

SACRAMENTO  
BUSINESS JOURNAL



*The region's top young leaders channel their inner child*

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**They say the only constant is change.** When we embarked on launching our college over 60 years ago, every business sector, from agriculture to manufacturing and finance, was radically different from what it is today. The traditional roles of men and women were different. The tech boom had barely even begun.

At Sacramento State's College of Business Administration, we've kept up with the times every step of the way. Our five decades of continuous accreditation is a testament to that commitment. Now in its 13th year, our MBA for Executives program has enhanced and advanced the careers of hundreds of business professionals, and continues to adapt with the world around us.

**Business will always change. Our values will not.**



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## FOREWORD

The funny thing about aging is that when you're young, you can't wait to become an adult. And as you get older, you wish you were a kid again. Unfortunately, no one has invented a time machine yet, so traveling back to your childhood isn't possible. However, even with all the responsibilities that come with being a grown-up, it's still possible—and we say essential—to hold on to your childlike enthusiasm, curiosity and energy.

That was the idea behind the 2018 40 Under 40 publication. We wanted to bring out the kid in each of this year's honorees. And what better place to do that than at the Sacramento Children's Museum, a veritable funhouse with all kinds of colorful and interactive



Sam Boykin is managing editor for the Sacramento Business Journal.

exhibits, displays and games. While these accomplished young professionals are all dealing with busy schedules, deadlines and, in some cases, parenthood, they all got into the spirit of this year's theme, which comes through in their photographs.

Of course, what this year's class of 40 Under 40 honorees has accomplished is not child's play. They've all worked hard, competed and achieved an impressive level of suc-

cess. And the good news for Sacramento is that they're just getting started. Representing industries ranging from law and health care to real estate and technology, these young professionals are helping boost the region's vitality and competitiveness. Moreover, they're making the city a better place to live, as they all give back to the community in meaningful ways.

I hope you enjoy this year's 40 Under 40 publication as much as we enjoyed putting it together. The Business Journal is in the unique position to not only help our readers grow their businesses, advance their careers and simplify their professional lives, but we also get to highlight exceptional young talent that deserves special recognition.

## ABOUT THE COVER



This year's cover (and back cover) was created and designed by SBJ lead designer Stephanie Hays and photographed by SBJ photo editor Dennis McCoy. The idea of childhood creativity, imagination, enthusiasm and fun was embodied with Legos, a quintessential children's toy.

The photo is a composite image. The 40/40 model (right) was built by hand, photographed and then disassembled and arranged into a pile of blocks (left), after which another photo was taken. Both images were merged together afterward.

Special thanks to office administrator Rebekkah McCurry for providing the Legos.

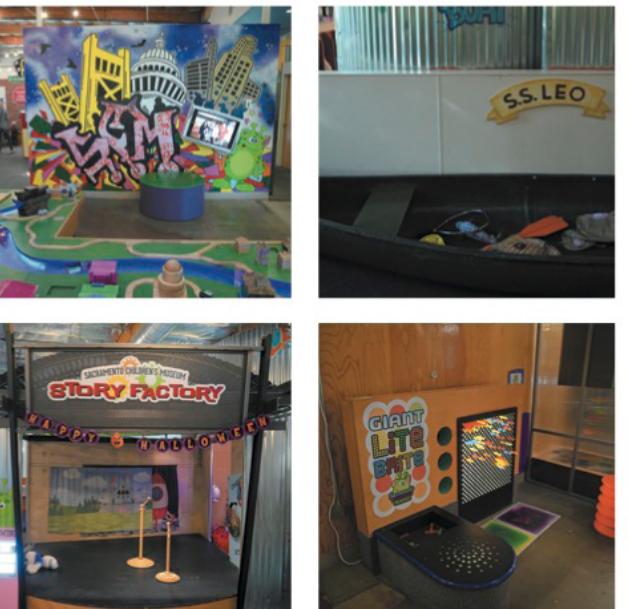
## ABOUT THE LOCATION

Sacramento Children's Museum

After a six-year effort, during which time they raised funds and scouted locations, a couple of elementary school teachers opened the Sacramento Children's Museum in 2011. Located in Rancho Cordova, the museum serves kids up to 8 years old and aims to "spark lifelong learning through play," said Sharon Stone Smith, who has been the museum's executive director since it opened. She oversees five full-time and 10 part-time employees, along with various volunteers. About 100,000 people visit the museum each year, which is the nonprofit's main source

of funding, along with groups sales, outreach programs, fundraisers and grants, said Smith. The city of Rancho

Cordova rents the 7,000-square-foot space to the museum for free, said Smith, who added that they're hoping to expand into a larger space sometime next year. "We knew we were going to need more space the day we opened seven years ago."



