

Young in heart. Young in career. Young in age. All are welcome.



June 2026

Now Accepting Applications: YPN Emerging Leader Award

The [application](#) window is now open for the YPN Emerging Leader Award, which celebrates a member of GRAR's YPN who demonstrates dedication, vision, and influence. This award recognizes an individual whose active involvement, ability to inspire peers, and commitment to collaboration embody the highest ideals of YPN and our profession.

Please note: The YPN Emerging Leader Award has no age restriction. Eligibility is based on active YPN involvement and demonstrated leadership within the network, not age.

How to Apply or Nominate

- Self-nominations are welcomed and encouraged.
- To apply or nominate someone for the award, please visit [our nominations page](#) and complete the submission form.
- If you nominate a YPN colleague, we will notify them and invite them to complete and submit their application.
- To view a list of eligible nominees, [please click here](#).

Important Dates

- Applications are due by August 1
- Winner announced on October 28 at the Emerge Conference
- At the event, our 2025 award recipient Cody Harding will formally pass the title to the new Emerging Leader Award winner.

'Suns Out, Funds Out' Summer Kickoff Celebration

Thank you, GRAR YPN members, for your support of the "Suns Out, Funds Out" Summer Kickoff Celebration!

More than 75 attendees gathered in the backyard at GRAR on May 20, to enjoy live music from [Decades](#), great food, cold beverages, and plenty of networking and socializing. Combined with beautiful sunshine, it made for the perfect spring afternoon!

A special congratulations to our Cornhole Tournament Champions, Christa Smith and Bryce Kilbourne, whose cornhole skills and steady aim carried them to victory, and to our Runners-Up, Weston Wylie and Jaxon Bouma, for an impressive tournament finish.

We would also like to extend a big thank you to our event sponsors: ATA National Title Group, Cross Country Mortgage, Denali Title, Grand Inspection Team, Hemingway Creek Inspections, JW Inspection Services, Lake Michigan Credit Union, and Mortgage 1. This event would not have been possible without their generous support. Please show your appreciation by reaching out to learn more about the professional products and services they offer our industry.

This event served as a fundraiser for RPAC. Thanks to the generosity of our members, the event raised \$3,380 to help advance the real estate industry and protect private property rights. When members voluntarily invest in RPAC, they support advocacy efforts that promote increased housing supply, property tax reform, and initiatives that help prevent costly government mandates from interfering with real estate transactions.

If you missed the opportunity to make your \$20 RPAC investment and attend this event, stay tuned for the next GRAR RPAC fundraiser in August. The annual RPAC Parking Lot Party is back and will feature everyone's favorite local hot dogs from Yesterdog!





On June 17, our Annual Appy Hour brought together a full house for an afternoon of learning, networking, and hands-on discovery. The event was officially sold out, with 60 attendees gathering to enjoy drinks, appetizers, and a showcase of cutting-edge real estate tools.

Guests had the opportunity to explore live demonstrations of several apps shaping the way real estate professionals work and market their businesses, including CapCut, Mailbox Power, Canva, RPR (Trade Reports), RenoSnap, and Claude AI. Each session highlighted practical ways these tools are being used to streamline workflows, elevate marketing, and enhance client experiences.



This event would not have been possible without the generous support of our sponsors: Denali Title, Farm Bureau Insurance Justin Goushaw Agency, Preferred Rate Team Mallory, and Over and Underwood Home Inspection. Their commitment to supporting education and innovation in real estate helped make the evening a success. Please show your appreciation by checking out the great services they offer to our industry.



We are also grateful to the REALTORS® who volunteered their time to lead demonstrations and share real-world insights: Curtis Gross (CapCut), Alexia Hoffman (Mailbox Power), Jamie Sauline (Canva), Melissa Mantilla (RPR Trade Reports), Bailey Peake (RenoSnap), and Lilian Felix (Claude AI). Their expertise helped bring each platform to life and showed attendees how these tools can be applied directly to grow and strengthen their businesses.

With great food, great conversations, and a room full of energy and ideas, Appy Hour once again delivered on its mission. We're already looking forward to next year – featuring even more innovative tools and apps to explore!

Wake Up with YPN: The 3 Ps of Success Series is in Full Swing!

We are pleased to share that our quarterly Wake Up with YPN series is well underway! This year's theme, *The 3 Ps of Success: People, Processes, Platforms* was designed to provide real estate professionals with insights, connections, and strategies to help grow their businesses.

One of the things that makes this series so special is its accessibility. These quarterly events are offered at no cost (thanks to our sponsors!), require no registration, and attendees are encouraged to bring a friend. It is truly industry professionals helping and encouraging other industry professionals. Hosted at Egypt Valley Country Club from 9:30–10:30 a.m., each session offers valuable takeaways, networking opportunities, and a welcoming atmosphere with coffee and pastries, making it a worthwhile addition to your morning.

Session 1: People – The Human Side of Real Estate

Our first session took place on April 23 and featured Moderator Steve Frody alongside panelists Will Friend, Ashleigh VanDuinen-Leistra, and Scott West. The conversation focused on the relationships that drive success in our industry, covering topics such as building a "Forever



Database," creating strategic partnerships, strengthening brokerage culture, understanding the next generation of buyers and sellers, and hosting events that foster lasting connections.

