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Profiles

IN BUSINESS

IT'S YOUR STORY... TELL IT YOUR WAY.

A SUPPLEMENT OF
THE BUSINESS JOURNAL



JTS **Johanson**
Transportation Service

Bella Vista
MEMORY CARE COMMUNITY



REFINED JOURNEYS

Refined Journeys President and Product Development Director, Jackie Cross, a 30-year veteran

in travel services talks about staying relevant in the travel industry as a growing brick and mortar company for over 20 years.

At Refined Journeys, we are committed to investing in our travel professional's education which enables us to present new and unique experiences to the most seasoned traveler. Our goal is to cultivate lasting relationships with our clients, to deliver tailor-made experiences based on their individual preferences. We do this by listening and learning about what brings them joy, we strive to understand what they are looking for in each journey. Whether they are looking to be enlightened by experiencing exotic cultures and culinary adventures; or going on safari to view wildlife in their natural habitat. Our job is to listen then educate our clients about the possibilities, ultimately curating the right experience for them.

Each year Refined Journeys hosts a Travel Showcase to present new travel opportunities to the community. We invite five unique travel partners to present their latest products. Prior to this public event we have an exclusive customer appreciation reception, where our travel partners mingle with our clients, giving them an opportunity to have one on one interaction.

At our next Travel Showcase on January 16, 2020 we are excited to be the first to introduce Sir Richard Branson's, Virgin Voyages cruise line to Central California. Virgin Voyages ship, the Scarlet Lady, is set to disrupt the industry with its inaugural voyage scheduled for April 2020. The Scarlet Lady was designed to reflect the look of a sleek luxury yacht, with spaces designed by some of the top names in contemporary interiors. Adult-by-Design, she is a sanctuary at sea for the 18+ traveler. Offering well-being, activated through a mix of high-energy moments coupled with relaxation and rejuvenation, it features alluring entertainment and 20+ world-class intimate eateries. Virgin Voyages is putting a twist on luxury, which the company refers to as "Rebellious Luxe", with all restaurants, group fitness classes, soft drinks, and many more Virgin surprises included, it will be an incredible value for sailors. She will offer four, five and seven-night itineraries sailing to Key West, Cozumel/Playa del Carmen, Puerto Plata, Costa Maya, San Juan and Virgin's



LEFT | Jackie Cross harvesting the blue agave pineapple in the Unesco World Heritage region of Jalisco. **RIGHT** | Jackie Cross hosting an intimate group of clients on a day trip to Saint Emilion, Bordeaux Wine Region.



private spot, The Beach Club at Bimini. We are predicting rave reviews of this truly innovative cruise concept.

In addition to this, at the event we will introduce Blue Roads Touring, who specializes in small hosted group tours. Imagine being one of only 18 people in a luxury mini-coach, yacht or barge, they don't simply drop by top sights and major cities, but invite you to see a destination through the eyes of people who know it best, the locals who call it home. They have just launched their North America experiences, including the Deep South, New England and South West U.S.A.

Refined Journeys is associated with Travel Leaders Group and Traveller Made consortiums, which means as a privately-owned company we have the buying power of larger travel corporations, allowing us to offer added amenities and special pricing. We are also an authorized American Express Membership Rewards, Pay with Points office and can reserve Amex preferred hotels and other travel benefits offered through the American Express card.

The key to our success is embracing the challenges and intricacies that comes with planning travel/traveling and supporting our clients through their journey. We pride ourselves on education, building strong associations with our clients, and delivering quality services by partnering with the best suppliers in the industry. We invite you to call or visit us to learn more about our services and Travel Showcase. www.refinedjourneys.com. CST#209416940



PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Welcome to the sixth edition of "Profiles in Business," which was designed to give local business owners an advertising opportunity to get their stories out to The Business Journal's core audience. This publication consists of editorial descriptions of each company — commonly referred to as "advertorials" — that were completed within the company itself, or by The Business Journal's freelance writers.

The profiles give our advertisers a chance to showcase products and services that our readers may not be familiar with, and to also share the unique stories that make up the character and personality of each successful business. We thank the participating companies for giving us a chance to share their story, and we also thank all of the other businesses that invested in this product with their advertising dollars. We believe the end result is a "who's who" of the top companies in the Central Valley.

This year's profiles, as did the prior five years, make for interesting reading. They detail stories of generational succession, adversity, perseverance and success. They are stories told exactly the way those involved want to tell them. I hope you enjoy reading this year's edition of "Profiles in Business."



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Gordon M. Webster, Jr." in a cursive script.

Gordon M. Webster, Jr.
Publisher

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TREATING LOVED ONES WITH DIGNITY AND RESPECT

For the last seven years, Bella Vista Memory Care Community has provided a home to many patients who had nowhere else to turn. Bella Vista willingly provides care for all types of dementia patients, even severe cases, where other places turn patients away.

Donna Hurley, Bella Vista Memory Care Community owner, said the reason Bella Vista accepts more complex types and advanced dementia patients is because everyone deserves a place to call home. She worked in senior living for 15 years and thinks there is a big difference when it comes to locally owned and operated care centers.

"There is so much of a difference working here versus a big facility," she said.

She said just knowing a little about the residents makes all the difference. One of her residents has a 4-minute memory, and by knowing this, she knows how to engage with her residents. By finding out about their family backgrounds and who they are talking about can make people feel more at ease. Something as simple as calling residents by a nickname versus their formal name is the difference between night and day.

She treats her patients with dignity and respect. Hurley is there every day to walk the floor and greet patients. People can see it in the way she interacts with each person and takes the time to get to know each of her residents.

Hurley said it is not an easy job, but she likes a challenge. Her core plan focuses on a patient's personality. The memory care community encourages their residents to be themselves



without utilizing medication intervention.

"I'm taking a different look at how to handle dementia without drugs," she said.

She said some people spend so much time overcomplicating things so she tries to focus on what the patients really want/needs.

"I don't look at this as a job. I look at it as the ability to make a difference in people's lives," she said.

Her dad was diagnosed with dementia when she was 17, so she grew up around it and knows more than most about the disease.

"It is one of the scariest of all diseases," she said. "There is nothing like dementia because everyone progresses at different stages."

She said what is hard about this disease is an individual may appear as if they are physically intact but their cognition needs may be immense.

"Usually people are used to having their loved ones around and acting the same way, but through their disease processes, their personality changes and their isn't a crystal ball that provides answers as to when things will change again," she said.

According to Hurley, there are far more cases of dementia in the Valley compared to other areas, and she worries that bad air quality may be a contributing factor, as some research suggests. She also sees a trend of younger people getting diagnosed. She thinks the rise in elective surgeries in people at a younger age may be a factor because of the lack of oxygen during surgery.

"Nobody can figure out how it is



caused, so there needs to be more research done and support of financial relief for families who need care support," Hurley said.

Currently, patients ages 58 to 98 reside there. Staff as well as nurses and medication technicians care for residents. It not only has a supportive professional staff, but an amazing on-site medical team provides health care.

"There are a lot of people committed to doing a really good job," she said.

There are a wide variety of activities at Bella Vista, including church services, outside entertainment and a gardening club. Hairdressers and nail technicians also come in to make patients feel good about themselves.

"We try to bring various services here so family members can focus on their loved ones and the burdensome tasks of living life," she said.

There is even a sip and paint night where residents sip on non-alcoholic wine and beer.

"I don't know if they know it is non alcoholic, but they really like paint and sip nights. I want to continue to bring additional services to patients," Hurley said.

Hurley said this group of people is forgotten in society, and even though some residents don't know what day it is, they matter.

"We all have value," she said. "Here, we celebrate our residents for who they are and champion their abilities."

Bella Vista takes extra steps to provide care for patients — small things like having a photo care plan for patients make all the difference when trying to provide care. The kitchen is strategically placed in the middle of the room so residents can smell the fresh food cooked in front of them to help with their appetite.

"If they want to eat dessert first, we let them. We try to make every day enjoyable and not a fight so they can be as comfortable and happy as possible," she said.

The comfort of the patients is important, but so is their safety. The community sets a high standard for training and education providing over 100 hours of training including CPR up on hire. A resident council also listens to concerns.

It has a safe, secure perimeter with safety doors and alarm systems. Staff is available 24 hours a day to monitor patients. The specially equipped front door requires a code for access, or an alarm goes off to alert staff.



"I really try to support my staff because they do a great job," Hurley said. "The staff is focused on improving the lives of our residents."

