

SUCCESS STORY

GCNKAA NextGen: Building the Next Generation of Leaders in Property Management

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By Sam Fangman

Nurturing talent and inspiring young leaders are intentional practices of the Greater Cincinnati Northern Kentucky Apartment Association (GCNKAA) NextGen group. This peer group is dedicated to fostering career growth and facilitating a professional networking atmosphere for the future leaders of the multi-family housing industry. They ignite and cultivate fresh talent in this ever-changing field. GCNKAA Education and NextGen Coordinator, Heather Adams, is passionate about helping novice professionals advance their careers. She has witnessed first-hand that those who participate in GCNKAA NextGen are more engaged in their work. They find success and derive meaning, which manifests itself into industry promotions.

GCNKAA NextGen began over five years ago. Formerly known as the “Champions of Leadership”, the GCNKAA committee meets frequently to brainstorm innovative and effective ways to expand the size of this peer group and reach new audiences. The committee’s goal is to increase awareness and engagement with the association and its member benefits, while simultaneously creating new leaders in the industry through education, mentorship, and networking.

The GCNKAA NextGen hosts around six events each year. They maintain interest and engagement between existing and potential members through breakfast meetings, lunch & learns, and happy hours.

The group builds community and connections as they share meals and take away valuable insight from educational sessions led by experienced property management industry presenters. Thanks to dedicated sponsors, these events are free to attend and they are hosted at a different location each time. GCNKAA NextGen’s communicative and welcoming culture encourages members to reach out and meet new people during events.

“The NextGen organization is an inviting and un-intimidating way for emerging and driven industry professionals to get involved with our local and even national apartment association. It’s been awe-inspiring to see the organization facilitate as a gateway to educate and inspire the next generation of multi-family housing executives,” said Allison Fullenkamp of RentPath, 2020 GCNKAA NextGen Tri-Chair.

According to several members, GCNKAA’s most attended and well-loved event was the 2019 Summer Cookout Happy Hour. This laidback summertime soiree was held at a local management company’s AirBnB. Members were eager to network and socialize in such a relaxed setting. Ann Padgett, Vice President of Marketing for ePremium and 2020 GCNKAA NextGen Tri-Chair felt that it was, “conducive for one-on-one conversations in a more private setting [and] the variety of options for intimate seating allowed the event to feel more like you were enjoying a cocktail or barbecue with a friend on a patio.”

To get the word out about these events and opportunities, GCNKAA sends out clever email campaigns, social media posts, and newsletters, but they have found that their most effective marketing tool is word of mouth. Members find immense value in these events, which inspires them to spread the word to their coworkers who are new to the industry. “We've seen great success in younger or industry-novice professionals getting involved with GCNKAA and even NAA on a larger scale leveraging the connections they've made through NextGen through networking and participation,” said Brad Slomsky of Towne Properties, 2020 GCNKAA NextGen Tri-Chair.

This networking-centered peer group inspires and advances property management novices into well-rounded leaders. By encouraging industry involvement outside of the workplace, property management professionals form a deeper sense of connection and purpose to both their work and their colleagues.