



THE BOTTOM LINE

By Howard Headlee, President, Utah Bankers Association

Helping Others Creates Bright Future for All



As I step back from the news from the past few weeks I find myself suffering from a case of emotional whiplash. I grew up just outside of Detroit, Michigan, and I now realize that I was blessed with great childhood friends. I never spent a lot of time thinking about whether they were black or brown, or Chaldean or Jewish, they were just people I loved, that shaped me into the person I am today. So I really couldn't relate to the offensive words and actions I saw and heard during the demonstrations in Charlottesville. It was stunning to witness.

Then, within a few short days, as our family watched hurricane Harvey ravage the Texas coast, we found the displays of service, love and kindness among neighbors of all incomes, races and religious beliefs to be energizing, it made us want to do something nice for someone in need.

As I think about these two vastly different perspectives of our world today, I am convinced that the overwhelming majority of people in the world, find acts of kindness to be contagious, and acts of violence and intolerance to be repulsive.

So we really shouldn't allow such a small minority of people to discourage us, and we really shouldn't wait for horrific disasters before we reach out and connect with people, especially those who are different than us.

The most rewarding experience of my life has been my involvement in building a public school to serve refugees and immigrant children - the School for New Americans. As a result, I have met people that have changed and improved my life in so many ways. I am thrilled to watch these brilliant and resilient children learn, grow and succeed (the school was the top performing public school in all of Utah last year in Language Arts growth.) It's inspiring to me, and restores my confidence to see that when we empower people with freedom and knowledge, there is no limit to what America can become.

This is a big reason why I am so supportive of the UBA's efforts to help bank employees reach out and connect with other bank employees. I know that as our employees expand their circles of influence and connect with other bankers of

different backgrounds, with different expertise at different banks, they will grow in ways that cannot otherwise be accomplished and the industry will be stronger.

In the past, this type of networking only occurred with those who were assigned to serve on a UBA committee. But with the launch of the UBA Collaborate App any banker can connect with other bankers in their areas of interest or beyond. This robust platform has led a group of highly motivated bankers to establish the Emerging Bank Leaders (EBL) organization. This organization is open to anyone who is pursuing a career in banking, whether or not they currently work for a bank (like unemployed bankers, students and yes, even credit union employees!)

Those who join this organization can connect, communicate, and build relationships with other future industry leaders. The UBA Collaborate platform also provides a robust mentoring program and we are currently recruiting our current bank leaders to volunteer to serve as mentors to this group of next generation bank leaders.