
- Advertisement -

Center for Growing Talent honors Dick Spezzano as Jay Pack Cultivating Our Future Award winner

October 17, 2019

Center for Growing Talent recognized Dick Spezzano, president of Spezzano Consulting Service and longtime CGT volunteer, as the winner of the Jay Pack Cultivating our Future Award. The award was presented on Wednesday, Oct. 16 at the CGT Contributor & Volunteer Reception.

The Jay Pack Cultivating Our Future award honors a volunteer who supports attracting talent by sharing their passion and insights for careers in the produce and floral industries. The award is named for Jay Pack, an integral part of growing the Career Pathways programs over the years. The Career Pathways program is a cornerstone of CGT's strategies to attract talent to the industry and brings students from universities across the world to Produce Marketing Association and CGT events as well as other regional industry events. Students are paired with Career Ambassadors who are industry leaders that guide the students through the event providing connections and insights to the produce and floral industries. This year's Career Pathways program will be the largest ever at Fresh Summit with 37 students attending the event from 11 universities, including two from South Africa and one from Chile.

The programs are successful in large part because of the industry volunteers who contribute their time, passion, and insights to the students and up and coming industry talent. Like Pack, these volunteers serve as ambassadors for the industry by spreading awareness of careers in produce and floral. All nominees were volunteers who conduct themselves with integrity, dedication and distinction while advocating for CGT's mission to attract top talent to the industry.

Spezzano is a long-time volunteer for CGT and PMA, having served on both the CGT and PMA

boards and he served as chairs for each of the boards previously. Spezzano is also currently involved as a Career Ambassador or mentor for Career Pathway students and is also serving on the Tip Murphy Scholarship committee. Spezzano's legacy in the industry is amplified by his commitment to giving back to the industry and specifically to CGT as a volunteer and a mentor.

"Dick has always been a mentor to me and a strong CGT advocate," said Alicia Calhoun, CGT vice president. "He was one of the first industry members I met almost 27 years ago when I started PMA. Dick has a willingness to give back that's not just about volunteering — it is a way of living. He is proof that volunteers are people who don't want to be thanked for helping others but instead, want to thank others for giving them the opportunity to help. He has given his time, talent and expertise to excite bright, young talent and bring them into the industry and this award is very well deserved."

The nominations focused on Spezzano's contribution to the development of talent, and his peers were quick to provide context for his legacy.

"Dick's passion for produce is gravitating," said Russ Tavlan, chief executive officer of Moonlight Cos. of California. "His perpetual curiosity and drive to learn has always been inspiring to me. But above all, his willingness to share so much of his time to cultivate the careers of so many makes him deserving of this award. Our industry is better because of him, and I'm grateful to call him my friend."

[Print](#)