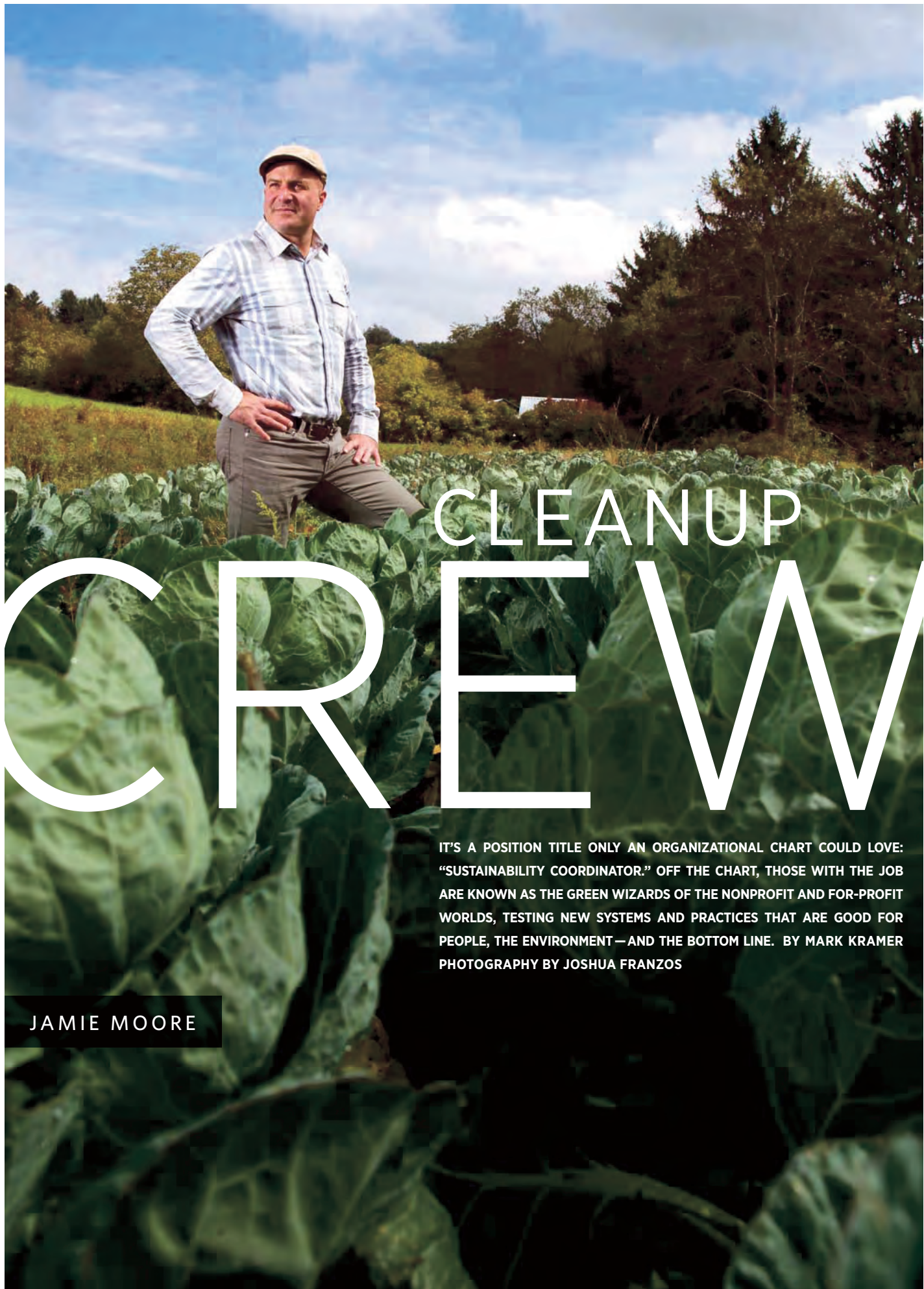


On an unseasonably cool, drizzly afternoon in May, Jamie Moore drives to Susquehanna Mills, a canola oil processing plant in Montoursville, central Pennsylvania. As director of sourcing and sustainability for the Pittsburgh-based Eat'n Park Hospitality Group, it's Moore's job to cultivate sources of quality food for his division, Parkhurst Dining Services, and to make sure that as much of that food is as local and as organic as possible. In his mind, there's no other way to do so than to follow food to its origin. So, he's inspecting oil and meeting processors.

