


Joe Curley APR, CPRC
**RISING
LEADER**

15 YEARS



Over the course of 15 years, more than \$100,000 has been provided in program support and scholarships to bolster the leadership journey of Rising Leader Class members from FPRA chapters statewide.

Celebrating

15 Years of Recognizing and Encouraging Leadership

The Joe Curley Rising Leader program honors up-and-coming FPRA members who have demonstrated emerging leadership traits and active involvement in FPRA chapter activities, programs, functions and events.

In 2025, we celebrate the 15th anniversary of the Joe Curley Rising Leader program, a significant milestone that truly showcases the program's profound impact on nurturing leadership within the Florida Public Relations Association and beyond.

The Joe Curley Rising Leader program recognizes the personal dedication and engagement of members with two to five years of membership. It is intended to encourage those rising leaders and strengthen the leadership development stream at the chapter level.

Since its creation, the Joe Curley Rising Leader program has recognized 185 FPRA members as Rising Leader Class members. Of those, 90% have served in a leadership role within the organization at the chapter and state level and have gone on to have fulfilling careers as leaders.

The Rising Leader program was made possible through the endowed Joe Curley Rising Leader Fund held with the Manatee Community Foundation. This program is managed by the Florida Public Relations Education Foundation.

In Their Own Words

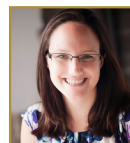
FPRA reached out to past Joe Curley Rising Leader class members and asked them to share insights and to describe their leadership path since their nomination. Here is what they had to say.



Jennifer Trefelner, APR, CPRC, Director of Communications & Development, Diocese of Palm Beach, Treasure Coast Chapter, Class of 2012 & 2013

“Being a leader means that you are a role model and mentor. I have enjoyed being a mentor for numerous FPRA and PRSA members over the years and supporting them through their professional journey.”

Leadership Path: “Since I was nominated for the Joe Curley Rising Leader Award, I have had more than 30 professional speaking engagements, published more than 20 professional articles, webinars/Zooms, and podcasts and earned more than 80 professional awards. I have also served on the Public Relations Society of America’s National APR Committee, am the PRSA State Chair for the APR, and serve as the PRSA Palm Beach Chapter Board as the APR Co-Chair, plus am the editor of the PRSA National APR publication. I proudly serve on the Board of Directors for Catholic Charities Palm Beach and volunteer for their Gala Committee. Locally, I am on several non-profit organization boards and am a member of numerous professional associations.”



Julie Hall, APR, Director, Internal Communications, Hilton Grand Vacations, Orlando Area Chapter, Class of 2015

“To me, leadership is about service — advocating for your team and helping them grow. A great leader fosters trust, empowers their team to do their best and gets out of their way so they can shine!”

Leadership Path: “Around the time I was recognized, I had the opportunity to take a promotion with a different organization, where I led national media relations for over seven years. Being recognized within FPRA and serving in that role bolstered my confidence as a communication professional and counselor. I ultimately went on to earn my APR accreditation, took on additional leadership responsibilities and earned further promotions.”



Alisha Katz, MAMC, APR, Communications Director, University of Florida, College of Health & Human Performance, Gainesville Chapter, Class of 2015

“To me, being an effective leader goes way beyond bringing strategic thinking skills to the table. More importantly, being a leader means being there for my team when they need me, being an active listener, leading with empathy and giving them the freedom to do their best work.”

Leadership Path: “Since being recognized, I have served as Image Awards chair (twice) and excelled in my career to communications director at the University of Florida College of Health & Human Performance. I have also obtained my APR and earned my Master of Arts in Mass Communications!”



Cindi Lane, APR, FDOT District 5 Public Information Director, Florida Department of Transportation, Volusia/Flagler Chapter Class of 2016

“One of the best things about FPRA is you’re never alone in your leadership journey – you’re inspired by a huge network of talented peers and supported by a dedicated State Board and professional staff.”

Leadership Path: “Due to an illness and a move that created serious challenges for our Chapter board in 2016, I was named president shortly before the start of the program year – without having a year as president-elect. At Summit that August, while I was being recognized as part of the Joe Curley Rising Leader Class, State Board members coached me through how to recruit a board! I will never forget the dedication of those members who worked together tirelessly to rebuild our Chapter, with the support of leaders from other chapters who carried us through that tough time. My roles since then have included VP of member services, immediate past president, VP of finance, and senior advisor (current). I apply the wisdom I have gained in board leadership every day in my professional position as PIO Director for the Florida Department of Transportation District Five, which covers the nine counties of Central Florida.”



Zoe Linafelt, APR, Director of Communications, Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida, Capital Chapter Class of 2016

“Being a leader means listening respectfully to everyone’s needs and setting the healthiest, strongest path forward for the group. It means never leaving anyone unheard or left behind. It means identifying and encouraging the unique strengths of each person in the group toward our common goals.”

Leadership Path: “Since being recognized, I have served as chapter director of communications & PR, secretary, director of programming president-elect, president and immediate past president.”



Sharon Kunkel, APR, CPRC, President, Wordslinger Marketing & PR, Central West Coast Chapter Class of 2017

“Being named our chapter’s Joe Curley Rising Leader wasn’t just a great honor — it challenged and inspired me to be more, in our chapter and in my profession.”

Leadership Path: “I served for three years as VP of communications and then stepped back — to make room for others to rise — into more targeted roles, heading up media relations, newsletter and other communications-related responsibilities. This year, since I finally earned my CPRC last year, I decided I’d like to try to work in the credentialing space and became the co-director of credentialing... My own employment hasn’t changed, although the level of confidence I have in work has increased exponentially, thanks in great part to the opportunities available through CWC-FPRA.”



Lisa Murray, APR, CPRC, Director, Corporate Communications, Interop Technologies, Southwest Florida Chapter Class of 2017

“Joe Curley’s vision for cultivating leadership within FPRA has shaped how I view my role in this organization. It helped me discover that some of the most meaningful wins come from helping others rise, too.”

Leadership Path: “Since being recognized, I’ve continued to stay actively engaged in FPRA leadership, both within the Southwest Florida Chapter and at the state level. I’ve remained on the board every year since joining, with roles that reflect my passion for professional development, accreditation and supporting the next generation of leaders. In addition to my work with FPRA, I’ve also served since March 2017 on a special events committee for the Competitive Carriers Association as a representative of Interop Technologies.”



