

# Leadership Mohawk Valley

## Making Lasting Connections

Over the past ten months, as Class of 2016 members began their journey into their Leadership Mohawk Valley experience, they had opportunities to reflect on important issues, such as philanthropy and trusteeship, art and culture, education, healthcare, technology and local economy; all of which represent ongoing opportunities and challenges that permeate the Mohawk Valley.

It has been a pleasure to watch as these thirty-five leaders built what we hope will be lasting connections with their cohort, as well as LMV alums. Attesting to this, current class members made up nearly 50% of the total attendees at an Alumni Mixer event last November and, more recently, showed their support by filling an entire table at LMV's Follow the Leader Awards dinner in March. Thus, as we close out another successful year of leadership programming, we are delighted to see that the model of leadership to which Leadership Mohawk Valley aspires; rooted in practical and actionable engagement in the community, continues to be carried out and supported by both current and former class members alike.

Now, with that mention of Follow the Leader, it gives us great pleasure to note that of the more than 200 guests in attendance; nearly thirty were former Follow the Leader honorees. What a great turnout! This year the event, which was held on March 23 at Daniele's Banquet Specialists in New Hartford, honored two businesses, as well as nine individuals (typically there are eight) due to a tie-vote (see list on page 2).

Finally, with another graduation complete, we hope that LMV's most recent alums will continue to find ways to remain engaged with Leadership Mohawk Valley, whether by attending an event, serving on a committee, or even providing us with feedback to ensure that LMV can remain connected to each of you, as well as your communities.

Now, as we look ahead to 2016-17, we strive to continue making connections together. If you haven't been involved, or are looking for ways to get involved with LMV, we invite you to contact us at: [info@leadershipmohawkvalley.net](mailto:info@leadershipmohawkvalley.net).

Sincerely,

—The LMV Staff & Board of Directors

## Congratulations Follow the Leader Honorees!

# Follow The Leader

For the 14<sup>th</sup> year, Leadership Mohawk Valley honored individuals for their excellence in the workplace and community, as well as organizations for their outstanding commitment and support of LMV and its programs.

### Individual Honorees:



**Steven Bulger ('14)**  
*Kids Oneida*



**Brandi Candido ('12)**  
*Kids Oneida*



**Michael Hayduk ('10)**  
*Air Force Research  
Laboratory*



**John "Chip" Hemmel, Jr. ('99)**  
*Gilroy, Kernan & Gilroy*



**Rena Hughes ('14)**  
*Rome Memorial Hospital*



**Stephen Karboski, Jr. ('15)**  
*Nunn & McGrath Funeral  
Directors, Myslinski Funeral Home*



**Matthew Nicholl ('15)**  
*Berkshire Bank*



**Aaron Postglione ('12)**  
*Herkimer Area  
Resource Center*



**Jerry Switzer ('10)**  
*The ARC,  
Oneida-Lewis Chapter*

### Business Honorees:

**TEDxUtica**

**The Community Foundation  
of Oneida & Herkimer Counties**



**Congratulations to all of these well-deserving individuals and organizations!**



Past Follow the Leader honorees in attendance pose with 2016 honorees at the Follow the Leader Awards dinner—March 2016

## Program Day Blog

To review the Class of 2016's progression during the 2015-16 year, be sure to check out the

### ***Program Day Blog***

<http://leadershipmohawkvalley.net/program-day-blog/>

Brenda Rogowski ('16) Loan and Deposit Operations Manager at First Source Federal Credit Union shared her LMV experience through her monthly blog:

<http://yoursource.org/?p=1579>



Please join us in reading Brenda's posts to find out how she's doing on her journey!

## Upcoming Events

**June 17, 2016**—Class of 2017 Application Deadline

**August 4, 2016**—Class of 2017 Opening Retreat, BBQ & Alumni Kickball Classic

## Project Fibonacci

Project Fibonacci is the brainchild of ANDRO Computational Solutions, LLC, a small scientific research company located in Rome, NY. Leonardo Pisano Bonacci (nicknamed "Fibonacci") was the famed 12th- and 13th-Century mathematician who "discovered" a branch of mathematics that neatly describes emergent patterns in the realms of science, engineering, nature, art and music.

The inaugural Project Fibonacci STEAM Youth Conference will tightly blend science and art themes through a series of all-encompassing Fibonacci STEAM-themed tracks held during the week-long summer event in Rome, NY. Each day includes a complement of local and regional experts, instructors and authoritative sources on various STEAM topics, changing topics day-by-day. Tours are going to be going to off-site locations, including art museums, scientific research centers, and music production studios.

