

New group connects young professionals

BY GARY WINKELMAN • ECCENTRIC STAFF WRITER • JULY 31, 2008



Leonard Magro chats with Erin Sudrovech during a Young Professionals of Rochester gathering last week. 'YPR is a great opportunity for young businesses and professionals alike,' says Magro, the group's chairman. 'Our aim is to provide young talent in our region the support network to grow in what they have started by developing synergies amongst lively, gifted, like-minded people and the support of successful, established local leaders who have been there and done that.' (photos by John Stormzand | Staff Photographer)

A young group with big plans is growing in greater Rochester.

Known as the Young Professionals of Rochester, the organization gives voice to the area's up-and-coming business people while encouraging their career development and civic involvement.

"YPR is a great opportunity for young businesses and professionals alike," says Leonard Magro, the group's chairman. "Our aim is to provide young talent in our region the support network to grow in what they have started by developing synergies amongst lively, gifted, like-minded people and the support of successful, established local leaders who have been there and done that."

YPR came together late last year through a partnership of the Rochester Regional Chamber of Commerce and the Oakland University Alumni Association. It has blossomed from a small steering committee to an active concern with events regularly drawing upward of 40 members. The group was formally introduced during a July 23 mixer at Great Oaks Country Club in Rochester.

Linda Davis-Kirksey, chairwoman of the Rochester Chamber board of directors, called YPR members a "vital and critical part of this region."

"Ten years from now I'm hoping to be retired," she said with a laugh, "and I hope to see many of you on our board and leading these causes and keeping good commerce going in this region."

Magro said YPR, which is for people 40 and under, aims to "utilize our energy, enthusiasm and talent toward building a better city, region and state."

'GREAT OPPORTUNITY'

Members say there are multiple benefits to YPR, not the least of which is interaction with peers.

"I think it's a really great opportunity for young professionals to connect socially and professionally," said Megan Ryan, 26. "It's nice to be able to find someone from a similar generation."

Ryan, manager for National City's downtown Rochester branch, arrived in the community a year ago. She said joining YPR has helped her with the transition.

"It was a nice way for me to meet some people more my age, because I really haven't at a lot of the other networking events," she said.

Tara Beatty, 29, special events coordinator for the Alzheimer's Association, said YPR has been "a great experience."

"One thing that our group is really focused on is building lasting relationships," she said. "You can go anywhere and do networking and pass business cards, but at the end of the night hardly know that person. ... So that's one thing that we try to do with our group - really continue to build the relationships."

Erin Sudrovech, 29, became involved with YPR through her role as assistant director for alumni relations at Oakland University. She's found it to be relevant personally and professionally.

"It's one thing to network with people who are older and have more experience in the workplace, but sometimes you can't really relate as well," she said. "This group really provides that opportunity because we're relatively the same age and the same career experience and ... we're all kind of looking for the same thing."

For information about joining YPR, call (248) 651-6700. For more about the group, visit

www.YPRochester.org