

# SESSION THREE

## *What's Stopping Me? Positive Intelligence and Stronger Allyship*

### **What holds us back from being the allies we aspire to be?**

In this session, participants will explore how positive Intelligence, emotional intelligence, and self-awareness influence leadership and allyship. When allies develop greater awareness of their habits and reactions, they become far more effective supporters and sponsors for women leading to business growth.

Participants will gain practical allyship tools that strengthen collaboration, advance inclusive leadership, and help translate good intentions into meaningful action.

MODERATOR



**Brad Damstedt**

**Brad Damstedt (He/Him/His)** is a self-described late starter in the world of Allyship and is grateful for the open-armed welcome he's received. With a strong background in volunteerism, Brad is working on broadening his perspectives through data and stories and on speaking up as an advocate for others. Brad is inspired by seeing people help other people. Brad works as a research engineer at Linde, using his PhD in chemical engineering to develop combustion related applications that enable Linde customers to reduce pollution emissions, increase productivity and / or utilize alternative fuel sources. Brad is married and father of four.

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MODERATOR



Emry Moore

**Emry Moore**, Lead Community Affairs Specialist at Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield, is a driving force behind Highmark's commitment to community well-being and corporate social responsibility. With over a decade of dedicated service to the local health plan and a strong foundation in operations and service, Emry expertly cultivates and strengthens strategic partnerships across Western New York. Emry's collaborative approach extends to working closely with local organizations and internal teams, ensuring resources are effectively directed through charitable contributions and sponsorships, ultimately amplifying Highmark's positive impact and fostering a healthier community.

SPEAKER



Christina Lesh

**Christina Lesh (She/Her/Hers)** is a Vistage Chair and executive leadership coach working with Western New York CEOs and business owners navigating complex, high-stakes decisions. She helps leaders build stronger companies and cultures where women can fully contribute and advance.

She leads a peer advisory group where leaders challenge each other's thinking, strengthen judgment, and uncover blind spots that quietly limit performance. Christina does this work because she has seen too many capable executives burn out in isolation, because they carry decisions without honest challenge or perspective.

As a result of her 15+ years as a senior leader and executive coach, she believes most leadership gaps are an opportunity for awareness and the willingness to examine the gap between intent and impact.

# SESSION FOUR

*Stronger Together:  
Empowering Leaders Across Sectors to Drive Collaborative Action*

**Progress happens when leaders across sectors and perspectives work together to create meaningful change.**

In this session, participants will explore how collaboration, allyship, and shared leadership can strengthen organizations and expand opportunities for women.

Through discussion and practical insights, leaders will learn how to turn intention into action and work more effectively across industries and roles. The session will include interactive scenario modeling that brings these concepts to life and demonstrates how collaborative leadership can work in practice. Participants will drive a culture of winning together for our community.

MODERATOR



**Erin Johnson**  
WNYWF Board Member

**Erin Johnson (She/Her/Hers)** is a global business executive with more than 25 years of experience leading strategy, business transformation, and human resources across diverse industries, from Fortune 100 companies to private equity-owned organizations. She currently serves as Vice President of Human Resources for Moog's Space and Defense operating group, supporting rapid growth to equip those who defend freedom and explore the universe. Erin holds an MBA from Canisius University, a bachelor's degree in Business Administration and Economics, and a certification in Strategy from the University of Oxford. She serves on the boards of the WNY Women's Foundation and Mount St. Mary Academy and has been recognized as a Top 40 Under 40 business leader and one of Buffalo Business First's Most Powerful Women.

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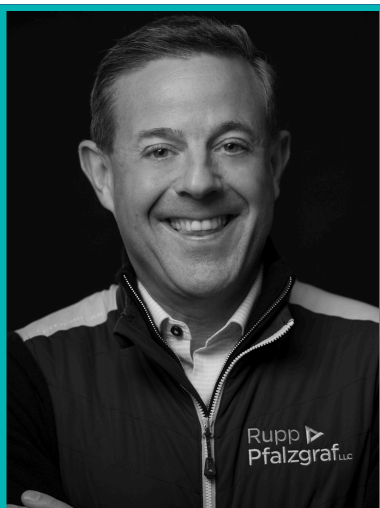
PANELIST



**Jamie Batt**  
WNYWF Board Member

**Jamie Batt (She/Her/Hers)** is a Partner and co-leader of the Business Law Group at Rupp Pfalzgraf LLC, where she advises businesses and executives on mergers and acquisitions, succession planning, and complex corporate transactions. Known for her ability to align stakeholders and move deals forward, she serves as a trusted advisor during pivotal moments of growth and transition. Jamie is widely recognized for her leadership, including Buffalo Business First's Power 200 Women and Women of Influence honors. She is an avid supporter of initiatives that advance women in leadership. As an active leader in the Western New York community, Jamie serves on the Board of Directors of the WNY Women's Foundation.

