

Who's Next in Communications: 21 people under 40 helping Pittsburgh tell its story

Meet The Incline's inaugural Who's Next class.



JAYNA WALLACE / THE INCLINE

[Sarah Anne Hughes](#)
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Who do you trust to tell your story?

For certain nonprofits, businesses and individuals in Pittsburgh, the answer is one of the many young pros in advertising, corporate communications, marketing and public relations who live and work in the city. Some run their own firms or freelance, while others work for some of the most well-known names in the Pittsburgh area.

Meet the inaugural class of [Who's Next](https://theincline.com/2016/10/05/nominate-someone-for-the-inclines-whos-next-communications/) (<https://theincline.com/2016/10/05/nominate-someone-for-the-inclines-whos-next-communications/>), a series in which *The Incline* asks Pittsburgh to nominate the best and brightest under-40 professionals in different fields. Our editorial staff vetted dozens of nominees before settling on this list. Soon, we'll celebrate the winners at a party we throw in their honor.

Our sibling site, *Billy Penn*, has recognized hundreds of young professionals through [Who's Next in Philadelphia](https://billypenn.com/stories/whos-next/) (<https://billypenn.com/stories/whos-next/>), from lawyers to artists to teachers to chefs. We'll do the same here.

Next week, we'll put out a call for our second Who's Next class. If you have ideas about which fields in Pittsburgh we should spotlight or people we can't miss, email us at tips@theincline.com (<mailto:tips@theincline.com>) (subject: Who's Next).

For now, meet Who's Next in Pittsburgh communications:



JASMINE GOLDBAND / THE INCLINE

STEPHAN BONTRAGER

👤 38 years old

🐦 @SKBontrager (<https://twitter.com/SKBontrager>)

Bontrager serves as communications director for Riverlife, a nonprofit dedicated to revitalizing the city's waterfronts. Since 2009, he's been tasked with communicating with members of the press about Riverlife's mission and developing marketing and community outreach strategies. Bontrager is behind the campaign to create the Strip District Riverfront Park, a person who nominated him wrote, and has built "broad public support" for it. For an art project under the Fort Duquesne Bridge, he involved students from the Pittsburgh Creative and Performing Arts Magnet school "in all aspects," including making a presentation to Arts Commission. "The high school students were so inspired by Stephan," the person wrote. Bontrager previously served as director of education and community engagement for 91.3 WYEP, Pittsburgh's independent music station. He was also the station's on-air "Midday Mix" host from 2002 to 2007 and served on its community advisory board. Bontrager has served as board chair for the Pittsburgh Urban Leadership Service Experience and was on the board for the Sprout Fund. He is a graduate of Goshen College and Point Park University. He lives in Regent Square.



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ADAM BRANDOLPH

👤 Media Relations and Spokesperson, Port Authority of Allegheny County

👤 34 years old

🐦 @AdamBrandolph (<https://twitter.com/AdamBrandolph>)


Brandolph has worked in public relations for the Port Authority since September 2015. There, he is the main media contact, writes speeches and correspondence for the CEO and creates content for marketing campaigns. Brandolph was previously a reporter for the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*, *The Sewickley Herald* and *The Signal Item*. In his nomination, he was described as professional with "masterful institutional knowledge" and was recognized for his "innovative use of new media to engage customers and stakeholders." He also volunteers with Lawrenceville United and is on the steering committee for Arsenal Park. Brandolph, his wife Ashley, and their dogs Oscar and Olive live in Lawrenceville.



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BEN BUTLER

 Founder and Head of Client Success, Top Hat IMC

 25 years old


 [@BenButlerPR](https://twitter.com/BenButlerPR) (<https://twitter.com/BenButlerPR>)


In May 2013, Butler created and launched Top Hat IMC, which is now an award-winning, five-person integrated marketing communications agency. He was previously head of marketing and public relations at Pittsburgh International Race Complex; the national vice president of public relations for the Public Relations Student Society of America and Director of Inbound Partnerships at GuavaBox, an inbound marketing agency. At Top Hat, Butler works with clients to evaluate their needs and goals and builds the company's client list. He is also accredited in public relations, which is the only post-graduate certification for the industry. Butler lives in Ross Township.



