

CRFP Spotlight

Get to know some of our recent CRFP designees!

We are excited that more of our members are joining this distinguished group. We credit their knowledge and experience, as well as their initiative for taking advantage of our online learning modules.

Nikki Hale, CRFP

Nikki Hale, CRFP Above, clockwise: Hale having fun horseback riding; at the airport; at BCT Graduation 2012; exploring Jamaica in 2017; at an FSU game; enjoying Disney in 2017.

Blake Callahan, CRFP

Blake Callahan, CRFP Clockwise from middle: Callahan with his family at the annual Turkey Trot for the homeless; exploring a Portland, Maine, lighthouse; stopping by Fenway Park to support the Red Sox.

Zach Hardy, CRFP

Zach Hardy, CRFP Above: Hardy and his wife having dinner in St. Petersburg, Russia; Hardy introducing his son to his new baby brother; with his family at Epcot Disney World in Orlando; the Hardy family at Easter.

Tim Spear, CRFP

Tim Spear, CRFP Clockwise from top: Spears fishing off Bermuda; whose sofa is it?; with his brother in Stone Creek, Penn.; celebrating his wife's retirement; Spears and his pocket pal, Izzy Smart.

Congratulations to Our CRFPs

Blake Callahan, CRFP, CPA, CVA — CFO, MC Builders LLC

Nikki Hale, CRFP — Facility Manager, Cheddar's Scratch Kitchen (Darden)

Zach Hardy, CRFP — Facilities Manager, Nando's Peri Peri

Tim Spear, CRFP — Equipment Maintenance Manager, Weis Markets Inc.

What do you enjoy most about your job? Callahan: I love the satisfaction of starting a project and watching it be completed. I enjoy being the person who our customers call upon. It may sound strange, but I enjoy the 2 a.m. phone calls. Hale: I love the fact that I don't know what the day will bring. I encounter something new each day. I find it very rewarding when I am able to quickly resolve an issue for my restaurants so they can get back to what is important: providing excellent food and service to our guests. Hardy: Every day presents a wide array of challenges that need to be resolved in a timely, efficient manner. These opportunities are what drive me to further my knowledge and expand my way of thinking in the effort of resolving problems quicker and finding a more efficient resolution than the time before. Spear: I love solving problems with logic rather than emotion. As an equipment maintenance manager for more than 200 stores, I get to do that a lot!

What other companies have you worked for prior to your current position? Callahan: I actually worked as a public accountant for 15 years but always missed working in the field. I grew up on a farm, so you were up early doing your chores and constantly fixing things. Being in this position takes me back to my roots, and I enjoy that. Hale: I am very fortunate to have been working for Darden for more than 23 years. Although I have held different positions within the company, they have been my only employer. Hardy: Olive Garden, Bertucci's, RUB BBQ and Pot Belly's. Spear: I started my working career as a teenager in residential construction and remodeling and progressed into the commercial side of the business.

When you were new to the industry, what was the most surprising thing you learned about the restaurant world? Hale: I was surprised at just how much my position can impact restaurant operations. The restaurant managers are already tasked with numerous items they need to accomplish each day, so if I am able to remove anything from their plate, I consider it a success. Hardy: That the hospitality industry never truly takes a day off! Spear: I was amazed by how much goes on behind the scenes that most folks never give any thought.

What is your all-time favorite movie? Callahan: The "National Treasure" movies. I love visiting and seeing places that have so much history. Hale: I'm not exactly sure why, but I can watch "The Shawshank Redemption" over and over again. Hardy: "The Big Lebowski." Spear: A lot of my favorite movies are westerns, but at the top of the list would have to be "The Last Boy Scout"!

What is the most challenging situation you've ever faced in a facility or on the job? How did you handle it? Callahan: We were remodeling a local restaurant, and our last crew that was coming in didn't make it on time. Needless to say, I had to call in a few favors, having family members come in and complete the final details of painting and caulking before our walk through. Hale: We all deal with challenges, from restaurant closings to power outages to remodels and even storms. One of my most challenging situations was when one of my restaurants had to shut down due to its sanitary sewer system being gone— yes, gone! They had old terracotta lines from the 1950s that had eroded away. The line ran under a six-lane state road, and we were responsible for it until it crossed underneath all six lanes and tied into the main. With the difficulty of this project, I knew that having the absolute best vendor partner would be crucial. We were originally told that we could only shut down one lane of the state road at a time, which meant the restaurant would be closed for at least six days. This was not acceptable, so after one night, we quickly abandoned the plan of a conventional dig and decided to bore a new line underground. The restaurant was back up and running within two days. In total, more than 200 feet of line was replaced. I think I only slept a few hours the whole time, but the restaurant downtime was minimal, and the operators were happy. Hardy: The greatest challenges happen when there is little alignment and all individuals are working for their own cause or off their own plan. I find these challenges can always be solved with clear communication, defined expectations and hard deadlines. Spear: Easily the biggest challenge I have faced as a facility professional was in 2016 when Weis Markets acquired and re-branded 44 stores in 96 days! We took possession of five stores on Saturday at midnight and reopened for business the following Friday at 7 a.m. I believe many others at Weis Markets would agree it was the biggest challenge of their careers as well. We all leaned on one another, pivoted as needed and pooled our experience and talents, and opened all 44 stores on schedule.