(Clockwise from top left) The trains and mural (by local artist Brandon Clingen), the S.S. Leo canoe, the Lite Brite and the Story Factory. These were the four locations used in the photos of the winners.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Meghan Baker	Downey Brand LLP	5
Katherine Bardis-Miry	Bardis Homes	5
Leslie Bosserman	The Makers Place	6
Kelly Brenk	Sutter Health	6
Francisco Castillo	Union Pacific Railroad	7
Michael Cox	Dignity Health	8
Chrysanthy Tsakopoulos Demos	AKT Investments	8
Anne Descalzo	SAFE Credit Union	9
Shawn Dhillon	Ethan Conrad Properties Inc.	10
Lisa Feigenbaum	Sacramento Kings	10
Shawna Fitzgerald	Creating Answers	11
Brenda Forman	Merlot Marketing	12
Lucas Frerichs	city of Davis, The Nature Conservancy	12
Nicholas Haystings	Square Root Academy	13
Samuel Hon	First Corporate Solutions Inc.	14
Tyson Hubbard	Downey Brand LLP	14
Kachet Jackson-Henderson	Kachet Media Group, The Kachet Life, The Blog Bloc	15
Bindu Jaduram	Tri Counties Bank	15
Melissa Jost	UC Davis Health	16
Matt Keasling	Taylor & Wiley	16
Dave Kempa	VOICES: River City	17
Jackie Kirkwood	Goodwin-Cole Company Inc.	17
Giuliano Kornberg	Sacramento Philharmonic & Opera	18
Devin Lavelle	California Research Bureau	18
Brendan Leonard	Anthem United	20
Genevieve Levy	Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services	20
Michael Lynch	Improve Your Tomorrow	21
Christine Mahon	Associated General Contractors of California	21
Kate Meis	Local Government Commission	22
Ashley Mellott	Webconex	22
Kari Miskit	Visit Sacramento	23
Nikky Mohanna	Mohanna Development	23
Sarah Pollo	Pollo Communications Inc.	24
Colin Roe	Fidelity National Title Company	24
Josh Rubin	Post Modern Marketing	26
Vidhu Shekhar	KPMG LLP	26
Venita Sivamani	LearnSkin	27
Donald Terry	city of Rancho Cordova	27
Nathan Ulsh	Franklin Blvd Business District	28
Jia Wang-Connelly	California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation	28
Outtakes		30

## 40 UNDER 40 CREDITS

<b>MANAGING EDITOR</b>	SAM BOYKIN
<b>LEAD DESIGNER</b>	STEPHANIE HAYS
<b>PHOTO EDITOR</b>	DENNIS MCCOY

## JUDGES PROFILES

**AMANDA BLACKWOOD** was appointed as president and CEO of the Sacramento Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce in May 2018. She is responsible for the strategic direction, vision and management for programs and personnel of the Metro Chamber.

Before joining the Metro Chamber, Blackwood served as owner and managing partner of OE Consulting Group, a women-owned firm that works with both for- and nonprofit

**ANNIE V. LAM**, principal of the Lam Consulting Group, is a recognized expert in public and nonprofit service and known for her strategic approach to enhancing and revitalizing organizations. She currently works with legislative and local elected officials to increase their organizational strength and build their pipelines. She leads four organizations with complementary missions: APIs Mobilize, the League of

**MICHAEL BROUGHTON** started his journey as a marketing expert and community leader in the Sacramento region at the University of California Davis. He worked with prominent northern California companies like AGI Publishing, The Chubb Group and CBS Television. In 2005, Broughton founded Blanket Marketing Group, a digital advertising agency serving clients both in the

clients. Previously, Blackwood served as the chief development officer for Elevation Entertainment Group, where she provided leadership for a statewide, multi-location, 700-member workforce. She has also served on the board of directors for the Citrus Heights Chamber of Commerce since 2016 and devoted her time to the Governor's Office of Innovation as the committee chair for Valley Vision's Innovation Pipeline and vice chair of Greater Sacramento Economic Council's Young Professional Board.

