

12 under 40: The finalists

These are the 12 finalists in LEAD Brevard's seventh annual 4 Under 40 contest, which recognizes the next generation of under-40 leaders who are helping guide Brevard County forward in positive ways. The four winners will be announced Friday.

RICK BALDA

President, Balda Development and Construction
Age: 39 Residence: Satellite Beach



Raised in Brevard, Rick Balda returned home after obtaining an electrical engineering degree from Purdue University. As president of Balda Development and Construction, his engineering background nurtured his company's green building initiative.

Balda's company built the first Platinum Certified Florida Green Home in Satellite Beach. Through his support of the Florida Green Building Coalition, he has introduced "green" skills and products to local tradesmen and contractors.

Through his Balda Family Foundation, Balda provides

scholarships and funds for Brevard Community College, Florida Tech, Ascension Catholic School, Take Stock in Children, the Brevard Art Museum and the Brevard Zoo.

"The majority of these organizations have received recurring scholarships to assist students through their graduation, illustrating our foundation's long-term commitment to the community," Balda said.

He later added, "One person can act as a catalyst, but it takes the elements of many to effect change." ■

CAREY BEAM

Communications Specialist, Craig Technologies
Age: 33 Residence: Cocoa



When it comes to community service, Craig Technologies walks the walk. So does Carey Beam, communications specialist for the company.

"She consistently put the Brevard community first, remaining an active volunteer to so many critical community-based organizations," said John Craig, the senior joint programs adviser at Craig Technologies who nominated Beam. "Carey makes a difference in people's lives every day."

Beam organized "CT Serves," Craig Technologies' community outreach and volunteer program, which annually provides

hundreds of volunteer hours and almost \$300,000 in cash and in-kind donations to Brevard charities.

A volunteer with Rolling Readers Space Coast, Beam emphasizes the importance of literacy to children who come from disadvantaged households.

"I believe that positivity tends to breed positivity," Beam said.

A graduate of Brevard County Citizen's Academy, Beam is active with the Brevard Symphony Orchestra's Vivace Society and National Space Club Florida Committee, among other groups. ■

JULIE BRAGA

Director of Sales, Courtyard and Residence Inn by Marriott
Age: 33 Residence: Cape Canaveral



Chances are excellent that when ever a local charity hosts an event, Julie Braga will be there.

Braga, director of sales for Melbourne Courtyard and Residence Inn by Marriott, is one of Brevard's biggest fans, and she works hard for her favorite county. In her professional life, Braga advocates for the Space Coast as a wonderful place to visit, live, work and play. As part of Melbourne Regional Chamber's Visitors' Bureau Advisory Board, she helped develop a new visitors' guide and website.

In August, Braga spearheaded the Women's Business Council's third annual Back-to-School Event,

which helps underprivileged girls succeed in school by providing them with back-to-school supplies, clothing, haircuts and food.

"Julie has been an inspiration to me and to many other local women in Brevard County, young and tenured alike," said nominator Courtney Culver, who was named a 4 Under 40 recipient last year.

Braga strives to lead a life of service.

"My goal is to be a role model each and every day, especially when no one is looking," Braga said. "When you stay true to your values, you will change the world around you." ■

ANGELICA COTSHOTT

CEO, Kindred Hospital Melbourne
Age: 38 Residence: Melbourne



As CEO of Kindred Hospital, Angelica Cotshott is responsible for the complex operations of the Melbourne long-term acute care hospital that treats critically ill patients suffering from multiple organ system failures.

"In this role, she has demonstrated her leadership qualities, as well as her capacity for handling the considerable responsibilities that come with her position in a highly competitive and important industry," said Florida Tech vice president for advancement Bino Campanini, who nominated Cotshott for the 4 under 40 award.

Under Cotshott's leader-

ship, Kindred has sponsored many charitable events.

"A business should place emphasis on what the community will gain from its presence," she said.

On a personal level, she volunteers for Junior Achievement of the Space Coast, the American Lung Association, Big Brothers Big Sisters and Habitat for Humanity.

