

# GreenSheet



**RUPPERT**  
LANDSCAPE

*Employee Newsletter*

**2nd Quarter 2013**

## The Advantages of Working with a Family-Owned Business

*By Amy Snyder*



**T**here's been a lot written about the pitfalls of working with family members and friends. The term "family-owned business" often implies a small or

mid-sized company with a local focus and problems like squabbles over succession. While there are some companies that fit that description, there are also many companies who have great team dynamics and don't fit those stereotypes at all! As with any individual or organization, there are attributes that can be viewed as either an asset or a liability depending on how they are managed. When looking at a family-owned business it's important to understand some of their characteristics so that the company, its employees and its customers can maximize potential benefits.

### Greater Sense of Ownership

One of the primary benefits of working for, or with, a family-owned business is that when there is a strong connection to ownership and the obligations that come with that. Employees in a family-owned business are often coached to "think like an owner" and are encouraged to make decisions as if the money spent or the decisions made were a direct reflection on them. Additionally, when a family name is associated with the business, there



*Focusing on the long-term outlook is one of the characteristics that sets a family-owned business apart. Mike Marshall, pictured here (from L to R) celebrating his 20th anniversary with Chris Davitt, Rich Schubach, (Mike Marshall) and Craig Ruppert, is great example of many Ruppert team members who have celebrated significant longstanding anniversaries with the company.*

is often more at stake. Conversely, if a company's owners are made up of people who trade on the New York Stock Exchange, the cost of losing a long-term local customer doesn't even register. However, in a family-owned business, that same loss is personal and has the potential to reflect poorly on not only the company but the family in that community as well. With that personal connection as an integral part of company's long-term success, there is more at stake and family-owned businesses are more inclined to want their organization connected to strong guiding principles that emphasize continuity, integrity and trustworthiness. This often equates to strong lines of

communication and training within the company to ensure that the values are understood and practiced at all levels. And for a customer, it means an organization that is ethical in its business dealings and will go the extra mile to ensure satisfaction and the continuation of a long-term relationship.

### Long-Term Outlook

A second key advantage of family-owned businesses is that they are less interested in the short-term reward that is often the mainstay of non-family firms that have to satisfy shareholders and investors. Family-owned businesses forgo the big returns that

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# Earth Day is Every Day



*There is a Native American proverb that reads “We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children.” Many of our branches are participating in green initiatives. Here are a few we’d like to share...*

**T**he **Lorton Maintenance Branch** donated trees and plant material to several projects in honor of Earth Day (April 22), one of which was Mosaic at Merrifield (an EDENS jobsite) where two River Birch trees were planted. Participants included **Jose Alvarez, Manuel Lopez, Walter Gutierrez** and **Tom Flint**.



*Lorton Maintenance Mosaic at Merrifield project.*

The **Forestville Maintenance** branch recently donated money to the Green City Project at Plum Point Elementary

school so that the participating children could purchase their team t-shirts. **Matt Davidson (FOM)** has a son that attends the school and was one of the participants. The Green City Challenge consists of simulating real-life environmentally focused engineering problems. Challenges involve building an energy efficient city and programming robots to complete tasks such as activating a wind turbine, placing a solar panel, sorting the trash, deploying a new smokestack, and closing a dam. As challenges are completed, energy bricks are awarded and they use them to collectively power the “Green City.” In addition, each team had to present



a research project on how they could implement a green idea.

**Chris Bixler (LAM)** attended an Earth Day event hosted by Emergent Biosolutions

to discuss ways that organizations can become more environmentally sound with day-to-day operations with a focus on fleet and routing and how homeowners can achieve like goals with tips on composting, returning clippings to the lawn, selecting native species of plants as part of their landscaping, and using water more efficiently.



**Seth Elrod (GAM)**

was elected to the advisory committee as a board member for the Horticulture Program of Southern Crescent Technical College. The advisory

committee consists of landscape and nursery production professionals and meets quarterly to keep the horticulture program up to date within the green industry through facility and equipment suggestions and preparing students for their careers as green industry professionals.



*Green City Project at Plum Point Elementary School*



# Movin' On Up

*Each employee should know that we are committed to his or her growth and development."*

*~ Ruppert Values, p. 2*



Josh Abendroth



Scott Hurst



Steven Gurganus



Artemio Villagomez



Jason Groff

**Josh Abendroth (LAM)** recently transferred to **FRM** and was promoted from Asst. Field Manager to Field Manager.

**Scott Hurst (RIM)** has been promoted from an Asst. Field Manager position to Field Manager and **Steven**

**Gurganus (RIM)** was promoted from Crewman to Asst. Field Manager. **Artemio Villagomez (PAM)** and **Jason Groff (PAM)** were both promoted from their Asst. Field Manager positions

to Field Manager. **William McNamara (BAM)** was promoted from Asst. Field Manager to Field Manager and **Mark Lipscomb (BAM)** was promoted from Crewman to Asst. Field Manager.



