



LEADERSHIP  
RHODE ISLAND

# Storied History: LRI's Lasting Impact

By Ashley Rappa '19

We all have our own Leadership Rhode Island story — a spark of curiosity, a shift in perspective, the connections that sustain us. The following vignettes shine a spotlight on LRI's history of challenging, strengthening, and transforming our state and its residents.

## Connecting Communities

The saying goes that “good fences make good neighbors,” but in one corner of the East Side of Providence, it may be more apt to say that good foundations do.

**Raymond Two Hawks Watson '15**, then executive director of the Mount Hope Neighborhood Association, and **Dean Weinberg '15**, then president of the abutting Summit Neighborhood Association, were separated by a distance of only a few blocks in their daily lives, but the first time they had ever met was in 2015 during their Leadership Rhode Island class retreat.

Though there is no physical boundary that separates Mount Hope and Summit, the two neighborhoods have long been divided by a history of racial tension, economic disparity



Dean Weinberg '15, left, and Raymond Two Hawks Watson '15 came together to improve the relationships between the Mount Hope and Summit neighborhoods on the East Side of Providence.

and deeply held resentment. That January, a framework of collaboration was formed when Weinberg and Watson kicked off their Lambda II experience as retreat roommates, transforming two strangers into peers, and eventually, peers into partners in collective progress.

“I’m Narragansett Indian, and five generations ago, my family was moved from the reservation directly into the Mount Hope neighborhood. For as long as I can remember, there has been a tangible and often visible

*Impact continued on page 8*

# Growing Up: CLRI expands to a full year

By Ashley Rappa '19

and Jen Hetzel Silbert '19

College teaches the skills needed for work, while College Leadership Rhode Island (CLRI) teaches the power of a network.

That’s how **Rhea Bhatia CLRI '19**, describes the link between her classes at Johnson & Wales University and her experience in CLRI. “College taught me what to do on the job, but not how to network or make connections to get the job,” she says.

In an employment market where 85% of jobs are obtained through relationships, CLRI matters, especially in a small and intimately connected state like Rhode Island.

“CLRI taught me the importance of meeting

people and engaging with them,” says Bhatia. “I’ve always struggled with starting the conversation, but CLRI helped me find a point of connection and how to capitalize on that in the moment.”

Bhatia graduated from Johnson & Wales with a master’s degree in mental health counseling and CLRI on the very same day and is now a clinician at the North American Family Institute, a nonprofit human service agency in Providence.

CLRI opened **Nicholas Siner’s** eyes to “how big Rhode Island actually is.” Siner participated in **CLRI in 2018** while enrolled at the New England Institute of Technology, where he majored in digital media production.

“I had no idea how many companies were

here, and big names like Hasbro, Fidelity, CVS, and Tiffany & Co.! There is so much to offer by staying here — as in a whole world beyond beaches, coffee milk, and bad drivers,” says Siner, who was raised in Vermont.

Now a video specialist at Schneider Electric in West Kingston, Siner says he loved his CLRI experience. Though, in reflection, he realizes that “packing so much information into just four sessions felt insufficient . . . I’m so grateful CLRI expanded; it’s a real investment in Rhode Island’s future leaders.”

Siner was in the last class limited to four full days in a single semester. By 2018-2019, when Bhatia participated, the program had

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# Letter from the Chair

As our clocks struck 12 on January 1st, we entered a new decade. Our Facebook feeds and newspaper pages were flooded with accounts of all that the last decade gave us — the happy, the sad, the changes and the celebrations. For Leadership Rhode Island, this year marks a time to reflect not just on the past decade but on the past four decades as we embark on our 40th year.

There is much that can be said about all that LRI has brought us over four decades. From award-winning leadership development programs, to community engagement events and, most recently, its Make RI Stronger initiative to improve the state through strengths-based training and education, LRI has accomplished so much.

But for me, LRI's greatest accomplishment in its 40 years lies in each of you. There are more than 2,500 LRI and CLRI alumni and countless more supporters and friends who have made LRI what it is today. You are the leaders who have made indelible marks on our state, our business community and our non-profits. You are the leaders who have engaged our communities, who have challenged the norm and who have executed new ideas. This year Leadership Rhode Island celebrates each of you.

As we embark on our 40th year, I encourage you to seek out and experience the power of the LRI network. While individually we all have our strengths, LRI has taught us that we are far stronger when we lean on one another. There is tremendous strength and opportunity in the LRI network and I hope you will consider how you can contribute to and benefit from it.

LRI's 40th year also presents a wonderful opportunity to reunite. If you haven't been active with LRI recently, I warmly invite you to reengage with us this year. We would love to hear from you and to learn what we can do to better serve you.



As we closed the last decade and celebrated the new year, we made resolutions and announced our aspirations for the year ahead. LRI did, too, with the benefit of an expanded staff that comes to the table with fresh new ideas, enthusiasm and energy and a board that is committed to LRI's growth. In 2020, LRI will work to build on its past, strategize on its future and set aspirations that will carry us well into the next 40 years.

I look forward to celebrating each of you in our 40th year and I sincerely hope you will join us at many of our events this year.

With gratitude,

**Nicole J. Benjamin, Esq. '13, Board Chair**

## Our Mission

*We engage and connect people through shared experiences that positively transform individuals, organizations and communities.*

## Our Vision

*We see a Rhode Island that is flourishing — economically, civically, culturally — built on a foundation of ever-improving human capital whose strengths and potential we spend each day revealing and igniting.*

*And we see the lessons of this lively leadership experiment being shared and amplified around the country and the world to nurture the kind of fully-engaged societies that create lasting, positive change.*





# Making a difference in a tough place

By Mike Masseur '19

Chances are good that when you hear “prison warden,” you envision someone more like the heartless Samuel Norton from the movie *Shawshank Redemption* than the compassionate Mother Theresa. Yet, the latter more aptly describes **Roberta Richman '90**, who spent a decade as warden of Rhode Island's women's prison.

Richman, warden and then Assistant Director of Corrections, promoted a more humane approach to corrections in Rhode Island. She will receive an 'Acts of Leadership' award at Leadership Rhode Island's annual luncheon March 19.

Richman's journey into the world of corrections began, accidentally, more than 40 years ago when she, then an aspiring professor of arts, realized that the prospects of a long-term college teaching position were growing slim. So, like she would do so many times in the years to follow, she adjusted her plans, and began taking psychology classes with the intent of launching a career in art therapy.

Before long, she was presented with an opportunity to be the coordinator of an arts program for inmates at the Adult Correctional Institutions. After a series of similar roles over the course of a couple of years, Richman was appointed Administrator of Educational Services.

“By this point, I loved being at the prison,” shared Richman during a recent conversation. “I thought it was a really good fit for me, as strange as that may sound, and I never felt threatened.”

