



## **Board Applicants 2017** **(5 candidates, 4 openings)**

### **Chris Vessels (current board member, up for re-election)**

Total Office Products & Service, 3326 Kramers Lane, Louisville, Kentucky 40216

1) *Why do you want to serve?*

I want to create a strong, local business organization that can help local, independent businesses, like mine, to grow, thrive, and compete against the national chains.

As well, I want to continue to make Louisville the unique & diverse world-class city it is, but can't be without a strong base of local, independent businesses.

2) *How long have you been a LIBA Member & how have you worked to spread the Buy Local message?*

T.O.P.S. has been a LIBA member going on 9 years. We joined LIBA early on. Being a small, locally-owned business, I spread the 'Buy Local' message every day in marketing my business. As well, I look for opportunities to promote LIBA members and other local businesses to my customers. Too, I always think it's important to 'walk the talk'. Wherever possible, I 'Buy Local' for myself, my family, & my business.

3) *Are you currently a Board Member or Officer of another organization?*

I currently serve on the Board of the Avondale Neighborhood Association. However, the ONLY business organization I am currently involved in is LIBA. I don't like to join just to be a member. Rather, I participate in just a small number of organizations and put my time & efforts in to those groups. I don't spread myself too thin. LIBA is the perfect business group for me and my company and that's where I want to put my efforts for the next 3 years.

4) *Please describe any past or current board or group decision-making experience that you have?*

I've served on a number of Boards and Committees over the years in various community, business and neighborhood groups. I've served the last 3 years on LIBA's Board of Directors, the last year and a half on LIBA's Executive Committee, and the last year on LIBA's Business To Business Committee.

5) *What qualities, leadership skills and contributions would you bring to the LIBA Board?*

One of my most valuable attributes is my ability to be a flexible part of the team, either as a follower or leader. I can easily exert leadership skills when needed, but I can, also, comfortably follow when needed. Many small business owners are strong personalities and have trouble not being 'in charge' or being the leader. I can easily do whatever is required to get the job done and am perfectly fine letting others lead.

During my time on the LIBA Board, I found that my strongest personality traits are those of an 'Executor'. I get things done and make things happen. I've worked with and have been involved in Brewfest, the Buy Local Fairs, the Business To Business Expo, and many other LIBA projects & events. I like to jump in and do things!

I am dependable. If I volunteer, it is with the understanding that I will participate and perform my duties with enthusiasm and I won't just be a name on the Board.

Lastly, I have a wealth of experience as a small, locally-owned business owner. After 38 years in a small business, I've seen and done pretty much a little bit of everything.

6) *What do you think are the most critical issues for LIBA in the next few years?*

I think the top priority for small business locally and nationwide is the continued 'Amazonation' of our economy. That is, the continued growth of online retailers who sell to and deliver to customers in our community, but that do not pay sales tax, property taxes, payroll taxes, local taxes, etc., in our communities. The big are continuing to get bigger and we need to fight as small businesses to reverse that trend.

7) *Do you see any conflicts with the time commitment of serving on the board?*

No. I have successfully served on the LIBA Board for 3 years, during which I attended meetings as required participated fully, and met my Fundraising Goals for LIBA Board members.

8) *Bio:*

I am a life-long Louisvillian. I am 51 years old. I graduated from Pleasure Ridge Park High School in 1983. I attended the University of Louisville from 1983-1987. I've lived in the Pleasure Ridge Park, the Highlands, and the Avondale/Hikes Lane neighborhoods. I am currently an active member of the Louisville Dixie Kiwanis Club. I've been married to my wife Paula for 19 years. Paula is a self-employed hair-stylist. I have two sons that attend Atherton High School; Andrew, age 16, and Matthew, age 14. I have only one hobby; GO CARDS!

My work experience, though limited, is very extensive. The ONLY job I've had in my life, since I was age 13, is working at Total Office Products & Service. Though I've had just the one job the last 38 years, I've done (and still do) virtually every job imaginable in my business. That's just part of being a small business owner. Rainbow Blossom Natural Food Markets: 3738 Lexington Road, 3046 Bardstown Rd., 12232 Shelbyville Rd., 3608 Springhurst Blvd., 3003 Charlestown Crossing (New Albany) 812-941-0080



## **Jordan Clemons**

Langley Capital Management, 2225 Lexington Rd. Louisville, KY 40206

### *1. Why do you want to serve?*

Community service and personal growth are one in the same, and there is no better place to make a tangible positive difference than Louisville. By giving my time to organizations which resonate with my personal beliefs, I've been afforded opportunities I would never have had otherwise. I intend to build my business by contributing to the karmic circle of life, and it has worked so far. More generally and less metaphysically, LIBA is just a great organization with awesome people, and I'd be honored to help it thrive and grow for many generations of Louisvillians to come.

