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40 under FORTY
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BERKSHIRE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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CRANE™ GENERAL DYNAMICS
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THE BERKSHIRE EAGLE
**Awards Ceremony**

Thursday, March 24

**Berkshire Hills Country Club, 500 Benedict Rd, Pittsfield**

5:00-5:30 PM - Private reception with honorees and sponsors
5:30-6:00 PM - Networking Reception, open to all attendees
6:00-7:15 PM - Program and awards

Cost: $40 per ticket
Includes reception with heavy hors d’oeuvres and cash bar.

To purchase tickets, contact Jennifer Larkin at 413-236-2185 or jlarkin@berkshirecc.edu.

Presented by:

- CRANE
- GENERAL DYNAMICS
- GUARDIAN
- MOUNTAINONE
- BERKSHIRE
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**CONGRATULATIONS!**

Congratulations, Erica from the Age Friendly Berkshires’ Task Force.
We’re all active agers!

Dr. Casey,
Congrats on your 40 Under Forty award.
We’re behind you all the way!

-Dr. Wise and the entire staff.

Congratulations to Pete White (MRC’s Employment Services Specialist) for recognition as one of The Berkshires’ 40 Under 40!

-Your MRC Colleagues

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**Berkshire Bank congratulates Gary Levante for being recognized as one of 40 Under Forty**

Gary has distinguished himself through hard work, technical expertise and dedication to our community.

Gary Levante
Community Engagement Officer, Berkshire Bank Foundation

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**Life is exciting. Let us help.**

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I invite you to peruse these pages that salute Berkshire County’s most outstanding young professionals, recipients of the inaugural 40 Under Forty awards, presented by Berkshire Community College.

I would like to first thank the more than 200 individuals who took the time and effort to nominate over 175 different candidates for these awards. Our eight judges all commented on the high quality of the entire cohort. The depth and breadth of their contributions, invested to improve the quality of life and economic vibrancy of the Berkshires, is particularly impressive. The selection process was extremely competitive, and we are grateful to everyone who participated. I’m sure you will enjoy reading the profiles of our honorees, which appear in this special section.

This publication and the 40 Under Forty awards celebration on March 24 at Berkshire Hills Country Club would not have been possible without our nominees, the forty honorees, sponsors, supporters and advertisers. Special thanks to 1Berkshire, our Strategic Partner and the Berkshire Eagle, our Media partner.

I look forward to meeting many of you at the awards and encourage you to visit our website at www.berkshirecc.edu/40underforty to purchase tickets. We have had an enthusiastic response and expect to sell out, if we haven’t already. Thank you all for supporting Berkshire Community College’s students and programs by participating in this exciting event.

Congratulations again to our honorees. You should all be proud of your accomplishments. We celebrate your achievements and thank you for your contributions to our communities.

Ellen Kennedy
President, Berkshire Community College

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR JUDGES.

Linda Gaspardi Febles
1Berkshire

Charles Kaminski
Berkshire Community College

Nancy McIntire
Berkshire Community College Foundation

Kevin Moran
The Berkshire Eagle

Richard Rowe
Crane

Tim Suffish
St. Germain Investment Management

Kathy Tisdale
Guardian Life Insurance Co.

Carlo Zaffanella
General Dynamics Mission Systems

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Interprint, Inc.
Lee Bank
The Pittsfield Cooperative Bank
Representative Paul Mark
Senator Benjamin Downing
Smith Green & Gold, LLP
Solomon Furniture
Thank you to BCC for the honor of this nomination and congratulations to all of the winners!

Sincerely,
Senator Ben Downing and Representative Paul Mark
Celebrating the future of The Berkshires.

MountainOne congratulates all 40 under Forty Honorees, including our own Jonathan Denmark, President of Coakley, Pierpan, Dolan & Collins Insurance Agency
> Career Highlights: Made a career transition to the field of alternative education and social work. Since starting in June, I have already assisted several students to earn their high school credentials.

> Community Involvement: I serve as a co-founder, multimedia designer, choreographer, and dancer of a local dance group dysFUNKcrew. I also lend my artistic talents to Berkshire Dance Theatre and The Funk Box Dance Studio. When I’m not teaching or performing, I’m capturing and editing videos for 1Berkshire’s Berkshire Initiative for Growth.

> Ultimate Career Goal: To become a high school educator, open my own videography business, and eventually open a dance studio.

> Individual You Admire Most: My wife, Rebecca (Clemons) Ahamad, is the source of my strength and inspiration. She quickly made a name for herself as a hip-hop dance instructor and is Co-Director of Berkshire Dance Theatre. I love her passion and drive to establish a safe and motivating creative environment for local Berkshire youth.

> Hidden Talents: I don’t have any “hidden” talents as I share all my abilities with my community. Whether it’s my ability to teach, dance, write, and/or capture stories and moments through video, I use every skill and talent in an effort to bring people together.

Jamal Ahamad
HiSET Instructor/Youth Counselor, BerkshireWorks Career Center
Birthplace: Brooklyn, NY
Residence: Cheshire, MA

Degrees and Certifications: Bachelor’s in Creative Writing with a Minor in Arts Management, MCLA
M.Ed., MCLA (in progress)

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Rick Bleser
Vice President - Portfolio Manager St. Germain Investment Management Springfield, MA

Birthplace: Niskayuna, NY
Residence: Lenox, MA

Degrees and Certifications: University at Albany, SUNY, BS, Business Administration; BS, Economics

Career Highlights: Achieved the position of Chief Investment Officer at my prior employer, after serving as Director of Research, responsibilities included client contact via original literature, composing a unique investment strategy and executing it on behalf of accounts aggregating in excess of $800 million.

Community Involvement: Over a decade of charitable giving and time volunteered to help college students at my alma mater, securing Bloomberg terminals for the finance department, providing feedback/direction on weekly calls with students managing part of the University’s endowment, and arranging internships for students while at my former employer Berkshire Bank.

Ultimate Career Goal: Own a namesake firm devoted to providing wealth management services. I believe the pinnacle of achievement in my profession would be founding or running a financial services firm.

