

the official newsletter of the pcma capital chapter

## Big Plans Unveiled at PCMA

The theme of this year's PCMA Convening Leaders empowered attendees to "Make No Little Plans", which was a perfect collaboration for the host city of Chicago. Throughout the conference, one could see the monumental changes which have taken place within the windy city and the future investment in their incredible convention package.

During the General Sessions at Convening Leaders, the inspirational stories and call to action by this year's speakers further displayed the ability for those in our industry to move forward with bigger plans and ideas in order to achieve loftier goals in 2015.

The opening session speaker, futurist Andrew Zolli, discussed how people tend to predict the future according to various trends and how it can be misinterpreted. "The biggest technology-related risk we face is new distractions. Within your phone, there are now thousands of places to be", Zolli said. He mentioned a utility company which rewards its customers with a smiley face on their next report if they are within the top 10 percent of energy-efficient households. This company will now conserve more electricity based on the programmed kindergarten instincts of adults who desperately feel the need for one of those smiley faces.

Tuesday's session featured long distance swimmer Diana Nyad, who achieved her dream of swimming across the ocean from Cuba to Florida. Her unbelievable journey featured jellyfish attacks, sharks and bouts of serious dehydration.

Through it all, Nyad finished the 110 mile journey in just 53 hours, which was her fifth attempt at the feat. Her unbelievable story received a rousing ovation from the crowd and inspired the masses to take on anything standing in their way. It was truly one of the most powerful messages delivered during the conference.



Dan Pallotta, Founder and Chief Humanity Officer of Advertising for Humanity, was a big hit for folks in the non-profit sector as he drove home the message for these organizations to increase their funding and their overall impact. "Stop treating money as a sin in the non-profit sector," Pallotta said. "Stop preventing the non-profit sector from using money to incentivize the production of 'more value.'"

Big plans are most certainly on the horizon after hearing these motivating speakers predict the future, swim across the ocean and raise millions for those in need. PCMA attendees certainly walked away with the drive to make big things happen. •

—by Ryan Barth, CMP  
Global Account Executive, ConferenceDirect

## The PCMA Capital Chapter is where "You Belong"!

**Mission:** The mission of PCMA and the Chapter is to be the leading organization for meeting and event professionals by delivering superior and innovative education and promoting the value of professional convention management.

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If you have any comments, suggestions or would like to write an article for *The Chatter*, email: [PCMAchatter@gmail.com](mailto:PCMAchatter@gmail.com)



## Message from the Board

Joy Womack, CMP

Director, Event Management

Experient



If Convening Leaders is any indication, PCMA and especially the Capital Chapter are poised for an amazing year.

I have always looked at Convening Leaders as my opportunity to recharge as we begin a new year and this year's meeting was no exception. As usual the PCMA team did a fantastic job setting the stage for a week of great education and engagement. The energy throughout the convention was high and it was obvious that many new connections were made that week.

Now that we are back in our daily routine, I would like to challenge all of us to find ways to maintain the high energy and enthusiasm that we experienced in Chicago and bring that to the Capital Chapter.

Attend an upcoming event and share best practices with your peers, volunteer to join a committee, or consider becoming a mentor. With a calendar full of events and many opportunities to engage as a volunteer there are plenty of options for all of our members and no need to "make little plans" when it comes to fully realizing the benefits of your PCMA membership.

Convening Leaders may only take place each January but the lessons learned and connections made can easily transfer to your experiences within the Capital Chapter and continue to provide enrichment throughout the year. •



Connecting with the Capital Chapter is not just about tracking what we are up to. We want to see what you are up to as well.



@PCMACC



PCMA Capital Chapter has become the first PCMA chapter to have an Instagram account because we believe in being creative and having fun with our communication. However, it is only as good as our members make it, so start shooting and posting today!



Follow us @pcmacapitalchapter and remember to tag us in your spring meeting photos as well by adding us into the comments or tag section. •



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## Virtually Awesome



I've often told people that I'll be with them in spirit; however, I just experienced something better. Not able to attend Convening Leaders in person, I decided to register for it virtually. The hybrid experience was amazing and took "being with you in spirit" to the next level. For three days, I was "virtually" in Chicago with the rest of my PCMA friends enjoying incredible education and networking.

