

Leader Under 40

Cole Stites

Executive Director

Woodland Terrace of New Palestine

Nominated by
Angela Miller

Leader Under 40 Nomination

Name: Cole Stites

Age: 31

Years employed by Justus: 7 ½ years

In 2010, prior to finishing his Bachelors in Public Health with a concentration in Long Term Care Administration, Cole Stites applied for a position with Justus Companies. At all of 24 years of age, Cole started his leadership journey at Justus when he accepted the leasing counselor position at Crestwood Village East. Cole is one of the fortunate people because who knew early on what he wanted to be when he grew up ... a senior living executive. Cole became familiar with senior living by visiting family members living at Crestwood Village East. From an early age, he respected his elders and enjoyed making friendships with seniors. Growing up on the eastside, Cole had a healthy respect for the Justus Company. So, it was the perfect fit. Cole worked as he continued his college education.

Cole's passion for customer service along with his organizational skills caused him to be noticed and quickly promoted to Marketing Director. Meanwhile, Cole continued his education and achieved a Masters of Health Administration from Indiana University School of Public Health. Cole was then promoted to Executed Director or Crestwood Village South which at the time was a community with over 700 independent living apartments. Cole dedicated himself to learning the ropes of managing a large community. He was known for focusing on the prospect's experience and ensuring move ins were smooth. His understanding of the relationship between customer service and retention was beyond his years.

Crestwood Village West, the largest community with over 800 senior apartments including assisted living, was promoted, had an opening for Executive Director and Cole was selected to take on this challenge. Cole ensured the campus was well-maintained, neat and clean, staff were trained and processes improved all while building the occupancy by over 16% and making residents happy. Cole's first child was born while leading Crestwood Village West and the drive from the west side to the east side began to take a toll. Cole transferred to Crestwood Village East as Executive Director and continued his line of successful leadership. He made it known that if Justus ever decided to build in New Palestine, he wanted the Executive Director position.

Cole is always willing to take the necessary steps to be ready for the next challenge. Cole participated in and completed Leading Age of Indiana's Leadership VIP program to explore leadership best practices and analyze his own leadership. Cole also completed his AIT and became a licensed residential care administrator on 2/14/2017. His licensure was none too soon. When the Executive Director of Woodland Terrace of Carmel resigned the day before opening, Cole was called to step in as the Interim Director. When he was called, he said, "What time do you want me there tomorrow morning?" Cole served as Executive Director during the challenging times of opening, initial survey and many move ins.

Cole is now uniquely equipped to open Woodland Terrace of New Palestine and serve as that community's Executive Director.

So, at only 31 years of age, this young man has already made a huge impact in the senior living industry. He has served as a leasing counselor, marketing director and executive director of now four of our communities and soon it will be five. You will not find another young adult more dedicated to serving seniors. It is a lifestyle for him. He includes his young family and the residents dearly love that. He has made senior living leadership his life endeavor.