

— SPRING 2025 —

# EXECUTIVE NEWS

A PUBLICATION OF THE BUFFALO NIAGARA SALES & MARKETING EXECUTIVES

# 2025

EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR

# KEVIN NEPHEW

President & Chief Executive Officer  
Seneca Gaming Corporation

JOIN US  
**APRIL 28<sup>TH</sup>**  
Seneca Niagara Resort & Casino  
Executive of the Year and  
Elite Sales & Marketing Awards



# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**Golf Gift Gathering & Networking**  
Wehrle Golf Dome **Thursday, Apr 3**  
5:00 p.m.

**2025 Executive of the Year & Elite Sales & Marketing Awards Gala**  
Seneca Niagara Resort & Casino **Monday, Apr 28**  
5:00 p.m.

**May Future Executives Program**  
Communication and Storytelling **Thursday, May 8**  
10:00 a.m.

**May Monthly Meeting**  
**Annual Installation Dinner**  
**Head, Heart and House: A leadership presentation by Jason Pearl, Nacre Consulting**  
Reikart House **Monday, May 19**  
5:00 p.m.

**June Future Executives Program**  
Navigating Avoidance, Procrastination, Overwhelm **Thursday, June 12**  
10:00 a.m.

**30th Annual Golf Outing**  
**Diamond Hawk**  
**To benefit Junior Achievement of WNY**  
Title Sponsor: Vision Financial Group **Friday, June 13**  
10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Plus **Marketing Mastermind Group** for Members only the first Wednesdays at 12 p.m.; **Breakfast with BNSME** virtual networking on the 3rd Wednesday each month at 8:30 a.m. – open to all

**Alex Hellert**  
Agent  
3849 Delaware Avenue  
Kenmore, NY 14217  
**Direct Line** | (716) 846-1388  
**Office** | (716) 875-6944  
**Fax** | (716) 875-2333  
**Email** | ahellert@iamagency.com  
linkedin.com/in/alexander-james-hellert-op

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# BNSME COMMITTEES

Joining a committee is the best way to make the most of your membership investment.

To learn more, contact Jeanne Hellert at [bnsme@bnsme.org](mailto:bnsme@bnsme.org)

## EDUCATION

*The Education committee works with area colleges for speakers, Future Execs program and Collegiate Sales & Marketing Award.*

**Lindsey Zajac**  
Ascendant (*vice president*)

**John Adams**  
The Too Tall Franchise Guy

**Lindsay Amico**  
Ascendant

**Lisa Ettipio**  
Tiveron Law PLLC

**Michaela LaJoie**  
Westin Buffalo

## AWARDS GALA

*The Awards Gala committee plans our annual signature event: the Executive of the Year and Elite Sales & Marketing Awards gala.*

**Jill Pawlik**  
Jill Pawlik Strategic Marketing LLC (*chair*)

**Lisa Ettipio**  
Tiveron Law PLLC

**Michaela LaJoie**  
Westin Buffalo

**Shelley Rohauer**  
Buffalo Business First

**Steve Neuss**  
Netrio

## PROGRAMMING

*The Programming Committee plans our monthly meetings and seminars.*

**Michaela LaJoie**  
Westin Buffalo (*vice president*)

**Paul Chisholm**  
Plan Administrators

**Courtney Collins**  
Scheid Architectural, PLLC

**Stephanie Kunkle**  
Complete Payroll

**Dan Wolfe**  
Employer Services Corporation

**Samantha Willhauck**  
Vision Financial Group

## MEMBERSHIP

*The Membership Committee is responsible for recruitment and retention of our members.*

**Michael Belin**  
Nacre Consulting LLC (*vice president*)

**Francine Brooks**

**Chelsea Heary**  
Netrio

**Greg Hennessey**  
Marketing Tech

**Tiffany Lambert**  
Netrio

**Courtney Lynn**  
Weed Ross

## GOLF

*The Golf committee plans our annual golf outing to support Junior Achievement of WNY.*

**Pierre Aubertin**  
ConEquip (*chair*)

**Matt Carlucci**  
ARCA (*co-chair*)

**Katie Babcock**  
Junior Achievement of WNY

**Steve Coulton**  
OnCore Golf

**Jason Covelli**  
Netrio

**Megan Davis**  
Welke Custom Brokers USA

**Alex Hellert**  
Insurance Associates Marketplace

**Michaela LaJoie**  
Westin Buffalo

**Nelson Montgomery**  
US itek Inc

**Dave Rechin, Jr.**  
Three Sixty

**Bob Waters**  
Netrio

## MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

*The Marketing/Communications committee manages all marketing and communications including advertising, branding, Executive News magazine, social media, roster and website.*

