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Tallahassee's Top 20 Young Professionals Recognized for Authentic Community Engagement at Golden A.C.E. Gala

Tallahassee, Fla. – The Tallahassee Network of Young Professionals (NYP) announced the winners of the first annual Golden A.C.E awards at a ceremony Saturday at Hotel Duval in Tallahassee. The ceremony was held to recognize the top 20 young professionals that exemplify authentic community engagement, or A.C.E.

“The 20 bright young professionals that were recognized today are truly engaged in our community, and serve as examples of how to be leaders in their fields,” said Rachel Gustafson, president of the Tallahassee NYP. “We hope that they will continue to dedicate their talents to the Tallahassee community, and make our great city an even better place for young people to live, work, play and stay.”

Golden A.C.E. winners in the 20 categories are:

1. **Beauty:** Katie Wright, Founder and Owner, Green Peridot Salon
2. **Communications:** Nikita Graham, Proposal Coordinator, Atkins
3. **Higher Education:** Rachel Sutz Pienta, Professor, Valdosta State University
4. **Education:** Christopher Small, Assistant Principal for Curriculum, Nims Middle School
5. **Entrepreneurship:** Casie Reinholt, Owner, Social Design Group
6. **Sales:** Melanie Lee, Vice President and General Manager, KIA Autosport
7. **Public Servant:** L. Bradford Johnson, Community Relations & External Affairs Aide to the Mayor, City of Tallahassee
8. **Journalism:** Elizabeth Mack, TLH Topics/Multimedia Reporter, Columnist and Host of Limelight Live, Tallahassee Democrat.
9. **Hospitality:** Pam Bauer, Director of Sales, Hotel Duval
10. **Arts & Culture:** Staci Mellman, Director, Tallahassee Film Festival
11. **Finance:** Adam Watson, Vice President, Watson & Associates, PA, CPA
12. **Government Relations & Law:** Jack “Jake” E. Kiker, III, Attorney & Shareholder, WilliamsGautier
13. **Health Care:** Dr. Heather Burch, Owner & Orthodontist, Heather K. Burch Orthodontics
14. **Health & Fitness:** Nick Mack, Owner & Trainer, Renegade Kettlebells and Training
15. **Insurance:** Miriam Watkins, Agent, AFLAC
16. **IT & Computers:** Brian Rode, Owner, Premiere Computers Solutions
17. **Public Safety:** Brandon Mark Cutcliffe, Detective, Financial Crimes Unit, Leon County Sheriff's Office
18. **Real Estate:** Christie Orros, Realtor, Coldwell Banker Hartung and Noblin
19. **Science & Engineering** - Eunice Cofie, President and Chief Cosmetic Chemist, Nuekie
20. **Non-Profit:** Barbara Maria Moro, Director of Student Affairs, Southern Scholarship Foundation

The highest recognition of Top A.C.E. was awarded to Barbara Maria Moro, who works at the Southern Scholarship Foundation. Barbara selected Oasis Center for Women & Girls as her charity of choice to receive a \$1000 donation from NYP that is given to the Top ACE award winner.

In addition to the Golden A.C.E. winners listed above, the below nominees were also recognized for their dedication to the community. The final nominees in each category are:

Health & Fitness

Nic Ancheta, Tallahassee League Representative, World Adult Kickball Association (WAKA)
Nigel Godfrey, Vice President, Fit & Function/Group Fit Studio

Arts & Culture

Carrie Ann Baade, Assistant Professor of Art, Florida State University
Joanna Thompson, Co-Owner & Manager, Painting With A Twist

Public Safety

Amanda Bailey, Police Officer, Tallahassee Police Department
Ben Silver, Petty Officer Second Class, United States Coast Guard

Education

Shelly Bell, Principal, Cobb Middle School
Kendra Wendeln, Music Teacher, Springwood Elementary

Entrepreneurship

Alex Beltrami, Manager & Co-Owner, Midtown Filling Station
Sam Littlefield, Owner, Gutter Solutions & Water Proofing

Government Relations & Law

French Brown, Deputy Director, Technical Assistance and Dispute Resolution
Florida Department of Revenue
Maria Villavicencio, Public Affairs Director, Pittman Law Group, P.L.

Real Estate

Allison Cartledge, Closing Agent, Manausa Law Firm, P.A.
Carmin Nedley, Real Estate Agent, Community Realty

Hospitality

Jasmine Clemons, Business Development Manager, Shula's 347 Grill & Hotel Duval
Meagan Lagassee, Chef & Owner, Soup Swift

IT & Computers

Jeff Couch, Managing Partner and Integration Engineer, Uber Operations, LLC
Frans de Wet, Managing Partner and Integration Engineer, Uber Operations, LLC

Insurance

Patricia "Sally" Dacosta, Insurance Professional, Rogers Gunter Vaughn Insurance
Lee Martin, Account Executive, Hunt Insurance Group - Willis

Sales

Blake Dowling, Development Officer, Aegis Business Technologies
Mike LePorin, Vice-President, Tri-Eagle Sales

Higher Education

Amy Griffin, Administrative Specialist for Faculty Development, Florida State University, College of Medicine
Christopher Strunk,, Academic Instructor, Florida A&M University, Army ROTC Department

Beauty

Megan Gross, Stylist, Synergy Salon

Science & Engineering

Audra Hayden, Engineer, Environmental & Geotechnical Specialists, Inc.
David Sediles, Design Engineer, Applied Fiber Manufacturing

Health Care

Marc Inglese, Physician, Dermatology Associates of Tallahassee
Heath Phillips, Chief Executive Officer, HealthSouth Rehabilitation Hospital of Tallahassee

Finance

Winn Keeton, Retail Banking Officer and Market Leader, Capital City Bank
Brandon Mauer, Market Leader, Capital City Bank

Public Servant

Alex Kelly, Staff Director, Florida House of Representatives-Redistricting Committee
Jay Revell, Aide to Commissioner John E. Dailey, Leon County Board of County Commissioners

Journalism & Broadcasting

Kristin Ledlow, Television Host, WTXL ABC 27
Lilly Rockwell, Associate Editor, Florida Trend

Communications

Nate Long, Industry Relations Manager, VISIT FLORIDA
Jackie Schutz, Deputy Press Secretary, Executive Office of the Governor Rick Scott

Non-Profit

Tanesha McDonald, Program Manager, Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Big Bend
Carly Sinnadurai, Executive Director, The Sharing Tree

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The Tallahassee Network of Young Professionals (NYP) was established in 2003 to help individuals foster an authentic relationship with the community they call home. The organization is dedicated to making Tallahassee a city where young professionals choose to live, work, play and stay. Learn more at www.TallahasseeNYP.org, follow us on Twitter (www.twitter.com/TallahasseeNYP) or like us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/tallahasseenyp).