**California Cities Asian Pacific Islander (API) Caucus, the League of California Cities Women's Caucus and the California Asian Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus Institute.** She is recipient of the National Association of Asian Pacifics in Politics and Public Affairs' inaugural Forward Award. She holds a master's degree in public administration from the University of Southern California and a bachelor's degree in art from UC Davis.

Sacramento region and across the state. As president and CEO, Broughton leads a team of branding and digital creatives. He and BMG donate over \$100,000 annually in monetary and in-kind advertising to nonprofits and community service organizations. He also serves on multiple nonprofit boards, such as Big Brothers Big Sisters, KVIE PBS's advisory board, Street Soccer USA, the Chevo Foundation and the Sacramento Zoo.

**DR. TONY MIKLA** is the owner of the KIME Human Performance Institute, which focuses on physical therapy and performance training. KIME is one of the fastest-growing health care practices in the region, working with everyone from elite athletes to

high school students. Mikla was also a national finalist for the NCSA Sports

**EMILY BAIME MICHAELS** has been executive director of the Midtown Association since 2013. Under her leadership, the organization renewed for a 10-year term, generating \$15 million in assessment funds for midtown. The association has also helped develop the Sacramento Midtown Farmers Market into one of the most popular events

in the region. Prior to Midtown Association, Michaels was the CEO of the Downtown Stockton Alliance. She has 15 years' experience with Property and Business Improvement District leadership and helped plan the World Cup in Rio, Brazil. More recently, she served as the International Downtown Association's vice-chair for the Council on Public Private Partnership.

40 UNDER 40 HONOREE 2016

40 UNDER 40 HONOREE 2014

Anthem  
United

Congratulations to this year's  
40 Under 40 honorees  
and to Brendan Leonard,  
Project Manager, Sacramento.

[anthemunited.com](http://anthemunited.com)

40 UNDER 40 HONOREE 2016

40 UNDER 40 HONOREE 2014

Growing Places



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**CONGRATULATIONS CHRISTINE MAHON** ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT OF COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING AGC OF CALIFORNIA

ON BEING NAMED ONE OF SACRAMENTO BUSINESS JOURNAL'S

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**IT IS AN HONOR TO BE RECOGNIZED AMONG THE 2018 40 UNDER 40 HONOREES.**

Thanks to each of you for making a positive impact upon our Region.

**Chrysa Tsakopoulos Demos,** President & CEO AKT Investments

**AKT**



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40 UNDER 40 HONOREE 2014

**Meghan Baker**

**MEGHAN BAKER**  
Partner, Downey Brand LLP

**B**aker specializes in lawsuits between Sacramento-area businesses. She graduated at the top of her class from McGeorge School of Law in 2005 and has since held a number of leadership roles at Downey Brand. She has also mentored new lawyers within the firm, served on Downey Brand's hiring committee and contributed to the Downey Brand Associate Liaison Committee, where she facilitated communication between associates and senior management. In addition, Baker is active in the local community. She coaches a youth softball team and volunteers with the McGeorge School of Law,

where she coaches students who participate in regional and national mock trial competitions.

**AGE 38**

**Education:** B.A. in political science and communication, UC Davis; J.D., McGeorge School of Law

**The biggest challenge I've overcome:** "Working on an extremely complex legal case that required long days/ late nights at the office, which was made even more challenging by being pregnant with my second daughter and having a 2-year-old at home."

**Ten years ago, my main goal was:** "Professionally, to become an excellent lawyer and a partner at Downey Brand. Personally, to be a mom—and hopefully a good one, too."

