

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.

CRFP Designees honored at RFMA 2018

The individuals below earned their CRFP designation during the past year and were celebrated at RFMA 2018 in Phoenix. It is through a combination of knowledge, experience and preparation that these distinguished professionals have achieved this honor.

Joe Kanawall, CRFP

Clockwise: Kanawall with Dave Thomas; Segways in Pigeon Forge, TN; Mystery Hill in Boone, NC; Kanawall gem mining with his family; watching the solar eclipse with his wife.

Brannon Stewart, CRFP

From top: Stewart swimming with his kids in Myrtle Beach; one tough Mudder in 2017; first day of kindergarten; Stewart at Crossfit competition in Medina, Ohio, 2017; family night out.

Kenneth McKay, CRFP

Clockwise from top: McKay and his wife, Kim, on the Disney World Avatar ride; at RFMA's annual conference with Michael Giminez of Starbucks and Tracy Tomson; McKay and daughter, Jazz, at an Orlando waterpark; Daughter Alex looking beautiful in her homecoming dress; McKay and son, "JoJo," in the dojo.

Congratulations to Our CRFPs

Joseph Kanawall, Jr., CRFP — Facilities Manager, Wendy's

Kenneth P. McKay, CRFP — Area Director, Team Schostak Family Restaurants

Brannon Stewart Jr., CRFP — Operations Manager, Major Facility Solutions

What do you enjoy most about your job? Kanawall: I am good at turning a wrench, but I really enjoy the facility management side of my position. I get a sense of satisfaction from the day-to-day process of keeping my facilities in peak condition, and I enjoy seeing the completion of our short- and long-term goals. Since I go from store to store, I get to interact with a lot of interesting people in the restaurant industry. McKay: Knowing that what we do, whether reactive or strategic, helps to keep customers and employees happy and keeps the company's cash registers open. Stewart: Every day is a new adventure and an opportunity to learn something new. I've been with Major since 2006, and to this day I am still learning, adapting and expanding my knowledge in this industry.

What other companies have you worked for prior to your current position? Kanawall: Prior to my 19 years at Wendy's, I worked at Volusia County School Board Facilities Division and Spencer Refrigeration, but I started as a young adult with my father as a remodeler/builder/investor. Right out of high school, I was an aviation mechanic in Connecticut. McKay: I worked for Starbucks for 16 years, the last 10 as a facilities manager. I earned my CRFP as part of the team with RFMy winner Kelly McMahon. Stewart: Rehabicare, a medical equipment company that specialized in nerve and muscle stimulation. I managed the clinical sales department. On the side, strictly for fun during the fall, I help a family friend by working at the Haunted School House and Laboratory in Akron, Ohio. I don't care how old I get; I will never stop enjoying the scare! If you don't know about it, please look it up!

When you were new to the industry, what was the most surprising thing you learned about the restaurant world? Kanawall: I learned that it's a performance that we need to perfect for our customers to have an enjoyable experience every time they visit. There is a lot of behind-the-scenes work, which take multiple hats to fulfill, and I am a key part of it. The better I do my job, the more likely our customers will have a smile on their faces and leave happy. McKay: I started way back at 15 years of age and found the customer service aspect to be so rewarding I never left. I went to college for my degree in the hospitality field. Stewart: This may sound simple, but I had no idea the ice bin on top of the soda machines helped regulate the temperature of the product being moved through the system.

What is your all-time favorite movie? Kanawall: As a child, "The Wizard of Oz." As a teen, "Top Gun," "Back to the Future" and other 80s movies. But with today's technology, many of the action movies are fantastic, too. McKay: "The Godfather I and II." Notwithstanding the violence, the traditions remind me of my mother's Italian side of the family and our upbringing! Stewart: "Braveheart" is my all-time favorite, but "Top Gun" is right there with it. My kids say this shows my age!

What is the most challenging situation you've ever faced in a facility or on the job? How did you handle it? Kanawall: Besides individual store calamities either caused by human interaction or nature, the most intense concentration of issues were the hurricanes of 2004, which affected all our locations. I was the first responder, information hub, evaluator, and point of contact for vendors, contractors, municipalities and adjusters. I orchestrated all components, as well as doing many of the repairs myself, to get things back to normal. Having my network of strong business relationships was also a key for recovery and success. McKay: I've had a few. A collapsed sewer resulted in a 54-inch gnat nest. Spilled gasoline from a gas station ran into our sewer system. But the biggest one was called a "heterodyne" situation, where a radio frequency was killing all the motherboards in a store. My facility manager Tom Mulhall flew in to help, and we ended up hiring a Vietnam vet radio specialist to figure it out, isolate it and remove it. Stewart: The most challenging situation I encountered was when a tractor-trailer driver fell asleep at the wheel and veered off the road into the side of a restaurant in the middle of the night. I recruited all the techs I could round up at 3 a.m. and had a Bobcat, trash dumpster and materials to board up the building within two hours of being informed of the accident. The cleanup, working with a structural engineer and securing the property went on for hours and into the afternoon that day. The building was secure and the restaurant was able to resume business within two days while construction continued to take place!