She said Alzheimer's gets a lot of publicity, but it is actually a form of dementia and more needs to be known about the disease. There are over 400 different types of dementia where some individuals may be diagnosed with multiple forms of the disease. Each form of dementia has different signs and symptoms and each individual progresses differently. The age-old rule states that when you have met one person with dementia, you have met one person with dementia.

Some patients have different schedules than others. For instance, if someone always bathes in the morning, and if a shower time was forced at night, it would cause an unnecessary argument.

"Something as simple as letting the patient shower when they want avoids an unneeded challenge," she said.

Hurley said it's usually an incident that prompts people to seek help, and families want their sick elders to move in immediately. Her advice is to build relationships with the care communities in advance to get to know the people who will be taking care of loved ones.

Bella Vista looks forward to the future in the Valley with a new name and new patients to serve for years to come.

"We find ways to care for our residents focusing on their dignity," she said. "In reality the patients who come here are not getting better, so I am doing everything I can to give the best care and quality of life."

Bella Vista is reasonably priced in comparison to other facilities, and it is the only location in town that is locally owned and operated at its capacity. There are 19 rooms in the memory care community and 36 residents.

In the future she looks to move forward with continued growth. Bella Vista Memory Care Community is located at 5425 West Spruce Avenue in Fresno. To schedule a face to face tour or for more information call 559-840-0452.



THE 500 CLUB

By Kimberly Horg



The 500 Club has a tremendous history in Clovis, but a new chapter has begun at the local casino and the exciting changes are impossible to miss. With a history dating back to 1953, the Sarantos family owned the 500 Club for decades before selling it to K&M Casinos in the beginning of 2019. The new owners, Kevin Barclay and Mike LeBlanc, have brought new ideas and new managers from Northern California to run the day-to-day operations.

The 500 Club originated in Old Town Clovis, but, has since, moved to Shaw and Willow near the border of Clovis and Fresno. The original card room in Old Town remains a bar and grill while the new location has grown into an 18-table casino and restaurant.

The current location opened on June 1, 2012. It operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The full-time operation employs 255 Team Members in areas such as Gaming, Security, and within the Restaurant.

"We have a friendly staff with great customer service experience," said 500 Club General Manager Manny Perez. "Guests come here for a consistent entertainment experience. We have great food, gaming and security with a focus on providing excellent customer service."

Perez had 15 years of cardroom experience before starting

at 500 Club in March of this year. 500 Club's focus is on building an incredible customer service team as well as strengthening its existing relationship with the local community. The 500 Club emphasizes being a good business neighbor.

"Getting to know the community and customers has been great," Perez said. "We plan to form new relationships within the community now and in the future to continue the legacy of the 500 Club."

Perez said the 500 Club is a safe, clean environment, and people from all walks of life frequent the card room.

"We enjoy groups of daily guests who make up 70 percent of our repeat business," he said.

California has a rich history of gambling that can be traced back to the Gold Rush Era and cardrooms have been associated with that same history. There are currently 88 licensed card rooms in California, of which 66 are actively operating. The 500 Club is one that features a smoke-free environment as well as a multitude of Poker and California table games.

The 500 Club began as a three-table card room and grew their table count over time. The gaming selection ranges from Hold 'em, PLO and Omaha at all limits of play. The Poker

We have a friendly staff with great customer service experience.

*Manny Perez
General Manager*



games are complemented with a variety of California Games ranging from favorites like Blackjack and Baccarat to Pai gow, Ultimate Texas Hold' em, and Three Card Poker.

There are knowledgeable team members who are happy to demonstrate how the games are played for guests who are uncertain. According to Perez, Baccarat is the easiest game to learn.

The 500 Club would like to offer customers even more betting options in the future as new games are developed and displayed.

The Player Rewards Card incentivizes play with rewards points. It is free to join, and all the games earn rewards. By having a rewards card, guests qualify for promotions as well as opportunities to win prizes at the casino.

Table promotions like jackpots for Poker as well as Player Rewards Cards allow guests to enjoy returns on their gaming activity and loyalty. The casino holds weekly drawings and tournaments as well as a \$100,000 Poker jackpot.

The 500 Club is very active, especially on the weekends. Beyond the table games, 500 Club features an extensive menu of Asian cuisine like Pad Thai, Khao Piak and Papaya Salad as well as American dishes like New York Steak, Pork Chops and Cheeseburgers.

"It is an entertaining local experience with great food at all hours of the night," Perez said.

Breakfast is served all day and the kitchen is open 365 days a year. Guests are invited to dine in the restaurant, but table-side service is also available on the gaming floor. Service on the floor includes cocktails and meals served for the guest while at the gaming table when requested.

In addition, the 500 Club offers a full bar with more than 20 different beers on tap. Happy hour is offered every day from 3p.m. to 6 p.m. which includes \$1 off drinks and half off appetizers. The dining experience is highlighted by surrounding eighty-inch televisions broadcasting all major sporting events throughout the Casino.

Perez believes the Central Valley is primed for an economic boom, and in the first year under new ownership, there is a lot of preparation for growth and change. The 500 Club plans to participate in community events, non-profit sponsorships

and giving back to the local community.

The 500 Club Casino is conveniently located at the north-east corner of Willow and Shaw Avenue, directly across Willow from the Home Depot. The casino's centralized location offers free and convenient parking. For more information visit www.500CLUBCASINO.com or call (559) 299-9951.



ROBINSON'S INTERIORS A FATHER'S INVESTMENT IN THE FUTURE

By Kimberly Horg

Mike Robinson's first job was as a delivery driver for Hanford Furniture in the late 1960s at age 16. Over the following 14 years, he not only ran deliveries but also set up displays and made sales. He also learned about flooring while working in the furniture business.

Robinson later started his own business in 1980 that serviced window coverings and drapes. He started with only \$35 in his bank account. That same business, Robinson's Interiors, is now going on 40 years servicing residential and commercial buildings throughout the central valley.

Unfortunately, the Hanford community lost a valued member earlier this year when Robinson passed away. Thankfully, two of his four sons, Luke and Jake Robinson, are continuing the family business as well as their father's legacy.

"We are not trying to fill his shoes, just follow in his footsteps," Luke Robinson said. "He taught us to work hard and be honest. Which are basic, but important, rules to follow."

The family business is also equipped with a well-seasoned staff, as multiple members of the sales team have been employed there for over 20 years. They have served generations of customers with excellence. In fact, the very first installer is



still employed there today.

"My dad could find and retain talent," Jake Robinson said. "He saw the value in people and was also humble."

Today, there are nine sales professionals, a few warehousemen, and four office positions, as well as anywhere from 10 to 15 crews a week that work for the company.

"We have the best installation team in the Valley," he said. "There is a big difference if a floor is installed by the right person."

He says if the product is not installed correctly, then its value has been greatly reduced. You also want to trust the people you are letting through the front door.

"People invite us into their home, so I am respectful of that," Jake Robinson said.

The sales associates will walk customers through the process step by step, helping with everything from picking out products to measuring their homes. This level of customer care requires an experienced staff to be able to answer any and all questions.

The two brothers started working full time for their dad in 2015, but both have worked in the family business for most of their childhood. The most impactful lesson their dad gave them is to have integrity and work hard.

"Everyone received the same respect, and he always thought about what was best for the customer," Jake Robinson said. "It didn't matter what walk of life you were from; everyone was equal in his book."

He also wanted to give his customers a fair price, as do his sons. Both agree that he re-invented the business many times. From updating the company website to adding





computers, he had no problem with investing in the future of the company.

"He said that is why he wanted to give us the business, to invest in the future," Luke Robinson said.

The eldest of his four sons, Rusty Robinson, also followed his father's footsteps and went to work for Hanford Furniture. He later became a co-owner with his father and grandparents, when the team decided to expand to Fresno and open Thomasville Home Furnishings at Riverpark. Then, in early 2011, Mike Robinson decided to expand the flooring business in order to offer a second location within the

furniture store, Robinson's Flooring. Mike Robinson always had an entrepreneur's spirit, and so do his sons.

Their father never guided any of them into the business, as he had concerns as a parent, because of the difficulty and stress involved in the line of work. Today, there are seven children between the two brothers who can potentially take over the business one day, but the Robinsons think it will be their own decision, not theirs. Nonetheless, the two of them were eager to work for their dad.

"This is the business he built so I was excited to come on board," Jake Robinson said. "My father had a great reputation and we walked into a successful, fine, sound business."

According to the brothers, their mother Barbara was a refuge to their father.

"My father would not have been as successful without her," he said.

Both say their dad did the work of three people. The two of them split up the work between them and it still isn't easy.