**In 10 years, I want to be:** "Still a partner at Downey Brand! I am truly blessed to work at a great law firm, with top-notch attorneys, in the best city in the state."

**My biggest pet peeve:** "Nagging. And throwing out fruit in an indoor trash



can. It makes the whole room stink."

**My ideal weekend includes:** "A quick getaway to Twain Harte – it's a gem! We love swimming at the lake, miniature golfing and spending quality time together. Plus, it gives us the perfect excuse for not doing laundry, grocery shopping and chores back home!"

**I wouldn't be where I am today without:** "My parents, Tom and Patty Gavin, who love and support me unconditionally; my husband Josh, who is an awesome father and lawyer; Bill Warne, my mentor and friend; and Nancy Drew, my childhood hero who led to my legal career."

**Katherine Bardis-Miry**

**KATHERINE BARDIS-MIRY**  
President, Bardis Homes



**B**ardis-Miry founded Bardis Homes in 2012 with the intention of bringing transparency, innovation and quality to the construction industry. When getting the company off the ground, she was simultaneously finishing her law degree and studying for the bar. Over the years, Bardis Homes has gone from building an average of four homes each year to more than 100. Some of the company's most notable projects include The Mill at Broadway in downtown and The Good Project in West Sacramento. Through the company's housing developments, Bardis-Miry teams up with local organizations like the Front Street Animal Shelter and the Food Literacy Center. These efforts resulted in the

**AGE 31**

development of a 4-acre community garden and free animal adoptions for Bardis Homes residents.

**Education:** B.A. in communication studies, Loyola Marymount University; J.D., McGeorge School of Law

**The biggest challenge I've overcome:** "Learning how to grow a company"

**Ten years ago, my main goal was:** "To get accepted to, and finish law school"

**In 10 years, I want to be:** "Continuing to do what I love"

**My biggest pet peeve:** "Tardiness"

**My ideal weekend includes:** "Catching up on sleep and Ginger Elizabeth chocolate chip cookies"

**I wouldn't be where I am today without:** "My family"

# Melissa Jost

**MELISSA JOST**  
Clinical informatics  
program manager,  
UC Davis Health

**J**ost develops new methods to increase efficiency in health record documentation. She created the Physician Efficiency Program to allow for customized training and optimization of software used by doctors to enable them to more efficiently input electronic health records. The program launched in February and has gained national attention. In August, Jost spoke about the program at a conference with over 18,000 attendees, encouraging other health systems to adopt the UC Davis methods in order to improve the lives of their physicians. Jost is also a triathlete and has spearheaded a program to expand opportunities for women to participate in local races.

**AGE  
29**

**Education:** B.A. in history, B.A. in political science and M.S. in health informatics, UC Davis  
**The biggest challenge I've overcome:** "As a manager in a field where young women are the minority, I've had to work to change perceptions about what women leaders in technology and health care look like. It takes time to build trust, but it benefits everyone."

**Ten years ago, my main goal was:** "To study law with the aim of drafting and analyzing congressional legislation."

**In 10 years, I want to be:** "Improving legislation for regulation in health care and health care technology. I believe that government can be a critical driver for progressive health technology adoption and standardization, through which we can build a healthier world."

**My biggest pet peeve:** "When I run out of coffee. No perfect morning starts on tea."



**My ideal weekend includes:** "A trip to Temple Coffee and time to disconnect from my phone and technology. I crave unscheduled time with my family and friends after maintaining such a demanding daily work and triathlon training schedule."

**I wouldn't be where I am today without:** "Jennifer Burger, my mentor and former manager at UC Davis Health. When I joined UC Davis Health she promised to always challenge me. She kept her word and inspires me to become a better person and a stronger leader."

# Dave Kempa

**DAVE KEMPA**

Founder/editor  
VOICES: River City

**K**empa is the founder of VOICES: River City, an online news publication that serves the greater Sacramento area. The goal of VOICES: River City is to fill gaps in Sacramento news coverage and to provide a platform for community members to write about local issues. Now in its second year, the online publication generates about 5,000 unique visits to its website each month. Kempa has established VOICES: River City by hosting meet-and-greets during which community members can engage with writers and editors and by focusing on local buy-in. Kempa won a first place

**AGE  
34**



award from the California News Publishers Association in 2017 and a Robert F. Kennedy Award in journalism in 2010. He is also an adjunct professor of journalism at American River College.

communication/journalism, Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Arizona State University

**The biggest challenge I've overcome:** "My friend Tex's death in 2017"

**Ten years ago, my main goal was:** "Seeing how long I could spend living out of a backpack in South America. (Answer: Just under a year.)"