PANELIST



**Dave Pfalzgraf**

David R. Pfalzgraf, Jr. is the Founding and Managing Partner of Rupp Pfalzgraf LLC, where he has led the firm's growth into one of Western New York's leading full-service law firms. Under his leadership, the firm has been recognized as one of Buffalo's Best Places to Work for 18 years. He advises closely held and public companies on mergers and acquisitions, financing, and complex business transactions, serving as a trusted advisor on high-stakes decisions. David is consistently recognized among the region's top business leaders, including Buffalo Business First's Power 250, and is known for building strong teams and driving collaboration. Outside the office, David is proud to serve on numerous for profit and not for profit Boards and loves to travel with his wife Amanda and his 4 grown children. He is also an avid and accomplished squash player and Ironman.

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PANELIST



**Scott Bieler**

**Scott R. Bieler** began his career with West Herr Automotive Group in 1975 as a Sales Consultant and quickly advanced into leadership roles, becoming General Manager in 1981 when the company operated a single dealership. He became a partner in 1983, president in 1997, and majority owner in 2000. Under his leadership, West Herr has grown into the largest automotive group in New York State and one of the largest privately owned groups in the country, with 41 locations, 27 franchises, and over 3,100 employees. A dedicated philanthropist, he and his wife Kathy founded the Scott Bieler Family Foundation to strengthen Western New York communities.

PANELIST



**Beth Hollis**

**Beth Hollis (She/Her/Hers)** is a transformative leader whose career reflects exceptional drive, strategic vision, and sustained impact. Beginning in an entry-level dealership role at age 20, she rose rapidly through various sales and leadership positions to become President of West Herr Auto Group in 2026. Over two decades, she has led multiple operations, consistently elevating financial performance, team engagement, and customer loyalty. Known for her servant leadership and sharp business acumen, Beth helps shape organizational strategy, customer experience, growth, team engagement and culture at one of the nation's top auto groups. Her influence extends beyond business through active community leadership, board service, and numerous honors recognizing her as a leading voice in Western New York.

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**Jim Keefe**

**Jim Keefe** is a Firm Ambassador in the Advisory & Consulting Division and Construction & Real Estate Industry of The Bonadio Group's Buffalo office. His responsibilities include new business development, consulting, and promoting the Firm in the Western New York Business Community. From a client perspective, Jim has earned an outstanding reputation in the Buffalo market for seeing beyond providing accounting and compliance services. He is also a consultant and advisor who takes special pride in empowering companies with the ability to see where they are now and where they want to go, complemented by the experience of guiding clients on how to achieve their goals. Jim assists clients with financing of all forms regularly. Jim believes that a strong client relationship is the cornerstone of superb client service, a sentiment that is reflected in his business approach.

PANELIST



**Denise Gueli**

**Denise Gueli** helped launch The Bonadio Group Buffalo office in 2002 and grew into a Partner, later leading both the Commercial and Small Business Teams. She served as Managing Partner of the Buffalo office until retiring in 2023 and now supports clients in a Senior Counsel role. Denise specializes in construction, auto dealerships, and pension plans, and is known for her strong relationships and mentorship. A SUNY Geneseo graduate, she has been active in the community, including leadership roles with the NYSSCPA and United Way of Buffalo and Erie County. She has received Business First's 40 Under 40 and NAWBO honors.

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PANELIST



Zeneta B. Everhart

**Zeneta B. Everhart**, a lifelong Buffalo native, is a public servant and community advocate dedicated to equity and inclusion. She holds degrees from Villa Maria College and Canisius College and began her career in media with Spectrum News before transitioning into public service as Director of Diversity & Inclusion for New York State Senator Tim Kennedy. Following the 5/14 tragedy that injured her son, she testified before Congress, contributing to the Safer Communities Act. She co-founded initiatives supporting single mothers and promoting inclusive education. In 2023, she was elected to the Buffalo Common Council, representing the Masten District with a commitment to service and community empowerment.

PANELIST



Adam Fogel

**Adam Fogel (He/Him/His)** serves as Chief of Staff to Congressman Timothy M. Kennedy (NY-26), overseeing offices in Washington, D.C. and Western New York, and serves as Campaign Manager for Kennedy for Congress. A veteran of government and politics, Adam previously served as Chief of Staff to a Montgomery County (MD) Council member and a Maryland State Senator, and managed successful campaigns in New York and Maryland. Originally from Cleveland, Adam relocated to Buffalo nine years ago with his wife, a Western New York native. They live in Snyder with their three kids and a dog. He holds degrees in English and Political Science from Allegheny College and Political Management from George Washington University.