Nanci Schwartz, APR, CPRC, Communications Lead, JLL, Lake County Chapter Class of 2017

“I could go on and on about the leadership opportunities offered by FPRA. I believe you get what you give, and I can truly say that every opportunity has provided positive experiences that benefited me professionally and personally.”

Leadership Path: “I have pursued many leadership roles within my FPRA chapter as well as in the organizations I’m aligned with. I’ve served on the chapter board in just about every role. My FPRA affiliation was critical to me pursuing and achieving my APR and CPRC credentials. That exercise has given me the confidence to raise my hand for leadership roles that I otherwise might not have considered within FPRA and beyond.”



Lindsay Tozer, MA, FCRM, BPMP, ECMS, Principal Strategist, Tall Tail Communications, Ocala Chapter Class of 2017

“I believe leadership is about listening first, acting with courage and leaving every space better than you found it. It’s also about making room at the table for others, and sometimes, building a new table altogether. Leadership, to me, is a lifelong journey of growth, service and impact.”

Leadership Path: “Since being recognized, I’ve had the privilege of serving in multiple leadership roles within FPRA and in my professional career. Internally, I began as VP of communications for the Nature Coast Chapter (RIP!), then went on to serve the Ocala Chapter as newsletter chair, secretary, president-elect, president and now as Immediate past president. I also currently serve on the FPRA Executive Committee as VP of digital media — roles that have each deepened my commitment to this incredible organization and its mission. Outside of FPRA, I’ve continued to grow in leadership as well. I’ve served as a communications officer and public information officer for local government and nonprofit organizations, launched my own small business and successfully led several local election campaigns. Most recently, I was honored to be hired as a public affairs specialist with FEMA, where I now serve communities across the country in times of disaster... an extension of my passion for impactful, purpose-driven communication.”



Sarah Whitfield, Public Information Officer, Santa Rosa County Board of County Commissioners, Pensacola Chapter Class of 2017

“Being a leader means a lot to me. It’s just one more way to give back to the community I grew up in... I can’t thank FPRA enough for the boost of confidence and connections I’ve made over the last 11 years as a member.”

Leadership Path: “After this nomination, I served as our chapter’s president twice, served as the VP of finance and served in an at-large position for our chapter, which kept me on our board of directors for 10 years. Within my organization, I have since been promoted to lead our Communications & Media Relations department.”



Heather Doane, APR, CPRC, Product Marketing Manager, Arthex, Inc., Southwest Florida Chapter Class of 2018

“Creativity and problem-solving can’t happen in a vacuum, and I truly believe that the best leaders acknowledge and embrace their teams’ best qualities, challenge them to improve and grow and ensure all viewpoints are considered before moving in a certain direction.”

Leadership Path: “FPRA: VP of Communications, President, Accreditation Co-chair, Events Chair. Organization: Women’s Network Lead”



Kacie Escobar, MBA, APR, Vice President, Curley & Pynn Public Relations, Orlando Area Chapter Class of 2018

“I once heard that we should ‘lead by example or not at all.’ That means having the humility to do what needs to be done (even the hard and boring stuff) and the self-awareness to know how your actions influence others.”

Leadership Path: “FPRA Orlando Area Chapter president, FPRA Executive Committee VP of membership, FPREF board member, C&P vice president”



Christopher Graham, MBA, APR, CPRC, Community Information Manager, City of Deland, Volusia/Flagler Chapter Class of 2018

“Receiving this recognition launched my journey into leadership and strengthened my commitment to FPRA — it was the start of something bigger.”

Leadership Path: “I served as Volusia/Flagler president for two years during the pandemic. And I have served on the Executive Committee for the state in various roles including twice as VP of Golden Image.”



Amanda Handley, APR, CPRC, Project Director, AtkinsRéalis, Capital Chapter Class of 2018

“For me, leadership means being transparent and honest. It also means standing in the gap between those you’re leading and the chaos and distractions that can occur in the C-suite so they can stay focused on delivering excellent communications products.”

Leadership Path: “Since being recognized as a Joe Curley Rising Leader, I have served as president-elect, president and immediate past president at the chapter level. I then went on to serve on the Executive Committee as VP of communications, VP of Annual Conference, VP of credentialing and VP of membership. This year, I served on the board of Counselors’ Network. I also was a member of LeadershipFPRA Class II.”



Kim Livengood, APR, CPRC, Founder + President, The Bazaar on Apricot & Lime / Hamlet’s Eatery, Central West Coast Chapter Class of 2018

“I got involved because there is nothing more stimulating than surrounding yourselves with like-minded professionals who care about FPRA’s mission to enhance the field of public relations. I stay involved for the same reason.”

Leadership Path: “I served as CWC president in 2019-2020. I joined the Executive Committee and served as VP of membership for two years and VP of finance for one year. I am on the Counselors’ Network board and lead the mentorship program. I will serve next year again on the Executive Committee as VP of sponsorship. I also will serve as an at-large board member for my chapter. I took a year off and really missed them and being in the know.”



Samantha Senger, APR, CPRC, APIO, Director of Communication and Economic Development, City of Cocoa, Space Coast Chapter Class of 2018

“All of my success in my career is from opportunities I worked for through the Florida Public Relations Association. Being a part of this great association has helped me gain friends and colleagues, opportunities for advancement and knowledge to excel.”

Leadership Path: “After being nominated and selected for the Joe Curley award, I went on to serve as president of the Space Coast Chapter (selected as Chapter of the Year that year) and serve in numerous roles on the Executive Committee board including currently serving as the chair of the LeadershipFPRA program. In my roles with the City of Cocoa, after my selection as the Joe Curley Rising Leader, I went on to become assistant to the city manager and public information officer and then director of communication and economic development. I have continued to rise up the ladder within my organization and it is all because of my selection as the Joe Curley Rising Leader.”



Amy Azoulay, APR, Senior Marketing Manager, CPAmerica, Inc., Gainesville Chapter Class of 2019

“Being a leader isn’t just about the title you have or where you place within your company org chart. I think being a leader is in how you inspire and encourage others.”

Leadership Path: “I was in the 2019 Joe Curley Rising Leader class and my involvement with FPRA has only grown since. After completing the leadership track with my local chapter (VP of member services, president-elect, president, immediate past president), I joined the Executive Committee as VP of student chapter services in 2023 and have been serving in the VP of professional development role this year.”