Individual You Admire Most: My former professor David Smith: he was instrumental in creating my Financial Analysis major, keeping me involved in supporting my school, while serving as an amazing example of balancing professional and personal growth.

Hidden/Unique Talents: My culinary skills are paltry compared to my wife’s, but the family still enjoys my weekend breakfasts—especially, breakfast sandwiches!

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Rick, making this incredible list validates many qualities we already knew about you.
From all of us at the firm, congratulations to you—and your Forty Under 40 peers—for being selected as an upstanding person in Berkshire County!
YOU’RE AWESOME.

Congratulations on your 40 Under Forty Award! We are so stoked to have you on our team.

Hey Arsema,

Are you an A-player excited to join a fast-paced company with a fun work environment and plenty of future growth for us and for you? Send us your story:

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Lee, Massachusetts
Congratulations

Krystle Gallo

& all the other 40 Under Forty honorees.

Please view our exciting career opportunities at www.gdmissionsystems.com/careers.

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Life is calling

the berkshires
Western Massachusetts

More information is available at www.gdmissionsystems.com/careers. Search all jobs, then select Pittsfield, MA.

General Dynamics is an Affirmative Action employer that is committed to hiring a diverse and talented workforce.

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Mission Systems

General Dynamics currently has nearly 100 engineering positions available at our Pittsfield, MA, location.

Come join a company that offers challenging, exciting work that is essential to our national security.
Congratulations to our partner, Jeromy Richardson!
Building Your Career in the Berkshires?
We have something in common: a true investment in the Berkshires
Congratulations
Heather Williams
For your tireless leadership in developing and implementing college/career readiness programs for ALL Berkshire County schools & youth!
The BCREB, your colleagues & Connecting Activities liaisons, and 40,000+ youth that you have reached appreciate your efforts!

Will Conklin
Executive Director
Greenagers
Great Barrington, MA
Birthplace: Sheffield, MA
Residence: Sheffield, MA
Degrees and Certifications:
BA - University of King’s College - Nova Scotia / UMASS Amherst

Kristine Hurley
Executive Director
Downtown Pittsfield, Inc. (DPI) Pittsfield, MA
Birthplace: Pittsfield, MA
Residence: Pittsfield, MA
Degrees and Certifications:
Bachelor of Science - Media Arts

> Career Highlights:
Seeing nearly 50 youth with jobs each summer at Greenagers. Improving the connections for youth with the community, and land in the Berkshires. Creating Sky View Farm with my wife as 4th generation stewards of the land; growing good food for our community. Running our sawmill and producing high quality local lumber.

> Community Involvement:
I served on the board of Berkshares for 4 years and currently serve on the boards of the Great Barrington Land Conservancy and the Upper Housatonick Valley National Heritage Area. I have volunteered at Dewey Hall, Great Barrington Fair Grounds, Sheffield Tree Project, and assist the Mount Everett FFA chapter. I have also been involved with the Sheffield Farmer’s Market.

> Ultimate Career Goal:
I shall continue to shepherd Greenagers as long as it makes sense for me to do so. My goal is to be involved with the community and make improvements toward the goals of ecological sustainability, community integrity, and job creation while remaining firmly attached to our land resources.

> Individual You Admire Most:
My grandfather, Bill Conklin (deceased)

> Hidden/Unique Talents:
I play trumpet in the duo “Easy Ridin’ Papas”

> Favorite Berkshire Person/Place/Thing:
Sky View Farm

Jamal Ahamad
BerkshireWorks Career Center
Congratulates Jamal Ahamad
And all of this years Honorees on This Outstanding Achievement.
Your Professionalism and Dedication is an Inspiration To Us All.

CONGRATULATIONS
Jamal Ahamad
BerkshireWorks Career Center
160 North Street, Pittsfield 413.499.2220 www.berkshireworks.org

Jamal Ahamad, HIset Instructor/Youth Counselor

Kristine Hurley, Executive Director
Downtown Pittsfield, Inc.
Congratulations to the 40 Under Forty 2016 Honorees

Crane Currency is proud to be a sponsor of Berkshire Community College’s 40 Under Forty supporting the future business leaders of the region. Based in Dalton, Crane has a long history of success thanks to a dedicated and loyal workforce. In fact, Crane has been providing the U.S. Bureau of Engraving and Printing with paper for U.S. currency since 1879. And we are now the fastest growing company in the currency industry.

Crane is active in the Berkshires through...

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Interested in working for a leader that is committed to the Berkshires?
Please visit CareersAtCrane.com for more information.
Rick, making this incredible list validates many qualities we, your family and friends already knew about you.
From all of us at the firm, congratulations to you—and your Forty Under 40 peers—for being selected as an upstanding person in Berkshire County!

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Member FINRA, SIPC
Congratulations to all of the outstanding 40 Under Forty nominees and winners.

Berkshire County is a better place to live because of you.

Thanks for all you do and best of luck!
For minor illness and injury, trust the healthcare family that cares for your family.

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- Conveniently located at the corner of East and Elm Streets
- Lower cost than emergency department copays
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FOR SERIOUS EMERGENCIES, CALL 911 OR VISIT A BERKSHIRE HEALTH EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT.
Darcie Sosa
Marketing Manager
Berkshire South Regional Community Center
Great Barrington MA
Birthplace: Dalton, MA
Residence: Dalton, MA
Degrees and Certifications:
B.S., Human Nutrition and Dietetics, University of Massachusetts, Amherst
B.A., English/Communications, Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts

Casey Jones, DMD
Dentist
Dr. Jay Wise, DDS & Dr. Casey Jones, DMD
Lee, MA
Birthplace: Glendale, AZ
Residence: Great Barrington, MA
Degrees and Certifications:
D.M.D. with a Certificate in Public Health, Arizona School of Dentistry & Oral Health (ASDOH)

> Career Highlights: I really loved working at Everyday Health Inc. Based out of NYC, but with a North Adams office, I felt that working there I learned so much about website development, popular diet and working for a larger organization with such a wonderful team. I also loved interning at Berkshire Creative for Julia Dixon and being introduced to both Berkshire and Berkshire Young Professionals. The work at Berkshire South Regional Community Center feels the most rewarding. I am working with one of the Berkshires best non-profit resources and helping bring awareness of all the amazing programs they offer to the Southern Berkshire population.