In 1990, Richman was asked to take the helm of the women's prison facilities, where others — most notably her superiors — soon began to recognize the value of her approach to leadership and prisoner interaction.

Richman says she “always felt like I could make a difference” even though her personality did not comport with the expectations of a tough disciplinarian. “It's just not who I was.” Over the years, the harsh realities of prison life hardened her personality, but, she says, she never let go of her core values.



Richman spent the balance of her career championing the belief that prisoners are human beings who need incessant support, not punishment.

She applied that belief to the inmates under her supervision, and also worked relentlessly to

***Richman continued on page 7***

## 'Come together' at the annual luncheon

By Mike Masseur '19

Two men whose views of the world were once polar opposites will take the stage as friends at Leadership Rhode Island's Inspiring Leaders Awards luncheon March 19 at the Marriott in Providence.

“Over the years our luncheon guests have come to expect powerful keynote presentations, and our speakers have never disappointed,” says **Mike Ritz '07**, LRI's executive director. “This year's keynotes will certainly contend for the most moving presentation in the history of our event.”

With 'Come Together' as the theme of the luncheon, the event will feature opportunities for guests who likely have different points of view to find common ground. LRI will assign the seating and facilitate conversations to ensure that attendees whose perspectives are potentially at odds will connect.

“Our guests will be challenged to find times when they were unable to connect with others for whatever reason,” adds Ritz. “Our hope is they use this luncheon as an opportunity to dig deeper on that topic to understand why, and how, they were able to overcome their differences.”

Further reinforcing the theme, LRI will also present **Roberta Richman '90** with the 'Acts of Leadership Award' for the incredible impact she made within the prison system in Rhode Island.

At the time of publication limited tickets were still available. For information about purchasing tickets to, or sponsoring, the 2020 Inspiring Leaders Awards Luncheon, visit [leadershipri.org/events](http://leadershipri.org/events).



Photo Credit: Mike Braca

From Left: Greg Cabral of Blum Shapiro, Ana Bess Moyer Bell '19, and Alicia Monnes '18 share thoughts at the 2019 luncheon.



# Meet the 2020 Pi II Class



**Jess Ashley** (Swansea, MA), Audit Senior Manager; Kahn, Litwin, Renza & Co., Ltd.

**Tom Baldwin** (Middletown), Military Professor; U.S. Naval War College

**Mary Barden** (Narragansett), Assistant Executive Director/UniServ; National Education Association RI

**Jillian Belanger** (Providence), Reading Specialist; Paul Cuffee Charter School

**Victoria Bernardo** (Warwick), Assistant Director of Stewardship; Rhode Island College Foundation

**Beth Bixby** (Coventry), Chief Executive Officer; Tides Family Services

**Scott Bromberg** (Providence), Vice President; Benny's Inc.

**Jason Carosi** (Cranston), Senior Vice President, Senior Relationship Manager, Business Banking; Webster Bank

**Chachi Carvalho** (Pawtucket), School Culture and Community Engagement Coordinator; Shea High School

**Brian Casey** (East Greenwich), President; Pariseault Builders, Inc.

**Caitlin Chaffee** (North Kingstown), Coastal Policy Analyst; RI Coastal Resources Management Council

**Alex Chiulli** (Warwick), Attorney; Barton Gilman, LLP

**Daniel Cohen** (Providence), Managing Director; CEO; Line, LLC

**Monique Collins** (Warwick), Chief Financial and Operations Officer; The College Crusade of Rhode Island

**Martha Correia** (Cumberland), VP Regional Branch Manager; Navigant Credit Union

**Danielle Crafford** (Barrington), General Superintendent; Gilbane Building Company

**Margo Crawford** (Fall River, MA), Productivity Coach; Wave Productivity

**Lisa Curry** (Warwick), Senior Vice President, Consumer Checking Executive, Bank of America

**Jen Dalen** (Lincoln), AVP Account Partnerships; Beacon Health Options

**Richard Davia** (Providence), Director, Creative and Branding; (add)ventures

**Liz Demers** (Riverside), Client Advisor, JP Morgan

**Missy Devine** (North Kingstown), Freelancer; Self employed.

**Mike Dowhan** (Dartmouth, MA), Senior Associate; SMMA – Symmes Maini & McKee Associates

**DJ Fernandes** (Providence), Project Executive / Architect; Site Specific

**Crisolita Figueiredo** (Pawtucket), Eligibility Technician; Department of Human Services

**Jillian Finkle** (Cranston), Principal Planner; City of Central Falls

**Dan Fitzpatrick** (Portsmouth), USMC Liaison Officer; U.S. Naval War College

**Carlene Fonseca** (Central Falls), Associate Director; Feinstein Institute for Public Service; Providence College

**Dora Garcia** (Coventry), Business Manager; Cox Business

**Deb Garneau** (North Scituate), Health Equity Institute Director; RI Department of Health

**Roberta Gosselin** (Lincoln), Vice President, Treasury and Risk Management; Amica Mutual Insurance Company

**Mary Grover** (Barrington), Senior Counsel; Eversource Energy

**Mike Grzybowski** (Saunderstown), Commander; Recruiting and Retention Battalion-RI National Guard

**Jackie Hague** (North Smithfield), Director; Enterprise Talent Management; CVS Health

**Rob Hancock** (Bristol), Assistant Vice President of Enrollment Management and Retention; Roger Williams University – University College

**Karsten Hart** (North Kingstown), Director of Restaurant Operations; Newport Restaurant Group

**Laura Hastings** (Cranston), Grant Advisor; State of Rhode Island, DLT

**Brooke Havens** (Warwick), Executive VP, Chief Development Officer; United Way of Rhode Island

**Priya Himatsingka** (Providence), Founder & Creative Director; Himatsingka, Inc + pH Factor

**Sarah Hocking** (Devens, MA), Director of Project Management and Compliance; Skills for Rhode Island's Future

**Lisa Huftalen** (Hopkinton), Graphic Design and Marketing Manager; VIBCO, Inc.

**Diana Imondi** (Barrington), Manager of Public Affairs; AAA Northeast

**Joe Jean-Philippe** (Coventry), Language Specialist; Inlingua

**Petra Jenkins** (Providence), Customer Account Lead II; General Mills, Inc

**Christopher Johnson** (Providence), Artist; Christopher Johnson

**Cynthia Johnson** (East Greenwich), Assistant Professor; Community College of Rhode Island

**Pat Jones** (Tiverton), Chief of Police; Tiverton Police Department

**Siu-Li Khoe** (Cranston), Vice President Business Development; Rhode Island Commerce Corporation

**Ted Kresse** (North Kingstown), Director of Communications; National Grid

**Natalia Lara** (Providence), Customer Acquisition Associate; Opportunity@Work

**Laurie Leonard** (Narragansett), Director, RIDOH Academic Institute; Rhode Island Department of Health

**Liam Lynch** (Tiverton), Director of Operations; Peregrine Property Management

**Mike Maccarone** (North Kingstown), Production Manager; Edesia Nutrition

**Giselle Mahoney** (North Kingstown), Sr. Account Executive / Partner; RDW Group

**Carrie Majewski** (East Greenwich), Vice President of Marketing; Trilix/Founder; Women in Leadership Nexus

**Justin Mandese** (East Greenwich), Owner/Agent/Coach; Realty United at HomeSmart Professionals

**Jess Marfeo** (Warwick), Director, Product Strategy & Development; Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island