Additionally, I joined the Florida Public Relations Education Foundation board for a three-year term in 2022. In my final year on that board, I led this year's Valentine's Day campaign. With my employer, we expanded our internship into a permanent part-time position, which I fully manage. I also earned my APR credential in 2020."



Kevin Yurasek, MA, Executive Director of Strategic Communications, Lake-Sumter State Collage, Lake County Chapter Class of 2019

"I believe in the power of collaborative leadership, listening, learning and lifting others up are just as important as driving results. True leadership is rooted in service, and I strive to lead in a way that empowers growth, both in myself and in those around me."

Leadership Path: "Since being recognized, I have continued each year on the chapter board as FPRA Lake Chapter president or VP membership. I continue to be employed by Lake-Sumter State College and appreciate the opportunities to continue to grow and challenge myself professionally in my role."



José Luis Dieppa, Senior Manager External Communications, AdventHealth, Orlando Area Chapter Class of 2020

"What does a leader mean to me? It means to create space where people can feel seen, supported and empowered to grow. It's about leading with empathy, listening and helping others realize their potential. It's not about titles or recognition. It's all about others."

Leadership Path: "Since being selected, I've had the honor of serving as president-elect, president and immediate past president of the FPRA Orlando Chapter. I also joined the FPRA Executive Committee as VP of student services. Thanks to the experiences and connections I've gained through FPRA, I've been able to grow both personally and professionally — including earning two promotions, in part because of what I've learned through this incredible organization."



Andrea Knies, APR, CPRC, Director of Communications and Community Engagement, Realize Bradenton, Central West Coast Chapter Class of 2020

"Receiving this accolade gave me the confidence that I needed to actively seek new challenges. Prior to this, I stepped into roles that were presented to me. Now I create roles to step into."

Leadership Path: "Events director (2 terms), creative director, media relations director and celebrations director (and currently on the slate for president-elect)."



Elisha Pappacoda, Communications Director, Town of Lady Lake, Lake County Chapter Class of 2020

"Being a leader... means more than just managing the message. It means building trust and fostering meaningful relationships both internally and externally. It means ensuring that all voices are heard and represented and advocating for my organization based on a foundation of truth, respect and integrity."

Leadership Path: "Since I was recognized, I have gone on to be named FPRA Chapter President of the Year for 2021. This has been the highlight of my FPRA journey! Professionally, I accepted a newly created position as Communications Director for the Town of Lady Lake, where I was given the opportunity to create the role and public relations strategy for the town and police department. For this work, I received a Golden Image Award of Distinction and a Judges' Award for Creativity in 2024."



Bobby Parker, Founder+Chief Creative Officer, Parker Gene Creative, Pensacola Chapter Class of 2020

"To me, being a leader means serving others with integrity, inspiring action through example and creating space for others to grow, thrive and lead in their own right. It's about listening, learning and lifting others up while staying grounded in purpose."

Leadership Path: "Since being recognized I served in the following positions in the Northwest Florida Coast Chapter: VP of membership, VP of finance, VP of professional development, president-elect and two terms as president. In addition, since being recognized, I launched my own PR firm, Parker Gene Creative, in October 2022."



Kristina Donohue, APR, Director of Prosperity, Florida Chamber Foundation, Ocala Chapter Class of 2021

"This experience was truly an honor and definitely showed that the organization valued my contributions."

Leadership Path: "Since being recognized, I have served as secretary, treasurer and president-elect and continue to serve in a leadership capacity within my occupation."



Valencia Scott, Deputy Director of Public Relations, Leon County Property Appraiser's Office, Capital Chapter Class of 2021

"FPRA and the Joe Curley Rising Leader Program don't just offer leadership opportunities, they cultivate leaders with purpose. These programs create space to stretch, stumble and soar, all while being supported by a village of communicators who genuinely want to see you win."

Leadership Path: "Since being recognized, I've remained committed to serving both FPRA and my organization. Within the Capital Chapter, I served three consecutive years as director of awards & recognition—an incredibly rewarding opportunity that allowed me to spotlight the amazing work of our members. I then stepped into chapter leadership, serving as president-elect and now as chapter president. At the Leon County Property Appraiser's Office, I continue my service as deputy director of public relations. Beyond my day-to-day responsibilities, I took on a new leadership role as our emergency coordination lead. I spearheaded the development of a critical partnership between our office and county and city agencies, ultimately resulting in our inclusion in the county's official emergency response team. It's a responsibility I take seriously and a reflection of how committed I am to both communication and community resiliency."



Madelene Skinner, APR, Marketing Development Leader, RS&H, Jacksonville Chapter
Class of 2021

“Being selected as a Joe Curley Rising Leader Class member offered a unique platform to engage with other amazing, emerging leaders. I believe the recognition associated with this honor inspired me to have a greater involvement with the association and the industry.”

Leadership Path: “I’ve served on the Executive Committee as VP of DE&I and VP of digital media and incoming VP of communications & PR. I continued to serve in the local chapter in various roles. When I was selected, I was just starting a job as a senior marketing communications leader, which has evolved to a market development leader across our largest business unit.”



Hunter Carpenter, MA, APR, Director of Community Relations & Partnerships, Visit Sarasota County, Central West Coast Chapter
Class of 2022

“The leaders I’ve always looked up to lean into curiosity before acting decisively, and embody grace and gratitude, in times of crisis and calm. I’ve taken their lessons to heart, and believe that with service as your compass, you cannot be led astray.”

Leadership Path: “Being recognized as CWC’s Joe Curley Rising Leader was a significant personal catalyst to consider a path to chapter presidency. At the time, I was serving as CWC’s events director, and then the following year, I was nominated to become our inaugural community liaison – empowered to determine and create pro-bono initiatives that would come to define our chapter’s regional involvement, like Mission Mavericks and student outreach. Even as I was elected to take on the president-elect role the next board term, I held onto the community liaison title to see through this work and enshrine it in our chapter’s annual activities. This past year, I was honored to hold the gavel as CWC’s president and take a strategic leap into a new leadership role with Visit Sarasota County – a journey that wouldn’t have been possible without the confidence and courage this recognition instilled within me.”