> Community Involvement: I am lucky to have taken on the role of the Chair of the Marketing Subcommittee for Berkshire Young Professionals as well as serving on the Steering Committee, a Berkshire Chamber of Commerce program. I am also part of the Berkshire Community College Alumni association and their marketing committee and the Communications Lead for Friends of Saint Mary’s, an ad hoc committee started to save and find a buyer to repurpose for the former Saint Mary’s the Morning Star church on Tyler Street. And for a time, I was hiking the Sonsin Shelter dogs, something I would like to get back into the habit of doing again.

> Ultimate Career Goal: I would like my career to continue in a field and for an organization that I know that has the same goals and values that I hold close. I want an organization where the common good and volunteerism is valued and where the thoughts and skills of all employees are valued. I also hope that someday I can take my writing skills and publish a book of short stories.

> Individual You Admire Most: I know it sounds cliche, but there are so many members of our Berkshire Community that I admire. They are so many leaders, all with different titles and roles that are out there trying to motivate others towards continuous progress of the Berkshires. I admire anyone who is willing to stand up for those individuals and groups that are oppressed. It takes courage to change a norm. That is what I can admire in many individuals.

> Hidden/Unique Talents: I feel like I can find humor in almost every situation. Sometimes I believe that I am an animal whisperer. I feel the good energy from them and vice versa. I am also really flexible, which helps with my yoga practice.

> Favorite Berkshire Person/Place/Thing: I have too many Berkshire persons to pick one. I feel the most alive on the Thunderbolt trail on Mount Greylock and I love the diversity of beautiful outdoor, educational and cultural places and events in the Berkshires.

WE WOULD LIKE TO CONGRATULATE ALL THE WINNERS OF THE 40 UNDER 40 2016!

Dr. Casey Jones, DMD

Casey Jones, DMD
Dentist
Dr. Jay Wise, DDS & Dr. Casey Jones, DMD
Lee, MA
Birthplace: Glendale, AZ
Residence: Great Barrington, MA
Degrees and Certifications:
D.M.D. with a Certificate in Public Health, Arizona School of Dentistry & Oral Health (ASDOH)

> Career Highlights: Last year, received the MA Dental Society’s “Ten Under 10” Award for significant contributions to the profession, the community, and organized dentistry. Helped secure a $30,000 Grant for Expanding Children’s Access to Dentistry from MA League of CHCs while Dental Director at CHP. Was a selected participant for The Geiger Gibson Program in Community Health Policy and Leadership.

> Community Involvement: Proud supporter of Berkshire Festivals, Family Fun Days, community arts and church events. Appears on local radio stations and talks with local children’s, parenting and underserved groups sharing a passion for prevention/education and integration of oral health as part of overall wellness.

> Ultimate Career Goal: My ultimate career goal is simple, to make a difference.

> Individual You Admire Most: Too many to list. Personally I admire my husband, Steve Hassmer, for teaching me to see the details in life and to always challenge me with the question, “Why can’t you?” Professionally, Dr. Jay Wise for being an amazing mentor, dentist, and person.

> Hidden/Unique Talents: I was a professional dancer before I was a dentist. I met my husband on a National Tour of “My Fair Lady,” played Velma in “West Side Story,” traveled and performed on cruise ships, and was in Denise Austin and David Kirsch fitness videos.

> Favorite Berkshire Person/Place/Thing: Jacob’s Pillow . . . You probably would have guessed that, with me being a dancer, I love the Inside Out Theatre experience with my children.
Caitlin Pemble
Manager, Agency Growth and Development
Guardian Life Insurance, Pittsfield, MA

Career Highlights: I love my current work with Guardian and am happiest when I’m working hard with smart people to make change and drive results.

Community Involvements: All sorts of stuff! Early childhood is a passion because there’s a need for greater awareness. My grandmother (Catherine Lipa) worked for HeadStart, as an Americorps I worked in pre-k, and the data shows it has significant ROI.

Ultimate Career Goal: To know I made a good living doing meaningful work that inspired me, connected me to people who I respect and let me to live a life I’m proud of.

Individual You Admire Most: My mom’s awesome, but with over 7 billion people in the world there are many! I have a quote in my office from Amma, a Hindi guru, teaching to look at what is of value in others and respect that. That seems wise to me.

Hidden Talents: I’m a beekeeper! Really I’m an apprentice to my husband, who is infinitely more patient and thorough than me.

Favorite Berkshire Person/Place/Thing: It’s not one thing but how everything is fluid and integrated here. Work, nature, community, culture – it’s all connected in the Berkshires. This is an amazing place and I’m thankful to be working for a great company, engaged in the community and experiencing life here.

Interprint is proud to support 40 Under Forty
Congratulations to all 40 honorees!

To learn more about Interprint, visit www.interprint.com
**Director of Nursing**
The Director of Nursing is responsible for the overall operation of nursing services for the agency. Will supervise the Head Nurse at each location to ensure that all appropriate regulations and agency policies are in compliance. Competitive salary and excellent benefits including health insurance and three weeks vacation. Bachelor's degree in Nursing required, Master's preferred. Appropriate Massachusetts license as Registered Nurse.

**Speech and Language Pathologist**
Will utilize leadership, advocacy, and collaboration to provide prevention, intervention, assessment and remediation services to help our children meet their educational goals. A Master's degree in Speech Pathology with emphasis in early childhood education and prior experience is desired. Proper licensure required.

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Ensure the safety, security and wellbeing of students in assigned area while teaching inner control through choices and decision making. HS diploma or equivalent required. Some experience working with youth preferred.

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Seeking qualified candidates for a full time position. This individual must be willing to work a flexible schedule. Prior Food Service experience required; ServSafe Certified a plus. Must be willing to travel to all campus locations and applicant should be organized with an attention to detail.