Moore, 41, is passionate about coordinating food supply chains that use sustainable practices and aim to benefit everyone, including his own company and clients. Here's the chain he envisions for canola oil: He shows dairy farmers how to raise rapeseed, the seed used to produce canola oil, which will give them an additional stream of revenue. Parkhurst will purchase and use this oil in its vinaigrettes, French fries and many other menu items available in its dining halls and catered venues. Used oil will then be converted into biodiesel fuel, which again will benefit green-minded consumers.



CLEANUP CREW

IT'S A POSITION TITLE ONLY AN ORGANIZATIONAL CHART COULD LOVE: "SUSTAINABILITY COORDINATOR." OFF THE CHART, THOSE WITH THE JOB ARE KNOWN AS THE GREEN WIZARDS OF THE NONPROFIT AND FOR-PROFIT WORLDS, TESTING NEW SYSTEMS AND PRACTICES THAT ARE GOOD FOR PEOPLE, THE ENVIRONMENT—AND THE BOTTOM LINE. BY MARK KRAMER PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOSHUA FRANZOS

JAMIE MOORE



His crisscross of rural Pennsylvania has produced the kind of win-win relationship that will ultimately reduce his company's carbon footprint while supporting local farmers and the environment. And both sides of the equation recognize that Moore's work is helping to improve the value of their own.

"One of our focuses as a local company has been to support our communities, and we also wanted to work in a way that got us away from processed foods and moved us back to basics and real cooking from scratch," says Nick Camody, Parkhurst's chief operating officer. "If you're going to do that, you have to use quality ingredients, and getting local products is even better. Jamie is bringing us products that are so local and so good that we're really happy to have him. And because of his passion, he is actually saving some farms in this region, so we see the sustainability director position as a benefit to our community and our guests."

Greg Brenckle's family operates Brenckle's Farm and Greenhouses, which provides local produce for Eat'n Park restaurants and Parkhurst's food service contracts. He agrees that Moore brings a level of commitment, knowledge and professionalism to his work that's appreciated by local farmers. "It's just nice to know that there are people out there who are that much into the local food movement."

Moore is part of a growing trend in which business, government, university and nonprofit entities are creating sustainability positions in the workplace that promote environmentally sound policies and practices. And philanthropies with strong environmental goals, such as The Heinz Endowments, are lending their support to help establish the posts and ensure that they yield beneficial dividends for local communities.



PHYLLIS BARBER

Even as a young girl growing up in Pittsburgh's south suburbs, Phyllis Barber realized the importance of conservation and caring for the environment.

From the back seat of her parents' car, she waited in lengthy gas station lines during the energy crisis of the 1970s. She learned to mimic her father and grandfather as they turned off lights whenever they left a room. While watching television, she heard Woodsy Owl chirp "Give a Hoot. Don't Pollute," and she remembers then-President Jimmy Carter challenging all Americans to insulate their homes and drive less.

Now, these memories continue to affect the choices that Barber, 39, makes from day to day. She likes to test herself and see whether she can go 24 hours without tossing items into a trash can. Instead, she devises ways to reuse, recycle or compost. Rather than drive, she takes a bus whenever she can, including to Downtown Pittsburgh where she works as the sustainability coordinator for Highmark Inc., one of the largest health insurers in the country.

Barber oversees green business practices, develops green policy and educates employees about sustainability. She has helped her company reduce paper use, install one of the largest green roofs in the region and, among other achievements, significantly reduce energy consumption.