### *2. How long have you been a member of LIBA and how have you worked to spread the Buy Local message?*

I've been a member since 2014, as soon as I started my business. Even before then I've volunteered for LIBA in as many capacities as possible (stuffing Ho-Lou-Day business packets, checking in guests at the business expo, handing out party favors at the LIBA birthday party, pouring beer at Forecastle, and many other events) but most importantly helping as volunteer coordinator for the 2016 Buy Local Fair alongside Kristen and my fiancé Natalie.

I do my best to be an advocate for Louisville and all the small businesses here as I build my own business. Serving as an ambassador on the Highland Commerce Guild for 2 years, I've helped promote Bardstown Rd Aglow while cultivating and nurturing relationships with businesses in the Highlands corridor.

3. *Are you currently a Board Member or Officer of another organization? (If yes, how long & the position.)*
  - a. Highland Commerce Guild – Ambassador – 2 years
  - b. Louisville Public Media Advisory Council Member – 1 year
  - c. YPAL – Ambassador – 2 years
  
4. *Please describe any past or current board or group decision-making experience that you have?*
  - a. Highland Commerce Guild
    - i. As a very small board (6-10 people) I helped make decisions across every facet of the organization. This includes annual lunches with the mayor, Bardstown Rd Aglow, new mural installments, monthly member meetings, and more.
  - b. Louisville Public Media Advisory Council
    - i. We are currently re-evaluating our mission statement to see how we can best serve LPM going forward. This is an extremely collaborative process and requires input from all board members.
  - c. YPAL
    - i. I regularly collaborate with other ambassadors as well as most members of the board to improve our organization. Specific tasks include defining what an “active member” is, how best to engage our new members, and design and implementation of community facing events (community connections). I am also on a committee to design a completely new “YPAL Awards” event to showcase our talented members.
  
5. *What qualities, leadership skills and contributions would you bring to the LIBA board?*

An open mind, efficient decision making skills, punctuality for meetings and communication timeliness, respect for others, an ingrained love for our city and its business community, commitment follow-through, enthusiastic professionalism, and a fiancé who likes to help me as well 😊

6. *What do you think are the most critical issues for LIBA in its next few years?*

To speak to personal experience as a member of the Highland Commerce Guild board, I've seen a trend of small businesses closing in our corridor with chains taking their places. This business district (filled with local businesses) could use a revitalized look/feel/something to drive more growth and local investment. If you keep doing the same things, you'll keep getting the same results.

As for LIBA specifically, I have only ever seen things from a volunteer's perspective. If I were to guess, I'd say nurturing newer business members for their growth and success should be a priority, as well as facilitating connections between local businesses to promote collaboration and cross-selling. Innovation and fast-paced adoption of newer technologies/trends is important to sustain LIBA's identity/importance as demographic changes occur.

Personal interaction between organizations (members off the board) and their business members (Be it HCG or LIBA) helps member retention, member participation, and the overall mood/feel of the organization. The human touch is being lost in so many ways, and a little bit goes a long way. Growing LIBA, as well as my own business, while maintaining this quality is very critical in my eyes.

7. *Are you able to commit the necessary time to serve on the board (6 to 8 hours/month)?*
  - a. Hell yes!

8. *Bio:*

Jordan Clemons is a young and enthusiastic independent financial advisor who works closely with 2 senior advisors, Jason Langley and Mary Casey. In addition to their assistant Jacqui Kapp, the team spans 4 decades and comprises over 30 years in the financial industry. Jordan holds both Series 7 and Series 66 registrations, and plans on obtaining his CFP designation. With a love for the local Louisville culture, Jordan focuses his business on helping independent business owners with their retirement plans as well as their own personal financial needs. Jordan is an ambassador for the Highland Commerce Guild, a member of the Louisville Public Media Community Advisory Board, a YPAL ambassador, and a member of the Louisville Independent Business Alliance. He works hard so his fiancé and cat can have a better life.

## **Andrew Held**

Chef Space, 1812 West Muhammad Ali Blvd.

1. *Why do you want to serve?*

I have just recently joined Chef Space and am excited by our mission to cultivate, expand, and improve the local entrepreneurial food landscape. It seems that there is a very organic and important overlap between our organizations. Whether or not I am invited to join your board, I feel that Chef Space will benefit by becoming involved with LIBA and the individual business it serves. Additionally, I believe that by virtue of our own roster of member entrepreneurs, we might provide valuable, real-time insights into current local marketplace issues.