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MEG CAMPBELL

 Communication and Program Specialist, University of Pittsburgh Community and Governmental Relations

 28 years old

 [@MegKCampbell](https://twitter.com/MegKCampbell) (<https://twitter.com/MegKCampbell>)


Campbell has worked in her role in the Office of Community and Governmental Relations for two years. She works on all marketing, communications, advertising and public relations activities for the office, as well as redesigned and managed websites and social media accounts within the office. In her Who's Next nomination, one person wrote that Campbell "loves writing and editing copy more than I previously thought possible." and that "Her first answer is never, 'I don't know how to do that,' but rather, 'Give me a few hours and a couple of YouTube tutorials and I'll find a way to get it done.'" Campbell is also a member of the National Association of Women MBAs, Chancellor's Communication Committee and the Mayor's Civic Leadership Academy. She has a Bachelor of Science in Marketing and Business Administration from Pitt and is currently earning her Master of Business Administration in Marketing & Strategy with a Digital Marketing Certificate. Campbell lives in Friendship.




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ROSSILYNNE CULGAN

 Assistant Director of Marketing, Carnegie Science Center

 28 years old

 @rossilynne (<https://www.twitter.com/rossilynne>)


Culgan has worked for the Carnegie Science Center since 2014, first as marketing communications manager and now as assistant director of marketing. It's her job to promote, publicize and serve as the spokesperson for the Chevron Center for STEM Education and Career Development, which hosts special field trips, holds competitions for students and offers training to teachers. She writes and edits Science Impact, a quarterly newsletter that documents the museum's activities. One person who nominated Culgan described her as like "a spokeswoman for the city of Pittsburgh." Another wrote, "There is not a more dedicated, driven individual coming up in the communications scene in Pittsburgh." Until recently, Culgan wrote pieces about Pittsburgh's dining scene as a freelancer for Thrillist. She covered everything from education to Marcellus shale drilling for the *Valley News Dispatch* between 2010 and 2014. Culgan was also the editor of *The Daily Collegian* at Penn State, the university from which she graduated. She has won several journalism awards, including the Pennsylvania Women's Press Association's Rookie Reporter award. Culgan lives Downtown.




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KEEGAN GIBSON

 Special Projects Manager for Western Pennsylvania, Ceisler Media & Issue Advocacy

 30 years old

 @KeeganGibson (<https://twitter.com/KeeganGibson>)


Gibson has led the Ceisler Media Pittsburgh office since January 2013, working with a variety of clients on strategic media relations, issue advocacy and grassroots mobilization programs. Previously, Gibson was managing editor of *PoliticsPA* and campaign manager for the Pennsylvania House Democratic Campaign Committee. In his nomination, one person said "he was able to synthesize the issue swiftly, offer creative suggestions on delivering the right message, but always guides clients so they look their best." Gibson and his wife Lindsay had their first child in June. They live in Bellevue.




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MAGGIE GRAHAM

 Owner, Maggie Graham Consulting

 28 years old

 @magsg (<https://www.twitter.com/magsg>)


Graham runs her own consulting firm, whose clients includes nonprofits like Grow Pittsburgh and the Sudden Cardiac Arrest Foundation. Before striking out on her own, Graham was communications coordinator for East Liberty Development, Inc. and Tree Pittsburgh. She also served as regional public affairs coordinator for the Muscular Dystrophy Association. “Maggie has a passion for all things Pittsburgh,” wrote one person who nominated her. “The people, the trees, the gardens, the food and the place itself.” Graham is currently an advisory board member for the Garfield Community Farm, assisting with fundraising events. She’s also an ambassador for Tickets for Kids Charities, which allows at-risk children to attend sporting and cultural events for free. Graham is a graduate of Waynesburg University and studied abroad at the University of Westminster in London as a participant in the Vira I. Heinz Scholarship Program for Women in Global Leadership. She is a resident of Fineview.