**Jennifer Geoger**  
Sealing Devices (*vice president*)

**Katie Babcock**  
Junior Achievement of WNY

**Emily Baczynski**  
Good Collective

**Bill Henecke**  
Apogee

**Greg Hennessey**  
Marketing Tech

**Liam O'Mahony**  
The Brothers of Mercy Wellness Campus

**Jennifer Szustakowski**  
Veolia

**Laura Zakrzewski**  
Sika

# EXECUTIVE NEWS

## Message from the President

### TEAMING WITH THE RIGHT PEOPLE GETS YOU TO THE RIGHT PLACES

Over 560 professionals representing 278 various companies throughout Western New York attended one or more BNSME events over the past year, showcasing incredible engagement and enthusiasm within our sales and marketing community.

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to our board of directors, committees, corporate sponsors, and members for providing the opportunities to connect, collaborate, learn, and grow – enabling professionals to exceed their personal goals and thrive in their work environments. The impact on careers, our business community and regional economy is significant.

This year's virtual and in-person programming connects us with a rich blend of national expertise like DemandJen (82k LinkedIn followers), regional successes like Kristen Cronyn (founder of Meet & Eat Charcuterie), and local leaders like Lindsey Zajac (CEO and owner of Ascendant) as well as others who lead our Masterminds and Future Executives programs. From senior executives to up-and-coming professionals, valuable game-changing content and resources are available for each of us at the various levels of our journeys.

Looking forward, please join us in recognizing Kevin Nephew, president and chief executive officer of Seneca Gaming Corporation, as this year's Executive of the Year. Kevin's leadership and contributions have been truly exemplary, and we are honored to celebrate his achievements at our 2025 Executive of the Year and Elite Sales & Marketing Awards banquet on April 28th. His leadership is characterized by his strategic vision and ability to inspire positive change.

As you are striving to improve, whether individually or the program at your company, the best way to do that is to get involved. I invite you to check out our website ([www.bnsme.org](http://www.bnsme.org)) for our calendar of upcoming events, register yourself, and invite a colleague or guest to join you! Want to learn more about leadership opportunities or taking it to the next level by joining one of our committees, please reach out to me directly at [Steve.Neuss@netrio.com](mailto:Steve.Neuss@netrio.com).

Best regards,

*Steve Neuss*

**Steve Neuss**  
President, BNSME  
Director of Sales  
Netrio



BUFFALO NIAGARA  
**Sales & Marketing Executives**

A Publication of the Buffalo Niagara  
Sales & Marketing Executives

**P.O. Box 1185, Orchard Park, NY 14127**  
**[bnsme.org](http://bnsme.org) | 716.662.2279**



Portrait from Lovely Day Photo

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# EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR AND ELITE SALES & MARKETING AWARDS

Monday, April 28 at Seneca Niagara Resort & Casino

Make plans to celebrate all of the great work done by sales, marketing and business development professionals and honor an exceptional leader in our community on **Monday, April 28, 2025**, at the annual **Executive of The Year and Elite Sales and Marketing Awards Gala**. It's one of the Buffalo Niagara business community's favorite events -- dress up, meet new people, catch up with friends and colleagues, and enjoy an incredible dining experience at the Seneca Niagara Resort & Casino.

We are honored that **Kevin Nephew** will be accepting the **Executive of The Year Award**. Mr. Nephew joined SGC in 2014 as vice president of organization improvement and development where he used emerging technology to streamline operations and grow revenue. He was elevated to President and CEO in late 2020 during the COVID pandemic when the resorts and casinos were operating under severe restrictions. In the years since, Mr. Nephew has rallied the company by attracting new and increased patronage, restoring its employment ranks to pre-pandemic levels, investing in new amenities and properties, and attracting national acts for entertainment.

The Gala is also the time of year when we recognize companies, teams and individuals who have done extraordinary work in the areas of sales, marketing or business development with our Elite Sales and Marketing Awards. Please join us in celebrating Kevin Nephew and the other award winners! Register now at [bnsme.org/awards](http://bnsme.org/awards).



