

Greetings, Chapter 141,

Our chapter's official kick off for the 2022-2023 year is in September. This year's VP team and I met at Camp Cathy, BCBSM LDA leadership retreat, to focus on planning events that will help us all grow personally and professionally. Whether in person or virtual, each meeting will tie in with this year's theme, "Grow to Enjoy" with an emphasis in the following three areas:



DeAndre K. Elliott
BCBSM LDA President, 2022-2023

- Planting a seed
- Nurturing a seed
- Celebrating the achievements

This month, I encourage you to concentrate on the Seed of Discernment:



- Build problem solving skills – If you can see the root issue of problems, you can solve them.
- Analyze your success – Find out what worked, why it worked and apply it in the future.
- Explore what others think – Choose leaders you admire and study how they think.

A long-standing goal of our chapter is to provide members with the tools and techniques they need to develop and advance. Veronica Beasley-Robinson, VP Professional Development, and her team are planning events that will guide you in sharpening your skills, exploring the strength of networking and gaining visibility to aid in your professional development. The team is committed to providing you with as many tools as possible to excel. Additionally, we will present members with the opportunity to explore becoming a Certified Manager. Watch for future details.

Lydia Officer, VP Program Administration, and her team will compose our monthly membership meetings around Detroit, Southfield, Grand Rapids and Lansing. The team is working on securing speakers that will entice, motivate and inspire you. Our first membership meeting will be in September. Be on the lookout for the official invitation.

The public relations team, led by VP Tiffany Darby, will engage current and future members through multiple networking mixers across the state. These mixers will hopefully inspire you to expand your network by building relationships with fellow and future members.

The 2022-2023 BCBSM LDA year will be filled with an abundance of events. As always, I encourage all of you to participate in as many meetings, professional development sessions and mixers as you can. Please come and enjoy the benefits of your membership and bring a friend.

Yours truly,



DeAndre K. Elliott

WHAT'S IN THIS ISSUE

<i>BCBSM LDA is hiring!</i>	2
<i>Meet the new VPs</i>	3
<i>New member corner</i>	4
<i>New member spotlight</i>	5
<i>blueprint openings</i>	6
<i>Calendar of events</i>	7
<i>Grow to enjoy</i>	8
<i>Honoring a hero</i>	9
<i>Mentor or mentee</i>	10
<i>PD Exchange</i>	11



HEIGHTEN YOUR LEADERSHIP SKILLS AND JOIN A GREAT TEAM!

BCBSM LDA is looking for motivated members to apply for the following positions:

-  **Public Relations: Member Recruitment and Retention (1 Chair / 1 Co-Chair)**
Attend bi-weekly new hire orientations. Deliver email blast to new hire's that details benefits of BCBSM LDA and NMA and current events happening. Develop and create ways to retain and increase membership. Identify opportunities for growth and communicate through the appropriate channels.
-  **Public Relations: Community Involvement (Support Staff Members)**
Identify and plan monthly events that allow the members of BCBSM LDA to volunteer and give back to the community.
-  **Program Administration: Leadership Speech Contest (1 Chair / Support Staff Members)**
Chair: Overall leadership for planning and delivery of the event. With the support of a committee, works in partnership with Toastmasters and other groups to recruit contestants, provide coaching opportunities for contestants, and logistics planning for the event. Committee members: Assist with planning, contestant selection, coaching for contestants, and other logistics leading up to and during the event.
-  **Program Administration: Program Development (1 Chair / Possible Openings for Support Staff Members)**
Creates surveys for monthly meetings. Engages with new members that attend monthly meetings either in person or following an event, which includes providing a new member packet with additional chapter information and resources.

See page 6 for *blueprint openings*.



NMA Chapter141@bcbsm.com

Subject: Public Relations or Program Administration

Include the role you're interested in as part of the email

MEET THE NEW VPS: THE VISION OF TRUE LEADERS

by David Shelby Jr., Team Coordinator

As we begin our upcoming year, it's an interesting time for LDA to see where our leaders plan to take us. I sat down with our leaders to get a preview into what they have for us regarding our theme "Grow to Enjoy". The question they were asked was, What are you looking forward to this chapter year as it relates to our chapter theme "Grow to Enjoy."

Angela Haygood, VP of Finance: "I see 'grow to enjoy' as planting the seed of leadership and then growing or nourishing those seeds. Whatever you do, you want to make sure others can enjoy the fruits of our labor. I look at leaving our chapter better than we arrived so others can benefit from our hard work; thinking outside the box to improve professional development, fostering leadership, and basically empowering our workforce."