"If we don't have a healthy environment," she says, "we don't have healthy people."

Barber studied business administration in accountancy at The University of Notre Dame and came to Highmark in 2007 after working in public accounting. She currently co-chairs the steering committee for Champions for Sustainability, the consortium overseen by Sustainable Pittsburgh, an Endowments grantee.

Barber says she has learned a lot since those first formative childhood lessons, including the real value that sustainable practices can bring to any business or city: "Being a sustainability coordinator provides a lot of insight into your company and into the community you work within."

According to the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education, the demand on university campuses for these "sustainability coordinators" has increased exponentially in recent years, even amid budget cuts and growing national unemployment. The International Society of Sustainability Professionals has been adding to its rolls coordinators in diverse sectors, from manufacturing and utilities to technology and education. These coordinators are reducing waste and energy use, making significant impact on procedures within their sectors and inspiring innovation.

There's also growing evidence that the coordinators' work offers financial advantages as well, though many organizations and businesses are still developing ways to quantify the extent. Some estimate cost reductions created by changes in areas such as electricity usage. PNC Financial Services Group, for example, reports that it has been able to reduce building operating costs by as much as 35 percent

just by improving heating and cooling systems and utilizing natural lighting. Others highlight benefits to consumers or small-business partners, as in the case of a promotion for Eat'n Park's FarmSource local purchasing program, which includes Greg's father, Don, declaring: "If it wasn't for Eat'n Park, there wouldn't be another generation of Brenckle farmers."

Often the coordinator positions are established as a result of clients' demands for greener practices and products. When PNC, a Parkhurst client, sought to make its dining services more sustainable, Moore helped the company by purchasing condiments in bulk, replacing plastic forks, knives and spoons with compostable cornstarch cutlery, and swapping Styrofoam to-go containers with cardboard and reusable containers. He also arranged for used vegetable oil to be sent to biodiesel processors and, in three locations, instituted food waste composting.

“It’s better for the business in various ways,” says Benson Gabler at PNC, “and we realize that our employees appreciate it and that it’s the right thing to do.” As manager of corporate sustainability, 29-year-old Gabler has developed an online community that engages his fellow employees in sustainability programs. Among other initiatives, he’s helping this company with 50,000 staff reach its goal of reducing energy use by 30 percent in the next 10 years. PNC has more newly constructed green buildings certified by the U.S. Green Building Council than any other company, and it recently unveiled plans to build in Pittsburgh what would be the greenest skyscraper in the world—which Gabler gets to help design.

Together, Gabler and Moore are developing the necessary operations, staff training and communication tools for implementing dining hall changes within a complex set of company processes. Central to the sustainability coordinator job description is this ability to think in terms of systems, see how parts affect the whole and remain mindful of how new initiatives affect people, whether the workplace is a field, a dining hall or an office building.

“It’s a difficult and unusual job,” says Matt Mehalik, program manager for Sustainable Pittsburgh, a nonprofit that receives operational support from the Endowments. “Each person is a champion to change a culture of a large organization.”

Mehalik oversees Champions for Sustainability, a consortium of more than 50 sustainability coordinators from across southwestern Pennsylvania—including Gabler and Moore—who gather regularly to consult and coordinate projects with one another; attend seminars and panels; hear from outside experts; and learn, among other things, about green procurement or how to build business cases for sustainability.

A couple of decades ago, Mehalik says, companies didn’t deal strategically with environmental or energy costs, but instead just viewed them as the

usual overhead expenses. But now, catalyzed in part by the work of sustainability coordinators, companies are improving operations, energy performance and waste management, often while lowering some costs. And as consumers—and citizens, in the case of government—demand greater corporate social responsibility, these coordinators are able to address directly their companies’ concerns about efficiency, greenhouse gases and carbon emissions.

“Companies that are being the most aggressive are seeing the benefits of these efforts,” Mehalik adds.

