



NEWS RELEASE

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A people-focused Purdue fan steps into Town's HR leadership role

As Michelle Crabtree takes on her new professional role as the Town of Vienna's human resources director, she brings with her lessons learned in the hotel industry and with Walmart, a family Purdue tradition that extends back four generations, and a love for people and human relations.

Before coming to the Town of Vienna, Crabtree worked for a quarter of a century in human resources in the hotel industry, for the past 15 years at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City, where she also provided HR support for other Hyatt hotels in Virginia, Maryland, and Washington, DC.

"At Hyatt," she says, "our mission was to care for people so that they can be their best. When employees can be their best, they can help guests – or residents – be their best."

Before coming to the hotel industry, Crabtree worked for eight years with Walmart, first as a college intern and eventually as a store manager. She recalls as an intern the allure of Sam Walton's Saturday morning management meetings and his MBWA philosophy – management by walking around.

"When you get to know employees and about their families and what they like, when you develop a relationship with them, then they feel more connected and work harder for the organization," she says. "That's why you'll find me out of my office more than in it sometimes. I'll be out getting to know people and learning about their lives."

In addition to her passion for people, Crabtree enjoys the unpredictability of working in the field. "Every day is different," she says. "You never know who's going to come to you needing help."

Town Manager Mercury Payton says: "We received 72 applications in our nationwide search to fill the director of human resources position. Michelle's deep experience in human resources leadership and her high level of customer service experience caught our attention, but it's Michelle's professionalism and appreciation of the value of employees at every level that set her apart from other candidates."

Over the course of her career, Crabtree is particularly proud of helping to promote more than two dozen people, both within and outside the human resources field. Another proud moment came in 2019 when the Hyatt Regency Crystal City was named a *Washington Post* Top Workplace.

Crabtree also is proud to be a fourth-generation Boilermaker alumna – her great-grandmother graduated from Purdue University in 1914. She graduated from Purdue in 1990 with a bachelor's degree in consumer sciences. And Crabtree met her husband of 16 years through a Purdue alumni event.

They have two children, Emily, 14, and Tyler, 11. Emily has plans to be an oncologist, inspired by her brother, who was diagnosed with pre-B acute lymphoblastic leukemia as a toddler and celebrated this spring his five-year anniversary of completing treatment. The family enjoys going to the beach, biking, and their pandemic yellow lab/boxer mix puppy, Sunny. Crabtree also runs half marathons.

Crabtree takes over the human resources director role in Vienna from Maggie Kain, who retired last month.