We offer competitive pay and benefits. Please email your cover letter and resume to: tjohnston@hillcrestec.org or apply online at: www.hillcrestec.org/careers

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**Jonah Sykes**
Development Manager
Berkshire United Way
Pittsfield
*Birthplace:* Beckett, MA  
*Residence:* Pittsfield, MA  
*Degrees and Certifications:* Undergrad in English/Communications at Mass. College of Liberal Arts, Graduate degree in Communications from College of St. Rose

**Career Highlights:**
- Started as the Executive Assistant, promoted to Coordinator of Marketing and then to Development Manager. Currently oversee 200 employee workplace campaigns, previously helped design and launch a new website, oversaw numerous community and donor related events. Have grown professionally in this organization through excellent mentoring by Kristine Hazzard, Jenn Kerwood, and Nancy Stoll.
- **Community Involvement:** Berkshire Young Professionals Chair, Berkshire Initiative for Growth, Berkshire Chamber of Commerce Board, Pittsfield Promise early literacy coalition, Face the Facts - reduce teen pregnancy community coalition.
- **Ultimate Career Goal:** Continue to do good work in improving the quality of life in Berkshire County, the place I will always call home, in any number of ways currently available to me or just off on the horizon that I can aspire to. My ultimate goal is to RETIRE, and start a farm in Sheffield that takes in sheltered and abused animals.

**Erica Girgenti**
Director
Town of Adams- Council on Aging
*Birthplace:* Adams, MA  
*Residence:* Adams, MA  
*Degrees and Certifications:* MS in Human Services- Specialization in Gerontology, Bachelor of Social Work Certified Trainer in Nonviolent Crisis Intervention and in PASS: Passenger Service and Safety

**Career Highlights:**
Everything I have done within my career has led me towards the work we do with Age Friendly Berkshires. Together with many involved partners, we will change the way we are able to live, play, and receive services within this county. Another highlight was being awarded Berkshire 25 in 2015.

**Aleisha Gibbons**
Co-Owner, Berkshire Organics Market & Delivery
*Birthplace:* Sheffield, MA  
*Residence:* Dalton, MA  
*Degrees and Certifications:* B.A. Roanoke College, Roanoke, VA

**Career Highlights:**
- Started Berkshire Organics with less than $1,000 out of my dining room in 2008. We currently gross over $2 million per year and I employ/manage over 20 staff. Berkshire Organics works with over 100 local farms and local food artisans and has spent millions of dollars locally.
- **Community Involvement:** One of my missions has been to be a zero waste company. Whatever produce is not deemed perfect for store sales is sold to the community for $1/lb. Whatever does not sell is donated to local food pantries. This amounts to hundreds of pounds of organic produce each week. Whatever produce is compost material is donated to local farms for their animals.
- **Career Goal:** I would love to completely renovate/update the current Berkshire Organics location, I dream of creating other market locations regionally. The retail food market industry is very complex and challenging, so I hope I can continue to be competitive and offer customers what they are looking for.
- **Admirer:** Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont and his efforts and support for mandatory labeling of genetically modified foods.
- **Talent:** I started running cross country and track and field competitively in 6th grade, through college, I also ran two marathons, but then my body needed a rest. I’ve run local races recently through the Berkshire Running Center.
- **Favorite Berkshire Thing:** We are fortunate to have some fantastic restaurants in the Berkshires who use a lot of local ingredients.

**Education Foundation**
Theresa (Tess) Sorrentino  
VP-Business Development  
Adams Community Bank  
Lenox  
**Birthplace:** Lenox, MA  
**Residence:** Lenox, MA  
**Degrees and Certifications:**  
BA: Saint Anselm College

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Nathan Girard  
Co-Owner Adams Ale House and Broker Associate Greylock Realty  
Adams Ale House, Adams, MA  
**Birthplace:** Adams, MA  
**Residence:** Cheshire, MA  
**Degrees and Certifications:**  
Endicott College (Beverly, MA) undergraduate Bachelor in Arts Management Focus, and Master’s Degree in Business from MCLA (North Adams, MA)

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Heather Williams  
Youth Program Director  
Berkshire County Regional Employment Board, Inc. (BCREB) Pittsfield  
**Birthplace:** Pittsfield, MA  
**Residence:** Pittsfield, MA  
**Degrees and Certifications:**  
Bachelor of Arts, History, U. Mass., Amherst  
Masters of Education, Special Education, Moderate Disabilities 5-12, Westfield State University

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Sharon Connors  
Assistant Director  
KidZone  
Pittsfield, MA  
**Birthplace:** Pittsfield, MA  
**Residence:** Pittsfield, MA  
**Degrees and Certifications:**  
Bachelor of Science, Early Childhood Development, Monticello State College, Pennsylvania  
Master’s Degree in Human Resources, UMass Boston  
MBA, University of Phoenix

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**Career Highlights:**  
I started at Lenox National Bank as a seasonal teller and proof operator. After college, I worked in the loan department. Over the next seven years I worked in loans, compliance, finance and many other areas. In 2014 I became a Vice President and continued in this position until we merged with Adams Community Bank in 2015. Since then I have been a Vice President in the Business Development department.

**Community Involvement:**  
I am a member of St. Vincent de Paul parish and serve on both the parish council and in the choir. I am a member of Pittsfield UNICO, helping raise money for local organizations and people in need. I am also a coordinator of the ACES, UNICO’s youth group. I am now serving my second term with the Lenox Housing Authority. I am always looking for ways to serve and give back to my community.

**Ultimate Career Goal:** To serve Berkshire County with community-focused banking.

**Individual You Admire Most:** Can’t pick just one! Anyone who works to improve the lives of others.

**Favorite Berkshire Person/Place/Thing:**  
The seasons.

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**Career Highlights:**  
I have sold over $20 Million dollars of residential and commercial real estate in my career, helping over 200 people find their dream home and sell their home. With the Adams Ale House my partners and I took a dilapidated old building and transformed it into an elegant gastropub serving nothing but scratch made delicious food and employing 22 employees.

**Community Involvement:**  
HVHS JV and Varsity Soccer Coach, Berkshire County Board of Realtors FLEXMLS Director, Berkshire Board Contracts and Forms Committee, Downtown Adams Business Advocacy Volunteer, Economic Development committee Town of Adams.

