

THE NFI FUTURE LEADERS CLASS OF 2021



Elise Avallon

BAP Marketing Manager, Global Aquaculture Alliance



Elise has been with GAA since 2016 and is currently responsible for overseeing marketing and communications for the Best Aquaculture Practices program. Prior to working at GAA, she worked for an environmental non-profit overseeing the development of educational programs and has also worked as a freelance marketing consultant.

Elise received her bachelor's degree from the University of New Hampshire. She lives in the seacoast in New Hampshire and enjoys spending time outdoors with her boyfriend Vincent and dog Scooter.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

- Margaret Mead



Future Leaders Class of 2021

Gregory Brun

Director, Corporate Food Safety & Quality, Performance Food Group



Greg Brun has been with Performance Food Group Inc. (PFG) since 2013. Prior to joining PFG, Greg spent 13 years at Darden Restaurants Inc. in varying food safety & quality positions.

Greg received his bachelor's degree in Microbiology from University of South Florida. Greg and his wife Aimee have two children. Greg enjoys being active, spending time with his family, and SCUBA diving with his wife.

"Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited, whereas imagination embraces the entire world, stimulating progress, giving birth to evolution."

– Albert Einstein 1924



Future Leaders Class of 2021

Mike Cape

National Sales – CenSea, Inc.



For the past 15 years, Mike has worked as a top-performing National Salesman for CenSea in Northbrook, IL. Prior to joining the sales team in 2006, Mike worked in grocery management and as a member of the SuperValu Management Leadership Program after graduating from Illinois State University with a Bachelors of Science in Marketing & Economics in 2004.

Mike lives in the suburbs of Chicago with his wife and two children, Jack (5) and Mia (4). In his spare time, Mike enjoys golfing, watching Chicago sports, concerts, and spending time with his family.

"Every strike brings me closer to the next home run."
– Babe Ruth



Future Leaders Class of 2021

Melissa Chace

Director, Sourcing Strategy, The Town Dock



Melissa Chace joined The Town Dock in 2009 as an inventory assistant after graduating from college and moving to Rhode Island.

Melissa received her BSBA in accounting from URI. She and her husband have two young daughters. Melissa enjoys spending time with family at the beach, in the garden, or out kayaking.

*"Be confident, not certain."
- Eleanor Roosevelt*



Future Leaders Class of 2021

Mark Garofalo

GM, Sales Manager, Fortune Fish & Gourmet Missouri



Mark Garofalo has worked in the Seafood Industry for more than 20 years. Prior to working at Fortune, Mark began with the Fresh Fish Company, which was subsequently bought by Morey's Seafood. He began his career in transportation, then moved into Plant Management, Sales, and recently was promoted to General Manager.

Mark lives in the country with his wife, 3 dogs and 2 cats. On the rare occasions when he is not working, you will find him fishing or restoring classic cars.

"Don't find fault, find a remedy; Anybody can complain."

- Henry Ford



Future Leaders Class of 2021

Angela Gonzales

Regional Manager, Business Development, Americold



Angela Gonzales has been with Americold since 2016. Prior to this role, she worked for a pasta food manufacturer as well as Del Monte Fresh Produce. With 16+ years of food industry experience, Angela has worked in various sectors of the industry including cold storage, food service, retail, wholesale and manufacturing. An energetic sales professional with a passion for helping producers, manufacturers, distributors, and logistics providers find solutions to their supply chain challenges and develop streamlined logistics services to meet their needs.

Angela currently lives in Greensboro, North Carolina with her husband, Erick, their two daughters, Dakota and Haydyn, and their 2 Shetland Sheepdog's, Jersey and Bucky. Angela enjoys spending time with her family, cheering on her girls at gymnastics and taking memorable family getaways to explore new places.

"Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success. If you love what you are doing, you will be successful."
– Albert Schweitzer



Future Leaders Class of 2021

Matt Gray

Director, Brand Marketing, Bumble Bee Seafoods



Matt Gray has been with Bumble Bee since 2016. Prior to joining BB, Matt worked for Advantage Solutions where he managed multiple consumer packaged goods brands in the New York Market.

