

The Young Professionals Network Division of the Jacksonville Area Chamber of Commerce began as an idea in the Membership Services Division Plan of Work for 2007. They wondered how to encourage younger business men and women to become involved in Chamber programs and activities.

They began to brainstorm names of young professionals they knew and sent out invitations for an informational meeting.

The response was overwhelmingly positive!

The eight charter members of what became the Young Professionals Network (YPN) met for the first time with Ginny Fanning, Chamber President and Kurt Gwillim, Membership Services Division V.P. on March 14, 2007.

The rest, as they say, is history!



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Charter members of YPN include Jared Maggart, YMCA; Alban Haxhinasto, The Farmers State Bank and Trust Company; Kristen Heaton, Passavant Area Hospital; Tiffany Warmowski, Warmowski Photography; J.B. Meier, Representative Watson's staff; and Kyle Schumacher, Chapin State Bank. Charter members not pictured are Hillary Estes, Nestlé and Jamie Fugnitti.

The first YPN social event was held on June 12 at the Three-Legged Dog. It was well attended and new members were added to the group.

Social events are an important way the YPN attracts new members to the division and provides opportunities for members to network and for newcomers to the community to meet others.



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Seen at the June 12, 2007 social at Three-Legged Dog: Mary Pollock; City Clerk Andy Ezard; and Brian Watts, A. Gaudio & Sons.



Easy Street Lounge hosted a YPN social in August 2007: Joel Tinsley, Imagine Foundation; Scott Hall, Passavant Area Hospital; and Kyle Schumacher, Chapin State Bank.



At a social held at Three-Legged Dog: Darren Collings, Jacksonville Savings Bank; Gerti Haxhinasto, UIS; and Matt Cors, Jacksonville Savings Bank.



At a social held at Easy Street Lounge: Greg Tanner, Hillary Estes, and Chris Euler all with Nestlé; Jason Scott Embry, Illinois College.



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The YPN celebrated the holidays with a social at Leo's Pizza: Chris Rourke, Country Insurance & Financial Services; Alban Haxhinasto, Joey Henry, and Beth Racey, all with The Farmers State Bank and Trust Company; Becca Ward, Wells Center; and Brent Kaufmann, Country Insurance & Financial Services.



Dr. David Atkins, Atkins Chiropractic Treatment; Jake Love, Easy Street Lounge; and Jamie Fugnitti are shown ringing the bells for the Salvation Army.

Other YPN members who participated include: Phil Brown, First State Bank of Winchester; Darrin Collings, Jacksonville Savings Bank; Alban Haxhinasto, The Farmers State Bank and Trust Company; Alicia Little, The Farmers State Bank and Trust Company; Jared Maggart, YMCA; J.B. Meier, Rep. Jim Watson's Office; Kyle Schumacher, Chapin State Bank; Kristen Turner, Turner Junior High School; and Tiffany Warmowski, WarmowskiPhotography.com.



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From the beginning, the Young Professionals Network has recognized the importance of working together to better our communities.

In November, they rang the bells for the Salvation Army.

In January 2008, they presented the CHOICES program to freshman students at Jacksonville High School.

In April, they will work the registration table at the Big Brothers Big Sisters Bowl For Kids Sake fundraiser.