

Arts, Education, and/or Culture

Innovation

Leadership

Mary Brobst, RN, MSN—Patient Care Services & CNO, Mercy Medical Center

Mary joined the Cedar Rapids community in 2013 when she became Mercy Medical Center's Senior Vice President of Patient Care Services & Chief Nursing Officer (CNO). Over the past seven years, Mary has rooted herself in this community, not only through her dedication to enhancing the health of Eastern Iowans, but also through her dedication to giving back.

In her time at Mercy, Mary's progressive leadership has ushered in numerous advancements that ensure exceptional patient care. She has spearheaded a new nursing shared governance structure that encourages nurses to be an engaged, active part of influential decisions and played a key role in initiating a nursing strategic plan.

In the community, Mary serves on Board of Directors for Area Ambulance and Big Brothers Big Sisters and is chairing Mercy's participation in the American Heart Association's annual heart walk this year.

Mary approaches her leadership role with a tireless dedication to the success of all and is dedicated to high quality patient care helping fuel numerous initiatives that move Mercy forward and continue it on the path of success.

Carol Dzingle—Senior Coordinator, Leadership & Annual Giving, United Way of East Central Iowa

Through her volunteering efforts and role as Senior Coordinator of Leadership and Annual Giving at United Way of East Central Iowa, Carol has made a substantial impact on the lives of thousands in our community. Within her job, she's had a vital role with United Way's Women United, as well as introducing the idea of a rural outreach program that led to the development of a new food backpack program.

In addition to her work with United Way, Carol sits on several committees and planning groups that address needs within the human services sector and has spent time volunteering for Habitat for Humanity and as a Red Coat Ambassador.

Carol is behind the scenes doing what is right and is a pillar of strength, both personally and professionally. She has a way of blending her experience with newly acquired skills to keep herself and her work relevant, impactful, and successful.

Heather Flemming—People Operations Manager, Van Meter, Inc.

As a devoted community member from a young age, Heather has always been committed to going above and beyond to serve others. Heather was recently promoted to People Operations Manager at Van Meter and will have responsibility for overseeing teams who support the employee experience.

Through Heather's leadership, Van Meter has received recognition spotlights at the local, state, and national level. Her uncompromising commitment to the well-being of fellow employee owners, family, and community has changed, if not saved, countless lives.

She has been extensively involved in the community through a wide variety of volunteer opportunities and leadership roles such as Worksite Committee Member for the Cedar Rapids Blue Zones Project and volunteering for the Boys & Girls Club.

Because Heather always gives 100%, Van Meter, the community, and the many lives she touches are all impacted for the better. Heather's leadership, passion, integrity, and drive ensure that success is achieved when she is leading.

Nicole Hubbel—Principal Business Development Manager, Collins Aerospace

Nicole, Principal Business Development Manager at Collins Aerospace, has truly captured what it means to be a leader in ensuring the achievement of women all around her. Through her kind, collaborative, and innovative leadership style which is felt throughout the entire business, it is evident that she is truly committed to the inclusion and development of others.

In her time at Collins Aerospace, Nicole led a team to re-evaluate their process and accuracy forecasting the annual commercial airlines spares sales, developed a monthly cadence process to review international business development pursuits with the portfolio owners, and was recognized as an example of innovation.

Outside of work, Nicole has served on the Cedar Rapids Women's Forum and the Corridor Women Connect board of advisors, as well as holding many leadership positions within her church.

Nicole is known to be the type of leader that makes people want to do well and exceed expectations, and her willingness to break the mold, remove distractions, and establish new processes has driven exponential growth for herself, the business, and all those around her.

Lisa Lefebure—Vice President, Talent & Organization Development, GreatAmerica Financial Services

In her 12 years at GreatAmerica, most recently in the role of Vice President of Talent & Organization Development, Lisa has exemplified her employer's motto of "Hard Work, Integrity, and Excellence." Resulting from her efforts in developing team members, delivery on successful completion of complex projects, and personal development, she is a three-time Outstanding Achiever winner, the highest award that any GreatAmerica employee can receive.

After spending ten years in GreatAmerica's credit function, she saw a need and made the leap to take the reins of their Talent & Organization Development team where she was promoted to Vice President in just over a year.

For the past decade, Lisa has also dedicated time to the annual Celebration of Agriculture event and is a former 4-H member.

Lisa is never one to stray from a challenge and works tirelessly to make herself and those around her better.