**In 10 years, I want to be:** "Living out of a backpack in South America"

**My biggest pet peeve:** "Coffee shops with spotty internet"

**My ideal weekend includes:** "Soccer, a day trip, day drinks, night owls and hiding out with a great book from the Sacramento Public Library."

**I wouldn't be where I am today without:** "Personally? My parents, sisters and friends. Professionally? The Nehemiah Emerging Leaders Program (Class 007), and VOICES: River City's volunteer editors Anthony Siino, Kris Hooks and Blake Gillespie."



# MATT KEASLING

**MATT KEASLING**  
Attorney, Taylor & Wiley

**AGE  
39**

**K**easling specializes in land use and development law. Some of his most significant cases include getting approval for a 15-story tower in midtown Sacramento, working on Sutter Park, the largest infill redevelopment project in East Sacramento, and approving the remodel of a family shelter that keeps nearly 100 homeless families together. Keasling is also the president of Sacramento Steps Forward, a nonprofit that manages all federal funds for local homelessness service providers, working closely with the city and county of Sacramento.

**Education:** B.A. in history, UC Santa Barbara; J.D., McGeorge School of Law  
**The biggest challenge I've overcome:** "Learning to operate without sleep after I became a dad."

**Ten years ago, my main goal was:** "Simply to make it through the Great Recession and figure out how to help my clients develop land during an incredibly difficult time."

**In 10 years, I want to be:** "At a point in my career where I am known by my clients and my peers for providing legally supportable innovative solutions. I'd also like to attend every meeting in shorts."

**My biggest pet peeve:** "As I look out the office window at a flag at half-mast for Senator McCain, my biggest pet peeve is the increasing incivility in politics. We need to get back to a time when we treated others with respect."

**My ideal weekend includes:** "A trip to the Central Coast with my son and beautiful wife, a little wine tasting and a sunny beach."

**I wouldn't be where I am today without:** "A lot of hard work, hours reviewing case law, brutal exams and lots of gray hairs."

# Jackie Kirkwood

**JACKIE KIRKWOOD**

Vice president of operations, Goodwin-Cole Company Inc.

**AGE  
39**

**A**s a Marine Corps veteran, Kirkwood has translated her leadership skills from public service into the private sector.

Kirkwood retired from the Marine Corps in 2015 with the rank of gunnery sergeant and moved on to work as the executive administrative manager at the Children's Receiving Home of Sacramento, a local foster care facility. Now, Kirkwood serves as vice president of operations at Goodwin-Cole Company Inc., a manufacturer of awnings, textiles and ornamental iron,

where she oversees the company's manufacturing teams. Kirkwood continues to support the military community as president of Woman Veterans Giving, an organization that seeks to narrow the gap between civilian and military relations. Additionally, she volunteers with the Sacramento chapter of The Mission Continues, which helps veterans find purpose through community impact.



**Ten years ago, my main goal was:** "Retire from the Marine Corps and start my second career."

**In 10 years, I want to be:** "The CEO of The Goodwin-Cole Company and still promoting the largest and most successful women veteran's nonprofit: Women Veterans Giving."

**My biggest pet peeve:** "The smell of

cigarette smoke"

**My ideal weekend includes:** "A weekend getaway near the beach where we can relax with food, wine and time together."

**I wouldn't be where I am today without:** "The knowledge and support of family, friends and all of the Marines I served with"

# Brendan Leonard

## BRENDAN LEONARD

Land acquisition and entitlements, Anthem United

In his role at Anthem United, an international real estate development company, Leonard has helped the Sacramento region capitalize on new home development opportunities. Prior to working at Anthem United, Leonard founded his own consulting firm, served in the U.S. military, earned a seat on the board of directors of the Building Industry Association and founded a competitive men's lacrosse team in San Francisco. Currently, he serves as vice chair for the City of West Sacramento Environment & Utilities Commission and participates in

**AGE  
39**


local volunteer programs through the Sutter Club and Saint John's Program For Real Change.