Caren Glotfelty, the Endowments’ Environment Program director, points out that effective sustainability coordinators must have technical know-how, diplomacy and authority within their agency. Often companies create a coordinator position at the recommendation of a committee examining environmental concerns or when a senior administrator champions sustainability. Once hired, this coordinator must then demonstrate outcomes through a particular project, before taking aim at larger initiatives and involving more and more agency staff.

“It’s a combination of someone at a higher level saying yes to a project, then the project succeeding, and then the naysayers are convinced,” says Glotfelty.

Building upon its successful grant making to green construction, the Endowments supported its first sustainability coordinator position in 2004 through the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, and, more recently, funded similar positions with Allegheny County, the City of Pittsburgh’s Urban Redevelopment Authority, the YMCA and several universities. In each instance, the Endowments funded the position for its initial one to two years. After that, the recipient organization maintained its coordinator position independently.

Coordinators’ backgrounds vary, from technical training to a liberal arts education, from experience in business administration and auditing to knowledge of community health and environmental science and education. Skill sets can differ as well, often according to sector or a particular agency’s

“It’s a difficult and unusual job. Each person is a champion to change a culture of a large organization.”

Matt Mehalik, program manager, Sustainable Pittsburgh

priorities. But when coordinators discuss their career requirements, some common themes emerge, including the ability to collaborate, prioritize, work within complex operations, track project results and communicate well with a variety of people.

“Communication is really the most difficult part of the whole thing,” says Barb Kviz, environmental coordinator at Carnegie Mellon University. She finds that it’s important—though difficult, given peoples’ busy schedules and other priorities—to be constantly informing students, staff and faculty of the university’s sustainable initiatives, guiding them to green resources, and recruiting them for departmental Green Teams. “You don’t want to be forceful, though,” she adds. “Let it be an organic process.”

The Endowments’ Glotfelty agrees. “We’re never in a position to tell people what to do. You need to convince them.”

So what do “organic” processes and persuasion look like?

Generally, coordinators look first for somewhat easily achievable projects—“low hanging fruit,” such as replacing conventional light bulbs with compact fluorescent bulbs—that exemplify the value of sustainable practices and create buy-in among other staff. Or they institute broadly understood and accepted measures such as putting lights on motion sensors, hibernating computers, implementing or improving recycling programs, installing water-conserving plumbing fixtures, or converting paper communications to digital.

Still, even these kinds of projects can be difficult to organize and implement, says Mary Whitney, 51, sustainability coordinator at Chatham University,

noting that behavioral change must accompany any changes in procurement or operations. “It’s one thing to change light bulbs. It’s another thing to train people to turn them off when they leave the room.”

But with collaboration, even bigger changes can occur. Kviz notes that Carnegie Mellon’s first green roof project—a flat roof covered in sedums and succulents, designed to provide insulation and minimize stormwater runoff and heat-island effects—began when one student who had an idea took the initiative and contacted Kviz and other students, staff and faculty across departments. Those groups then turned to consultants, engineers and the university’s facilities management. The roof was designed and constructed after funding was secured through a demonstration program organized by the environmental group 3 Rivers Wet Weather and supported by the Endowments and the federal government. Completed in 2005, the 300-square-foot Hammer-schlag Hall green roof is now an ongoing research project, and the university has built another six green roofs.

Partnering with departments throughout the school, Kviz, who at 56 has been “eco-minded since Earth Day in 1970,” has helped the university implement many other award-winning green initiatives. All of the university’s electricity is supplied by renewable sources. Nine buildings are LEED-certified. Kviz recently helped host a zero-waste picnic for 2,500 staff—soda cans were recycled, and flatware and dishes were compostable, along with the food waste.

“It was education in action,” she says.

Matthew Smuts draws on a diverse range of life experiences in his job as sustainability coordinator for the City of Pittsburgh's Urban Redevelopment Authority.

The 40-year-old earned a degree in architecture from the University of California—Berkley, designed homes using alternative materials such as straw bales, excavated cliff dwellings in an Arizona desert and rehabbed his own “fixer-upper” in Pittsburgh's Hazelwood neighborhood.