Allison McGraw—Client Services Manager, Ahmann Design

Allison's passion for Architecture and Interior Design started at a very early age. As a teen she enjoyed touring many of the parade homes and pouring over Architecture Design Magazine and worked at a furniture design store throughout high school and college. In 2005, she graduated with an AAS Degree in the award winning NKBA accredited Interior Design program from DCTC in the Twin Cities. After working in the Cedar Rapids area for nearly two years at a high-end interior design firm, she caught the eye of

Ahmann Design and was offered a sales position in 2007. Allison excelled with Ahmann quickly and now handles all Custom Designs and Stock Plan Modifications for the eastern side of Iowa, along with all national and international clients, while leading a team of nine in Cedar Rapids and Des Moines. Allison's approachable personality and ability to incorporate her clients' wishes into their dream home has made her a highly demanded designer.

Allison continues to grow herself and her people. Each year she works with Kirkwood Community College to bring on a design intern and each year has been able to turn them into full time employees. She helped start the A-Team at Ahmann Companies – which is the employee action committee. Allison's energy and creativity helped this team launch engagement activities that helped them win CBJ's Coolest Places to Work in 2018.

Lauri Mitchell—Associate Executive Director, Aging Services

In the five short years Laurie has worked for Aging Services, her commitment and passion have led to her rising from Case Manager to Associate Executive Director.

Along her path to becoming Associate Executive Director, Laurie leaves a trail of accomplishments. To name a couple, in her role as a Program Coordinator, she revamped Aging Services' Volunteer Services and Chore Program, and as a Director of Community Services, she implemented staff cross-training and helped streamline their referral procedures. In her time as Associate Executive Director, Laurie has led the agency in a three-year process to receive CARF Accreditation and was instrumental in the transition of their case management services.

Additionally, Laurie is a 2018 graduate of Emerge Leadership Academy and volunteers at the Cedar Rapids Animeals Program and Linn Area Partners Active in Disaster.

Laurie inspires her team, supporting individual ambitions and representing all that is good in her agency. Through her attention to detail and can-do attitude, she makes Aging Services a great place to work.

Brenda Oehler—Director of Nursing Operations, UnityPoint Health – St. Luke's Hospital

Brenda has served in many key roles during her 22-year tenure at UnityPoint, the most recent being Director of Nursing Operations. In her many leadership roles, Brenda has made numerous contributions, including implementing a program to reduce patients' falls and leading the hospital's transition back to providing its own hemodialysis service. She was also honored with the 100 Great Iowa Nurses recognition.

Brenda demonstrates the characteristics of a true "servant leader" through genuine listening, reflective discussion, and gentle encouragement. She is respected by her colleagues and is a role model when introducing new initiatives focused on exemplary practice.

On top of her impactful work at the hospital, Brenda also sits on the Healthcare Sector Board for Kirkwood Community College, is a 4-H Leader for Linn County, and volunteers at St. Matthew's Catholic School.

Bringing a great blend of talent to her profession as a nurse and a leader, Brenda is a mentor to so many within her organization.

Lisa Rowe—Pivot Real Estate

Prior to joining the Pivot Real Estate team, Lisa managed Old Capital Town Center and served as the Senior Marketing Manager and Director of Business Development for 13 years at Lindale Mall. Lisa also served as the Vice President of Retail for Frew Development Group and as the General Manager for Westdale, a 72-acre mixed-use development in Cedar Rapids. While there, she was involved in every aspect of the massive commercial redevelopment project, raising the assessed value by over ten-fold.

In 2018, Lisa joined Pivot Real Estate, an Ahmann Company, as the Manager of Real Estate Solutions. Lisa's 25-year career in commercial management and marketing has provided her with the expertise and experience needed to lead the Pivot Real Estate team. Her well-rounded background and understanding of each phase of a commercial tenant's needs make her an effective and understanding manager, giving her tenants the best opportunity to succeed and grow their business.

When Lisa isn't working, she is volunteering to improve the community. Since 2006, she has been an Ambassador for the Marion Chamber and the Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance. During that time, she has volunteered her time to the business community by assisting with or helping plan approximately five hundred of ribbon cuttings, groundbreaking, and biz-Mixes throughout the corridor. In 2014, she became part of the Business Support Innovation Council through Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance. Lisa also supports several other community organizations, including Gems of Hope and the Make-a-Wish Foundation.

Jane Shaffer—Senior Director, Consulting Operations, RSM US LLP

As Senior Director of Consulting Operations for RSM, Jane is a fantastic role model and leader who elevates her team to think big. During her ten years with RSM, Jane has been an integral part in the success and growth of the firm's consulting practice.