**Education:** B.A. in communication, Saint Mary's College; civil engineering and government, United States Air Force Academy; Ross Program in real estate development, USC

**The biggest challenge I've overcome:** "Overcoming age bias in a field where

youth is (understandably) perceived as a lack of experience or maturity to do the big jobs with enormous budgets."

**In 10 years, I want to be:** "Contributing meaningfully to the positive direction of this world while in ferocious pursuit of my best self."

**My biggest pet peeve:** "Upspeak. It is one of the most damaging characteristics of the speaker's credibility and the English language overall."

**My ideal weekend includes:**

"Unstructured time with people I love, rigorous exercise, learning, meditating, recovering, binge watching Planet Earth, making food, being in nature, napping, writing and last but certainly not least, plotting the next move."

**I wouldn't be where I am today without:** "Crushing hardship. It forged a wisdom that forever altered the fabric of my being. But on the daily, it is the intelligent, successful, loyal, loving goofballs that comprise my core friend group."

# Genevieve Levy

## GENEVIEVE LEVY

Director of family services, Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services

**Education:** B.A. in international relations; international relations and Spanish executive leadership program, UC Davis

**The biggest challenge I've overcome:** "Helped refugee family through the tragic loss of their father, brain injury in the son and subsequent services needed, including asylum petition for brother, family self-sufficiency and name change applications. The illiterate mom got her driver's license and the family moved into a new apartment."

**Ten years ago, my main goal was:** "Continue working for a cause I believed in, to support my community including immigrants and refugees, get married to my best friend and start a family."

**In 10 years, I want to be:** "The president/CEO of a nonprofit social service organization that I am proud to lead. I would also like to be involved in activities at my children's schools, coach local youth sports and find new ways to support the community."

**AGE  
35**


"Complacency, laziness and acceptance. Just because things are normally done one way, doesn't mean they can't be different, better and more efficient."

**My ideal weekend includes:** "Spending time with my husband, daughter and friends. Being outdoors."

Riding our bikes to go to the park, farmer's market and restaurant."

**I wouldn't be where I am today without:** "The support of my best friend and husband, Rob. We have been together since we were 19 and we have supported each other through all academic, professional and personal accomplishments."

# Michael Lynch

## MICHAEL LYNCH

Co-founder and CEO, Improve Your Tomorrow

Lynch co-founded Improve Your Tomorrow in 2013 with the goal of increasing the number of young men of color who attend and graduate from colleges and universities. Improve Your Tomorrow started with 17 students and \$2,000. The organization now has 35 staff members and a budget of \$1.5 million. Improve Your Tomorrow has changed the trajectory of hundreds of young men of

**AGE  
30**


color by providing them with support services from seventh grade until college graduation. Students from the original cohort of Improve Your Tomorrow will graduate from college this year, with many more graduation ceremonies on the horizon.

**Education:** B.S. in business management, Humboldt State University

**The biggest challenge I've overcome:** "Starting Improve Your Tomorrow"

**Ten years ago, my main goal was:** "To become an attorney"

**In 10 years, I want to be:** "CEO of IYT"

and a university professor"

**My biggest pet peeve:** "When people are late!"

**My ideal weekend includes:** "Eating great food, spending time with my wife and daughter, playing basketball, going to church and reading."

**I wouldn't be where I am today without:** "My wife and dad"

# Christine Mahon

## CHRISTINE MAHON

Associate vice president, marketing and communications, Associated General Contractors of California

Mahon works to give a voice to the construction industry and call attention to policy or workforce issues. During the statewide drought in 2014, Mahon represented clients that relied on water supplies from a critically low Folsom Lake and helped craft a strategic plan to make the issue stand out to lawmakers. Prior to her role at Associated General Contractors, Mahon managed communications and public affairs strategy for VSP Global's mobile clinic outreach in California. In that role, she worked to identify communities with significant gaps in eye care and find sustainable solutions to ensure the health of their residents. Mahon is also chair of Metro EDGE, where she supports the professional

development, civic engagement and philanthropic involvement of about 700 young professionals in the Sacramento area.