Summers hiking and camping help him see “the connection between our actions and the health of the natural world.” More recently, he researched energy efficiency for a Pittsburgh-based company and consulted

with major developers who build tens of thousands of homes each year. Then the URA hired him in 2007, with the help of an \$85,000 Heinz Endowments grant that established his current position.

Today, Smuts helps residential developers contracting with the URA to incorporate sustainability into their construction plans. For example, he might show them proper techniques for installing insulation and other energy conservation measures, practices that are light on both costs and labor. And to good effect: The URA requires that all new residential construction meet Energy Star ratings, which achieve at least 15 percent greater efficiency than structures built to minimum code. The agency's new construction now averages a full 30 percent greater efficiency.

MATTHEW SMUTS

Smuts also has initiated an internal recycling program, educated colleagues about sustainability, provided developers with financing that gives them incentives to build green and helped codify sustainability guidelines. Still, he says he's simultaneously trying to work himself out of a job.

“Ideally, in the future, sustainability coordinators won't exist because we will have incorporated sustainability so much into the organization that it'll be part of its DNA. But right now, we play a critical role in convincing the organization that sustainability is the right path to go down.”

Many coordinators note that being a point person who can track and report successes as well as identify areas for improvement is a key element of the job. Allegheny County, which owns about 125 buildings and leases about another 125, is in the process of implementing a new software system that will allow sustainability manager Jeaneen Zappa to keep tabs on the use and cost of all utilities at all county facilities. “That's how we are moving forward,” she says, “because you can't manage what you can't measure.”

Providing that type of on-the-job support is another way employers recognize that the work that Zappa and her colleagues perform is valued and viewed as integral to organizational operations.

“Jeaneen has played a central role in developing policies and programs to reduce the county's ecological footprint and instilling sustainable practices throughout the county workforce,” says Allegheny County Executive Dan Onorato. “I am proud of the

gains Allegheny County has made in sustainability and the role we are playing as a leader in the green movement.”

To help Zappa and other coordinators amid what is, according to Mehalik, a void in professional support and training in the region, Sustainable Pittsburgh's Champions for Sustainability began gathering in October 2008. By that time, more major firms, such as BNY Mellon, FedEx Ground, Westinghouse and Highmark Inc., along with the City of Pittsburgh, had created these positions. City officials demonstrated their commitment to the work as well as to the institutionalization of the post by hiring a new coordinator, Aftyn Giles, in June to replace Lindsay Baxter, who was the first to hold the position and resigned in 2010.

PNC's Gabler, who serves on the Champions for Sustainability's steering committee, says it's helpful “to have people who are knowledgeable about local





resources and have similar issues, because it's a new field. It's great that I can call [other sustainability coordinators] and find out how they approached a waste audit. Who did they contact? How did it go? Would they do it again? Would there be any changes they would make? I think that's been the biggest support... just being able to come in and, all of a sudden, go to one meeting and be connected to that large network of people who are all dealing with very similar issues."

Sustainable Pittsburgh is sponsoring a workplace challenge through its Business Climate Coalition, in which regional companies can vie with one another to see who can reduce their energy, water and gas usage the most. The nonprofit also is providing coordinators with a series of seminars targeting the particular needs of coordinators in the health care sector. In addition, Sustainable Pittsburgh has just begun a spinoff consortium focusing on

the unique challenges of government-based coordinators. Pittsburgh's Higher Education Climate Consortium provides similar ongoing support for university-based coordinators such as Kviz and Whitney.

As for the future of sustainability coordinators, Mehalik already sees them moving beyond internal duties and goals, and collectively affecting the region and specific sectors. They're even pushing innovation and moving companies into emerging markets, he says.

Whitney points to recently installed solar thermal hot water systems at Chatham University that will provide for most of the hot water needs in two dormitories. It's the first commercial use of this particular technology in all of North America.

"We don't have to wait for the market," she says. "We are making the market." *h*