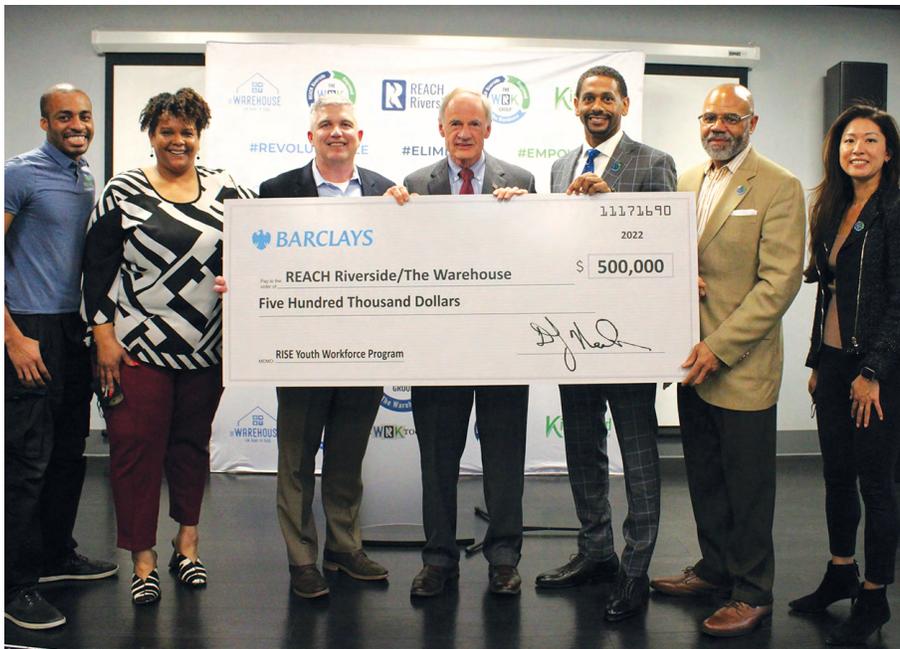
Employment, is a paid, 26-week program that provides teens and young adults, ages 14-24, with the skills needed to secure sustainable employment.

“We at The WRK Group are so grateful for partners like Barclays who are committed to investing in the next generation of young professionals,” said Logan S. Herring, Sr., CEO of The WRK Group. “By investing in Riverside’s youth, Barclays has proven their dedication to creating a more equitable

playing field where teens and young adults of color can attain financial and professional success.”

The first eight weeks of RISE are spent developing soft skills such as financial literacy, time management, conflict resolution, and more. Participants spend the following eight weeks in an externship with one of The Warehouse’s employer partners connected to specific career pathways such as culinary, information technology, certified nursing assistant, and clinical medical administrative assistant certification. Finally, participants return to The Warehouse for individual coaching in resume building, job search/ placement, and to develop an individual service strategy for professional success. RISE participants are paid for 15 hours a week at \$12 an hour throughout the 26-week training program.

“For the past several years, Barclays has watched The Warehouse and The WRK Group begin to transform Riverside and Northeast Wilmington,” said Denny Nealon, CEO of Barclays US Consumer Bank and REACH Riverside Advisory Board member. “We continue to be inspired by the impact of this organization to create a thriving and inclusive community in Riverside, and an important part of that is supporting the next generation. As part of Barclays LifeSkills initiative, we are proud to invest in the teens and young adults of Wilmington, helping them gain the skills they need to enter the workforce.”



*“By investing in Riverside’s youth, Barclays has proven their dedication to creating a more equitable playing field where teens and young adults of color can attain financial and professional success.” — Logan S. Herring, Sr.*



## Chair Message

BY NICK LAMBROW

»» The summer tourism season is upon us, and in Delaware, that's

notable for this reason: Summer tourists mean summer jobs.

Restaurants and hotels along the coastline will be brimming with patrons. Tourist attractions and entertainment venues will be booked day and night. Retail and grocery stores will see an uptick in shoppers.

Employers will need employees, and Delaware's economy stands to benefit.

All that sounds great—especially when you consider the uncertainty we've faced for more than two years. But what happens when the tourists go home? What happens when the summer season draws to its inevitable close?

While the needs of the hospitality sector are many, so too are the needs of other sectors important to the Delaware economy. We must continue to invest in the programs and practices that will train Delawareans and match them with the jobs available today and tomorrow in our state.

Delaware's unemployment rate is in much better shape than it was two years ago, but it's still not back to pre-pandemic levels. In February 2020, Delaware's unemployment was 3.7 percent; it's hovered just under 5 percent for the past several months.

The numbers don't tell the entire story, though. Employers are saying their job vacancy rates are at all-time highs. They say they can't find workers with the

skills—notably skills in the trades and IT—needed to do the job.

This labor mismatch is not exclusive to Delaware. But if our state is going to remain competitive and attractive to businesses, we need to deal with these challenges in two ways:

- Lengthen and widen our pipeline for talented workers; and,
- Retrain our existing workforce to do the jobs waiting to be filled.

Broadening the state's talent pipeline got a boost late last year when Gov. John Carney announced an additional \$15.8 million public-private investment in the state's Pathways program that allows

*We must continue to invest in the programs and practices that will train Delawareans and match them with the jobs available today and tomorrow in our state.*

students to get work experience in health care, IT, finance, and engineering while in school. The expanded Pathways program will reach more than 6,000 Delaware middle school students and 32,000 high schoolers—up from the 23,000 high school students it currently serves.

As members of the State Chamber, we also can do our part to support The Partnership Inc.—the State Chamber's 501(c)(3) workforce development affiliate—and its flagship program, Intern Delaware. The program is designed to provide student interns with professional development and networking opportunities that highlight what the state can offer them professionally and personally, so that we keep our young talent in

Delaware. We, at M&T Bank, see great value in programs like Intern Delaware and are proud to offer this internship “add-on” to our summer interns.

Young people entering the workforce only account for three percent of the entire labor market. Therefore, retraining—or upskilling—our current workforce through apprenticeships or rapid training courses could help close the gap between the jobs available in Delaware and the number of skilled, trained people to fill them. As we look to help industries like manufacturing and biotech boost employment in the state, we can look to successful programs like Year Up and Zip

Code Wilmington as a blueprint for how to retrain Delawareans who want or need to make a career change. In just 12 weeks, Zip Code students learn how to be software developers through mentorship and networking opportunities with technologists from corporate partners that then look to offer the students full-time jobs.

Let's draw upon the collaborative culture of Delaware's business community to look at what's working and dream up the next Zip Code-like jobs training program. Let's build upon those successful programs and replicate their models across all industries. The time is now for us to work together to provide skills, knowledge, and opportunities to our workforce—of today and tomorrow.

## DIVERSE SUPPLIER SPOTLIGHT: **NERDIT NOW** BY REGINA DONATO



» It all started with the gift of a computer. While Markevis Gideon didn't know it in eighth grade, that one simple present was the start to a groundbreaking organization in the state of Delaware: NERDIT NOW.

Upon receiving this gift, he taught himself the art of IT repair. After becoming Microsoft certified, attending school for computer science and accounting, and living in China for several years, Gideon found himself back in his home state and wanting to address a problem impacting so many communities: the lack of access to basic technology.

"I saw my community needed help, and I remember how that one computer changed my life," Gideon recalls. "I wanted to afford the opportunity to donate technology back into the community." And he did just that.

What began in a two-bedroom apartment in 2015 has grown exponentially in less than a decade. NERDIT NOW currently has a retail location that offers affordable IT repair for phones, tablets, computers, and gaming systems. Additionally, NERDIT's infamous ambulance takes the business on the road, bringing valuable repair services and education directly into the community.

NERDIT CARES is the organization's 501(c)(3) nonprofit affiliate, which has two main functions: providing both

technology and workforce development opportunities to the community, free of charge. Since the foundation of the nonprofit in 2016, over 7,500 devices have been donated to individuals in Delaware; in many cases, a device from NERDIT is the first a family has owned.

Their workforce development effort, NERDIT Academy, provides

the program during the pandemic, over 70 students have already completed the program.

When founding NERDIT NOW, one of Gideon's main missions was to create a sustainable business. Worldwide, there is an estimated 40 million dollars of electronic waste every year. To

eliminate some of this waste, recycling programs are essential. However, Delaware did not have a single Responsible Recycling (R2) certified IT recycler until NERDIT NOW took on the task. All Delaware businesses who are considering recycling their electronics or already doing so through an out-of-state organization should consider switching. "When you recycle with NERDIT, you are helping to create the next generation of



individuals with key technology skills to earn a living wage and a rewarding career. The program consists of a pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship portion. The former is a twelve-week program that allows participants to earn four tech certifications, qualifying them for most entry-level technology positions. The year-long apprenticeship that follows allows students to earn additional certifications while also gaining valuable experience. Upon completing the program, graduates are guaranteed a job with NERDIT and have the qualifications to make at least \$18 to 20/hr. Despite launching

tech skills, IT careers, and empowered students," explains Gideon.

Sometimes all it takes is the power of one man and one computer to make a difference. NERDIT NOW's impact on the community in the last seven years is tremendous as the company works to close the ever-present digital, income, and wealth divides.

"For us, Delaware is home. We are looking forward to expanding towards Kent and Sussex County soon," says Gideon. "One day, we hope to have a presence in every county and every state so that we can truly say we closed the digital divide in the United States."

# WELCOME New Members



## **ARMSTRONG TEASDALE LLP**

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Wilmington, DE 19806

MOSSGOD Brand was established in 2019 by Founder Arius Bey. While traveling through Jamaica, Arius studied natural healing and it was there that he discovered the power of seamoss and natural healing. This titled superfood has a history of stimulating proper thyroid function, boosting the immune system, reducing inflammation, helping with weight loss, and helping improve digestion issues.

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Social Contract LLC is a woman- and minority-owned social and collective impact consulting firm. Social Contract partners with community, corporate, government, and philanthropic leaders to solve complex social challenges.

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## WEALTH WISDOM GROUP, INC.

www.wealthwisdomgroup.com  
(302) 651-9191

701 Foulk Rd., Suite 2G  
Wilmington, DE 19803

As a financial consultant and lawyer, William Curry is a multi-faceted professional capable of helping people with virtually all their financial needs. "My mission," he says, "is to help affluent individuals and families plan, implement, and manage every phase of their pre- and post-retirement life, ensuring that their Golden Years are just that—truly golden."

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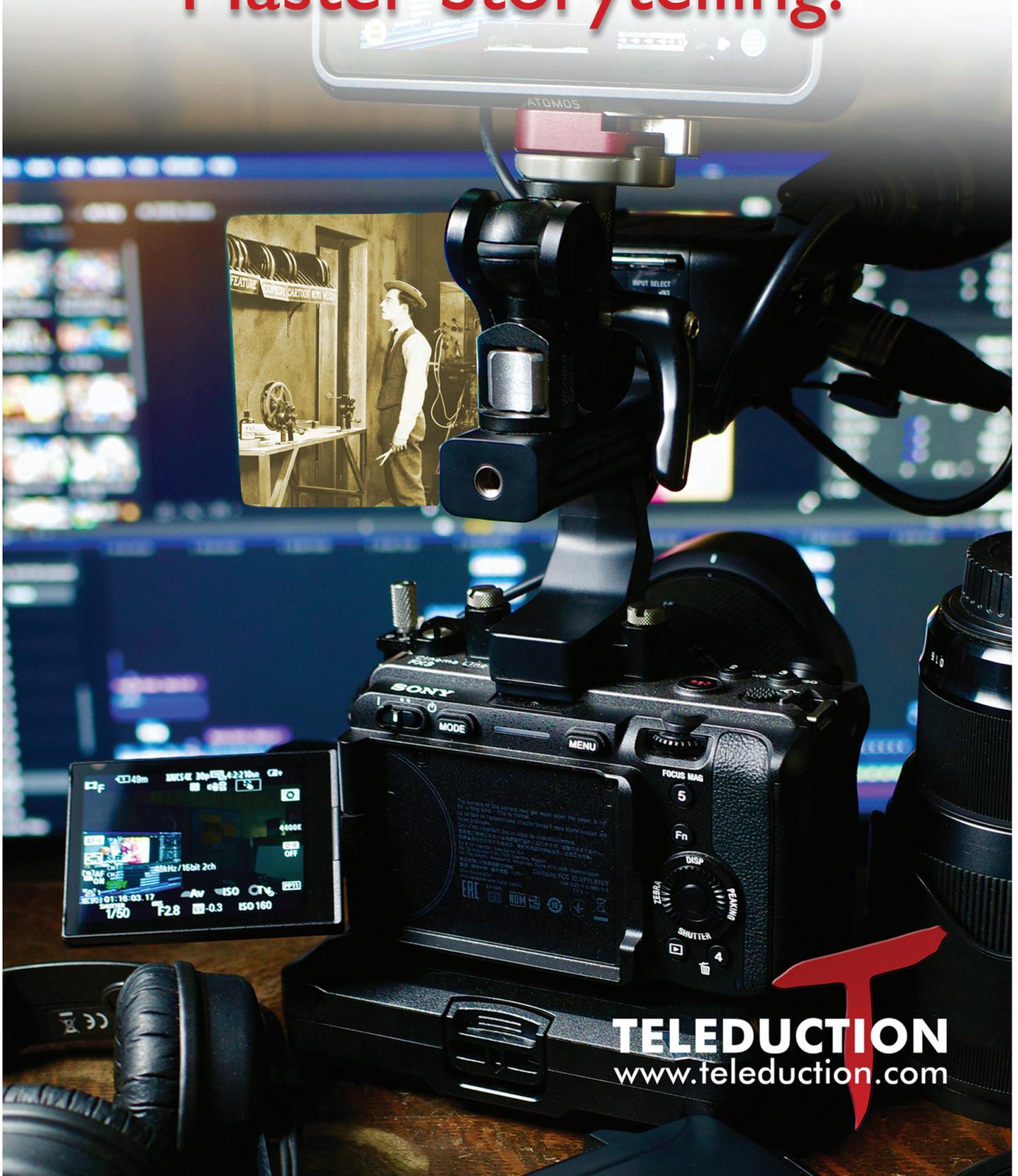
**95%**  
Percentage of Students Who Graduated  
between May 2020 - May 2021

**\$76K**  
Average Salary of Graduates  
Placed between May 2020 - May 2021

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# Superstars in Education & Training

The Delaware State Chamber of Commerce and its workforce development affiliate, The Partnership, Inc., are pleased to announce the 2022 Superstars in Education & Training award winners **PHOTOS BY NICK WALLACE PHOTOGRAPHY**

THERE IS NO QUESTION that a healthy economy requires a strong workforce. A skilled and educated workforce draws businesses to Delaware and encourages existing businesses to stay and expand here. Whether college-bound or preparing for a technical or trade job, individuals must be equipped with the knowledge and skills to be successful. Superstars in Education and Training seeks to celebrate innovative programs that contribute to developing the state's workforce—of today and tomorrow.