"I am blown away with how much he had to do," Jake Robinson said.

Prior to working at the family business Luke worked as a tax accountant, so he handles the finances, whereas Jake is more the front man.

"Jake is right there in the trenches on the ground," he said.

Both of them have adapted, adjusted, and are still feeling it out. Robinson told them just that — in time both of them will figure it out.

"We bounce off of each other," Jake Robinson said.

Robinson's Interiors installs carpet to hard surfaces in a lot of schools and hospitals. It has done flooring for prisons, Tachi Palace, and commercial buildings from law offices to bowling alleys as far north as the Oregon border.

Currently, one of the most popular products is luxury vinyl plank (LVP). It's less labor intensive to install, and it can be more affordable than other similar look products.

"They are quality, good looking floors that look like hardwood," Jake Robinson said. "It is the closest you can get to wood."

He says it is made for active households. He has three kids, so coming from a father, it is great for a family.

"It can handle what other woods can't and be more cost effective," he said.

He says there is a real trend with hard surfaces currently. Hard surfaces last 20 to 25 years whereas carpet lasts most people 10 to 15 years. Multi tones, grey, brown and beige tones are the top color choices among customers. He added that flooring lasts much longer if it is installed properly.

The Robinsons value the work their staff does because the business family is comprised of hard-working people. The brothers both work six days a week.

"He would have been glad that we are keeping the business going and happy there is a not a for sale sign on the lawn," Jake Robinson said. "His legacy was us and this store."

The brothers were born and raised in Hanford and reside in their hometown with their uncles, aunts, and cousins so the family has a lot of roots in the city. Robinson's Interiors has a loyal family and community following that has kept the business going.

"We are excited to have been in business for 40 years," Luke Robinson said. "We want to continue it for, at least, another 40."

Robinson's Interiors invests in the well being of the community by regularly taking part in community events and organizations. The brothers are involved with Rotary Club, community boards, and make regular donations to fundraisers. Robinson's Interiors is located at 230 N. 11th Avenue in Hanford. For more information call (559) 582-2610 or visit www.robinsoninteriors.com.

IN LOVING MEMORY MIKE ROBINSON



VALLEY COMMUNITY SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER INFUSING CAPITAL, EXPERIENCE AND WISDOM INTO VALLEY SMALL BUSINESSES

By Kimberly Horg



Valley Community Small Business Development Center (VCSBDC) provides one-on-one counseling, technical assistance and training to entrepreneurs and small businesses that want to start, grow, expand or strengthen their business. VCSBDC has provided these services throughout Fresno, Madera, Tulare and Kings counties from its headquarters located at the Herndon Campus of its host, Clovis Community College.

All business consulting services are offered on a confidential basis and at no cost.

Since January of 2019 VCSBDC has provided consulting to 475 clients looking to start or expand a business. This has resulted in 33 new businesses started, the injection of over \$11 million in capital infusion (loans, investments and equity) helping local businesses develop and expand, and has also supported the creation and/or retention of over 1,400 jobs. During this period, VCSBDC also conducted or/co-sponsored 28 workshops for more than 1,600 attendees. Hitting those numbers has meant more successful local businesses, which boosts the economy as a whole.

"We are happy everything is on track and looks good," Said VCSBDC Director Rich Mostert. "This is the first fully staffed year of operation with Clovis Community College as our host. We have met and exceeded our State goals and deliverable and we will exceed all Federal goals and deliverables before year's end."

"The Central Valley is a fantastic place for entrepreneurs and small business owners to start and grow their business,"

said VCSBDC Director Rich Mostert. "The need is great and we are working diligently to build and refine our Center to meet the growing demand for professional and effective business development services."

According to Mostert, Fresno and the Valley is also a good test market for those who want to explore new product lines or test business concepts. Fresno is the fifth largest city in the state with a relatively low cost of living. There are fewer competitors here compared to larger cities in the state and we have a rising population.

VCSBDC is one of six centers that serve the Central Valley, with the Valley Community Small Business Development Center in Clovis leading as the largest. There are outreach locations in each of the four counties. "We have a big area we cover. Our four-County service area has a population of approximately 1.76 million and covers over 14,000 square miles. We are very appreciative that our host, Clovis Community College is very supportive in our efforts to fully serve our region and meet our goals," he said. "We have a wealth of opportunity with the college." In addition to the knowledge and support of administrative staff and faculty, VCSBDC has access to classrooms to conduct workshops on the Herndon Campus. Currently, it staffs only two, but it utilizes interns from the college to assist with work.

"We have hired Clovis Community College student interns to work here and gain experience while helping local businesses," he said.

The program has hired and deployed 18 business consul-

tants who are actively helping clients. It offers consulting in all four counties it covers. Consultants help with everything from how to start a business, business planning, marketing, financing, management, bookkeeping, procurement, exporting, and many other subjects.

"Our goal is to have 30 consultants on-board by the end of the year," Mostert said.

When we are recruiting consultants, we are looking for individuals with experience, expertise and/or training that will help a business expand. Different factors like the number of clients it has served, business starts, jobs it has supported and capital infusion are all taken into account.

Mostert has 40 years of experience working in business and economic development as well as lending and business planning. He also has started to run his own businesses, so he uses his background to help businesses. "It is nice to drive down the road and see a business that I worked with many years ago who are still thriving," Mostert said. "That is the favorite part of my job because it is tangible evidence of how economic development impacts lives."

"I have a commitment to improving the lives of people by helping them find economic prosperity through business ownership," he said. "I'm also very fortunate to have made friendships with the people who also serve small businesses and have built lasting partnerships with them."

Whether it is to start a business or talking to a business that has been around for years, Mostert makes sure businesses get the help they need. VCSBDC pays subject matter experts to connect to clients and also conducts workshops and training. It has targeted certain underserved demographics, but



helps anyone and everyone.

Mostert said he partners with all businesses and service providers and that there are great entrepreneurs in the demographics he works with. "We do this to increase our ability to fully facilitate small businesses growth and expansion."

According to him, there needs to be more ethnic diversity in the Southeast Asian and South Asian communities. "It is interesting talking to people because a business is just like a person, and just like people who have their own personality, we try to get on track based on that personality," he said.

He says one of the biggest concerns that he hears is that 80 to 90 percent of small businesses fail in the first years of operation, but if guidance, advice and planning takes place it can improve the success rate for a business.

VCSBDC also assists newer and existing businesses in finding ways to improve and diversify revenue streams. "Our goal is to help businesses improve and get more sales, whether it is by getting advice or help with refinancing — that is the bottom line," Mostert said.

VCSBDC is funded by grants from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and the California Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-BIZ) as well as in-kind contributions from Clovis Community College. In order to expand to fully meet the needs of our clients, additional funding is needed.

To learn more about their services, visit Valleycommunitysbdc.com or for more information or call 559-324-6403.





A FAMILY BUSINESS POISED FOR THE FUTURE. PRO-SCREEN PRINT, SIGNS, AND GRAPHICS

Tim Leary started his career in Fresno in 1986 in the radio business. After 7 years of selling advertising for KYNO AM/FM, he wanted to do something on his own - something tangible.

"I wanted to create and sell something that I could put my hands on," he said. In 1993, Leary started Pro-Screen - this was the outlet he needed to create a product that his clients could touch and hold.

When Pro-Screen was started, they only screen-printed signs; and now, that technology is in the past. All of Pro-Screen's production is done on large high-speed digital printers. "The technology keeps improving," says Leary. "The product is better, can be produced faster, lasts longer, and is more economical for the customer. It has been energizing to watch the industry and technology grow. It takes quite an investment to stay on the forefront, but it is definitely what keeps us on top."

Pro-Screen is a full-service printing company - they produce all printed products, such as, business cards, booklets, sales literature, vehicle wraps, trade show graphics, interior office graphics, custom wallpaper, banners, school spirit sig-



nage, etc. Pro-Screen is also proud to offer the services of their graphic design, installation, and shipping departments.

"Staying on top of printing technology is demanding. It's always changing and it is our mission to always stay on the forefront of that change. Our customers deserve it," Leary states.

Some of the key categories that Pro-Screen works with are schools, agriculture, retail stores, and most businesses. "We are definitely a business to business printer." Pro-Screen has an outside sales force that is made up of Leary's daughters, and a full team of customer service professionals. "We cater to business, and the needs of business".