Matt received his bachelor's degree from University of Colorado, Boulder. He and his wife Jenny live in San Diego, CA. Matt enjoys any & all outdoor activities and spending time with friends & family.

"When you see only problems, you're not seeing clearly."

- Phil Knight



Future Leaders Class of 2021

Matthew Hall

Head of Global Sustainability, StarKist Co.



Matt has been with StarKist since 2016 serving roles in Corporate Quality Assurance and in his current role, Sustainability. Prior to joining StarKist, Matt worked at Big Heart Pet Brands, HJ Heinz Co., and Smithfield Foods.

Matt received his bachelor's degree from the University of Pittsburgh. Outside of work, Matt has several hobbies including music and carpentry, but his number one passion is spending his free time with his wife Maria and son Jack.

*"I'll rise and fall let me take credit for both."
- Eddie Vedder*



Future Leaders Class of 2021

Ashley Heimbigner

Communications Director, Alaska Seafood Marketing Inst.



Ashley Heimbigner has been with ASMI since 2017, supporting Alaska Seafood in both the International and Communications Programs. Prior to ASMI, Ashley championed Alaska brands and industries from brewing to tourism.

Ashley received her bachelor's degree from Willamette University. She and her husband Erick enjoy adventuring in Alaska with their young son, Emmett.

"Make the most of the best and the least of the worst."

– Robert Louis Stevenson



Future Leaders Class of 2021

Julie Huckeba

Marketing Manager, SeaPak Shrimp and Seafood Co.,
Rich Products Corporation



Julie Huckeba has been with Rich Products since 2012. Prior to joining Rich's, she was with a marketing research firm out of Atlanta, GA.

Julie received her Bachelor's degree from the University of Georgia. She and her husband Sean have one daughter. Julie enjoys playing on her local tennis team and living on the Georgia Coast with her family.

"Our potential is one thing, what we do with it is quite another."

- Angela Duckworth



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Mark Leal

Buyer, Purchasing, Blount Fine Foods



Mark Leal has been with Blount Fine Foods since 2012. He worked in Logistics prior to moving to his current role as seafood Buyer in 2019.

Mark has 9 years of experience working in food manufacturing and truly enjoys learning about the seafood industry. In his free time, he enjoys cooking and spending time with his family.

"Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn."

– Benjamin Franklin



Future Leaders Class of 2021

Melaina Lewis

Director, Communications, National Fisheries Institute



Melaina joined NFI in March of 2021. Prior to joining NFI, she was with FMI – The Food Industry Association and worked in Higher Education as a digital and social media specialist.

Melaina graduated from Ohio University with a degree in Strategic Communications. She enjoys traveling, hiking, and finding the best local coffee shops.

“To live is the rarest thing in the world. Most people exist, that is all.”

– Oscar Wilde



Future Leaders Class of 2021

Vanessa Martin-Asaturov

Director of Examination & Audit Services,
Seafood Products Association



Vanessa Martin-Asaturov has been a part of SPA since 2018 and has over a decade of experience in the Alaska Seafood Industry.

Vanessa holds a Bachelor's of Science in Environmental Science, Minor in Chemistry from The University of Washington. She lives in the Seattle area with her husband Sasha. Vanessa loves being out on the water fishing and is extremely passionate about learning and educating others.

"The man who asks a question is a fool for a minute, the man who does not ask is a fool for life."

– Confucius



Future Leaders Class of 2021

Ray Menendez

Commodity Procurement Manager –Seafood – US Foods



Ray Menendez has been with US Foods since 2010, prior to that he was with Sysco for 5 years. Ray has spent the past 15 years in broad line with his tenure having a high focus on Center of the plate/ Seafood Specific as well as Sales, Marketing and Supply Chain.

Ray has a love for the outdoors (hunting and fishing) sports of all kinds (still actively playing fast pitch baseball) as well a passion for fitness.

