



# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Emma Shank

VENLY FELLOW '14





## VENLY 2014 ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: Emma Shank

### ANOTHER VENLY FELLOW MAKES THE CHAMBER PROUD

Congratulations to 2013-14 Venly Fellow, Emma Shank.

One measure of the fellowship's success is how well each Fellow's year serves as the springboard for his or her career and professional development.

**Emma Shank**, who served as a 2013-2014 Fellow across three adjacent chambers of commerce: Amherst Area Chamber of Commerce, Quaboag Hills Chamber of Commerce, and Greater Chicopee Chamber of Commerce, exemplifies this benchmark.

Beginning in December 2014, Emma will become the first Digital Marketing Strategist for a regional web development company, Union Street Media, which serves clients across the Northeast and is headquartered in Burlington, Vermont. In turn, she'll be succeeded by another outstanding Fellow for 2014-2015 who will continue serving her clients.

The company recruiting Emma for this new position had tried unsuccessfully to find a candidate with the necessary blend of skills. Then the firm found Emma who had secured the

unique mix of experience for this job through her Venly Fellowship. Emma tells us:

*" Venly enabled me to get this new position. I'm proud to be part of the Venly Fellows Alumni and couldn't be more grateful for my Venly experience. Venly gave me the background to take this next great step in my career. "*

Emma will be pioneering new industry segments as the company expands its analytics and web offerings to reach a broader client pool.

From the time of Emma's Mount Holyoke College graduation in May 2013 to the time she completed her Venly Fellowship in the fall of 2014, she served 75 local business leaders across 19 business categories as a community

social media consultant. In addition, she had provided more than 100 personalized best practices sessions free for chamber members.

Like each Venly Fellow, Emma was selected from a competitive pool of applicants and nominated by the local chamber executives for the one-year program. Growing up in Northfield, Minnesota, Emma's father managed the local grocery store and was a board member of the local chamber while her mother served as an obstetric nurse. That upbringing taught her that local business and civic leadership create the foundation for a thriving community.

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*The chambers and the Venly Social Media Support Team congratulate Emma on her new role as Digital Marketing Strategist. We look forward to supporting her any way we can in the Venly Fellows Alumni Network as she continues her career.*



**Andrea Jung**, Venly Co-Founder

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At college, Emma developed excellent teamwork and self-management skills as a student-athlete with a degree in sociology focusing on complex organizations. Despite her achievements, Emma would have had to leave the Pioneer Valley after graduation if not for the Venly Fellowship.

*"Local employers told me that it wasn't personal, but they'd want me to get experience elsewhere or go back to school for a graduate degree and then reapply if I wanted a position locally."*

At the annual dinner of the Quaboag Hills Chamber of Commerce, Emma addressed the group: "Many businesses don't realize how much of a difference recent graduates and returning veterans can make with the right training and certification in helping local businesses with social media. Because of the Chamber's support and the Venly Fellowship, I got to do the kind of high-impact work I had always hoped to do with my degree!"

### Amherst Area Kick Off



Venly Fellow '14-Emma with (right to left) Hilltown Tree and Garden owner-Jim McSweeney, Executive Director of Amherst Area chamber-Tony Maroulis, Venly Community Connection Lead-Chiderah Okoye, Emily Dickinson Museum Executive Director-Jane Wald, The Loose Goose Cafe owner-Larry Severance, Venly Fellow '13-Claire Oberholtzer.

## Fellow in Action



Emma with Northeast Solar's Marketing and Technology Lead Andrew Cunningham, a Venly client and member of the Amherst Area Chamber and Northampton Chamber of Commerce.

The ovation Emma received at the dinner from the chamber's membership made it clear how much the members appreciated her service, and the feelings went both ways. Looking back, Emma said: *"I definitely relied on the local chamber leaders to coach me on how to approach the business community. That was incredibly valuable. Initially, I didn't know a whole lot about local chambers of commerce or what exactly they did. But after working so closely with them, they're definitely the heartbeat of the local community."*

Emma's strong work ethic was reinforced by solid advice from her father, Alan: ***If you're not serving your customer, then you better be serving the person who is.*** Emma's colleagues began referring to this as "Alan's Law," and it became a daily guide for Emma and the Venly Social Media Support Team.

Venly knows that Emma will succeed in whatever high-impact career and mentorship roles she assumes. On behalf of her friends, colleagues,

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*We were really struggling with how to assert a social media presence and how to tie that into an overall public relations plan. Emma and our Venly Fellow before her, Claire, really helped. It was like turning on a light switch in a dark room.*

**Jane Wald**, Emma's Client and Executive Director of the Emily Dickinson Museum

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Venly Co-Founder Andrea Jung (above) with (left to right) Venly Fellow Emma Shank, Whirl Wind Farm Kennel owner, Amherst Area Chamber member, and Venly client, Anne Maxon, and Venly Community Connection Campaign Lead Chiderah Okoye.

and clients at the Amherst Area Chamber, the Quaboag Hills Chamber, the Greater Chicopee Chamber, and Venly's Social Media Support Team, Venly offers Emma our warmest appreciation and best wishes. Her service as a Venly Fellow to these communities and chambers make her a proud alumni of the program. **We'll stay in touch.**