



2026 Week of Caring Benefitting Paws 4 the Cause Comes to a Close



The PRSA Thoroughbred Chapter wrapped up this year's Week of Caring with a visit to Paws 4 the Cause.

Because of this incredible community, we were able to deliver donations of cleaning supplies, towels, blankets and gift cards to help provide comfort and care to animals waiting for their forever homes. Seeing firsthand the work their team does every day reminds us that “community” isn’t just a word — it’s action.

We’re especially proud to support this organization as their vice president, Anita Spreitzer, was honored as our 2025 Communicator of the Year.

A special ask: Paws 4 the Cause has a large group of animals that recently arrived and urgently needs foster homes. If you’ve ever considered fostering, now is the time. Opening your home, even temporarily, truly saves lives.

If you’re interested in fostering, please reach out to Paws 4 the Cause directly to learn how you can help.

Thank you to everyone who donated and continues to make our 2026 Week of Caring count. This is what it looks like when communicators care.



President Marc Whitt

At February's inaugural Coffee & Comms, I found myself seated beside a new member as we talked about life, work and the to-do lists waiting for us when we headed back to our desks.

In the middle of the conversation, he smiled and said something that stopped me in my tracks: *"I'm really getting my money's worth! Since joining PRSA and this chapter last month, I've already attended the network lunch and now this coffee event — and I really feel at home."*

That simple sentence was like music to my ears.

Moments like that are exactly why the PRSA Thoroughbred Chapter exists. We're the only PRSA chapter serving Lexington and Central and Eastern Kentucky, and our mission is straightforward: to bring people together. Young professionals just starting out. Mid-career practitioners navigating new challenges. Senior folks like me who've seen a few wins — and a few career trials — along the way. And, importantly, our PRSSA students from UK and ECU who bring fresh energy, ideas, and optimism to the room.

What makes our chapter special isn't just the programming or the calendar of events. It's the sense of community. It's a place where you can swap stories of victories, commiserate over the occasional professional setback, learn something new, and leave feeling a little more energized than when you arrived. In an industry that moves fast and often demands more than it gives, that kind of connection matters.

For our nearly 80 — and still growing — chapter members, let me say this plainly: your presence is needed. Your voice is needed. Your involvement is needed. A chapter doesn't thrive because of a board or a handful of volunteers alone; it thrives because members show up, engage, and bring their full selves into the conversation.

And if you're a PR professional in our region who's still looking for a professional home, know this: *we're here for you*. Sometimes, national organizations may feel big and abstract, but at the chapter level, it's personal. It's a room full of people who understand your work, your pressures, and your passion for the profession.

You'll find in this issue — and in future editions of *The Loop* — details about our upcoming events. I know we're all busy. Truly, I get it. Calendars are full, inboxes are overflowing, and it can be tempting to skip "one more thing." But I encourage you to make our monthly networking events — a mix of lunch gatherings and after-hours meetups — and now our morning Coffee & Comms a priority on your calendar.

When you do, you just might find yourself saying the same thing that new member said to me over coffee: that you're getting your money's worth — and

that you feel right at home among a friendly, creative, and supportive group of peers.

And honestly? That's the best return on investment any of us could ask for. I look forward to seeing you soon!

Join us at an Upcoming Event!

Networking Madness

Friday, March 13, 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Tip off March with championship-level connections at our PRSA networking luncheon. Join fellow communications pros for an afternoon of thoughtful conversation and strategic relationship-building. Inspired by the energy of March Madness, this gathering is all about strengthening your professional playbook and expanding your network. Whether you're a seasoned pro or new to the field, come ready to connect, collaborate and build momentum together.

Chuy's Tex-Mex

3841 Nicholasville Centre Dr.

Lexington, Ky. 40503

March Coffee & Comms

Tuesday, March 17, 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

Join us for a special St. Patrick's Day edition of Coffee & Comms — where good conversation is the real pot of gold. If you're looking for an energizing way to start your day, share ideas and enjoy relationship-building over coffee, join us! Wear your green and don't forget your punch card — your 6th cup is on us! We can't wait to see you there.

Breve Coffee Distillery District

1170 Manchester St. Ste. 110

Lexington, Ky. 40508

[Register Here](#)

PRSA Thoroughbred Chapter in the News



PRSA Thoroughbred Chapter members have taken to television to highlight PRSA's impact across the region, including a range of networking events, professional development opportunities and our inaugural conference.

Board member Dan Koett and member Tina Bryson appeared on [FOX 56 with Payden Hinkle](#), and board members Brant Welch, APR, and Katie Neal, ACC, appeared on [WTVQ News at Noon](#). Katie also promoted her [TEDx talk at Bellarmine University](#) (her part starts at 1:34:30).

Thanks to communications co-chair Dan Koett for making this segment and other PR opportunities possible!

Congratulations to our Members!



Amy Preske, APR, of Booze PR was named Communicator of the Year at Whisky Magazine and American Whiskey's "Icons of Whisky 2026" event. With a career spanning nearly 25 years in the distilled spirits industry, this achievement is very well deserved.

Congratulations, Amy!



Andrea Gils Monzón of Lexington-based Shiftmakers Agency has been inducted into the PRSSA Hall of Fame, recognizing her distinguished career and long-standing commitment to student development and the PR profession.

Congratulations, Andrea!

Welcome, New Members!

Please join us in welcoming members who joined our chapter in January. We are excited to have them in our community and look forward to meeting them at upcoming events.

- Abbye Crowe – Public Relations Specialist, New Vista
- Erin Hester – Assistant Professor, University of Kentucky
- Sarah Lynch – AEP Kentucky Power

Maximize Your Membership: March Into Momentum

As the pace of the year picks up, March becomes a great resolution checkpoint. Take a moment to take stock of progress on your professional development goals for the year and check out the opportunities already available to you as a PRSA member.