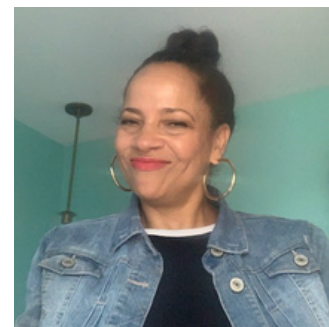
Lydia Officer, VP of Program Administration: "What I'm looking forward to the most is transitioning from a virtual setting to a hybrid setting for our meetings. Everyone is eager to see each other and to connect and network. I think that during the pandemic, although we've had virtual meetings, that connection was missing. I'm also looking forward to the external organizations that we bring in to teach us about leadership and how to grow within leadership, nurturing the seed of leadership in our membership and future leaders."

Veronica Beasley-Robinson, VP of Professional Development: "I like that word 'nurture', because when you nurture something, you are watching it grow. So, I have a plant, it's like a tree in my front room that my mom brought to me. I had to get it together. I had to nurture it. I had to prune it. I had to because it was falling apart. It gave me great joy to see that it's thriving by some of the things that I was doing, like watering it, and giving it air and light by opening up the window. It's a living thing and I think leadership is a living thing that we have to feed and nurture".

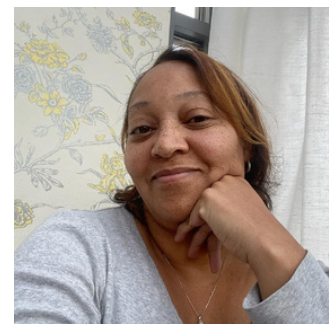
Tiffany Darby, VP of Public Relations: "Regarding planting the seed, to me that speaks to taking the initiative or that first step to be stretched, tried or to attempt something new. Then after that step, moving on to nurturing that seed consists of learning, practicing and seeking to understand and develop yourself in that particular area or those areas of interest. Lastly, DeAndre already planted the idea of celebrating in our head at our VP meeting. You know, we always just want to celebrate the big things. But we should practice and become comfortable with celebrating the small wins as well because they all are part of the process to our growth and they're all worth celebrating."

Carla Harris, VP of Awards and Recognition: "Planting seeds of leadership is investing in a person or people and assisting them in their development to blossom or bloom into someone greater. If planted correctly, the growth will be continuous."

I think this statement sums up why we are all here. Our arrival was us individually planting the seed ourselves and the environment placed around us along with the work we do is the food source that can help it grow.



Angela Haygood



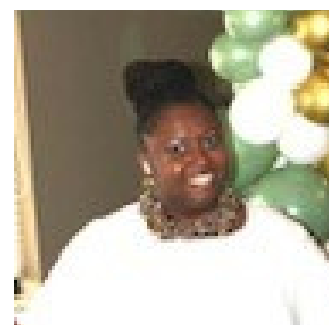
Lydia Officer



Veronica Beasley-Robinson



Tiffany Darby



Carla Harris

NEW MEMBER CORNER



OUR NEW TEAM MEMBERS
Welcome

Kelly Johnson
Christina Warren
Sophia Pipis
Charisse L. Watts

As a member of BCBSM LDA you are now a part of a great group of leaders, striving to live out our theme, "Grow to Enjoy." We encourage you to connect with our members and learn something new about the organization.

Member Benefits

- Networking through monthly meeting and mixers
- Professional development through workshops and "lunch and learn" sessions
- Community involvement through events like Bowl for Kids' Sake, walks for cures and causes, Adopt-a-Highway and more!

We have many upcoming events to begin networking and meeting other BCBSM LDA members. Check them out on the [Calendar of Events page](#).

We also perform various community involvement services throughout the year. We'd love for you to take part.

For more information about all other upcoming events, please visit [BCBSM LDA's site](#).

We look forward to seeing you at the next event!

Get
Acquainted

NEW MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

by Ebony Benson, Team Leader I

Meet BCBSM LDA April Batchelor! April joined Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan in November 2021 and her current role is team lead I with Group Customer Membership and Billing. But that's not her only gig. She's also an author and at-home baker.

As the team lead, April ensures Blue Cross' service levels are met by providing support to her team. She handles escalations, allocates work and resolves any issues. Her motto as a leader is *"Teamwork makes the dreamwork...no one person can do it alone."*

As a leader and in her personal life, she's inspired by stories about individuals who have accomplished their goals and overcame adversities, which reflect the three characteristics of what she defines as a great leader, empathy, accountability and dedication.

April is currently writing a fictional book loosely based on her life. She decided to write a book because she journals a lot for self-reflection. One day as she was reading her journal, she laughed out loud and thought to herself, this would be a great book. She plans to publish the book once it's complete.

