

Faces *of the* Future

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Meet the Future

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- J.J. Bernabei
- Robert and James Brooks
- Stacy DeLong
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When we began discussing the task of choosing the Ohio Valley's top young leaders earlier this year, most of us at The Intelligencer and Wheeling News-Register were uncertain as to just how good the "Faces of the Future" would be.

Don't we always hear that all of our young people are leaving the area after college? That there are no "good" jobs left with which to raise a family?

It was somewhat of a surprise, then, when we received more than 90 nominations for this spotlight on young leaders who are making a difference each and every day. And to top it off, in every case, the nominations were sent in by someone other than the nominee — a boss, co-worker, friend or other interested party who saw the potential and the daily impact of the young leader.

The nominees included attorneys, doctors and other medical personnel, entrepreneurs, educators, political figures and business leaders.

Every nominee stood out in some way, whether it was through their business accomplishments, community involvement or their role in shaping the area's political and social future.

It was challenging, to say the least, to choose those we deemed as the best of the best, the ones who stood out from the crowd.

In the end, we selected these young leaders under the age of 40 to serve as our "Faces of the Future."

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Kara Gray, 30 **Owner,** **New Horizons Consulting**

By BRIANNE ROSEBERRY

New Horizons Consulting founder Kara L. Gray does it all.

The 30-year-old wife and mother owns and operates her growing consulting firm and still does the gardening with her 3-year-old daughter, Ainsley. She shares her country home in Marshall County with John, her husband of six years, her daughter, two horses and a dog named Wiley. She balances her time between work and family by maintaining a home office, getting up very early and going to bed very late. Despite the chaotic atmosphere, Gray enjoys the flexibility that comes with being in charge.

The Bethany College graduate never expected to end up on the public relations end of things when she majored in communications, but she has found her path to be an exciting one. Her business deals with public relations and professional writing to assist in the development of small businesses. She loves the flexibility of her schedule and the client variety. For example, one morning she will be writing a grant for a customer and that afternoon she could be taking pictures at an elementary school for a good cause.

Her status as an up-and-coming community leader does not seem to phase Gray. She described a leader as someone who is willing to put themselves out in front and say "I have something to offer, but I realize that others have things to offer also," as well as someone who can accept help and create strong networks.

She admits that networking is one of her strong points. She makes things happen in her business by connecting to the right people at the right time.

New Horizons Consulting might not have all the resources of a big business right in Gray's home office, but she is more than willing to tap into her well-developed network of resources for her customers.

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By keeping overhead costs down, she is able to offer the quality of a big business at a lower cost.

Gray's motivation is possibly the thing that sets her apart from other community businesses. Not just in it for a quick dollar, she is dedicated to improving the area.

Being born and raised in the Ohio Valley, and a member of a close extended family, Gray believes that the area has much to offer those who choose to stay after college. She feels that the common conception that jobs in the Ohio Valley are not available to college graduates is just not true. Gray encourages college graduates to consider staying in the area after graduation and creating their own opportunities, as she did. Perhaps her biggest motivation is the future of her daughter's generation. She believes if people continue to leave it will be the younger generation that will suffer the consequences.

Gray sums up her place in the community by saying, "I think my place is to do whatever I can with the talent and skills that God gave me to make this area a place where my daughter will want to stay and have a family when she grows up."