**AGE  
29**


**Education:** B.A. in communications, California State University Sacramento

**The biggest challenge I've overcome:** "I think that one is yet to come! I'm expecting my first child in late November, which is guaranteed to present some exciting and exhausting challenges."

**Ten years ago, my main goal was:** "Simply to make it through college. In 2008 I was in my second year of college, transitioning to a new school and learning how to balance a full-time job."

**In 10 years, I want to be:** "Continuing to find ways to make an impact in Sacramento. I almost left to move to Portland a few years back and stayed after realizing this community

would always be home. I want to keep helping to make it better."

**My biggest pet peeve:** "The person who always sends high-importance/read receipt emails that aren't urgent. It's usually the same person who calls to see if you got their email they just sent."

**My ideal weekend includes:** "Pre-pregnancy: walking my dog, brunch

with friends and wine tasting in Clarksburg or Amador. Now that I'm pregnant? I really just want a weekend filled with naps!"

**I wouldn't be where I am today without:** "My tribe, network, whatever you call it—I wouldn't be where I am without the support of my friends, family and mentors who believe in me and constantly push me to be better."



# Kate Meis

## KATE MEIS

Executive director, Local Government Commission

**M**eis supports local officials through policy guidance and community events. Some of her projects include creating regional adaptation strategies for climate change, addressing the growing racial equity gap and working with local leaders to prepare for the opportunities and concerns related to autonomous vehicles. Additionally, Meis worked with the Governor's Office of Planning and Research to start the California Adaptation Forum, which brings people together in Sacramento to advance community resilience to climate risks. In 2016, she was recognized by the Chronicle of Philanthropy as one of the nation's "40 Under 40 Young Leaders Who Are Solving the Problems of Today – and Tomorrow." Meis also serves on the boards of a number of community organizations, including the Powerhouse Science Center.

AGE  
37

**Education:** B.A. in sociology, Sonoma State University; M.S. in community and regional development, UC Davis

**The biggest challenge I've overcome:** "As a young female leader, I'm often the outlier. However, thanks to my amazing mentors in the region, I've learned to take full advantage of the great privilege and responsibility that comes with having a seat at the table."

**Ten years ago, my main goal was:** "Improving communities. Traveling around the world seeing amazing parks, diverse mobility options and walkable downtowns, I wanted more people in the Valley to experience those kinds of cities. My position helps me leverage my experiences into building more."

**In 10 years, I want to be:** "With the speed of today's innovations, 10 years is a lifetime. I ask myself every year if I'm still contributing to this work. As long as I can say 'yes,' I will be here helping communities embrace the future."

**My biggest pet peeve:** "Complacency. There is so much in life to be passionate and compassionate about – whether it's a social injustice or a remarkable experience to enjoy and share, I find it really tragic when people live their lives on cruise control."

**My ideal weekend includes:** "I am usually happiest when I'm outdoors with friends and loved ones. I love backpacking in the Sierras, playing soccer, biking along the American River, trail running and traveling just about anywhere I haven't been."

**I wouldn't be where I am today without:** "My tribe. My family has always encouraged me to seek leadership roles. My husband and close friends have given me the strength and energy to take on difficult challenges, and my mentors have guided me through the process."

# Kari Miskit

## KARI MISKIT

Vice president of communications, Visit Sacramento

**M**iskit is at the forefront of bringing the ever-changing face of Sacramento to life. When she started working at Visit Sacramento, Miskit developed a public relations program around Visit Sacramento's Farm-to-Fork initiative and has since created an all-digital press room to create blog posts and videos to market Sacramento as a destination. Miskit uses her professional skills to mentor local students in public relations and communications and serves as a guest lecturer at her alma mater, California State University Chico. Miskit is also the co-chair of the Read Across America project, which encourages recognizable community members to share their love of reading with students.