"I actively recruit for many of the organizations on which I serve," said Cotshott. "It's not about quantitating your level of involvement. It is about the quality you bring to your involvement." ■

ALIONA GROH

Marketing Coordinator, Hoyman Dobson
Age: 36 Residence: Rockledge



Aliona Groh helps build the Space Coast one home at a time.

As part of Habitat for Humanity's Women Build project, Groh was instrumental in getting a family into a Habitat for Humanity home. In fact, Groh, marketing coordinator at Hoyman Dobson, became a one-woman marketing agency for the Habitat program, coordinating press coverage and engaging prospective sponsors and work site volunteers to lend their hands to the project.

"Aliona has an infectious spirit and can be seen in the community giving her best to her work, professional associations and charitable or-

ganizations," said nominator Carey Beam, communications specialist with Craig Technologies and a 4 Under 40 nominee.

"Aliona willingly gives her time and talents to community organizations and never fails to step up when help is needed."

Habitat is not Groh's only passion. She supports the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, the March of Dimes, the Space Coast Early Intervention Center and Florida Tech's Women's Business Center.

"I'm a big believer in organizing people to do good things in the community," she said. ■

MARK MALEK

Patent Attorney, Zies Wilderman & Malek
Age: 37 Residence: Indian Harbour Beach



Mark Malek's can-do attitude serves him well, both in the courtroom and with his many philanthropic endeavors.

"I attempt to volunteer my time for as many community organizations as possible," said the Melbourne attorney.

Fran Warkomski, executive director of Florida Tech's Scott Center for Autism Treatment who nominated Malek, praised his involvement with her organization.

"His energy, enthusiasm and, most importantly, his support and assistance in helping our new program and families, is immeasurable," she said.

As managing partner of Zies Wilderman & Malek, he makes it a priority to support

organizations that make Brevard a better place.

"I encourage the firm and its employees to volunteer their time," said

Malek, who has been a member of the board of Junior Achievement since 2004. He also teaches Junior Achievement classes at local schools, serves on the Advisory Committee of the Scott Center for Autism Treatment, and serves on the Advisory Committee of Everst University and of the Brevard Autism Coalition.

"Although it is sometimes difficult to balance the rigors of managing a law firm, I find that I must balance work with community involvement and lead the way for others to do the same." ■

RICHARD ROGERS

Central Florida Area Director, Eckerd Youth Alternatives
Age: 33 Residence: Viera



Last year, when Brevard Public Schools officials were concerned about the increasing number of homeless students, they asked Richard Rogers for help.

The Central Florida area director for Eckerd Youth Alternatives, Rogers is an untiring advocate for children's issues and serves on numerous boards and coalitions that support this cause.

Under his leadership, Eckerd Youth Alternatives has developed abuse prevention, mental health, diversion, and after-school and summer enrichment programs, as well as a mentoring program for children of incar-

cerated parents and a Computer 4 Kidz program that has provided more than 500 computers to needy children.

Rogers is a firm believer in partnerships that share resources and best practices to maximize care for youth.

"I don't like seeing children fall through the cracks, and I refuse to believe that any child is beyond hope," Rogers said. "It breaks my heart to see people giving up on a child. Every child needs someone by their side believing in them and holding out a helping hand. My motto is 'whatever is best for the kids.'" ■

DR. ANITA SALUJA

Dermatologist, MIMA Dermatology
Age: 34 Residence: Melbourne



She heals . . . and she dances like a star.

MIMA dermatologist Dr. Anita Saluja is a medical prodigy who graduated from the University of Michigan Medical School when she was just 20 years old. This year, she competed in "Dancing with Brevard," raising more than \$20,000 for the KLD Youth Foundation.

"I have an urge to get better, to make a difference, to learn more 24/7," Saluja said.

As part of the Skin Cancer Foundation's Road to Healthy Skin Tour, Saluja

performed free skin exams at Ron Jon Surf Shop and at Florida Tech.

Saluja has donated aesthetic treatments to help with the fundraising efforts of the Women's Center, Children's Home Society, Sally's House, Make-a-Wish Foundation and American Cancer Society, among others.