William McNamara



Mark Lipscomb

## Career Opportunities

Looking to move up the ladder or know someone in the industry seeking a position? Ruppert Landscape has the following positions immediately available:

### Landscape Construction

- GAL** – Estimator (1), Assistant Production Manager (Houston)
- MDL** – Field Manager (1), Project Manager (1), Asst. Foreman (1), Crewman
- VAL** – Field Manager (1), Production Manager (1), Project Engineer (1), Project Manager (1), Crewman

### Landscape Management

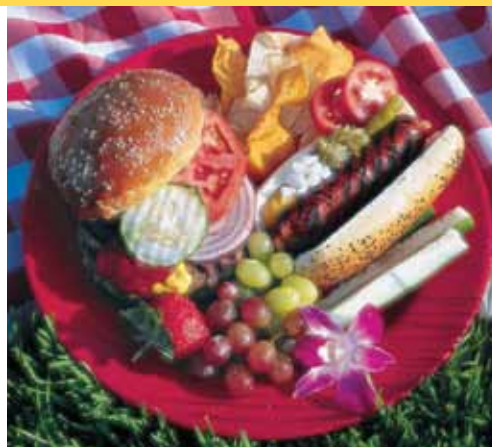
- BAM** – Field Manager (2)
- CHM** – Field Manager (1)
- FOM** – Crewman
- FRM** – Crewman
- GAM** – Asst. Field Manager (1)
- GVM** – Field Manager (1), Crewman
- LAM** – Crewman
- PAM** – Crewman
- RAM** – Field Managers, Crewman
- RIM** – Asst. Field Manager (1), Crewman

*For more information or to apply, please contact the department noted.*

## Reminder

The company Picnic will be held on **Saturday, October 5th, 2013** from **12 p.m. to 4 p.m.** at **Fall Creek Farm** in **Laytonsville, MD**. Invitations to follow. Be sure to mark your calendar!

## Save the Date!



# Community Service

*"A man wrapped up in himself  
makes a very small bundle."  
~ Benjamin Franklin*

## Maryland Landscape

**MDL** partnered up with Gilbane for Christmas in April, which is a community outreach program that helps new homeowners who are having a difficult time overcoming the repair issues that come along with owning a home. This year's recipient was navy veteran Gayle Savoy from Laurel, MD. Ruppert helped resolve issues she was having with standing water accumulating in her basement by clearing out dead bushes and trees, installing tile along the side of her house and a drain that tied in to the down spouts and sump pump. They also added in new flower beds to give her yard a face lift.



## Laytonsville Maintenance

For the sixth year in a row, several employees from **LAM** assisted the Olney Lyons Club with their annual mulch sale on April 6th. **Pat Cunningham, Adrian Durham, Eric Long, Jack Ruppert, Drew Doty, Shawn Nestor, Henry Martinez** and **Kyle Meissner** donated elbow grease while Ruppert loaned trucks and a bobcat to help deliver 2,200 bags of mulch to residents in the Olney area. Funds raised are used in part to support Lions Camp Merrick, which provides thousands of youth with special needs a loving and caring environment where everyone can participate.

## Lorton Maintenance

**LOM** donated and planted a Leland Cypress, shrubs and flowers at WRIT's Park Adam's jobsite to support a Mother's Day event being hosted.

## Georgia Maintenance

**Steven Fraser** and **Seth Elrod** (GAM) and team worked together for the International Facility Manager Association's (IFMA) community service day for Project Community Connections, which is a non-profit group that offers job placement as well as temporary housing placement for Atlanta's homeless. Steven Fraser and crew coordinated the plant and mulch material delivery, and the general clean up and beautification of the landscape.

**GAM** attended an event hosted by the Atlanta Cancer Society on April 25th. All of money raised from the tickets sale benefits victims of cancer and their families. Each guest received an angel to hang on a special tree that was donated by the Georgia branch as a symbol of the evenings theme: Life. The event was organized by an employee of Coca Cola, who had cancer herself, and is doing her best to share hope and love with other patients who are fighting the disease.



**Josh Mickey** (GAM) received a certificate of appreciation on behalf of Ruppert for the work that the branch has done at the Oconee Veterans Memorial at Veterans Park. Ruppert donated flowers and mulch to this project.

## Pennsylvania Maintenance

**PAM** participated in the Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA) Cradles to Crayons event, which provides everyday essentials to over 100,000 disadvantaged children around Greater Philadelphia. **Kim Gasper** and her daughters, Mia and Sara, as well as **Adrian Karver** and his son, Ben, helped support this cause.