Our hybrid agenda included all three of the general sessions and what I can only guess must have been the top picks in breakouts, two choices per time slot. We saw and heard the speaker and viewed the images shown to conference attendees in a box at the lower right of the presenter screen. And they even figured out a way to include networking. While in a session, the hybrid attendees shared comments in the chat room going on to the right of the screen, adding another dimension to our educational experience. The chats focused on what the speaker was saying and related experiences shared by the virtual audience. Often torn between presenters and chatting, I was relieved to know that I could focus on the speaker and return to review the chats at any time later without missing a beat.

PCMA made sure that the virtual experience was a personal one. While conference attendees broke into small groups, presenters addressed the virtual audience, asking us for feedback to the topics at hand. At the end of each conference day, we enjoyed a virtual happy hour, putting aside work and sharing topics from kids to pets to what's for dinner. There were pictures of the hybrid party goers on the screen and name introductions by hovering over each picture. PCMA thought of everything!

The hybrid experience fully engaged hundreds of PCMA members for two and a half days and the interesting thing is that it caused each of us to want to attend in person next year. Thank you Calgary Meetings & Conventions for giving us the pleasure of being with you all in spirit and we'll see you next year in Vancouver! •

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*by Marilyn Atchue-Zuill, HPN Global*

## New Tricks at Convening Leaders

This year's Convening Leaders was full of hands-on learning, sessions featuring crowdsourced content and unique meeting design ideas that continued PCMA's tradition of being an incubator of new and creative concepts for MICE professionals.



With four educational tracks—Event Technology and Intelligence, Operational Strategy, Meeting and Experience Design, and Globalization—and a smaller number of Thought Leadership and Business School sessions, attendees were able to select sessions that applied specifically to their needs. In addition, the last day was revamped to focus on leadership sessions, an introduction of Five Speakers to Watch and ended with a closing General Session and brunch to launch PCMA's 2016 Convening Leaders in Vancouver.

PCMA transformed the third level of McCormick Place West into a park complete with trees, benches, picnic tables, and food and beverages to create a sense of community. The Learning Lounge and TechCentral also were combined into one location adjacent to the park. Inside, attendees could view unique seating configurations, attend hands-on workshops, demo various meeting resources and ask questions at the TechBar.

Attendees were able to experience a new stage set with blended widescreen technology that showcased the possibilities of general sessions. Additionally, three smaller groups of attendees were able to sit in bleachers behind the main stage to watch the behind-the-scenes production of a PCMA General Session and then ask questions of key AV staff each day.

Attending PCMA offers multiple avenues for networking, however the new luncheon on the second day allowed attendees to network in a relaxed setting as well as learn strategies for handling the myriad of dietary restrictions at their own meeting and events. A virtual happy hour was also introduced at the end of each day to extend networking for remote attendees.

With all of these changes and improvements, it's no wonder everyone left excited, inspired and ready to incorporate innovation into their own meetings and programs. •

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*by Tiffany Melton, CMP, J. Spargo & Associates, Inc.*



# ALLOW US TO WOW YOU.

When it comes to deciding on a destination, don't miss Madison, Wisconsin.

From capitol to campus and renowned restaurants to rooms with a view, our city is ranked repeatedly and booked eagerly.

Find out what everyone's talking about at [visitmadison.com/chatter2](http://visitmadison.com/chatter2).



## Inside the Architect's Studio

This year, I was fortunate enough to take part in the newly redubbed PCMA Orientation session, Inside the Architect's Studio. However, the process of welcoming novice attendees to PCMA began long before arriving in the windy city.

To begin PCMA employees, Patrick Crosson, CMP, Events Manager, and Sheila Mires, CMP, Director, Member Services, held a Die Hard/Novice webinar approximately three weeks prior to the conference. This session encompassed more than first-timer tips; it also helped to kick off PCMA's mentoring program. During the webinar, they incorporated a clever video, they then went through the conference app and explained how the conference education would be broken down. It also included a call to the mentors and mentees to get in touch before the conference and suggested they meet up at the Inside the Architect's Studio session.

On Sunday, January 11, Kelly Peacy, CAE, CMP, Senior Vice President, Education and Events, explained the educational blueprint of the conference. She then stated PCMA's goal to try as many new and creative concepts at the conference, so that we as attendees get to see what works and how to do it, as well as what doesn't work. I took away that PCMA is basically offering to take a bullet for us so we can see if we should really try a huge buffet luncheon, a wellness fitness studio, tech-byte sessions, thought leader sessions and a head shot lounge at our own conferences. While it can be a little awkward experiencing so many new things as an attendee, it also helps us to hone in on how many big and little changes our conference can handle.