Sasha Staton, Account Manager, Benedict Advertising, Volusia/Flagler Chapter
Class of 2022

“Being a leader means showing up with purpose, integrity and a commitment to helping others grow. As a leader, I believe in creating space for collaboration, celebrating the success of others and stepping up when challenges arise.”

Leadership Path: “VP of public relations; VP of programs, president-elect; president”



Travis Cornwell, Senior Client Experience & Development Manager, Next-Mark, LLC, Central West Coast Chapter
Class of 2023

“The leadership opportunities provided by FPRA — and especially through the Joe Curley Rising Leader program — have been truly transformative. They offer more than just professional development; they create a path for meaningful connection, mentorship and personal growth.”

Leadership Path: “I have continued to serve on the board each year. Taking on different positions that challenge me to learn new skills.”



Jessica Martinez, MA, Senior Communications and Marketing Officer, University of South Florida, Tampa Bay Chapter
Class of 2023

“Being nominated and selected as a Joe Curley Rising Leader Class Member was an incredibly meaningful experience. It validated that my years of hard work and leadership potential were being recognized by my peers.”

Leadership Path: “Since being recognized as a Rising Leader, I continued to serve as VP of strategic communications and was honored to be asked to serve as president-elect this past year. I’m excited to step into the role of president of the Tampa Bay Chapter this fall!”



Lauren Helm, APR, CPRC, President/Consultant, Lauren Helm PR, Capital Chapter
Class of 2023

“If you want to truly make a difference, get involved with leadership within your professional organizations. It can be the catapult you need in order to realize effective change for the common good of the industry, your peers and the economy.”

Leadership Path: “Since I was recognized, I’ve stepped into the president-elect role with my chapter and will assume the president role in August 2025. It also gave me the foundation to go out on my own as a consultant, which I will celebrate my second anniversary of owning my own business in October 2025.”



Isabela Roselione, Communications Manager/Public Information Specialist, AtkinsRéalis, South Florida Chapter
Class of 2023

“My FPRA membership and the Joe Curley Rising Leader program has significantly shaped my professional experience, offering leadership opportunities and opening doors for continued growth with my career.”

Leadership Path: “I have served as chapter president for South Florida FPRA twice. I have been recently promoted to communications manager within a client office. I have also served on FPRA’s DE&I committee and the Executive Committee’s nominating committee.”



Laura Ansel, APR, CPRC, Director of Communications, Sarasota Performing Arts Foundation, Central West Coast Chapter
Class of 2024

“Being a leader, to me, is less about having authority and more about having responsibility. Responsibility to my team, our mission, our community—and maybe most importantly, to my values.”

Leadership Path: “I’ve served as president-elect and will be stepping up as president this year.”



Gregory Davis, Public Information Officer, City of Ocala, Ocala Chapter
Class of 2024

“Leadership isn’t always about being the most popular person in the room. Sometimes, it means making tough calls. But it also means leading with empathy, listening with understanding and putting yourself in others’ shoes.”

Leadership Path: “I was sworn in as president of the Ocala Chapter that same day, just two months after starting my new role as the public information officer for the City of Ocala. At the same time, I am entering my third year as a professor at the University of Florida.”



Darlene Montano, Communications & Outreach Specialist, Launch Credit Union, Space Coast Chapter

“This program reinforces that leadership is a journey, and being recognized as a Rising Leader has motivated me to continue showing up, giving back and encouraging others to embrace their own leadership potential.”

Leadership Path: “I’m honored to serve on the Florida Public Relations Education Foundation, supporting initiatives that advance professional development and educational opportunities for current and future PR professionals. It’s been a meaningful way to stay engaged with FPRA at the state level and continue contributing to the growth of our industry.”

Rising Leaders Through the Years

2010 Joe Curley Rising Leader Award Recipient



Michael English, Rising Leader Award, Pensacola Chapter

2011 Joe Curley Rising Leader Award Recipient



Tami Karaba, Rising Leader Award, Orlando Area Chapter

In the program’s first two years, a single FPRA member was chosen as the Joe Curley Rising Leader Award honoree. The Joe Curley Rising Leader Classes, formed from chapter nominations, began in 2012 to further extend the recognition program throughout the organization.

Joe Curley Rising Leader Class of 2012



- Jenny Baker**, Rising Leader Award, Dick Pope/Polk County Chapter
- Nancy DeVault**, Professional Development Scholarship, Orlando Area Chapter
- Rebecca Mahoney**, Professional Development Scholarship, Capital Chapter
- Katie Mehl**, Professional Development Scholarship, Nature Coast Chapter
- Michelle Nagel**, Professional Development Scholarship, Southwest Florida Chapter
- Leah Saunders**, Professional Development Scholarship, Tampa Bay Chapter
- Jennifer Trefelner, APR, CPRC**, Professional Development Scholarship, Treasure Coast Chapter

Joe Curley Rising Leader Class of 2013



Erin Croop, Professional Development Scholarship, Southwest Florida Chapter
Allison Downey, APR, CPRC, Professional Development Scholarship, Gainesville Chapter
Tessa Friederichs, Rising Leader Award, Space Coast Chapter
Juliette Lauer Hunsicker, Professional Development Scholarship, Tampa Bay Chapter
Kerry Martin, APR, Professional Development Scholarship, Orlando Area Chapter
Katie Mehl, APR, Professional Development Scholarship, Nature Coast Chapter
Valeria Palmertree, Professional Development Scholarship, Northwest Chapter
Sandi Poreda, APR, Professional Development, Scholarship, Capital Chapter
Marybeth Soderstrom, Professional Development Scholarship,
 Dick Pope/Polk County Chapter
Jennifer Trefelner, APR, CPRC, Professional Development Scholarship,
 Treasure Coast Chapter
Kristen Wimer, Professional Development Scholarship, Pensacola Chapter

Joe Curley Rising Leader Class of 2014



Julie Arnold, Professional Development Scholarship, Space Coast Chapter
Janelle Beaber, Professional Development Scholarship, Southwest Florida Chapter
Alayna Curry, APR, Professional Development Scholarship, Orlando Area Chapter
Alison Faris, APR, Professional Development Scholarship, Capital Chapter
Barbra Hernandez, APR, CPRC, Professional Development Scholarship, Ocala Chapter
Amy Kingery, APR, CPRC, Professional Development Scholarship, Nature Coast Chapter
Juliette Lauer Hunsicker, Professional Development Scholarship, Tampa Bay Chapter
Ginny Lawrimore, Rising Leader Award, Gainesville Chapter
Jessica Lawson, Professional Development Scholarship, Dick Pope/Polk County Chapter
Tara Poulton, Professional Development Scholarship, Central West Coast Chapter
Brooke Scholl, Professional Development Scholarship, Northwest Chapter
Malerie Shelton, Professional Development Scholarship, Pensacola Chapter
Tyler Stover, Professional Development Scholarship, Volusia/Flagler Chapter
Kim Waser Nash, Professional Development Scholarship, Treasure Coast Chapter

