

# New Chamber CEO brings passion for rebuilding organizations

BY HOLLY GOODMAN, TUALATIN LIFE

After a series of leadership changes, the Tualatin Chamber of Commerce this Spring named a new chief executive officer with deep non-profit and marketing experience and an affinity for rebuilding organizations to take the helm.

Anneleah Jaxen, who took over in mid-April from interim CEO Caitlyn Quwenikov, is busy getting to know her new Board of Directors and the needs of local businesses.

“When I see an organization like this chamber, I think, ‘if I owned this and it was my baby, what would I want for it?’ What would I put into place to try to energize and help it grow and be strong,” Jaxen said.

She comes to the job with a passion for “upstarts and turnarounds,” fostered through decades of designing marketing and branding campaigns for mostly healthcare-based non-profits, working with the Lake Oswego Chamber and mothering three daughters, all now adults.

“All these things inform my role here,” she said. “I love being a mom. I love nurturing people and making sure that they are safe, that they are happy, and that I hear them. I love ethics and excellence in business. I want to be true in being honest and transparent. I like good business practices. I want (my work) to be relevant. I want it to be effective. And I want it to bring results.”

Jaxen started her career in healthcare marketing at Providence Home and Community services directly out of college and launched into a series of other marketing, branding, and leadership positions focused on geriatric health care.

“Anneleah brings a rich career in non-profit management, leadership, strategic planning and marketing to the Chamber,” Board Chair Susan Noack said. “She is passionate about uplifting everyone involved in our organization and is the right fit to enhance what we currently do to support the business community.”

From Providence, she moved to Life Care Centers of America as the regional director of marketing, and later worked with Lake Oswego’s Adult Community Center. She led a rebranding campaign at the Lake Oswego Chamber of Commerce and started a relief nursery for victims of child abuse and neglect, serving six years as its executive director.

“I’ve worked with a lot of start-ups and turnarounds. I’ve started up a couple, turned around a couple, and always worked with my good friend Jane Larsen,” Jaxen said.

It was Larsen who suggested Jaxen apply for the position, telling her she is exactly who the Chamber needs.

Jaxen’s hiring ended a six-month search for a new CEO, making her the third person to helm the Chamber since Linda Moholt retired in Jan. 2021.

Moholt’s immediate successor, Roy Gugliotta, held the post for just 8-months before the board unanimously voted to remove him in September of 2021, releasing him with a statement to chamber members that the board was moving in a new direction “for the benefit of our members and partners.”

Quwenikov acted as interim CEO following Gugliotta’s firing.

“Anneleah is the epitome of TEAM (Together

Everyone Achieves More),” Noack said. “Under her leadership, we will continue to build our programs and partnerships so that our businesses thrive.”

Currently in the earliest stages of drafting a new strategic plan for the Chamber, Jaxen is surveying members to identify community priorities and assessing the damage done to small businesses by the pandemic-driven closures.

“I’m examining what happened to who and what they need now. How can they rebuild? How can we help? That’s a big concern of mine, and I’m excited about it,” she said. “I’m not shy about it. I want to know what damage was done and where did we thrive? Where did we get hurt, and how do we turn this around?”

Chamber membership is currently at 309 businesses, down from about 440 in early 2020.

Jaxen’s approaching the rebuild with a sprawling strategic draft plan engineered to present the board of directors with numerous possible paths forward.

“There’s a ton of ideas in the plan, and I know that not all of them will be implemented and executed. I’m just trying to see what fits, who’s interested, where the passion is, who steps forward and champions the different programs,” Jaxen said, adding she won’t be ready to talk specific details until the board has weighed in.

For now, she’s focused on the upcoming annual Golf Tournament and on continuing to listen to her new community.



Anneleah Jaxen

MIKE ANTONELLI/TUALATIN LIFE

“I have the best ambassador’s ever in this chamber, she said. “They shoot that positive energy into the meeting and encourage members to show up and network.”

**Holly Goodman** has been a writer and journalist for three decades, beginning with a stint with The Columbus (Ohio) Dispatch. More recently she has been a regular contributor to The Oregonian. Her work has appeared in dozens of magazines, newspapers and webzines. You can reach her at [holly@tualatinlife.com](mailto:holly@tualatinlife.com).