**Adrian Karver** (PAM) also assisted with a Cub Scout community service project on May 26th. A Ruppert truck was used to transport materials for a gardening project, which included the cleanup of a neglected vegetable garden at Starkweather Elementary school in West Chester. The garden will be an ongoing summer project for the scouts so they can learn about growing vegetables. In turn, everything that is grown in the garden will be donated to local food banks and/or shelters.



**Chris Madden, Dennis Goodman, Phillip Waters, Elvin Rivera, and Brandon Simmons** of **BAM** attended the 2013 Project SEARCH Graduation on May 30th in support of Darrian Jackson. Project SEARCH is a high school transitional program for developmentally disabled youth in Baltimore City. Darrian completed his internship with Ruppert at the University of Maryland Baltimore during the summer of 2012, where he learned basic landscaping skills and grew significantly throughout the course of his internship. The team was pleased to see him graduate, and wish him all the best in his future endeavors.



**Kim Gaspar** (PAM) who is a member of the BOMA Philadelphia Community Involvement Committee, attended the Bethesda Volunteer Appreciation Night on April 27th where she and fellow committee members were honored by the Bethesda Project for their service to Our Brother's Place Shelter in South Philadelphia.

## Baltimore Maintenance

Several **BAM** team members participated, along with their customers from Liberty Property Trust, in the Liberty Walk for Cystic Fibrosis. The mile and a half walk took place on May 12th in Hunt Valley, MD. The group collectively raised over \$2500 for the cause.



**Mike Fleming** (BAM) participated with the Rosedale, MD Boy Scout troop, and members of the Prince of Peace Church, in an effort to revamp the front of the church and provide an opportunity for the scouts to participate in a "green event." Old plant material was removed, and over 300 pink and red begonias were planted in front of the church to brighten it up. Monica Arford, from The Shelter Group, organized the event.



The BAM team also volunteered in support of the BOMA Community Service Division as part of their Annual Day of Service. They teamed up with the League for People with Disabilities "Day of Caring" and donated and installed new plants and mulch to various beds located at the Leagues entry ways.





# Major Milestones

A HEARTY  
CONGRATULATIONS  
AND BEST WISHES:

## PROUD PARENTS & GRANDPARENTS

**John Harich (LAM)** and his wife, Elise, welcomed their first daughter, Zoe Emma, on May 16, 2013. She has two older brothers Cody and Ryley.



Zoe Emma Harich



Finn Dumann

**Drew Dumann (VAL)** and **Angela Howes (VAL)** welcomed their first child, Finn Clark, on June 3, 2013.

**Will Madison (GAM)** and his wife, Jennifer, welcomed their second child, Andrew Madison, on May 23, 2013. He has a big sister, Lauren, who is four years old.



Andrew Madison



Colin Cunningham

**Pat Cunningham (LAM)** and his wife, Jenny, welcomed their third boy, Colin Patrick, on March 22, 2013. He has two older brothers, Jake and Dylan.

**Mike Felts (MDL)** and his wife, Sophie, welcomed twins, June Patricia and Kael Michael, on April 24, 2013. The twins have an older sister, Cordelia, who is three years old.



Kael and June Felts with older sister Cordelia

**Sean Hillis (BAM)** and his girlfriend, Kelsey Miller, welcomed their first child, Kathan James, on March 28, 2013.



Kathan Hillis

## NEW HOMES



**John Cericole (PAM)** and his wife, Brittney, purchased a new home in Elkton, MD.

**Jose Cruz (RAM)** and his wife, Lideth, purchased a new home in Raleigh, NC.

## ANNIVERSARIES

**Matt Davidson (FOM)** and his wife, Jen, celebrated 15 years of marriage.



## OVERACHIEVERS

**Sean Davitt** and **Mike Felts** of **Maryland Landscape** both graduated from the ABC Leadership Development Program at the platinum level. This program was first offered in 2008 for ABC members who were looking to further their leadership skills and professional development, learn more about and become more involved with ABC and demonstrate their desire and ability to serve as future industry leaders. Students undergo a rigorous application and interview process to be accepted into

the 15 month program and from there are expected to participate in monthly class sessions, as well as elective activities through the chapter to earn credits towards graduation. Congratulations Sean and Mike!



