

# 1BERKSHIRE QUARTERLY ALUMNI Newsletter

BERKSHIRE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

2019 Winter



Pictured: The Class of 2019 at their graduation celebration at Skyline Country Club.

## It's not too late to recommend an applicant for the BLP Class of 2020!

Applications are open until Sunday, December 8th!

Some of our best applicants are recommended by program alumni. Take a few minutes to discuss the program with your coworkers and colleagues and encourage them to apply! The application can be found [here](#).

## JOIN US!

### Alumni Meetup

Tuesday, December 10, 2019

6 PM, Patrick's Pub

Join us for a casual night to catch up with classmates or make new friends. No RSVP required! Just look for us there!

## SAVE THE DATE!

### Networking with the BLP Class of 2020

Friday, March 20, 2020

John Harvard's, Jiminy Peak

Join us for the Welcome Reception as the Class of 2020 wraps up the first day of the retreat. More information will be announced closer to the event!

## 2020 SESSION SCHEDULE

Sessions for the 2020 Class will be held on Thursday evenings from 5:30-9:30 PM on the following dates:

March 20-21	Retreat at Jiminy Peak
March 26	Economic Development Bus Tour
April 2	Community Engagement
April 9	Government
April 16	Workforce Development
April 23	Healthcare
April 30	Education
May 14	Energy & Environment
May 21	Creative Economy
May 28	Leadership
June 4	Commencement

Think you or your business might be able to support one of these sessions with a food donation or as a guest speaker? Contact Jenn Smith, Programming Subcommittee Chair, at [jsmith@berkshireeagle.com](mailto:jsmith@berkshireeagle.com).

## STEERING COMMITTEE UPDATES

Introducing the 2019-2020 Steering Committee Officers!

**Chair:** Catherine VanBramer, Class of 2014

**Vice Chair:** Ricardo Morales, Class of 2018

**Project Liaison:** Krystle Blake, Class of 2014

Are you interested in joining the BLP Steering Committee? The application will be available on the 1Berkshire website in the spring. Contact [BLP@1Berkshire.com](mailto:BLP@1Berkshire.com) with questions.

## BECOME A CLASS AMBASSADOR!

Do you want to stay connected with BLP? As your Class Ambassador, you can help by generating excitement about events, collecting Class Notes for our quarterly newsletter, and keeping contact information up to date! Contact [BLP@1Berkshire.com](mailto:BLP@1Berkshire.com) to sign up!





## Alumni Spotlight

**Catherine VanBramer**

*2019-2020 BLP  
Steering Committee Chair*

*BLP Class of 2014*

*Executive Assistant to the  
Mayor, City of Pittsfield*

### What do you think makes a good leader?

A leader is someone who is passionate about the work they do, lifts people up and brings everyone to the table. A good leader supports their team and provides them with the tools to be confident to take on new opportunities in their roles.

Leaders should take time to listen, communicate clearly and always be willing to continue learning.

### How did BLP enhance your leadership abilities?

BLP provided me with an opportunity to step out of my comfort zone to meet new people, network with county leaders and learn more about the Berkshires and all it has to offer. BLP taught me how to collaborate with a diverse group of people while working towards a common goal. BLP opened the door for additional opportunities including my current role as the Chair of the Steering Committee.

### What's one project or initiative you're currently spearheading?

I am passionate about civic engagement and finding ways to get people involved in government. Recently, I organized and led the second annual Citizens Academy for the City of Pittsfield. The Citizens Academy is a free 10-week session program designed to teach citizens about how their local government operates. The academy gives first-hand exposure to many city departments to highlight their various functions in municipal government. Over the last two years, 31 residents have participated in the program and we will be hosting session 3 in the late summer and fall of 2020. More details can be found [here](#).

## CLASS NOTES

In this new section of the newsletter, we celebrate milestones and achievements of our alumni! If you would like to be featured, please contact your Class Ambassador. No Ambassador for your Class yet? Sign up to fill the role or submit a note to [BLP@1Berkshire.com](mailto:BLP@1Berkshire.com).

**Becky Sawyer** (2019) has made the move from classroom teacher to Principal of Hoosac Valley Elementary School. She says, "I knew I wanted to make the move into administration and BLP provided me with the opportunity to grow my leadership skills. It has been a whirlwind...and I couldn't be happier on this new path."

**Cecilia Hirsch** (2019) has invited fellow classmate **Liana Toscanini**, Executive Director of Non-Profit Center of the

Berkshires, to present a workshop on the value of volunteering for Williams College staff and faculty. Included on the panel of volunteers is former Steering Committee Chair **Jill St. John** (2016).

**Kalee Carmel** (2019) started a new position this summer as executive and office manager at 18 Degrees Family Services for Western Massachusetts, formerly Berkshire Children & Families. BLP motivated her dive into a non-profit company and 18 Degree's mission immediately resonated: "My brother is adopted and I recently fostered 2 children so their work with foster and adoption spoke to me."

**Liana Toscanini** (2019) has had the pleasure of working with some of her classmates post-graduation: **Rebecca Brien** (2019), Hilton Garden Inn, and **Rebecca Weinman** (2019), Main Street

Hospitality, for events and workshops; **PJ Danahey** (2019), Sp3ak Easy Studio, on a generously donated video session for the NPC online auction; and **Toni Buckley** (2019) creating workshops for BCC. She also attended the 2019 Dulye Leadership Experience alongside **Kalee Carmel** (2019), **Katrina Cardillo** (2014), **Shannon Ashcroft** (2018), **Kevin Pink** (2018), and **Stephanie Bosley** (2017).

**Krystle (Gallo) Blake** (2014) and **Carlton Blake** (2017) were married on October 5, 2019 in Whately, MA.



**This newsletter was provided to you by the Alumni subcommittee of the Berkshire Leadership Steering Committee.**

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