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## MEET OUR EXECUTIVE OF THE YEAR



# KEVIN NEPHEW

*President and Chief Executive Officer for Seneca Gaming Corporation*

Kevin Nephew was named president and CEO of SGC in October 2020, becoming the first member of the Seneca Nation to lead the company. He oversees the operation and performance of Seneca Niagara Resort & Casino in Niagara Falls, Seneca Allegany Resort & Casino in Salamanca, Seneca Buffalo Creek Casino in downtown Buffalo, and Seneca Hickory Stick Golf Course in Lewiston. The corporation employs more than 3,000 people, making SGC one of the region's largest private employers. Under Nephew's leadership, SGC has not only continued to make significant investments in its properties, amenities and team members, but the company has also continued to build important partnerships with a growing network of local businesses, charitable organizations and community partners. Each year, SGC spends more than \$150 million with Western New York vendors and suppliers, further supporting thousands of additional jobs in the local economy.

“ I am incredibly grateful to BNSME for this prestigious honor. As a business executive, I stand on the shoulders of more than 3,000 team members at Seneca Gaming Corporation who amaze me with their dedication, commitment and creativity. This award is a reflection on the work they do every day to exceed our guests' expectations and on the remarkable contributions the Seneca Nation continues to make to help move our region and our economy forward. ”

Kevin Nephew

## WE ASKED KEVIN NEPHEW TO RESPOND TO SOME QUESTIONS TO GET TO KNOW HIM BETTER.

### 1. WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE RESTAURANT?

My favorite restaurants are our Western Door steakhouse and Hutch's.

### 2. WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE BOOK?

“Can't Hurt Me” by David Goggins.

### 3. WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE DRINK?

Pepsi. It's the one drink I could not get when I was growing up.

### 4. HOW DO YOU SPEND YOUR FREE TIME?

Spending time with my beautiful wife, Tracie, our children and grandchildren, watching them in sports, band, plays, and everything they do. I also love spending time with my dog, Betty, and enjoy going camping.

### 5. WHERE HAVE YOU NEVER BEEN BUT WOULD LIKE TO TRAVEL TO?

Hong Kong.

### 6. WHERE WERE YOU EDUCATED?

I received my bachelor's degree in Sociology from Bucknell University and my MBA from Columbia University.

### 7. WHAT WAS YOUR DREAM JOB WHEN YOU WERE A CHILD?

I wanted to be working on and racing motorcycles.

### 8. WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE THING ABOUT WNY?

The people – hands down. We are all one big family and nothing holds us down.

### 9. CAN YOU SHARE A SALES AND MARKETING BEST PRACTICE?

Listen to the customer. Don't sell what you think your customers want, sell them what they want. Listening is so important.

# WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING AT OUR EVENTS

## SEPTEMBER 30 SEASON KICKOFF AT WINGNUTZ



Joan Cofield, Lamar Billboards; Tim Kwiatkowski, Fran Vaughan, FMV Tax Professionals



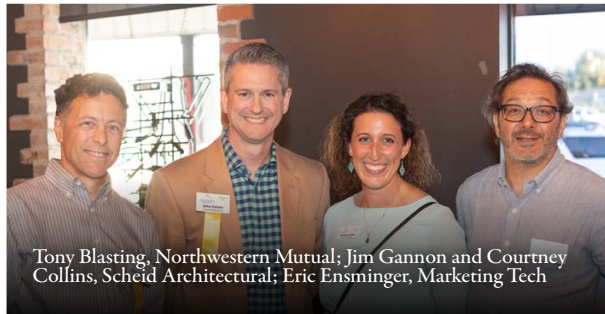
Andrea Duke, Best Version Media; Mike Belin, Nacre Consulting; Alex Hellert, Insurance Associates Marketplace Agency; Dan Wolfe, Employer Services Corp



Pierre Aubertin, ConEquip; Rick Andrews, PremCom; John Adams, The Too Tall Franchise Guy



Beth Blumenson, Buffalo Lodging Associates; Sarah Robitaille, Howard Hanna Real Estate; Francine Brooks



Tony Blasting, Northwestern Mutual; Jim Gannon and Courtney Collins, Scheid Architectural; Eric Ensinger, Marketing Tech

