

New firm offers help with staff dynamics, teamwork

BY JOHN TOWNES

At a time when workplace issues have become more challenging and complex, Kevin Thomas has launched a North Adams-based consulting business to help the staffs of businesses and organizations work together more effectively.

Thomas founded Green River Coaching and Consulting in September.

“My primary focus is on fostering collaborative working relationships,” said Thomas, who previously was Learning and Development Manager at Williams College. “The goal is to create win-win scenarios that benefit the business, the staff and their customers.”

He said Green River Coaching and Consulting (617-388-8655 or www.greenrivercoaching.com) is oriented

both to businesses and nonprofit community organizations such as cultural institutions and social service agencies.

His services include mediation, conflict resolution and team-building activities, which are used to help the members of businesses and organizations collaborate more effectively, and to achieve goals such as improved customer service and productivity.

These include participatory interactive exercises and learning programs in communication skills, change leadership, facilitation skills, supervision, employee development, performance management and project management, among others.

He also offers executive coaching to help professionals manage organizations.

Thomas explained that he tailors his services and fees to the specific needs of clients.

“Every engagement starts with a conversation in which the client explains their situation and what they want to accomplish, and

I explain the services I offer,” he said. “Then I’ll submit a proposal based on the goals of the client, and my evaluation of what specific services would be most helpful.”

He noted that his background includes psychology, organizational development and human resources.

Thomas grew up in Framingham and lived and worked in the Boston area. He has a bachelor’s degree in philosophy from St. John’s College and a master’s degree in psychology from Lesley University.

“I started my career in mental health counseling,” he said. “I then moved into HR and I discovered a strong interest in organizational development and learning.”

Among other positions, he was a human resources specialist at Harvard Medical School and HR programs and business process consultant at Harvard Library.

Thomas and his wife, Sonora, a psychotherapist, moved to Berkshire County in 2013, when he joined the staff at Williams College.

“We had been vacationing in southern Vermont and the Berkshires for many years,” he said. “We had wanted to get out of the city for a while. On one of our trips here, I saw a posting for the job of Learning and Development Manager at Williams. That looked like a dream come true, and I immediately applied.”

He said he had also done some part-time consulting work here and decided to set up his own firm on a full-time basis last autumn.

“Like many people, the COVID situation made me look at my priorities and what I wanted out of my career,” he said. “I decided that I really wanted to offer my skills in learning and organizational development to the larger community, so I took the leap.”

Thomas said the firm’s name is a reference to the Green River in Williamstown, and also has symbolic connotations.



Kevin Thomas has launched Green River Coaching and Consulting. (Photo provided by the company)

“The name suggests the core principles of growth and flow, and the philosophy that organizations work best when they are based on the principle of natural harmony,” he said.

He acknowledged that he has had to adjust to accommodate the need for social distancing during the COVID pandemic.

“Like all professionals, I can’t do as much in person now,” he said. “However, all of my services can be done remotely and translated into online programs.”

He said that the pandemic has added other dimensions to the issues and challenges of the workplace. This includes the increased reliance on remote working.

“For example, people are used to depending on physical proximity to create baseline trust,” he said. “Now, when organizations depend more on remote working and virtual remote interactions, it becomes more important than ever to send the right messages that inspire trust. That takes more work.”

He added that the pressures of the situation also make empathy especially important.

“This is a trauma that we’re all going through,” Thomas said. “It can impact people’s job performance in many ways. So, it becomes especially vital that employers and co-workers recognize the challenges that people are facing, and to be understanding about it.” ♦

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This project is funded by a Senator Kenneth J. Donnelly Workforce Success Grant (Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund FY19’ Appropriation) through the Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development and is administered by the Commonwealth Corporation.