PRSA offers a strong lineup of webinars all year, including several at no cost, to help members build skills, gain fresh insights and stay current in a fast-moving communications landscape.

You can find a complete list of webinars for the year [here](#) on the PRSA website. The list is searchable by month, keyword, category, format, and career level. Registration and adding to your calendar is quick and easy.

Here's a sample of the March offerings:

Influencer Impact: Strategies for Outreach and Engagement

Wednesday, March 11, noon to 1:00 p.m.

\$40 for PRSA members (Free for Association/Nonprofit Section members)

Five Ways to Think Like a Reader

Thursday, March 12, 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Free for PRSA members

Business for Communicators: Fundamentals of Corporate Finance for Value Creation

Tuesday, March 17, 3:00 p.m. to 3:45 p.m.

Free for PRSA members

Make the most of the last month of the quarter — and make the most of your membership investment!

Chapter Member Spotlight: Sarah Marko

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We are excited to share our Thoroughbred Chapter member spotlight! Each month, get to know our members and why they love what they do.

If you would like to learn more about chapter membership, email info@kyprsa.org.

Meet this month's featured member, Sarah Marko!

Sue is a senior public affairs specialist at Enterprise Technical Assistance Services.

What is one of the most memorable or rewarding experiences of your career?

I have worked for the federal government in various capacities my entire career. I feel very fortunate to have been a part of truly historical moments. In 2023, I worked for a project destroying the remaining chemical weapons in the U.S. stockpile. As the last weapons were being destroyed, I had an opportunity to work with the New York Times to cover this momentous occasion. I was able to capture photos and videos of the last weapon before it was destroyed and even got to sign the rocket. It's a moment I'll never forget for two reasons. First is because of the importance of the public relations campaign we developed to highlight the moment and all the coverage we received. Second is because I was able to witness the last declared chemical stockpile in the world finally be destroyed — an entire class of weapons — and the world became a little safer that day.

What do you love most about the PR/Communications industry?

I've never had the same day twice. In public relations, I am faced with new challenges, new events, new initiatives and new tasks every single day.

What is the best piece of career advice you've ever received?

The best advice I ever received actually came from a professor at ECU before I started practicing public relations. He told the class to not worry if we wrote a press release or developed some other communications product and it was heavily edited by a boss. He said that often times people in managerial positions do not have time to get started. By just putting something together, we help out those in more senior level positions more than we know. He said to not take editing as a criticism, to not feel ownership over your work to the point you're unwilling to see it change or get better. Just know that you are contributing to your team and organization by just getting started.

What do you appreciate most about being a PRSA member?

Although I don't get to attend events as often as I would like, I appreciate the networking opportunities.

What is your favorite Central Kentucky food spot?

Agave and Rye. I love those tacos!

[Connect with Sarah on LinkedIn!](#)

All Thoroughbred Chapter Members are invited to fill out this [Google Form](#) to be featured as a Member Spotlight! Email info@kyprsa.org if you have any questions.

Katie Neal to Present at PRSA CHE

Board member and past president Katie Neal, ACC, will speak at the PRSA Counselors to Higher Education Senior Summit on March 8 in Atlanta.

Her session, "Developing a Coaching Mindset: Leading Up, Leading Your Team, and Leading Yourself in Higher Education" is part of the invitation-only Executive Leadership Summit.



Leading Up, Leading Your Team, and Leading Yourself in Higher Ed Communications

Joseph A. Brennan, MBA, PhD, APR, Fellow PRSA
VP, Communications & Marketing, Montclair State University

Katie Neal, ACC
CEO, Katie Neal Coaching & Consulting

Having previously led the news and communications team at Wake Forest University, Katie will co-present with Joseph A. Brennan, APR, Vice President of Communications and Marketing at Montclair State University.

APR Fees to Increase July 1, 2026

If you've been thinking about getting your Accreditation in Public Relations (APR), there's no better time than now, as the national accreditation board has announced rate increases effective July 1, 2026.

Any PRSA member who applies and receives authorization from the Universal Accreditation Board (UAB) before July 1 will receive the current application fee of \$385. After July 1, new applicants will be charged \$495.

You have one year from the date your application is approved, and you receive authorization from the UAB to complete the entire APR process, which includes the Panel Presentation and the computer-based exam. The exam is typically taken at the end of the one-year period.

For current APR's, the renewal fee will be increasing as well, from the current \$75 to \$150. If you are already an APR and are up for renewal in 2026, you can renew before July 1 at the current rate of \$75, provided you have your CEU's completed.

These price adjustments were made at the national level after careful review, research into comparable professional credentials and industry standards, and thoughtful discussion with the Universal Accreditation Board leadership and PRSA.

For more information on obtaining your APR, visit [PRSA's website](https://www.prsa.org), or reach out our chapter APR co-chairs, Brant Welch, Holly Wiemers or Amy Preske.

From PRsay: As AI Evolves, so do PRSA's Guidelines on Using it Ethically



Check out the most recent post from PRsay, and extension of PRSA's Strategies & Tactics

In response to the ever-evolving artificial intelligence landscape, PRSA has updated its Code of Ethics. During the most recent Member Monday webinar, panelists explore the applications of generative AI and why professional judgement is crucial as new tools are available.

[Read the Article](#)

Are you following us on social media? We post chapter updates, upcoming events and more across these channels, don't miss out!



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PRSA - Thoroughbred Chapter | 250 West Main Street, Suite 90 ATTN: Ryan Worthen | Lexington, KY 40507
US

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