“Lead from the Front”



Future Leaders Class of 2021

Jason Mulvihill

Sales Manager, Lineage Logistics



Jason Mulvihill has been with Lineage Logistics since 2018. Prior to joining Lineage, he was with Service Corporation Intl and served as Regional Sales Manager - Midwest.

Jason received his B.A. from The University of Alabama. He and wife Stacy have three children with one on the way. Jason enjoys football, traveling and spending time with his wife, their children and animals.

"You can have results or excuses, not both!"
– Gene Stallings



Future Leaders Class of 2021

Shawn Oliver

Seafood Category Buyer, Giant Eagle



Shawn Oliver has been at Giant Eagle since 2013, and in current roll since Feb. 2020. Prior to joining the Giant Eagle team, he spent 18 years as a professional chef and restaurant manager.

Shawn inherited his passion for our aquatic natural resources from his father, who teaches aquaculture to high school students. He and his wife Staci have two children. Milo (6) and Adella (3). In his spare time, he enjoys spending time outdoors boating, fishing, hunting, trapping, lumberjacking and smoking meat (and seafood).

"Don't take life too seriously. No one gets out alive" – Van Wilder

"Anything worth doing is worth overdoing"
-Shane Patton

Future Leaders Class of 2021



Joe Rosenberg

Chief Operating Officer, CenSea



Joe Rosenberg has been with CenSea since 2017. Prior to joining CenSea, he lived in New York City and worked in the financial services industry.

Joe received his bachelor's degree from the University of Michigan. He and his wife Gera have two children. Joe enjoys being outdoors, traveling, and spending time with his family.

*"Be yourself; everyone else is already taken."
– Oscar Wilde*



Future Leaders Class of 2021

Abigail Ruiz Vega

Food Safety and Quality Manager for Seafood, US Foods



Abigail Ruiz Vega (Abby) has been with US Foods since 2013. She has over ten years of food safety experience, with over 7 of those years being in seafood.

Abby received her bachelor's degree in Microbiology from the University of Puerto Rico, and she is working towards her Master of Science in Food Safety at Michigan State University. She and her husband Patrick have a one-year-old girl. Abby enjoys warm weather, good coffee, photography, traveling, and spending time with her family.

"Don't stop until you're proud."

- Unknown



Future Leaders Class of 2021

Courtney Schwab

Quality Assurance & Technical Services Coordinator
Thai Union North America



Courtney Schwab has been with Chicken of the Sea Frozen Foods since 2018.

Courtney received her Bachelor of Science degree in Nutrition and Dietetics from California State University, Long Beach. She enjoys spending time in her garden propagating succulents and playing with her new puppy. Courtney loves being outside and would hike everyday if she could.

"If you think you are too small to make a difference, try sleeping with a mosquito"
– Dalai Lama



Future Leaders Class of 2021

Aaron Scott

Supplier Quality Manager, King & Prince Seafood Corp.



Aaron Scott has been with King & Prince Seafood since 2016, he started as the plant quality manager and was promoted to supplier quality manager in 2018. Prior to joining King & Prince, he was with Kraft-Heinz and Bacardi Bottling Corp.

Aaron received his bachelor's degree in Biology from University of North Florida. Aaron and his wife Sabreena have one kid and currently reside in coastal Georgia. Aaron enjoys traveling and spending time with his family.

"Improvement usually means doing something that we have never done before."

– Shigeo Shingo



Future Leaders Class of 2021

Jaimy Sorrell

Category Manger – Seafood, Performance Food Service



Jaimy Sorrell joined PFS in 2018, but has been in the seafood industry for almost 20 years. She has experience with foodservice and retail purchasing, along with sustainability and traceability, and is a member of the Board of Directors for Fish Standard for Crew (fairness, integrity, safety and health).

Jaimy received her bachelor's degree in Marketing Management from Missouri State University. She and her husband live in Richmond, VA, with their 4 year old daughter.

*“Follow your heart, but take your brain with you”
– Alfred Adler*



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