Her proven track record led to assuming responsibility for the operations function for the entire consulting practice, managing over 2,500 consultants. As the leadership team she reported to grew and evolved, Jane became Senior Director and now has a team of 35, including ten direct reports.

In addition to her advancement within RSM, Jane also received her MBA in 2014 from the University of Iowa, serves on the welcoming committee of her church, and belongs to a ladies group called OOP.

In all, Jane shows exceptional leadership by encouraging her team at RSM to grow without placing a box on their roles, allowing them to show their value to the organization. She is a good listener, honest mentor, and has an unwavering focus of her firm's vision without sacrificing smaller opportunities to influence the character and leadership potential within her team.

Kathy Swift—Clinical Specialist, Mercy Medical Center

Kathy has been a nursing leader in Eastern Iowa for more than 35 years and currently works as a Clinical Specialist at Mercy Medical Center. In particular, through 17 years as a professor of nursing in Cedar Rapids, Kathy's inspiring mentorship has helped other nursing professionals shape their career paths and find their caregiving passions. She has helped build stellar nurses in the community who are dedicated to helping people live their best, healthiest lives.

In her 13 years of service at Mercy, Kathy, with her collaborative spirit, has been an active participant on numerous committees and a leader for a myriad of initiatives that aim to continuously improve the quality and safety of patient care. Additionally, she serves on the Board for the Penn Center, a subsidiary of Abbe Health, and is a Eucharistic minister.

Kathy has received Mercy Medical Center's Catherine McAuley Service Award, was bestowed the Distinguished Alumni Award from Mount Mercy University, and was honored as one of the 100 Great Iowa Nurses.

Whether working on projects at Mercy, presenting on clinical topics in the community, or through her volunteer work, Kathy's leadership as an educator, collaborator, and healthcare advocate is worthy of celebration.

Veronica Tessler—Owner, Yotopia

Veronica Tessler is the founder of Yotopia: Iowa City's Original FroYo, is a co-founder of the Makers Loft, and a producer of Political Party LIVE! She also serves on the Board of Directors for Summer of the Arts, currently serving as the Vice President. In everything she does, Veronica works tirelessly to support causes she believes in. From international peace and security issues to women's leadership and entrepreneurship, Veronica continues to push for equality and greater access to resources for all.

Katrina Turner—Customer Advocacy, U.S. Bank

Katrina Turner is a 25-year U.S. Bank employee who spent 19 years managing the Cedar Rapids Cash Vault. In her time at U.S. Bank, Katrina has won sales contests, led her team to several Vault of the Quarters awards, earned Peak Performance and Performance Plus awards, been nominated for the Circle of Excellence award, and has received numerous Shield recognitions. Katrina was recently promoted to head up a new Customer Advocacy initiative at U.S. Bank.

Passionate about the Marion community, Katrina volunteers for the Linn-Mar School District where she served as PTO President and a Board member for the Linn-Mar Foundation, receiving the Unsung Hero award in 2013 for her volunteer efforts. Other organizations Katrina actively volunteers for include United Way-Day of Caring, Habitat for Humanity, Marion Blue Zones Group, and the Alzheimer's Association.

Katrina is a committed volunteer, mother, and U.S. Bank team member. Whatever endeavors Katrina sets her mind to, she pursues them with a passion and heart to support the people and causes she cares about.

Services to the Community

Emily Blomme—Executive Director, Foundation 2

Through her work as Executive Director at Foundation 2 and her volunteer efforts, Emily works hard to help the community thrive. Emily has grown Foundation 2's financial assets through grants, contracts, and development by nearly 40% in two years and collaborates with several nonprofits and community partners to drive her organization's mission forward.

Outside of work, she serves as the membership chair for the Iowa Coalition for Family and Children's Services, the Behavioral Health Chair for the Iowa Behavioral Health Association, and is an active member of Daybreak Rotary. Her honors include being a "40 under 40" recipient and graduate of Leadership for Five Seasons. Emily consistently demonstrates a "can-do" attitude, is empathetic and honest, and is dedicated to doing what she can to benefit individuals who are struggling with a crisis.

Heidi Brown—Director of Resource Development, Zach Johnson Foundation

As the Director of Resource Development at the Zach Johnson Foundation, Heidi is no stranger to making a difference in the community. As a highly active community volunteer, Heidi doesn't shy away from any opportunity that will impact someone's life. She has volunteered at Xavier High School long since her children attended and was integral in the development of the Dancing with the Saints fundraiser, which has since raised thousands of dollars for the school. Locally, she also assists her parish with church service at an area care facility and is the first to volunteer to help family and friends in need.