Since 1989, the awards program has recognized more than 200 educational programs for innovative and impactful programming. While many go through the rigorous application process, only a handful of winners are selected each year. An award is given to one independent training and certificate provider, a higher education program, and a Delaware high school. Awards of Excellence are also granted to deserving companies.

The 15 members of our selection committee met over the course of

three months to choose our honorees. The rigorous process included reading and grading applications, meeting to discuss the merits of each application, and finally, making site visits for a firsthand look at the finalists in action. Our selection committee returned full of excitement and stories from the site visits.

The 2022 Superstars in Education and Training award winners—all of which exemplify creativity and efficacy in workforce development initiatives—are the Food Bank of Delaware, Year Up Wilmington, and Paul M. Hodgson Vocational Technical School. Zip Code Wilmington was also named an Award of Excellence recipient.

Since 1999, the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce's 501(c)(3) workforce development affiliate, The Partnership, Inc., has been fostering private sector involvement in education and workforce development to ensure the First State has a sustainable pipeline of talent. Delaware Principal for a Day, Superstars in Education and Training, Intern Delaware, and the Delaware Young Professionals Network are the four flagship programs.



# Congratulations

Congratulations to each of the 2022 Superstars in Education award winners! Your innovative, educational programs have incredible impact on thousands of children and adults. Bank of America celebrates you! Thank you for all you do in Delaware.

Visit us at [bankofamerica.com/delaware](https://bankofamerica.com/delaware).



## 2022 WINNERS

### FOOD BANK OF DELAWARE

#### Independent Training and Certificate Provider

The Food Bank of Delaware’s job skills training programs—The Culinary School and LOGIC—serve unemployed and under-employed adults with barriers to employment and is a recognized trade school by the Delaware Department of Education. Since 2002, The Culinary School (TCS) allows participants to enter a 14-week program to learn basic and high-end kitchen skills and become ServSafe® certified. In its third year of operation, The Logistics, Operations, General Warehousing and Inventory Control (LOGIC) training program prepares students for careers in warehousing/logistics industry through an 11-week course where they receive an OSHA-10 General Industry certificate and a forklift certification upon completion.



### YEAR UP WILMINGTON

#### Higher Education

Year Up Wilmington, in collaboration with Wilmington University, works to close the opportunity divide by empowering young adults with the skills, experiences, and support to reach their potential and have living wage careers. The program’s evidence-based workforce development program prepares young adults for professional and personal success. Serving individuals ages 18-24, the year-long program provides students hands-on training for industry-specific, middle-skill roles and an internship with Wilmington’s leading employers—many of which turn into job offers. Additionally, all students receive comprehensive wraparound support during the duration of the program such as a weekly educational stipend, assistance with personal challenges, and emergency funds for urgent hardships like food, child care, and housing needs.

### PAUL M. HODGSON VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL SCHOOL

#### High School

The ACE (Architecture, Construction, and Engineering) mentoring program introduces students to the wide range of career opportunities open to young people in the fields of architecture, construction, engineering, and related areas of the building design and construction industry. Student teams work directly with professionals from leading area firms who volunteer their time to mentor the teams as they design hypothetical projects, tour local construction sites, and visit architectural, engineering and construction offices. In addition to discovering and developing new skill sets, many students form positive relationships with industry professionals who can provide important references for obtaining college admissions, scholarships, internships, and full-time employment.

### AWARD OF EXCELLENCE RECIPIENT: ZIP CODE WILMINGTON

#### Independent Training and Certificate Provider

## 2022 Superstars in Education Selection Committee

**Dr. Rob Rescigno, Chair**  
Wilmington University

**Kelly DeCurtis**  
Pepco Holdings,  
an Exelon Company

**Dr. Lora A. Johnson**  
Delaware Technical  
Community College

**Linda Poole**  
Educationally Speaking,  
LLC

**Patricia H. Smith, Ed.D**  
Holmes Smith Consulting  
Services, Inc.

**Dr. Christine Alois**  
Secretary, Delaware  
Department of Education

**Thomas Fertal**  
Saint Mark’s High School

**Kendall Massett**  
Delaware Charter  
Schools Network

**Kurt N. Schrock**  
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**Tamara Stoner**  
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**Mark Baxter**  
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Delaware Prosperity  
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The Partnership, Inc. is the 501(c)(3) workforce development affiliate of the DELAWARE STATE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

\*As of 4/5/2022



# Closing the Opportunity Divide

Year Up Wilmington empowers young adults with the skills, experiences, and support to reach their potential **BY REGINA DONATO**

TALENT IS DISTRIBUTED equally but opportunity is not. It is an unfortunate reality that affects hundreds of thousands of people across the United States. Due to social and economic inequities, very real systemic divides, and a lack of support, many young adults in underserved communities often find themselves only able to access low-paying jobs with little-to-no benefits. Year Up Wilmington provides these individuals with the chance to rise above this threshold.

“Year Up serves individuals ages 18-24 who are systematically excluded from education and employment opportunities—and are disproportionately Black, Latinx, or other people of color,” explains Peter Lonie, site director of Year Up Wilmington. This one-year workforce development program provides students with the skills,

experiences, and necessary support to reach their full potential and access career opportunities.

During the program, students begin with a hands-on technical training portion for six months, which prepares them for middle-skill roles with leading employers in and around Wilmington. Year Up Wilmington aligns this training to industry-specific needs in fields which desperately need talent. This market research resulted in Year Up including training programs focusing on data analytics, financial operations, consumer banking, and software development. Year Up is constantly re-evaluating these fields to ensure students are equipped with in-demand skills.

After the six-month learning and development period, students earn an internship at one of Year Up’s corporate partners, including State Chamber

members JPMorgan Chase, Bank of America, Sallie Mae, and W.L. Gore & Associates. “The majority of students turn their internships into a job offer, and all earn valuable experience, which increases their access to living wage careers,” says Lonie.

*“Year Up has helped provide me a future that at one point, I couldn’t see worth living.” — Ammanuel Falice*

Year Up has a strong collaborative partnership with Wilmington University, which generously contributes its space, resources, and faculty for the benefit of the program and its students. Throughout their training with Year Up, students are dual enrolled at Wilmington University and can earn 22 credits toward a bachelor’s degree. Receiving credits toward a college degree is a luxury many cannot typically afford; a huge benefit which many leverage to continue working toward finishing a degree.

Year Up also maintains a strong partnership with Zip Code Wilmington—a program that provides technical training in software development, enabling students to enter careers as full stack developers. Students also receive outside support throughout the duration of the programming, including a weekly stipend, transportation, technology, and emergency fund support.

As for the success of the program, the proof lies in the numbers. For Year Up’s January 2022 graduating class, 96 percent of graduates are employed and/or pursuing postsecondary education. Eighty-six percent of graduates are hired into full-time roles pertaining to their training, and the average wage is \$27.56 an hour, or \$54,000 a year. “Despite the numerous pandemic-related challenges, we are proud to see our graduates seizing opportunities for economic stability and mobility,” remarks Lonie.

Since its inception in 2017 in Wilmington, Year Up has served nearly 400 students to date, with an ever-growing number of alumni and supporters invested in growing equal-opportunity communities. “Year Up has helped provide me a future that at one point, I couldn’t see worth living,” says graduate Ammanuel Falice. Year Up has provided that vital second chance to so many worthy individuals.

Year Up Wilmington has earned a 2022 Superstars in Education award in the Higher Education category, a testament to the dedication they have provided to their program graduates. “This recognition truly highlights the tenacity and grit our students display each day as they complete our rigorous one-year program, as well as the hard work of our staff and the strength of our community and corporate partnerships,” says Lonie. “Most importantly, it is a testament to the impact our innovative program is making in closing the opportunity divide and providing meaningful career opportunities for young adults in our community.” ■

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**PaduaAcademy.org/DSCC**



# Laying the Groundwork

Hodgson VoTech High School's ACE Mentor program

turns passions into careers **BY KELLY BASILE**

**LEARNING WHILE DOING.** Hands-on learning with real-life scenarios is one of the most effective strategies for young people to learn the skills and expertise needed for a job. More importantly, it offers the chance to truly visualize what it's like to have a career in a particular industry.

Founded in 1994, the ACE Mentor Program is a nationwide program designed to do just that—introduce students to the wide range of career opportunities in the fields of architecture, construction, engineering, or ACE. Recognizing the need to create a talent pipeline for these industries in Delaware, Cooperative Education Coordinator Chris Moxley brought the program to Paul M. Hodgson Vocational Technical High School in 2012.

Many drafting students come to Hodgson with a passion for design and desire to create, but don't know how to convert that to a career path," explained Moxley. "ACE Mentor connects students with real world

professionals and brings classroom curriculum to life. The connections built as a result can literally change a student's future."

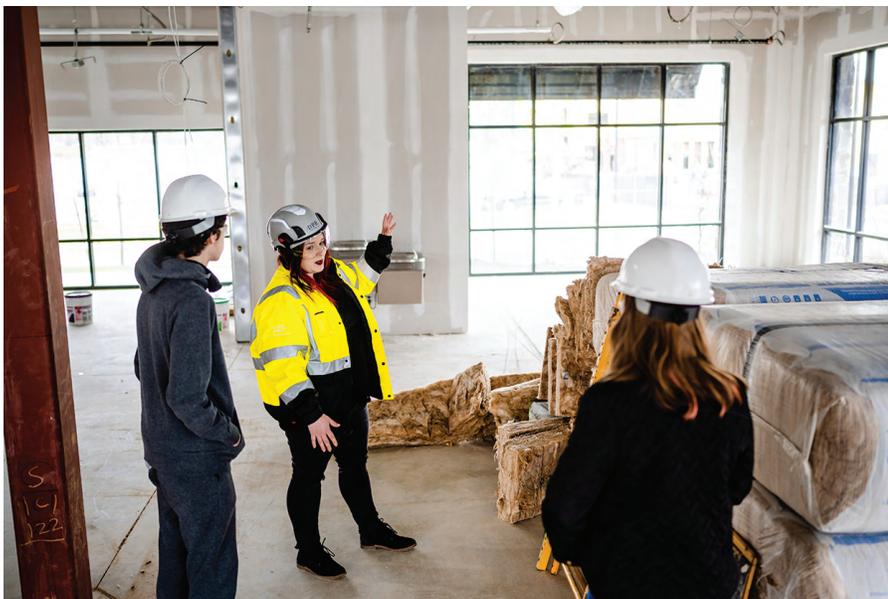
ACE Mentor's mission has two simple goals: to connect practicing professionals with the next generation of their workforce and to inspire high school students to pursue careers in design and construction.

Broken into multi-grade teams, students spend 16 weeks learning the fundamentals of a construction project from site selection to design, procurement, and finally construction. As an after-school program, student project teams meet with mentors once a week to prepare and deliver comprehensive development plans. In March, students present their projects at ACE's Yearly Awards Breakfast—attended by industry professionals, state legislators, school district personnel, and parents. Recent projects examples include University of Delaware student dormitory and

dining facilities, STAR Campus in Newark, a library/community center in New Castle, redesign/additions to our school, and the redevelopment of Barley Mill Plaza, which is this year's project.

For students, it's a unique chance to discover and develop new skills, solidify future goals, and work towards exciting, rewarding careers.

"Students work closely with their mentors on projects that provide hands-on experience in solving the types of design, engineering and construction challenges industry professionals confront every day," said Marc Kilinefelter, technical drafting instructor and ACE program lead. "Our industry professional mentors donate their time and expertise to coach students through hypothetical projects, tour local construction sites, and visit architectural, engineering and construction offices."



With more than 20 companies involved in the program, students gain access to industry experts such as architects; interior designers; landscape architects; mechanical, structural, electrical, environmental, and civil engineers; surveyors, and construction managers.

However, the real-world impact of ACE Mentoring goes beyond completing a project. Students build soft skills in the process—communication, self-motivation, leadership, teamwork, problem solving, ability to work under pressure, flexibility, and negotiation/conflict resolution—which translate to success in any career they may choose.

ACE exposes students to career paths they may normally lack access to in a normal high school setting. The program aids in the effort to expand the talent pool for an industry that needs more diversity. According to ACE, 69 percent of student participants are a minority and over 40 percent are female.

The ACE program is really laying the groundwork for a structure that is a win-win structure to all participants. After spending time with ACE mentors, many students form positive relationships with industry professionals who can provide important references for obtaining college admissions, scholarships, internships, and full-time employment. It also

offers employers the chance to hand-pick the students they think are a great fit for their company.

"ACE Mentoring can really be looked at as an extended job interview for many employers," said Moxley. "Mentors get to know students on a personal level as well as evaluate their ability to complete certain tasks and do a job."