What is your favorite work-related app? Callahan: All my travel apps. They make everything easy as far as finding my flight or checking in to my hotel. The benefits are great as well. Hale: With restaurants across so many states, I could not live without WAZE to help me navigate from point A to point B. Hardy: Ecotrak, a CMMS app, keeps me linked in to my entire portfolio, in real time, with no confusion. Spear: "Just Press Record" is a great tool for capturing meeting or site visit notes, and since I am never without my phone, it is something I use often. It is my proven memory formula.

What is the best advice you ever received? Callahan: "You have to be willing to fail while working your tail off to succeed." I actually have this quote on my office wall. Failing is a learning experience. Hale: When I was initially hired at Darden (then GMRI Inc.), my father told me, "Learn your job and do it well, so others cannot tell you how to do it." I've passed this little nugget along to my kids as they have ventured out into the work force. Hardy: A hard working student mentality can be your best asset. Spear: "Don't panic; you can think your way through anything." This was advice my father gave me as a very young man. I have lived by this and gotten through many "hair on fire" moments with its simplicity.

Who is the most impressive person you have ever met? Callahan: I would say Curtis Jackson (50 Cent). I had the opportunity to eat dinner with him one night and was blown away at the business knowledge this gentleman had—something I wasn't expecting for sure. Hale: The most impressive person I have ever met would have to be the one who stole my heart: my husband! He came from very meager beginnings and is the only one of his siblings to receive a college degree. He left home early to pursue a better life for himself, which took him from West Virginia to Florida, where I met him. He is extremely supportive and committed to the Lord and his family, gives back to the community by being a youth sports coach and is an all-around hard-working man. He is a great example of a husband, father and person! Hardy: My mom, who raised my two brothers and me, sacrificing on a personal level daily for the benefit and well-being of our family. I never fully grasped that until I had kids and my own family. Spear: With zero hesitation, my wife and best friend, Beverly, who impresses me every day; she is from where my sun shines.

To what would you attribute your success in achieving your CRFP? Callahan: Hard work. I still to this day will go on job sites to help out and work through the night because I love to learn. Hale: The online study guide and practice exams were wonderful and assisted me in preparing to take the CRFP exam. Obtaining the CRFP designation was a goal I had set for myself, and I am very pleased to have achieved it. Hardy: Having a great leader (Nic Stoyer) who drives me to strive for more and continue my growth by gaining education and certifications on the latest industry standards and best practices, while never settling, instead always moving and growing. Spear: As a Hard Knocks University laureate, I tend to lean in and go hard at it.

Would you recommend attaining a CRFP to other colleagues? Why? Callahan: Definitely. I think the CRFP designation is a great tool when talking to customers or colleagues. I feel it shows your knowledge of ever-changing tools of the industry. Hale: Yes. There is absolutely no reason not to! Just set aside the time to go through the modules online, and you will be prepared for the exam. You will be surprised at how much you learn! Hardy: I would definitely recommend attaining a CRFP to others as it gives a great foundation of knowledge for all facilities roles. Spear: I definitely do recommend earning the CRFP. It makes you part of and connects you with an invaluable network of industry professionals.

What do you do for fun in your spare time? Callahan: I enjoy hanging out with my family and watching their sports, which takes up most of my free time. I also enjoy traveling and seeing new places that maybe I've passed through on work trips. Hale: I am sure this is the same with most people, but I love spending time with my family. We are huge sports enthusiasts, and we love to attend different sporting events, from high school, to college, to pro. My husband is an assistant coach on my daughter's travel basketball team, so many of our weekends are spent in the gym and traveling for tournaments. When we are not at sporting events, we love to travel to new places, take in a good movie, host dinner parties for friends and family, and eat! Hardy: I spend most of my time adventuring in the outdoors, fishing, crabbing, hunting and hiking with my wife and two sons. Spear: I have been playing guitar for 40 years. Playing takes me to a place where I am able to disconnect from the rigors of the 24/7/365 demands of the facilities industry.