



# Meet the Director, Katherine Chase, Executive Director, Cayuga Lake Wine Trail

## Describe Your Business

The Cayuga Lake Wine Trail is a non-profit organization with 14 member wineries and over 75 associate advertisers from the area, such as accommodations, dining, transportation, and attractions. As the first wine trail in the country, we were founded in 1983 to help promote the wineries that are located within the Cayuga Lake AVA (American Viticultural Area). To do this, we produce a brochure that's distributed throughout the eastern states and distributed through annual events and promotional activities. We also have a website with up-to-date information such as winery events and happenings, as well as having a large social media presence.

## Tell us your story:

My two younger siblings and I were all born in Ithaca, NY to parents who also grew up in Ithaca. We lived about 30 minutes north of Ithaca in Interlaken, NY. My career path is based on experience rather than an educational path, and didn't truly start until I took my first office job. I started as a temp for a home health agency in Auburn, NY. I was recruited to fill a vacant position in their Newark office, and was the Medical Secretary for the Rehab Department of Lifetime Care for 4 years. I basically stumbled into the tourism and wine industry after that and haven't looked back. I was a new mother, and was adamant that I couldn't commute 45 minutes, each way, to Newark. That was too much extra time away from my new son. One late night, I stumbled on a job posting for an administrative assistant at the Cayuga Lake Wine Trail, which happened to be 10 minutes from my house at the time. I easily met all the qualifications, and decided to apply. From here, the rest is history. I worked with the original Director before she retired, and worked alongside the new one after her. I was promoted to event coordinator and kept chugging along. When that director left, I was then promoted to the new Executive Director, and have been running the wine trail for the past two years. In this role is where I truly realized how much I love, not just the wine industry, but tourism as a whole.

## What has helped you succeed and gain experience?

I think my work ethic has helped me succeed so much since starting at the wine trail. I have the drive to succeed and the personality to make sure I do it to the best of my ability. I've gained a lot of knowledge from working with my previous directors because I pay attention to detail and learned as they worked. I also do as much networking as I can. Having connections and knowing people who can help when help is needed is crucial to success on all levels.

## What inspires you?

Making sure I set a good example for my son, Evan. I want him to know that I did my best and that I worked hard to pave my way up the ladder at each business I've been with. I want him to know that if you work hard, you can go anywhere you want and do anything you want to do. I'm also inspired by my peers. Seeing them rocking it in their positions pushes me to want to accomplish great things, too.

## What keeps you up at night? What are your challenges?

Professionally, my seemingly never-ending to-do list keeps me up at night. I have a hard to time shutting that out once I'm home. I'll lay awake prioritizing what needs to be done the next day, or mentally adding things to that list. Personally, I lay awake pondering my parenting abilities. I share custody of my 5 year old son, so I either wonder if he was happy that day at his dads, or I wonder if I'm doing a good job or not; a common question amongst parents. Night time is when we reflect on everything from the previous day. Was I too lenient or too stern? Am I feeding him properly?

Is he misbehaving in school because of my parenting? Or is he just a wild 5 year-old boy? The list of parenting questions and qualms is even more never-ending than my work to-do list.

**What is your favorite local activity?**

I very much enjoy live music. I like going to different venues, whether a winery, restaurant, or even a local park in the summer to hear new bands, or to follow some of my favorites. The Finger Lakes has so many awesome things to see and do, and entertainers are definitely one of those.

**Is there anything else we should know about you?**

I'm incredibly creative and love crafts. I make gifts at Christmastime and birthdays, and have created almost all of my own wall art in my apartment. If it's cheaper and easier to just buy something similar, I will 100% spend more on supplies to make it myself. I believe that taking that time and effort to make something is much more meaningful than picking it out and swiping your debit card to buy it. I also sign the things I make in case I'm ever famous one day!

**Cayuga Lake Wine Trail • 800-684-5271 • 2770 Ernsberger Rd. Suite 200, Romulus, NY 14541 •**

**[info@cayugawinetrail.com](mailto:info@cayugawinetrail.com) • <http://www.CayugaWineTrail.com>**

**<https://www.facebook.com/cayugawinetrail/> • <https://www.instagram.com/cayugawinetrail/>**