Companies such as Tevebaugh Architecture and Karins Engineering have not only hired co-ops, but they've employed the students full time after graduation, even offering tuition reimbursement for the students to pursue degrees in engineering and architecture.

"Since Delaware does not have a NAAB-Accredited Architecture program, it is important to capture the architectural talent before it leaves our state. The ACE Mentoring program provides the perfect platform to accomplish this by allowing us to collaborate with students passionate about Architecture in a work-like atmosphere," said Shawn Crowley, principal of Tevebaugh Architecture and president of the ACE Mentor Program's Delaware Chapter. "To date we have provided five full-time career opportunities with our longest tenure being Arman Reid, who joined Tevebaugh in 2014 and is now a project manager."

While ACE Mentoring exposes young talent to the many pathways in the architecture, construction and engineering sectors, there are many more industries that could benefit from a similar structure. Dr. Christine Colihan, principal at Hodgson Vo-Tech, shared that "there are so many career paths in health care, for example, where professionals could share their passion and coach students through the process of identifying a need, defining its importance, and then finding solutions to that problem."

The long-term impact of ACE Mentoring can be seen in the number of students that participate in ACE and then eventually go on to join the construction industry. At Hodgson alone, over 25 students have been hired as a co-op student during their senior year as a result of being in ACE. Even more impressive are the number of students whose co-op job turns to offers of full-time employment after graduation.

Superstars in Education & Training programs serves to shine a spotlight on programs that are working—and that's ACE Mentoring. Hodgson is connecting employers of today with their workforce of tomorrow, and changing lives along the way. ■

Interested in becoming a mentor? The right mix of knowledge, passion, and rapport makes a great ACE mentor. ACE mentors are team players willing to dedicate several hours of their time during the school year. Contact Chris Moxley at [christopher.moxley@nccvt.k12.de.us](mailto:christopher.moxley@nccvt.k12.de.us) or Shawn Crowley at [scrowley@tevebaugh.com](mailto:scrowley@tevebaugh.com) to learn more.



# Not a Job, But a Career

Food Bank of Delaware develops career skills for unemployed and underemployed adults **BY COLIN HEFFINGER**

LEARNING VALUABLE CAREER SKILLS can be a tremendous challenge when simultaneously facing the reality of being unemployed or underemployed. These adults are often stuck in a discouraging cycle of the inability to acquire a job that provides enough to sustain their lives and families while also acquiring the skills needed for a rewarding career opportunity. Additionally, they may face other barriers to employment such as caretaker responsibilities, substance use, incarceration, or health issues.

The Food Bank of Delaware, with locations in Newark and Milford, provides two Delaware Department of Education recognized training programs that prepare these adults for meaningful career opportunities through dedicated classroom work, on-the-job training, experiential learning, and continuous comprehensive support. These programs are made possible through the support of funders.

The Food Bank of Delaware's first training program, The Culinary

School (TCS), has been in operation since 2002 and plays an important role as the restaurant and food service industry drives forth Delaware's economy. Under the instruction of the Food Bank's chef instructors, students spend 14 weeks learning basic and high-end kitchen skills as well as the opportunity to become ServSafe® certified in preparation for entry-level jobs in the culinary and food service industry.

The Logistics, Operations, General Warehousing, and Inventory Control (LOGIC) Training Program has been in operation since 2018 and is building from the Operations Department's years of warehousing and logistics experience. The 11-week program prepares students for careers in the industry as well as offering an opportunity to receive OSHA-10 General Industry Certification and a Forklift Certification. The final two weeks of the program provide on-the-job paid work experience at a partner employer or onsite warehouse.

Anna McDermott, senior director of workforce and community

development for the Food Bank of Delaware, shared how the programs are designed to equip students with not just specific job skills but also the soft-skills and confidence to be continuously successful. “We can’t just push students through our programs,” Anna explains. “They must be able to adapt to the demands of the workplace, and our students have been doing that consistently and building success in their new roles. Our students are leaving the programs knowing that they can achieve anything they set their mind to.”

Over the past 20 years, the program has evolved to best serve the needs of the community through those showcased by students. During times of high unemployment, students often need vocational skills more than confidence—while in times of low unemployment, students typically experience multiple barriers to acquiring a career. The impact of other factors such as the opioid epidemic leads to gaps in employment that make it more challenging even when support is needed most. The Food Bank of Delaware adapts its programs to fit these needs and provide the support that helps adults recover from their employment gaps and acquire a long-term career.

*“Our job training programs help adults enter a career versus a job to help them provide for their families going forward. We help people become more food secure today while also planning to secure their needs tomorrow.”*

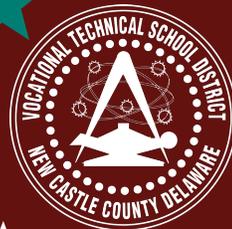
The Food Bank of Delaware has recognized how its programs have become increasingly important over the past two years of the COVID-19 pandemic. “We’ve anticipated that the pandemic repercussions have been critical to those we serve,” Anna states. “Our job training programs help adults enter a career versus a job to help them provide for their families going forward. We help people become more food secure today while also planning to secure their needs tomorrow.”

The Food Bank of Delaware is aiming to strengthen its programs and continue creating new value for students in the upcoming years. “We plan to develop culinary training to support adults with disabilities through new pilot programs,” Anna explains. “We’re also looking to add additional certifications for the LOGIC program as well as designing new ways to develop a strong pipeline of talent directly to employers. It’s important that we keep an eye on what is happening outside of our programs to understand what students are encountering once in the work world.”

“I am grateful to our team who cares deeply about making sure our students have every opportunity to succeed,” Anna reflects. “The Superstars in Education award is recognition of our dedication and student success over the past 20 years. We could not do this without their support, and it is a privilege to contribute and make a meaningful difference.” ■

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#nccvtworks



# One Group's Vision for Student Success

2022 John H. Taylor Jr. Education Leadership Award Winners,  
Marvin "Skip" Schoenhals, Ernie Dianastasis, and Gary Stockbridge

BY MATT AMIS

"THERE ARE SO MANY PEOPLE in Delaware that really have a passion for education," muses Gary Stockbridge, former regional president of Delmarva Power and Atlantic City Electric. "And 80 percent of the stuff we all have a passion for, we all actually agree on."

"But so often today, people spend 90 percent of their time on the 10 percent of the stuff that they don't agree on—fighting. There is so much stuff we can work together on; let's focus on that and let's get stuff done."

Therein lies the ethos of The Vision Coalition of Delaware, a group that Stockbridge chaired, and one of the nation's most enduring public-private partnerships dedicated to improving public education on a state-wide level.

The longstanding coalition has given a space for business leaders like Stockbridge—or Ernie Dianastasis, CEO of The Precisionists, Inc., or Marvin "Skip" Schoenhals, the retired former board chair of WSFS Bank—to work with district superintendents, state-level policymakers, grassroots advocates, nonprofit leaders, and more, for 16 years.

"The concept of trying to transform public education as a businessperson, what would be more important than talent acquisition and retention?," says Dianastasis. "From that perspective, what better way to help than with the farm system, our K-12?"

The Vision Coalition is tasked with helping Delaware create—and deliver on—aspirational, long-term blueprints for modernizing and improving the state's public education ecosystem, so that all children—not just those from well-off families—have a chance to succeed and grow into healthy, productive citizens.

They are the group responsible for Vision 2015, a ten-year plan released in 2005 that was hailed as one of the most comprehensive and coherent education plans in the nation. Vision 2015 focused on nearly every aspect of public education to provide students with greater and fairer opportunities.

"My involvement began really out of a personal conviction to help people learn how to be able to function at the level of which they were

capable,” Schoenhals says. “That they would have the opportunity to get an education that would maximize their potential...It doesn’t take you long to think about...the huge economic impact that that has on society.”

While Vision 2015 earned local and national acclaim, it also set Delaware up for a huge federal windfall. The planning and convening set Delaware up to have the highest scoring plan in the U.S. and to win \$119 million through the federal Race to the Top competition in 2009.

Delaware moved on more than 75 percent of the policy recommendations set forth in the Vision 2015 plan and held annual conferences each year to hold themselves accountable.

As technology and modern approaches began making their way into classrooms, the coalition released Student Success 2025 in 2015 to help inform the priorities of the next decade.

Based on feedback from 4,000 Delawareans, Student Success 2025 acknowledges that, to truly succeed in the future, students will need more than just core academic knowledge. To tackle tomorrow’s problems and excel in the jobs of the future, students will need “soft” skills and attributes like creativity, flexibility, and curiosity.

The goal is for all Delaware students to thrive, accomplish more, and take advantage of expanded opportunities aligned with their unique skills, interests, and abilities. This includes providing support needed for all students to succeed, including students who are homeless, living in foster care, hungry, neglected, physically disabled, cognitively challenged, or learning English. Student Success 2025 has six key tenets:

- The state should prioritize investments in early learning.

## How Have Our Public Schools Improved Over the Last Decade?

- **Early Learning has grown and improved:** 10,000 students enrolled in high quality early learning programs in 2018, a 49 percent increase.
- **More parents are choosing our public schools:** Over the last decade, parents of about 13,000 children have voted with their feet and moved back to our public schools
- **More high schoolers are graduating:** Since the establishment of a sound measure of high school graduation in 2013, we’ve seen a steady increase, up from 80 percent to 87 percent.
- **Delaware is a national leader in Career Pathways:** Starting with just 27 students six years ago, we now have 23,000 students engaged in meaningful work experiences, earning opportunities for industry credentials and early college credits.
- **More of our young people are ready for college and careers:** A big uptick in college credit attainment while still in high school (e.g. 44 percent increase in the number of high schoolers taking dual enrollment courses from SY 2016) and a 43 percent decrease in youth unemployment over the last eight years.



- Schools should harness technology to personalize learning for students.
- College and workforce training should be more accessible after high school.
- The state’s funding system must be overhauled to be more efficient and fair.
- Educators should receive top-notch training and in-school support.
- Schools should work better together towards common goals.

This long-term vision is critical, but the future is here. The commitment of the business community is paying off. More of our young people are attending high quality early learning, coming back to our public schools, completing high school, and getting into college and careers (see side bar).

Back when Skip was the chair of the Vision Coalition, only about a third of our young people were in full-day kindergarten and there was no way of measuring quality across our early childhood providers. Today, all kids have access to full-day kindergarten and there is STARS, a statewide quality-rating system benefiting 10,000 of our youngest learners per year. This took steady, persistent advocacy over a decade.

Likewise, the business community played a lead role in helping catalyze the state’s effort to launch career pathways. By working in partnership with the state, higher education, our schools and nonprofits, Delaware is now seen as a national leader in connecting our young people to a range of fast growing industries. The private sector’s willingness to invest early in this idea helped it grow from just 27 students in 2014 to what will be more than 23,000, or half of our high schoolers, next year. “A lot of it is happening now!” says Dianastasis. “What a wonderful connection point between industry and the kids and schools. If we didn’t have that foundation and alignment laid with the Vision Coalition, it would’ve been a lot harder to get something started.”

The business community needs to continue to be at the table and lead. The hard work of building a world-class system of public schools takes more than any political cycle. These three leaders exemplify the commitment the First State needs to continue to grow and improve. ■



# Delaware

## Department of Education

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**SUPERSTARS**  
**IN BUSINESS**

**Superstars in Business Awards Luncheon**  
Wednesday, November 2, 2022



# WHAT MAKES YOUR BUSINESS SUPER?

This application form is a simple self-evaluation that can improve your business management skills and put you in the running to win the Marvin S. Gilman Superstars in Business Award!

## Step 1 / Self-Evaluation:

- If your organization is a business, please use Form A.
- If you are a nonprofit, please use Form B.

Please answer the questions by completing the application online at [www.dsc.com/superstarsinbusiness](http://www.dsc.com/superstarsinbusiness). Electronic PDFs and paper versions are also available for reference, but your application must be submitted online. Please contact Kerri Welcher at [kwelcher@dsc.com](mailto:kwelcher@dsc.com) or (302) 576-6566 with questions.

## Eligibility:

- In business for at least three continuous years.
- 150 employees or fewer.
- Previous Award of Excellence recipients and applicants that were not selected for an award may resubmit their same application up to three years back.
- Previous Superstars in Business winners may re-apply after five years.

If you would like to be connected with a previous Superstars in Business winner for assistance in completing your application, please contact Kerri Welcher at [kwelcher@dsc.com](mailto:kwelcher@dsc.com) or (302) 576-6566.

## Step 2 / Submission:

All applications must be submitted online. Applications must be submitted to the Superstars in Business Committee no later than **Thursday, July 14, 2022 at 4:30 p.m.** No late entries will be accepted. Please note that materials submitted cannot be returned, but all information remains confidential.

*\*\*Each question has a word count limit. Please follow those word count limits. Applications longer than the outlined limits will not be accepted.*

## Step 3 / Application Review:

Within each category, the finalists may be contacted for additional information or validation of the information submitted. The review made at this step is held in strict confidence.

## Step 4 / The Awards:

Each winner will be presented with a special award recognizing their superior achievement on **November 2, 2022** at a luncheon in the Gold Ballroom of the Hotel du Pont in Wilmington. Marketing and recognition will be given to all the Business Superstars throughout the year.

**Awards may be judged in the following categories** (Please note that categories will be decided upon at the Selection Committee's discretion based on number of entries and quality of applications):

- 1 to 24 employees
- 25 to 59 employees
- 60 to 150 employees
- Nonprofits

Below each question we have provided you with 'Superstar Suggestions.' They aim to help you form more robust answers and provide suggestions on what information may make your response more competitive. These are not requirements, but may help judges compare your business against other applicants. Please answer questions as concisely as possible.