What is your favorite work-related app? Kanawall: MyRadar to know the weather, Google Maps to avoid jams on the highway since travel a lot and Podcasts. McKay: Starbucks had a Facility Store Condition tablet application that systematically walked you through all of the elements of the store, wherein you could create work orders and identify capital projects. It also took photos and sent the final report to the DM, RDO and my FM. Stewart: Slack. It has allowed our entire company to stay in touch at all times, anywhere! Sometimes there are group messages you no longer need to be a part of, and you can remove and add people to conversations as needed.

Additionally, you never lose conversations and can keyword search items to find information from an old conversation.

What is the best advice you ever received? Kanawall: My dad used to say, "Measure twice; cut once." It's a simple rule, but it applies to many things in life. He also encouraged me at a young age to save for the future. We taught our children the same, and they have taken it to heart.

McKay: "Ken, you've just got the wrong vendor." It was in relation to the heterodyne situation. One would almost never think to call a veteran with such experience in radio frequencies! Stewart: "It's always a 'no' unless you ask! Never be afraid to ask."

Who is the most impressive person you have ever met? Kanawall: Dave Thomas, the founder of Wendy's. I had an opportunity early in my career to meet him personally. He was very down to earth, believing in honesty, integrity and treating people with respect. He used to say, "You can be anything you want to be within the laws of God and man." A close second is my wife, Tricia, of 34 years who has accomplished a finance degree and recently two computer degrees. McKay: John Foley, keynote speaker at RFMA 2015 and a former Blue Angels pilot—what a motivating person. Stewart: William Sterling, hands down! He was a warrant officer in the U.S. Navy. This man had patience, insight, understanding and wisdom beyond any one I have ever met. He did not always pretend to have the answers, but he would listen, break down and sail you in the right direction every time.

To what would you attribute your success in achieving your CRFP? Kanawall: My years in the field made it much easier to digest the material. There are so many facets within the restaurant industry, so having the background was very helpful. I had started it a year ago but then had some major schedule changes. This time I made sure to find blocks of time in the evening to read through the modules so I could complete the test. McKay: As stated prior, Kelly McMahan and the Starbucks Midwest Team. We studied together as a team under her tutelage until we all achieved it. I also appreciated the vast amount of resources on the RFMA site. Stewart: Our customers, my experience and my peers in the office. Together we learn, grow, accomplish and achieve to make each one of us effective in this industry.

Would you recommend attaining a CRFP to other colleagues? Why? Kanawall: Yes; I highly recommend it. It's an important achievement, and it encourages you to continue learning no matter where you are in your career. I look forward to other learning opportunities. RFMA has

done a great job of putting together the educational information. Each module has links that offer a wealth of additional information. McKay: Yes! When I attained it, I called my first facility manager, Dino Tatangelo, and told him how proud I was. Stewart: Absolutely. First and foremost, everyone should want to learn and accomplish any certifications in their industry. Knowledge is empowering. Second, on the vendor side of things, it brings insight into everything the restaurateurs have to deal with in decisions they make regarding the repairs, code requirements and smooth operations of their locations.

What do you do for fun in your spare time? Kanawall: Enjoying fellowship at the church, exercising at the Y, making memories with the family on road trips, camping or just making s'mores in our backyard fire pit. It's harder now that they are in college, but we still find the time. McKay: I love martial arts, physical fitness and watching sports. I boxed for 32 years, did Brazilian Jiu Jitsu for seven years and now, I'm close to achieving a black belt NAAMA in karate. My little boy comes with me every Saturday for class. My wife and I work out in our huge home gym, and we are avid concert goers, especially during the summer concert season. As a family, we try to visit sunny Florida once a year and enjoy all of the theme parks. If anybody has a facilities position open in Florida, message me on the RFMA site—we'll get a one-way ticket! Stewart: Vacation! Plus, I have been doing CrossFit for three years, and I love it. I also enjoy hanging with my kids, hunting, fishing, tennis, golf and darts.

You, Too, Can Be a CRFP, and the Online CRFP Exam Prep Course is Here to Help You!

The online prep course was designed by RFMA member experts to help all RFMA members be the best restaurant facility professionals they can be.