

## POLICY WATCH – November 2019

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What are you grateful for? It's good to remember all the reasons to be grateful: our families, our work, our friends, our homes, our communities, to count a few. This issue looks at ways being grateful can help you through good and bad times. Who knew feeling gratitude was a stress reducer?

Also in this issue, we welcome two new board members to NBLC: InterWest Insurance Services and Recology. Please read below about these organizations and their contributions to the North Bay.

We also congratulate Alon Adani, Cornerstone Properties, for being NBLC's 2020 Spirit of Sonoma honoree. It is remarkable to learn how much Alon and Cornerstone are doing to make the North Bay a better place to live and work.

Wishing you and yours the Happiest of Thanksgivings!

Best,

Cynthia

### Four Ways Gratitude Helps You with Difficult Feelings

With Thanksgiving approaching, many of us think about feeling gratitude and what reasons we have to give thanks. Others of us worry about sitting down to dinner with family members with different political views or other issues. In a new article by Elizabeth Hopper in Greater Good Magazine, ([Link](#)), she says, "Feeling grateful can bring us a variety of benefits, including better mental and physical health and improved relationships. We tend to think of gratitude as an emotion we experience when things are going well, one that is closely associated with well-being and contentment. But does it serve any purpose when life isn't so rosy?"

Given that stress is a dominant feature of our lives today, the idea that feeling gratitude can help us better manage that stress is very appealing. Hopper says, "As researchers have investigated why feeling grateful brings such wide-ranging benefits, they've uncovered that gratitude isn't just puppies and positive thinking. One reason why gratitude is so powerful might be that it helps us manage difficult emotions more effectively: When we feel grateful, we might be better at coping with stressful, negative, and frustrating situations."

Hopper goes on to say, “According to this research, gratitude doesn’t just make us feel good—it also has a useful function when life is hard. Grateful people tend to cope with stress in smarter ways and regulate their negative emotions more skillfully. Here are four ways gratitude can help you manage your emotions when you’re faced with challenges in life:”

### 1. Grateful people cope with stress in healthy ways

“When we’re under stress, there are a variety of possible ways we can cope—some healthier than others. Research suggests that gratitude may help us take advantage of the more useful ones.

In a 2007 study in the *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, psychologist Alex Wood and his colleagues found that more grateful people were more likely to take steps to actively deal with their problems or try to look for “silver linings” (a technique that psychologists call “positive reframing”) compared to less grateful people.”

“Why did grateful people choose healthier styles of coping? Wood and his colleagues write, “This perception of the world as a hospitable place may likely lead to an increased willingness to deal actively with problems.” In other words, grateful people feel more optimistic about solving their problems successfully, so they’re less likely to avoid or disengage from them.”

“According to Barbara Fredrickson’s “broaden-and-build” model, positive emotions like gratitude help us to think in more innovative and creative ways, which helps us build resources we can draw upon when things get difficult. If gratitude spurs creative thinking, that might be why we find it easier to put a positive spin on stressful or negative events. “

### 2. Grateful people benefit from the support of others

“Another healthy coping strategy that gratitude may promote is seeking out our support networks.

In the study by Wood and his colleagues, grateful people were also more likely than their less grateful counterparts to reach out to others in the midst of stress. And a 2019 study in the *Journal of Positive Psychology* by Nathan Deichert and his colleagues suggests that gratitude may help people benefit *more* from that social support when they receive it.”

“Grateful people feel appreciative about previous times when others have helped them, Wood and his colleagues point out, and that may explain why they seek out support—they probably believe that others will help them again in the future. According to psychologist Sara Algoe’s theory, part of gratitude’s function is to help us identify people who will be supportive of us and strengthen our relationships with them. Gratitude seems to help us notice the people in our lives who are there to help us.”

### 3. Gratitude can help you control your reaction to negative events

“Not only do grateful people seem to engage in helpful habits when they’re faced with stress, but research suggests that gratitude also changes our experience of negative emotions.”

“In a 2019 study in the *Journal of Positive Psychology* by Paulo Boggio and his colleagues, 71 undergraduate students completed a writing exercise twice a week for four weeks. The researchers found that participants who had written about gratitude for a month were better at decreasing their emotional

reactions to the negative pictures. Why? The researchers suggest that gratitude might have helped participants to cultivate “a general positive attitude towards life” that allowed them to protect their emotional state.”

“Participants who wrote about what they were grateful for used more words related to cognitive processes (for example, words showing insight into the topic, or words talking about cause and effect). Since these types of words would be involved in the process of reappraising negative events, the researchers suggest that the gratitude group may have been better at reframing when viewing the negative pictures. This healthy emotion regulation strategy, which grateful people are inclined toward, might be key in helping them manage their negative emotions.”

#### 4. Gratitude can help you to be less impatient

“People’s ability to manage their impatience and wait for better rewards in the future is referred to by psychologists as delay of gratification. It’s a form of emotion regulation that requires people to replace “hot” (more emotional) ways of thinking with “cool” (less emotional) ways of thinking. Among other benefits, people who score higher on a delay-of-gratification test as children tend to be better at coping with stress as adults.”