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LAURA GREENAWALT

 Marketing Director, City Theatre

 31 years old


Until recently, Greenawalt was the sole person in charge of handling marketing and communications for City Theatre on the South Side. That includes writing marketing, ad and event materials, handling public and media relations for the theater and managing its social media accounts. She has “transformed the marketing and advertising strategy at City Theatre in a quantifiable and positive way, leading to greater attendance and awareness for the company,” a person who nominated Greenawalt wrote. Before that, she was the marketing and PR coordinator for Point Park University’s Conservatory of Performing Arts and was a marketing consultant for Green Light Wireless. Greenawalt, who graduated from Penn State University with a degree in theater arts, was City Theatre’s Young Playwright’s Competition Resident Artist and worked as Pittsburgh Public Theater’s assistant house manager for several years. She received her master’s degree from Point Park University. Greenawalt lives in Lawrenceville.



SUBMITTED

AMANDA HARTLE

 Director of Communications and Development, North Hills School District

 32 years old

Since 2012, Hartle has been the North Hills School District's director of communications and development. In that time, she has grown the district's social media accounts, which now have nearly 10,000 followers collectively. Under her direction, the North Hills School District became the first in Allegheny County to have an Instagram account and mobile app. Through her development work, which includes connecting with alumni and finding sponsorships and partnerships, the district has raised more than \$100,000 for its students. "When I think of the top communications professionals in Pittsburgh, Amanda Hartle immediately comes to mind," one of the people who nominated Hartle wrote. Hartle previously worked for the Moon Area School District and was a staff writer for Gateway Newspapers. She currently writes for the Pennsylvania School Boards Association's magazine and serves on the Pennsylvania School Public Relations Association's board. The latter organization gave Hartle an award of excellence. Constant Contact also recognized her with its All-Star Award in 2016. Hartle is a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown. She lives in Hampton Township.



HEATHER HOPSON

📁 Communications Director, Allies for Children; Publisher, DiaryofaFirstTimeMom.com

👤 39 years old

🐦 @dearmomdiary (<https://twitter.com/dearmomdiary>).

Hopson's communications work revolves around children. She is the communications director of Allies for Children, which advocates for policies that improve the lives of kids in Allegheny County and builds a network of partners. She's also the creator and publisher of Diary of a First Time Mom, where she chronicles her journey through motherhood and gives other African-American parents a space to write about their experiences. Before that, she was social media and video manager for Pittsburgh Public Schools and was a reading teacher at a middle school in Temple Hills, Md. Those careers came after she spent more than a decade as a television journalist in Lansing, Michigan, Pittsburgh, Lexington, Kentucky and the Cayman Islands. She is the winner of several awards, including one for journalism from the Pan American Health Organization Excellence, and the recipient of grants including The Pittsburgh Foundation and The Heinz Endowments' Advancing Black Arts in Pittsburgh for her website. Hopson is a graduate of Michigan State University. She lives in Penn Hills.



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JOANNA HUSS

📁 Founder and CEO, Huss Group

👤 32 years old

🐦 @joannahuss (<https://twitter.com/joannahuss>).

Before she turned 30, Huss founded her own communications company. After just two years, the Huss Group expanded to New York with a satellite office. "She is relentless in searching for opportunities to get our message to the right audience," said one person who nominated her. Another added, "Joanna comes up with unique ideas that make a big impact when communicating for our business. Joanna has a way of creating an 'event' that has way more impact than a typical ad and does not cost nearly as much." She served as press secretary to Pittsburgh Mayor Luke Ravenstahl and worked in the press office of Pittsburgh Mayor Bob O'Connor. She also briefly served a guest host on radio station KDKA. Huss graduated from the University of Pittsburgh and Carnegie Mellon. She lives in Squirrel Hill.



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KELSEY JACKSON

📁 Public Relations Manager P3R (Pittsburgh Three Rivers Marathon Inc.)

Public relations manager, P3R (Pittsburgh Three Rivers Marathon, Inc.)

