

Cuomo talks jobs; these 5 talk about getting theirs



Gov. Cuomo laid out a jobs plan Wednesday, but how do real people get real jobs? Here are some snapshots of mid-Hudson people and how they found their ways to their workplaces. Craig Wolf reports. Craig Wolf/Poughkeepsie Journal



Craig Wolf, Poughkeepsie Journal 4:42 p.m. EST January 22, 2015



"It's all about jobs, jobs, jobs," Gov. Andrew Cuomo said in his State of the State address Wednesday. "Business is the engine that pulls the train."

(Photo: Courtesy photo)



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So, here are some first-person stories from mid-Hudson people talking about their jobs and how they got there. Some found jobs; others made their own.

Watching for trends

Filomena E. Fanelli, 37, is CEO and founder, Impact PR & Communications Ltd., Poughkeepsie.

I grew up in Poughkeepsie, where I live with my husband and two daughters. I originally tried careers in education and sales, earning a degree from Dutchess Community College and attending classes at Marist College, before stumbling upon public relations. My first job in the industry was an entry level position at Rubenstein Associates in New York City, one of the nation's most prominent public relations firms. I spent most of my 20s there, learning the industry and rising through the ranks from assistant to vice president.

By then, my husband and I had our first child and I decided to end my commute and delve into motherhood. Two years later, I was called by a New York City public relations firm to do freelance writing from home.

Drafting press releases and writing articles fit neatly into our life and worked well even after adding another child. However, while juggling deadlines and diapers, I noticed an interesting trend: local businesses were curious about my background and wanted help promoting their news, getting media attention and honing their messages.

Before long, one Hudson Valley client turned into two... and three... and four... and a business was born. Realizing there was a need for my services in my own backyard, I launched Impact PR & Communications in Spring 2014.

It has been a pleasure creating my own Poughkeepsie-based business and working with individuals and companies locally. My advice is not to wait for an opportunity, but to recognize it when it's right there in front of you.



Katy and Leonard (Buddy) Behney pose with items from their two businesses: Mountain Tops Outfitters and Bank Square Coffeehouse. The entrepreneurial couple began by selling T-shirts where they could, and now have two stores in Beacon. (Photo: Courtesy)

Started with T-shirts

Katy and Leonard Behney, both 37, are proprietors of Mountain Tops Outfitters, Bank Square Coffeehouse, Beacon.

Katy and Leonard Behney were born in and live in Beacon. Married in 2007 with two black labs. Katy earned bachelor's degree in community health and then worked odd jobs and Leonard worked in IT at IBM before starting their businesses. Basically, neither were passionate about their current job and wanted to follow their passion, which centered on the outdoors.

We own and operate two businesses in Beacon. Mountain Tops Outfitters (established in 2006) specializes in outdoor clothing, footwear, gear and kayaking. Bank Square Coffeehouse (established in 2009) is a coffee shop, meeting place, workspace, art gallery, music space and has one of the best outdoor patios in Beacon.

Back in 2005 we came up with the idea of t-shirts that centered on Beacon and its mountain. We started selling them at festivals and on consignment until a small space became available at 143 Main St. and grew the business with just what little money we had saved up until that point. After a year, a bigger location across the street opened up at 144 where we still reside. We reinvested everything and were able to do it without business loans, which

also meant no employees or days off for 6 years.

In 2009 a coffee shop at 129 Main St. closed and we were able to secure the space. We didn't have much if any coffee experience but we saw the potential. We did our homework, found a great roaster, hired a good staff and the rest is history.

The best advice we can give is to be passionate about what you are doing. If you are starting your own business, don't expect to make a lot of money (not at first at least). It took us years before we could take a paycheck because we needed to re-invest to build inventory. Be prepared to make sacrifices and put in the time and effort. We worked seven days a week for six years. The reward is, if you are passionate about it, you won't loathe going to work every day. You get out what you put in and it's much easier to put more in if you enjoy the work.



Jaime Butler wasn't really looking for a job, but she found a better opportunity when she met the owners of Integrated Enterprise Solutions, an information technology firm in Poughkeepsie. (Photo: Courtesy photo)

She wasn't looking

Jaime Butler, 36, is a business development specialist, Integrated Enterprise Solutions, Inc.

I am currently a resident of the Town of Poughkeepsie. I'm a 1997 graduate of Franklin D. Roosevelt High School and a 1999 graduate of Randolph Community College with an associate degree in interior design. My career path thus far has been one trying to get to that next level professionally while finding balance with a successful home life.

Currently, I hold the business development specialist position at Integrated Enterprise Solutions, Inc. I'm responsible for the advertising/marketing for the business, event planning and promotion. I also hold an inside sales position to process new customer and customer orders and fulfill a contract with IBM East Fishkill to manage their eDiagnostics User Database.

I was introduced to Alexandra Putman and Eric Gorman of Integrated Enterprise Solutions, Inc. (IES) and their team of IT technicians in 2005. I was alerted that they were looking for an executive assistant but also had contract work with IBM that they needed to fulfill and was able to take the position. I hadn't been sending out resumes at the time, I just happened to meet the owners of IES at the right time.

My advice to those looking for a job or looking to find a better one would be to run down every opportunity and keep trying to be unique. I feel like the things that I knew to be helpful when I had looked for employment no longer apply.



Stacey Kurian passed up what looked like a good job offer. In the end, she got a good one as an assistant project engineer in Poughkeepsie after following her dream to Africa. (Photo: Courtesy: The Chazen Companies)

First, she said 'no'

Stacey Kurian, 24, is assistant project engineer at The Chazen Companies, Poughkeepsie.