**ENTRY DEADLINE: July 14, 2022 at 4:30 p.m.**

Apply online at [www.DSCC.com/SuperstarsinBusiness](http://www.DSCC.com/SuperstarsinBusiness)

**\*Join us on April 27 at 8:30 am for a workshop on how to best write your application. Register at [www.DSCC.com](http://www.DSCC.com)\***



# Form A for BUSINESSES

Please answer all questions as concisely as possible online at [www.dsc.com/superstarsinbusiness](http://www.dsc.com/superstarsinbusiness)

1. **Business name, address & phone number; primary contact and CEO's name, title, phone number & email.**

2. **450 words: Background information**

- Please describe your business. Superstar suggestion: Assume reader has no understanding of your industry.
- List the number of years in business and briefly explain how your business was started.
- Number of employees and average tenure (Please distinguish between full-time and part-time).

3. **450 words: Please provide your business mission statement and/or business philosophy including core competencies and strengths. How do you align your day-to-day operations to this statement / philosophy?**

Superstar suggestion: Provide your mission statement, vision statement, guiding principles or strategies for success. How is your mission statement communicated to your clients, employees, investors and/or the general public (i.e. word of mouth, through marketing materials, etc.)? Also explain how they were developed – were they customer or leadership driven, and how do you ensure they are understood by your entire company? Tell us here if you have team building meetings, strategy sessions and/or safety meetings that may include a regular discussion on these important guiding statements.

4. **450 words: What are your key metrics and tools and how are you measuring your results? How do you use these to proactively measure your performance and guarantee future success?**

Superstar suggestion: Here is the place to highlight any strategies and measures taken that resulted in savings, stability or growth. You should be monitoring outcomes that are consequence of its operational performance and then serve as predictors of future performance. How do your results measure up to other companies in your industry? Be specific and tell us about innovative tools you use to market or boost sales, which in turn produced a good ROI. Customer loyalty, years of experience, low associate turnover and industry awards are all competitive weapons. We want to know that your business is sustainable and will be around in the years to come. Actual financial metrics (i.e. revenue growth percentage, profit margin, days cash on hand, debt ratio, etc.) could separate your application from the competition.  
\*Remain assured that all information is kept confidential.

5. **450 words: When thinking about your customers, what makes your business stand apart from your peers and/ or similar businesses?**

Superstar suggestion: Please use this question to outline how you identify customer needs and priorities. Tell us if you are measuring customer satisfaction or if you have moved to customer loyalty or customer advocacy. How do you engage your customers? Share with us how you brand your company and how you maintain it (i.e. social media, online networking, marketing campaigns, etc.). Tell us if you have a customer database or process to retain information about customers to use in the future. If you have a formal process for tracking and resolving complaints, please highlight your program here and brag about your results. What makes your business a Superstar?

6. **450 words: A qualified workforce is a main concern for all businesses. How do you recruit and retain your associates?**

Superstar suggestion: What are your key workforce practices and how are they directed towards creating and maintaining a high-performance work environment. How do you determine and meet the needs of your employees? If associate training or education reimbursement programs are a big part of your employee retention program or your quality/safety programs, please tell us about that too. Specific examples are appreciated.

7. **450 words: What recent or current significant challenges have you had to overcome to continue to be a successful business? Identify and describe the steps you took.**

Superstar suggestion: How were the challenges identified and did you anticipate them coming? If they couldn't be predicted, what did you learn for the next time to make the company stronger? For these opportunities, financial or otherwise, how did the leaders of the organization rally and engage associates to adapt to change and meet the challenge? Please list challenges within the past two years.

8. **450 words: Discuss the nature and involvement of your community service efforts from leadership to employees.**

Superstar suggestion: We want to know what organizations your company chooses to align with and why. How in depth is your involvement? How does your owner/leadership's commitment and involvement influence the corporate culture as it related to community service efforts? Describe investments of time, as well as causes supported financially. Highlight efforts regarding care for our environment, care for underserved communities and/or social equality. Do you have a formal program that includes fundraising or service hours donated? Are the commitments or passions you have for certain causes conveyed in your marketing, company brand and culture?



# Form B for NONPROFITS

Please answer all questions as concisely as possible online at [www.dsc.com/superstarsinbusiness](http://www.dsc.com/superstarsinbusiness)

1. **Business name, address & phone number; primary contact & executive director's name, title, phone number & email address.**

2. **450 words: Background information:**

- Please describe the work of your nonprofit.
- Number of years serving the community.
- Number of paid staff and average tenure (Please distinguish between full-time and part-time).
- Number of volunteers and their average tenure.

3. **450 words: Financial information**

List your organization's functional expense allocation as a percentage of total expenses:

Program Services \_\_\_\_\_, Fundraising \_\_\_\_\_, Management & General \_\_\_\_\_

What is the calculation of your unrestricted net assets to current operating expenses? \_\_\_\_\_

How many months of cash do you have on hand? \_\_\_\_\_

Superstar suggestion: To calculate these figures, please refer to your 990 and visit <https://bit.ly/3Jb31qP> which will help with the calculations. Please use the space below to provide a narrative that will help the selection committee understand the strength of your nonprofit's financial position. A well-run nonprofit should meet standards where at least 65% of its total expenses are on program activities. Please explain if your organization's ratio is below that. Also, a well-run nonprofit should avoid accumulating funds that could be used for current program activities. To meet this standard, the organization's unrestricted net assets should be no more than 3x the size of the past year's expenses or 3x the size of the current year's budget, whichever is higher. Please explain any variance from this standard. Examples may be that your organization is planning on a large capital project, introducing a new program or in the midst of a capital campaign and the organization is accumulating funds for that expense.

4. **450 words: Please provide your organization's mission statement and/or philosophy including core competencies and strengths. How do you align your day-to-day operations to this statement / philosophy? Also please provide the number of people or groups that benefit from your organization (Please provide results for each of the last three years).**

Superstar suggestion: Provide your mission statement, vision statement, guiding principles or strategies for success. How is your mission statement communicated to your beneficiaries, staff, board, contributors and/or the general public (i.e. word of mouth, through marketing materials, etc.)? Also explain how they were developed – were they constituent or leadership driven, and how do you ensure they are understood by your entire organization? Tell us here if you have team building meetings, strategy sessions and/or safety meetings that may include a regular discussion on these important guiding statements.

5. **450 words: When thinking about your key constituents (i.e. recipients of service, board members, donors and / or customers), what makes your organization stand apart from your peers and / or similar nonprofits?**

Superstar suggestion: Please use this question to outline how you identify constituent needs and priorities. Are you measuring their satisfaction? How do you engage your constituents? Share with us how you brand your organization and how you maintain it (i.e. social media, online networking, marketing campaigns, etc.). Tell us if you have a database or process to retain information about your constituents to use in the future. If you have a formal process for tracking and resolving complaints, please highlight your program here and brag about your results.

6. **450 words: A qualified workforce and board of directors are main concerns for all nonprofits. How do you recruit and retain both your staff, board members and volunteers?**

Superstar suggestion: What are your key workforce practices and how are they directed towards creating and maintaining a high-performance work environment. How do you determine and meet the needs of your staff, board and volunteers? How often does your board meet and are there term limits? What is the percentage of board members who make financial contributions to your organization? If associate training or education reimbursement programs are a big part of your employee retention program or your quality/safety programs, please tell us about that too. Specific examples are appreciated.

7. **450 words: What recent or current significant challenges have you had to overcome to continue to be a successful nonprofit? Identify and describe the steps you took.**

Superstar suggestion: How were the challenges identified and did you anticipate them coming? If they couldn't be predicted, what did you learn for the next time to make the company stronger? For these opportunities, financial or otherwise, how did the leaders of the organization rally and engage associates to adapt to change and meet the challenge? Please list challenges within the past two years.

# Developing a Skilled Workforce

Business Partnerships + Career-Ready Students = NCCVT

BY JOSEPH JONES, ED.D.

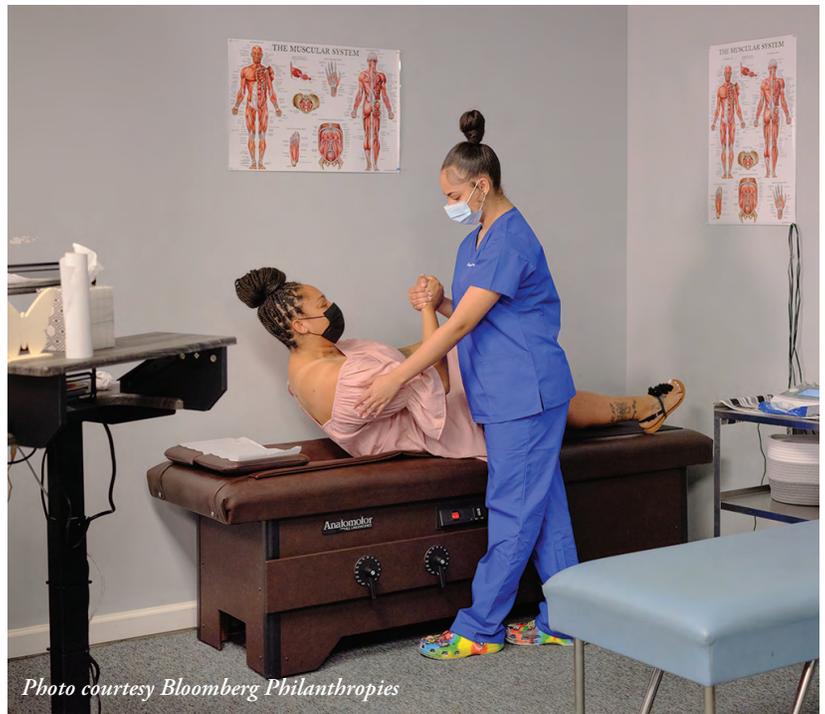
“LEARN - EARN - GET AHEAD” is far more than just a motto for New Castle County Vo-Tech (NCCVT). Covering New Castle County with four high schools—Delcastle, Hodgson, Howard, and St. Georges—the District has a unique purpose, which is not only educating the whole child but also developing a skilled workforce that can contribute to thriving local industries. Knowing that by 2030 all baby boomers will be over the age of 65, NCCVT recognizes the role they play in developing students who can meet many of the needs of local companies: a role they welcome.

With 40 different career programs throughout the district and approximately 1,000 seniors in all four schools, NCCVT relies heavily on their capstone cooperative employment program. After students spend significant time in their career programs during their first three years of high school, the goal is for students to work in a job related to their career program during their senior year. NCCVT is fortunate to have incredible relationships with hundreds of business partners who recognize the value of having students work for them.

As John Gooden, president of M. Davis & Sons, states, “We’ve been working with NCCVT for more than three decades. Over those years, we adopted a longer view strategy to build our workforce by hiring co-ops and graduates and then training them through the apprenticeship program, which also happens to run in their schools. This program has helped us manage the boomer transition as many people who started here as co-ops are now supervisors and managers. The instructors and administration continuously seek feedback from employer partners, which keeps their graduates at the top of their game.”

Through a rich curriculum, state-of-the-art career and technical classrooms, an exceptional staff, and a thriving Adult Education Division, NCCVT’s mission of providing a superior career and technical education enables all students to achieve their aspirations. This mission, coupled with the realization of the state’s workforce needs, clarifies their purpose and helps them stay focused on their “why.”

This can be illustrated in a recent example. As the pandemic continued to cause mass disruption—especially impacting employees—NCCVT was fortunate to have more than 110 senior students working in the health care



*Photo courtesy Bloomberg Philanthropies*

industry this school year. These students filled a critical gap at a time when the need for knowledgeable, skilled health care workers was dire.

The ability to contribute to the community and help during a workforce shortage is what NCCVT is all about. Community and civic responsibilities are values of the District, and having students being a part of a dynamic workforce, earning great wages, and contributing to their own families while growing their skills is the power of NCCVT and a clear example of how #NCCVTworks. ■



**Joseph Jones, Ed.D.** is superintendent of the New Castle County Vocational Technical School District.



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at [hrodriguez@dsc.com](mailto:hrodriguez@dsc.com).*



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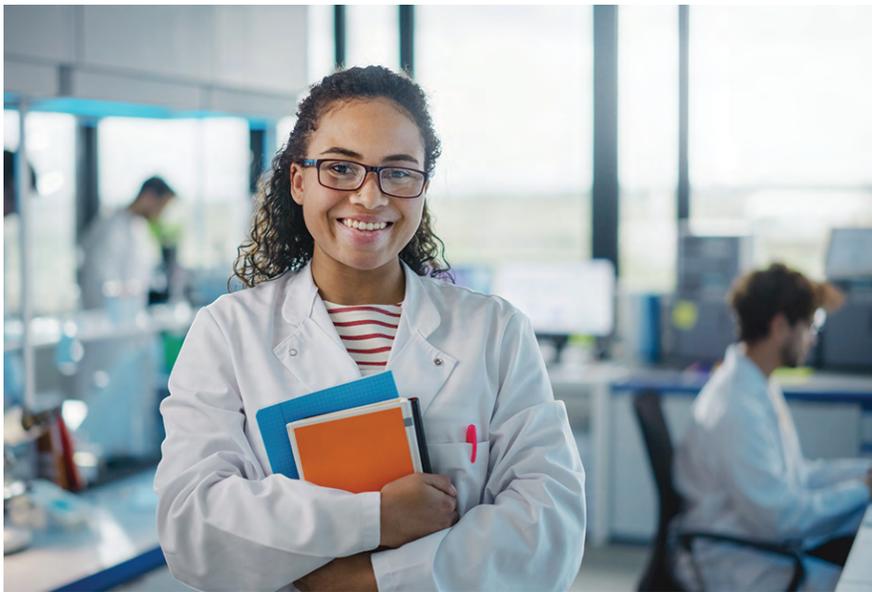
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# Apprenticeships as a Workforce Solution

BY ASHLEY PUTNAM AND KEITH ROLLAND

IN AN EXCEPTIONALLY TIGHT LABOR MARKET, business leaders are contemplating the changes they can make in hiring and developing talent. Research from the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia has demonstrated that this is a unique moment in our economy for workers without four-year college degrees. As companies start to examine their own hiring and talent development strategies, there is an opportunity to foster economic mobility by creating career pathways for nondegree-

manufacturing, health care, information technology (IT), and other industries. Recently, the U.S. DOL funded three industry intermediaries to develop apprenticeships that respond to supply chain challenges in advanced manufacturing, automation, and nanotech/semiconductors. Another intermediary will develop apprenticeships for providers of human services, vocational rehabilitation, and child care. Correspondingly, there has been an increase in occupations eligible for apprenticeships.