👤 31 years old

🐦 @kelseyjackson (<https://twitter.com/kelseyjackson>)

Jackson has been the public relations manager for P3R, which oversees the city's marathon and half-marathon, among other races, since November 2012. She also worked in public relations and as the elite athlete program coordinator for a year before that. As public relations manager, Jackson leads brand awareness and communication strategies, plans for press operations during the P3R races and analyzes media placements and social media impressions. She previously worked as an information specialist at the University of Missouri News Bureau. Jackson lives in Greenfield.



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WILLY JAMES

👤 Publicist and freelance videographer

👤 22 years old

🐦 @willypgh (<https://twitter.com/willypgh>)

James is telling the story of the North Side and Pittsburgh through video. Between January 2014 and March 2016, he served as publicist, videographer and web designer for the Allegheny City Historic Gallery as a volunteer. He wrote press releases, communicated with journalists and spread the word through video. "It seems as if the Allegheny City Historic Gallery is appearing everywhere at the moment. This is thanks to the clever tactics and hard work of ... publicist [Willy James \(https://www.facebook.com/willsayshi\)](https://www.facebook.com/willsayshi)," gallery founder Bill Gandy once wrote of James. As a freelancer, James has worked with The Allegheny City Society, Northside Chronicle, Observatory Hill Inc. and rapper KRS-One. James also shoots independent documentaries in order to tell community stories. He won a Neighbor-to-Neighbor grant from the Sprout Fund to create a short documentary on the Banjo Club. James lives on the North Side.



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ABASS B. KAMARA

👤 39 years old


🐦 @AbassBKamara150 (<https://twitter.com/AbassBKamara150>)


Kamara became a partner at The Carey Group, a consulting and business development firm, in May 2013. There, he works on business development, campaign consulting and management, grassroots organizing, strategic communications and more. Previously, he was director of government affairs for the Pittsburgh Penguins and a special assistant to former Gov. Edward G. Rendell. Kamara is also active on multiple local boards including the Oakland Planning Development Corp. Board, Riverlife, Greater Pittsburgh Food Bank, United Methodist Church Union, East End Cooperative Ministries, Planned Parenthood Western PA, Bob O'Connor Foundation Board, Allegheny County MBE/WBE Board and involved in efforts to protect Albright United Methodist Church. Kamara lives in Highland Park.




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PHIL LABOON

 CEO, Eyeflow Internet Marketing

 34 years old

 @PhilLaBoon (<https://twitter.com/PhilLaBoon>)


LaBoon started Eyeflow Internet Marketing in 2001 to provide consulting and digital marketing services to clients and help them promote their companies. He also helps clients manage their online reputation and promote SEO and online public relations. In addition, LaBoon is the co-founder of WUDN, handcrafted wooden lifestyle products. He is president of the Pittsburgh chapter of the Young Entrepreneurial Council and a member and investor of the organization's parent company Young Entrepreneur Council. LaBoon is a board member of the South Side Chamber of Commerce. He lives in the South Side.



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SARAH MAYER

 Partner, Shift Collaborative

 37 years old

 @sjbst37 (<https://twitter.com/sjbst37>)


As a partner in Shift Collaborative, Mayer works with organizations in the community that want to make change. She manages client accounts, does digital marketing strategies for clients and manages company communications. She was one of the founders of the creative agency in 2013, and the team has grown to nine people. She's also the co-founder of UpToKnow Good, which is a resource for small businesses and


entrepreneurs to help them understand the value of professional design, marketing and communications services in pop-up locations. Mayer is the board president for Sojourner House, a nonprofit organization delivering faith-based recovery services to mothers and their children. Previously, she worked as retail promotions and special events manager for Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership. Mayer lives in Allison Park.



