

VENLY 2014

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Em Shank





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ANOTHER VENLY FELLOW MAKES THE CHAMBER PROUD

Congratulations to 2013-14 Venly Fellow, Em Shank.

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

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

Beginning in December 2014, Em will become the first Internet Marketing Specialist for a regional web development company, Union Street Media, which serves clients across the Northeast and is headquartered in Burlington, Vermont. In turn, Em will be succeeded by another outstanding Fellow for 2014-2015 who will continue serving their clients.

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

unique mix of experience for this job through the Venly Fellowship. Em 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. ”

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

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

Like each Venly Fellow, Em 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, Em's father managed the local grocery store and was a board member of the local chamber while Em's mother served as an obstetric nurse. That upbringing taught Em that local business and civic leadership create the foundation for a thriving community.

The chambers and the Venly Social Media Support Team congratulate Em on the new role as Internet Marketing Specialist. We look forward to supporting Em any way we can in the Venly Fellows Alumni Network throughout Em's career.



Andrea Jung, Venly Co-Founder

At college, Em developed excellent teamwork and self-management skills as a student-athlete with a degree in sociology focusing on complex organizations. Despite Em's achievements, Em 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, Em 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



Left to Right: Em Shank (Fellow, Venly), Jim McSweeney (Owner, Hilltown Tree and Garden), Tony Maroulis (Executive Director, Amherst Area Chamber of Commerce), Chiderah Okoye (State Director, Venly), Jane Wald (Executive Director, Emily Dickinson Museum), Larry Severance (Owner, The Loose Goose Cafe), Claire Oberholtzer (Fellow, Venly)

Fellow in Action



Em 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 Em received from the chamber's membership made clear how much the chamber members appreciated Em's service, and the feeling went both ways. Looking back, Em 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, I definitely saw them as a heartbeat of the local community."*

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

Venly knows that Em will be a high-impact success in whichever future career and coaching roles that Em chooses. On behalf of Em's

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

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



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

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