

JANUARY 2016

QUARTER IN REVIEW

2015 was a tremendous year for NEXT Professionals to serve our community. Our general membership provided over 180 hours of community service, along with donating over 1,700 items and 46 units of blood. Serving our community is a critical part to the success of our members and of our group. NEXT Professionals made a real impact in the Bloomington-Normal community, and that is something we can all be proud of.

In 2016, we have some exciting opportunities ahead regarding service events. Be on the lookout for more updates throughout the year. Some upcoming service opportunities for the year include a blood drive in April, an opportunity with the West Bloomington Revitalization Project in June, and volunteering at Bruegala in August. There will be more news to come, including a NEXT Professionals-branded service event in October.

If you are interested in getting more involved or have an idea for a service opportunity to be added to our calendar, email the new Service Chair, Travis Huber, at travis.huber@heartland.edu and let him explain how you can help.

2015 was a great year for NEXT Professionals! In October, 15 members joined us at the Olive Bin for a social event, and 20 members were in attendance later in the month for a happy hour at Dr. McKay's. In November, members met for a happy hour at Fiesta Ranchera after volunteering for the Baby Fold's Festival of Trees event. We ended our year with a December happy hour at Dr. McKay's. We're excited for more NEXT members to join us in 2016!

To kick off the New Year, the January general membership meeting program will focus on Igniting Your Passion. First, hear from speakers Joe McDonald and Lisa Hurley on how to find and nurture your passion in 2016. Following the speakers, meet your new 2016 Board who will share why they are passionate about NEXT, what their committees do, and how you can join committees and become further involved in NEXT Professionals.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Looking to get involved in the community? Want to build personal and professional relationships? Get involved at one of our NEXT socials, service projects or monthly meetings!

Speaker Preview

To kick off the New Year, the January general membership meeting program will focus on Igniting Your Passion in 2016. What is it that gives your life meaning? Joe McDonald and Lisa Hurley will help you tune into the skills, experiences, and interests that ignite your sense of passion. Learn what it means to have passion and how it can change the way you live and work. Explore your own passions and learn some practical steps to start cultivating more passion in your life today. Following Joe and Lisa, meet your new 2016 board who will share why they are passionate about NEXT, what their committees do, and how you can join committees and become involved.

January

- | | |
|------|--|
| 1/21 | Happy Hour Networking
Time & Location: 5:00 p.m. at Dr. McKay's (909 N. Hershey Rd. in Bloomington) |
| 1/26 | Ignite Your Passion: Board Networking
Speaker: Joe McDonald, Lisa Hurley & NEXT Board
Time & Location: 11:30 a.m. at Prairie Vista Golf Course (502 W Hamilton Rd., Bloomington) |

February

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| 2/11 | Happy Hour Networking
Time & Location: 5:00 p.m. at Maggie Miley's (126 E. Beaufort St. in Normal) |
| 2/23 | General Membership Meeting
Speaker: TBD |

IMPROVING QUALITY OF LIFE...

Time & Location: 11:30 a.m. at TBD

March

3/24

Happy Hour Networking

Time & Location: 7:00 a.m. at Coffee Hound (205 W. North St. in Normal)

3/29

General Membership Meeting

Speaker: TBD

Time & Location: 11:30 a.m. at TBD

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: Lauren Hardy



Lauren Hardy is a Development Associate for Easter Seals Central Illinois. Her responsibilities include advocating and bringing in funds for children with disabilities so they can continue to receive services. Lauren plans and coordinates Easter Seal's events to raise money and awareness for the children and families of Easter Seals.

Lauren graduated from Illinois State University with a B.S. and M.S. in Family and Consumer Sciences. She is originally from Woodridge, Illinois and loves to be active. She spends her free time working out and trying new things. Lauren is also a member of the 2016 Class of Leadership

McLean County. She also loves to spend time with friends and family and support local businesses and organizations at community events.

Lauren became a NEXT Professional member in 2015 and is recently serving as the Max in Action Chair on the NEXT Professional's Board. An interesting fact about Lauren is that she is very passionate about sports, and she played competitive basketball all the way up to her senior year in high school.