**George Marley** (Providence), Director of Development and Community Relations; Big Brothers Big Sisters of RI

**Ray Martin** (Johnston), Director of Information Technology; Dimeo Construction Company

**Emily Martineau** (Providence), Press Secretary, City of Warwick

**Ryan Mitchner** (Warwick), Director of Workforce Development Program Deliver; Community College of RI

**Tim O'Hara** (East Greenwich), Commanding Officer of Detective Bureau; Providence Police Dept

**Adam Olenn** (Warren), CEO; Rustle & Spark

**Erica Olobri** (Warwick), Director; Marcum LLP

**Leslie Parker** (Barrington), Shareholder; Adler Pollock & Sheehan P.C.

**Michelle Pelletier** (Coventry), Corporate Marketing and Communications Director; The Beacon Mutual Insurance Company

**Cristen Raucci** (Providence), Assistant Counsel; Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation

**Marcy Reyes** (Cranston), Director, Individual Segment; Blue Cross & Blue Shield of RI

**TeLisa Richardson** (Providence), Parenting Coordinator; State of Rhode Island

**Dino Rizzi** (Saunderstown), Director of Engineering; Amgen

**Anthony Rolle** (Saunderstown), Dean, Alan Shawn Feinstein College of Education & Professional Studies; University of RI

**Nancy Serpa** (Newport), IT Program Manager; Sensata Technologies

**Josh Short** (Wakefield), Artistic Director; The Wilbury Theatre Group

**Maggie Slane** (Barrington), Vice President, Advance; Family Service of Rhode Island

**Rebecca Twitchell** (Providence), Founder; President; half full, llc

**Tyler Wentworth** (Providence), President, The Hire



# From Alpha to Omicron II: Co-Chairs from '81 and '19 'Come Together' to lead the Pi II Class

By Kara Brady '19

Nearly 40 years separate the Leadership Rhode Island experiences of **James W. Farley '81** and **Sterling Clinton-Spellman '19**, the Program Co-Chairs for the Class of 2020. Farley, who was in LRI's very first class, and Clinton-Spellman, a brand new alumna, are confident they will bridge the generational gap to pull off this year's "Come Together" theme.

Farley, soon to be 82 years old, remembers the day his boss at what was then the state Department of Employment Services approached him with the "important task" of representing the department as a member of the Alpha class in a new program of the Chamber of Commerce called Leadership Greater Providence.

"Show up on Monday, pay \$100 out-of-pocket toward the tuition, and the department will pay the remaining \$400," Mary Hackett told him.

A native Rhode Islander, Farley spent much of his career working for federal and state government agencies in various planning and organizational capacities, while also building an impressive track record of community involvement with town, religious, cultural, historical, and military organizations. A 44-year member of Bristol's Fourth of July Committee, he was awarded the coveted title of Chief Marshall of the town's 234th annual parade in 2019.

Addressing the new class, the Pi IIs, at their retreat in January, Farley moved easily between light-hearted and serious remarks. Knowing that his pioneer status as a member of the Alpha class was key to his selection as Program Co-Chair, he joked: "Am I being honored for my exemplary work, or am I just the only one still alive?"

The core program, he said, remains essentially the same as the one he experienced in LRI's inaugural year, though there was no retreat, no driving with the police, and no defense discussions. Still, he quipped, "Without Alpha, there would be no Pi."

Turning heartfelt, he assured the 77 members of the new class that they are already leaders. Your LRI experience, he said, will "expand your horizons" so you can help make the state better. "It's people like you who can help us do that."

A month away from her 36th birthday, Clinton-Spellman, also a Rhode Island native, is an entrepreneur, coach, consultant, speaker,



*James Farley '81 and Sterling Clinton-Spellman '19 with her daughter Harmony, at the first Pi II session day.*

author, mentor, and founder of the "Refine, Lead, and Profit" incubator. Through her workshops and seminars, she helps others hone their strengths and gifts, raise their self-esteem, and become socially aware global citizens.

She was selected Class Speaker by her Omicron II classmates in August, graduated from the core program in October, was invited to be Program Co-Chair in November, and delivered her second child in December.

And, in January, she was at the retreat, urging the Pi IIs to bring authenticity to their LRI experience. "From day one, I was myself. I showed up as Sterling, from January to October to now."

To demonstrate how much authenticity counts, Clinton-Spellman instructed class members to form a huge circle. Holding one end of an "Energy Stick" with the class member next to her holding the other, she asked everyone to join hands, showing that the only way to light the stick was by touching skin-to-skin. The stick went dark when she touched the jacket instead of the hand of the person next to her.

"Bring your light and energy to Rhode Island. Let's come together and be our real selves — that's the only way this is going to work."

Farley and Clinton-Spellman recognize that they are partnering during a time when generational rifts are increasing, as evidenced by tensions between Baby Boomers and Millennials. While getting to know one another, contrasting opinions were immediately apparent, but the

two approached each issue with understanding, compassion, and a willingness to listen and learn.

"Her thoughts gave me pause," Farley said of a conversation they had about a potentially controversial plan for an exercise at the retreat. "She gave me a totally different perspective."

"I have his back, and need to lean on him for his expertise and knowledge," Clinton-Spellman said.

While a large generational gap will naturally tease out differences, their similarities hold the promise of genuine momentum, especially since they share a humanistic approach to leadership.

Farley touts empathy. "Empathy is something I've prioritized in all aspects of my life over the years. It's a really important part of being a leader," he says.

Clinton-Spellman emphasizes inclusion. "You don't have to be a high-profile CEO or an expert on all of the topics covered [in the program]. We all bring something to the table."

"People will see you for who you are and what you bring to the table, no matter how large or small. To me, this is the most important part of leadership."

Farley's reserved manner complements the outgoing and energetic Clinton-Spellman, allowing the two to play off each other seamlessly. They both live by their values and strengths, which is one of the many reasons their respective journeys brought them together as Pi II Program Co-Chairs for LRI's 40th anniversary year.

