

LOUISVILLE BUSINESS FIRST

Most Admired CEOs: Edward Minnis

Edward Minnis, executive director, Gathering Club

Years in the industry: 18
 Years in current job: 1.5
 Lives: Louisville
 Number of Louisville-area employees: 160
 Briefly describe your company and what it does.

Founded by Dr. Rishi Kumar in 2013, the Gathering Club was established to help as a gap closure measure for so many patients who require additional compassionate care. Many patients lacked the supervision and assistance they needed to maintain their personal health. Dr. Rishi's compassion drove him to create the Gathering Club to offer services in the facility and in the homes of clients.

Two locations in the South and East end of Louisville provide vital services including:

- Adult day health center
- In-Home attendant care
- Transportation
- Case management

Gathering Club serves a wide range of populations focusing on:

- immigrants,
- refugees,
- senior citizens, and
- persons with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

The Center boasts over 80 years of combined experience in caring for these diverse populations. The organization has always been an ally with our LGBTQ+ community. Gathering Club is proud of their 2021 Platinum SAGECare member status.

What's the best thing about being CEO? What's the worst? Serving and supporting others is the hallmark and the best aspect of my leadership position. I love the industry I have chosen, enjoy working with an established and incredible team of professionals who are dedicated to making a difference, and I am devoted to being a servant leader. Coupled with drive and ambition, that's what gets me out of bed every morning.

As a foster parent myself, I understand the delicate intricacies in providing a safe and nurturing home for the children entrusted to our care. The same holds true for my career. I am entrusted with the lives of my clients, team, and owners daily. I am blessed to have a career and home life that mirror one another so perfectly as if in a symphony of divine order.

The biggest struggle for me and most healthcare leaders is finding dedicated, compassionate people to provide support for those in need.

What has been a turning point in your career and what made it so important? There is not one single event in my life that I would consider a



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“career turning point.”

During the time I was establishing my career, I felt very unappreciated as an employee who was working 60-80 hours per week. The revelation that there must be a more productive and healthier way to contribute, pushed me to the executive level where I could truly help an organization focus on lack of work-life balance, empathy, and appreciation within the workforce.

Most research indicates that happier, healthier employees are directly related to their work environment and culture. I attribute our success to ensuring we remain productive while providing beneficial Work-Life Balance within the confines of our business model. That model also reminds us to continue appreciate each other's differences and contributions.

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What advice would you give a new CEO/president? I would share with them that the most critical pieces of your new leadership position are to:

- Never discount your frontline employees, they are the true asset to any organization
- Lead, Listen, and have empathy
- Look for ways to be a good steward with the mindset that giving leads to gains which leads to growth
- Look for the opportunities to teach and guide vs focusing on failures and giving unnecessary criticism
- Be committed to the growth of all people
- Empower, Collaborate, and Love Unconditionally
- Serve others' needs before your own

What personal responsibility do you feel as a leader to promote diversity, equity and inclusion and how do you make it a reality? As a member of senior management and being a minority within the organization speaks volumes to our belief structure. We have no need to rationalize or tolerate any inequality behaviors within our staff or from others who enter our doors.

I also believe that transparency with wages is paramount to the ongoing success of any business. Both individual contributors and management should have a concrete understanding of how salary ties to job performance and responsibility in order to avoid biased pay gaps.

Ensuring that everyone is viewed as a person and welcoming them as an individual is key.

We look for ways to support anyone that is in need of a helping hand. This has led to our new East End Center which will open the first of the year. The new Center will focus on individuals that have been overlooked and underserved over their lifetime.

What's a company other than your own that you admire and why? In my 18 years of serving others, I have worked with some of the best organizations. The one that truly stand out for me and that I admired the most is The ARC of Rensselaer County, New York.

When meeting with the administrator, Hanns Meissner, he shared The Arc's calling to support individuals with disabilities as citizens of their communities. Describing the difficult journey in challenging old models to create room for new ideas. The Arc's discovered pathways helped leverage their way out of group-based services through an organizational culture of appreciation and innovation. After spending some time at the agency, I saw firsthand how the culture, appreciation, and innovation was felt and shared at every level.

The comment that Hanns left me with was, "If we are effectively doing what we needed to do; our focus would be on working ourselves out of a job." This statement holds true today, even though we decrease support with someone, there is always someone that is in need of a guide to a better quality of life.

What was your first paying job and what did you learn from it? Whether paid for in fiat currency or as a volunteer position, life's career journey offers us unique learning opportunities to grow and expand our knowledge base.

My first exposure to the workforce wasn't a paid job. I was only 12 years old. I was volunteering at a local hospital (candy stripper they use to call it), working on a unit answering phones, guiding visitors on the unit to the correct room, refilling water pitchers, and most of all making a difference where I could, even at that young age.

My first paid job was at Taco Bell at the age of 14, where I used my high school ID and social security card to get hired. Even though this job wasn't something that I cared to do ever again in my life, it did help me define my calling. It's knowing the opposite of what you want that helps clarify what you do want in life. My calling was making the difference in the lives of others.

How do you unwind and/or disconnect? We must all remember that most likely when we die, we never announce: "I wish I would have spent more time at the office". This goes back to my belief in work-life balance. My mantra is always "do, do, do." It's hard for me to disconnect.

I too need reminders to slow down, embrace life and those we love, and relish this short time on the third rock from the sun. To do this I enjoy laughter, animals and children, spending time with my husband, family and friends, being in the water, traveling to the beach as often as I can, and working on house renovations and decorating projects.

What's something most people don't know about you and/or the wildest/craziest thing you've ever done? What's considered wild and crazy for each of us is different. To me, my chosen career and life path is just crazy.

I've worked insane hours to get to the top of my field. While building my career in management I was also a single foster parent of five children of color, finishing my master's degree, and providing stability for myself and my family.

In the end, it has all been worth it. I've never been one to sit on the sidelines of life. If something needs to be solved, I thrive on helping make that happen. If someone needs assistance, the same holds true. It's just how I am wired. Servant leadership has served me well.