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2024 Get2KnowNoke Ambassadors Poised to Attract and Retain Talent in the Roanoke Region

ROANOKE, Va. (January 17, 2024) – The Roanoke Region of Virginia launched the 2024 Get2KnowNoke Talent Ambassador program with 26 young professionals and influencers poised to highlight the unique benefits of living and working in Virginia’s Blue Ridge Mountain metro.

Get2KnowNoke, a talent attraction initiative of the Roanoke Regional Partnership, selected 26 ambassadors to reflect the region’s diverse lifestyle offerings; they span the distance from Smith Mountain Lake in Franklin County to Botetourt County and everything in between; they work for diverse industries from automotive manufacturing to banking, to local artists and entrepreneurs; and they are culturally diverse so that anyone considering moving to the region sees themselves represented.

"We had an unprecedented and overwhelming number of applicants this year, which speaks to the growing interest of our talent attraction efforts and the enthusiasm of our young professionals to invest their time in the region," said Julia Boas, director of talent strategies at the Roanoke Regional Partnership. "As with previous livability initiatives, the key to success is turning residents into Roanoke Region evangelists."

Talent attraction and retention are a top priority in the Roanoke Regional Partnership’s [five-year strategic plan](#). As communities across the country are fighting to attract, train, and retain top-tier talent, evidence shows that those connecting with young talent early and working intentionally to develop livability assets will win this battle.

Ambassadors are key to making those connections. The 2024 inductees will use their skillsets and interest areas to host pop-up events welcoming newcomers and creating connectivity among user groups, promote lifestyle stories and attractions on social media, develop a strong professional network, and represent the region on campuses, with legislators or leadership, or even meet with companies looking to relocate to the area.

“I am passionate about providing opportunities for urban youth and using technology to create those opportunities,” explained Douglas Pitzer, a newly selected ambassador, founder of Strokes of Genius, vice president of Blacks in Technology for Southwest Virginia, and a polysomnographic technologist at Carilion Clinic. “I’m excited to leverage my connection with Get2KnowNoke to bring awareness to vital causes and continue to strengthen this wonderful community and bring economic prosperity to its residents.”

The Get2KnowNoke ambassador program is just one piece of the funnel under development by the Partnership’s talent attraction brand. Also being launched in 2024 is the Roanoke Region’s new talent attraction website, a targeted marketing campaign, on-campus interaction with students being educated in the region, [summer onboarding programs](#) to connect employers with emerging talent, year-round regional employer [branding events](#), and the Experience Conference in May.

Get2KnowNoke is working diligently with regional partners to fill gaps in the talent pipeline. From current residents, regional employers, and higher ed institutions, to students entering the workforce, and mid-career professionals relocating, the region is developing the connections and solutions that make it a place where people want to live and work. And of course, this diverse group of successful and enthusiastic ambassadors will take these initiatives to the next level.

In a [study by the Knight Soul of the Community](#), researchers determined the key indicators that make a community “sticky”, meaning how attached a person is to their community, include openness (how welcome people feel), aesthetics, social offerings, and connections. This three-year study compared residents’ attachment level to GDP growth, with findings showing a significant correlation between community attachment and economic growth.

Thanks to previous placemaking and livability efforts by the Roanoke Regional Partnership, including the nationally recognized [Roanoke Outside initiative](#), the region is well-positioned to make its case to young and mid-career audiences. The Get2KnowNoke effort will expand on these successes to ensure that all aspects of our region’s lifestyles are being highlighted.

Meet and connect with all of the Roanoke Region ambassadors by visiting <https://get2knownoke.com/talent-ambassadors/>. Receive all Get2KnowNoke talent initiative updates by signing up for our [bi-monthly e-newsletters](#).

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ABOUT GET2KNOWNOKE

Get2KnowNoke is the Roanoke Region's talent attraction brand, developed to lead the effort in showcasing livability assets and make the case for what sets our mountain metro apart from the competition. The initiative was developed by the Roanoke Regional Partnership to leverage the organization's marketing expertise to develop a young, diverse, and skilled workforce; and to collaborate with education and workforce development partners to better align with employer needs. Learn more at get2knownoke.com.

ABOUT ROANOKE REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

The Roanoke Regional Partnership, founded in 1983, is the public-private economic development marketing and strategy organization supported by Alleghany, Botetourt, Franklin, and Roanoke counties, the cities of Covington, Roanoke, and Salem, and the town of Vinton as well as more than 200 businesses. The organization has worked with its partners to create more than 19,000 primary jobs and \$19 billion in investment by attracting companies such as Orvis, Altec, McAirlaids, Bimbo Bakeries, Cardinal Glass, Balchem, Eldor, Mack Trucks, STS Group, Traditional Medicinals, New Belgium Brewery and others to the region. The Roanoke Regional Partnership manages 501(c)3 organizations Roanoke Outside and Get2KnowNoke. Learn more at Roanoke.org.