

## Facilitator — April/May 2016



### 2016 Restaurateur of the Year

*Noelle Faille*

Noelle Faille, CRFP, Regional Facilities Manager at Jason's Deli, is relatively new to facility management. She has been with Jason's Deli for 13 years, beginning as a restaurant manager, then moving into the training department to train restaurant managers and the purchasing department, and currently, to the facilities department.

"Purchasing was a desk job, but I have too much energy to sit at a desk Monday through Friday," she said. "Five years ago, when the facility manager opportunity presented itself, I jumped on it."

She attended her first RFMA annual conference four years ago and thought it was a great introduction into the world of facilities. She enjoyed meeting and networking with other facility professionals.

"RFMA opened my eyes to the possibilities of the impact I can make as a facility manager," she said.

By the next year, she was ready to dive into RFMA.

"It's like watching people double-dutch jump rope: You watch them for a bit before you jump in," she said.

Additionally, Nic McLaughlin, who at the time was the Director of Facilities at Jason's Deli and is now the Director of FF&E, was deeply involved with RFMA. He demonstrated to her that it was possible to work and volunteer with RFMA and be effective at both.

"He's been inspirational to me," she said.

"Jason's Deli has been fortunate to have Noelle as part of the family for the past 13 years," McLaughlin said. "From her first day, Noelle has brought a bright smile, a whatever-it-takes attitude and a knack for thinking outside the box to every situation. Her ability to maintain a calm demeanor, enthusiasm for her work and to provide excellent communication has made her a top team member. She is universally respected by her peers, the restaurant operators she supports and the vendors. Her seemingly boundless energy has made it possible for her to maintain a high level of work performance while completing a Master's degree and will shortly complete her Doctorate. We are extremely proud of Noelle."

Last year at the annual conference in San Diego, Faille hosted her first education session.

"I wanted to develop myself in public speaking and saw the education session as a chance to practice it," she said. "I submitted an abstract about 'Project Management in a Virtual Setting,' and it was selected. It was great; I enjoyed the experience."

"Noelle is a true professional who strives for continuous improvement in herself personally and professionally," said Raymond Begnaud, Director of Facilities, Development & Design at Jason's Deli. "She is a consummate communicator who is always prepared to share an impactful message and works diligently in her role to achieve our company's mission, to make every customer happy."

For this year's conference, her abstract about "How to Negotiate and Purchase Services" was selected. She had an impressive turnout—approximately 80 attendees—and her session received encouraging feedback.

"As I walked the exhibit hall, vendors stopped me to say they enjoyed it, and at networking events, people stopped me to say they left with good information," she said. "I hope to do it again next year and be a regular speaker. I still get stage fright, but instead of focusing on fear, I channel it into excitement."

"Noelle's passion for work and life is only matched by her determination for excellence," said Donald Newman, Director of Facilities at Jason's Deli. "She has the unique ability to learn and teach all at the same time."

Faille is currently serving as the Co-Chair of RFMA's Member Engagement Committee and also co-hosted a regional benchmarking session in Texas.

Faille is always more than willing to do whatever the RFMA staff asks of her, and her contributions have been invaluable. For these reasons, she is this year's recipient of the Restaurateur of the Year award.

"We can't say enough about Noelle," said Tracy Tomson, Executive Director at RFMA. "She is an enthusiastic volunteer and a

complete joy to work with. She is passionate about our industry and fully embodies our mission like no one else I know. She is all about advancing the profession and increasing and sharing knowledge for the betterment of all members.”

McLaughlin secretly arranged for Faille’s parents, Ed and Kathryn Faille and sister, Heather Norton, to be there to watch her accept the award. As she walked off the stage after receiving the award and having her picture taken, she saw her family waiting for her.

“My dad was choked up, and they were cheering for me,” she said. “It is a moment I will never forget.

Her dad, now retired, was a Project Manager for Carrier Air Conditioners. He loves that Faille is a facility manager.

“He’s over the moon that his daughter got into facilities,” she said. “It gives us an opportunity to talk shop. For him to see me get that award was very special for him.”

Faille says the award gives her professional validation.

“A lot of us wing it and do the best we can at our job,” she said.

“The award says that I’m doing a good job of winging it. I will honor the award by being my best professional self.”

“Noelle is a consummate professional, excelling in personal and professional development, resulting in the achievement of high performance standards in multiple roles and responsibilities within our organization,” said Keith Kemplay, Director of Performance Excellence at Jason’s Deli.

It’s apparent that Faille’s professional life is firing on all cylinders. She loves her job, her company and being an integral part of RFMA.

“I’ll always be a restaurant person,” she said. “I love ensuring that restaurant managers have everything they need to be successful. I know from experience that they have a lot to focus on, and the last thing they need to worry about is if their equipment is going to work.

“Jason’s Deli is an amazing company. They have seen me grow from fresh out of college to the adult I am now. The leadership is family strong. We hug each other constantly, we care about each other’s families, and every year we have a retreat that includes our families. The philosophies of the company align with my personal values. It’s a perfect fit for me.

“I have an affinity for the RFMA staff. They are all awesome people. I enjoy visiting the office. They were all so excited for me when I was having a baby and wanted me to bring him by the office so they could meet him. It’s a close-knit group, and I’m really happy to be a part of it.”

Faille is honored by the award and grateful to everyone who helped make it possible.

“I look forward to being more involved with RFMA and getting involved with new opportunities in the future,” she said.