



Angie Heuck

Angie Heuck, Uplift founder and director, is a champion of women's rights, empowerment and encouragement. After stepping away from a career in strategic communications and foundation management, Angie founded Uplift after seeing individual need for direct financial assistance and witnessing three women in her own life experience crisis. Named Portage County Business Council's Entrepreneur of the Year, Angie draws from her deep well of management and foundation experience that has equipped her for success, including her roles as Ministry Health Care's Director of Foundation and Development, Senior Manager of Marketing Communications at Joerns Healthcare and owning and operating her own marketing agency, Advantage Communications and Design. Angie has uplifted countless women through her mentorship and leadership. Though she may be happiest when she is serving and mentoring others, in her free time, you can find her reading historical fiction on the beach, or spending time with her husband, Mark, and her two children Kieran and McKenon, as well as her two dogs.



Karen Benoit

Karen Benoit, Uplift Board Vice President, is the Program Manager of Global Learning and Development at Tiffany & Co. Karen joined Uplift's board of directors through her mentor, Mirfie Chan, who also serves on Uplift's board. In addition to serving on the board, Karen has also founded Space2Create, a remote working space for small business owners. She also leads the Black Employee Resource Group (African Brilliance Collective) at Tiffany & Co. In addition to her degree in business administration and economics, Karen is continuing to pursue educational and entrepreneurial excellence through a Learning Design Certification at New York University. In her free time, Karen enjoys bike riding, hiking, traveling and spending time with friends and family.



Leah Botello

Leah Botello serves as an Uplift board member while also enrolled as a full-time student at Northern Illinois University, where she is currently an NNGO major. She became involved with Uplift through her work addressing housing insecurity in her community. In addition to her work for Uplift, Leah is the director of public affairs for NIU's student government association and is on the Dean's List after maintaining a 4.0 GPA. When she is not excelling at her school work, researching housing insecurity or shining as Uplift's youngest board member, Leah likes to go shopping or sit outside and read.

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Mirfie Chan

Mirfie Chan is the Founder and Chief Storyteller of Love, The Chans, a social enterprise that champions global citizenry and purposeful consumerism. She has a passion for strategic problem solving and unlocking human potential. Previously, she has worked as the Strategic Client Director for Workhuman, the Vice President of Customer Experience at Michael C. Fina (now HALO Recognition), and Director of Operations at IncentOne. Born and raised in Singapore, Mirfie is fluent in Malay and English. She currently lives in New York with her husband and two children.



Kushal Desai

Kushal Desai is the Senior Commercial Counsel for Motorola Solutions. She graduated in 2012 with a degree in neuroscience from the University of Miami, before earning her law degree in 2015 from the Case Western Reserve University School of Law. She connected to Uplift through LinkedIn, and she has brought incredibly valuable expertise and experience through her work with other nonprofits, including serving as part of an ambassador council for Ronald McDonald House Charities and on the Young Professional's Board of the American Cancer Society and the Junior Council Benefiting Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago. She is an avid traveler and foodie, and she enjoys exploring other cultures.



Leah Knights

Leah Knights, Uplift Board President, is a veteran marketing specialist, with experience in healthcare marketing and brand marketing. Portage County Business Council and Ignite's 2021 Young Professional of the Year, Leah runs her own marketing consulting business, Leah Knights Creative, which allows her to control her workload and allows her to balance client work with her work as a mother of three children. Leah has a degree in strategic communication from the University of Minnesota and a master's degree in business administration from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. She is a firm believer in experiencing the small things with intention, and she enjoys exploring her community with her husband and children--going to parks, grabbing coffee, and spending time with friends and family.

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Lark Lewis

Lark Lewis is no stranger to helping women. She is currently working as the Manager of Creative and Digital Strategies at the National Women’s Law Center, and she has previous experience developing digital strategy for New Blue Interactive and working as a press fellow for U.S. Congresswoman Robin Kelly. During her time at her alma mater, Northern Illinois University, she received the Illinois Journalist of the Year Student Award, Outstanding Woman Student Award, and the Senior Leadership Award. She has a bachelor of arts in journalism. In addition to working with Megan Markle and being a founding member of Uplift’s board of directors, Lark is a solo-female traveler, and she recently traveled to Hawaii by herself. She enjoys exploring the streets of Washington, D.C. and empowering women in their fitness goals by teaching Barre 3 classes.

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