Finally, to bring it back to the concept of Inside the Architect's Studio, Kelly interviewed two experienced PCMA members, Rocco LaForgia, CASE, Hilton Worldwide, and myself. We discussed our PCMA histories, how we prepared for the conference each year and what we would recommend to those attending Convening Leaders as a novice. In addition, attendees had the chance to ask questions of each of us. And Rocco made at least one new contact in the audience that day, his goal for PCMA.

As a planner, this process helped me to realize I needed to rework our first-timer session and plan to utilize a number of the steps that PCMA presented. •

*by Shannon Burke, CMP  
Director of Conference and Meetings, National Association for College Admission Counseling*

## First Time Experience as a Speaker at PCMA Convening Leaders

Re-booting conferences and starting a new year strong starts with a strong and healthy self. This was the theme of the Wellness Theatre – a place for meeting planners to congregate, learn about personal and conference wellness, pick up wellness tip sheets, and participate in a superfoods menu planning competition and in live and video fitness breaks. I delivered 8 talks on 4 different topics: Taking Care of Yourself: Best Practices for Personal Health; Fitting Fitness into Your Busy Life; Fighting Event Fatigue with Superfood Energy and Brain Boosters; and Combatting Conference Fatigue with Fitness Energy Boosters. Sounds exhausting? I was invigorated.

There is nothing more rewarding than to see others share in my fitness/wellness passion. I am an academic/researcher (and former introvert) who is new to the meeting planner industry. I stumbled into my business by accident while presenting at a Business of Aging Summit. I am grateful to PCMA HQ for the opportunity to pilot test the idea of fitness and mind-body wellness at EdCon2014 in Toronto (my former hometown) last summer. The theme was so well received that I was invited to Convening Leaders and a wellness theatre was created.

This was the largest meeting planner conference I attended. The energy and enthusiasm were infectious. Wellness was a hit because it is topical for event planners (ranked among the top 10 most stressful jobs) and aging boomers, which make up the bulk of attendees.

The Learning Lounge provided a perfect open area conducive to hands-on, experiential learning. And we “walked the talk” of wellness with theraband workouts, hotel towel exercise demonstrations, video stretch breaks, strength training, yoga and mindfulness practices – all in business attire. This type of “active learning” attracted much attention and traffic at the Wellness Theatre. My sessions were packed, with standing room only. PCMA headquarters staff was receptive to my ideas for the theatre. And Freeman provided the signage and onsite AV support needed to keep my sessions running smoothly.

I talked about how “sitting is the new smoking” and how energy breaks are needed to combat sitting syndrome. After standing for 2.5 days, I experienced standing syndrome. Luckily, the BodyWorks massage station was right next-door and I was able to get a foot massage! I recently moved from Toronto to the Washington DC area and look forward to building new friendships and sharing my wellness passion in the U.S. and with the Capital Chapter. Feel free to contact me at kim@x-bytes.com to share your wellness ideas for PCMA 2016. •

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*by Kim Bercovitz, Ph.D., President & Chief Exercise Officer, Exercise Bytes, Inc.*

## PCMA Deposits Pounds of Good Will

6:30 AM came really early in Chicago on Sunday, January 11, but still almost 130 PCMA attendees piled onto buses. First stop was the Renaissance Blackstone Chicago Hotel where the group checked in and received the “classic” white t-shirt stamping them as a participant of the Hospitality Helping Hands program. Even at this early hour, you heard individuals warmly greet each other and give big hugs. HHH provides PCMA members a great way to connect with one another and give back to the host city’s community.

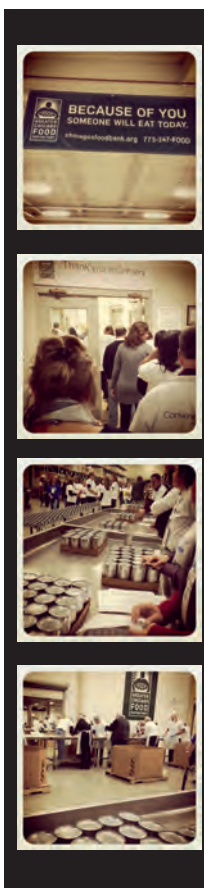
The Renaissance graciously provided a tasty breakfast spread that everyone used to fuel up for the hard work ahead. Then back on to the buses. This time we were headed to the HHH project location, the Greater Chicago Food Depository, which is a nonprofit food distribution and training center that provides food for hungry people. Last year, the Food Depository distributed 67 million pounds of shelf-stable food, fresh produce, and dairy products and meat (the equivalent of 154,000 meals every day.)