The products Pro-Screen produces for schools are something they are very proud of. Pro-Screen works with schools and school districts all over California. Over the years they have created products that help them with the educational initiatives they face every day. Leary has been involved in many school committees, foundations, and task forces so he understands how schools work and what the needs are. Some of the notable campaigns they have worked on are Anti-Bullying, Character Counts, Smoking and Vaping Prevention, and signage to improve school spirit and school pride. "We have seen dramatic impact after we install our programs





on school campuses, it is very rewarding."

Pro-Screen has a diverse customer base, and it handles all projects the same. Whether it is a small or large project, their team wants everyone to feel important and valued. All clients receive the personal touch.

"We work with their time frame and ask when they need it by instead of us telling them when we can have it done," Leary said. "How can we be faster and better? That has always been our focus and it has not changed."

Pro-Screen is a family business. Wife, Deanna Leary, handles the accounting for the business; and now, Daughters Jenna Dykstra (29) and Shannon Ulrich (26) are partners in Pro-Screen and are poised to take over when Tim and Deanna retire.

Jenna, the eldest daughter, joined the business in 2014. She started as a full-time sales representative after working in San Francisco. She studied Business Administration with an emphasis in Entrepreneurship at California Polytechnic State University.

Younger sister, Shannon, also attended California Polytechnic State University. She majored in Wine and Viticulture with an emphasis in Enology, and worked in the wine industry in Paso Robles before moving back home.

"Shannon and I are best friends," Dykstra said. "We play off each other's strengths and differences."

Jenna and Shannon started in sales and customer service, and saw the importance of working entry-level positions to truly understand the business. They recognized how impor-

tant it was to build relationships with customers that their dad had fostered for 25 years, as well as, the need to build relationships with new customers for future growth.

"The girls joining the business happened organically," he said. "They wanted to come home so it just worked out, and it was never forced."

Leary says he is not ready to retire just yet, but he is happy to know the business will be in good hands in the future. "Jenna and Shannon aren't just learning the business any longer. Jenna and Shannon are influencing the direction of the company. Pro-Screen

plans to launch an online digital presence that has been in the works for over a year. The new software system will be the next step to change the future direction of the business. This doesn't happen without Jenna and Shannon. They have a very clear picture of the direction of the company and are working with the management team to take it there. I help where I can, but they are leaders and the company is thriving because of their efforts and energy."

Ulrich says the family is motivated by customer satisfaction. In the future she plans to maintain partners and relationships.

There is also a possibility for expansion in the future.

"The future is bright," Leary said. "We are feeling positive and adapting to the business culture by staying in the forefront of technology."

Pro-Screen is located at 6925 E. Belmont Avenue in Fresno. For more information call 559-255-8079 or visit www.pro-screen.com





JOHANSON TRANSPORTATION SERVICE

As a successful, family-owned business, Johanson Transportation Service is known for its community leadership and support of area charities and educational organizations. Led by President/CEO Larry Johanson and a team of 90 knowledgeable logistics professionals, the company is fully dedicated to volunteerism and philanthropy.

Larry and his wife Patti, along with JTS, recently committed to underwrite the Interdisciplinary Entrepreneurship Faculty/Student Program at Fresno State for the next three years in order to allow the decade-long curriculum to continue to thrive. Larry sits on the Board of Governors at Fresno State, and while attending a meeting, he learned that the current sponsor of that program would be withdrawing support.

With this program, faculty can apply for scholarships to teach students to develop and apply entrepreneurial skills like curiosity, imagination, forward-thinking, risk-taking and creativity to find unique, inventive solutions for market and company challenges, no matter the students' area of study. Students from all colleges can apply for scholarships within the program as well.

Johanson states, "JTS was founded on a platform of applying ethical principles, providing the best customer service and giving back to the communities in which we serve. In 1989, I took over the reins and built the company by continuing my father's business model and by inspiring our staff to be forward-thinking, technology-savvy and to always challenge themselves to come up with out-of-the-box ideas to drive JTS forward.

According to Johanson, the entrepreneurial spirit is indeed alive at JTS. "Our success is largely driven by the inspired, breakthrough ideas of our staff. As a regular supporter of charitable and educational organizations, we believe we can continue to fuel efforts to teach creativity and ingenuity to those who will be tasked with running the scientific, academic, business and health industries of the future. The program is right in line with our foundational principles and culture of entrepreneurialism to grow our business and solve business challenges for our customers."

The company has pledged not only their financial support but also volunteers for many charitable causes throughout the year. Their #JTSCares team does one service project per quarter, and all the regional offices get involved. Some



of the most recent events this year have included: a blood drive for the American Red Cross in Fresno; serving at the Oregon Food Bank in Beaverton, OR; participating in the Donut Run benefiting the Ronald McDonald House Charities of the Central Valley; and, sponsoring the Making the Grade Program with the Fresno Grizzlies, which gives thousands of area kids the treat of attending a game with free lunch.

Since the business was founded in 1971, JTS has evolved into a leader in their field of expertise — the freight transportation industry — and operates across multiple locations in the U.S. JTS is an established 3PL (third-party logistics) provider, licensed property broker, licensed ocean freight forwarder and NVOCC.

"JTS offers customized freight solutions with unmatched services at a competitive price," says Johanson. From full truckload, less-than-truckload OTR service to rail intermodal, domestic ocean and air freight, JTS can accommodate most freight with a range of solutions. Freight moves are

coordinated and customized to suit their shipping customers' unique needs. Their International Division supports their customers doing global business with importing and exporting services, handling the multifaceted process of customs paperwork and billing, insurance handling and other complex details.

Beyond freight transportation solutions, JTS adds value with business improvement ideas and offers technology geared to their carrier partners and shipping customers for better load management.

"An important focus for JTS has been, and will continue to be, that of creating technologies that adapt to our customers' specific needs, business models and processes. At JTS, the evolution of technology is always moving forward. This is a commitment we have made to our customers," states Johanson. They have plans to soon release the next rendition of their cloud-based TMS, which is designed for greater speed, efficiency and transparency, using the most advanced technology tools.

"In 2008, we identified an opportunity to invest in technology to provide much greater value to our customers. This was when we created the first version of our in-house TMS system," says VP of Logistics Craig Johansson. "Built with the same passion and goal that has helped the company evolve over the years, our cloud-based TMS is a one-stop solution for managing full truckload, LTL, intermodal and international freight communications — all in one easy to use, cloud-based web interface. Over the decade, our product has evolved substantially alongside the entire industry. We moved it to a web-based solution and now to the Cloud, and we went from EDI communication to API. Our goal is to create one platform for all modes of transportation," says Johansson.

With their cloud-based TMS, clients can manage logistics communications within a single location and gain online visibility and access to all transportation communications. Shippers can perform instant rate quotes for dry or temperature-controlled truckload, LTL and intermodal, saving time which was previously invested in emailing, calling or logging into carrier websites many times in a day to find the best rate. With the TMS, they can compare LTL rates for multiple carriers on the screen, choose the carrier they want and print a quote. All the data is accessible from the desktop or a mobile device, anytime it is needed.

Users can track shipments from the beginning to the very end, automate order processing, and gain visibility on their shipment performance with easy analytics reporting tools. Documents such as bill of lading and pallet tags are printed, and pick-up instructions for the carriers will be sent in seconds.

The firm also offers a version of their cloud-based TMS

for carriers, who leverage the system's ability to enter their location, provide available equipment and search for available loads they would like to haul on behalf of JTS customers.

While the offering did see tremendous results, team JTS noticed one other hurdle their clients still faced. "The idea of customers having to adapt all their processes into one software often becomes cumbersome. It slows down implementation and has no strong outcome. For that, we have a robust in-house programming team that can customize our product to fit our clients' requirements perfectly," says Johansson.

Johansson cites an instance where JTS helped a customer optimize their transportation system alongside implementing SAP as their accounting and ERP system. They needed a transportation module that could communicate with SAP — to receive and share data. Furthermore, they wanted a system to enable them to predict schedules for manufacturing, raw materials, and equipment they would need in the days to come. They were looking for a solution that could help them be well-prepared ahead of time, even in terms of staffing. "To meet these demands, we customized our TMS by adding many additional features. We were able to make the entire shipping process efficient by giving the warehouse team a tablet through which they could send and share information with our system, as orders were finished. Our TMS was able to automatically dispatch carriers with the tracking number attached, so that the client could take a picked order, move it directly into a dropped trailer on the dock, and essentially, avoid the whole staging process," highlights Johansson.

JTS offers the use of the technology at no cost to them and will continue investing to keep functionality as cutting-edge as possible. "This ongoing investment means our customers don't have to implement their own costly systems. While many of our competitors charge a fee to use their TMS, we've believed from the beginning that it was important to offer this tool as an added value of doing business with us," comments Larry Johanson.