This is a major undertaking for youth in the Mohawk Valley and beyond, and the Project Fibonacci team needs volunteers! For more information about volunteer opportunities or to sign up to volunteer, contact Evan Drodz at Andro Computational Solutions, at [edrozd@androcs.com](mailto:edrozd@androcs.com).

## LMV Board President

I have to admit that I am feeling a bit nostalgic as I sit here preparing to write my final Board President newsletter comments for Leadership Mohawk Valley. It has been my tradition to warn each new LMV class to be prepared because they are about to embark upon the fastest ten months of their lives. My two-year journey as Board President has been no different; the time has flown by and it is hard to believe that I am already preparing to turn the reins over to a new Board President at our Annual Meeting in June. As with most organizations, it is easy to get caught up with the day-to-day organizational routines. It isn't until you stop and take the time to reflect on what has been done that you realize how much has been accomplished over a relatively short period of time. I have to admit that I've fallen into this same trap as Board President; I've found it easy over the past two years to get caught up in with what we haven't done and forget about everything that has been done. As I reflect on everything that the Board and staff have tackled over the past two years, from contract renegotiation, to 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, to strategic planning, to major changes in our core program...I can honestly say that we couldn't have done much more to position the organization for future growth and success. It has been my great honor to work so closely with each of the LMV Board and staff members and I am excited to see what the future holds for Leadership Mohawk Valley! Just a few short weeks ago, we graduated our 26<sup>th</sup> Leadership Mohawk Valley class, bringing our LMV Alumni network up to over 850 people. This year's class, like each of the 25 classes prior, demonstrated the power of the Leadership Mohawk Valley program. They entered as 35 random and highly diverse professionals and graduated, just ten short months later, united as a group of leaders better positioned to make a difference in the Mohawk Valley. There is no doubt in my mind that this group of alumni will be a force to be reckoned with, creating positive change in our community. It has been my honor to serve in the role at the Board President for Leadership Mohawk Valley. I can say with confidence that my time on the LMV Board, and especially my time as Board President, have better prepared me for my own work with my Board in my current role with The Root Farm. I look forward to continued work with this incredible organization and for great things to come in the future!



Jeremy Earl, LMV Board President

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeremy W. Earl". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

President, Board of Directors  
Leadership Mohawk Valley

## Executive Director Musings...

The LMV office on the SUNY Poly campus is a flurry of activity! People seem to think that, once Graduation is over, we get some time to relax and coast, which couldn't be further from the truth. In fact, we're currently in the thick of recruiting the Class of 2017, our 27<sup>th</sup> class; evaluating individuals that have applied to fill upcoming Board vacancies; planning for our year-end Board retreat and annual meeting; as well as wrapping up the final stages of our yearlong Strategic Planning initiatives before going into implementation mode in the next fiscal year. While there may be occasional lulls in activity for any organization, late spring-early summer is NOT one of them for LMV!



Ann Rushlo, LMV  
Executive Director

This year, we added thirty-five more leaders to the ranks of LMV alumni, and what a year it was! As we continually expand and improve our flagship program, we had first-time experiences this year, such as a narrated walking tour through Utica's historic Baggs Square district, a Griffiss International Airport tour from none other than the Oneida County Executive himself, Anthony J. Picente, Jr., and the opportunity to create individual art pieces during our final program day at Art & Vine (downtown Utica) while learning more about leadership and teamwork. We also added nine more individuals to the ranks of Follow the Leader honorees, bringing the total of honorees to 138 individual honorees and 18 business honorees over fourteen years of that signature event.

People often tell me I have the perfect job, and I do have to agree; I get to connect people with others in their classes and in the community, I get to connect people with other community leaders, and I get to connect people with the leader within themselves (that some didn't know was there!). I suppose it comes as no surprise that one of my top five *StrengthsFinder* strengths is connectedness. Connecting people to others, to leadership, to their communities...that's what makes my role with Leadership Mohawk Valley so rewarding. As I enter my ninth year of developing leaders, I look forward to more of these connections as the Mohawk Valley continues its upward ascent with regards to economic development, quality of life and so many other initiatives we're able to connect LMV'ers to.

So here's to a great year behind us, and a great year ahead of us...and more connections at every turn!