In Delaware, Registered Apprenticeships have gradually expanded to include water systems operators and auto technicians, as well as occupations in the restaurant and information technology industries, in addition to continued extensive activity in construction and the skilled trades.

Reflecting growing national interest in high school apprenticeship programs, Delaware is implementing a U.S. Department of Labor grant to enroll 400 youth apprentices in construction, hospitality, and information technology. The state is convening partners and is developing a case management data system for youth apprentices.

Given the impact that apprenticeships can have on growing talent and connecting nondegree workers to the labor market, the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia is exploring the use and application of apprenticeships. In the current shortage of skilled workers, businesses may want to consider apprenticeship as a talent recruitment and development strategy to attract new talented employees and to increase skills of incumbent employees. ■

holding job seekers. One tried and true best practice for both employers and job seekers is apprenticeship. Apprenticeships show good returns on investment for both employers and apprentices.

Apprenticeship can be a pathway to economic mobility, as apprentices benefit from the combination of on-the-job learning and education and the support of mentors. Some employers start apprenticeships as a way to increase diversity in their workforce.

Most of us are familiar with apprenticeships such as those seen in construction and the skilled trades. They allow job seekers to work, learn, and earn at the same time, moving up in both skills and wages as they journey from an apprentice to a tradesperson.

U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) funding during the past decade has fueled a gradual expansion of Registered Apprenticeships to advanced

For sources, visit [www.DSCC.com/DelawareBusiness](http://www.DSCC.com/DelawareBusiness)



**Ashley Putnam** is director of the Economic Growth and Mobility Project at the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia. **Keith Rolland** is a consultant for the Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia.

# Work-Based Learning is an Employer's Gift to Their Future Self

BY BRYAN HORSEY

WHAT'S THAT EXPRESSION you hear so often—build the future you wish to live in?

That's the power of work-based learning for employers. When you offer work-based educational experiences to college and high school students, you are engaging with your future workforce. It provides a rare opportunity to shape your employees by getting to know them early; generating excitement about career paths in your field; and starting to build foundational skills so when the students are hired a couple years later, they are ready to be effective and impactful to your organization.

But employers have a lot going on right now—and frankly, many are overwhelmed by staffing shortages and navigating an unpredictable marketplace. Engaging a future workforce at any level can feel unrealistic when the present is so demanding. Even if there are significant long-term benefits in the balance.

That's where the Delaware Office of Work-Based Learning comes in.

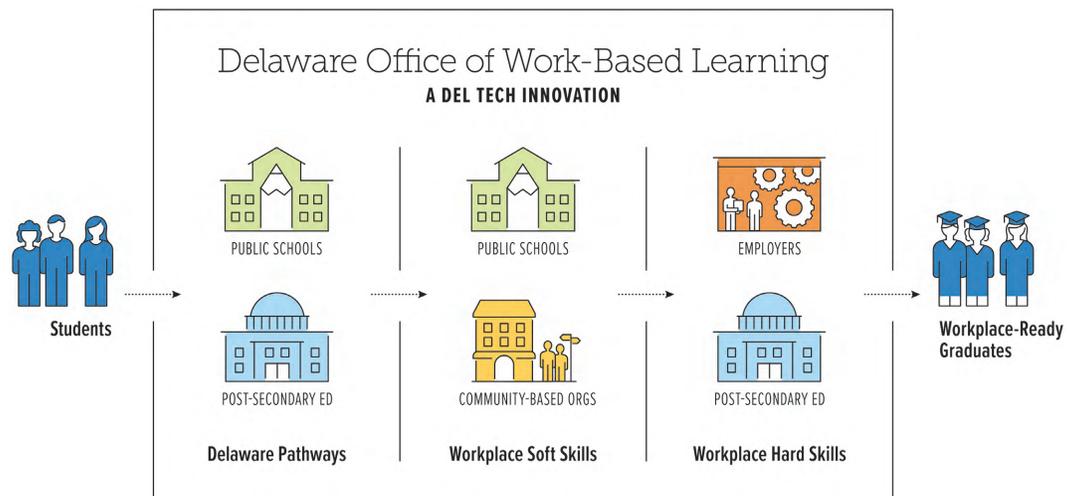
Our office is the state-designated intermediary to support and grow work-based learning in Delaware to aid in securing the state's economic future. Here's how it works:

First, we consult with Delaware educators to understand student needs. Some student needs are very straightforward, like opportunities to participate in mock job interviews or learn about new career pathways through the personal stories of industry professionals and workplace tours. Other needs are more involved, such as receiving outside professional mentoring with a school-based, industry-led project or the participating in a multi-week immersive internship or pre-apprenticeship.

Once the needs are identified, we partner with employers and community-based organizations to design work-based learning opportunities that teach the essential hard and soft skills young people need to secure jobs in high-demand fields. Sometimes this is straightforward, like lining up speakers for school-based career days or evaluators for students' industry

projects. In other instances, our office helps employers build comprehensive, unique internship programs that attract young applicants and establish an employee pipeline for their human resources department.

Lastly, we serve as a matchmaker—connecting Delaware students to employers. There truly is meaningful opportunity for employers to engage with students at any level. And we are committed to ensuring successful work-based learning experiences for all.



At the Delaware Office of Work-Based Learning, we are facilitators, co-creators, and ambassadors. We are building a strong, work-based learning infrastructure across the state so that our industries can thrive with a talented, homegrown workforce.

Our job is to make it easy for employers to engage in work-based learning... because the success of your future workforce depends on student preparation today. Please visit us at [deowble.org](http://deowble.org)—sign up for a webinar or reach out to our team. We'd love to help you get involved! ■



**Bryan Horsey** is the director of the Delaware Office of Work-Based Learning.

# Returning to the Workforce

How returnships can benefit more than companies when done right

BY KEN GLADNEY

THE PANDEMIC HAS SHINED A LIGHT on people leaving the traditional workforce for a period of time, including when and how they will adjust to going back. While people leave the workforce for a variety of reasons, it's important to recognize that experienced professionals have taken extended career breaks long before the last couple of years.

How does a seasoned professional return to the workplace after a break of several years? The list can be daunting as one considers the changes in technology, new regulatory or compliance processes, or recertification. Companies can ease the process by designing a “ReEntry” or returnship program which allows professionals to return to the work environment through an internship.

## Structuring a ReEntry Program

Rewarding careers do not always follow a conventional path. Stepping away from the traditional workforce can often provide those individuals with a new perspective that they can bring back to the office, if and when they choose to return. ReEntry programs allow organizations to provide individuals looking to return to the workplace with an opportunity to join a structured program making the transition as successful as possible.

The program consists of professional skills workshops, on-the-job training, coupled with coaching and developmental experiences to help fellows ramp-up with ease and prepare for a long-term career. ReEntry fellows will refresh their professional and technical skills and be paired with a mentor who will provide them with the support and guidance needed to relaunch their career. The end goal is to place high-performing participants who successfully complete the program into full-time positions within the firm.

## Giving People a Second Chance

One in three Americans have an arrest or conviction record, creating significant barriers to employment and economic opportunity for a substantial number of working-age adults. In supporting these individuals with their re-entry into the workforce, companies can provide new ways for these individuals to contribute to their community and local economies, giving them a second chance to make a difference.

Furthermore, companies can be drivers of change and create greater economic opportunity for more people by using its business resources and expertise—including data, research, talent, and philanthropic



investments—as well as through collaboration with policy, business, and community leaders.

## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is Good for Business

A diverse and inclusive culture for employees and business is important to ensure that everyone feels comfortable and that they have a place to fit in. Through evaluating diverse recruiting practices, training, products and services, and supplier diversity, companies can change their DNA and showcase their diverse, inclusive culture. Incorporating ReEntry and Second Chance programs takes diversity, equity, and inclusion one step further by providing a structured program to help those who have been out of the workforce succeed.

Returning professionals can bring diversity, a fresh perspective, and a wealth of experience which companies can benefit from as well. Integrating returning professionals and providing a second chance can yield benefits beyond just a rewarding career and make a difference in your local community. ■



**Ken Gladney** is executive director and DEI director at J.P. Morgan Asset Wealth Management based in Newark, Delaware.



# Experts Address Manufacturers' Training Needs

National program supports apprenticeship expansion

BY BECKY CALWELL

THE WORD IS GETTING OUT. A Registered Apprenticeship program is a valuable tool for manufacturers looking for ways to improve their recruitment, training, and retention.

Most manufacturers today recognize the critical need for new approaches to building their workforce. Retirements and a tight labor market are making it increasingly difficult for manufacturers to find the skilled people they need. Apprenticeships not only help employers fill entry-level jobs but also provide a way to upskill incumbent workers into highly skilled jobs.

### How it Works

Considered the highest quality apprenticeships in the United States, Registered Apprenticeships last from one to six years and are sponsored by employers, labor management organizations, or other organizations. In order to be recognized as a Registered Apprenticeship, a program must provide approximately 2,000 hours of on-the-job learning and 144 hours of related instruction that applies to an occupation or a specific job.

Participants in Registered Apprenticeship programs receive on-the-job

supervision and mentorship, are paid increasingly higher wages as they progress through their training, and earn industry-recognized credentials upon successful completion of the program.

### Getting Started

Building an apprenticeship program can seem like a daunting task, but Delaware manufacturers have access to experts who can help them develop programs for entry-level employees and incumbent workers. Manufacturers also may qualify for funding to support these programs. National nonprofit, Jobs for the Future (JFF), provides the assistance through its Improving Diversity and Equity in Apprenticeships for Manufacturing (IDEA-M) project. Based in Boston, JFF's mission is to drive the transformation of workforce and education systems to achieve equitable economic advancement for all.

*According to federal statistics, more than 91 percent of apprentices stick with the same company once they complete their apprenticeship.*

IDEA-M launched in 2020 with support from the U.S. Department of Labor, building on JFF's decades of experience with creating and enhancing Registered Apprenticeship programs. Since its inception, IDEA-M has helped hundreds of manufacturers in the development and expansion of apprenticeship programs and enrolled more than 1,000 apprentices.

For companies interested in developing a new program, JFF will help you assess your needs, identify an occupation suitable for a Registered Apprenticeship, and develop an outline of the skills necessary to master that occupation. JFF also assists manufacturers in identifying resources in their own communities to support their programs. For example, the team may connect the employer with the local community college for related training and a workforce agency for financial assistance. JFF also provides guidance on complying with state and federal apprenticeship guidelines and making your apprenticeship program more equitable.

### A Workforce Development Strategy

A Registered Apprenticeship program boosts recruitment by presenting applicants with a clear path forward. Applicants know they are embarking on a career, not just a job. In this way, employers attract applicants who show potential—even if they lack the necessary years of experience.

Apprenticeships also improve and standardize training. Through a combination of on-the-job training and related instruction, apprentices learn both the practical and theoretical aspects to a job. Apprenticeships encourage that all-important knowledge transfer, as a veteran employee guides and mentors the apprentice.

Developing a learning culture pays off for manufacturers. According to federal statistics, more than 91 percent of apprentices stick with the same company once they complete their apprenticeship.

### Resources to Help

Apprenticeships do take time and effort to develop, but resources to support employers are plentiful. Many states, including Delaware, offer assistance to companies that want to establish apprenticeship programs. In addition, the U.S. Department of Labor designated several official "intermediaries" targeting different sectors, including advanced manufacturing.

As an intermediary, JFF offers limited funding to support new and expanding Registered Apprenticeship programs. Manufacturers can use this money to help pay for costs like apprentices' supplies and coursework at local community colleges.

The investment in Registered Apprenticeships pays off. JFF's own research has shown an ROI of \$1.48 for every \$1.00 spent on a Registered Apprenticeship program.

With the abundance of resources, there's never been a better time to explore apprenticeship as a workforce solution. ■



**Becky Calwell** is the senior program manager for the Center for Apprenticeship & Work-Based Learning at JFF.



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# Data Brokers and Consumer Protection

It's Your Data, You Have a Right to Know Who's Selling it

BY REPRESENTATIVE KRISTA GRIFFITH, ESQ.

IF YOU RAN INTO A NEIGHBOR at the grocery store and asked them about creating a regulatory framework for data brokering in Delaware, you'd probably get a puzzled look. But what if you asked that same neighbor if they want to know who's selling their name, address, biometric data, or other information linked to their identity, who's buying up their personal information, and how businesses are profiting off that data? I can tell you that when we put the issues into clear and relatable terms, people get interested.

We all know by now that the modern economy runs on a trade-off of privacy and convenience. But in a world of geolocated data collection tracking our trips to the pharmacy, and shadowy companies hoovering up data to build profiles on each of us, it's hard to know the real stakes of that tradeoff.

Don't just take my word for it. A 2019 study by the Pew Research Center found that approximately 80 percent of Americans feel they have little or no control over how their

personal data is collected, that the risks of collecting their data outweigh the benefits, and that they're concerned about how their data is being used.

Today I must tell my constituents that there's no realistic way for the average Delawarean to track who's profiting from selling the information that fundamentally belongs to that person. House Bill (HB) 262—which I've spent more than two years developing—is a plan to fix that.

