

RIVERTOWN.

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RIVERTOWN AWARDS 2018

Every year Rivertown selects four individuals & a local business who goes above & beyond to demonstrate leadership, community engagement & pride for the region. Here are the recipients of this year's Rivertown Awards:

RYAN MILLNER

Caleb Cassell, contributing writer

Ryan grew up in Palm Beach County, Florida; his grandparents own a farm in Providence, North Carolina that he would visit at least once a year a kid. Even though Ryan grew up in Florida, he has a growing heart for the Danville & Caswell County community.

Once Ryan got married and started a family, he and his wife decided that the cost of living to raise a family would be considerably less on his family's farm in Providence than in Florida. In 2016 Ryan and his wife made the move to North Carolina with their children Londyn, Valyn, and have since had another son, "daddy's wingman," Maverick.

Ryan was able to find a job in marketing at Caswell Family Medical Center in Yanceyville, North Carolina. Ryan enjoys his job because he is able to meet and connect with people in Caswell County. Ryan serves on committees and attends board meetings in Caswell County and is a recent alumnus for the Middle Border Forward Fellowship. Ryan believes "that community engagement is the active involvement of a group of like-minded people who look to better serve the people where they live." Ryan also states that "there's nothing better than having the opportunity to come together with a group of people who can see a better future for your community and do something about it."

One of Ryan's favorite things about Caswell County & Danville region is how many people are willing to step in and fix issues that they see. Ryan believes that there are constant changes for the better in the community. For anyone who wants to get involved in the community, Ryan suggest looking into Middle Border Forward, The Health Collaborative of Danville and Caswell County, and the Boys and Girls Club. Ryan concludes with recommending Middle Border Forward for any questions regarding the community such as education, infrastructure, or arts and culture.

RIVERTOWN.

NOVEMBER 2018 · VOL II · ISSUE 3

PORCHIA RUSSELL

Caleb Cassell, contributing writer

Porchia Russell grew up in Caswell County. In 2008, she graduated from the Art Institute of Charlotte and continued her education at DCC and graduated in 2015. Porchia currently works for Danville Public Schools as the Precision Machining Technology Instructor. Porchia also serves as board directors for Danville Public Schools and Middle Boarder Forward; she is also the Creative/Backstage Coordinator for Danville Fashion Week. Porchia loves all things art, music, fashion, and personal growth. Porchia believes that community engagement means being present. Being present, as she explains, "not [present] in the sense of physically being involved but present in being honest with the real issues that our region faces on a daily basis." Porchia strongly believes that community engagement means using your talents and gifts to make the community better. Porchia's favorite thing about the region is the food and drinks. Her favorites include Me's burgers, pizza from Dellanos, and a Lady Astor form either the 616 or Cotton. Porchia's advice for community involvement is to get plugged into a local nonprofit. A couple of starting places she gives are Middle Border Forward, God's Storehouse, and serve365.org.

SARAH PORTER-MCWILLIAMS

Caleb Cassell, contributing writer

Sarah Porter-McWillaims is one of the friendliest people you will ever meet. I had the opportunity to meet her while she and my wife, Corinne, briefly worked together at Crema & Vine. Corinne and I have also had the opportunity to visit her home church several times, which is what brought Sarah to Danville. A born and raised Southern California girl, Sarah was asked to consider moving across the country to be a part of newground church. She made the move in July 2013 and has made an impact ever since. Sarah is very outgoing, never meets a stranger, and that has helped her build relationships in her new hometown and make lasting impacts. There is no surprise that Sara's favorite thing about the region would be the people she has met. Sara is a mother to three (Charlie, Kaylin, and Charlotte) and has worked various retail positions as she continues an education at DCC. Sarah has used social media as her means for finding out all the happenings in the city. Sarah's advice to anyone wanting to get involved is to step out of your comfort zone. She explains, "Do something you never imagined yourself doing and then do it again tomorrow." Finally, Sarah's idea of community involvement is, simply put, to work on solutions to problems that you see in the area instead of doing nothing but continually complaining about the issues that need addressing. Sarah believes that getting out of your comfort zone is how you grow as a person while simultaneously making your community better.