Quote to live by:

"A goal without a plan is simply a wish."

MAX IN ACTION

Make Your Money Mean More



Introducing Max the Buy Local Bluebird! ... The what? Let us explain!

Who is Max? Max is the mascot for the Make Your Money Mean More campaign. Okay, but what is the Make Your Money Mean More Campaign? This campaign is a McLean County local spending initiative created by the McLean County Chamber of Commerce.

What is the point of the campaign? The goal is to strengthen our community dollars, our local economy, by keeping dollars in McLean County and educating individuals and businesses the benefits of doing so. We can then enable our community and businesses to thrive and pave a way for a successful future in McLean County.

Got it, but what are the specific benefits?

By keeping our dollars local:

- tax revenue will increase, supporting vital needs from education to crime prevention
- employers can support their workforce, keeping unemployment low
- our community will have more stability against unpredictable economic conditions throughout the state and nation

How does this connect with NEXT Professionals? NEXT Professionals will be the home for Max the Buy Local Bluebird! Be on the lookout for Max throughout town. Are you a local business dedicated to the campaign? Let us know and Max can come by for a visit! We are proud to support our local businesses and are excited to educate others to do so. We encourage you to make it a goal to Make Your Money Mean More!

JANUARY 2016

BUILDING PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS...

NEXT OPPORTUNITIES Professional Development Grant

As part of NEXT's commitment to the development of all its members, this grant has been designed to aid in the professional development of NEXT members in association with the McLean County Chamber of Commerce. Professional Development Grants are provided to encourage members' professional growth through financial support (i.e. workshops, professional conferences, higher education courses, seminars, etc.)

Grants are available up to \$150 each within a term year (renewing each January). After review by the Board of NEXT Professionals, grants will be awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. Applicants will be notified of the decision within 30 days of submitting their application.

ELIGIBILITY & REGULATIONS

- Grants are available to any NEXT Professionals member who is in good standing at time of application and time of award of grant
- Member must demonstrate commitment to professional growth
- Funds must be used within six months of receiving the grant
- Receipts will be required to verify grant use
- If you receive a grant, you will be asked to write an article for the member newsletter highlighting the benefits you received from your professional development experience

For more information on professional development grants, please contact Kaitlin Muckey, NEXT past-president, at kaitlin.muckey@hilton.com.

CONTACT US

MEGAN MCCANN
President
memccan@ilstu.edu

JUSTIN BOYD
President-Elect
justin.boyd@countryfinancial.com

KAITLIN MUCKEY
Past President
kaitlin.muckey@hilton.com

JULIE NAVICKAS
Marketing
janavic@ilstu.edu

LAURA KRAYNAK
Membership
lkraynak@plrinsurance.com

TRAVIS HUBER
Service
travis.huber@heartland.com

ERIN SHANNON
Programs
eshannon@cityblm.org

MAGGIE SCHNITTKER
Social
maggie.schnittker@TMIHospitality.com

LAUREN HARDY
Max In Action
lharty@ci.easterseals.com

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CHAMBER UPDATES

Connect Through Upcoming Events

Looking for more ways to get involved with the McLean County Chamber of Commerce and network with other professionals outside of NEXT? Attend Business Before Hours (BBH) and Business After Hours (BAH)! Business After Hours will be held the 3rd Wednesday night each month and Business Before Hours is held the 4th Wednesday morning of each month. Both BBH and BAH are no cost and have no sign up required. See dates below:

January 20: BAH at Hy-Vee, 4:30pm-6:30pm

January 27: BBH at Flat Top Grill, 7:00am-8:30am

February 17: BAH at Marriott Hotel and Conference Center, 4:30pm-6:30pm

February 24: BBH at TBD, 7:00am-8:30am

March 16: BAH at Meyer Capel, 4:30pm-6:30pm

March 30: BBH at Heartland Community College, 7:00am-8:30am

Other Chamber News:

Mark your calendar for January 30th for the Annual Chamber Gala! The Gala will be held at the Double Tree from 5pm-10pm. The Gala celebrates the contributions and accomplishments of McLean County's local business and community leaders.