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SHAUNDA MILES

 Director of Public Relations, Pittsburgh Cultural Trust

 39 years old

 @Trust_Shaunda (https://twitter.com/Trust_Shaunda)

Miles has led public relations for the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust since March 2013. She provides statements to the trust's staff, as well as to sponsors for events and festivals, promotes the trust and trust-sponsored shows at the Benedum Center and Byham Theater, works with public relations firms for campaigns, writes press releases and more. She is also the project manager for the Macedonia Church of Pittsburgh, where she develops ways to advance the church's strategic vision, oversees maintenance and facilities of the church and manages a membership drive. Miles is a producer for the demaskus Theater Collective, a non-profit collective that spreads the messages of marginalized people through theater. She also is a member of the board of directors for the Yale Club of Pittsburgh and Pittsburgh Jazz Orchestra. She's on the advisory board of the SHYNE Awards Foundation and the ladies' night steering committee for Quantum Theatre Company. Miles also is a faculty member for the Center for Urban Biblical Ministries and a managing editor and contributing writer to The Mount Magazine. She lives in McKees Rocks.



SURMITTFD

ANTHONY M. MOORE

📄 Senior University News Representative, University of Pittsburgh

👤 35 years old

In his role at the University of Pittsburgh, Moore is the media relations person for 17 university divisions, including the schools of law and education, as well as the University Honors College. He works daily with news outlets and with university staff to communicate the messages and positions of Pitt. Previously, Moore was an executive assistant to Pitt's vice chancellor for communications and, before that, a news and information specialist at Pitt. He's won multiple awards from the International Association of Business Communications, the Pittsburgh Black Media Federation and the Press Club of Western Pennsylvania. Moore lives in Shadyside.



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MARIANNE OLSCHESKY

📄 Community Outreach and Marketing Specialist, St. Clair Hospital

👤 29 years old

Olschesky is the community outreach and marketing specialist for St. Clair Hospital in Mt. Lebanon, where she has worked in various roles since 2010. In addition to handling the hospital's social media accounts and assisting with media relations, she plans community outreach events with nonprofit partners. "Marianne does outstanding work arranging health fairs for nonprofit organizations that serve low-income communities," wrote one of the people who nominated Olschesky, adding she's the "one everyone seeks out to get things done." She currently serves as secretary on the board of directors for the Carnegie Boys & Girls Club, one of the ways she expresses her passion for helping youth. Olschesky graduated from Duquesne University. She lives in Dormont.



BRIAN COHEN

KATIE O'MALLEY

📄 Assistant Communications Manager, Office of Mayor William Peduto

👤 32 years old

🐦 @omalley1212 (<https://twitter.com/omalley1212>)


O'Malley is a familiar name to the city's journalists. As one of Mayor Bill Peduto's spokespeople, she manages press inquiries, handles press conferences and writes releases, letters and proclamations. O'Malley also oversees Pittsburgh's government cable channel and the city's social media accounts. She spearheaded the creation of the City of Pittsburgh Canine Ambassador position, currently held by her dog, [River](https://www.instagram.com/pghdogriver/) (<https://www.instagram.com/pghdogriver/>). O'Malley "does her job incredibly well," according to the person who nominated her. Before joining Peduto's administration, she held several positions with the Pittsburgh Penguins including PenTV host and Penguins Live co-host, and she coordinated production and Penguins' mascot Iceburgh's appearances. She is a graduate of the University of Colorado. O'Malley lives in Morningside.



JASMINE GOLDBAND / THE INCLINE

KARAMAGI RUJUMBA

 Director of Public Affairs & Advocacy, Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation

 38 years old

 [@KaramagiRujumba](https://twitter.com/KaramagiRujumba) (<https://twitter.com/KaramagiRujumba>)

Since 2010, Rujumba has directed media and public affairs for the Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation, which works to preserve significant structures and areas in the region. He also manages the Landmarks Preservation Resource Center – which hosts lectures, film screenings and workshops – and produced the foundation's documentary, "Through the Place," which was selected to screen at the New Urbanism Film Festival. Prior to joining the foundation, he was a staff writer at the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* and the *Toledo Blade*. Rujumba was born in Kenya, grew up in Uganda and moved to the U.S., where he became a naturalized citizen. He's a graduate of Wittenberg University and the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism. He resides on the North Side.

The spelling of Stephan Bontrager's last name in the body of the text has been corrected as has his age.

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