All solutions are provided with service excellence in mind. Friendly, reliable, personal 24/7 attention is given to all shippers and carriers for issues that may arise. They monitor all shipments, support customer policies, negotiate rates, and more. "We think good-old fashioned service is hard to come by these days, but JTS will always be a friendly partner on which our customers can rely," continues Johanson. With so many long-term relationships with their customers in place, their track record of above and beyond service is the reason customers keep coming back to JTS.

JTS was founded on a platform of applying ethical principles, providing the best customer service and giving back to the communities in which we serve.

***Larry Johanson
President/CEO***



Intern Miguel Gaytan stands in front of Sanger Unified School District's new Educational Complex. The project is comprised of an academic and administrative building, a multi-purpose facility, a central plant, and corresponding onsite and off-site improvements. The project has an expected completion date of 2020. Inset Photo: Miguel checks a set of plans for the Sanger Educational Complex project.

FRESNO STATE STUDENTS GET HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE AT HARRIS CONSTRUCTION



As an intern in the construction industry, students are suddenly on the inside track of seeing real projects go from a set of plans and a dirt field to large-scale buildings.

Their onsite experiences, combined with everything they're learning at Fresno State, are all beginning to make a lot more sense!

Harris Construction, located in Fresno, currently has 11 interns on staff, and all are from the Fresno State Construction Management (CM) program. One of those interns, Miguel Gaytan, plans to graduate in the spring with a bachelor's in construction management and a minor in general business.

Miguel began his life in Mexico as a fourth child to farm-worker laborer parents. At the age of 13 he knew he wanted not only a better life, but also a better education so he made the journey to the U.S. alone. He stayed with an aunt and uncle in Fresno and worked and studied hard to accomplish his dreams.

At Hoover High School, Miguel took a basic construction class. Then he took a framing class. One day that class took a field trip to a local jobsite where the Project Manager talked to the students and explained what he did during the day from start to finish - 10 calls a day, meetings, along with the

other day-to-day processes. Miguel knew in an instant, deciding then and there, what he wanted to do as a career.

Miguel then joined the Construction Management program at Fresno State. As a first generation in his family to attend college, Miguel had to navigate it all on his own. But he soon found his professors were there to help him, that they have real construction experience in the field and are great at advising the students. One professor, Professor Lloyd Crask, has helped Miguel significantly. Prof. Crask worked in heavy civil construction and has really taught Miguel about getting along with subcontractors and the culture of a company, and how to meet the expectations of the company for which they work. Miguel knows he can go to Prof. Crask whenever he needs advice.

The staff at Fresno State suggests its students attend the Company Presentations, where construction companies looking for interns present and describe their company and the open intern positions.

"Harris Construction was my top consideration for an internship," said Miguel, "as they are the largest general contractor based in the Central Valley and they have different career path opportunities, including field engineers and project engineers. My goal is to gain the experience needed to become a project manager someday.

"Being at Harris and on a big jobsite has been very educational for me," said Miguel. "I read about all of this in school, but now I get to see it all come to life. What surprised me the most is the work is a lot more than just construction. It is

paperwork, permits, submittals, approvals, contractor meetings, owner meetings... and I have found that I really like it all. My advice to other interns is you have to take the initiative to learn, to excel, and to never be afraid to ask questions. And at school, being part of the CM clubs like the AGC and the Reno competition are critical for your success and personal development. The seminars, learning about safety, and new trends in construction combined with the professors have all really helped me do well."

Ryan Diel, currently the Chief Operating Officer and a 22-year project management veteran for Harris Construction is actively involved in choosing and hiring the Fresno State interns.

"Interns are the future of our company and it's really a mutually beneficial relationship," said Diel. "They are part of our team to both contribute AND to learn. Fresno State is preparing these students for entry-level positions in the construction field. Once the students join our team, we usually place them on large, active jobsites where they can bring together their education with real construction experience. We are fortunate the Fresno State CM program is continuing to blossom; now we might be able to conduct 4-5 CM intern interviews a week. This is giving us a great opportunity to engage with students to see if there's a match before putting them on a career path at Harris. Fresno State is providing a great benefit to our industry and these students."

Harris' Director of Student Internships is Jadee Mejorado. She enjoys working with interns and is always open to meeting new people to consider for the company's program. If you know a student who is interested in becoming an intern in the construction industry, the company suggests having them reach out to Jadee directly.

But not all CM students want to be project managers.

Harris Intern Chris Prince had a goal to attend Fresno State since he was quite young. One day, when he and his dad were watching a 5-story steel erection project in north Fresno, they saw a welder, up high in an angel's wing work platform, wearing a hood, beginning to weld. As the sparks flew, young Chris' eyes opened wide and he shouted out loud, "What is THAT?!"

Chris' family was in Ag, so seeing a guy welding three stories up was a sight to behold. Chris was just staring at it in awe and immediately knew the construction industry was for him. Over time, Fresno State's CM program became his goal to help make that dream a reality.

Once at Fresno State, Chris has had a great experience in the CM program. He appreciates having such great professors and advisors. Chris is especially complimentary of the CM Department Chair, Brad Hyatt, who Chris says is doing great things - including bringing together Harris and other construction firms from around the state, involving the community in the CM program, and encouraging students to engage back into the community. Hyatt meets with the students one-on-one and helps them with their own specific career path.

Chris said, "Professor Hyatt really motivates all of the students and he pushes us to be the best we can be."

But unlike Miguel, Chris isn't working toward becoming a project engineer and ultimately a project manager. Instead Chris has his eye set on becoming a Safety Director and possibly move into Risk Management. Most often, future safety managers get their degree in Industrial Hygiene, but Chris felt that obtaining his CM degree would better prepare him to understand safety as it relates to the construction field. Chris is currently a part-time Safety Coordinator at Harris Construction.

"Harris has created a great safety program," said Chris, "that



Safety is a top priority for Harris Construction. Project Intern Chris Prince is learning on-the-job about Harris' Safety Program and has the opportunity to visit different jobsites to help check adherence to the company's safety program. Chris poses at the Matilda Torres High School project for Madera Unified School District which is comprised of single- and two-story buildings for classrooms, science labs, career technical education, administrative offices, library/media center, health clinic, cafeteria, gymnasium, locker/shower, performing arts theater, aquatics complex, play courts, playfields, parking and ancillary facilities totaling approximately 277,000 sq. ft.

provides the correct tools and knowledge for us to be successful in the building and safety-aspect of construction.

"I always wanted to work at Harris," said Chris, "because working for Harris allows me to be part of the growth of the Central Valley. It allows me to be part of the camaraderie that is built on a jobsite. These jobsites begin to feel like family, and I get to be part of the process of sending everyone home safe. That's why I enjoy safety."

Another project intern at Harris is Alma Jimenez. She too was fascinated with design and construction early in life. When she was eight years old, she began drawing, and re-drawing, her dream home - a big two-story house with her very own bedroom, a big yard, and of course a pool. In junior high, she learned how to draw plans by hand. At Edison High School she took several years of architecture and in her senior year, she also took concurrent architectural and construction classes at City College, riding there on the city bus every day after high school to attend her classes. In one of her college classes, they built a house. They built the foundation, framed the house, and completed all of the rough-in during the first semester, and then completed the home's interior in the second semester.

Yet, even after she had five years of architectural design classes, including time at Cal Poly Pomona, she no longer felt the passion for design. "That house project changed me," said Alma. "I realized I loved how buildings are MADE, not just drawn, so I transferred to Fresno State to attend their renowned CM program.

"It can be intimidating coming into a new school and developing new friendships," said Alma, "but my advisor, Mr. Hyatt, is always very helpful. If I have a question he'll do whatever it takes to get the answer. All of the professors at Fresno State want to see us succeed and graduate. They want us to go out into the industry - and then come back to help future students in their competition teams and Industry clubs. Our CM program at Fresno State has many opportunities and resources to help us reach whatever position we see ourselves achieving in the industry."

Regarding her internship with Harris, Alma said, "When Harris Construction presented at a Fresno State/CM luncheon seeking interns, I knew they were the company for me. The other companies that presented were either small or were located far away. Harris is doing a lot of big projects here in the Central Valley trying to make Fresno better than it is already. I wanted to be a part of that and once they did their presentation I started noticing their jobsites (and signs) are everywhere! I'm glad I chose Harris and really enjoy the people. It's a great internship experience for me."