When you're a college senior and the number one question you always see and yet still dread coming is, "What are you doing after graduation?" There is no limit to the career fairs you will attend, resumes you will submit, people you will reach out to, and hours you'll spend waiting and wondering if it was enough. Or so it was for me. I dreamed of the day of saying yes, and signing my not-quite-perfected signature on a dotted line that would ultimately justify the last four years. Ironically though, I got my current and first professional job by saying no.

While most people have more than formal conversations with human resources regarding job offers, mine entailed me pacing in a stairwell outside my Oceanology class, pleading for additional time to make a decision. But when the voice on the other end of the line responded with "I don't think you need more time," it became clear I already knew what I wanted.

Instead of taking that ideal job offer, I followed my dream all the way to North Africa to intern with an international engineering ministry organization. While it scared me to know I was taking the unexpected, unconventional path, I knew deep down it was what I was meant to do. When I returned to the states, I was offered another

opportunity at the Chazen Companies, for which I am beyond grateful. Somehow I believe saying no the first time around made me better suited to say yes confidently and contently.



Mark Copans created Real Eye On Solutions after branching out on his own and using skills he had learned at a design firm in New York City. (Photo: Courtesy photo)

Started with \$100

Mark Copans, 34, is owner of Real Eye On Solutions.

I live in Newburgh with my wife and three young children who are the fifth generation of Copans in the Hudson Valley. Growing up, in the family accounting office (where my dad still works), I always loved seeing my dad and grandfather with their clients. Although accounting wasn't for me, I always loved the relationship they had with their clients.

After graduating college with a degree in theater design, I moved to New York City to work as a set designer. I worked on Broadway shows, theme parks, television, events and all kinds of events. I took a job for a design firm working mostly on large marketing events. In the four years I was there, the experience opened my eyes! Until then, I thought business and creativity were mutually exclusive. In January 2010, I created a business to combine everything I love; business, being creative, problem-solving, and community. Real Eye On Solutions™ was born from the idea of using my experience and passion to help local businesses market themselves more effectively.

We provide a full solution to local businesses and nonprofits including graphic design, web design, promotional products, printing, trade show displays, signage, and more.

My advice to those starting out: If you want to have your own business, go outside of your comfort zone. Remember that doing nothing is the only guaranteed way to fail. I started by myself with a \$100 check I wrote to start my business account. At first, I was a little hesitant to jump in with both feet. It wasn't until I invested in my business that things really took off!



Marielle Campbell found internships helped her land a job out of college. (Photo: Courtesy photo)

Internships helped her

Marielle Campbell is an HR assistant at Rhinebeck Bank.

I began my first semester at Marist College in the fall of 2010. I was determined to be active on campus as well as in the Hudson Valley Community. Among many activities; I played tennis on the Marist Women's Tennis Team, I played Cello in the school orchestra and volunteered at the Morse School through Campus Ministry. After speaking with professors, Career Services counselors and local professionals for career advice and guidance, I chose to pursue a BS in Business Administration and concentrate in Human Resources.

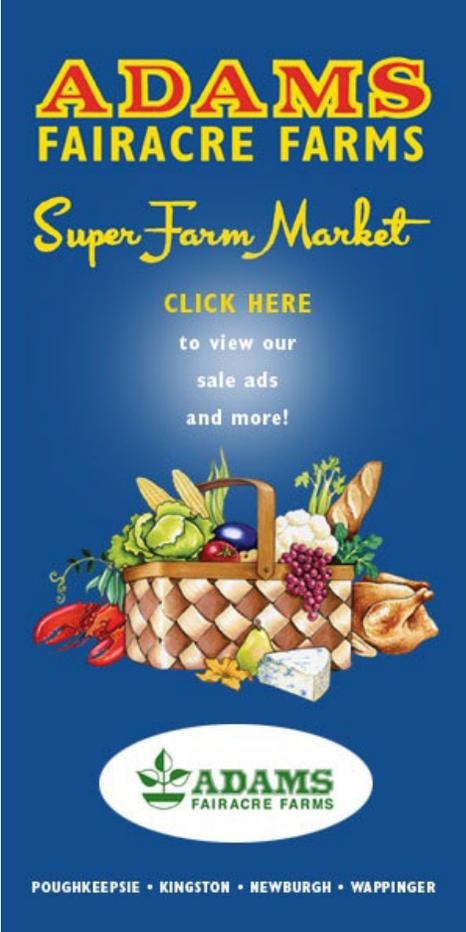
In my junior year, I approached Stephen Cole for the opportunity to work as a student assistant in the Career Services Center. With this campus job I saw what employers were looking for; I saw what kind of students they were pursuing to fill positions and reflected on what I could do to make my resume more attractive to employers.

With help from Career Services, I found four great internships that gave me the professional experience I needed to enter the workforce. In the Poughkeepsie area, I interned at the Mid-Hudson Valley chapter of the American Red Cross. At this internship I worked on recruiting and developing volunteers to become active in assisting the community. In my last semester at Marist I interned for Greystone Programs, Inc. As a Human Resources Intern I was able to solidify my interests in the field and began applying to entry level, full-time HR Positions.

In my last semester at Marist (Spring 2014) I heard that I had been nominated and received the School of Management Intern of the Year Award. After a number of unsuccessful job interviews it was nice to be recognized for all the hard work I had put into my internships. At the awards ceremony, I networked with local employers and discovered that Rhinebeck Bank was looking for a Human Resources Assistant to join their team. After a couple of interviews I was hired to begin working the week after graduation.

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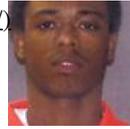


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