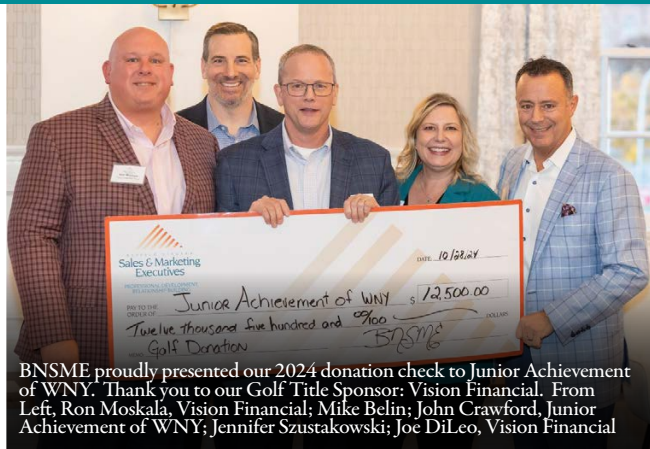


Emeri Krawczyk with David Michaud, CP Staffing Solutions

## OCTOBER 28 CEO ROUNDTABLE AT 500 PEARL



Haley Miller and Kenny Smith from Buffalo Lodging Associates



BNSME proudly presented our 2024 donation check to Junior Achievement of WNY. Thank you to our Golf Title Sponsor: Vision Financial. From Left, Ron Moskala, Vision Financial; Mike Belin; John Crawford, Junior Achievement of WNY; Jennifer Szustakowski; Joe DiLeo, Vision Financial



Our CEO Roundtable panelists: Janelle Camesano, Harper International; Don Boyd, Kaleida Health; Tricia Barrett, Crowley Webb; John Eberl, Eberl Iron Works



Mike Belin, far right, welcomes new members Melissa Parrish, Lovely Day Photo; Laura Zakrzewski, Sika; Kelsey Rebmann, Hyatt Regency Buffalo; Karen Cantwell, PuroClean Property Damage Restoration; Aaron Regdos, 716 Cleanup and Restoration; Dave Rechin Jr, Three Sixty



Paul Chisholm, Plan Administrators; Lindsey Zajac, Ascendant; Arcadea Scott, Buffalo Niagara Partnership; Jennifer Szustakowski, Veolia



Thank you to our moderator, Ed Drantch from WKBW Channel 7

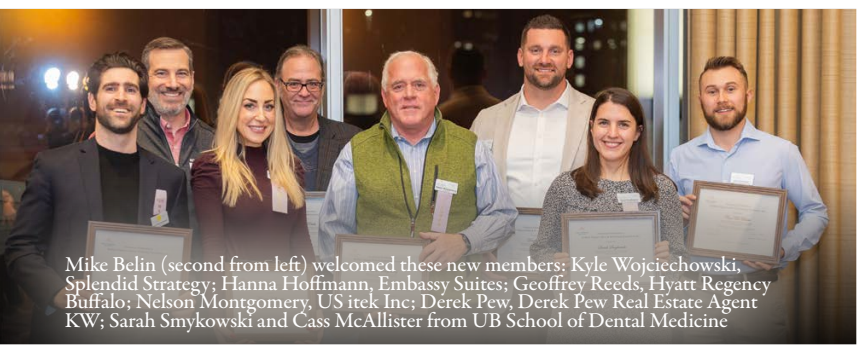
**NOVEMBER 25 PROGRESSIVE NETWORKING DINNER AT THE WESTIN BUFFALO**



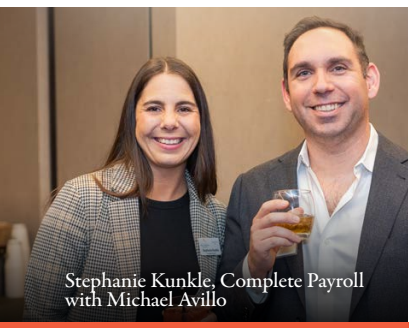
Michaela LaJoie from The Westin leads a session of Progressive Networking with Courtney Collins, Scheid Architectural; Tom Gilmore, Hover Networks; Jim McAuliffe, JK Executive Strategies and Derek Pew, Derek Pew Real Estate Agent KW



Laura Czora, Weed Ross with Megan Davis, Welke Customs Brokers USA Inc and Emily Baczynski, Good Collective



Mike Belin (second from left) welcomed these new members: Kyle Wojcicchowski, Splendid Strategy; Hanna Hoffmann, Embassy Suites; Geoffrey Reeds, Hyatt Regency Buffalo; Nelson Montgomery, US irek Inc; Derek Pew, Derek Pew Real Estate Agent KW; Sarah Smykowski and Cass McAllister from UB School of Dental Medicine