**At Left:** Attendees check in to the education event organized by the Crime/Incarceration team.  
**At Right:** Panelists left to right are Robert Kalaskowski, grant advisor for the RI Department of Labor and Training, Brent Mancuso, President of Office Recycling Solutions, and Jayne DelSesto, acting interdepartmental project manager at RI Department of Corrections  
 Photos courtesy of: Colin Galliano



# Omicron II Mission: Create Change

**By Kara Brady '19**

Half of the men and women released from prison in Rhode Island are back behind bars within three years, a recidivism rate that most likely would abate if more could find jobs.

Recognizing the link between recidivism and unemployment, a Leadership-in-Action (LIA) team in 2019 set out to persuade employers and others that they could play a role in changing the situation.

Toward that end, the Crime/Incarceration team of the Omicron IIs staged two educational events: One for 64 human resource staffers, representing more than 50 employers, and a second for 35 lawyers for state agencies that enforce occupational licensing regulations.

The first event, organized with help from the Society for Human Resource Management, featured a panel discussion aimed at demystifying and encouraging the hiring of justice-affected individuals. **Laura Pisaturo '18**, chair of the state Parole Board and a member of the Xi II Crime/Incarceration team, moderated.

The message from panelists was twofold: Ex-prisoners would benefit from steady work and employers struggling to fill openings would benefit from a larger applicant pool.

A "before and after" survey found a definite change in their openness to hiring individuals with criminal records. "We were amazed to discover that a single, carefully designed event . . . could result in such dramatic mindset shift," says team member **Danielle Kopf '19**.

Pisaturo joined Lara Montecalvo, a lawyer in the appellate division of the state Public Defenders' office, to lead the second event, which was planned with the assistance of the Government Lawyers Committee. The discussion focused on the hurdles that applicants with criminal records face when seeking employment in a field that requires a state license.

The second event also resulted in a positive shift. The participants' knowledge of the impact

of regulatory barriers moved from "moderate" at the outset to "high" at the conclusion.

Creating measurable change became the battle cry for the Omicron IIs, whose class theme was "leadership, actually." **Jane Nugent '95**, Project Advisor for Leadership Rhode Island, urged the nine teams to plan and execute projects that hold the promise of change. Change, she coached, is achieved by making detectable shifts in one or more of five arenas: knowledge, attitude or perception, skills or behavior, status, or condition.

A shared passion for decreasing the stigma that surrounds mental illness emerged quickly during the first meeting of the Health/Wellness/Medicine team. Aware of national statistics showing that 50 percent of all mental illnesses begin by age 14, the team decided to target young students, and work toward making change in their knowledge of mental health and the tools available to manage a mental illness.

Finding a well-connected community partner was often a key to project success. For the Health team, that partner was Liz Lemire, a Director at the Cumberland Mayor's Office of

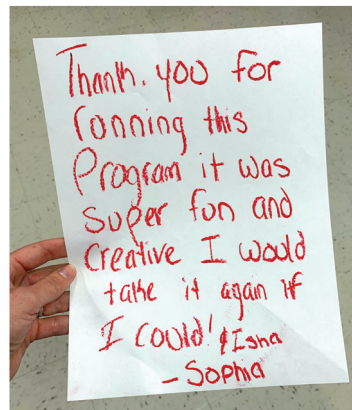
Children, Youth and Learning. Lemire connected the team with the principal and art teacher at the town's McCourt Middle School. Together, they designed and executed "Our Minds Matter: Mind the Art," a four-week mental health expressive arts program for children in sixth through eighth grades in an after-school art club.

At the outset, local representatives of the Rhode Island chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness introduced students to the warning signs of mental illness, ways to cope, and tips for helping others. Then, PeaceLove, an expressive arts non-profit focused on mental wellness, ran a workshop encouraging the students to create artwork that reflects a situation in which they experienced two different emotions at the same time.

Lemire and the team spent the remaining two weeks demonstrating various ways that art can help individuals express themselves, heal, connect with others, or feel included.

Students described the program as "peaceful and inspiring," with one saying it was "calming, and I felt safe there." Another summed up the experience as one that "made me feel free to be

**Omicron II continued on page 11**



Projects produced by middle schoolers participating in the after-school expressive arts program organized by the Health/Wellness/Medicine team.



Photos courtesy of: Kara Brady



# PrepareRI: Making RI students stronger

By Mike Masseur '19

Leadership Rhode Island is using its expertise in strengths training to help hundreds of Rhode Island high school students identify and develop their own natural talents.

In a blossoming partnership with the non-profit, Skills for Rhode Island's Future, LRI will introduce the concept of strengths again this summer to 425 students, divided evenly into two separate week-long sessions.

After participating in the intensive work-readiness "boot camp," the students will then move on to equally intensive 6-to-8-week paid internships at one of 90 different employment sites.

The summer program, held at Rhode Island College, is called PrepareRI.

"Many of the kids who struggle in traditional academic settings are given the tools to develop different strategies for problem solving. It's incredible; we see so many moments of enlightenment on the spot," says **Nina Pande '12**, executive director of Skills for Rhode Island's Future.

Another PrepareRI goal, she says, is to teach students — through the LRI-led strengths curriculum — that they possess greater value than what traditional academic measures might indicate.

Seeking a partner who could really bring the strengths component to life, Skills for Rhode Island's Future brought LRI on board for the first time in the summer of 2018 to leverage the organization's expertise in developing a strengths-focused curriculum.

LRI-trained strengths coaches work with students throughout the five-day program, helping them understand and develop their own strengths and how to use them, particularly in group settings.

LRI launched its strengths initiative, Make RI Stronger, in 2014. Since then, more than 30,000 Rhode Islanders have discovered their greatest strengths — referred to as their Top Five — by taking the online CliftonStrengths assessment.



Photo courtesy of: Skills for Rhode Island's Future

*A group of PrepareRI participants in 2019 celebrates the successful completion of their internships where they learned to apply their strengths and build their academic, technical, and professional skills at work.*

"Leadership Rhode Island does a lot of strengths training with adults all around the country, and I'm always amazed to see their reactions when they learn to harness the power of their strengths and help manage the strengths of others," says **Mike Ritz '07**, LRI Executive Director.

Introducing the strengths philosophy to a younger generation, he says, "ensures long-term sustainability and impact of strengths-based development for many more years to come."

PrepareRI, funded through the Governor's Workforce Board, provides a curriculum that strengthens work readiness and essential skills, while challenging students to think about their long-term career paths.

Students who complete the program and the internship receive provisional acceptance to RIC and four college credits to apply toward a

degree there.

