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## **CGT welcomes Leonard Batti as chair of board of directors**

October 28, 2020

Center for Growing Talent has announced that Leonard Batti, vice president at Taylor Farms, will serve as the chair of the organization's board of directors for 2021. Batti stepped into the role during CGT's first board meeting on Oct. 22. During this time, CGT also welcomed nine new industry members to the CGT board of directors, growing the overall board by three volunteers. In this role, Batti will also serve on the PMA board of directors and the executive committee.

The CGT board of directors is a collective of industry leaders who volunteer to contribute their time, insights and experience to help accomplish the vision and mission of the Center for Growing Talent. The organization seeks to be the talent solution for the produce and floral industries, establishing and growing streams to attract new talent, providing industry specific development programs, and creating meaningful networking opportunities to share and connect across the entire supply chain. This year has seen CGT gain visibility as they pivoted to provide industry solutions during the pandemic. During the board meeting this year, Batti expanded on these successes to share his vision for the coming year.



Leonard Batti

Batti's vision for CGT centers around three major priorities. First, he homed in on the center's success over the past year in expanding the number of students engaging with CGT programming. The future of these efforts will not only focus on increasing the number of students learning about the produce and floral industries, but will also focus on incorporating students with a range of skills and training that PMA members have identified as necessary for their businesses to thrive.

Batti will also prioritize expanding the development and retention of young professionals by growing education and networking resources in a way that builds on and complements the impact of the Emerging Leaders Program.

Lastly, Batti has announced his commitment to help PMA members create a more diverse workforce and inclusive workplace in a way that drives culture and the industry's bottom line through both talent attraction and development efforts. This will include establishing new relationships with more universities and colleges, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities and also community colleges and trade schools. Additionally, CGT will build on the accomplishments of the Women's Fresh Perspectives series.

"It is my vision that by focusing on expanding our talent streams and creating programming that fosters a diverse and inclusive workforce, CGT becomes a true center for the industry," said Batti. "One that is built on scalable, efficient and easily accessible platforms that support the delivery of year-round content and value."

This work will be enhanced by the entire board of directors, including nine newly elected directors who started their tenure last week. The newest board members are Neila Alamo of Renaissance Food Group; Steven Daum of FloraLife; Kristen Smith Eshaya of JV Smith Cos.; Elyse Lipman of Lipman Family Farms; Shawn Peery of Albertsons Cos.; Greg Reinauer of Tom Lange Co. Inc.; Kathy Smith of Bayer US Crop Science; Caitlin Tierney of 99 Cents Only Stores; and Larry Zink of Michigan State University.

"The Center for Growing Talent excites and educates talent about our industry and empowers professionals in our industry through ongoing career development and training," said Doug Bohr, executive director of CGT. "Our industry volunteers are an essential part of this work. I am grateful for each of our board members, including our new directors, who contribute their time and passion to the work we do on behalf of our industry. I look forward to all we will accomplish together."

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