While some companies are required to provide consumers with privacy policies, anyone who has ever tried to read one without a corporate lawyer by their side knows how indecipherable they can be—and that's no accident. HB 262 will give Delawareans a clear and concise way to determine who is selling their personal information. Those companies would be required to register with the Delaware Department of Justice's Consumer Protection Unit. That office will then host an easy-to-use website where

consumers can see what kind of data companies are collecting, in what manner they collect it, and how they use it to make a profit.

If a company that sells data doesn't register, the Department of Justice could pursue penalties to bring them into compliance.

Some say we should let the free market decide—that consumers will “vote with their feet” and reward companies who don't misuse their data.

But how can consumers make those choices if they have no way of knowing or comparing how their data is used? HB 262 would arm consumers with that information, making the market a fair place to do business.

I've worked with stakeholders from the technology industry, finance and banking sectors, and groups like the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce to ensure House Bill 262 delivers the information Delawareans have a right to know about their personal data. I've made clarifications, relied on experts, and crafted a piece of legislation that won't place an undue burden on companies that

operate fairly and openly when it comes to data privacy.

When we pass HB 262 and the Governor signs it into law, we can be proud that, in Delaware, we know who is selling our personal data and how it's being used. ■



*The purpose of these articles is to provide the platform for two perspectives to be shared. The views are that of the authors.*

**Attorney Krista Griffith** represents the 12th District in the Delaware House of Representatives.

# Are We Hurting Innovation?

BY MICHAEL J. QUARANTA

IF YOU JOINED ME AT A SHOPPING MALL and we listened in on customers making purchases, we are likely to hear a clerk ask this question, “Would you like to open an account with us, receive ten percent off on your purchases today and sale information before everyone else?” I’ve taken advantage of those offers and many have done similarly. People are privacy pragmatists and have few issues sharing information with businesses provided they get something of value in exchange.

Most consumers cannot describe the Fair Credit Reporting Act, the Gramm, Leach Bliley Act, HIPAA, the DPPA, and a host of other federal and state laws that safeguard sensitive data. They don’t spend time worrying about data collection and sharing practices provided they have options, and the collectors are responsible data stewards.

House Bill 262 was recently introduced and would require all businesses that sell data to pay a fee to the State as well as submit a summary of those lengthy privacy notices on to a state website for consumers to review. The proposal also puts into law a private right of action that allows every consumer the option to sue a company—large or small—if they think information about them was misused.

Studies have shown that consumers rarely look over privacy notices. I also predict the likelihood of people navigating to a state website for this information is even more doubtful. Personally, if I read online about a company and data practices I don’t like, I’ll find a competitor and spend my money elsewhere.

Today more than ever, we learn about issues and events from around the world only moments after they’ve occurred. Anybody watch the Oscars? Most everyone understands that if you bank or shop in-person or online, use internet search engines, or post opinions or pictures on social media, none of that is done without a small measure of risk. Companies have heavily invested in resources to protect customers and data while looking for ways to add value or a customized experience. This is how innovation occurs.

This bill does not obligate the public sector to do what is expected of the business community. I have no option but to give up information to a state or local government if I would like a license to drive, practice law, cut hair, fish, register my dog, or visit a state park. The public sector collects and sells more information about me than any other entity. No options, no disclosures, no best practices, and no information about selling data. To be fair, the Division of Motor Vehicles does offer some customer options, but only because a federal law instructed them to do so.



The Delaware Department of Justice is an enforcement agency. They have no record of consumers complaining or demonstrating harm from data practices. A better option would be to engage with data sellers who do not disclose what they collect, sell, or use. The Department has the ability to do this now, and that’s a better place to start. ■



**Michael J. Quaranta** is president of the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce.



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# Employers Beware

Penalties for withholding paychecks **BY G. KEVIN FASIC, ESQ.**

DELAWARE'S WAGE PAYMENT and Collection Act, Title 19, Chapter 11, mandates that employees receive paychecks, in full and without improper withholding, on a regular pay cycle. Section 1103 allows an employee to recover up to double the amount of wages as liquidated damages if the employer violates the statute. Provision for civil penalties, attorney's fees, and costs of suit appear elsewhere.

Since at least 1965, employers have had a defense built into Section 1103: "If an employer, *without reasonable grounds for dispute*, fails to

whether the agency's 1979 regulation was valid or effective today.

The employer's right to withhold wages without suffering the penalty was upheld by the Delaware Supreme Court in 2006, in *Delaware Bay Surgical Services, P.C. v. Swier*, 900 A.2d 646 (2006). In this case, the employer had a contractual right to recover damages from the employee if they separated from employment before the end of the contract term. The Court, recognizing the authority of *Hollingsworth*, held in favor of the employer. "It has been the operative case law in Delaware since 1969

without intervention by the General Assembly. We view the *Hollingsworth* interpretation of the WPCA as a correct interpretation of the General Assembly's intent."

Currently before the General Assembly is Senate Substitute 1 for Senate Bill 208. This re-write of Section 1103 would eliminate an employer's ability to avoid liquidated damages for withholding wages for virtually any reason, aside from: a dispute about the amount of the wages; deductions required by law; deductions for medical expenses; or if a written agreement exists that allows the withholding. This elimination of an employer's right to withhold wages where the employee has failed to return company property is inequitable and misguided.

While an employer owes a duty to pay an employee for services provided, the employee has a duty to return the employer's property. The unintended consequence? Employers unable to do an exchange of check for property will be forced to file suit to recover property or seek



pay..." In other words, if the employer demonstrates a reasonable basis for disputing payment, it could avoid the double damages. This Section was put to the test in a 1969 Superior Court case where the court determined that a former employee's failure to return company property constituted a reasonable basis for withholding of employee wages. *Pierson v. Hollingsworth*, 251 A.2d 350 (Del.Super. 1969).

While the Department of Labor in 1979 attempted to eliminate the employer's ability to withhold wages—without the double damages penalty—for failure to return company property, it only did so by regulation. Delaware has long held that where regulations are inconsistent with, or conflict with a statute, the statute prevails. *DE State Sportsmans' Ass'n. v. Garvin*, 2020 WL 6813997 (Del.Super. 2020). Having failed to amend the law through the General Assembly, it is an open question

to have the employee arrested and charged with theft. Hardly equitable, contrary to *Hollingsworth* and *Delaware Bay*, and certainly not what must be intended. ■

*Any and all opinions contained in the above article are those of the author. They are not reflective of the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce's official position on the bill referenced in this article.*



**G. Kevin Fasic, Esq.** is a principal at Offit Kurman, P.A.



## What's Your Next Pivot?

### Four ways the pandemic spurred big picture thinking

BY KELLY A. BOWERS

THE ERA OF the Great Resignation is fast approaching its one-year anniversary as it was in April 2021 that an astonishing 4.5 million Americans decided to collectively put in their two-week notices. Even by the summer of last year, many pundits and workforce economists were predicting a new normal outlook for employees. By the end of the year, it was reported that almost 70 million people left their jobs in the U.S., and two-thirds of these resignations were initiated by the employees themselves.

In light of this newfound leverage, in what other ways has the pandemic changed the dynamics of our career pursuits? To dig in, here are four ways the pandemic spurred big-picture thinking among employees.

#### Gaining the Upper Hand

It wasn't that long ago that employers seemingly held all of the cards in the high-stakes poker game of employer-employee relations. At times in the past decade, the job market was exceedingly tight, leaving many to feel thankful just for having a full-time job.

Then came the pandemic, which brought lockdowns, remote work, and hybrid collaboration arrangements. Productivity didn't suffer—in fact, it rose quite notably. And this left employees with an upper hand—the leverage in knowing that their value to the company was suddenly a pri-

mary concern. A great deal of U.S. workers began acting upon it, ready to renegotiate their circumstances with employers who became increasingly concerned with departures.

#### Bargaining Power

In quick fashion, employees began recognizing their newfound bargaining power. Those who didn't immediately head for the exits started negotiating for better terms, including salary, benefits, rewards, time off, and hybrid schedules. Employers responded in kind, conceding to terms that would have been unthinkable before the pandemic.

#### Self-Reflection

As employees gained the upper hand in determining their future, they put this time of self-reflection to good use. Millions of employees took stock in their situation and circumstances and initiated an inward search for more fulfillment. For many of these people, this meant reordering their lives to achieve more happiness. As the Great Resignation rate remained steady throughout the latter half of 2021, it was increasingly clear for many that it was time to chase their dreams and pursue what really mattered. This led directly to...

## More Entrepreneurs!

Statistics don't lie, and the data just released in the International Franchise Association's *2022 Franchising Economic Outlook* report shows some measurable increases for the industry in 2021. The number of franchised businesses rose by nearly 25,000 (+2.8 percent), employment rose by 600,000 (+8.8 percent), and the GDP generated by franchising rose 16.3 percent!

Franchised businesses are much more than French fries and retail. At Frannet, we carry over 250 franchises in our inventory. What's the hottest franchise you might ask? Over the past two years, there have been steady and sometimes dramatic increases in essential service franchises, including both inside and outside the home, tutoring and education services, home health care for seniors, signage services, and consulting services.

These are heady times for the franchising industry, one of the main benefactors of the Great Resignation. This may be a great opportunity not only for you but also for the state of Delaware to bring new businesses and jobs here. If you've had thoughts of owning a business of your own through franchising, I would be happy to help guide you through this process. ■



**Kelly A. Bowers** is a franchise consultant at Frannet.

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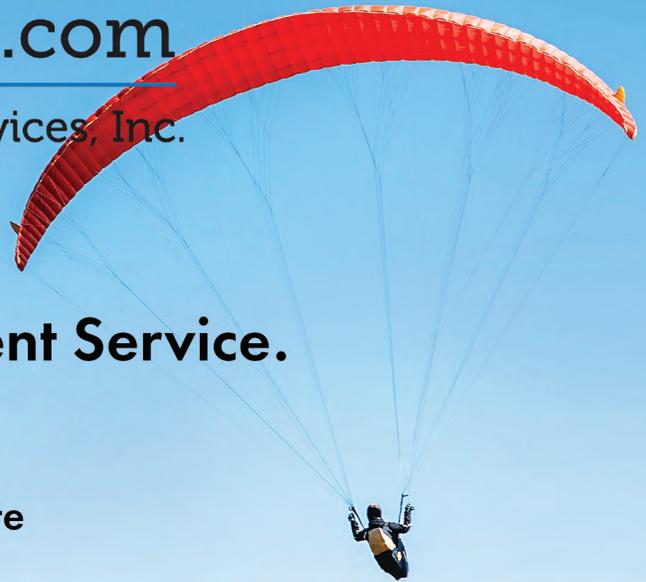
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# Where Science and Creativity Meet

IFF's Health & Biosciences Division delivers diverse health and wellness products and solutions **BY SIMON HERRIOTT**

CONSUMERS HAVE BECOME increasingly focused on effective health and wellness products and 'functional foods' that support health. The global health and wellness market (USD \$1.5 trillion in 2021) is growing 5-10 percent annually. One of the leaders in the global health and wellness industry is IFF Health & Biosciences (IFF H&B). IFF H&B is one of four divisions of International Flavors & Fragrances resulting from its merger with DuPont Nutrition and Biosciences in February 2021. It employs approximately 400 people at its site in Wilmington, including business and functional leaders who manage multiple sub-business units and health and wellness product lines.

Some of the world's most iconic consumer brands, as well as regional and niche brands, use IFF Health & Biosciences' ingredients and solutions. IFF H&B utilizes its world-class bioscience and microbiome capabilities to create ingredient solutions for health care, food and home care. Its product portfolio is diverse and includes enzymes, yeasts, cultures, probiotics, and plant-extracts.

With a focus on health, IFF H&B develops clinically demonstrated wellness solutions including probiotics, prebiotics, and natural botanical extracts used in dietary supplements and food and beverage applications. IFF H&B high-performance probiotics (HOWARU® probiotics) are carefully tested under strict conditions to ensure they provide real health benefits. Each probiotic strain or strain-combination provides benefits including digestive, cognitive, and immune.

The business recently launched a probiotic product, HOWARU® Calm, that has been shown to reduce perceived stress. Stress and its effects on society continue to grow, and the negative impact public health and productivity is well known. In fact, 65 percent of American adults report battling stress. A clinical trial of HOWARU® Calm demonstrated benefits in helping manage the psychological response to stress, promoting mental well-being and helping balance and regulate perceived feelings of stress. The IFF Health portfolio also includes high quality natural health and

nutrition ingredients derived from plants and herbs and backed by science and clinical studies. These products are used in dietary supplements, functional food, infant and elderly nutrition, cosmetics, personal care, and other over-the-counter health products.

In food applications, IFF H&B provides cultures and enzymes for foods and beverages. Worldwide, one out of three yogurts and approximately 50 percent of all plant-based yogurts are made with IFF H&B cultures. Our cultures allow customers to reduce their environmental impact by conserving water and energy and reducing emissions. IFF H&B's cultures also extend the shelf-life of products, reducing food waste. With the use of our food enzymes, food companies can make foods and beverages for healthier diets, including lactose-free, reduced sugar, and fiber enriched products. IFF H&B also improves animal nutrition, health, and welfare with feed ingredients (direct-fed microbials) that enable antibiotic-free and sustainable livestock production.

In home and personal care, our enzymes for laundry and dishwashers help our customers' products break down stains on soiled clothing and dishware, deliver sustainable, lower-cost cleaning through reduced temperature washings, and shorten wash cycle times—all while using less energy and being eco-friendly. Approximately 50 percent of all cold-water wash laundry and dishwashing products in the world contain IFF H&B enzymes.

From its Delaware roots, IFF Health & Biosciences is driving breakthroughs in products and solutions that support the health and wellbeing priorities of customers and consumers worldwide. ■



**Simon Herriott** is president of health and biosciences at IFF.

# Your Health at an Arm's Length Away

ChristianaCare leverages wearables so patients can be healthier and more productive **BY TIM SHIUH, M.D.**

A FEW MONTHS AGO, an 81-year-old man walked out of his home to retrieve his mail when he collapsed from a heart arrhythmia. He fell on his driveway unconscious.