Sean Davitt



Mike Felts

# NewFaces

WE WELCOME THE FOLLOWING NEW LEADERS TO RUPPERT'S GROWING RANKS:



**Jaime Cook  
(CORP)**  
Payroll Specialist



**Jason Groff  
(PAM)**  
Field Manager



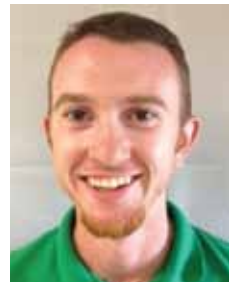
**David Hadrych  
(VAL)**  
Operations Manager



**Harrison Lee  
(GAM)**  
Asst. Field Manager



**Tyler Marshall  
(RIM)**  
Field Manager



**Joseph McKinnon  
(GAM)**  
Field Manager



**Brad Milne  
(NCL)**  
Estimator



**Jibran Misbah  
(CORP)**  
AP/AR Specialist



**David Nuckols  
(RIM)**  
Area Manager



**Courtney Oswald  
(CORP)**  
Executive Asst.



**John Piccoli  
(GAM)**  
Asst. Field Manager



**Josh Richardson  
(RAM)**  
Field Manager



**Ryan Schupp  
(BAM)**  
Field Manager



**Oscar Santos  
(GAM)**  
Asst. Field Manager



**Johnny Sawyer  
(RAM)**  
Shop Manager



**Jordan Shilan  
(PAM)**  
Asst. Field Manager



**Eric Spangler  
(GAL)**  
Estimator



**Sean Walters  
(VAL)**  
Asst. Project Mgr.



**James Watson  
(GAM)**  
Field Manager



**Carol Zazeski  
(CORP)**  
Info Syst Support Mgr.



**John Zwijacz  
(CORP)**  
Sr. Network Admin.

We would like to give a warm  
**WELCOME**  
to our new and returning  
**CREWMEMBERS**  
and our  
**INTERNS**  
joining us for the summer!



are possible during the good times in order to increase their odds of survival during bad times, leveraging what they do now to benefit the next generation. The byproduct of that outlook is that employees have career stability. Employer and employee are looking at the 10-20 year horizon and that knowledge ties the two together in a common bond that helps with both parties long-term success.

Employees in a family-owned business represent an invaluable competitive advantage, and many studies have suggested that family-owned businesses tend to look after the well-being of their employees more so than non-family firms. They focus on creating a culture of commitment and purpose, avoiding layoffs during downturns, promoting from within, and investing in people with training and employee appreciation initiatives. With more

tenure and less turnover, the company (and those who do business with it) end up with a stronger team dynamic and overall company culture, and employees who are capable and feel empowered to make decisions.

### Fiscally Responsible

One of the phrases we say over and over again here at Ruppert is "watch the pennies and the dollars will take care of themselves." That deeply held tenet means balancing opportunity and efficiency with a constant awareness of expenditures. Spending money "as if it were your own" is a perhaps a more concrete idea within a family-owned business because it does tie more directly to the family versus a corporation. That cost consciousness is as simple as not buying more than you need, reducing waste and negotiating the best price-for-value. This translates in many

ways including being selective about the projects they become involved with to avoid risk, carrying little debt and focusing on organic growth. The benefits of this conservative and steady approach are far reaching: for employees it means career stability and a decreased likelihood of layoffs during economic downturns and for customers it means being connected to an organization that is financially sound with a long-term team in place that know the ins and outs of their project or property.

The points made above are for the benefit of employees and customers to ensure that they understand the inherent strengths and challenges that come along with working for or with a family-owned business. Hopefully, this understanding allows both parties to put these situations to better use for the benefit of themselves and/or their organizations.



## Farewell Friend



*Clyde attended the 2011 Awards Banquet to present the award to recipient Steve Faber (GAM).*

**A** long-time friend of our organization, **Clyde Vadner**, passed away On April 27th. Clyde worked with Ruppert since the mid-1980's helping us build our skills in areas ranging from management and communication to recruiting and training. In Ruppert's early years, Clyde

spent a lot of time working alone-on-one with many of our branch managers, even going out on sales calls to help build skills and provide coaching. He was instrumental in empowering our workforce and bringing their knowledge and skills to a higher level, which enabled customers to further differentiate us from our competition.

In 2006, we re-named one of the company's top awards The Clyde Vadner Merit Award in honor of his contributions. That award is given out yearly to the individual who has demonstrated consistent hard work and dedication leading to exceptional contributions to the organization, and has been presented to many of the company's top performers who, like Clyde, have had a significant and lasting impact on the company.

"The difference between Clyde and the many other business associates that I've experienced over the years is that Clyde shared a piece of himself with you every time you interacted



with him," said Chris Davitt. "He taught me hundreds of things over the 30+ years he worked with us, but what I appreciated most is that he shared himself. He wasn't stingy about sharing his feelings or about taking the time to connect on a personal level and it's what really distinguished him as not just someone we did business with, but someone who we called a friend."

His teaching and stories have helped shape our culture and foster our success. Clyde will be missed here at Ruppert and our organization is better for having had his guidance and friendship these many years.