“And, according to research, gratitude may help us to delay gratification. In a 2014 study in *Psychological Science*, researchers found that participants who had written about gratitude were more likely to pick the larger rewards that they had to wait longer for (compared to participants in the happy or neutral groups). In other words, gratitude seems to help us manage our impatient urges.”

‘While it might seem paradoxical to think about things we’re grateful for in more stressful situations, people who do this experience a variety of benefits: healthier coping, a greater sense of social support, less negative emotions, and less impatience. In other words, those times when gratitude doesn’t come as naturally to us might be exactly when we need it most.”

So when you are sitting at the Thanksgiving table, keep top of mind the list of things you are grateful for, so when issues arise, you won’t be as stressed out!

## **NBLC Welcomes Two New Board Members: InterWest Insurance Services and Recology**

### **North Bay Leadership Council Welcomes New Board Member, InterWest Insurance Services**

Petaluma, CA North Bay Leadership Council (NBLC) is pleased to announce the addition of a new board member, InterWest Insurance Services. Founded in 1992 with the merger of three large, successful Northern California Insurance Brokerage firms, InterWest has grown to 12 offices in the North Bay, San Francisco Bay Area and Central California. The firm has its North Bay offices in Petaluma and Santa Rosa. NBLC’s Chair, Craig Nelson, said, “InterWest Insurance Services has a strong North Bay presence and is a leader in its sector. We look forward to working with them on the issues we face on a regional basis like housing, transportation, workforce development and resilience.”

InterWest has built a very successful business by focusing on smaller niche regional markets like the North Bay. During the past 25 years, they have grown in size from \$10 Million in annual revenue in 1992 to over roughly \$70 Million in revenue. Statewide, they have 345 employees.

The boardmember representative is Mike Ryan who joined InterWest as a Commercial Insurance Broker August 2016. Ryan said joining NBLC was “a good fit for our guiding principle to support and give back to the communities in which we work and live. By being NBLC members, we can help strengthen communities and the economic ecosystem in the North Bay.”

Previously Ryan was a Managing Principal, Shareholder and Practice Leader with EPIC Insurance Brokers and Consultants, responsible for the management, leadership and growth of the Petaluma (North Bay) office. Mike’s client responsibilities include overall management of relationships, service teams, brokerage and advocacy in the insurance marketplace. He works with clients in the real estate, professional services, manufacturing/distribution, wine and construction industries.

InterWest was recognized again in 2018 as one of 35 Elite Agencies in the U.S. by Insurance Business America. Elite Agencies are distinguished by their Best Practices, knowledgeable professional staff, exemplary customer service, quality technology, inward focus on education & mentorship and an unwavering commitment to serving their communities. They were identified as an Elite leader from approximately 39,000 independent agencies across the U.S.

One of InterWest’s fundamental principles is to serve the needs and contribute to the betterment and strengthening of the communities in which they live and work. The company participates not only by providing financial contributions, but also through the many hours their employees selflessly volunteer their time. It’s part of their culture to give back and actively participate in making a difference in the lives of others. Their charities are many and extend benefits nationwide to those deservedly needing a helping hand. A few of the organizations they support are American Lung Association, Boys and Girls Club, Make-A-Wish Foundation, Relay for Life, Wounded Warrior Project and HomeAid.

### **Recology Joins North Bay Leadership Council**

Craig Nelson, chairman of the board for North Bay Leadership Council (NBLC) announced that Recology is joining the board of NBLC. Recology, based in San Francisco, with regional offices in Santa Rosa and Petaluma, has 434 employees in the Sonoma-Marin region. Previously known as Norcal Waste Systems, it changed its name to Recology in 2009. The company today serves 127 communities in California, Oregon, Washington and Nevada, according to its website.

Nelson welcomed Recology, saying “Recology is a large employer in the North Bay and is facing the same challenges as other NBLC members: a housing shortage, traffic congestion, workforce availability and responding to the disasters arising from climate change. Adding their voice to our public policy work will increase our clout.” The board member representative will be Derek Nelson, Operations Manager for Recology Sonoma Marin. His alternate will be Fred Stemmler, General Manager.

Derek Nelson said, “We are looking forward to working with other leaders on finding solutions to the housing crisis and getting more transportation improvements underway. We appreciate NBLC’s members commitment to addressing climate change through environmental stewardship as that is one of our core missions.”

Whenever possible, Recology uses recycled materials to build and maintain each of their offices. They regularly implement energy-efficiency upgrades throughout their facilities, like automatic lighting controls and energy efficient water fixtures. Bio Diesel and Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) is used to fuel their fleet, thereby reducing both emissions and noise levels.

The Recology mission represents a fundamental shift from traditional waste management to resource recovery. The vision at Recology is to create a world without waste by developing and discovering sustainable resource recovery practices that can be implemented globally. This begins by building an exceptional Resource Ecosystem – one that both protects the environment and sustains the local community. It's a 'closed loop' ecosystem that makes it possible for the communities Recology serves to achieve high landfill diversion and meet sustainability goals. Waste Zero is their goal.