Sponsors: Grand Inspection Team and Top Flite Home Loans



Session 2: Processes – The Business Behind the Business

Held on June 25, the second session featured Moderator David Buko with panelists Brian Clinger, Michelle Costa, and Rachael Fountain. Their discussion explored the systems and habits that help real estate professionals work more effectively, including referral generation, creating consistent business processes, navigating challenging transactions, and tax strategies for self-employed professionals.

Sponsors: JW Inspection Services and Top Flite Home Loans

Join us for the remaining sessions on Sept. 24 and Dec. 17 as we explore the tools, strategies, and relationships that support lasting success in real estate. See details later in this newsletter.

A special thank you to our YPN Advisory Council

The success of our Young Professionals Network is made possible by the volunteers who serve on our YPN Advisory Council. We would like to extend our gratitude to these individuals for their time, energy, and talents.

From planning engaging events and creating networking opportunities to encouraging participation and building strong connections, our Advisory Council members play a vital role in helping YPN thrive. Their commitment to service, leadership, and collaboration helps create a welcoming environment where all can grow both personally and professionally.

As Walt Disney once said, *"The way to get started is to quit talking and begin doing."* This spirit is reflected in the dedication of our Advisory Council, who consistently turn ideas into action and help bring experiences to life for our members. Most importantly, they bring positivity to everything they do. Their efforts strengthen our YPN community and make a lasting impact on our members.

We thank the [members of the YPN Advisory Council](#) and are grateful for their service!

The way to get started is to quit talking and begin doing.

–Walt Disney

Our Young Professionals Network Keeps Growing— *138 members & counting!*

YPN is a community built on connection, collaboration, professional growth, and giving back. Whether you're new to the industry, young at heart, or looking to grow your network, there's a place for you. View our roster.

YPN membership is free and offers opportunities to connect with peers, develop professionally, and get involved in the REALTOR® community.



Do you know a GRAR member who should be part of YPN?

Please encourage them to complete [this form](#) to join!

What's in Store for the Rest of the Year with YPN?

We look forward to seeing you at these upcoming events as we continue building connections, supporting our community, and growing together.

Volunteer with YPN at The Lavender Life Company

Wednesday, July 1 | 1:00–3:00 p.m. | [View flyer](#)

Join YPN and The Lavender Life Company for a volunteer opportunity supporting children in foster care. Volunteers will help harvest lavender, stuff plush figures, and assist with projects that provide comfort to children navigating the foster care system. Indoor and outdoor opportunities are available.



[Please sign up to join us in volunteering!](#) Be sure to wear clothing you do not mind getting dirty. Please contact [Steve Sochanek](#) if you'd like to bring a guest.

Blue Bridge .1K: Cross Your Way

Thursday, August 27 | 1:00 p.m.

One of YPN's most entertaining fundraisers returns! Choose your own creative way to cross Grand Rapids' iconic Blue Bridge while raising funds for the Crisis Fund and Schoolhouse Fund. Afterwards, join fellow participants at Z's Bar & Grill for networking and refreshments. Registration opens soon!

Wake Up with YPN: The 3 Ps of Success

Egypt Valley Country Club | 9:30–10:30 a.m.

Our free quarterly networking and education series continues with sessions focused on the three Ps of success: People, Processes, and Platforms. No registration required—bring a colleague and join us!

- Sept 24: Tools of the Trade, including metrics, personal branding, and CRM strategies.
- Dec 17: Bringing the three Ps together to build a scalable, sustainable business.

What's in Store for the Rest of the Year with YPN?

Emerge 2026: Turning the Key on Housing Supply Wednesday, Oct 28 | Watermark Country Club

This half-day event, concluding with a networking luncheon, will focus on one of the industry's most pressing challenges: housing supply.

Grand Rapids Mayor David LaGrand returns as keynote speaker to discuss housing affordability, availability, density, and the opportunities and challenges facing our region.

Additional presenters include:

- Laura Featherston, serving as event emcee.
- Ryan Ogle, sharing strategies for uncovering hidden inventory.
- Sam Cummings, discussing mixed-use developments and commercial-to-residential conversions.
- Paul Sachs, Director of Strategic Impact for Ottawa County, presenting innovative smaller-footprint housing initiatives.
- Cody Harding, presenting the 2025 YPN Emerging Leader Award.

Registration details will be announced soon!

Annual Euchre Tournament

Thursday, November 19 | 2:00–4:00 p.m. | GRAR

A YPN favorite returns! Enjoy friendly competition while supporting the Crisis Fund and Schoolhouse Fund. More details and registration information will be announced soon!

Ugly Sweater & Bowling Party

December TBD

Wrap up the year with one of YPN's favorite traditions. Join us for holiday networking, bowling, and plenty of festive sweaters. Watch for additional details!



If you have any questions about YPN events, please reach out to [Steve Sochanek](#).

He would be happy to chat with you and share more info!