"My practice has seen more than 25,000 patients from this fine community and, hopefully, we have impacted and continue to impact their lives through education and treatment," Saluja said. ■

JOSEPH SOFIA

Vice President, Florida Business Bank
Age: 31 Residence: Eau Gallie



When Joseph Sofia took over as chairman of Young Professionals of Brevard, the organization was suffering from "board fatigue," a declining membership and a reputation as a venue for meeting singles rather than a networking opportunity for professionals.

Under Sofia's leadership, YPB doubled in membership, reinventing itself as an "incubator" for the best and the brightest in Brevard.

At just 31, the vice president at Florida Business Bank is already an important leader for Space Coast nonprofits including the Brevard Cultural Alliance, Circles of

Care, Brevard Art Museum, Brevard Symphony Orchestra, Florida Tech's Scott Center for Autism Treatment, Brevard County Civilian Military Council, Melbourne Chamber of Commerce and PREVENT!

His weekly Junior Achievement class helps groom the businesspeople of tomorrow.

"After teaching the class, I have seen students who could barely understand business give compelling presentation utilizing terms like return on equity, market risk and interest rate shock," Sofia said. ■

REBECCA WOOD

Associate Editor, SCB Marketing
Age: 27 Residence: Palm Bay



Rebecca Wood, associate editor at SCB Marketing, believes in leading by example.

"I encourage others by setting a good example, working hard and contributing my best to whatever task is at hand," she said.

As president-elect of the Junior League of South Brevard, Wood has made significant contributions to the community.

"As a leader of the Junior League of South Brevard, I constantly look for needs in the community," Wood said.

A Rolling Readers volunteer, Wood shares her passion for the written word with elementary school stu-

dents. Through the Rachel's Challenge initiative, she teaches children the dangers of bullying. She collects diapers for mothers who cannot afford to buy them, donates move-in kits for young adults who have aged out of the foster system and, through her membership at Florida Tech's Women's Business Center board, helps new business men and women develop the skills necessary for success.

"In addition to her contributions at SCB, Rebecca is an up-and-coming leader in the community as well," said nominator Josh Field, the president at SCB Marketing. ■

A single mother who works full-time, Holly Woolsey not only finds time to pursue her bachelor's degree, but she also manages to juggle her schedule to deliver Meals on Wheels and volunteer at the Children's Center in Titusville.

"Holly is an excellent person and goes above and beyond her normal work duties to make a difference in this community," said Jess Parrish Medical Foundation Executive Director Laurie Smirl, who nominated Woolsey, the foundation's senior philanthropy officer.

"Holly is an incredible leader and is helping make the North Brevard community a better place in which to live, work and raise families," Smirl said.



Woolsey considers her association as a volunteer with the United Way as "a life-changing experience." At the Jess Parrish Medical Foundation, she has helped raise more than \$3.5 million for the development of Parrish Health Village, where seniors will be able to receive medical services and referrals in a welcoming, hometown atmosphere.

Her responsibilities also include fundraisers for the Children's Center, which houses six nonprofit agencies that provide physical therapy, tutoring, day care and counseling services for children. A past victim of domestic violence, Woolsey also served on the Women's Center Guild for several years. ■

CATHERINE WRIGHT

Business Development, Harris Corp.
Age: 36 Residence: Indialantic



To thrive, companies need folks who, like Catherine Wright, are eager to work outside their comfort zone.

"Catherine's determination, initiative and enthusiasm have contributed to her success as an up-and-coming leader," said Rick Simonian, president of Harris' Maritime Communication Services, who nominated Wright.

Wright, who leads a team of 100 engineering employees, was selected to participate in an assignment that led to the successful acquisition of CapRock Communications.

"This is a commercial business where Catherine had to quickly learn new markets, new processes, new competitors and a new functional area," added Si-

monian. "These recent assignments continue to demonstrate Catherine's willingness to take on new challenges and to bring new ideas and energy to various parts of Harris."

A strong advocate for the United Way, Wright also supports Habitat for Humanity and raises awareness for Second Harvest Food Bank.

As a dance instructor at a Palm Bay studio, Wright enjoys sharing her can-do attitude with her students.

"I hope that through my classes, my students learn the value of working together and supporting one another, which they will take forward into the community," she said. ■