**Ultimate Career Goal:** My ultimate career goal is to help other people every day. Whether it is to provide work for 20 people @ the Adams ale house or to have the best priced banquet hall to get the best bang for your buck when you get married; I want to help people’s lives be better and make themselves better in the process.

**Individual You Admire Most:** Individually I admire my mother and father most; they taught me the value of getting a solid education. I always put in as much effort as I could learning and creating opportunities for myself and those around me. I have my mother’s do attitude and have learned it is easier to go and try new things and take incredible risks because rewards cannot be had without taking them.

**Hidden/Unique Talents:** I can breakdance at least I used to be able to. I would also say, contrary to what most people think, I’m a fantastic cook and love spending time with my family in the kitchen.

**Favorite Berkshire Person/Place/Thing:**  
Near the Greylock Glen is a place called Pecks Falls. It is a natural waterfall where the water is frigidly cold and a great place to bring your dog and/or yourself on a hot summer’s day for a dip.

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**Career Highlights:**  
Since 2005, I have managed the region’s Career Readiness system involving the MA Dept. of Education, public school districts, employers, CBO’s, higher education and workforce/ economic development entities. This provides 4,500 youth annually with career awareness, exploration and immersion experiences. Secured $1.4 million to enhance the region’s Career Readiness models.

**Community Involvement:**  
I manage the BCREB Youth Council and serve on the Berkshire Compact for Education, Berkshire STEM Advisory Board and Pittsfield’s Community Connection Steering Committee; enhancing the College and Career aspirations of our youth and meeting the current workforce needs of regional employers to further enhance the area’s population, workforce and economy.

**Ultimate Career Goal:**  
Has been reached! I love my job and greatly appreciate my BCREB colleagues, board members and dedicated community partners. I thoroughly enjoy my work to ensure our youth are equipped with the skills and knowledge to be successful and contributing members of the Berkshire economy and community.

**Individual You Admire Most:**  
My grandmother, Della Shogry (1929-2014).

**Hidden/Unique Talents:**  
I am a fitness enthusiast (borderline fanatic)! Runner & Cross-Trainer

**Favorite Berkshire Person/Place/Thing:**  
My favorite thing is the region’s variety of recreation, health & fitness offerings.

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**Career Highlights:**  
I began my career as a preschool teacher through Girls Inc. Then, became a staff coordinator for a home care/health agency. Next, I served as Asst. Manager of The Apartments at Fox Hollow. I joined KidZone as their School Age Director, then promoted to the Center’s Asst. Director.

**Community Involvement:**  
I do a lot of volunteer work in Berkshire County. Presently, I am Secretary for the BCC Alumni board, I am on the Homebuyer’s Selection Committee through the Central Berkshire Habitat for Humanity, completed the Berkshire Leadership Program and served on their Steering Committee. Currently a member of the Berkshire Business and Professional Women’s (BBPW) group, was Second Vice President/Chair for Membership. I was honored with the Berkshire Business and Professional Women’s Member of the year.

**Ultimate Career Goal:**  
My ultimate career goal is to obtain my Master’s Degree in Education, Social Work, or Human Resources.

**Individual You Admire Most:**  
The individual I admire most is my Mom, Donna Connors. She comes from a strong line of women, my Grandma who was an RN who owned her own nursing home and my Great Grandmother.

**Hidden/Unique Talents:**  
I have figure skated since I was seven years old, competing in the dance portion, precision team and individuals/singles. I taught figure skating to UNASS students as part of their physical education curriculum, I enjoy hiking and photography, have been a photographer for many weddings.

**Favorite Berkshire Person/Place/Thing:**  
My favorite Berkshire “thing” would have to be the abundance of hiking trails and scenic areas. Short or long hikes, throughout the county.
We at Cohen Kinne Valicenti Cook, LLP would like to congratulate our colleague Jesse Cook-Dubin and all of the other 40 Under Forty Award Recipients.
Jenn Smith

**Birthplace:** Kolkata, India
**Residence:** Williamstown.

**Degrees and Certifications:**
- B.S., magazine journalism; minors in leadership communications, Latin American studies, Syracuse University.
- Latina mericans tudies, B.S., magazine journalism;
- Residences:

**Career highlights:** Reporting and editing for The Berkshire Eagle for more than a decade. Traveling to report on Haiti and Pakistan; the Sandy Hook shooting and Boston Marathon bombing.

**Community involvement:** Berkshire Leadership Program, Town Players of Pittsfield, national Education Writers Association member; volunteer for literacy and journalism education initiatives; guest lecturer; Thanksgiving Baking Angels; race volunteer for Josh Billings Runaground and Berkshire Running Center.

**Ultimate career goal:** To continue to work in the field of journalism in the Berkshires and abroad. The industry’s not dying, just changing.

**Individual you admire most:** Anyone working to make a positive difference in their lives/ the lives of others.

**Hidden talents:** Trying anything adventurous. I’ve been skydiving and eaten goat brain. I aspire to be a master bread baker, and do every DIY project on my Pinterest board.

**Favorite Berkshire thing:** There may be six degrees of separation between people and Kevin Bacon, but I swear there are only four degrees between people and the Berkshires.

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The Berkshire Eagle proudly congratulates Jenn Smith for being named one of Berkshire County’s 40 Under Forty.

Thank you for your tireless enthusiasm and unwavering commitment to the future of Berkshire County.

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Congratulations, Tess, we knew you were great!

Meet Tess, our 40 under forty winner

**Career Highlights:** Tess began her career in the loan department at Lenox National Bank in 2007. Within five years she was promoted to Vice President and Compliance Officer. In 2013, she began to also oversee Operations. Tess is currently Vice President of Business Development at Adams Community Bank. She is committed to making a sincere difference for her customers, friends and neighbors at a true community-oriented financial institution like Adams Community Bank.