Skills for Rhode Island's Future is also working with educators around the state to re-think and re-shape what a traditional high school offers, changes that would place greater emphasis on essential skills. With a growing concern about an aging workforce, the need for short and long-term solutions is critical to ensuring Rhode Island's continued upward employment climb.

"There's a human being behind all of this work," says Pande. "We want to transform Rhode Islanders' lives so there is a path to economic mobility for everyone."

Make RI Stronger is now a revenue-generating social enterprise. Gallup has called LRI's initiative an inspiration for the global strengths movement.

For more information about PrepareRI, including eligibility to participate, visit [skillsforri.com](http://skillsforri.com).

## Richman continued from page 3

shape the public's perception of what the incarcerated need, especially after they are released. She worked with community leaders, small business owners, community healthcare agencies, and others to create support systems that would help prisoners succeed when they re-entered life on the outside.

"We have to constantly remind ourselves that prisoners aren't just the bad thing they did, they're human beings who often just want a chance to do the right thing. So, the real battle begins when they re-enter the community and the walls in the community don't let them in."

Proud of what she accomplished, Richman retired in 2012 after

33 years of service in the state's prison system. She has penned several opinion pieces and has offered expert testimony about controversial prison topics, like solitary confinement and life without parole for juveniles. In her retirement, Richman has served on the boards of several nonprofits, and is currently leading the Welcome House of South County as Interim Executive Director.

On rare occasions, you might find her in Wakefield's Hera Art Gallery, which she helped launch in 1974. And hardly a day goes by without some time playing the piano or enjoying her grandchildren, in whom she — no doubt — sees great potential as human beings.

## Impact continued from page 1

disconnect between the two communities,” says Watson, who began his tenure as executive director in 2006. “And everything that was simmering came to the surface around the issue of former Ward 3 Councilman Kevin Jackson.”

Jackson, who served as councilman from 1995 to 2016, was sentenced to serve a year and a half in prison for embezzling hundreds of thousands of dollars in donations for personal use and removed from his position after a recall election spearheaded by Summit residents. Where Summit locals saw a corrupt politician who had to go, Mount Hope residents saw someone who had fought for them, who supported them, who understood and empathized with the lack of basic needs in their community.

“When Jackson’s recall election happened it was a like a bomb went off between these neighborhoods,” says Weinberg. “It was clear something had to be done, and it seemed like a good opportunity to try to approach things differently.”

Watson and Weinberg engaged **Mike Ritz '07**, LRI’s executive director, and together they conducted a new kind of candidate forum to seek out Jackson’s replacement. With Ritz moderating, alongside **Angela Bannerman Ankoma '14**, they brought together residents from both sides of Rochambeau Avenue to participate in an undebate, a format in which candidates are brought in not to speak, but to listen to their constituents.

“It was an unproven format in our community, and I’m sure we were all thinking the same thing: this could be an all-out disaster,” Weinberg says. “It started with people yelling at each other, but then something extraordinary happened: the blockage was cleared, and there was real two-way communication. We found out that we actually all cared about a lot of the same issues—combating gun violence, protecting civil rights—and we were united in that way. For a long time these neighborhoods had been tense parallel lines, existing alongside each other, but that night, those lines became woven together. I felt like we really achieved something special.”

With the groundwork laid, Summit and Mount Hope came together to elect their new representative, Councilwoman **Nirva LaFortune '19**, the first Haitian American to hold elected office in the State of Rhode Island. Though both Watson and Weinberg have now moved on from their leadership positions, the two communities continue to collaborate.

“It was such an opportunity to help set the foundation for relationship building between these areas,” says Watson. “Of course, there’s

still work to be done — there always is. But we now have a solid framework for us to come together under common purpose, resulting in lasting positive change for both neighborhoods.”

### Together for Better

“Your daughter has a tumor on her spine.” In one of **Pam Alarie’s '05** darkest moments, in a hospital room with her daughter Aleigh, whose long history of back pain had finally been explained with a terrifying diagnosis, the LRI alumna saw a single source of brightness.

“I was petrified, just beside myself with fear, waiting to find out what was wrong with my child,” recalls Alarie. “And the door opens and in walks Sharonda, our physician assistant, with a smile that would light up the world. Sharonda said, ‘We are going to take care of you. We are going to fix this.’ And when she walked out of that room, for the first time in so long, I felt like we were in good hands.”

That initial meeting in 2016 was the first of many between Alarie and **Sharonda Keith** as together they helped to navigate Aleigh’s long journey to health. Diagnosed with a giant cell tumor that had shattered a vertebra and caused months of debilitating pain, Aleigh, then 23, underwent emergency surgery, spinal fusion, and learned how to walk again. There was daily coordination between the Alaries and their medical team.

Keith was continuously impressed with Aleigh’s outlook on life and her ability to make her entire treatment team laugh through the scariest moments. Keith, in turn, made quite an impression on the Alaries as she mirrored those same qualities back to the family.

“Sharonda has such an incredible spirit, and we became very good friends. She had helped



Photo courtesy of: Pam Alarie  
Pam Alarie '05, Aleigh Alarie, and Sharonda Keith '18

us so much that I found myself wondering, ‘What’s the best way I could help her in return?’” says Alarie. “I immediately thought of Leadership Rhode Island.”

At first, Keith was hesitant to apply.

“I looked at the credentials of past participants and there were lists of presidents, vice presidents and CEOs. I was apprehensive that my role as a physician assistant would not compare to the other participants,” says Keith. “But after much apprehension and coaxing from Pam,” she agreed to apply. Her participation in the Xi II 2018 “GOAT” class, she says, “shifted the whole course of my life.”

Now an LRI alumna, Keith remains engaged, agreeing to let students in College Leadership Rhode Island shadow her and collaborating with classmate **Nicole Anderson '18**, Chief Advancement Officer for the Ronald McDonald House, to help some of Keith’s international and out-of-state patients.

“Rhode Island needs people like Sharonda,” Alarie says. “She made such a difference in our lives when we needed it most.”

And the life-changing cycle continues.

“I’ve made friends and connections through Leadership Rhode Island I never could have made otherwise,” Keith says. “Because of Leadership Rhode Island, my life will never, ever be the same.”

### Small But Mighty

For the biggest little state in the union, it has been a bit of a challenge to find a brand to call home.

Enter **Alec Beckett '11**, Creative Partner at Providence’s NAIL Communications, a New Hampshire native who has been a member of the teams behind not one, but two winning slogans for Rhode Island.

During Tourism and Hospitality Day in 2011, LRI staff staged a class competition for the best tagline for the Ocean State. The judges included tourism officials and the publisher of Yankee Magazine. Beckett’s team submission, “So small you can do it all,” took home the win. The prize: A free full-page ad incorporating the winning tagline in Yankee Magazine.