Richard Spencer, and his wife Karen, who have owned Harris Construction since 1986 are pleased to have so many students from the CM program at Harris. "We are very supportive of the Fresno State CM program and proud of our relationship with Brad Hyatt," said Richard. "As the interns mentioned, Brad is a very capable person, a good leader, and because of it we are having great success with the pool of talent he presides over.

"The CM program is doing great things for the construction industry in the Central Valley," said Richard. "As our communi-



Alma Jimenez, Project Intern at Harris Construction, in one of the Harris job trailers and on an excavator in Reedley for a new project for Kings Canyon Unified School District. The project will include two phases of modernization at Reedley High School.



ty grows there is even more pressure on Brad's department and others like it - all designed to help students and young people. We are pleased and proud to employ a large number of students from the program and are excited about our relationship with the many entrepreneurial efforts at Fresno State, including the Laval Entrepreneur Mentor (LEM) program and the Craig School of Business."

Fresno State is educating and preparing students not just in the CM program but throughout the campus for the betterment of the community and the students themselves. If you and your business are not actively involved with Fresno State, please consider an investment of your time, talent and treasure. These students are the future of our businesses and our community. Not just at Harris Construction, but hopefully at your business, too. Get involved!



FORGING PERSONAL BONDS WITH CLIENTS

Just like the fashion world, trends in the practice of law tend to migrate westward. Something catches hold in Europe, travels across the Atlantic to New York and then slowly becomes vogue on the West Coast.

Much how a stylish jacket sparks comfort and confidence in its owner, the fee structures at Fresno firm Proper Defense Law Corporation afford clients a piece of mind they won't find with any other law firm in the area.

Law partners and husband-and-wife team Sally and Justin Vecchiarelli instituted a flat fee model for their law firm at the start of the year. If a client wishes to pay for their services on an hourly basis, similar to how most law firms in the area charge, they will accommodate the request, but what sets them apart is the ability to quote a flat fee for most any legal matter, including trials.

The flat fee model was the brainchild of Justin, who noticed it is something the major law firms in New York were beginning to offer their clients. But it's not for the faint of heart. It took a significant amount of time and research, attending conferences as well as picking the brains of attorneys in other states to make an accurate quote without losing his shirt.

The end result? Clients love it.

"For business owners, they can anticipate their legal costs," Justin said about the model. "The uncertainty of legal fees can be very scary."

A level of certainty isn't just valued by small business owners. Proper Defense Law Corporation counts among its clientele national and global corporations. No matter the size, each gets the level of attention needed for the best possible legal outcomes.

Practicing law in a different way has been the Proper Defense Law Corporation way since Sally founded the firm in February 2018, with her focus in juvenile law and criminal defense. After several years working for a larger local law firm, Justin brought his business law experience to the firm in January 2019, along with a set of ideas on how to add value to his clients' bottom line.

He cites the example of an employee handbook. He might quote a few thousand dollars to an employer client who needs one, but that figure doesn't approach the value they receive avoiding the legal pitfalls of improper written policies.

"You'll pay me X and get Y in return. Y is always greater



than X," Justin said.

Proper Defense Law Corporation is lean, nimble and the definition of accessible. Client work isn't pawned off on a team of paralegals. The Vecchiarellis take a hands-on approach to their practice, giving each client the personal touch.

"We just want to help people, so we answer and return calls and talk to clients, even on the weekend," Sally said. "My clients as well as Justin's clients have our cell phone numbers."

Sally is able to take that personal touch even deeper in her criminal defense practice. She enjoys the alternative term for an attorney as a "counselor," some-

one who will be there for clients in their worst moments. In juvenile cases, as a mother, she can empathize even more with the parents. She also has certain limitations and is not willing to help those who don't help themselves. She has a hand's off policy on potential clients who have drug or alcohol problems and are not willing to seek help with recovery.

The result is often positive outcomes for Sally's clients who frequently only need someone to believe in and support them. In addition to referrals, the Vecchiarellis regularly receive Christmas cards and graduation party invites from past clients.

"I emphasize that relationship," Sally said. "When I represent someone, I get close to them, and that continues after they are no longer my client."

That equation adds up to a law firm on the rise, to which the Vecchiarellis' accolades can attest. The pair, who met at Fresno State and are San Joaquin College of Law alums, are consistently named "Rising Stars" by Super Lawyers magazine. This honor is bestowed by peers and given to upcoming attorneys under age 40.

Proper Defense Law Corporation also has a location in Beverly Hills, near the corner of Wilshire Boulevard and Rodeo Drive, where they spend some of their time serving Southern California-based clients.

The next big thing for the firm is a new Fresno office and the addition of additional attorneys. They currently share about 1,300 square-feet with another attorney in Downtown Fresno, but come January 2020, they will take the keys on a newly constructed space at Palm and Herndon avenues. The office features floor-to-ceiling glass walls overlooking an atrium, and ample parking.

For more information call 559-825-3800 or visit www.properdefenselaw.com



THE GARABEDIAN GROUP
ACCOUNTANTS. CONSULTANTS. ADVISORS.

BEYOND THE BOTTOM LINE: THE GARABEDIAN GROUP FOCUSES ON CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS

By Valerie Shelton



Accounting firms often have a reputation for being all business, but the family-owned and operated Garabedian Group prides itself on being more than a traditional accounting firm. Simply put, they are focused on revolutionizing the way CPA firms operate and serve clients. The Garabedian Group provides exceptional service that not only delivers what is best for their clients' bottom line, but what is best for the client, overall.

"It's more than preparing tax returns, it's about having a one on one conversation and forming a relationship with the client," said founder and CEO Dale Garabedian.

True to its tagline - Accountants. Consultants. Advisors. - The Garabedian Group takes a holistic approach to manage

its client's finances. While tax returns and other deliverables continue to be the bread and butter of the firm, it is the group's consulting and advisory roles that have expanded significantly in its brief 10-year history.

The Garabedian Group's history has been shaped by Dale Garabedian's philosophy about how a CPA firm should function. Gone are the outrageous hours employees worked in CPA firms of the past. Unproductive employee presenteeism, and once a year, client visits to discuss taxes would no longer be the norm. Another reform came in the form of upfront pricing for clients to feel free to proactively seek advice and discuss any business issue without the fear of unknown hourly billing or a ticking time clock.

"We wanted a balanced work-life and to create long-term relationships with our clientele. Step by step, we made changes, and over time, our vision became a reality," Dale Garabedian said.

The vision expanded as well. In 2013, the firm developed a payroll division, Payroll by The Garabedian Group, to better serve commercial clients in need of a more personalized payroll management.

"Sonja Fabbian and I started the payroll division of our company to offer a solution to clients who were dissatisfied with big national payroll companies. They weren't getting the type of attention and service we believe they deserve when it comes to something as important as payroll. Payroll by The Garabedian Group was created to solve these issues we saw in the payroll industry, and the way we service our payroll clients is something we are really proud of. Processing payroll is truly a commodity--put in the data, spit out the paychecks--and when done right it is great for the client, but when it's done wrong it's a really big headache for clients," Lauren Garabedian Ruff said. "Our job is to take that worry off their shoulders and let them focus on running their business, not calculating their payroll tax liability."

As the payroll division took off, Dale and COO Aaron Garabedian simultaneously established a sister firm, Blue Oak Wealth Management, where both existing and new clients could receive in-depth financial advisory services to assist them with financial planning and investing.

"Blue Oak Wealth Management started from zero and growth was organic," Aaron Garabedian said. "As of today, we have a little over \$100 million in investments, so it's grown quickly, and we believe that is the result of our philosophy. While everyone else is telling their clients they know which way the market will go and where to invest, we tell clients we don't know which way the market is going tomorrow. We know what long-term investment success requires and how to tune out the daily noise. This allows us to make decisions based on financial science, our understanding of the capital markets, and a strong historical perspective."

While Blue Oak Wealth Management is a separate entity,** its existence demonstrates The Garabedian Group's commitment to thinking outside the box to best serve clients. For Dale Garabedian, quality service involves creating a synergy between accounting, financial advisory, legal and estate planning, which often means teaming with other professionals, whether that be working with a law firm or Blue Oak Wealth Management. This approach gives clients the most personal service and strategies tailored to their needs and financial goals.

"If you know the client needs X, but you can only do Y, why not find someone who can do X and be a part of that conversation to help the client," said Dale Garabedian.

With many clients coming from multi-generational family businesses like The Garabedian Group itself, the firm provides valuable first-hand knowledge in navigating the complex issues surrounding the transfer of not only ownership but managing the business day-to-day. They have made it their mission to assist clients in establishing long-term financial and succession plans that will keep their businesses running smoothly from one generation to the next.