Joe Curley Rising Leader Class of 2015



Elizabeth Austin, MPS, Professional Development Scholarship, Nature Coast Chapter
Carin Campbell Smith, Professional Development Scholarship, Treasure Coast Chapter
Kelli Carter, Professional Development Scholarship, Northwest Florida Chapter
Rebecca Crisafulli, Rising Leader Award, Space Coast Chapter
Estella Gray, Professional Development Scholarship, Tampa Bay Chapter
Julie Hall, APR, Professional Development Scholarship, Orlando Area Chapter
Alisha Katz, MAMC, APR, Professional Development Scholarship, Gainesville Chapter
Elain McClain, Professional Development Scholarship, Ocala Chapter
Jeremy Piper, Professional Development Scholarship, Central West Coast Chapter
Stefanie Stricklin, APR, Professional Development Scholarship, Capital Chapter
Stefany Strong, Professional Development Scholarship, Volusia/Flagler Chapter
Brandi Welk, Professional Development Scholarship, Pensacola Chapter
Tiffany Whitaker, APR, CPRC, Professional Development Scholarship, Southwest Florida Chapter

Joe Curley Rising Leader Class of 2016



Liz Anderson Slobodian, APR, Professional Development Scholarship, Jacksonville Chapter
Corrie Benfield, Professional Development Scholarship, Tampa Bay Chapter
Lauren Delorio, Professional Development Scholarship, Ocala Chapter

Angelica Deluccia Morrissey, Professional Development Scholarship, Space Coast Chapter
Erin Ingram Storey, Professional Development Scholarship, Northwest Florida Chapter
Erin Knothe, Professional Development Scholarship, Dick Pope/Polk County Chapter
Cindi Lane, APR, Professional Development Scholarship, Volusia/Flagler Chapter
Rhonda Leiberick, APR, Rising Leader Award, Central West Coast Chapter
Zoe Linafelt, APR, Professional Development Scholarship, Capital Chapter
Joey Mazzaferro, Professional Development Scholarship, Gainesville Chapter
Vianka McConville, Professional Development Scholarship, Orlando Area Chapter
Nicole Stacey, Professional Development Scholarship, Pensacola Chapter

Joe Curley Rising Leader Class of 2017



Margarita Alfaro, APR, Professional Development Scholarship, Dick Pope/Polk County Chapter
Brianna Barnebee Green, Professional Development Scholarship, Capital Chapter
Sarah Coulson, APR, Professional Development Scholarship, Gainesville Chapter
Megan DeBello, Professional Development Scholarship, Volusia/Flagler, Chapter
Lauren Debick, APR, CPRC, LeadershipFRPA Scholarship, Ocala Chapter
Cindi Green, RN, APR, Professional Development Scholarship, Treasure Coast Chapter
Sarah Hansen, Professional Development Scholarship, Space Coast Chapter
Brittany Jackson, Professional Development Scholarship, Tampa Bay Chapter
Jacqueline Kooser Fettig, MBA, Professional Development Scholarship, Orlando Area Chapter
Sharon Kunkel, APR, CPRC, Professional Development Scholarship, Central West Coast Chapter
Lisa Murray, APR, CPRC, CPRC Scholarship, Southwest Florida Chapter
Nanci Schwartz, APR, CPRC, Rising Leader Award, Lake County Chapter
Andrea Siracusa, APR, CPRC, Professional Development Scholarship, Jacksonville Chapter
Julie Stuckey, Professional Development Scholarship, Northwest Florida
Lindsay Tozer, MA, FCRM, BPMP, ECMS, Professional Development Scholarship, Nature Coast Chapter
Sarah Whitfield, Professional Development Scholarship, Pensacola Chapter

Joe Curley Rising Leader Class of 2018



Tiffany Cowie, APR, CPRC, Professional Development Scholarship, Jacksonville Chapter

Heather Doane, APR, CPRC, Professional Development Scholarship, Southwest Florida Chapter

Kacie Escobar, MBA, APR, Professional Development Scholarship, Orlando Area Chapter

Christopher Graham, MBA, APR, CPRC, Professional Development Scholarship, Volusia/Flagler Chapter

Amanda Handley, APR, CPRC, Professional Development Scholarship, Capital Chapter

Katie Hunnicutt, Professional Development Scholarship, Ocala Chapter

Kim Livengood, APR, CPRC, Professional Development Scholarship, Central West Coast Chapter

Joey Martinez, Professional Development Scholarship, Gainesville Chapter

Joe McLeod, Rising Leader Award, Dick Pope/Polk County Chapter

Stephanie Pettis, APR, CPRC, CPRC Scholarship, Northwest Florida Chapter

Jayne Platts, APR Scholarship, Treasure Coast Chapter

Samantha Senger, APR, CPRC, APIO, LeadershipFPRA Scholarship, Space Coast Chapter

Keeley Sheehan, Professional Development Scholarship, Tampa Bay Chapter

Kim Stefansson, Professional Development Scholarship, Pensacola Chapter

Joe Curley Rising Leader Class of 2019



Sara Almond, APR, CPRC, Rising Leader Award, Space Coast Chapter

Amy Azoulay, APR, LeadershipFPRA Scholarship, Gainesville Chapter

Holly Brooks, Professional Development Scholarship, Capital Chapter

Marc Espeso, APR Scholarship, Orlando Area Chapter

Heidi Gutierrez, Professional Development Scholarship, Ocala Chapter

Laura Beth Huber, Professional Development Scholarship, Jacksonville Chapter

Eleni Kouvatso Gates, MBA, APR, APR Scholarship, Central West Coast Chapter

Cathryn Lacy, Professional Development Scholarship, Dick Pope/Polk County Chapter

Kate MacMillan, Professional Development Scholarship, Northwest Chapter

Josh Newby, Professional Development Scholarship, Pensacola Chapter

Johanna Santana, Professional Development Scholarship, Volusia/Flagler Chapter

Jenny Tomes, APR, CPRC, Professional Development Scholarship, Treasure Coast Chapter

Kevin Yurasek, MA, Professional Development Scholarship, Lake County Chapter

Joe Curley Rising Leader Class of 2020



FPRA did not host an annual conference in 2020 due to the coronavirus.