At the Depository, we gathered in their training room where the staff shared their mission, and then we were divided up into groups to handle the three different projects - separating large quantities of dry pasta into smaller portions, sorting through bins of apples removing the rotten ones, and labelling unmarked cans of pork & beans. I am proud to report the PCMA group blew past the goals set forth including 2,744 bags of pasta (1,500 goal), 11,400 apples (goal 6,000), and 15,096 cans of pork & beans (8,000 goal). This resulted in 33,842 pounds of food for the Chicago community.

After all this hard work, the group reconvened at the Renaissance for a much needed hearty lunch. Still in their t-shirts, everyone bonded over the accomplishments of the day and the many lives our efforts would touch. HHH is a proud PCMA tradition for many. This was only my second outing, but I am a complete convert. Be sure to add HHH to your Convening Leaders schedule next year. •

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*by Will Trokey, CMP, National Sales Manager, Visit Charlotte*





## Convening Leaders Sets the Stage for Students

As an aspiring meeting planner, there is something inexplicably captivating about being in a convention center with thousands of industry professionals. For the last two years, I have been studying Tourism and Events Management at George Mason University. Although formal education has given me a solid foundation, the three days at Convening Leaders provided invaluable experience and networking opportunities that would be hard to find anywhere else.

Convening Leaders sets the stage for students, to learn, grow, and make meaningful connections. Everywhere I went I felt immersed in the event. I met industry professionals in restaurants, buses, and even at 1,353 feet above ground when attempting to brave the ledge of the Skydeck. It was more than I could have ever imagined!

Even though this was my second year attending, the idea of approaching strangers made me anxious to say the least. In spite of my angst, I've come to realize that this industry is full of people who are inviting, supportive, and passionate about the same things I am. The numerous human connections that I made at Convening Leaders got me really pumped up about the career path that I've chosen to pursue.

It is comforting to know that by the time I graduate I will already have a strong network of people in an industry I am excited to be a part of, but networking wasn't the only benefit of attending. This event helped broaden my horizon with topic specific sessions, demonstrations, and discussions. Topics covered included current trends, up and coming technology, and industry challenges. Each session provided the insight necessary to stay on the cutting edge of the industry.

I am so very thankful to PCMA and all the people who have given me the guidance, support, and the respect needed to make my experiences at Convening Leaders so wonderful. I can't wait to see you all in Vancouver in 2016! •

—by Kayla Crutcher, Student, George Mason University

## Hey DC Area Commuters Download the “I’m Stuck” App!

Have you ever been stuck in traffic in the DC area and said, “Why can’t our government get these roads fixed?!” Well, now you can tell them yourself. Download the I’m Stuck app today.



I'm Stuck is an app generated through a partnership of the Building America's Future ([www.bafuture.org](http://www.bafuture.org)) and USTA (US Travel Association). The goal is to allow citizens to alert their congressmen of any delays, dangers, and dilapidations of our aging highways, airports, or train systems. As indicated in a recent 60 Minutes program (aired on November 23, 2014), about 70,000 bridges across the country are “structurally deficient.” These bridges, some built in the 1920s, were designed to only a shelf life of 50 years.

By continuing to tell our members of Congress – the app has a feature to take pictures and send a pre-scripted email to your representative – that our transportation infrastructure needs attention. Until Congress hears from their constituents, or someone gets really hurt, they will not take action. Make your voice – and your frustrations – known!

Go to the iTunes or Android store today and download the I'm Stuck smartphone app today by Building America's Future! •

—by Terence Donnelly, CMP  
Vice President, Experient  
Chair of the Government Relations & Advocacy Task Force

The advertisement features a background image of three people on a golf course. On the left, a person in colorful patterned shorts is in mid-swing. In the center, another person in similar shorts is standing. On the right, a person in a white dress is holding a golf club. The text 'DRIVE SERVE SIP RELAX ...LIKE A PRO' is overlaid in large, bold, white letters. In the top right corner, the ASAE Foundation logo is displayed. Below the logo, the text 'Executive Golf Tennis & Spa Series' is written in a large, elegant font. At the bottom, a blue banner contains the text: 'Join your association peers and industry partners for a day of friendly competition, fun, and networking opportunities. Register at [asaecenter.org/golf](http://asaecenter.org/golf).'

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Join your association peers and industry partners for a day of friendly competition, fun, and networking opportunities. Register at [asaecenter.org/golf](http://asaecenter.org/golf).