Stephanie Kunkle, Complete Payroll with Michael Avillo



Samantha Willhauck from Vision Financial



Francine Brooks with Bill Henecke of Apogee

**FEBRUARY 24 AT MEET & EAT CHARCUTERIE**



Valerie Bello, Sealing Devices; Taylor Schaffert, Citibank; Jen Georger, Sealing Devices; Lisa Ettipio, Tiveron Law



Our speaker and host, Kristen Cronyn, owner of Meet & Eat Charcuterie



Mike Belin, far right, welcomed new members Brian Kelly, TriSonder Marketing; Michael Avillo; Emily Baczynski, Good Collective; Valerie Bello, Sealing Devices



Greg Hennessey, Marketing Tech with Frank LaNasa



Kristen gave an inspiring presentation about how she utilized her network to open her business



Laura Zakrzewski, Sika with our January guest speaker, Julia Culklin-Jacobia from Catapult

# NEW!! BNSME Future Executives Program

sponsored by West Herr Automotive Group



BNSME is excited to launch a new program for 2025 designed especially for professionals who are looking to develop or enhance their leadership skills. As the business landscape continues to evolve, future executives will need to blend traditional leadership skills with new capabilities to navigate complexity, technology, and shifting employee expectations.

Our six-session **BNSME Future Executives Program** is sponsored by West Herr Automotive Group and is free for BNSME members. It is designed to equip rising leaders with the critical skills and insights they'll need to excel in top roles. Each session provides practical, interactive learning experiences, focusing on the unique challenges of executive leadership in a rapidly evolving world. Participants will engage in workshops covering the most critical skills for future executives while networking and collaborating with their peers.

Our sessions are facilitated by Lindsey Zajac, owner and CEO of Ascendant along with Lindsay Amico, director of talent solutions, Ascendant, as well as additional experts.

Our first session on January 9th was **Imposter Syndrome: Feeling the Fear and Doing It Anyway**. We learned that it is natural to have imposter syndrome. While we all hold limiting beliefs to some extent, the problem occurs when these beliefs are leading our emotions, actions, and end results. We discussed what we currently believe about ourselves, and cultivated strategies we can all leverage to build confidence and feel more empowered.

## UPCOMING SESSIONS:

**5.8.25: Communication and Storytelling presented by Robert Durante, Ph. D**

**6.12.25: Navigating Avoidance, Procrastination, Overwhelm**

**9.11.25: Inclusive Leadership and Psychological Safety**

**11.13.25: Unplug: How to Create Space in a Digital Age**

*Melissa Parrish*  
*lovely day photo*  
716.861.3459  
@lovelydayphoto  
melissa@lovelydayphoto.com



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# BNSME Provides Purposeful Engagement with Marketing Mastermind

*BNSME offers members the opportunity to share best practices and get your marketing questions answered at our monthly virtual Mastermind.*

Connect with your peers, share expertise, and brainstorm ways to solve common marketing problems.

The mastermind group adapts its focus based on the needs, goals, or topics of interest of the group members. Rest assured that this is a safe and confidential space to share ideas and discuss challenges.

If you've been looking for a mastermind group with professionals in your field, to help take you to the next level, then this resource is for you.

We meet the first Wednesday each month at 12 PM. Contact [bnsme@bnsme.org](mailto:bnsme@bnsme.org) for the Zoom link.



Two of the most impactful programs I have participated in so far are the Marketing Mastermind and Future Executives seminars. Both programs provide invaluable insights into current trends in sales and marketing through a collaborative roundtable format... I strongly recommend BNSME to anyone in the sales and marketing field looking to grow their career, expand their knowledge, and connect with like-minded professionals. 👍👍

— Dave Rechin Jr,  
Account Executive, ThreeSixty

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As we look to the future,  
we're excited to continue  
delivering innovative solutions  
to help your business thrive.

# YEARS

Thank you for being part of our journey!



# IN FULL COLOR

# SPOTLIGHT ON MEMBERSHIP

## Mike Belin

Executive Growth Strategist at Nacre Consulting; Executive VP and VP Membership for BNSME

### UNLOCKING GROWTH AND SUCCESS WITH BNSME MEMBERSHIP

As the incoming **President of BNSME** and current **VP of Membership**, I've seen firsthand how our organization empowers sales and marketing professionals across Western New York. In my role as Executive Growth Strategist at Nacre Consulting, my involvement with BNSME has reinforced the importance of lifelong learning, strategic connections, and professional development.