In 1986, Recology became 100% employee owned. The Recology ESOP provides employees with a supplemental retirement plan alongside their 401(K) or pension, and comprehensive benefits package. Being employee owned, employees have a heightened sense of commitment to the company, goals, and to customer satisfaction in the communities in which they serve.

### **NBLC Honors Alon Adani, Cornerstone Properties with the 2020 Spirit of Sonoma Award**



Alon Adani's commitment to the North Bay community is a consistent value and can be seen in his consideration of all current and potential projects and partnerships. His work in giving back to the community can be seen through Cornerstone

Properties, as well as 180 Studios, North Bay Makers.

After the Northern California wildfires in 2017, Cornerstone donated 16,000 square feet in downtown Santa Rosa to be used as the Sonoma County Local Assistance Center serving fire-affected individuals. 48,000 square feet of warehouse in Santa Rosa was donated by Cornerstone to the American Red Cross as the central distribution center for displaced individuals and families. Another combined 15,000 square feet of warehouse was given to Mentor Me Petaluma, Sonoma County Fire Relief and Sonoma Family Meal.

180 Studios is a makerspace in Santa Rosa providing workforce training programs and classes to the North Bay community. Alon and Cornerstone are large supporters, donating both money and space to this non-profit organization. Following the fires, 180 Studios acted as an evacuation center for Keysight Technologies employees and their families.

Currently, Alon is working on an infill, transit-oriented, master plan development consisting of four sites, located at the heart of downtown Santa Rosa and Historic Railroad Square. These projects can create substantial housing projects for the community, as well as many service-based amenities such as childcare, a grocery market, health clinics and shared gathering spaces. He is working closely with the City of Santa Rosa, as well as many other local partners to make this vision a reality.

Congratulations, Alon Adani!

## **Members in the News**

### **Becoming Independent Opens Office in San Rafael**

Becoming Independent, a nonprofit serving adults with disabilities for more than 50 years in Sonoma County, is expanding its services to Marin.

### **Sonoma Chapter of Speedway Children's Charities Distributes \$378,000 to Sonoma County Youth Groups**

Fifty-four Sonoma County non-profit organizations will benefit from nearly \$380,000 in grants recently awarded by the Sonoma chapter of Speedway Children's Charities (SCC), the charitable arm of Sonoma Raceway.

### **Bank of America Celebrating Women Photographers at Napa Valley Museum**

The exhibit is a fascinating study of the depth and breadth of American life, as presented solely by women photographers.

### **Marin Sanitary Looks to Turn Trash into Power as Business Changes Rapidly**

Companies like Marin Sanitary have had to find innovative ways to keep cash flowing in despite China refusing to take recycled material like office paper.

### **Redwood Credit Union Steps Up for Kincade Fire Support**

Redwood Credit Union (RCU) has responded to the recent Kincade Fire in a multitude of ways to help its members, employees, and communities.

### **Comcast NBCUniversal's Enduring Service to the Veteran & Military Community**

As a leader in media and technology, Comcast NBCUniversal is looking to the future in how we engage with and serve the military community.

### **Keysight Technologies Board Elects CEO Ron Nersesian Chairman**

Keysight Technologies (NYSE: KEYS) on Friday announced today that President and Chief Executive Officer Ron Nersesian, has been appointed chairman of the company's board of directors, effective immediately.

### **Cornerstone Properties Hosts World Central Kitchen Chefs to Feed Victims Effected by the Kincade Fire**

Andrés tweeted on October 24 that World Central Kitchen was already stationed in Sonoma County to provide relief for those affected by the fire, and they've been on the ground since serving meals to residents and first responders.

### **Congratulations to Kaiser Permanente's Pat Kendall for Winning the Outstanding Corporate Involvement Award From Lifehouse**

Lifehouse, a Marin County-based nonprofit organization supporting individuals with developmental disabilities.

### **Arrow Benefits Group Launches Award-Winning Joint-Partnership Program for Clients**

Arrow Benefits Group is breaking the mold, where Principal Andrew McNeil and Spanish Language Division (Alianza) lead Rosario Avila have teamed up to form The Power of Two, an unprecedented collaboration that has garnered them the prestigious award "2019 Benefits Advisers of the Year" by Employee Benefits Adviser (EBA), the first time this award has been granted jointly.

### **Midstate Construction Completes Valley View Senior Homes**

General contractor Midstate Construction Corporation and developer Satellite Affordable Housing Associates (SAHA) recently completed new construction of Valley View Senior Homes, a 70 unit affordable senior and veteran housing facility in American Canyon, CA.

**Read more online at** [www.northbayleadership.org/news](http://www.northbayleadership.org/news)



## Who We Are

Over twenty five years ago, business leaders founded the North Bay Leadership Council on a simple premise: We can accomplish more by working together. Today, the Council includes 54 leading employers in the North Bay. Our members represent a wide variety of businesses, non-profits and educational institutions, with a workforce in excess of 25,000. As business and civic leaders, our goal is to promote sound public policy, innovation and sustainability to make our region a better place to live and work. For more information: Call 707.283.0028 / E-mail [info@northbayleadership.org](mailto:info@northbayleadership.org)

[www.northbayleadership.org](http://www.northbayleadership.org)