In 2017, the state sent out a call for a new tourism campaign. **Jeanette Palmer '15**, Managing Director at NAIL, credits her LRI experience, along with Beckett’s four years earlier, as the reason their agency was uniquely positioned to come out on top.

“One of the tasks my class had in LRI was to host community meetings in key areas of the state. Our job, essentially, was to document what and who was making these towns and cities so awesome,” says Palmer.

**Impact continued on page 9**





East Bay Bike Path - Barrington

PPAC - Providence

**RHODE ISLAND**  
So small, you can do it all.

VisitRhodeIsland.com



*At Left: One of the ads created by Alec Beckett during the 2011 Tourism and Hospitality day  
At Right: In 2017 NAIL created a series of ads for the state of Rhode Island describing the state as 'Fun-Sized'  
Photos and graphics courtesy of: NAIL Communications*

### **Impact continued from page 8**

"That experience gave such granular insight into what's beyond our beautiful beaches, what's past the city of Providence, and because of that we felt very prepared to speak from an honest place about what's in this state and what makes it such a great place to live and visit."

Their campaign — "Fun-Sized" — beat out a slew of other proposals, and is the backbone of the state's current tourism efforts. Though "Fun-Sized" wasn't entirely derivative of "So small you can do it all," both center on the state's standout value proposition: its diminutive size.

"The tourism industry is critical to Rhode Island's success, and it's a tough, complicated road to compete for dollars against giants like Disney World, London, and Las Vegas," says Beckett. "So we reimagined a perceived negative, our smallness, and turned it into a true positive. It's a logistical benefit, and a real draw to have so much fun highly distilled in one geographic area."

That same outlook is part of why not just Rhode Island, but Leadership Rhode Island, is so effective.

"LRI has this sneaky dual mission, to make people into better leaders



*Alec Beckett '11 and Jeanette Palmer '15 of NAIL Communications*

and leaders into better people," says Beckett. "The connections that happen in the program are so powerful because they cross sectors, they burst the personal and professional bubbles that we all naturally create. Yes, we are small. But we grow and are stronger because of it."



## **Rhode Island *BIG* Deals**

**Monday April 6, 2020 | 6 to 8 p.m.**  
Sapinsley Hall at Rhode Island College  
[RhodeIslandBIGdeals.eventbrite.com](http://RhodeIslandBIGdeals.eventbrite.com)



***Will there ever be a RI deal good enough for Rhode Islanders to consider without cynicism?***





At Left: The inaugural CLRI class in 2004 participated in four half-day sessions during one semester.  
Above: The 2019 CLRI class was the first to participate in an eight-day, two-semester program.

### CLRI continued from page 1

expanded to eight days over the course of a full academic year.

CLRI, conceived in 2003 and launched in 2004, is growing up.

The idea for CLRI emerged during a 2003 Fidelity reception for Leadership Rhode Island, at which **Chris Feisthamel '01** and colleague **Joseph Pratt**, who would go through **LRI in 2006**, brainstormed ways to attract more local talent to Fidelity's then-new Smithfield campus.

Armed with those initial kernels jotted down on a cocktail napkin, Feisthamel, who was on

the LRI board, successfully advocated for the creation of a mini-core program tailored for college students.

In its infancy, CLRI offered 25 undergraduates from 10 local colleges four half-day sessions during which they engaged with leaders from the public, private and nonprofit sectors, men and women committed to making the state a better place to work and live.

Over time, CLRI experienced growth spurts and programmatic change. In 2013, in response to student demand, the program was expanded to four full days. In 2014, class size was in-

creased to 35 students, nine of whom remained for a second semester of shadowing executives, service in non-profit governance, and an introduction to the state legislature.

By the 2018-2019 academic year, the length doubled again to eight full days over two semesters and class size grew to 50. The doors to the program were opened to include college graduates up to 26 years old who are emerging leaders in the community.

**Jeff Gagnon '19**, an executive at Amica, one of CLRI's longtime sponsors, sees CLRI as a "proactive way to keep talented college students in the state and working on RI-based challenges."

Pinning down how many of CLRI's 428 graduates stayed in Rhode Island is a task underway now by **Samantha Bergbauer**, LRI's new College Program and Alumni Coordinator. While updating 15 years of alumni data, Bergbauer also is focused on building a stronger CLRI alumni presence within LRI and within the state.

Anecdotal information suggests that plenty of CLRI alumni are successfully employed here. A tiny sampling: **Suzy Alba CLRI '04**, Director of Alumni and College Relations at Rhode Island College and President of the Smithfield Town Council; **Stephen Kavanagh CLRI '04**, Legislative Director at the Executive Office of the Governor; **Rob Hamlin CLRI '04**, Director, Release Services, at Fidelity Investments; **Dave Chéry CLRI '13**, Financial Analyst with FGX International, and **Rocio Cabrera CLRI '13**, Senior MilieuTherapist at Lifespan.

**CLRI continued on page 13**



Wrapping Up: The 2019 CLRI class convened at the State House for their final session before commencement.

## CLRI by the numbers

**428**

Alumni

**95**

Academic specialties represented

**257**

Have learned their strengths since 2013

**71**

Professional shadowing experiences since 2014

**18**

Colleges and Universities have participated

**21 Plus**

Sites visited





Visitors check in at the Old Industrial Trust Building in Pawtucket, one of the ten historic locations open to the public for the Doors Open RI event.

## Omicron II continued from page 6

myself,” demonstrating that they learned a new way to view mental health.

By showing off the architectural, cultural and historical treasures of Pawtucket and Central Falls, the Arts/Design/Historic Preservation team hoped to address an apparent reluctance or indifference to visiting these cities.

With a goal of increasing civic pride while connecting more Rhode Islanders “to our state’s history, art, and culture,” the team partnered with “Doors Open RI” founder Caroline Stevens to resurrect a community festival piloted in Providence in 2017.

Stevens and the team used their collective resources, drive and passion to raise more than \$10,000 to plan, brand, market and present an open house festival offering free, behind-the-scenes access to ten sites across Pawtucket and Central Falls.

Sites included the dugout at McCoy Stadium, the Slater Mill, the Mayor’s office and tower in City Hall, the Elks Lodge, and the Historic Bridge Mill Power Station, all in Pawtucket, and the 70-ft Cogswell Tower and grotto in Jenks Park, Central Falls.

“I’ve visited places in Pawtucket from time to time, but now I realize that I had never really seen Pawtucket,” exclaimed one of the 1000-plus attendees. The Providence resident said she especially enjoyed seeing

sites that told a story of the city’s history.

When the Economic Development team’s initial effort to create change faltered, members turned the setback into a learning experience and recalibrated. Their plan had been to develop directional signage for the growing number of breweries and distilleries in Pawtucket, but, for a variety of reasons, the “wayfinding” project failed to gain momentum.