One key lesson I've learned: business success requires more than just experience, it demands cutting-edge insights, a strong network, and ongoing skill development. That's exactly what BNSME membership provides:

- ✓ **Monthly Meetings with Expert Speakers** – Gain actionable strategies from top sales and marketing leaders.
- ✓ **Seminars & Special Events** – Stay ahead of emerging trends with interactive learning experiences.
- ✓ **Peer Networking** – Build meaningful connections with fellow sales & marketing professionals to exchange ideas, insights, and referrals.
- ✓ **Marketing Masterminds** – Engage in deep-dive discussions on key challenges and opportunities.
- ✓ **Future Executive Leadership Program** – An immersive professional development program equipping rising leaders with critical skills.

At BNSME, membership is more than attending events—it's an investment in your growth, your team, and your organization's success. Many of our corporate members, including our team at Nacre Consulting, have experienced firsthand how BNSME drives business growth, leadership development, and competitive success.

Whether you're an individual looking to sharpen your skills or a company aiming to strengthen sales and marketing strategies, BNSME offers the platform to grow, connect, and lead.

I invite you to explore how BNSME can be a catalyst for your success. Join us at an upcoming event and experience the value of membership firsthand!

Looking forward to an exciting year ahead.

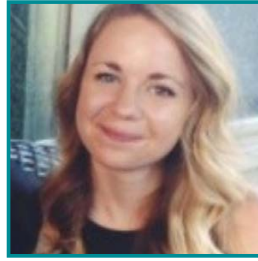
## Mike Belin

VP of Membership & Incoming President (May 2025)  
Executive Growth Strategist, Nacre Consulting

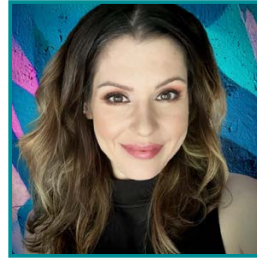
# WELCOME NEW MEMBERS



**Michael Avillo**  
Marketing Executive



**Emily Baczynski**  
Good Collective



**Valerie Bello**  
Sealing Devices



**Laurie Buckley**  
Reikart House



**Karen Cantwell**  
PuroClean Property  
Damage Restoration



**Travis Flaherty**  
ConEquip



**Hanna Hoffmann**  
Embassy Suites Buffalo



**Brian Kelly**  
TriSonder Marketing LLC



**Cass McAllister**  
UB School of  
Dental Medicine



**Nelson Montgomery**  
US itek Inc



**Liam O'Mahony**  
The Brothers of Mercy  
Wellness Campus



**Melissa Parrish**  
Lovely Day  
Photo, LLC



**David Rechin Jr**  
ThreeSixty



**Aaron Regdos**  
716 Cleanup  
and Restoration



**Arcadea Scott**  
Buffalo Niagara  
Partnership



**Sarah Smykowski**  
UB School of  
Dental Medicine



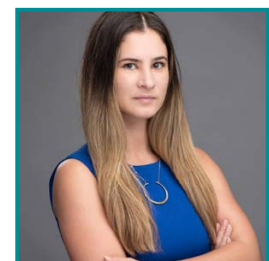
**Julie Spagnolo**  
Sika



**Michael Vasko**  
ConEquip



**Kyle Wojciechowski**  
Splendid Strategy



**Laura Zakrzewski**  
Sika



  
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30<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL  
**GOLF  
 OUTING**  
**FRIDAY JUNE 13  
 2025**  
 AT DIAMOND HAWK GOLF COURSE



SCAN TO  
 REGISTER

10:00 AM REGISTRATION  
 11:00 AM BOXED LUNCH  
 & SHOTGUN START  
 (SCRAMBLE FORMAT)  
 4:00 PM COCKTAILS, DINNER,  
 SILENT & TICKET AUCTIONS

  
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Buffalo Niagara Sales & Marketing Executives  
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At Junior Achievement, we believe in **“possible.”** Each day, we work to help young people discover what’s possible in their lives. We do this by helping them connect what they learn in school with life outside the classroom. We let them know it’s possible to invest in their future, to gain a better understanding of how the world works, and to pursue their dreams. We show them that **it’s possible for tomorrow to be a better day.**

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