

Month of gratitude – pay it forward

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BUSINESS

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PITTSFIELD — 'Tis the season for reflecting on the goodness in our lives and giving thanks. For many, the month of November provides an opportunity to show our appreciation and thankfulness for our friends, family and loved ones. For some, however, gratitude can be difficult to find when there are so many people to help, so many meetings to attend, so many deadlines to meet, so much daily stress and just not enough time in the day.



Heather Boulger

Inside the Job Market

Last year I documented #30DaysOfGratitude by posting a daily item that I was grateful for, and it seemed to keep me grounded and focused. This year, I am doing something daily to #PayItForward. Something small like paying for the customer behind me at the drive-thru or donating books to the library or providing toiletries to the homeless shelter. The opportunities are endless.

Being positive is contagious. When you're walking down the street and someone smiles at you for no reason, it makes you want to smile back, or if you're on the receiving end of a good deed, it makes you want to keep the good feelings going.

Pay it forward this November by thanking a veteran. We are able to celebrate our blessings and freedoms because of the sacrifices of our military veterans. There are 10,062 veterans living in the Berkshires. The labor force participation rate for veterans in the Berkshires is 72 percent, the unemployment rate is 9.8 percent and 28 percent have a disability. BerkshireWorks Center provides priority of service to veterans and can help access employment and training opportunities. Massachusetts employers that hire a veteran might be eligible for a federal tax credit. Let's show our veterans that we appreciate their sacrifices.

Support our small businesses all year long, too! There are 3,868 establishments in Berkshire County, with 88 percent being considered small businesses and employing more than 53,000 people. When we support small businesses, jobs are created and local communities preserve or develop a unique culture. The money spent at small business also stays local because it goes back into the local economy.

Did you know that happy workers are, on average, 31 percent more productive and three times more creative? Employers can also take advantage of this time by showing their appreciation and respect for their employees. Take the opportunity to find a fun way to show that you care about your employees as human beings. Hand write a thank you note for a job well done, help colleagues complete a task, or treat staff to pizza. After all, recognizing your employees for the value they add is critical to minimizing employee turnover and maintaining long-term productivity.

Boulger

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The best part about gratitude is that it is contagious. It can spread like the flu through your office but is much more desirable. They say it isn't happy people who are thankful, it is thankful people who are happy. When you encourage a culture of gratitude in your office, you will see everyone being more positive toward one another. Any act of kindness from your heart will be greatly appreciated by the receiver.

RAPID RESPONSE SERVICES

With the recent announcement of several companies closing in the region, we wanted to inform the community that there are outsourcing or rapid response services available to help both the job seeker and the employer. In these volatile economic times, there is a sizable population of good people affected by corporate layoffs and downsizing. There is no shame in losing your job — it will likely happen to many of us at some point in our careers. Try to look at it as an exciting opportunity to take stock of

your life and a rare chance to be more intentional about the next move in your career.

The purpose of rapid response is to promote economic recovery and vitality by developing an ongoing, comprehensive approach to identifying, planning for, responding to layoffs and dislocations, and preventing or minimizing their impacts on workers, businesses, and communities. The rapid response team has already assisted seven companies impacting 385 employees with their re-employment efforts. Rapid response can help navigate unemployment assistance, health care options, job search strategies, resume writing, interviewing and job placement assistance.

The team can also assist companies that are in transition with layoff aversion opportunities and resources. More information for job seekers and/or employers is available at BerkshireWorks.org or by calling 413 499-2220.

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