No one was around to see what happened—but the immediate medical response was as if he had a clinical team on standby.

The smartwatch he was wearing detected he had fallen and was not moving. Within seconds, the watch pinged and vibrated but received no response. The watch then activated a 911 call and pinpointed to the man's precise location by GPS. An ambulance was dispatched to his home, where paramedics found him still lying on the ground. Concurrently, his watch facilitated the notification of his daughter—his emergency contact—that he was being transported to the emergency department at Christiana Hospital.

The man was treated and discharged home with a pacemaker. Throughout the entire incident—from collapse to arrival in our emergency department—only 35 minutes elapsed.

As ChristianaCare's chief health information officer and vice president for digital clinical transformation, I work at the intersection between data, technology, and patient care as we innovate and create new ways of providing care that leverage today's—and tomorrow's—technology. As a physician, I also continue to practice and see patients on a regular basis. It just so happens that I was in the emergency department that day, and I had the opportunity to care for this man and learn about his extraordinary case.

Wearables are more and more a part of our everyday life. Smartwatches and fitness trackers are becoming increasingly popular and more powerful. For example, today's Apple Watch can track the wearer's blood oxygen levels, as well as data about heart rate and the heart's electrical activity (ECG). It also can detect falls, as happened for our patient. At ChristianaCare, we've been at the leading edge of integrating the power of wearables into the health care experience.

For example, ChristianaCare patients who own iOS 15 iPhones were among the first in the nation to have the option to share important everyday health information stored in the Apple Health app directly with our doctors. This gives patients a secure way to share certain types of data with their clinician so they can have more meaningful conversations with them.

ChristianaCare patients now can select categories of this information to share with their provider within the Apple Health app, including data like activity, heart rate, cycle tracking, sleep, irregular rhythm notifications, falls, and certain health records categories like labs and immunizations.

By enabling data that originates from digital devices such as Apple Watch and iPhone to be easily accessible within the provider's electronic health record software, a more comprehensive picture is created. And it enables health care providers to easily digest the data and find actionable insights that can positively alter the trajectory of a patient's care. The health care team even can view trends and changes over time in easy-to-read summary charts and choose to incorporate relevant information into the patient medical record.

ChristianaCare historically has been a trailblazer in health care innovation. We were the first health system, well over a decade ago, to deliver ICU telemonitoring across state lines. CareVio, our health information technology-supported care management program, has earned the John M. Eisenberg Patient Safety and Quality Award, the preeminent recognition for excellence in health care in the United States. And our Center for Virtual Health is pioneering new models of care that are powered by data and technology and create an "always on" health care experience that doesn't pause between appointments.

With our leveraging of technology, from telemedicine to wearables, we are leaning confidently and deliberately into a future where all care will be digital—except that which cannot be—and all care will be delivered in the home—except that which cannot be.

The future of better care is at ChristianaCare. ■



**Tim Shiuh, M.D.**, an emergency doctor by training, is the chief health information officer and vice president of Digital Clinical Transformation at ChristianaCare.

# Make the Best Choice

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**➤ To learn more and schedule an appointment, visit [ChristianaCare.org](https://www.ChristianaCare.org).**



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*^*



# What's New in Medical Cannabis?

Less stigma and more edibles

BY MARK LALLY



REMOVING THE STIGMA around cannabis has been a challenge, and First State Compassion (FSC) is proud of the inroads we have made with the state's neighborhood, business, and physician communities.

We've seen the stigma of treatment lessen and the positioning of medical cannabis as a viable component in our health care system accelerate. We foresee a future for the industry that includes more controlled research into the cannabis plant's medical effectiveness as it relates to various diseases and benefits to patients' bodies and minds.

## More Edibles

The option of vaping or smoking cannabis as treatment is not appealing to some patients. This was one reason for the introduction of medical cannabis-infused edibles, offering patients a discreet and tasty ingestion alternative. From chocolate chip cookies to brownies and fruit chews, medical cannabis dispensaries are now making and baking edibles in state-of-the-art kitchens across the country. Among them is FSC, with edible products now available at our locations in Wilmington and Lewes to our more than 10,000 patients.

A great majority of patients have been looking forward to adding the option of medical cannabis edibles to their treatment programs. Many are all-natural products made with real fruits and vegetables, and are lactose-free, gluten-free and vegan. Examples include Betty's Eddies© infused,

all-natural fruit chews in a variety of flavors like grape, elderberry, orange, peachy mango, passionfruit, lime, lemon, and berry. Another is Bubby's Baked™—soft and chewy baked “bite” made from scratch with simple ingredients and full-spectrum cannabis for a popular edible. Favored selections are Brownie, Choco Chip Cookie, and Snickerdoodle.

## Ultimately, a Passage to Relief

When it comes to our patients, we know that each one is on a personal passage to relief. So, by providing edible options, we offer another pathway for patients to feel comfortable in their journey to finding the relief that works best for them.

Whether it's through learning more about the benefits of cannabis or personal experience with edibles, more people are becoming aware that medical cannabis helps alleviate physical and mental suffering. Patients who experience disease symptoms that include pain, nausea, seizures,



tremors, neuropathy, gastrointestinal issues, and more truly appreciate the life-changing benefits medical cannabis brings to their quality of life. ■

**Mark Lally** is the CEO of First State Compassion.

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\* According to the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association.



# Beyond Medicine

## Nemours Children's Health Launches the Ginsburg Institute for Health Equity

BY KARA ODOM WALKER, MD, MPH, MSHS

IN 2021, Nemours Children's Health announced the organization's bold vision of redefining children's health. We shared the evolution of our name and introduced our new logo. We explained that to create the healthiest generations of children, we must go "beyond medicine," beyond what we have always been known for—excellence in pediatric medical care—to reach children where they live, learn, and play.

Now in 2022, Nemours Children's is excited to announce another step toward achieving our goal and making good on our promise to be a leader in advancing health equity for children here in Delaware and throughout our country.

We know that chronic conditions such as asthma, obesity, diabetes, and behavioral disorders represent an enormous proportion of rising health care costs and loss of productivity over a lifetime for children. The social determinants that impact health outcomes in children are often poorly understood, especially in marginalized communities. Can you imagine eliminating avoidable health issues and keeping children healthy in the first

place? Now, imagine a collaborative where those efforts could be synergized, where experts can work together across our health system to radically rethink and remedy these problems.

That endeavor is the Ginsburg Institute for Health Equity at Nemours Children's Health, launched with a generous \$25 million gift from philanthropist Alan H. Ginsburg and the Ginsburg Family Foundation. This first-of-its-kind initiative will advance health equity for children in medically underserved communities by building a world-class interdisciplinary program that goes beyond medicine alone.

Part think-tank, part health-pilot incubator, the Ginsburg Institute will advance Nemours Children's mission by providing the leadership, institutions, and services that are not readily available to improve children's health. It will bring together a team of world-renowned pediatric specialists, behavioral economists, health services researchers, environmental health experts, data informaticists, and other professionals. This collaboration will forge new and innovative programs, engage in national policy dis-

ussions, and provide intellectual and practical leadership through clinical care, research, education, and quality improvement initiatives.

Nemours Children's has had a long history of collaborating with schools, local agencies, and community organizations to support initiatives that improve the health of children in areas such as nutrition, physical activity, flu vaccinations, and literacy screenings. Now we have gone one step further by creating a place to research and test new ideas and to share our findings through local, national, and international publications and forums, and ultimately change how health for children is achieved.

It's a transformative gift. It's a lofty goal. It's a new way of thinking and approaching health. Nemours Children's has served Delaware and its surrounding region for more than 80 years. And while we will always be available to those children who need our care, we are excited to be proactive too. We want to proactively change how we view children's health, allowing all kids to reach their full potential and lead more productive lives. ■



**Kara Odom Walker, MD, MPH, MSHS** is the executive vice president and chief population health officer at Nemours Children's Health.

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# Fighting the COVID-19 Pandemic with Technology Innovations

BY GREG WITHAM



AS THE ONLY COMPANY in the state of Delaware that received FDA Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for its COVID-19 Antigen Rapid Test, ANP Technologies (ANP) has invested years of technical expertise into rapid development of advanced detection technology for fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. Many Delawareans and non-Delawareans have been using ANP's NIDS® COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Test Kits as a part of their efforts to combat the ongoing pandemic.

During January and February of 2022, ANP provided almost one million tests, all of which were 100 percent made in the U.S. to communities, including New Castle County government; Delaware Department of Public Health; private and public schools; local doctor's offices; large companies; hospital networks; 140+ schools in greater Philadelphia and New York areas; many colleges and businesses across the country, especially, vulnerable minority- and women-owned small businesses and nonprofits like churches and schools. All of these efforts focused on helping mitigate the impact of the SARS-CoV-2 virus through rapid detection and screening with the overall goal of safely reopening businesses and schools and jump starting the impacted economy. ANP also provided many free tests to local communities, families, and vulnerable populations—helping to lessen the health, social, and economic impact to these most susceptible populations.

The NIDS® (Nano Intelligent Detection System) COVID-19 Antigen Rapid Test is a rapid lateral flow immunoassay for the qualitative detection of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, from direct nasal swabs. The test is highly sensitive and has demonstrated to be effective at detecting the original strain of the virus, as well as all of the variants of concern (VOC) including Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Mu, Delta, Omicron,

BA.1, BA.2, and others.

The NIDS® COVID-19 Antigen Rapid Test was developed using ANP's NIDS® technology platform that was initially developed for the rapid detection of various biological warfare agents for the U.S. military. When COVID-19 emerged, ANP quickly configured its detection platform to detect SARS-CoV-2 antigen and achieved outstanding performance with support from the Department of Defense and the NIH/NIBIB RADx initiative. With funding from NIH RADx, ANP rapidly acquired and deployed automated, large-scale production lines for producing test kits—scaling up production to more than 100,000 tests per day capacity.

Technology innovation is a long-term commitment. ANP's success in rapid development of the COVID-19 test illustrated the desperate need for government-supported innovation in technology that can provide and maintain domestic manufacturing capability, as well as technology readiness to deploy and combat novel and emerging threats as was and continues to be the case for COVID-19. Unfortunately, as has been painfully experienced by ANP—the lack of coordinated government procurement programs or mechanisms to do so after successfully winning and completing the NIH/RADx initiatives has severely hindered the ability of small businesses to deliver its full domestic manufacturing

capacity and serve the nation when rapid testing is most needed. ■



**Greg Witham** is the executive director of business development & contracts at ANP Technologies, Inc.



## AAA Celebrates 120 Years of Service

AAA marked a milestone anniversary in March that few other organizations have achieved. The original auto club, which has since become so much more, officially marked its 120th anniversary with special events at retail locations across the country, illustrating that the legendary organization is not just surviving, but thriving, as it moves into the digital age.

"As Americans prepare for what could be record breaking travel this summer, AAA will be greeting them with new technology and innovative processes to ensure the best possible experience, prioritizing safety and savings, just as they have been doing for 120 years," said AAA Delaware spokesperson Jana Tidwell. "It only stands to reason that AAA is marking this milestone on March 4th, as America marches forth with renewed enthusiasm for travel."

## Brandywine Valley SPCA Launches Paws for Change

The Brandywine Valley SPCA (BVSPCA) launched the Paws for Change animal assisted therapy program at Baylor Women's Correctional Institution (BWCI) in March. Paws for Change trains owners and their dogs for therapeutic visits to venues such as correctional facilities, youth centers, assisted living facilities, and schools.

Paws for Change dogs and their handlers go through an initial evaluation followed by an eight-week therapy dog training course conducted by Brandywine's canine behavior experts. This training is an American Kennel Club-endorsed curriculum for therapy pets. Members of the public who are interested in having their dog evaluated as a potential Paws for Change therapy dog candidate are encouraged to apply at:

[secure.qgiv.com/for/pawsforchange](https://secure.qgiv.com/for/pawsforchange).

"The partnership with Brandywine Valley SPCA demonstrates our investment in new innovative supports as part of our comprehensive medical and behavioral health treatment programs that meet the needs of our incarcerated population," Delaware Department of Correction (DOC) Commissioner Monroe B. Hudson Jr. said. "The DOC initiated this program at BWCI because we know that animal therapy improves mental health, reduces anxiety, and has other positive impacts. Thank you to the BVSPCA and its volunteer therapy teams for helping us to meet our dual mission of public safety and rehabilitation."

## Short Order Production House Receives Top Honors

Telling 10 unique stories of disability pride, Short Order Production House won



gold at the 2021-2022 Philadelphia Metro American Advertising Awards, known as the ADDYs.

The 10 videos in the Delaware

Developmental Disabilities Council's Disability Pride series were produced by Hannah Geller, directed by Jason Prezant, and edited by Sam Molloy, in conjunction with the Marcella Saborio of Qua Marketing. Gold was awarded in the category of "Branded Content & Entertainment Campaign."

"This project was a gift, lifting our spirits in the middle of the pandemic," said Matt Sullivan, chief operating officer of Short Order and executive producer on the Disability Pride project. "Our job was just to make sure each piece reflected the authentic personality and spirit of the people we were profiling. Their stories and testimony did all the rest of the work."



## New Development Breaks Ground in Frederica

The SpringHill Suites by Marriott becomes the cornerstone of Frederica's newest development, Asbury Square. Located across Rt. 1 from Kent County regional sports complex, DE Turf, Asbury Square is positioned to provide tourists, teams, and locals to a variety of dining, retail, and convenience options.

The 86-room hotel will serve as a

premier lodging option for those visiting Frederica. Its proximity to DE Turf gives visitors an opportunity to stay, shop, and dine closer to their tournaments and games than ever before.