2. *How long have you been a member of LIBA and how have you worked to spread the Buy Local message?*

We are, as an organization, brand-spanking new! That said, we already play an integral role in proselytizing the benefits of local by means of on-site events, traditional PR/marketing, and member product launch support. After only one year of operation, we have helped launch 3 new retail product lines, 4 new catering companies, 2 new food trucks, 3 meal delivery programs, and graduated 3 members into their own retail spaces.

3. *Are you currently a Board Member or Officer of another organization? (If yes, how long & the position.)*

I am not currently involved with any board, but did serve with the Center for Nonprofit Excellence for a couple of years ,

4. *Please describe any past or current board or group decision-making experience that you have?*

Besides my 2-year tenure working with the Center for Non-profit Excellence, I served for a year as employee Liaison with the Fund for the Arts for the 2 years I was Marketing Director with that organization, and faculty representative for 5 years while I was employed at Sullivan University.

5. *What qualities, leadership skills and contributions would you bring to the LIBA board?*

I think of myself as an insightful critic and analyzer. I like integrating far-flung and disparate sets of information and simplifying them into manageable and understandable action plans. My years in the classroom made me understand the need for clarity and simplicity. Once immersed, I tend to take the lead in meetings and organizational processes, usually with the purpose of providing a uniform sense of direction and accomplishment.

6. *What do you think are the most critical issues for LIBA in its next few years?*

I would guess that the two most important functions that LIBA concentrates on would be 1) to act as a powerful and loud voice in local government, providing support, protection, and funding opportunities for entrepreneurship; and 2)

continue to develop powerful and resonant marketing tools that can provide a framework for small business compete more effectively in a bloated corporate marketplace.

7. *Are you able to commit the necessary time to serve on the board (6 to 8 hours/month)?*

Besides being able to fully commit my personal time to LIBA, Chef Space is strongly encouraging me to become involved in your organization and will subsidize my involvement in any way possible.

8. *Bio:*

Andrew Held is the current Director of Operations at Chef Space, but boasts a broad range of experiences including time as the Chair of Undergraduate Marketing at Sullivan University, Marketing Director at the Fund for the Arts, and many, many years opening, operating, and managing restaurants around the world. He is excited about the serving with LIBA and the opportunity it provides for his wide-ranging set of skills and passions. In his spare time, he stays busy yelling at his four parrots, decorating for Halloween, and finding comfortable, shady places to sit and relax with his lovely wife Alice.



### **Shaun Spencer**

Trimen Solutions/Trimen Career Placement Solutions, 332 West Broadway, Suite 605, Louisville, KY 40202

1. *Why do you want to serve?*

I enjoy helping my community and I love working to promote and educate small business owners and entrepreneurs, so serving on LIBA's Board affords me the opportunity to do both!

2. *How long have you been a member of LIBA and how have you worked to spread the Buy Local message?*

I have been a current and active member of LIBA for almost a year and a half. I have worked to spread the Buy Local message by trying to promote LIBA activities via networking and word of mouth, sharing of projects and activities

3. *Are you currently a Board Member or Officer of another organization? (If yes, how long & the position.)*

Yes, President of the West Louisville Dream Team, 3 years.

4. *Please describe any past or current board or group decision-making experience that you have?*

Previous Board and Committee leadership experience includes appointments on the Louisville Society of Human Resources (LSHRM) Board as Secretary (2 year position) and Committee Chair. Delegate, Kentucky Partnership for Families and Children. School based decision making (SBDM) committee member for Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS). President of the West Louisville Dream Team and committee member of the Southwest Dream Team.

5. *What qualities, leadership skills and contributions would you bring to the LIBA board?*

I've served on several local and national boards in the past which has taught me to work well with others regardless of background or purpose for serving. I pride myself on having excellent character and integrity in both my personal life as well as business dealings. I believe in hands on leadership!

6. *What do you think are the most critical issues for LIBA in its next few years?*

Diversity of membership, geographic diversity, and diversification educational opportunities for small and new business owners.

7. *Are you able to commit the necessary time to serve on the board (6 to 8 hours/month)?*

Yes, I am able to dedicate the required time.