Not only is Heidi instrumental in fundraising locally, but she also helps collect a variety of donations to distribute to people, primarily children, in Haiti during an annual mission trip. Whenever Heidi commits to doing something, she is involved from start to finish and gives more than 100%. She is an extremely generous person and is always willing to lend a hand whenever there's a need.

Laura Columbus—Senior Coordinator, Education Initiatives, United Way of East Central Iowa

Laura Columbus is the Senior Coordinator for Education Initiatives with United Way of East Central Iowa. In Cedar Rapids, Laura has been a driving force in bringing together more than 25 organizations across multiple sectors to form Reading Into Success. The goal of this collaborative is to foster literacy and learning for children birth to age eight with their families. With Laura's help, this group has launched several successful pilots and initiatives such as Ready 10, a kindergarten readiness program, a summer reading program called Take 10!, and a community wide second grade reading event called One 2 Read.

Laura has fostered innovation and capacity building, engaging these literacy networks in national learning events and deploying Americorps to fill critical summer learning needs. In 2017, Laura was instrumental in helping Reading Into Success be honored by All America Cities and the Campaign for Grade Level Reading with a Pacesetter Award.

Laura has demonstrated an unrelenting commitment to a better future for some of our most vulnerable residents in our community. She is willing to take risks and confront challenges to do what needs to be done, all for the betterment of our community and its members.

Deb Gertsen—Senior Vice President, Trusts and Investments, Cedar Rapids Bank & Trust

Throughout her nearly 40-year career in financial services, Deb has been very involved in the Cedar Rapids community. At Cedar Rapids Bank & Trust (CRBT), she is Senior Vice President of Trusts and Investments and has received a number of achievements, including founding CRBT's Women's Group, being a top LPL adviser, and being recognized for the Freedom Club or Director's Club annually since 2004.

Using her financial services background, Deb has volunteered countless hours assisting employees, clients, strangers, and friends with personal financial issues beyond their investment portfolio. Additionally, she has coached youth sports, volunteered at many CRBT community events, and served as a volunteer, committee member, and board member for organizations including United Way, Meth-Wick, and America Heart Association Circle of Red because she believes strongly in strengthening this community.

Jean Knepper—Director of Community Relations, UICCU

Jean has selflessly served the community for more than 30 years, spending the majority of her tenure with UICCU as the Director of Community Relations. She has been instrumental in helping the credit union grow and increase its philanthropic impact across the state of Iowa. When she walked through the

doors in 1980, UICCU had 23 employees and \$23 million in assets. Today, UICCU has 492 employees and \$5.3 billion in assets.

Jean has been active on numerous boards and committees, including Big Brothers, Big Sisters, Rotary, United Way, Iowa City Public Library Friends Foundation, and 5224Good. Additionally at UICCU, she heads up the Community Involvement Team, started the Give & Grow Program, and coordinates fundraising, contributions, and volunteer support throughout Central and Eastern Iowa.

She has a vast amount of community knowledge that cannot be matched, and UICCU has thrived as a result of her tremendous expertise and abilities.

Jennifer Lopez—Diabetic Nurse Education, His Hands Free Clinic

Working as a Diabetic Nurse Educator at His Hands Free Clinic and as a community volunteer, Jennifer is passionate about helping people receive health services, regardless of their ability to pay. Sharing her knowledge and expertise, Jennifer piloted the first-ever Diabetes Management and Disease Management classes at His Hands Free Clinic. Working to treat the whole person, Jennifer uses her awareness of the social factors affecting the health of her patients and does what she can to help those in need.

In addition to her impactful work at His Hands Free Clinic, Jennifer has served as a volunteer at Bridgehaven for the past seven years as a client advocate, sonographer, and instructor. She is also the Treasurer for the Kappa Xi Chapter of the Sigma Nursing Honor Society, helps with fundraising, running the soundboard and video equipment at her church, and brings meals to families dealing with illnesses and death.

Jennifer has a giving heart and openly uses her background and wisdom to improve the health and well-being of all her patients.

Kayla Paulson—Senior Coordinator, 55+ Initiative

Kayla Paulson is the Senior Coordinator for the 55+ Initiative at United Way of East Central Iowa. In her role, she works with individuals aged 55 or better to support them in finding impactful ways to engage as volunteers in Linn County. Kayla also serves as an advocate for volunteers, working to develop invaluable partnerships with organizations, schools, and other organizations to ensure community needs are met. Locally, she works with over 400 volunteers each year to help connect their interests with meaningful volunteer experiences.