## Capital Chapter Shines at Convening Leaders

When the recipients of the 2014 PCMA Achievement Awards were announced during the general session on day two of Convening Leaders, the Capital Chapter was well represented. In fact, Joy Womack, Kim Allison and Samantha Moore made us all proud! Each one of these amazing women leads by example and is someone we can all learn from.

Joy Womack, CMP, Director of Event Management for Experient, was honored as the Distinguished Member of the Year for her exemplary contributions to PCMA during the previous year. For Joy, this year's Convening Leaders was very exciting and she enjoyed celebrating her achievement with Capital Chapter members and her co-workers. Joy said, "My first employer told me to get as involved as possible in the meetings industry and PCMA and I'm thankful that to this day, Experient champions my involvement. I will continue to encourage others to become engaged in PCMA."

Kim Allison, CAE, CASE, CTA, Associate Director of Sales for Visit Baltimore, received the Distinguished Supplier Professional of the Year Award for her professional excellence and contributions to her organization, PCMA, and her community. Kim found it hard to believe that she won out of all the nominees. "No one wins these awards on their own. It's due to the people in our lives. For me it's my great bosses, mentors, co-workers, customers and even the difficult customers that got me here."

Samantha Moore, Meetings and Exhibits Manager for the Community Anti-Drug Coalition of America, was selected as the Distinguished Emerging Leader of the Year for demonstrating extraordinary leadership and service early in her career. This was an exceptional Convening Leaders experience for Samantha because, not only did she receive this award, but Samantha also was selected as an honoree in PCMA's 20 in Their Twenties program! It's all been a little overwhelming for Samantha. When asked her about her long term goals, Samantha quickly replied, "I want to promote accredited meeting and conference education on the collegiate level." As for short term goals, "To beat out Mindy Halpert as the youngest member of the PCMA Capital Chapter Board." (Samantha requested that a smiley face should be placed here.) 😊 •

by Gail Seawright, Director of National Accounts  
Loews Ventana Canyon

## Flappers and Chapters and Feathers...Oh My

Chapter members were treated to a true taste of the Roaring 20's Chicago at the Capital and Chesapeake Chapter Reception. Held at the Fairmont, a tunneled walk way kept attendees out of the light dusting of snow.

Upon entering, hostesses checked if each attendee had received their drink tickets with a certain flapper flair. The ballroom was transformed into a nightclub complete with San Jose flappers offering blazing fast internet turtles.

The centerpiece of the room was a large four sided bar, complete with a stunning jazzy lounge act offering her best in-person Roxie Hart. All the while, the film Chicago played on and on in the background. Champagne and other spirits kept the evening bubbly, while the delicious food kept everyone a little grounded.

New members were blown away by this kickoff reception to start the conference. Attendees made their way through the crowds to meet and mingle with friends new and old, in both the Capital and Chesapeake chapters.

While the feather boas stayed at this reception, attendees took the flapper joie de vivre with them to sustain them through all that PCMA jazz. •

by Shannon Burke, CMP,  
Director of Conference and Meetings  
National Association for College Admission Counseling

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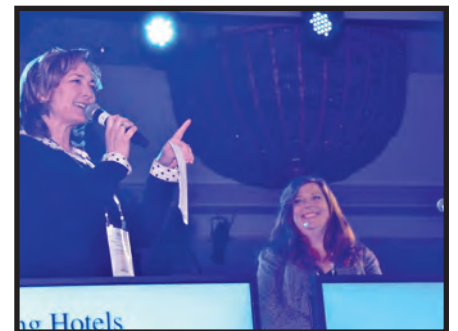
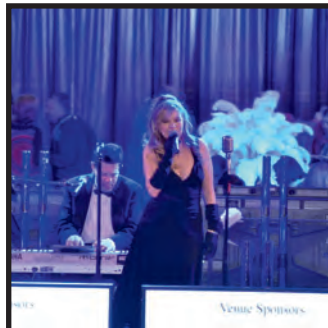
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# CAPITALS CHESEAPEAKE CHAPTER RECEPTION

Photos by Christie's Photographic Solutions





## Member Spotlights

### Spotlight on a Planner

*Michael Jordan (MJ)*  
*Senior Meeting Planner*  
*Nuclear Energy Institute*



The youngest of three siblings, MJ grew up in Fort Myers, Florida where his entire family currently resides, making him the “forgotten child who moved away”. He attended The University of Florida where he produced the Gator Growl event in 2008 and cemented his place in UF’s history.

