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OU alumnus starts program for young professionals

By **Rebecca Wyatt Thomas**, OU Web Writer

Shortly before their first child was born, Leonard Magro and his wife decided to take on another type of challenge — starting their own business. Combining their backgrounds, they started **Magro International**, a Web site marketing company based in Rochester. As two young professionals, they found little in the way of networking or support. Now they have created **Young Professionals of Rochester** and OU faculty and staff can get involved.

Magro studied computer engineering and his wife, Julie, studied marketing at Oakland University. They both had a desire to start a business.

After working in Germany doing software development, the Magros returned to the United States, specifically the Rochester area, and learned Julie was pregnant. They decided to open a business so she could still work and yet have flexibility in her schedule.

"When I first came to the United States, Rochester was one of the areas I spent the most time in. It's an area I was familiar with and it's what I felt was my home in the U.S.," Magro said.

The Magros started Magro International, an Internet marketing company. They work with small- and medium-sized businesses to develop an Internet marketing plan and use the Web as a marketing tool.

They started Magro International nearly three years ago and began attending networking events. Magro didn't feel there was enough that catered to the young business professional.

"I came up with the idea that I wanted to organize a group for business owners who are younger and just starting out. I worked with the chair at the Rochester Chamber of Commerce, Oakland University and the **Oakland University Alumni Association** and we developed the Young Professionals of Rochester," Magro said. "I thought of Oakland University because the university has a **partnership with Rochester** and also because Oakland is graduating the business professionals of tomorrow and those are the people we want to reach for this group."

The group brings together local young professionals who are under 40 years old, have a business that has been operating for less than five years, live or work in the Rochester community and be a member or work for a member of the Rochester Regional Chamber of Commerce.

"We are providing an opportunity for these like-minded people to get together and network and share experiences of what the great city of Rochester has to offer," Magro said.

The first meeting of the Young Professionals of Rochester was in November. The group got together for the Rochester Christmas parade. Magro said the group plans to offer professional development, networking and philanthropy opportunities.

"We are building a team of members that can take the group wherever the members would like to see it go," Magro said. "The details will be defined by the members with the ultimate goal to get people to know each other, network and create synergy."

Oakland University alumni, faculty and staff are eligible to be a part of the group due to OU's affiliation with the Rochester Regional Chamber of Commerce.

Magro plans to continue his involvement with the Young Professionals and hopes it becomes an established, self-sustaining group. He said it will help him create new work relationships that will also help with his business.

For more information on the Young Professionals of Rochester, visit the **Young Professionals** Web site.

SUMMARY

Shortly before their first child was born, Leonard Magro and his wife decided to take on another type of challenge — starting their own business. Combining their backgrounds, they started Magro International, a Web site marketing company based in Rochester. As two young professionals, they found little in the way of networking or support. Now they have created Young Professionals of Rochester and OU faculty and staff can get involved.

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