"Succession planning is happening at a high rate right now



because baby boomers are getting ready to retire. Our goal is to work proactively with our clients, so when that day comes, everything is in place, and they don't have to worry about how the family business will go on," Lauren said. "We're currently working with a client in their mid-30s whose father died suddenly and there was no plan. This is an all too common occurrence that we see. It is an intense time in their life, but we are working alongside the client to help them come out the other side in a better place."

The Garabedian Group's holistic approach to financial management isn't the only thing that differentiates them from other accounting firms. The Garabedian Group is also the first CPA firm in North America to be certified as a Results Only Work Environment (ROWE). As a ROWE firm, employees of The Garabedian Group are free to work any way they want as long as the work they are responsible for is complete, and client service remains the focus. This means autonomy exists at all levels, not just management. Employees are expected to be where they need to be when they need to be there without having to worry about office attendance being an issue.

"ROWE is this idea that we are all adults, and we should be able to do our work and manage our lives in a way that makes sense to us. It is not necessarily about being here from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., that is not where the value is," Aaron said. "The value we deliver is making sure our clients receive the things we have promised them in a timely fashion, and in the same way, things happening internally are being delivered as well. The idea is that you can work how and when and where ever you want as long as you provide results."

The Garabedian Group's success is rooted not only in the peace of mind and results they deliver to their clients but also from the sense of ownership its employees feel when provided the autonomy to do their jobs to the fullest. That culture will usher The Garabedian Group into continued success beyond the bottom line.

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A DELUXE HAVEN FOR BUSINESS AND LEISURE TRAVELERS

By Kimberly Horg

The completed multi-million dollar renovation to a Visalia area hotel brings many domestic and international travelers to the growing city. Upon entering the vast parking area of the Wyndham Hotel, visitors get a sense of elegance beginning with the fountain and the porte-cochere entrance to the natural touches like the picture of the giant Sequoias over the cobblestone fireplace. There's also a stylish and comfortable seating area in the lobby to make your stay feel at home.

The Visalia location is ranked in the top six of Wyndham Hotel and Resorts in North America for overall satisfaction. In 2019, it was awarded the excellence award by Trip Advisor, as it has for many years. Many international travelers make plans to visit Sequoia National Park and stay in Visalia along the way.

The entire Wyndham Hotel was remodeled to include all 256 guest rooms and public areas. The renovation lasted 18 months and was completed in February of this year. A designer from the San Francisco area customized the hotel's renovation.

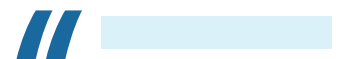


One new feature starting December 2019 is the addition of "Stay Well" rooms to the executive fifth floor. Geared toward the frequent business traveler, the Stay Well rooms infuse wellness with features and programs to help minimize the impact of travel on the human body. Amenities include better rest, fresher air, personalized lighting and more.

"We sat with the designer to hand-pick everything and customize the furniture," said Samantha Rummage-Mathias, Wyndham Hotel Visalia General Manager. "Our whole hotel is customized like no other hotel. We wanted to incorporate the Sequoia feel, so every room has a slice of a tree as a headboard and other décor to bring the feel of the park inside," she states.

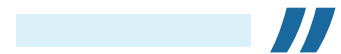
"We are excited to celebrate receiving the Large Business of the Year 2019 award from the Visalia Chamber of Commerce and our 45th anniversary and celebrate our hotel that has been part of the community for so long. This is a great stop to stay the night on your way to Sequoia National Park or Visalia which is a great place to explore, so it is more than a gateway to the Sequoias. It is definitely a stay-over on the way."

The Four Guardsman in the Giant Forest area of nearby Sequoia National Park was recently rated by Sunset Magazine as the best national park in its 2019 Travel Awards. Customers have the option of taking a shuttle to the park directly from the hotel and can take a connecting shuttle in the park back to the hotel.



Our whole hotel is customized like no other hotel. We wanted to incorporate the Sequoia feel, so every room has a slice of a tree as a headboard and other décor to bring the feel of the park inside.

***Samantha Rummage-Mathias
General Manager***





The centralized location in California is a short distance from many popular destinations, but the town of Visalia itself is marketed as a tourist destination and a great convention city as well.

After a long trip; guests can enjoy an array of amenities such as the Mahoganys Lounge and restaurant Café California. Mahoganys Lounge gives guests a chance to sit down and relax. It has a sophisticated look down from its wooden floors, intimate fireplace and leather chairs, as well as a full bar. You also have the convenience of a sports bar with 10 HD televisions tuned to the latest games. The lounge offers Saturday night local entertainment and late hour food service.

Adjacent to the lounge is our full-service restaurant, Café California. The casual dining atmosphere and a local favorite in the Visalia area, offers Californian infused menu items. The restaurant which was also part of the renovation now features a beautiful outdoor patio and offers extended seating for guests and is pet friendly! One of the most popular items on the menu is its signature appetizer, the shrimp stuffed avocado created by the chef, who's been with the hotel for many years like many of the hotel's 120 employees.

In 2015 the hotel changed from Holiday Inn to Wyndham, but the hotel itself has been around for 45 years. This upcoming year it will be celebrating 45 years of business in the community and is currently making plans to celebrate the special occasion.

Wyndham is the largest hotel in the area with its own convention center. The hotel has two ballrooms, a junior ballroom that can fit 300 and a grand ballroom that can hold 600 with options for 14 breakouts. The hotel hosts many conventions, meetings, holiday parties and social events such as big to large weddings. There is pre-function space provided on site and an outdoor terrace. A wedding party can even book a block of rooms and get married on site.

The full service hotel has 256 rooms and 22,000 square feet of meeting space. Wyndham offers ample free parking and Wi-Fi as well as outlets for electric vehicles. The hotel is also conveniently located right next to the city operated Valley Oaks Golf Course and 40 acre park. There is also an indoor pool, heated pool and spa and seasonal outdoor pool. It is conveniently located at 9000 W Airport Drive, Visalia. To make a reservation call (559) 651-5000 or visit www.Wyndhamhotels.com.





United Health Centers
of the San Joaquin Valley

ON THE MOVE TO MEET A GROWING DEMAND

By Kimberly Horg

United Health Centers of the San Joaquin Valley (UHC) provides outstanding health services for underserved communities while offering competitive wages for hundreds of entry-level jobs assisting the economies of families and businesses alike. UHC is a nonprofit organization that provides comprehensive primary care including medical, dental, behavioral health, optometry, chiropractic and other specialty and ancillary health services to everyone in the community. UHC currently operates 17 health centers in three Central Valley Counties of Fresno, Tulare and Kings. UHC is among a number of Federally Qualified Health Centers in the region, but what makes it stand out is the level of care it provides.

UHC will reach its 50th anniversary in 2021 so by historical comparison UHC has been expanding rapidly since 2011 and now the growth is accelerating with eight new health centers coming to the City of Fresno in the next 12 months with an additional 10 locations in the Valley over the next 24 months. To help meet the demand UHC will need to increase the number of its employees from 700 with another 300 - 350



staff members bringing the total number of employees to over 1,000 in the next few years. UHC currently serves 90,000 patients, and that number is also expected to dramatically increase to more than 150,000 patients of all ages by 2022.

Ms. Curtis started working for UHC in 2002 as the Chief Financial Officer, and then in January 2009 she was promoted to President and CEO. She said her goal had been to change the culture at UHC. "I wanted to make it patient centered, and it may sound simple but to obtain lasting improvements in patient care, I had to change the culture from daily interactions to strategic decisions," Curtis said. We needed to put more resources in recruitment, training and essential tools that would assist our staff in performing at their best. This meant in no small measure renovations of existing facilities, introducing the latest in high technologies and reducing the barriers that limited a patient's access to the care they needed. "And while United Health Centers is growing at a fast pace at this time, and our primary focus has remained as the patient experience and taking care of all the needs of the entire family," said Colleen Curtis.

According to Curtis, UHC has also been devoted to the development of its staff. Aside from the best-compensated entry-level jobs in the Valley, including retirement planning, is to give employees more than a fair entry-level wage for the Central Valley. United Health Centers currently pays a starting wage of \$16 an hour and also adjusted salaries for more than 70% of the work force in a recent wage hike.