AGE  
39

**Education:** B.A. in journalism, California State University Chico

**The biggest challenge I've overcome:** "I've had to learn to trust my instincts. It's easy when you're surrounded by lots of opinions to defer to others. But to really lead, I have to believe in myself first and foremost."

**Ten years ago, my main goal was:** "To get to a place where my work and my personal life had a better flow and balance. When you're really cutting your teeth in your career, the balance can shift, so it's about figuring out what works."

**In 10 years, I want to be:** "Surrounded by family and friends, in a job that challenges me and drives me to be better, and all with a good cup of coffee in my hand."

**My biggest pet peeve:** "Nothing bothers me more than people who don't own their mistakes. We're all human, we all mess up. But the way someone responds to a mistake says more about them than the mistake itself."

**My ideal weekend includes:** "No alarm clock, the farmers market with my kids, some exercise, lots of good coffee, verde enchiladas from Tres Hermanas, time to enjoy a cocktail and down time with my husband."

**I wouldn't be where I am today without:** "My family and friends, great professional mentors and plain old life experience. My loved ones and professional supporters challenged me and lifted me up. Those people, coupled with trying new things and overcoming challenges, brought me here."



# Ashley Mellott

## ASHLEY MELLOTT

Chief operating officer and chief of staff, Webconnex

AGE  
32

**Education:** B.S. in business marketing, California State University Sacramento

**The biggest challenge I've overcome:** "I am a recovering people pleaser. Most of my leadership fails and challenges can almost all be pinpointed back to that trait. Once this was overcome, my impact and leadership skills were able to flourish."

**Ten years ago, my main goal was:** "My main goal was to find or create a career that didn't suck, where I could leverage my skills to impact people. I didn't have a specific field in mind, as I felt I could accomplish this in any role."

**In 10 years, I want to be:** "I want to be continuing to grow and develop people. People in my company, in my community and people around the world. This is something I live for and that fuels me."

**My ideal weekend includes:** "Morning creative writing or reading, then mountain biking to get the adventure fix followed by cooling off at the lake. I'd likely serve at church and host a workshop at my house."

**I wouldn't be where I am today without:** "The influence of both (Webconnex co-founder) Eric Knopf and (life coach) Eric Waterbury."



# Nikky Mohanna

## NIKKY MOHANNA

Principal, Mohanna Development Co.

AGE  
28

**Education:** Bachelor's in political economy, UC Berkeley; master's in political economy, London School of Economics

**The biggest challenge I've overcome:** "Entering a very complex, cut-throat industry as a young female and learning all of the technical aspects of construction (traditionally 'a man's world') to value engineer and build with innovation."

**Ten years ago, my main goal was:** "To get a Ph.D. in economics and stay in academia."

**In 10 years, I want to be:** "Revolutionizing the way we build housing through technology and innovative mass production"

**My biggest pet peeve:** "When someone responds to a problem by saying 'that's just the standard in the industry,' instead of being motivated to change it."

**My ideal weekend includes:** "Touring through unique projects and concepts in cities around the globe and getting inspired by the innovation that already exists"

**I wouldn't be where I am today without:** "My mom and dad"

## TOO MANY TO CHOOSE FROM ...

Many of our honorees had a lot of fun at the Sacramento Children's Museum. Here are extra photos that we had to share:



**Josh Rubin**, CEO and owner, Post Modern Marketing



**Brenda Forman**, Vice president, managing director, Merlot Marketing



**Michael Cox**, Service area vice president, mission integration, Dignity Health



**Jackie Kirkwood**, Vice president of operations, Goodwin-Cole Company Inc.



**Dave Kempa**, Founder and editor, VOICES: River City



**Nathan Uish**, Executive director, Franklin Blvd Business District



**Ashley Mellott**, Chief operating officer and chief of staff, Webconnex



**Nicholas Haystings**, President and executive director, Square Root Academy



**Kelly Brenk**, Manager, community health, Sutter Health



**Christine Mahon**, Associate vice president, marketing and communications, Associated General Contractors of California



**Katherine Bardis-Miry**, President, Bardis Homes



**Colin Roe**, Regional sales manager, Fidelity National Title Co.

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for being chosen as one of  
Sacramento Business Journal's 40 under 40

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