During the pandemic she dusted off her baking skills and learned she had a talent for baking cheesecakes, especially her specialty lemon cheesecake.

April graduated Cum Laude in June with a Bachelor of Science in Business with a specialization in operational management and is currently a member of Delta Mu Delta International Honor Society in Business and plans to pledge Delta Sigma Theta in the near future.

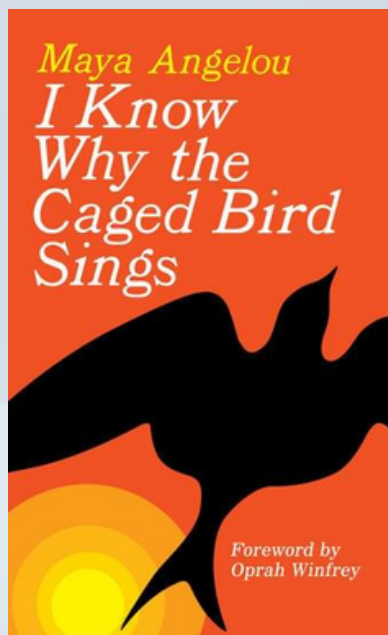
Being new to the company, April joined BCBSM LDA to network and to put herself in an environment to learn different management styles and best practices from other leaders.



April Batchelor

MORE ABOUT APRIL

- Favorite book: "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings," by Maya Angelou
- Favorite movie: "Love Jones"
- Family: She has three children in every stage of life; A 23-year-old son, a 14-year-old daughter and 4-year-old son



April and her children

JOIN US!

blueprint

is **HIRING.**

APPLY NOW

Share your creativity and volunteer for an award winning newsletter!

- Graphic Designers
- Writers
- Photographers

For more information email:

blueprint Chair Barbara.Krajenke@advantasure.com
or *blueprint* Co-Chair MBanaszak@bcbsm.com

August
22

**Impact Players: How to Take the Lead,
Play Bigger, and Multiply Your Impact**
12:00 - 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 - 4:00 p.m.

In Impact Players, New York Times bestselling author and researcher Liz Wiseman reveals the secrets of these stellar professionals who play the game at a higher level. Drawing on insights from leaders at top companies, Wiseman explains what the most influential players are doing differently, how small and seemingly insignificant differences in how we think, and act can make an enormous impact, and why -- with a little coaching -- this mindset is available to everyone who wants to contribute at their highest level and do more meaningful work. Based on a study of 170 top contributors, Wiseman identifies the mindsets that prevent otherwise smart, capable people from contributing to their full potential and the five practices that differentiate Impact Players.



Speaker:

Liz Wiseman, CEO of the Wiseman Group, a leadership research and development firm headquartered in Silicon Valley, California.

[Link to register](#)

GROW TO ENJOY

by Jeanette Johnson, Administrative Manager

Patience is a leader's greatest virtue, something that took me a while to learn. Growing as a leader takes patience and willingness to invest by "planting the seed and watching it grow". One way I do this is by investing time in those that I believe can be developed into leaders and other levels as well.

A good analogy for me is my home garden where I plant flowers and vegetables and watch them grow into luscious vegetation. It's satisfying watching them grow from just a small little seed into beautiful fully matured plants, a gift learned from my mom, a master gardener. But to get a garden (or future leader to grow) you must feed and water them so they can be nurtured into healthy plants.

Plant - a seed can be planted in someone without even knowing that's what you're doing. My mom planted the gardening seed in me, and I wasn't even paying attention. I have the same passion to grow employees and friends. Employees watch leaders and look to them to set the example of how to grow and reach a higher level. I plant the seed by providing advice or simply by being open to listening and saying what's on your mind. As leaders we have to be open to listen and speak to make changes, planting a seed within ourselves.

Nurture – My garden has to be attended to; therefore, I have to spend time to ensure its growth.

The weeds have to be pulled, sometimes plants have to be thinned out, the watering cycle has to be adjusted from time to time and I must protect it from animals. As a leader you have to nurture your employees in the same way by mentoring, training and providing a safe and comfortable environment. As a leader I'm not the center of attention and the only one leading a meeting or conversation. I think it's important to listen to employees and encourage them to speak up.



Nurturing is encouraging growth and development and spending time showing interest in their passions and desires.

I love teaching, training and seeing the results of what was learned. We won't pour water on employees as we do with plants, but we can certainly pour development into them through encouragement of professional development, establishing goals and mentoring.

To help employees develop, I trust them to do their jobs by getting out of the way the same as a plant will spread if you give them enough room.

