

Rising Star Spotlight - December 2017



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The Rising Star Program has really caught on and is serving a vital role to entice fresh, new members to join SHFM. Tell us about leading this group of young professionals.

As a former teacher, it's been very rewarding to act as a mentor and educator to these young professionals. Entering any industry can be intimidating, so it's important that SHFM provide young professionals with the means for learning,

growth, mentorship and a sense of community. That is exactly what SHFM did for me when I entered the industry and now, as I lead the Rising Stars for its second year, I see this as my opportunity to pay it forward.

Over the past three years, I have seen firsthand how the foodservice and hospitality industries have embraced innovation and trends and I believe this shift is largely in part due to young professionals. As a result, SHFM wanted to ensure that these young professionals know they have an organization to help grow their career and connections. To take action, over the past two years, an emphasis was put on creating and maturing the Rising Stars program. Annually, 20 young professionals are selected from a pool of applicants who meet specific and competitive criteria. This year, at the National Conference, we officially kicked off the 2017/2018 Rising Stars Committee. It provides a platform for young professionals to come together from not only across the country, but also the industry. This program is something truly special and I look forward to seeing what this year has in store for us!

In what ways have you seen the group's success within SHFM?

One of the purposes of the Rising Stars program is to assist young professionals with growth and development within their careers. We now have past Rising Stars joining as members and participating in various committees, including the National Conference Planning Committee and the Strategic Planning Committee. As these Rising Stars grow within the SHFM community, it's opening even more doors to meeting new people, mentors and establishing business relationships within our industry. Rising Stars are actively engaged at a variety of events such as Critical Issues, National Conference and different locals all over the country!

Where do you continue to see more opportunities for the Rising Stars?

This year, each Rising Star is tasked with joining one of the other SHFM committees. It provides these individuals with the opportunity to not only take part in evolving the SHFM organization, but also a platform to meet experienced individuals within the industry. Our Rising Stars now have a way to see the difference facets of what SHFM has to offer and a new way to become engaged with mentors. Also, this year, the Rising Stars will be tasked with a working project - I look forward to sharing more details about this in the future.

How has your involvement with SHFM and the Rising Stars supported your own professional success?

As I was new to the industry and organization yearning to build relationships, I was introduced to our current President, Victoria Vega. Victoria probably gave me some of the best advice that I now bestow on every Rising Star and young professional I meet. "You get back what you put into SHFM ... and so much more." I took that advice and ran with it. Within the span of three years, I've attended many local and national events, sat on multiple committees including CIC and the National Conference, and of course, chair the Rising Stars Committee. But, I have a full-time job. Why do I do all of this?

First off, the people I have fostered relationships with from the SHFM community has been extremely rewarding; I have truly gained great friendships and mentors. Secondly, our company has definitely seen the positive impacts of being so heavily involved. SHFM has been a channel for the elite | studio e team to share our innovations, projects and successes with our peers. I think one of the most rewarding parts of this all, is that SHFM does not feel like "work". SHFM has given me the platform to build and solidify relationships with peers and clients in your not so norm business environments. Whether at a Boston Red Sox game, competing in the Hunger Games or participating in a whiskey tasting, I can always count on SHFM to provide me with a great out of office experience!

Where do you see yourself in five years?

As our family business continues to grow, I expect to be taking on more leadership roles within the company. At elite | studio e, it is our company's vision to create a network of offices around the country to better serve the needs of our clients in target markets. Although no one can predict the future, I believe in five years I will continue to grow into a person that not only my company can depend on, but our clients and of course, fellow SHFM members. With that being said, I hope a future in leadership within the SHFM organization will develop as I definitely want to continue introducing, mentoring and developing young professionals in this innovative and fantastic industry!