**Community Involvement:** Tess is very dedicated to her community with her involvement with the Pittsfield Chapter of UNICO where she is Co-Advisor of the youth group, ACES. She is serving her second elected term on the Lenox Housing Authority, is a Confirmation instructor at St. Ann’s Church in Lenox and is a vocalist in the choir at St. Vincent de Paul Church in Lenox Dale, where she also serves on the parish council. In addition, Tess is very involved in the Lenox and Lenox Dale communities where her family roots run deep.

**Ultimate Career Goal:** To continue to serve the Berkshires with community-focused banking.

**Individual you admire the Most:** My nephew, TJ, because of his smile, strength, perseverance and the lessons he has taught me about faith, hope and everyday miracles.

**Hidden Talents:** Singing, crocheting, cooking and cake decorating.

**Favorite Berkshire Business, Place or Thing:** The changing of the seasons.

**Degrees and Certifications:** Tess is a 2003 summa cum laude graduate of Lenox Memorial High School and a 2007 magna cum laude graduate of St. Anselm College in Manchester, N.H. where she earned degrees in Classics and Catholic Studies. While at St. Anselm she was awarded the Campus Ministry Service Award in her junior year.
CONGRATULATIONS!
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CAREER HIGHLIGHTS: I’m an experienced HR/Recruitment professional with 13 years of experience in the field. I work to recruit nursing candidates, and function as a resource and advocate for BHS staff. I was selected as an Employee Leadership Initiative participant by Senior Management, and served as a Project Lead/Trainer during our HRIS launches.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT: I researched/advocated for the development of a band/orchestra program at Reid Middle School, which has proven to be an incredibly successful and popular addition to the curriculum. I currently serve as Fundraising Co-Chair with Allendale Elementary School’s PTO, and have had the same position with Craneville Elementary School. I was a Berkshire United Way Campaign Coordinator, and was also on the BHS Wellness Committee. I’ve also donated over 4 gallons of blood at the BMC Blood Donor Center.

ULTIMATE CAREER GOAL: To continue to grow professionally in the field of Human Resources, while ensuring I successfully maintain a work/life balance for my family.

INDIVIDUAL YOU ADMIRE MOST: My Parents - They taught me the importance of a strong work ethic and encouraged independence. Most importantly, they taught me the importance of family, and for that I am eternally grateful!

HIDDEN/UNIQUE TALENTS: I love event/travel planning, I’m a proud lefty, and I love to cook.

FAVORITE BERKSHIRE PERSON/PLACE/THING: Flavours Restaurant - They have delicious food, and are one of the only restaurants in the Berkshires that offer gluten free options.
We work here.
We live here.
We give here.

In 2015, the Berkshire Life Charitable Foundation gave over $127,000 to Berkshire County organizations that serve physically and developmentally disabled clients.

Our employee campaign donated more than $130,000 to Berkshire United Way, and the company gave another $200,000 to Berkshire County charitable organizations, focusing on financial literacy, workforce development, and health and wellness.

Teams of our employees volunteered at Habitat for Humanity, Meals on Wheels, Third Thursday, Relay For Life, Festival of Trees, Shakespeare in the Park, and Community Resources for People with Autism.

We're proud to be there for the countless individuals and businesses that put their trust in us. We're also proud to provide high-quality jobs right here in Pittsfield – and to support the 40 Under Forty program, which recognizes Berkshire County’s current and future business leaders.

But we’re especially proud of our commitment to this community, where we plan to work, live and give for a long, long time.

Berkshire Life Insurance Company of America, Pittsfield, MA, is a wholly owned stock subsidiary of The Guardian Life Insurance Company of America, New York, NY.
Molly Hines
Technical Account Manager Onyx Specialty Papers South Lee, MA
Birthplace: Anderson, IN
Residence: Stockbridge, MA

Degrees and Certifications: Western Michigan University, BS in Engineering for Paper Engineering

> Career Highlights: I started working as a Product Development Engineer for MeadWestvaco where I created new products and improved existing grade lines. In 2009, the company became Onyx Specialty Papers and in 2013 I became a Technical Account Manager where I now manage both my customers’ technical and commercial needs.

> Community Involvement: I have participated in my company’s United Way and Wellness Committees and have dedicated many hours bringing science into the schools through being a Flying Cloud Institute GIRLS in Science Instructor and a Miss Hall’s Horizons Intern Mentor.

> Ultimate Career Goal: My goal is to continue working and succeeding in the Paper Industry that I love.

> Individual you Admire the Most: The person I have always admired the most is my Dad. He taught the importance of hard work, the correlation between a good attitude and being successful, to value friendship and family – and to remember to always work hard and play hard, just not necessarily at the same time. Although in spirit, he continues to be a major driving factor in how I live my life.

> Hidden Talents: I am an avid photographer, self proclaimed home cook, and my friends and family say I’m the person to go to when planning a unique adventure or vacation.

> Favorite Berkshire Location: Jug End State Reservation, The natural beauty is breathtaking and the hiking trails change with every turn.

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Robert McCulloch-Dews
Director of Administrative Services, Mayor’s Office, City of Pittsfield
Birthplace: Kingston, Jamaica
Residence: Hinsdale, MA

Degrees and Certifications: Bachelor of Arts, Print Journalism, New York University

> Ultimate Career Goal: My goal is to continue using my talents and expertise to better serve those throughout the community.

> Individual You Admire Most: My parents.

> Hidden Talents: I enjoy acting.

> Favorite Berkshire Business, Place or Thing: Tanglewood in the summer.

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Pamela R. Green
Attorney (Partner) Smith Green & Gold, LLP
Pittsfield, MA
Birthplace: Lowell, MA
Residence: Pittsfield, MA

Degrees and Certifications: J.D., magna cum laude, Western New England College School of Law; M.A., World Politics, The Catholic University of America; B.A., cum laude, World Politics, The Catholic University of America


> Community Involvement: I volunteer as Berkshire Scenic Railway Museum’s General Counsel and Special Events Manager. I am a member of the Pittsfield Economic Development Authority (PEDA) Board of Directors, where I sit on the Finance Committee and chair the Special Projects committee. I also joined the Hancock Shaker Village Audit Committee.