Celebrate – It's important to celebrate achievements and I definitely enjoy the fruit of my labor when it comes to planting. I love photos, so I constantly take pictures of my plants from the very beginning until they have grown into beautiful flowers and vegetation.

Also, to celebrate the growth of my garden, I eat the fruits of my labor. One of the vegetables I plant is leaf lettuce. The freshness is indescribable. This year I was successful at growing strawberries as well and yes, I eat them in celebration. I celebrate employee achievements through our Health Care Value Bright Spots, by recognizing them in meetings, a Teams Praise Recognition, or the best thing I like to do is just call them up and say, "Great Job" and chat on the phone with them for a few minutes and give them continued encouragement.



Jeanette Johnson

"Every seed you plant, will grow into bountiful crops for a great harvest."

HONORING A HERO

By Barbara Krajenke, Communications Specialist

Taken from the obituary for LT. Col. Alexander Jefferson

Before becoming a [Tuskegee Airmen](#) LT. Col. Alexander Jefferson drew pictures of airplanes in his textbooks. After an initial let down, he was able to fulfill his passions of serving his country and aviation.

In 1942, during WWII he enlisted and was assigned to the Army Air Field at Tuskegee (University) Institute in Alabama for pilot training. However, the quota for black pilot candidates had been filled for the month and they sent him home and told him to wait until he was called. In April 1943, the army called to have him start his pilot training and in January 1944 he began his combat training at [Selfridge Air Force Base](#).

LT. Col. Jefferson served as a [Red Tail](#) a P-51 fighter pilot, 332nd Fighter Group, 301st Fighter squadron in Ramitelli, Italy, serving as an escort for B-17 and B-24 bombers. On August 12, 1944, three days before the invasion of Southern France, he was shot down by ground fire while strafing radar stations in the harbor of Toulon. Captured by German troops and interned for nine months as a prisoner of war, he spent the first six months in [Stalag Luft III](#), 80 miles east of Berlin on the Oder River.

On January 29, 1945, when the Russians started their offensive, the prisoners, American, British and French, were transferred to [Stalag VIIA](#), near Mooseburg, Germany approximately 20 miles north of Dachau. Liberated by American forces on April 29, 1945, he visited Dachau and witnessed the results of the atrocities committed by the Nazis. Upon his return to the U. S., he served as an instrument instructor in advance training at The Tuskegee Army Air Field until its deactivation in 1946. He wrote about his experiences in his memoir "[Red Tail Captured, Red Tail Free: Memoirs of a Tuskegee Airman and POW](#)" and was featured in "[The Luft Gangster: Memoirs of a Second Class Hero.](#)"



LT. Col. Alexander Jefferson



LT. Col. Alexander Jefferson speaking with other Tuskegee Airmen at Blue Cross

LT. Col. Jefferson was discharged from active duty in 1947 and retired from the reserves in 1969 with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, serving the last years as Staff Operations and Training Officer for the 9505th Air Recovery Squadron. The USAF, retired Tuskegee airman took his final flight on June 22, 2022.

LT. Col. Jefferson was the uncle of Lyida Officer, BCBSM LDA VP of Program Administration. We give our condolences to the loss of her beloved family member and United States hero.

MENTOR OR MENTEE - TWO REWARDING EXPERIENCES

By Jennifer Pakkala, Health Care Analyst

Taken from an HCV article published in June by Heidi Saucier

If you're looking for further guidance and development opportunities, mentoring is a great option. Mentoring others or being mentored both provide valuable growth in unique ways. As a mentee, you can gain valuable insights, knowledge, and skill development from an experienced person. As a mentor, not only are you able to offer the same to someone else, but you can also further develop leadership skills and may even learn something new from your mentee!

To start a relationship with a mentor, consider the following:

- Mentoring relationships don't happen by magic. When you identify a person who has experience in an area you are looking to grow in, ask that person if they would be willing to share with you their insights and experiences. You don't necessarily have to ask, "Will you be my mentor?" You could approach it by sharing your goals, identifying that you know the person has experience around that goal, and asking if they would be willing to talk about it more with you.
- A mentor doesn't have to be a leader by title. People at any level have skills and experiences that can help us in our career journey.
- You have a mentor, now what? Have a goal in mind for what you want to accomplish, whether it's a short-term or long-term mentoring relationship. Mentoring is a partnership, and you as the mentee will get out of it what you put into it.
- Be open to feedback. Mentors can be important guides to help you see things from a different point of view and may have overcome similar obstacles that you are facing. Take the time to listen and ask questions to get clear understanding on how to improve or navigate through new and challenging experiences.



