



remarkable women of southborough

photography by resident Chelsea Bradway

Karen Sommers - City Wide of Boston

meet

KAREN SOMMERS

of CITY WIDE BOSTON!

Karen and Bob Sommers and their children Olivia 20, Bobby 18 and Kendall 16 have lived in Southborough for 21 years. They have two beautiful Golden Retrievers, Henry and Lily.

Karen is the local business owner of City Wide of Boston a Massachusetts State Certified Woman Business Enterprise (WBE). Both she and Bob also helped founded Smiling Kids, Inc and are also long-time supporters of Horizons for Homeless Children.

Tell us about your business: My husband and I founded City Wide of Boston in 2008. We are a management company that provides managed services to commercial buildings in Eastern, MA. Our value is our business model which is a formula of vendor sourcing & screening

paired with professional management. We currently work with over 400 organizations that range from commercial office buildings, manufacturing companies, medical facilities, auto dealerships to private schools. We save our clients the time and headaches associated with building maintenance by being one point of contact for project & services management, compliance, and the ability to access an established network of contractors across a wide array of services.

How long have you been involved in your new business? It's hard to believe it has been 11 years! Time has flown by!

How did you become involved in this endeavor? Our first venture together as business partners started in 2002 when we founded Smiling Kids, Inc a 501(c)3 nonprofit that provides birthday presents to children and teens in-need throughout Massachusetts. That experience gave us the confidence to take the risk of building our own company. We wanted



to find an opportunity to leverage our decades of management experience to build a company that provides exceptional customer service and opportunities for our employees to grow and thrive professionally.

What do you find most rewarding about your involvement? Being able to provide an employment opportunity for our hard-working team to be successful, learn along with us and grow.

Why is this so important to you and/or your family? We strongly believe in finding ways to give back and the philosophy of servant leadership aligns with that value.

What is your toughest challenge in this stage of your life? Managing my time to fit in all the things I want to do with so many priorities. This is a constant evolution for me as things change, the kids get older, the busi-



Bob & Karen Sommers

ness matures, and new challenges and opportunities are presented.

If you have children, what activities are they involved with? Olivia is a junior at Middlebury College majoring in Environmental Studies. She is very involved with social movements focused on fighting the climate crisis like the Sunrise Movement and Extinction Rebellion. She will be studying abroad in the spring in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

Bobby is a high school Senior at St. Mark's School. He is a House Prefect and Peer Mentor and the Captain of the Varsity Basketball team. He will be playing basketball at Amherst College in the fall.

Kendall is a high school Sophomore at St. Mark's School. She is a runner on the Varsity Cross Country Team and a Coxswain for the Girls Varsity Crew team, heads the St. Mark's Coffee House,

GSA and is a writer for the various school publications.

What is your secret to staying organized? Blocking time in my calendar for priorities, utilizing my resources and asking for help. Advanced planning is critical for me.

Tell me what you do to relax/unwind: Time with family and friends. Walking my two dogs. Working out and time in Sunapee, NH.

What is your favorite part about living in Southborough? The warm feel of the town. We raised our children here because of the strong sense of community and excellent schools. Opening our business here was a no



The City Wide Team!

brainer. It allowed us to be close to home all while working what felt like 24/7 in those early days. As our company has grown, it has been nice to see our employees enjoying the local places we love and support in our community.

What advice would you give to somebody wanting to start their own business? Really think about what your vision is now and in the future. Write a business plan to guide your decision making and talk to trusted resources. And finally, have faith in your own strength to build something.

To learn more about City Wide Boston, please go to their website at gocitywideboston.com.