He then moved to Washington, DC and began his career in event planning. In the DC area you’ll likely find him at the Portrait Gallery, attending a Nationals game or enjoying a meal at Bistro La Bonne or having brunch at Vinoteca. MJ just recently joined PCMA this past year and attended his first Convening Leaders conference in Chicago.

Michael embraces the creativity and hard work it takes to produce events. “There’s something very satisfying about seeing an event transition from being on paper into real life. The ability to be creative and drive change in the industry is extremely satisfying.”

His advice to young professionals making their name in event planning? “Know when to turn the phone off. Your email will still be there in the morning. Be present and in the moment with the people you’re with, whether that’s in business or at home.” •

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*by Ryan Barth, CMP*  
*Global Account Executive, ConferenceDirect*

### Spotlight on a Supplier

*Robin D. Roane, CTE, CCTE, CMP*  
*Senior Sales Manager*  
*Visit Alexandria*



Robin joined the Alexandria CVA as Senior Sales Manager in April 2010 with a diverse background in hotel sales and association management. Robin held the position of Membership Director for the Global Business Travel Association bringing her to Alexandria in 2006. Prior to her time with GBTA, Robin as an associate of Marriott International, Inc.

for over 18 years. She held various positions from Director of Catering & Convention Services to Director of Hotel Sales, primarily under the Renaissance brand, and the last being Senior Account Executive for Texas Market Sales representing multiple properties to include seven different Marriott brands.

Robin is a new member of PCMA; she realized the benefit by going to local events and found her first PCMA Convening Leaders to be excellent. With great one-on-one networking opportunities and stellar education sessions, Robin jumped right into the conference. She also really enjoyed the X-bytes in the learning lounge, though her favorite part of the conference had to be the ever present Garrett’s each afternoon. Actually, the two seemed to go hand in hand.

Robin is a huge international traveler, but really loves to immerse herself in new and interesting surroundings as much as possible. So far, 2013 brought trekking in Nepal, 2014 found her on safari in Kenya, and 2015 will lead her to Vietnam.

On all her travels, she has found that she really likes art in all formats, but is partial to paintings. And while she prefers to bring pieces back from her travels, she enjoys shopping at *The 10,000 Villages Co-op* to ensure that the artists who create do in fact get the funds.

She pinches herself that she is lucky enough to work and live in Alexandria, right near the George Washington Masonic National Memorial. But she is really most excited for the Visit Alexandria, Meetings Made Extraordinary program that is rolling out as we speak...find her at a PCMA event and she’ll tell you all about it. •

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*by Shannon Burke, CMP*  
*Director of Conference and Meetings*  
*National Association for College Admission Counseling*





## News Bytes

Email your news: [PCMAchatter+news@gmail.com](mailto:PCMAchatter+news@gmail.com)

**FRED MOXLEY, CMP** IS NOW DIRECTOR, MEETINGS AND EXHIBITS WITH THE SAFETY NET HOSPITALS FOR PHARMACEUTICAL ACCESS.

**BETH O'BRIEN, CMP** IS NOW MANAGER, CONFERENCE AND MEETINGS WITH THE ASSOCIATION OF CLINICAL RESEARCH PROFESSIONALS.

**BETHANY BLUE CHIRICO, CMP** IS NOW DIRECTOR, GLOBAL MEETINGS AND EXPOSITIONS WITH THE AMERICAN INDUSTRIAL HYGIENE ASSOCIATION



## Mark Your Calendar

Please join us for these upcoming events. Visit our chapter website for details and to register:  
[www.pcma.org/connect-and-grow/chapters/capital](http://www.pcma.org/connect-and-grow/chapters/capital)

CAPITAL CONNECTION

**2/17** **Planner Workshop** (designed for Planners Only)  
**Ripped from the Headlines:**  
**Trends Affecting Your 2015 Meetings**  
3:00pm - 5:00pm ET  
National Press Club  
529 14th St. NW, 13th Floor, Washington, DC  
Register:  
<https://www.regonline.com/2015-PlannerOnly-Trends-Affecting-Your-2015-Mtgs>

**3/19** **Mix-N-Bowl**  
3:30pm - 7:00pm  
Bowlmor Lanes  
5353 Westbard Avenue, Bethesda, MD  
Registration TBA

**5/26** **Quest for Talent**  
Education Program: 3:00pm - 5:00pm ET  
Networking Reception: 5:00pm - 6:30 pm ET  
Location TBA, Registration TBA

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