

Northeast past president honored for nonprofit work

BY ANNA RAKOVSKY | Trusted Professional Staff

For nearly a decade, Jeremy Noble, a past president of the NYSSCPA's Northeast Chapter, has lent his financial acumen to nonprofits whose missions may be diverse—the list includes youth organizations and community theater, groups that care for animals and those that service the physically, mentally and socially disadvantaged—but whose needs are often the same. “There are many charitable organizations in the community that want to do good but are structured in a way that impairs their ability to do so efficiently,” said Noble, the chief financial officer of the Albany-based full-service law firm Tully Rinckey PLLC. In recognition of his efforts as a volunteer to help community groups in the state’s Capital Region develop cost-savings strategies and improve internal controls, Noble was named the recipient of the 2013 Michael H. Urbach CPA Community Builders Award. The award, cosponsored by the NYSSCPA and the New York Council of Nonprofits (NYCON), is presented annually to a New York CPA who has demonstrated excellence in board leadership for nonprofit organizations and community service. It is named after Michael H. Urbach, a former NYSSCPA member and the first CPA to serve as the New York State Commissioner of Taxation and Finance. Noble formally received the award on Oct. 10 at the NYCON annual business meeting in New Paltz. For Noble, the inspiration to volunteer came from an unlikely source: the stage. “I really do believe that community service is important, and I developed an appreciation for it having done theater my entire life,” Noble said. “Community theater is comprised entirely of volunteers. Seeing how they work together on stage and off stage to accomplish a goal—the production itself—has been a great lesson for me.” He joined his first nonprofit board in 2006, after a relative encouraged him to donate his time to the Family & Child Service of Schenectady. In his six years of service with the organization, Noble helped it to purchase a new headquarters, reduce increasing expenses, improve cash flow, and develop ideas for fundraising strategies. Bob VanZetta, the organization’s executive director, nominated Noble for the Urbach Award, noting that he “found Jeremy to be hardworking, thorough, conscientious, generous and supportive, and entirely engaged in the matters of the agency.” “As my first time on a board of directors, working with Family & Child Service was very fulfilling,” Noble said. “You get to have an impact on the services the organization provides and you even get to have a hand in guiding the mission of the organization.” In 2008, Noble helped found the Schenectady County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA). An avid animal lover, Noble not only works behind the scenes as the SPCA’s treasurer, but out in the field as the captain of the group’s Humane Law Enforcement Division. “I’ve had the opportunity to educate animal owners about proper care for their pets and rescue a number of abused or neglected animals,” he said. “It’s so rewarding because you really get to educate people and make a difference in the community.” He counts saving a cat named “Bud” among his more memorable rescues. The cat had been trapped in an abandoned apartment for weeks with no food or water, when Noble and his team of rescuers were finally able to get inside and get the animal to safety. “When I found the cat, he was disoriented and barely able to walk,” Noble said. “We rushed him off to a vet ... I didn’t know if

he was going to live, but he survived and today is a big, healthy fat cat.” Noble is currently the chairperson of the SPCA’s upcoming 5K Run Fundraiser “New Leash on Life,” which will raise money to stop animal cruelty. Although he strongly encourages community service, Noble believes that professionals should choose their organizations wisely—by finding a cause they care about, meeting the board members and getting to know other volunteers. “You have to understand what they serve, how they serve it, and what it takes to help from both a financial and personal standpoint,” he explained. “If you sit in on a board meeting and you’re listening to the director of the organization talk about things that you don’t care about, no matter how much you want to make progress, you won’t—you have to care about the same things they care about.”