“The vision, foresight, and determination that brought the DE Turf Sports Complex to life has now officially spawned the first of many support services that were designed within the Master Plan to boost the viability of the Turf and ultimately the economic growth and stability of Kent County,” said Michael Meoli, principal of Asbury Hospitality, LLC. “I’m excited, confident, and proud to be principal owner of this hotel which I know will be the catalyst for smart and responsible development that will occur along this part of the Rt. 1 corridor over the next decade.”

The hotel property is expected to be completed by Spring 2023.

## Kalmar Nyckel Foundation Launches New Program

*Five Ways to Freedom: Navigating Delaware’s Underground Railroad Network* is a new classroom program from the Kalmar Nyckel Foundation (KNF) that explores the many routes freedom seekers traveled—by land and water—and the major role of the Delaware abolitionist network. Emphasizing critical thinking and analysis, this program places Delaware and Wilmington at the center of the “Eastern Line” of the Underground Railroad, through which thousands of enslaved people made their way to freedom.

Five important Underground Railroad actors including Frederick Douglass, Harriet Tubman, Thomas Garrett, Capt. Alfred Fountain, and William Still, among other heroes, traveled in the Delaware network. The program focuses on these five historical heroes, five strategic routes and



## More Than 2.6 Million Raised on Delaware’s Giving Day

Do More 24 Delaware 2022, “Delaware’s Giving Day,” raised more than \$2.6 million in 24 hours in March, exceeding the extraordinary amount raised during last year’s event.

Significant milestones for Do More 24 Delaware:

- More than 500 nonprofits supported
- Over \$4.5 million dollars raised in the past two years
- More than 10,000 Delawareans donated to their favorite nonprofits during the 24 hours

United Way of Delaware President and Chief Executive Officer Michelle Taylor said, “Delaware, we did it again! United Way of Delaware is proud to partner with Spur Impact to support hundreds of nonprofits working to make Delaware a better, more equitable place for all. Today, Delawareans showed up for nonprofits that support our community every day and we couldn’t be more proud. Delaware might be small in square mileage, but we’re mighty in many other ways, including the generosity of our people.”

Charlie Vincent, executive director of Spur Impact Association, agreed. “The nonprofit sector continues to persevere through the evolving pandemic economy. We are proud to have played a small role in activating individual philanthropy and helping the Delaware nonprofit sector long after today is over.”

factors, and five modes of transportation that made Delaware central to the escape networks. Five Ways to Freedom reveals the understudied “maritime Underground

Railroad,” which allowed people to find freedom by ships and boats.

“We are offering this program at no cost to Delaware students during 2022, thanks

# Newsbites

to a generous grant from The Chichester duPont Foundation,” explained KNF Director of Education and Senior Historian Sam Heed. “Our goal is to have students engage critically with real-life stories and problem-solving from this pivotal chapter of American history.”

KNF will bring trained educators to schools and community centers to facilitate this lesson with a traveling display and printed materials. To schedule a Five Ways to Freedom program, educators may visit [KalmarNyckel.org](http://KalmarNyckel.org) and contact Marygrace Kennedy at [edu@KalmarNyckel.org](mailto:edu@KalmarNyckel.org).

## Nickle Electrical Honored by ABC

Nickle Electrical Companies was ranked 95th on Associated Builders and Contractors’ 2022 *Top Performers* list, which ranks its commercial and industrial contractor members that build long-lasting, high-quality construction projects across the country, by work hours. The *Top Performers* list recognizes the top 200 organizations overall.

Nickle was also ranked 43rd on ABC’s *Top Trade Contractors* list and 21st on

ABC’s *Top Electrical Contractors* list.

“It’s truly an honor to be recognized on such a prestigious list,” said Nickle Vice President of Operations Jeromy Newton. “A big thank you goes out to all the men and women at Nickle whose hard work and dedication to safety and quality made this possible.”

## Middletown YMCA construction begins

The YMCA of Delaware is excited to announce that construction has begun on the Middletown YMCA in the vicinity of Silver Lake.

“This project, which would not be possible without the significant support from the town of Middletown and the State of Delaware, will have the power to fuel economic development, improve community health outcomes, empower youth, and bring people from all walks of life together,” said Jim Kelly, YMCA of Delaware interim CEO.

With Middletown being one of the fastest-growing communities in Delaware, the Y anticipates serving 15,000 individuals annually through membership, community-based



programs, before and after school enrichment, youth sports and summer camp. The YMCA’s

academic enrichment and college readiness programs will prepare teens to become competent and successful adults, and pre-teen and teen mentorship programs will support substance abuse prevention. In addition, the Y will bring 300 new, local jobs to the Middletown area, providing a workforce development pathway for many first-time job seekers.

“YMCAs across the state have a proven history of uniting communities and providing critical services and support to individuals and families,” said Middletown Mayor Kenneth Branner. “Middletown needs and deserves a full state-of-the-art Y, and I am so glad to see years of planning and hard work finally becoming reality.”

## MySherpa Celebrates 20 Years

In March, MySherpa, a leading Philadelphia, Delaware, South Jersey, and Northern Maryland guide to managed IT services for small and medium-sized businesses, celebrated 20 years serving as trusted client advisors. For two decades, the company’s team has gone the route of the Sherpas of yore—providing vision, commitment, ongoing assessment, and guidance along every step of the journey toward the peak of digital transformation, employee enablement, and optimized operations.

“MySherpa will always stand by the notion that being a great business partner consists of deep understanding of their business and holding ourselves accountable to the results we plan together,” said Greg Gurev, head sherpa.

## ChristianaCare Ranked a Top Health System to Work For by Forbes

For the second consecutive year, ChristianaCare ranked as the 29th best health system overall, within *Forbes*’ list of the 500 best large employers in the United States. ChristianaCare was the only health system in Delaware to make *Forbes*’ list.

“At ChristianaCare, we anticipate the needs of others, help with compassion and generosity, and show respect to everyone,” said Neil Jasani, M.D., MBA, FACEP, chief people officer at ChristianaCare. “These values and behaviors start with our workforce, as we create a supportive environment that enables our caregivers to find joy in their work and provide consistently excellent care to everyone we serve.”

While the pandemic has taken a significant toll on the health care workforce nationally, ChristianaCare has been recognized for its success in supporting its caregivers.

Did you miss the Chamber Chatter online? Here are our most popular posts on social media...

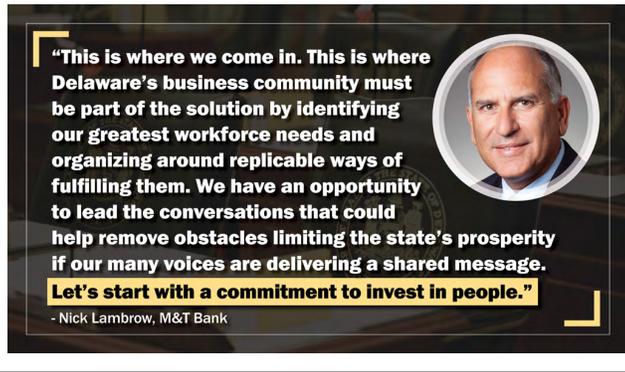
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# ICYMI

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

 **Nicholas A. Moriello, RHU:** With more job openings than candidates, Delaware's business community is well poised to be part of the solution. Thank you **Nicholas Lambrow, Michael J Quaranta** and the **Delaware State Chamber of Commerce** for bringing businesses together to lead these conversations.



**"This is where we come in. This is where Delaware's business community must be part of the solution by identifying our greatest workforce needs and organizing around replicable ways of fulfilling them. We have an opportunity to lead the conversations that could help remove obstacles limiting the state's prosperity if our many voices are delivering a shared message. Let's start with a commitment to invest in people."**

- Nick Lambrow, M&T Bank

**New Castle County Vocational-Technical School District:** We are thrilled to announce that Hodgson VoTech High School has been named a 2022 Superstar in Education by the **Delaware State Chamber of Commerce!** Hodgson has been recognized for its ACE Mentoring Program that introduces students to career opportunities in architecture, construction, engineering, building design, and other related fields. Congratulations to everyone involved at Hodgson and to our business partners, without whom ACE could not exist. [#nccvworks](#) [#superstarineducation](#) [#education](#) [#engineering](#) [#mentoring](#) [#architecture](#) [#tech](#) [#construction](#)

**Patrick L. Mosley, MBA:** I had a wonderful morning meeting with other members of the **Delaware State Chamber of Commerce** hosted by **MySherpa® - Business Technology Guides.** I'm looking forward to the 185th Annual Dinner on April 4th. [#business](#) [#commerce](#) [#delaware](#) [#truist](#)



**@Supt\_Jones:** Powerful conversation at the state & Nat'l level regarding Manufacturing & Policy.



Every industry is in need of highly skilled workers, many could be right out of HS. Great opportunity for **@NCCVoTech** to support local businesses. **@DEStateChamber**

## WHERE DID ALL THE WORKERS GO?

SPRING MANUFACTURING & POLICY CONFERENCE

**Jessica D. Ruggieri:** It was an early event, but the **Delaware State Chamber of Commerce** and **MySherpa® - Business Technology Guides** pulled a nice crowd of individuals representing companies working towards building a better community. What can I say? Free breakfast brings the crowds most of the time!!



**Food Bank of Delaware:** We are **THRILLED** to announce that our Culinary and Warehousing/Logistics training programs have earned a Superstars in Education and Training award from the **Delaware State Chamber!** Read all about the honor here: <https://bit.ly/3pRJpkB>



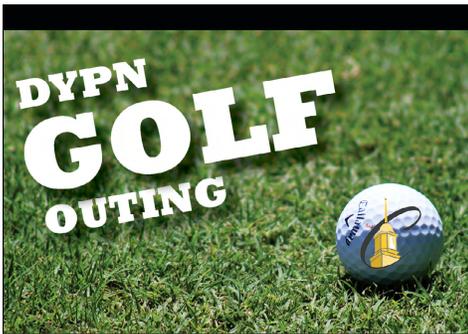
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# WHAT'S NEXT? Chamber Calendar



**MAY 20, 2022**

## 10th Annual DYPN Golf Outing

The Delaware Young Professionals Network will hit the golf course for an afternoon of golfing and networking. Foursomes will include three young professionals and one mentor.

### Nine Holes & Happy Hour:

Young Professionals / Members: **\$50**

Future Members: **\$60**

### Happy Hour Only:

Young Professionals / Members: **\$10**

Future Members: **\$20**

When you think of the Delaware State Chamber, think of

## #NETWORKING

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.com/events

## END-OF-SESSION POLICY CONFERENCE

JUNE 7, 2022 • #EOSCONF

**JUNE 7, 2022**

## End-of-Session Policy Conference

Each June as the General Assembly comes to a close, the End-of-Session Policy Conference updates you on the important initiatives the Chamber has played a key role in shaping. The Brunch also features updates from our strategic partners and a legislative wrap-up from the House and Senate leadership.

Members: **\$75**

Future Members: **\$85**



**JUNE 15, 2022**

## Networking Breakfast at Boy Scouts Del-Mar-Va Council

Start your day by networking outside with business and community leaders at the Boy Scouts of Del-Mar-Va Council's Akridge Scout Reservation in Dover.

**FREE** to attend



**JULY 14, 2022**

## Networking Breakfast at Incyte

Join us for a morning of networking at Incyte, a global biopharmaceutical company focused on finding solutions for serious unmet medical needs.

**FREE** to attend

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# CALL THE CHAMBER

The State Chamber of Commerce staff works for you, serving our member companies and organizations statewide. This State Chamber staff directory lists phone numbers and email addresses, as well as individual areas of responsibility. If you need business assistance or information, please don't hesitate to call.



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The mission of the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce is to promote an economic climate that strengthens the competitiveness of Delaware businesses and benefits citizens of the state. The Chamber will provide services members want; it will serve and be recognized as the primary resource on matters affecting companies of all sizes; and it will be the leading advocate for business with government in Delaware.



Lucretia B. Young  
AARP Delaware  
State Director

## We Must Put a Secure Future Within Reach

As Delawareans, we aren't saving enough for retirement. That is especially true for the 66% of Delaware residents that work for themselves or small businesses without a workplace retirement savings plan. Without decent savings, we will face tough decisions about housing, medicine, and food in our later years. That is why AARP Delaware is working with state leaders to pass DE EARNs to ensure that all Delawareans can have a chance to grow the savings they need for a secure future.

Research shows that many small businesses want to provide a retirement savings plan for their employees but can't due to how complicated and costly it can be. As a business owner, DE EARNs allows you to access a simple retirement option. All you have to do is pass the program's information on to your employees and add a payroll deduction—with zero employer fees, no employer match, and no fiduciary responsibility. And, it will help you compete in attracting and retaining top talent.

We know your employees are the lifeblood of your business. With DE EARNs, your hard-working employees can save for retirement right out of their regular paycheck so that they can take control of their future. They will set up their account, remain in control of it, and retain the account if they change jobs.

The last several years have shown us the importance of being prepared for an uncertain future, including having savings. While Social Security is a critical piece of the puzzle, it alone is not enough to depend on. Now more than ever, small business owners and employees need state lawmakers to make it easier to save for the future. Join us in calling on our leaders to pass DE EARNs now.

If you are interested in learning more about DE EARNs or want to use your voice as a business owner to help make this option a reality, please contact us at [DEaarp.org](https://DEaarp.org)



# Help Delawareans build a more secure future.

## Support DE EARNs.

Even before the effects of the pandemic, too many hard-working Delaware small business owners and employees had no easy way to save for their future. Now more than ever, we need to make it easier to start saving. Luckily, there's one simple way to give every Delawarean a path to save for retirement—passing DE EARNs.

Now is the time to get this done. DE EARNs is good for workers, good for small businesses, and will save taxpayer dollars. That means it's good for all of us.

**Tell your state lawmakers to help all Delawareans build a more secure future by passing DE EARNs.**

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*– Endora Jefferson, Culinary Alumni*

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