If you are interested in being a mentor:

- Check out the Employee Resource Networks for opportunities to volunteer as a mentor. For example, one Blue Cross ERN is always looking for people to mentor our summer interns.
- Have you experienced growth? Do you have skills and knowledge others may be interested in? Then you can be a mentor! Mentoring does not have to be done in a formal program.
- Just like someone doesn't have to ask someone specifically to become a mentor, you don't have to specifically ask to mentor someone. Take opportunities to share your story and offer insights in a professional way if you think it will help someone grow.
- If you've been asked to mentor someone and you do not think you are the right person for them, ask questions to identify their needs and determine if you can point them to an alternate mentor or mentoring program. That might make all the difference in the world for that person.

When mentors and mentees participate actively contribute to their relationship, it provides learning opportunities and the ability to expand your network. I hope this guides you in determining which mentoring relationships are right for you.


PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: THE DEVELOPMENT OF A FUTURE LEADER

By Veronica G. Beasley-Robinson, Executive Assistant to VP

Our goal this year is to grow to enjoy! Our theme this year is to grow, nurture and celebrate. Professional Development opportunities are the smartest and most precise way to turn anyone into an emerging leader. Creating a generation of leaders is no easy job, and the process should address leadership concerns from the ground level. However, nurturing takes time, as you would understand if you had a pet or have grown plants. Giving the right amount of attention at the right time is necessary. Ensuring and providing an opportunity to access resources and skills at the right time will help anyone scale up. And that's something to celebrate!



The Professional Development Committee's platform is to develop you as a leader. We will provide opportunities to:

- Develop a new skill – Growing professionally often means expanding the arsenal of your skillset.
 - Develop leadership skills – Planning, facilitating and coordinating an event is an opportunity to put your leadership skills into practice.
- 
- Expansion of your professional network – Expanding your professional network can expose you to new ideas, build your profile, meet new people, and help you learn continuously.
 - Level up your credentials – Continuing your education or acquiring knowledge can open new career opportunities or clear a path to a promotion.
 - Deepen job satisfaction – Job satisfaction is tied to many factors besides enjoying the work itself—including forming fulfilling relationships with coworkers, achieving work-life balance and keeping your mental and physical health in check.

So be on the lookout for our book club meetings, virtual webinars and in-person seminars. We are looking for future leaders! For more information on how to join the Professional Development Committee, please contact Veronica Beasley-Robinson, Vice President of Professional Development vbeasley-robinson@bcbsm.com.

BCBSM LDA Code of Ethics

- I will recognize that all individuals inherently desire to practice their occupations to the best of their ability.
- I will assume that all individuals want to do their best.
- I will maintain a broad and balanced outlook and will recognize value in the ideas and opinions of others.
- I will be guided in all my activities by truth, accuracy, fair dealing and good taste.
- I will keep informed on the latest developments in techniques, equipment and process.
- I will recommend or initiate methods to increase productivity and efficiency.
- I will support efforts to strengthen the management profession through training and education.
- I will help my associates reach personal and professional fulfillment.
- I will earn and carefully guard my reputation for good moral character and good citizenship.
- I will promote the principles of our American Enterprise System to others, by highlighting its accomplishments and displaying confidence in its future.
- I will recognize that leadership is a call to service.

Statement of Principles

BCBSM LDA is dedicated to managerial excellence, personal and professional growth, and leadership development. The following principles identify BCBSM LDA's core beliefs and provide the basis for the Association's Mission Statement.

- We believe in the highest standards of personal and organizational integrity and respect for the individual.
- We believe in lifelong learning, continuous improvement, and the development of a workforce capable of sustaining a competitive posture in the global economy.
- We believe management is a creative, dynamic, and essential process enabling people to achieve personal and organizational objectives.
- We believe that managerial responsibility is shared among all individuals at all levels of the organization and that leadership is critical to management success.
- We believe that individuals and organizations have a community and civic responsibility.

blueprint team

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Co-Chair Michelle Banaszak

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Dustin Freeze

BCBSM LDA Board Officers

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President: DeAndre Elliott

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Dana Bell

DeAndre Elliott

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Lifetime National Director: Nancy Bennett

Lifetime National Director: Cathy Longo

Executive Advisors

Cassandra Alston-Childs

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VP of Public Relations: Tiffany Darby

VP of Finance: Angela Haygood

VP of Awards and Recognition: Carla Harris

VP of Program Administration: Lydia Officer

VP of Professional Development: Veronica Beasley-Robinson

NMA National Mission Statement

NMA offers leadership development products and opportunities that maximize the potential of our members, sponsoring organizations and communities.