Angela Chan, Professional Development Scholarship, Gainesville Chapter

Jennifer Krell Davis, J.D., Professional Development Scholarship, Capital Chapter

José Luis Dieppa, Rising Leader Award, Orlando Area Chapter

Cyndi Hines, Professional Development Scholarship, Volusia/Flagler Chapter

Andrea Knies, APR, CPRC, Professional Development Scholarship, Central West Coast Chapter

Jessica Lawson, Professional Development Scholarship, Dick Pope/Polk County Chapter

Niki Mann, Professional Development Scholarship, Southwest Florida Chapter

Britney Melchiori, Professional Development Scholarship, Treasure Coast Chapter

Brianna Moss, Professional Development Scholarship, Jacksonville Chapter

Elisha Pappacoda, Professional Development Scholarship, Lake County Chapter

Bobby Parker, APR Scholarship, Northwest Chapter

Nina Salvaggio Wagner, APR, Professional Development Scholarship, Space Coast Chapter

Savannah Silliman, Professional Development Scholarship, Ocala Chapter

Lindsey Steck, APR Scholarship, Pensacola Chapter

Joe Curley Rising Leader Class of 2021



Jenni Brunson, Professional Development Scholarship, Northwest Florida Chapter
Kristina Donohue, APR, CPRC, APR Scholarship, Ocala Chapter
Sarah Glendening, APR, Professional Development Scholarship, Central West Coast Chapter
Kandice Hayes, MBA, APR, Professional Development Scholarship, Southwest Florida Chapter
Susan Houts, APR Scholarship, Space Coast Chapter
Megan Kimmel MacPherson, Professional Development Scholarship, Gainesville Chapter
Christine Martindale, Professional Development Scholarship, Volusia/Flagler Chapter
Melanie Melvin, Professional Development Scholarship, Lake County Chapter
Stephanie Nelson, Professional Development Scholarship, Treasure Coast Chapter
Valencia Scott, Professional Development Scholarship, Capital Chapter
Brittany Sherwood, Professional Development Scholarship, Pensacola Chapter
Madelene Skinner, APR, Rising Leader Award, Jacksonville Chapter
Melisa Vanderpol, Professional Development Scholarship, Orlando Area Chapter
Dave Walter, LeadershipFPRA Scholarship, Dick Pope/Polk County Chapter

Joe Curley Rising Leader Class of 2022



Emily Beltran, APR, Professional Development Scholarship, Southwest Florida Chapter
Hunter Carpenter, MA, APR, LeadershipFPRA Scholarship, Central West Coast Chapter
Hillaree Durso, Professional Development Scholarship, Northwest Florida Chapter
Jennifer Harris, Professional Development Scholarship, Treasure Coast Chapter
Rachel Horst, Rising Leader Award, Space Coast Chapter
Kaycee Lagarde, Professional Development Scholarship, Pensacola Chapter
Carla Brown Lucas, MS, Professional Development Scholarship, Capital Chapter
Erin Martinez, MNM, APR Scholarship, Dick Pope/Polk County Chapter
Marbella Miller, APR Scholarship, Gainesville Chapter
Valerie Moses, MBA, APR, Professional Development Scholarship, Orlando Area Chapter
Kimberly Norman, Professional Development Scholarship, Jacksonville Chapter
Darryl Owens, Professional Development Scholarship, Lake County Chapter
Sasha Staton, Professional Development Scholarship, Volusia/Flagler Chapter
Lindsay Tozer, MA, FCRM, BPMP, ECMS, Professional Development Scholarship, Ocala Chapter

Joe Curley Rising Leader Class of 2023



Travis Cornwell, Professional Development Scholarship, Central West Coast Chapter
Rachel Cote, APR, APR Scholarship, Ocala Chapter
Angelene Davis, MA, Professional Development Scholarship, Volusia/Flagler Chapter
Lauren Helm, APR, CPRC, CPRC Scholarship, Capital Chapter

Kyrianna Hoffses Kennedy, Professional Development Scholarship Treasure Coast
EmmaJean Livingston, Professional Development Scholarship, Jacksonville Chapter
Jessica Martinez, MA, LeadershipFPRA Scholarship, Tampa Bay Chapter
Despina McLaughlin, APR, Professional Development Scholarship, Orlando Area Chapter
Carlee Mixon, Professional Development Scholarship, Space Coast Chapter
Stylia Resvanis, Professional Development Scholarship, Gainesville Chapter
Isabela Roselione, Rising Leader Award, South Florida Chapter
Maggie Weaver, Professional Development Scholarship, Northwest Florida Chapter
Jacqueline Whitmore, Professional Development Scholarship, Lake County Chapter
Shannon Williamson, APR, Professional Development Scholarship, Southwest Florida Chapter

Joe Curley Rising Leader Class of 2024



Laura Ansel, APR, CPRC, LeadershipFPRA Scholarship, Central West Coast Chapter
Kaitlyn Ballard, Professional Development Scholarship, Treasure Coast Chapter
Christopher Bright, Professional Development Scholarship, Southwest Florida Chapter
Gregory Davis, Joe Curley Rising Leader Award, Ocala Chapter
Emily Enchevarria, Professional Development Scholarship, Pensacola Chapter
Andy Janecek, Professional Development Scholarship, Capital Chapter
Vicki Karr, Professional Development Scholarship, Volusia/Flagler Chapter
Chelsea Kavanagh, APR, CPRC Scholarship, Jacksonville Chapter
Sarah Kelliher, APR, Professional Development Scholarship, Orlando Area Chapter
Eric Marshall, APR Scholarship, Dick Pope/Polk County Chapter
Emily Mavrakis, Professional Development Scholarship, Gainesville Chapter
Darlene Montano, Professional Development Scholarship, Space Coast Chapter
Melanie Perazzo, Professional Development Scholarship, South Florida Chapter