The team needed a new focus for its goal of creating change through the “planning, design or management of public places.” Fortunately, team member **Mark Hellendrung ’19**, President of Narragansett Beer, said he would welcome the team’s “placemaking” guidance for the brewery he plans to build in Providence’s Fox Point neighborhood.

Team members agreed to extend their work into 2020 by conducting “placemaking” research to inform Hellendrung’s brewery plans as well as others in the food and beverage field who could benefit.

At the graduation ceremony for the 2019 class, LRI Executive Director **Mike Ritz ’07** observed that the 2019 class was “notably different” in the way members tackled their LIA projects. They accomplished a lot, but with a noticeable lack of fuss or patting each other (or themselves) on the back. It could be, he reflected, the result of a high concentration of “executors” in the class, a reference to one of the CliftonStrengths domains.

The other Omicron II projects designed to create change were these:

**Basic Needs/Housing** — The redesign of Rhode Island Housing’s website to provide easier access to information for those looking for housing, selling and renting, or available to assist in the affordable housing market.

**Education/Literacy** — The production of educational videos on the topic of social and emotional learning for the state Department of Education to inform and educate teachers/school staff.

**Workforce Development** — The development and launch of a Technical Assistance and Customer Solutions Pre-Employment Workforce Program to train adults in customer service career pathways at a new Workforce Development Hub in Central Falls.

**Children/Youth** — The exploration of a talents-based assessment designed by Gallup to encourage students with a natural proclivity to pursue entrepreneurship.

**Civic/Community/Neighborhood** — The design of a mobile app, “Passport RI,” weaving together diverse and distinct communities in a manner that encourages residents to connect, engage and take pride in their collective resources.



From left, Walter Berbrick, Sandy Ross, Kerry Wilson, Jeremy Howard, and Luann Edwards of the Economic Development team at the Omicron II commencement.

# Our 2019 Alumni Membership Campaign supporters

Thank you for your support; we're lucky to have you on our team.

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Robert Smith '14  
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John Tarantino '91  
Mike Thomas '18  
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Note: This list only includes individuals who renewed their dues between Jan. 1 - Dec. 31, 2019

To join our annual membership drive, visit: [www.leadershipri.org/alumni](http://www.leadershipri.org/alumni)



# Eve Bontemp '19, Planting Seeds for the Future of RI

By Shana Murrell '06

**Eve Bontemp** is founder and owner of the Garden of Eve restaurant which serves authentic Haitian cuisine. Her husband and two sons, Shamarey, 15, and Rolkens, 18, are also part of the family-run business.

After living in Haiti and Florida, Eve's family moved to Rhode Island when she was 12. Eve attended Parkview Middle School in Cranston and Hope High in Providence, worked several jobs in the food service industry, including eleven years in different roles at the Providence Marriott.

Wanting a new start, Eve enrolled in the Community Kitchen Program offered by the RI Community Food Bank. The experience persuaded her to take the leap and start a place of her own, one where she could share family recipes with the community.

Eve's willingness to give back to the community caught the attention of **Ray Two Hawks Watson '15**, who happened to be at Providence City Hall where Eve was passing out food

samples for PVD Fest. Ray urged her to consider Leadership Rhode Island.

Though juggling both business and family responsibilities, Eve decided to take yet another leap: She applied and was selected to join LRI's 2019 class, the Omicron IIs.

"Rhode Island is home for me but Leadership Rhode Island opened my eyes to a new world of experiences right in my community" she says.

What stood out during her LRI experience year? Seeing how young some of the inmates are at the women's prison had the biggest impact, she says. So much so, she says she is inspired to work with women and children in the future.

She's both grateful and optimistic about what the next couple of years will bring. It's with that sense of hope that she chose to give to the Leadership Rhode Island Alumni Membership Campaign.

"I'm proud to be a graduate of Leadership Rhode Island, and believe in supporting the next generation of leaders, planting seeds for the future."



To join our annual membership drive, visit: [www.leadershipri.org/alumni](http://www.leadershipri.org/alumni)

## CLRI continued from page 10

Also, a half-dozen CLRI graduates, including **Stephanie Mandeville CLRI '05, LRI '15**, Communications Director for the National Education Association of Rhode Island, are also graduates of the core program.

Though the CLRI program has morphed over time, its core mission — to inspire, educate, and engage a diverse group of emerging young adult leaders as they transition from college to career — has remained.

CLRI offers its students a combination of how-to's for making a good impression and opportunities to interact with leaders and influencers in the community. With topics such as Engaging with Government; A Positive

Online Presence; The Etiquette Code; and Perfecting the Ask: Developing Your Elevator Pitch, each session is dedicated to fueling passion and encouraging professionalism.

Participants also explore careers in the nonprofit, private and public sectors, expanding their knowledge and their networks. There is also an emphasis on leadership style, strengths and competencies as well as the importance of physical, mental, and financial well-being.

For **Ting Barnard '15**, owner of Ting Barnard Studios, welcoming **Manal Jakhar CLRI '19** into her workplace was an opportunity to fortify her business and reflect upon her own strengths.

"Confidence, hard work and integrity are the essentials when I am looking to hire. A strong candidate will be willing to overcome challenges, meet deadlines and navigate circumstances using their individual strengths," Barnard says. "I found all of those qualities when Manal shadowed me, and see them now that she's an employee. She and I share a lot of the same strengths, but how we implement them and our approach and styles differ in the best ways."

Barnard and her husband **Ian Barnard '17** are CLRI sponsors, along with Maryanne and **John Mulattieri '09**, National Grid, Amica, and, most recently, Navigant Credit Union.

These sponsors provide one of the greatest benefits of CLRI: It's tuition-free, a powerful unifier that creates equity of opportunity for participants and strengthens the program. CLRI's success stems, in part, from its diversity — diversity of opinion, background, and experience.

"By the second or third session, participants begin to realize it's not just about the exercises or the projects," says Feisthamel, whose vision helped shape CLRI. "It's about how we listen, not just how we speak. It's about how we open up to new perspectives, not just push our own agenda. There's value in working together to create something that's greater than the sum of its parts."



Donte Brame, CLRI '19 asks a question during the orientation session for first CLRI class spanning a full academic year.

# LRI welcomes four new staff members



**Shana Murrell '06**  
Director of Engagement  
and Development

**Arranger – Intellection –  
Ideation – Futuristic – Input**

In this newly created role, Shana is coordinating all giving and stewardship efforts as well as expanding alumni membership and engagement. "Since I was a participant in 2006, I have seen the organization grow, and I'm excited to be a part of that growth in the future."

