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Central Louisiana 4-Under-40 Announced

ALEXANDRIA, LA – The Young Professionals Group of Cenla is excited to announce the 2022 CENLA 4WARD 4-Under-40. The program is an initiative of YPG and the Central Louisiana Regional Chamber of Commerce to honor those under 40 years of age who are making an impact and improving communities in the 12-parish region and beyond.

“Congratulations to winners,” says 2023 YPG President, Dustin Campbell from Procter & Gamble. “Each of [them] has shown great passion and dedication to improving their organizations, serving our community, and moving central Louisiana forward.”

Brandon Wilkinson - Founder & Director of Operations at Enrich Louisiana.

Crystal Mitchell - Chief Clinical Officer and VP of Growth & Development at Southern Evals.

Mandi Guillory - Director of Marketing & Business Development at Alexandria Emergency Hospital.

Emily McGruder - Director of Membership Development at the Louisiana Armed Forces Alliance.

“Congratulations again to all our program nominees and finalists,” Campbell continues. “Thank you all for your hard work, dedication, and commitment to serving and improving our area. You truly are making an impact on our community and moving central Louisiana forward.”

CENLA 4WARD is dedicated to recognizing individuals who exhibit the 4 pillars that move communities forward: community involvement, industry impact, leadership and professional distinction, and passion and perseverance. Find more information about the program at www.ypgcenla.org.

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The Young Professionals Group of Central Louisiana is a committee of the Central Louisiana Regional Chamber of Commerce and a motivated, educated and community-conscious group of individuals. By connecting diverse young professionals across the area, we create a force that will both strengthen and grow Central Louisiana.



CENLA 4WARD 4-Under-40 Bios

Brandon Wilkinson - Founder & Director of Operations at Enrich Louisiana.

With over 11 years of professional leadership experience, Brandon Wilkerson is a distinguished industry leader of operations at Target, Coca-Cola and now as a founder and director of Enrich Louisiana - a nonprofit organization geared towards workforce development in the CENLA. Brandon's

key strengths are passion, accountability, resilience and adaptability. One of his many nominators shared that Brandon is the perfect picture of hope in our community for generations to come. His perfectly placed passion creates an atmosphere of perseverance and endurance that does not stop with just Enrich Louisiana, but bleeds into every other endeavor he takes on including his leadership in multiple community organizations and events. Brandon has been a Pillar in the community for years, having moved back to his hometown of Alexandria, after graduating from Louisiana Tech to give back to the community. He truly has a heart for the community and is well known for his hard work of bringing out the best in and for CENLA.



Crystal Mitchell - Chief Clinical Officer and VP of Growth & Development at Southern Evals.

Judges shared that Crystal embodies the traits of perseverance, integrity, dignity, and compassion. She has a strong dedication to improve the awareness and lives of others and is constantly pursuing ways to become better and share her experience and knowledge with those around her. Her laundry list of

community involvement and professional accomplishments showcases her impact on a national scale, but her resilience in the face of unimaginable struggle is what sets her apart. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Crystal had to overcome illness, loss of children, and incredible heartache, but she used her struggles to impact women both across Louisiana and nationally by sharing her story. Her renewed purpose in life was to help others become better and to ensure that our community had education, care, and the necessities desperately needed at the time. While undergoing treatment and painful personal loss, Crystal was enrolled in school, working full time, and continuing her roles of wife, mother, and community member while still having surgery every week for nearly 4 months. She never gave up because she believes in a better tomorrow, a better CENLA, and in a better her!



Emily McGruder - Director of Membership Development at the Louisiana Armed Forces Alliance.

Emily is a true pillar in the Fort Polk community, as well as in Vernon Parish. Judges shared, “although Ft. Polk/Leesville is a smaller community in Louisiana, she has made big impacts in her sphere of influence and her work is vital to our local area and the national armed forces community.” In 2022

alone, she has volunteered over 1,000 hours in Vernon Parish and serves as the President of the Fort Polk Spouses' & Community Club, the Treasurer of the Fort Polk Thrift Shop, a Giving Tuesday Military ambassador, and a coach for several Child Youth Sports organizations. Emily has dedicated her time to making Vernon Parish a better place and puts in the hard work to represent Military spouses in our area and provide them with resources they need to make CENLA home. Emily recently took her passion for representing the military community and turned it into a career. In May she was hired by Fort Polk Progress (now Louisiana Armed Forces Alliance) as their Director of Membership Development where she has already expanded the organization's mission and began impacting and representing all military installations within the state of Louisiana. There will always be hurdles to conquer and tough times, but as a leader when you show up in hard times to continue to achieve your mission, you're setting an example - and Emily is a fantastic example that passion will always persevere.



Mandi Guillory - Director of Marketing & Business Development at Alexandria Emergency Hospital.

Mandi has had her share of struggles over the past few years, and they only seem to fuel her desire to succeed even more. Judges shared how they were impressed that Mandi is involved in numerous organizations throughout our community, and she has been doing this work for multiple years, with tangible impacts on our local community. She puts in the effort to involve local businesses in what's going on in her industry and has pushed others to be involved in the community too. She has a passion for supporting other women and helping them see their potential, and her professional excellence and the continued success of Alexandria Emergency Hospital is a testament to her expertise. She has made it through several challenges and setbacks yet continues to excel while showing admirability in both her personal and professional life. Mandi has a heart for servant leadership and giving back to the community that she grew up in and loves and is inspiring others to do the same.