Congratulations

to the

Joe Curley Rising Leader Class of 2025



Chapters' Nominations Through the Years

Capital Chapter

Rebecca Mahoney, Professional Development Scholarship, 2012
Sandi Poreda, APR, Professional Development Scholarship, 2013
Alison Faris, APR, Professional Development Scholarship, 2014
Stefanie Stricklin, APR, Professional Development Scholarship, 2015
Zoe Linafelt, APR, Professional Development Scholarship, 2016
Brianna Barnebee Green, Professional Development Scholarship, 2017
Amanda Handley, APR, CPRC, Professional Development Scholarship, 2018
Holly Brooks, Professional Development Scholarship, 2019
Jennifer Krell Davis, J.D., Professional Development Scholarship, 2020
Valencia Scott, Professional Development Scholarship, 2021
Carla Brown Lucas, MS, Professional Development Scholarship, 2022
Lauren Helm, APR, CPRC, CPRC Scholarship, 2023
Andy Janecek, Professional Development Scholarship, 2024
Michael Sonntag, 2025*

Central West Coast Chapter

Tara Poulton, Professional Development Scholarship, 2014
Jeremy Piper, Professional Development Scholarship, 2015
Rhonda Leiberick, APR, Rising Leader Award, 2016
Sharon Kunkel, APR, CPRC, Professional Development Scholarship, 2017
Kim Livengood, APR, CPRC, Professional Development Scholarship, 2018
Eleni Kouvatzos Gates, MBA, APR, APR Scholarship, 2019
Andrea Knies, APR, CPRC, Professional Development Scholarship, 2020
Sarah Glendening, APR, Professional Development Scholarship, 2021
Hunter Carpenter, MA, APR, LeadershipFPRA Scholarship, 2022
Travis Cornwell, Professional Development Scholarship, 2023
Laura Ansel, APR, CPRC, LeadershipFPRA Scholarship, 2024
Jennifer Hemmerdinger, APR, 2025*

Dick Pope/Polk County Chapter

Jenny Baker, Rising Leader Award, 2012
Marybeth Soderstrom, Professional Development Scholarship, 2013
Jessica Lawson, Professional Development Scholarship, 2014
Erin Knothe, Professional Development Scholarship, 2016
Margarita Alfaro, APR, Professional Development Scholarship, 2017
Joe McLeod, Rising Leader Award, 2018
Cathyrn Lacy, Professional Development Scholarship, 2019
Jessica Lawson, Professional Development Scholarship, 2020
Dave Walter, LeadershipFPRA Scholarship, 2021
Erin Martinez, MNM, APR Scholarship, 2022
Eric Marshall, APR Scholarship, 2024
Merissa Green, 2025*

Gainesville Chapter

Allison Downey, APR, CPRC, Professional Development Scholarship, 2013
Ginny Lawrimore, Rising Leader Award, 2014
Alisha Katz, MAMC, APR, Professional Development Scholarship, 2015
Joey Mazzaferro, Professional Development Scholarship, 2016
Sarah Coulson, APR, Professional Development Scholarship, 2017
Joey Martinez, Professional Development Scholarship, 2018
Amy Azoulay, APR, LeadershipFPRA Scholarship, 2019
Angela Chan, Professional Development Scholarship, 2020
Megan Kimmel MacPherson, Professional Development Scholarship, 2021
Marbella Miller, APR Scholarship, 2022
Styliana Resvanis, Professional Development Scholarship, 2023
Emily Mavrakis, Professional Development Scholarship, 2024
Shelby Martin, 2025*

Jacksonville Chapter

Liz Anderson Slobodian, APR, Professional Development Scholarship, 2016
Andrea Siracusa, APR, CPRC, Professional Development Scholarship, 2017
Tiffany Cowie, APR, CPRC, Professional Development Scholarship, 2018
Laura Beth Huber, Professional Development Scholarship, 2019
Brianna Moss, Professional Development Scholarship, 2020
Madelene Skinner, APR, Rising Leader Award, 2021
Kimberly Norman, Professional Development Scholarship, 2022
EmmaJean Livingston, Professional Development Scholarship, 2023
Chelsea Kavanagh, APR, CPRC Scholarship, 2024
Kayla Roberts, 2025*

Lake County Chapter

Nanci Schwartz, APR, CPRC, Rising Leader Award, 2017
Kevin Yurasek, MA, Professional Development Scholarship, 2019
Elisha Pappacoda, Professional Development Scholarship, 2020
Melanie Melvin, Professional Development Scholarship, 2021
Darryl Owens, Professional Development Scholarship, 2022
Jacqueline Whitmore, Professional Development Scholarship, 2023

Nature Coast Chapter

Katie Mehl, APR, Professional Development Scholarship, 2012
Katie Mehl, APR, Professional Development Scholarship, 2013
Amy Kingery, APR, CPRC, Professional Development Scholarship, 2014
Elizabeth Austin, MPS, Professional Development Scholarship, 2015
Lindsay Tozer, MA, FCRM, BPMP, ECMS, Professional Development Scholarship, 2017

Northwest Florida Chapter

Valeria Palmertree, Professional Development Scholarship, 2013
Brooke Scholl, Professional Development Scholarship, 2014
Kelli Carter, Professional Development Scholarship, 2015
Erin Ingram Storey, Professional Development Scholarship, 2016
Julie Stuckey, Professional Development Scholarship, 2017
Stephanie Pettis, APR, CPRC, CPRC Scholarship, 2018
Kate MacMillan, Professional Development Scholarship, 2019
Bobby Parker, APR Scholarship, 2020
Jenni Brunson, Professional Development Scholarship, 2021
Hillaree Durso, Professional Development Scholarship, 2022
Maggie Weaver, Professional Development Scholarship, 2023

Ocala Chapter

Barbra Hernandez, APR, CPRC, Professional Development Scholarship, 2014
Elain McClain, Professional Development Scholarship, 2015
Lauren Delorio, Professional Development Scholarship, 2016
Lauren Debick, APR, CPRC, LeadershipFRPA Scholarship, 2017
Katie Hunnicutt, Professional Development Scholarship, 2018
Heidi Gutierrez, Professional Development Scholarship, 2019
Savannah Silliman, Professional Development Scholarship, 2020
Kristina Donohue, APR, CPRC, APR Scholarship, 2021
Lindsay Tozer, MA, FCRM, BPMP, ECMS, Professional Development Scholarship, 2022
Rachel Cote, APR, APR Scholarship, 2023
Gregory Davis, Rising Leader Award, 2024
Danielle Veenstra, 2025*