Shana brings more than two decades of experience in alumni relations and development including a stint as Interim Director of Development for Becker College, Alumni Director for Bridgewater State University and more than 11 years at Rhode Island College where she held various leadership roles with the Alumni Association and the Foundation. She received a master's of business administration degree in business management, and a bachelor's degree in hospitality sales and meeting management from Johnson & Wales University. She volunteers for the National Philanthropy Day Committee organized by the RI chapter of The Association of Fundraising Professionals.



**Abby Montine**  
Training Administrator

**Achiever – Learner – Input –  
Developer – Relator**

Abby oversees the Make RI Stronger strengths initiative and other professional development efforts. "I'm looking forward to being a part of this exciting work of bringing individuals, communities, and the state together."

Abby's experience in nonprofit management and education is both domestic and international.

Working with several New York City nonprofits, she developed successful grant proposals, designed program models, and collaborated with staff to guide organizational strategy. As a TEFL-Certified Instructor and Trainer in the U.S. Peace Corps in Santo Domingo, Ecuador, she designed and led professional development sessions for Ecuadorian educators citywide and delivered pre-service training sessions to newly arrived Peace Corps volunteers.

She received a master's of business administration degree from The Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University, and a bachelor's degree in English from Providence College.



**Christopher Donovan**  
Events and Communications  
Specialist

**Restorative –  
Individualization – Arranger  
– Strategic – Analytical**

Christopher oversees LRI's communications strategies and implementation. "We're in a small state packed with people doing great things. Working at LRI is an opportunity to highlight so many of those Rhode Islanders, who are a part of the LRI family."

He also coordinates special events such as Publick Occurrences and Jeffersonian Dinners.

Christopher has a decade of experience in the nonprofit sector as an administrator in the performing arts. He recently served as Director of McVinney Auditorium in Providence and Assistant Managing Director at Barrington Stage Company in Pittsfield, MA.

Since 2017 he has volunteered as a community organizer for the monthly PechaKucha Nights in Providence. He received a bachelor's degree in marketing from UMass Dartmouth.



**Samantha Bergbauer**  
College Program  
and Alumni Coordinator

**Responsibility – Empathy  
– Individualization –  
Arranger – Relator**

Samantha is overseeing the College Leadership Rhode Island program. She was drawn to LRI after hearing about how strengths are utilized to accomplish goals. "It's unique to work at a place where everyone genuinely enjoys their job, and I can safely say that is the case here because everyone is using their strengths."

She is also focused on CLRI alumni engagement opportunities. "I would like to grow the CLRI alumni network within Rhode Island and also include alumni who have moved out of state."

Samantha graduated from Providence College with a bachelor's degree in public and community service, and business studies from the Feinstein Institute. After her undergraduate degree, she completed a year of service with AmeriCorps at RI Campus Compact and then earned a master's of education in school counseling.

## Join Leadership Rhode Island for the inaugural





# Here's what some of our alumni have been up to

**Kathryn Power '86** has returned to state government as Director of the Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals, a position she also held from 1993-2003.

**Dean Isabella '14** has moved to the state Department of Children, Youth and Families as Assistant Director of Child Protective Services.

**Mary Wyatt '98** is now Principal at her own firm, Wyatt Consulting.

**Phillip Kydd '98** has joined **Emanuel Barrows '05**, **Roger Begin '87**, and **Steven Pare '01** on the Lifespan Board of Directors.

**Craig Phelps '06** has retired from his position as Senior Assistant Vice President and Marketing Director at Amica.

After nearly three decades at the helm, **John Gregory '94** has retired as President & CEO of the Northern RI Chamber of Commerce.

goTeff Superfoods, a startup company launched by **Saron Mechale CLRI '18**, recently won a Gold award from the Rhode Island cohort of MassChallenge. The company sells cereal and granola featuring teff, a grain long used by Ethiopian runners.

**Kim Hall '11** has retired from her position as Chief Learning Officer at the Naval Undersea Warfare Center.

**Catherine Capoloupo '14** is now an associate at Napier Executive Search.

Six LRI alumnae and a member of the 2020 class are among the 2019 Women of Achievement honored by the YWCA Rhode Island: **Christine McDermott '11**, Director of Sales and Marketing at Tri-Bro Manufacturing; **Kibbe Reilly '03**, President of Reilly Consulting Associates; **Angela Bannerman Ankoma '14**, Executive Vice President, United Way of Rhode Island; **Ana Novais '04**, Deputy Director at the state Department of Health; **Anne Conway '88**, Director, RI Historical Society; **Bev Wiley '83**, Compliance Officer, Community College of Rhode Island, and **Beth Bixby, a PI II**, CEO of Tides Family Services.



**Mechale CLRI '18**



**Gregory '94**



**Ambrosino '11**



**Novais '04**



**Power '86**



**Portugal CLRI '19**



**Brown '00**



**Bolwell '09**



**Sweeney '16**



**Kydd '98**

*The Wrong Todd*, produced by **Anthony Ambrosino '11**, recently won "Best Indie Film" at Film Threat's Award This! 2020.

**Meaghan McCabe CLRI '11** has been promoted to Senior Communications Advisor for U.S. Senator Sheldon Whitehouse.

**Yarrow Thorne CLRI '10/LRI '17**, founder and executive director of The Avenue Concept, presented How Cities Breathe at TEDxProvidence 2019.

**Matt Brown '00** is a founding Co-Chair of the RI Political Cooperative, an organization advancing a slate of candidates for state and local offices.

**Jeanette Palmer '15** is now Managing Director at NAIL Communications.

The new executive director at Worcester Community Housing Resources is **Jennifer Schanck Bolwell '09**.

**Lanre Ajakaiye '17**, is the new Head of Membership (NFPA Global) at the National Fire Protection Association.

**Peter Bramante '02** has been named Executive Director of Island Moving Company, a classically trained contemporary ballet company in Newport.

**Krystina Almon '16**, who has been working at the Claflin Company for 10 years, has been promoted to Director of Administration.

**Sara Sweeney '16** has joined Seyfarth Shaw LLP as counsel.

**Benedict Portugal CLRI '19** will be joining Amica Insurance as an Associate Account Manager through the Future Leaders Program.

**Savannah Martin**, who is in the current class of CLRI, was named one of Rhode Island Inno's 2019 Inno Under 25.

**Robert Sanders '16** is associate professor and chair of the National Security Department at the University of Hartford's Henry C. Lee College of Criminal Justice and Forensic Sciences.

**Do you have news you want to share with your fellow alumni? Let us know!**

E-mail Christopher Donovan, LRI's Communications & Engagement Specialist at [cdonovan@leadershipri.org](mailto:cdonovan@leadershipri.org)



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Join us on  
Saturday October 17, 2020  
to celebrate

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Years of Leadership

*Location and time to be announced at a later date*