Kayla is also a tremendous advocate for local nonprofits, pushing for more strategic and impactful volunteer engagement to advance the field of volunteer management. She does this by providing training opportunities for local agencies and coordinating the local Service Enterprise certification effort. So far, Kayla has taken 25 organizations through the national certification process to help them effectively leverage their volunteers to move their mission forward.

On top of being an advocate for community volunteers, Kayla is also an avid volunteer herself. Kayla currently serves as the Vice-Chair for Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) Directors of Iowa, is a board member for ALIVE (Association of Leaders in Volunteer Organizations), and has served in several leadership capacities for the local chapter of Leaders in Volunteerism (LIV).

Lauren Shovein—Marketing Program Manager, Van Meter, Inc.

While working full-time as Marketing Manager at Van Meter, being a loving mother and wife, and maintaining a strong circle of close friends, Lauren makes time to selflessly share her talents in the community. Lauren has a deep understanding and appreciation for giving back and supporting the area where she works and lives.

At work, she is the marketing representative on the Regional Van Meter Charitable Giving Committee and helps with many company-sponsored community initiatives, including the Baby Essentials Drive and the Women of Van Meter Give Back Project. She also sits on the Board for several organizations such as St. Matthew's Catholic Church/School, the Especially for You Race, and the Salvation Army.

The call to help is always answered with a resounding "yes" from Lauren. Bringing energy, creativity, and organization to everything she does, Lauren's take-charge attitude make her a desired member on every planning committee, internally at Van Meter and in the community. She is grateful for the opportunities she's been given in life and wants the same or better for those around her.

Diane Stefani—Vice President of Donor Development, Mercy Medical Center Foundation

Diane Stefani has always been active in the community she calls home. She works as the Vice President of Donor Development at the Mercy Medical Center Foundation, and her footprint can be seen within the hospital, the Hall-Perrine Cancer Center, and the Oldorf Hospice House. Her relationships with key community stakeholders, combined with her fundraising expertise, have turned dreams into reality for the donors and the hospital.

One community event that Diane considers to be at the top of her list for career accomplishments is the Four Oaks Golf Classic. She is particularly proud of creating this premiere golf event that has raised well over a million dollars since its inception and is still going strong. She was honored at their 25th anniversary last June.

She has served on the Board for multiple organizations, including Junior League and Metro YMCA and is currently a member of the Downtown Rotary and Eastern Iowa Planned Giving Council.

Diane has always had a strong desire to make the community a better place, stating, "Volunteering gave me my career path, and then my career path gave me personal fulfillment."

Kim Vaicunas—Yoga Instructor & Wellness Advocate, Veterans Yoga Project

As a Yoga Instructor and Wellness Advocate for the Veterans Yoga Project, Kim impacts the lives of many veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder. Kim is a veteran herself, having served in the Navy, and uses her specialized training in trauma-informed yoga for the military to teach the balance of the body, both physically and emotionally.

Kim has practiced yoga since 2001 and became certified in 2011. Currently, she is a student at Mount Mercy University studying Marriage and Family Therapy and has introduced the practice of Kripalu Yoga to the school as part of their therapy practices.

With a calm presence and life-changing approach to teaching yoga, Kim is making a big difference in the mental health and well-being of local veterans.

Susie Weinacht—Cedar Rapids Mayor Pro-Tempore & At-Large Council Member, City of Cedar Rapids

Mayor Pro Tempore and At-Large Cedar Rapids City Council member Susie is currently serving her second term and works tirelessly to make the community a better place.

As a member of the City Council, Susie has championed a Synthetic Drug Ordinance, which has helped law enforcement get ahead of the ever-changing substance formulas, a “heads-in-beds” financing formula for a regional project estimated to deliver an economic impact of \$20 million, and passage of amendments in city zoning codes lowering the minimum square footage requirements for tiny homes.

She is the recipient of multiple achievement awards and serves on numerous committees, such as Public Safety and Early Childhood Iowa. In her spare time, Susie was involved in a vast number of community organizations, including the Housing Fund for Linn County, the History Center, and Mission of Hope.

Bringing people together on matters of great importance to help move the community forward is one of Susie’s greatest strengths. One of her guiding principles is, “Together We Can,” and she walks this talk in every facet of her life.