> Ultimate Career Goal: I am lucky enough to have already met my career goal - to specialize in an area of law I love, and to be a partner in a quality law firm with professionals I respect and admire. I hope to continue to provide my clients with service that exceeds their expectations in competency and quality.

> Individual You Admire Most: Professionally, I most admire my law partner, Virginia Smith, who is undoubtedly the smartest, most compassionate, and dedicated professional I have worked with. I model my practice after hers, and will continue to do so.

> Hidden/Unique Talents: -

> Favorite Berkshire Person/Place/Thing: I love the Berkshire Scenic Railway Museum. This all-volunteer organization is the most dedicated group I have seen. Their only compensation is the joy they bring to others when they ride on the vintage train equipment, and for them, it’s more than enough.

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Rachael Plaine
Proprietress/Director/Instructor and Partner/Realtor- Berkshire Yoga Dance & Fitness and The Berkshires For Sale, Pittsfield, MA
Birthplace: Pittsfield, MA
Residence: Pittsfield, MA

Degrees and Certifications: University of Massachusetts, Amherst: BA in Dance. Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health: 200-Hour Yoga Teacher Training Program

> Career Highlights: Turning my dreams into reality by opening Berkshire Yoga Dance & Fitness in May 2014. Our Grand Opening Celebration in November 2014, with ribbon cutting ceremony by Mayor Bianchi. Teaching yoga on top of Mt. Greylock on a perfect summer day to over 70 yogis of all-ages, levels and abilities. Working with my parents in our family owned real estate business and helping people achieve their real estate goals.

> Community Involvement: Teaching free Zumba in Park Square on 3rd Thursdays, at Discover Tyler Street, Jacob’s Pillow Community Day and more. Offering donation-based yoga and Zumba classes at Springside Park and Onota Lake. Hosting fundraising such as the One Love Benefit for Kalo Gresser & Breast Cancer Awareness Day and our Giving a Tree, providing holiday gifts for a local family in need. Board member, Downtown Pittsfield, Inc.

> Ultimate Career Goal: Continue to do work that I love and am passionate about while helping others find joy through movement. Broaden our off-site offerings to reach more businesses, schools and organizations. Allow space for fitness professionals and students to thrive.

> Individual You Admire Most: My parents. They have inspired and supported me through my journey, always offering love, guidance and inspiration. They are my role models in business, creativity, compassion and family values.

> Hidden/Unique Talents: I was on a Salsa and Argentine Tango performance dance team in San Diego, where I also learned to surf. I am an avid snowboarder and have dabbled in acting and choreography with Berkshire Theatre Group.

> Favorite Berkshire Person/Place/Thing: My dear friend Yuki Cohen and her hip downtown Pittsfield spot, Methuselah Bar & Lounge.
Congratulations Pam Green

And all of the 40 Under Forty honorees

On this much deserved recognition of your commitment to your profession and to your community.

Your colleagues and friends at

Smith Green & Gold, LLP
75 North Street, Suite 400
Pittsfield, MA 01201
Career Highlights: I started my career in commercial banking before transitioning to marketing. I’ve had the opportunity to transform a bank-wide service culture, work with and promote our business community and raise the profile of our community college. I get to work at a place that changes the lives of individuals and families; you cannot put a price on that kind of satisfaction.

Community Involvement: Over the years, I’ve had the opportunity to work with many organizations and nonprofits that have had significant impacts on our community. Among the most noteworthy include BFAIR, Berkshire and Northern Berkshire United Way, both Berkshire Leadership Programs, Berkshire Young Professionals and the Pittsfield Economic Development Authority.

Ultimate Career Goal: To always be doing work I am passionate about alongside dedicated and community-minded people.

Individual You Admire Most: I’ve had the privilege to know so many talented and inspiring people that I cannot possibly select just one. That said, my parents, grandparents, younger brother and very best friends rise to the top of my list.

Hidden/Unique Talents: While I’m not the best cook, the desserts I bake for family and friends are a big hit, particularly cookies, cheesecakes and lemon squares. I can also raise both of my eyebrows - together and independently.

Favorite Berkshire Person/Place/Thing: My favorite spot in the Berkshires is the Natural Bridge State Park in North Adams, the only naturally formed white marble arch and man-made white marble dam in North America. It’s a beautiful and peaceful place.

Pete White
Employment Services Specialist, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (Berkshire County) and Pittsfield at Large City Councillor
Birthplace: Pittsfield, MA
Residence: Pittsfield, MA

Degrees and Certifications: Bachelor of Arts, History major, Political Science minor from the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts Associate of Arts, Early Childhood Education, Berkshire Community College Berkshire Leadership Program, 2010

Career Highlights: Being hired by the Commonwealth of Mass. as an Employment Specialist at Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission. This was a highlight because MRC services helped me to finish college and get my job at the Brien Center. Being elected twice to serve on the Pittsfield City Council.

Community Involvement: This consists of projects that will improve the quality of life for people in our community; including the Morningside Initiative and Crime Watch, Tyler St. Business Group, 4th of July Parade Committee, Berkshire Leadership Program Steering Committee and serving on the Pittsfield City Council.

Ultimate Career Goal: I would like to continue working towards a more stable regional economy. I would like to continue to learn more and perform my positions better every day. So, my ultimate career goal is to always be able to contribute to my team’s efforts.

Individual You Admire Most: My parents Russ and C. Jean White, State Senator Ben Downing, Dane Wedsted and Gus Nelson.

Favorite Berkshire Person/Place/Thing: The people working to make the Berkshires great. Springside Park.
1Berkshire is proud of all our amazing young business leaders and would like to congratulate the 40 Under Forty on their remarkable achievement.

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> Career Highlights: I returned to the Berkshires in 2011 after working at a large law firm in the Midwest. I’m a business lawyer who represents companies and entrepreneurs with starting, financing, operating, and selling their businesses. My recent work includes negotiating a $9.7 million state grant and leases on behalf of the Berkshire Innovation Center, and representing MountainOne Bank with tax credit financing for Hotel on North.

> Community Involvement: First Vice President of Downtown Pittsfield, Inc., advocating for the continued rejuvenation of Pittsfield’s urban core. In connection with my work on the downtown area, I have served on a variety of committees for the City of Pittsfield.