Orlando Area Chapter

Tami Karaba, Rising Leader Award, 2011
Nancy DeVault, Professional Development Scholarship, 2012
Kerry Martin, APR, Professional Development Scholarship, 2013
Alayna Curry, APR, Professional Development Scholarship, 2014
Julie Hall, APR, Professional Development Scholarship, 2015
Vianka McConville, Professional Development Scholarship, 2016
Jacqueline Kooser Fettig, MBA, Professional Development Scholarship, 2017
Kacie Escobar, MBA, APR, Professional Development Scholarship, 2018
Marc Espeso, APR Scholarship, 2019
José Luis Dieppa, Rising Leader Award, 2020
Melisa Vanderpol, Professional Development Scholarship, 2021
Valerie Moses, MBA, APR, Professional Development Scholarship, 2022
Despina McLaughlin, APR, Professional Development Scholarship, 2023
Sarah Kelliher, APR, Professional Development Scholarship, 2024
Jennifer Marcial Ocasio, 2025*

Pensacola Chapter

Michael English, Rising Leader Award, 2010
Kristen Wimer, Professional Development Scholarship, 2013
Malerie Shelton, Professional Development Scholarship, 2014
Brandi Welk, Professional Development Scholarship, 2015
Nicole Stacey, Professional Development Scholarship, 2016
Sarah Whitfield, Professional Development Scholarship, 2017
Kim Stefansson, Professional Development Scholarship, 2018
Josh Newby, Professional Development Scholarship, 2019
Lindsey Steck, APR Scholarship, 2020
Brittany Sherwood, Professional Development Scholarship, 2021
Kaycee Lagarde, Professional Development Scholarship, 2022
Emily Echevarria, Professional Development Scholarship, 2024
Amber Casart, 2025*

South Florida Chapter

Isabella Roselione, Rising Leader Award, 2023
Melanie Perazzo, Professional Development Scholarship, 2024
Diana Delgado Garcia, 2025*

Southwest Florida Chapter

Michelle Nagel, Professional Development Scholarship, 2012
Erin Croop, Professional Development Scholarship, 2013
Janelle Beaber, Professional Development Scholarship, 2014
Tiffany Whitaker, APR, CPRC, Professional Development Scholarship, 2015
Lisa Murray, APR, CPRC, CPRC Scholarship, 2017
Heather Doane, APR, CPRC, Professional Development Scholarship, 2018
Niki Mann, Professional Development Scholarship, 2020
Kandice Hayes, MBA, Professional Development Scholarship, 2021
Emily Beltran, APR, Professional Development Scholarship, 2022
Shannon Williamson, APR, Professional Development Scholarship, 2023
Christopher Bright, Professional Development Scholarship, 2024
Yliana Vilella, MS, APR, 2025*

Space Coast Chapter

Tessa Friederichs, Rising Leader Award, 2013
Julie Arnold, Professional Development Scholarship, 2014
Rebecca Crisafulli, Rising Leader Award, 2015
Angelica DeLuccia Morrissey, Professional Development Scholarship, 2016
Sarah Hansen, Professional Development Scholarship, 2017
Samantha Senger, APR, CPRC, APIO, LeadershipFPRA Scholarship, 2018
Sara Almond, APR, CPRC, Rising Leader Award, 2019
Nina Salvaggio Wagner, APR, CPRC, Professional Development Scholarship, 2020
Susan Houts, APR Scholarship, 2021
Rachel Horst, Rising Leader Award, 2022
Carlee Mixon, Professional Development Scholarship, 2023
Darlene Montano, Professional Development Scholarship, 2024
Sascha Lee, 2025*

Tampa Bay Chapter

Leah Saunders, Professional Development Scholarship, 2012
Juliette Lauer Hunsicker, Professional Development Scholarship, 2013
Juliette Lauer Hunsicker, Professional Development Scholarship, 2014
Estella Gray, Professional Development Scholarship, 2015
Corrie Benfield, Professional Development Scholarship, 2016
Brittany Jackson, Professional Development Scholarship, 2017
Keeley Sheehan, Professional Development Scholarship, 2018
Jessica Martinez, MA, LeadershipFPRA Scholarship, 2023
Lexie Savedge, APR, 2025*

Treasure Coast Chapter

Jennifer Trefelner, APR, CPRC, Professional Development Scholarship, 2012
Jennifer Trefelner, APR, CPRC, Professional Development Scholarship, 2013
Kim Waser Nash, Professional Development Scholarship, 2014
Carin Campbell Smith, Professional Development Scholarship, 2015
Cindi Green, RN, APR, Professional Development Scholarship, 2017
Jayne Platts, APR Scholarship, 2018
Jenny Tomes, APR, CPRC, Professional Development Scholarship, 2019
Britney Melchiori, Professional Development Scholarship, 2020
Stephanie Nelson, Professional Development Scholarship, 2021
Jennifer Harris, Professional Development Scholarship, 2022
Kyrianna Hoffses Kennedy, Professional Development Scholarship, 2023
Kaitlyn Ballard, Professional Development Scholarship, 2024
Courtney Ziesman, 2025*

Volusia/Flagler Chapter

Cindi Lane, APR, Professional Development Scholarship, 2016
Tyler Stover, Professional Development Scholarship, 2014
Stefany Strong, Professional Development Scholarship, 2015
Megan DeBello, Professional Development Scholarship, 2017
Christopher Graham, MBA, APR, CPRC, Professional Development Scholarship, 2018
Johanna Santana, Professional Development Scholarship, 2019
Cyndi Hines, Professional Development Scholarship, 2020
Christine Martindale, Professional Development Scholarship, 2021
Sasha Staton, Professional Development Scholarship, 2022
Angelene Davis, Professional Development Scholarship, 2023
Vicki Karr, Professional Development Scholarship, 2024
Lauren Wiseman, MS, 2025*

**All Joe Curley Rising Leader class members will receive a professional development scholarship. The Class of 2025 will be recognized on stage during the Presidents' Luncheon on August 4, 2025, at the PR & Comms Summit in Orlando. This is when the winners of additional scholarships and the Joe Curley Rising Leader Award will be announced.*