Yours in leadership,

*Ann*



## A Look at Follow the Leader 2016



Stay current with LMV events and information, visit our website at [leadershipmohawkvalley.net](http://leadershipmohawkvalley.net) or contact us at: [info@leadershipmohawkvalley.net](mailto:info@leadershipmohawkvalley.net)

## Join the Network

*The LMV Alumni Network fosters lasting connections and networking opportunities for graduates of the Leadership Mohawk Valley Program*

Membership benefits include:

- one or more complimentary tickets to an LMV event (see membership levels for details)
- access to the Alumni Network database
- access to a private Facebook group for Alumni Network members
- ...and more!

Visit our website at: <http://leadershipmohawkvalley.net/alumni/>



The most recent LMV alumni members  
(Class of 2016)

## Alumni Perspective: Matt Briggs

I first learned about Leadership Mohawk Valley when my new boss came to me and said, “Hey Matt, I want you to go through this program.” I had previously never even heard of a “leadership training program,” but thought that it sounded interesting. Now, five years later, I’m on several committees and also have a seat on the Board of Directors, as well as the Executive committee. I guess you could say I found it to be a rewarding and engaging experience.



Matt Briggs ('12),  
LMV Board  
of Directors

For me, the topic of leadership was an undiscovered gem. I found it so interesting that there had been a lot of thought, study and writing done on the aspect of leading others. Also, there were times when I realized that there were things I’d sometimes thought about randomly; for instance, with regard to my experiences with other people, that I soon found out were actually concepts covered by various leadership topics. The result was that I took to program day material with an enthusiasm and thirst that continues to this day. Knowing that leadership is something that can be taught, learned and applied is something I think we should all take comfort in. Leaders are needed to get things done, and we need to train more leaders to get more things done. It’s really as simple as that.

One of the most unexpected aspects about the program was how much of a bond I built with my classmates. I made many great friends during my time in class and many are still friends today; these several years later. Leadership Mohawk Valley is very much a strong leadership program, but what I think it really offers over other leadership programs, especially those offered as online courses, or even as conferences that are non-local to the community, is local networking. It’s one thing to get leadership training, while it’s quite another to have it synergistically blended with local networking so that the two are experienced as more than the sum of their parts. These two aspects beautifully meld to provide leadership lessons, as well as an outlet to apply them to via working with a team of people from the community on a local project or problem. This is truly a once in a lifetime experience.

Because of my experiences in Leadership Mohawk Valley, I am a more confident person in my day-to-day life and in business. For instance, some of the lessons learned, I apply almost daily. Also, as a result of the program, I was eager to take on a new position as a manager; something I may have shied away from in the past. In conclusion, I think one day I will look back and realize that my time, experience and skills gained throughout the LMV program, and even through my continued involvement with the program after graduation, will be one of the most significant experiences of my professional career.

Sincerely,

Matthew D. Briggs ('12)  
Agent Manager  
Gates-Cole Insurance



## LMV and Oneida County Executive Donate Painting to Remsen School

On April 8, a painting of Remsen native and world-class athlete Erin Hamlin, commissioned by LMV as part of its 25th Anniversary Gala, was donated by Oneida County government and Leadership Mohawk Valley to Remsen High School.

Oneida County Executive Anthony, Jr. indicated that the painting, created by artist Tom Varano of Emotion Into Art, naturally belonged at the school because “Erin Hamlin’s story is a powerful inspiration for all of the people of Oneida County, and we could not think of a more fitting place for this artwork than the school in her home community. We are not all Olympic athletes, but in many ways, every day, people from Oneida County complete against the best and win. This artwork is a reminder not just of Erin’s achievements, but that it does not matter where you come from; it matters if you have that desire to compete and the will to persevere.”

Remsen School District Superintendent William Crankshaw was on-hand to welcome Erin Hamlin and Leadership Mohawk Valley, and to offer thanks: “We appreciate this gift as one more way that we can remind our students of the possibilities that lie ahead of them. Celebrating Erin Hamlin’s achievements and reminding students that

anything is possible with hard work and commitment is part of our mission to pass on to future generations.”

Erin Hamlin is a three-time United States Olympian. She recently completed the 2015-16 season and finished 4th overall in the World Cup standings. This was her best World Cup season of her career, which included two Gold Medals in the Lake Placid World Cup race in December 2015. Erin was a Bronze medalist at the 2014 Winter Games in Sochi, Russia, as well as the 2009 World Champion in Lake Placid. Erin holds the Women’s Singles Track Record in Lake Placid.



Tom Varano of Emotion Into Art holds up the completed Erin Hamlin painting at LMV’s 25th Anniversary Gala, (May 2015)



From Left: County Executive Anthony Picente, Jr., Erin Hamlin and LMV Executive Director, Ann Rushlo



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