> Ultimate Career Goal: I would say that my career goal is to be trusted enough as an advisor to be considered an honorary member of the family for some of the terrific family-owned businesses in the Berkshires.

> Individual You Admire Most: Steve Jobs

> Hidden/Unique Talents: Before going to law school, I built furniture for a living in Charleston, South Carolina.

> Favorite Berkshire Person/Place/Thing: Family!

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**Jesse Cook-Dubin**

Attorney at Law
Cohen Kinne Valicenti & Cook LLP
Pittsfield, MA

Birthplace: Stephentown, NY
Residence: Pittsfield, MA

Degrees and Certifications:
B.A. Dartmouth College, J.D. Boston College

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**Michele Butler**

Project Manager
David J. Tierney, Jr., Inc.
Pittsfield

Birthplace: Mahopac, NY
Residence: Adams, MA

Degrees and Certifications:
Tufts University, B.A., Central Connecticut State University, M.S., Suffolk University Law School, J.D.

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**Danielle Trumbull**

Co-Founder & Assistant Executive Director
Moments House, Pittsfield, MA

Birthplace: Orlando, FL
Residence: Pittsfield, MA

Degrees and Certifications:
The College of Saint Rose - Bachelors Degree in Business Administration, Marketing Concentration.

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**Adam Hinds**

Executive Director
Northern Berkshire Community Coalition
North Adams, MA

Birthplace: Pittsfield, MA
Residence: Pittsfield, MA

Degrees and Certifications:
Suffolk University Law School, J.D.

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> Career Highlights: Creating a thriving youth development program in Pittsfield that gives kids a sense that they too can excel and have a shot at life despite difficult circumstances. Supporting community efforts to confront challenges related to the heroin epidemic, workforce development and the provision of health in rural areas. Negotiating between the Kuralstan Govt. and the Govt. of Iraq, working with Kofi Annan on a ceasefire in Syria, working to establish calm in Gaza, helping to remove Syria’s chemical weapons program.

> Community Involvement: Preparing youth for leadership positions while exposing them to opportunities throughout the County through this program with the Leadership Program.

> Ultimate Career Goal: Find a way to significantly improve the lives of residents in the region, by impacting individuals as well as the direction of the region as a whole.

> Individual You Admire Most: My parents. They demonstrated selfless love, support, and sacrifice every day of my childhood. I now understand how valuable that is for the building blocks of a community.

> Hidden/Unique Talents: 3rd Degree Black Belt in Tae Kwon Do

> Favorite Berkshire Person/Place/Thing: Walking, skiing or riding a bike up (and down) Mt. Greylock.

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> Career Highlights: In the State House, I was Policy Advisor to the Senate Chair of the Joint Committee on Education. I was the lead Senate staffer working on a sweeping education reform bill, helping all students have access to high-quality education, regardless of race, income or ability. In 2012, I was fortunate to meet the Tierneys and worked on the legal aspects of Hotel on North. I truly believe it is an example of community collaboration and a symbol of the future potential of our region and it led me to my current position with David J. Tierney, Jr., Inc.!

> Community Involvement:
Board of Directors, Hillcrest Educational Centers, Inc. and Downtown Pittsfield Inc. Treasurer for Senator Benjamin Downing. Former Steering Committee Member, Berkshire Leadership Program. Berkshire Leadership Program, Class of 2012.

> Ultimate Career Goal:
I want to continue to make a difference and contribute to the growth and development of Berkshire County, wherever and however that happens professionally.

> Individual You Admire Most:
My first boss at the State House, Senator Robert Antonioni. He spoke out about his struggles with depression, at a time when mental illness was much stigmatized, and became a champion for those who struggled with the disease.

> Hidden/Unique Talents:
Cat herding!

> Favorite Berkshire Person/Place/Thing:
My favorite thing is flipping a coin on a Saturday afternoon to decide whether to head North or South, knowing there’s something to do, and good food to be had, in either direction.
CONGRATS AND GRATITUDE TO THE EMERGING LEADERS OF OUR NEW BERKSHIRE ECONOMIC COMMUNITY – LEAD THE WAY!

BERKSHIRE PROPERTY AGENTS

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*BASED ON BERKSHIRE BOARD OF REALTORS FIGURES
Congratulations to our

Molly Hines

…and all the recipients of the first annual 40 Under Forty

Pastor Akilah Edgerton
Special Education Liaison
Bart Charter Public School
Adams, MA

Birthplace: Bronxville, NY
Residence: Pittsfield, MA

Degrees and Certifications:
BS, Social Work, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, Magna Cum Laude, Alpha Delta Mu and Golden Key International Honor Societies.

Career Highlights: During the school year of 2014-2015, I helped to establish the learning academy for our middle school students. The learning academy is a specialized program for students with profound social emotional and/or academic challenges. Currently I am the Special Education Liaison.

Community Involvement: Pastor, New Generation Global Ministry; Hall mother at Miss Hall’s School; Mentor for the Rites of Passage and Empowerment program; Founder of Youth Alive Step, Dance and Drum Team; Board of Directors for Ghana Educational Collaborative.

Ultimate Career Goal: My ultimate career goal is to continue developing educational programs for diverse learners and to further develop my teaching ministry. Both of my goals will be achieved both locally and internationally.

Individual You Admire Most: Bishop Jerome T. Edgerton Sr. and Shirley Edgerton

Hidden/Unique Talents: My hidden talent is singing.

Favorite Berkshire Business, Place or Thing: My favorite place in the Berkshires is Jacob’s Pillow.
If you are looking to advance in your current position or learn a new career, Berkshire Community College offers a variety of options to help you achieve your goals.

- **Hundreds of non-credit workshops** that can enhance your skills
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**Contact us today at admissions@berkshirecc.edu or 413-236-1630.**

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Congratulations to the 2016 40 Under Forty honorees. We look forward to watching your bright, bold, extraordinary futures unfold.

THE BERKSHIRE EAGLE
Proud supporter of Berkshire County pioneers past, present and future.