## 8. Bio

After several years of contracting as a human resources consultant while maintaining a full time job, Shaun Spencer launched Trimen Solutions in 2008. Previously, Ms. Spencer was responsible for creating on-boarding hiring processes for major franchises; developing processes and procedures for employee benefit plans across the country; implementing EEO policies; recruiting and placement of candidates; and producing employee handbooks and job descriptions for new and existing businesses in a variety of human resources administrative and management positions. Ms. Spencer additionally brings over nine years of combined experience in social services, management and operations to her current position as President of Trimen Solutions, LLC and Trimen Career Placement Solutions.

For the last 7 years, Ms. Spencer has conducted a workshop on “What HR Looks for in Candidates” for the annual Louisville Urban League Career Expo, and currently volunteers with the Community Ventures Corporation, conducting HR workshops for new business owners participating in the organization’s programs; and with Youth Opportunities Unlimited, a program providing education and job readiness training to local youth. Ms. Spencer also serves as a member and chair for several committees for the Tri-State Minority Supplier Development Council (formerly Kentuckiana Minority Business Council) and is the current Vice President of Chapter Administration for the Louisville Society for Human Resources Management. She also served on the Economic Development Committee of the Southwest Dream Team, a non-profit business association made up of Southwest Louisville civic and business leaders dedicated to promoting and enhancing the quality of Southwest Louisville.

Ms. Spencer is a member of the Louisville and National Societies for Human Resources Management, Louisville Independent Business Association, West Louisville Dream Team, and a delegate for the Kentucky Partnership for Families and Children. She formerly served as co-chair and chair of the Networking and Placement Committee for the Louisville Society of Human Resources Management and as a member of the Louisville YMCA-CEP program’s Advisory Board.

Ms. Spencer holds a bachelors degree in psychology from the University of Kentucky in Lexington, and is a certified senior level human resources professional by both the Human Resources Certification Institution and the national Society of Human Resources Management; she is also certified by the American Staffing Association as a Certified Staffing Professional.

Ms. Spencer is a native of Louisville. She is a member of Bates Memorial Church and has one daughter, Briana.



### **Michael Trager-Kusman**

Mperfect, Rye, and Galaxie, 900 E Market Street, Louisville, KY 40206

#### *1) Why do you want to serve?*

As a local business owner myself, I think it is a great way to help represent a growing community and really work to make sure our needs are being taken care of. Operating a business is very challenging and I believe I can help LIBA reach out to members and help with these challenges.

#### *2) How long have you been a member of LIBA and how have you worked to spread the Buy Local message?*

Rye has been a LIBA member for 4 years, Galaxie 2, and Mperfect 2, all of these business help spread the word through the action of working with local businesses daily. We use local businesses for produces, supplies, etc...

3) *Are you currently a Board Member or Officer of another organization? (If yes, how long & the position.)*

Yes, I have served on the board of governors at the Speed for 5 years and was elected to the board of trustees for my first term, 2017-2020. I am on the collections committee and development committee at the Speed as well.

4) *Please describe any past or current board or group decision-making experience that you have?*

As a member of the development committee we are constantly reevaluating fundraising goals and strategic initiatives for raising funds and attracting members.

5) *What qualities, leadership skills and contributions would you bring to the LIBA board?*

This is hard, but I feel like I pride myself on being productive and getting things done quickly with out taking shortcuts, which could compromise quality.

6) *What do you think are the most critical issues for LIBA in its next few years?*

Continued growth and cultivation of local businesses.

7) *Are you able to commit the necessary time to serve on the board (6 to 8 hours/month)?*

Yes, my schedule is pretty flexible.

8) *Bio*

Michael Trager-Kusman was born and raised in Louisville, KY and lived in the city until he graduated from the University of Louisville in 2006. After college, Michael moved to Washington D.C. and joined Senator Chris Dodd's staff. In 2007 he began working at The United States Department of Treasury for consumer protection. In 2009 he left D.C. and moved to New York City to begin a career in hospitality. There he worked with two different companies: curating handling financials, opening logistics, menu implementation and managing at Slice, and in the back of house as a line cook at The Breslin during the time in which they won their first Michelin Star.

In 2012 Michael moved back to Louisville to open Rye, an ingredient-inspired restaurant in the NuLu neighborhood. Since then he has started the Back Porch Sessions (in it's 5th year), The Louisville Cocktail Competition, and opened a second bar/restaurant Galaxie. His most recent career move has been with Mperfect Design as an Operating Partner, where he is heading up operations and strategic growth.

One of Michael's personal beliefs and missions is that everyone deserves good food, and through his restaurants he contributes dinner to the West End School on a monthly basis. He also supports local non-profits such as The Speed, LPM, The Louisville Orchestra, and The KMAC.