"We have a well trained staff," Curtis said. "Investing in my staff creates a good environment for the patients, so it goes full circle." She said although the focus is on patients, UHC assists the





staff toward personal and professional development and as well. UHC goes above and beyond to make sure its employees are confident in their skills and abilities to perform at work and have had personal development classes as well. A new training partnership with San Joaquin Valley College is part of that equation. "It is not something offered anywhere else," she said. "We are very excited about it and so are they." An instructor from the college teaches four-hour workshops on established college courses in the curriculum. UHC started offering courses in June that will continue through the end of year. We are investing in the future by training staff members with new critical thinking skills, managerial skills, writing skills, customer service, communication strategies and how to conduct meetings.

UHC has a reach far beyond its current employees, UHC will bring many jobs to the area outside of health care. Many jobs will be awarded to construction companies through the construction of new locations, renovating its current buildings as well as renovating vacant or abandoned structures. Our standards are very high and we will build state-of-the-art centers that are fully equipped to take care of our current

patients and those future patients who will get their care in centers more closely to where they work or live.

"United Health Centers brings a lot to the Valley and definitely enhances the local communities in many ways," she said. The expansion of health centers also adds to the local economies by bringing a variety of jobs, including opportunities in the administrations call center, registration and enrollment services, medical assistants, reception, nursing and a wide variety of medical and mental health providers and health educators.

According to Curtis, the Information technology (IT) department is state-of-the-art and supports all aspects in health care including electronic health records to make sure all documentation is saved and the records on each patient are kept on file so specialists know how to treat their patients. Since the employees are dealing with patients every day, training the staff on enhancements and updates in the electronic health records is always a priority. "The technology department is exceptional and anything we can automate to bring a higher level of care to the departments is valuable," she said.

Each year more than 100 volunteers provide over 13,000 hours of service to assist with patients as well. The large Volunteer Program is one additional service amenity that adds to the overall patient experience. "Volunteers attend to children, escort patients, give directions and offer comfort. Anything and everything of service to make their experience valuable," Curtis said. UHC also works with dozens of high school programs to present at youth programs about careers in health care and community service so students can observe firsthand how to build the required workplace skills at a young age.

Advocacy is one of UHC critical Values because it is important to support underserved communities in as many ways as possible whether it's advocating for individuals, for the community, or presenting locally, regionally or nationally. UHC also works with other advocate and grass roots organizations locally and nationally groups like in the state; the California Primary Care Association and nationally the National Association of Community Health Centers

to coordinate services for the uninsured and underinsured, which includes migrant, seasonal and agricultural workers. UHC's mission in part, is to avoid expensive trips to the emergency room by taking a proactive, preventative approach to health maintenance.

"We understand that most of the people that don't have access also don't get treatment until its emergency treatment, which is way more costly," she said. "Giving people access to health care significantly cuts down on costs in the long run. Our cost in primary care is a tenth of the cost compared to a visit to the ER."

For more information visit www.unitedhealthcenters.org.





CINTAS

By Kimberly Horg

In January of this year, Fresno became home to one of more than 400 Cintas facilities in North America to service over a million customers with quality innovative products and services.

Headquartered near Cincinnati, the industry-leading Cintas decided to build a new state of the art facility to better service the Central Valley.

Cintas tailors its uniform rental program to fit every customer's specific needs, delivering comfortable and professional-looking uniforms and facility services. Cintas brings a long-term commitment of trust and opportunity to an area that is in need of job opportunities. It has 126 employee/partners in Fresno, and recently hired 48 additional partners for its new facility. Cintas believes in diversity and went to great lengths to hire the best people to serve their customers.

"We did over 250 interviews to find the right team," said Andrew T. Remlinger, Cintas General Manager. "We hire partners and we hire the right, customer focused, people."

Mr. Remlinger says everyone at Cintas is a partner in serving our customers. He keeps that in mind when he manages the day to day needs of the business. Employee/Partners receive full benefits including 401K, health and dental packages.

He knows all 126 employee/partners by name. It's the simple acts of kindness and respect that build the partnership within their business. The partners all work together in daily activities and rely on each other. Whether it is unloading, loading, working as a wash operator, belt operator, seamstress or quality control, every member of the team is counted on to deliver quality products to their customers.

"Every partner working here has a direct impact on the final results, and we are all linked," Mr. Remlinger said. "We are a partnership."

He says Cintas partners make real connections with the customers and with each other. The company is projecting to hire at least 10 more partners in the next year and will continue to do so for years to come.

"The marketplace in Fresno is untapped, and the city as a whole is growing," Mr. Remlinger said "Future opportunities were taken into account when we decided to build here."



The company usually acquires its plants, but the new Fresno location was built from the ground up. In the past it serviced the area out of the Bakersfield location.

According to him, the growth in Fresno is some of the biggest in the county, which is good for Cintas and Fresno. Cintas is an established leader in the industry and is a good addition to the city's growth and economy.

Cintas technically started in the 1920s, when its founder began cleaning old rags for industrial companies during the Great Depression, under the name Acme Wiper and Industrial Laundry. In 1973 the name was changed to Cintas, and the following decades, the company started growing because of its high-quality product and service.

"We were the first in 1966 to make the 65/35 blend garment a standard product. The poly/cotton fabric blend made us the innovators who we are," he said.

The secret to their success: the service exceeds the customers' expectations. Cintas helps its customers recognize their products by their presentation. The High Image Collection by Cintas, offers retail-inspired style and flexible fabrics, to keep employees comfortable and professional looking. This line is for employees with jobs who have direct customer contact, which calls for a retail-inspired appearance.



The collections provide much more than retail-inspired garments. Cintas delivers anywhere, from restaurants, automotive repair shops, construction crews, hotels, and more. It also offers Chef Works culinary apparel, and both flame resistant and industrial work wear from Carhartt, (designed exclusively for Cintas). Cintas is the only industrial laundry to have Chef Works branded work apparel in a rental service program offering chef coats, pants, shirts, kitchen supplies as well as chef aprons and beanies.

Cintas has part-ownership in a floor mat manufacturing company to be able to design specialty mats to meet the needs of their customers. Cintas provides a mat that has



earned the highest safety rating from the National Floor Safety Institute do to its patented design to reduce slip and falls. The back of the mat is made with a "tire tread" backing so it sticks to the ground and stays in place.

"When we hear a customer say they want a better product, we react," he said.

He said their action is based on the customer's desire for improvement. Cintas wants to keep the image right for their customers and positively impact their daily work. It relies on



a well-documented management system of policies and procedures to meet goals. For example, shirts are scanned and accounted for, so Cintas can track each shirt's delivery.

"Our Service Reps scans every garment upon pick up from each customer. We then can track each individual garment through our wash process all the way to the point of delivery. Cintas is the only provider that can track our customers' garments to this level."

Cintas also has a back stock of uniforms in case of emergency or special orders. They also keep a large supply of customer emblems in case their seamstress needs to do in house repairs.

"We keep a supply of what is being worn in Fresno to ensure a smooth transition for new customer employees." He said.

When a customer begins a uniform rental program with Cintas of Fresno, no upfront garment cost is required. Uniforms are individually fit for each employee to ensure the right look and fit. If the size of a work force increases, it adds additional uniforms.

"We process over 35,000 garments a week," Mr. Remlinger said.

Cintas services 36 routes in Fresno County. The centralized location that Fresno has to offer is a big reason the city was selected because the new location alleviates pressure from the northern and southern locations. Those locations can now process more customers in their own regions.

"It made sense that this location would work," he said.

Cintas has 9 high-capacity washers, which can wash 40 regular home loads in one wash. Additionally, 5 oversized dryers, the newest models in the company, are installed on the property.

Whether it is mechanical grease or food grease, Cintas knows how to get out the very worst stains. Cintas has 50 different types of wash combinations. The agitation, soap, temperature and time can be adjusted for each load and what chemicals are used is dependent on the products as well as its weight.

"These industrial washers are equipped to get products really clean, no matter what the soil," he said.

Every garment, towel, and mat is thoroughly inspected by the frontline partners who make decisions on the products quality before it gets delivered to the customers.

Cintas values sustainability, so it installed a system to save energy and reuse water. There is a full water processing plant in back of the building that reclaims energy and transfers heat. This is just another way it is dedicated to improving the lives of the communities it serves.

There are service areas that include Fresno, Clovis, Madera, Merced, Tulare, Visalia, and throughout the Central Valley. Customers can set up a tour to see first-hand how the process works. For more information call (559) 457-0183 or visit the location at 2920 S. East Avenue Fresno, CA 93725.

"When customers make a decision to go with Cintas, it is a long-term relationship they can trust," Mr. Remlinger said.



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