

Leadership

By TOM CRAIN

Miles Kuperus

Owner, led by his faith, focuses on honesty, integrity and safety.

Honesty and integrity built from Christian values — those are the leadership principles guiding Miles Kuperus Jr. throughout his career in landscaping.

Together with his wife, Lisa, Kuperus owns and operates Farmside Landscape & Design, headquartered in Sussex County, New Jersey, serving the tristate area of New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania for more than 25 years.

Farmside offers landscape design, installation and maintenance services, in addition to specialty plant health care, turf care and snow removal. Kuperus participates in various local community service projects, including the creation of a U.S. Veterans Memorial, a monument built with a special patio, honoring those who fought in the Revolutionary War through our modern day war on terrorism.

It was all about “Going for the Gold” for Kuperus this year. For the second year in a row, Farmside was awarded NALP’s Safety Achievement Award at the highest level — gold performance. For the fourth year in a row, the company received the *New Jersey Herald’s* Readers Choice Gold Award for Best Landscaping Business. “Safety is a journey you never completely arrive at,” explains Kuperus. “Being safe is something you continually work at and also a big part of what it takes to be a true professional.”

Kuperus taps into his faith to drive this quest for safety on the job for his employees and his leadership skills.

Q How would you describe your style of leadership and why does this work for you?

A I lead by example. It’s natural for me to be very engaged with my core management team — at Farmside and also on

volunteer boards. This style of collaborative leadership feels right to me. I value the strong relationships developed within and among my team members as well as with our clients. I want my team to be a resource to our clients, so our relationship with clients is based on value and solutions — not just on price.

I’m also a big believer in team empowerment. I give my staff opportunities to learn and develop skills and try new things. I encourage their success by setting sound, achievable goals for them. Then, I let them build their own success paths. I believe it’s the best way to foster creative problem-solving skills and collaborative work dynamics.

Q How do you work at consistently becoming better at leadership?

A At the heart of my personal standards is my faith, and from that comes my commitment to setting and maintaining the highest standards for me and my team. I surround myself with great people — those with integrity, who strive for excellence and, in turn, inspire me to demand more of myself. I get a great deal of satisfaction from mentoring and supporting others and seeing them achieve results they never thought possible.

I’m always pushing myself to learn more and open myself up to new experiences. I do this through my involvement with NALP’s leadership, my church and Christian school community and through my peer relationships sharing ideas for best practices.

Q Who are your leadership role models and why?

A My leadership role models include: First and foremost, Jesus Christ, plus many of the great Bible patriarchs. I’m inspired by their teachings on the great truths of life that are as relevant today as they were in their time. Second, my father. His faith in God and his compassion for the community has served as a role model of integrity to me; he showed me what it means to live and lead by a Godly life. Third, industry leaders within NALP. I’ve learned so much from them: how they think about issues and solve problems.



Fourth, the great presidents and military leaders of our country. It’s so interesting to learn how they tackle the tough issues and lead people through them.

Q What leadership books inspire you and why?

A I have read a number of great books, but the one that inspires me most is the Bible: The Book of Proverbs for its wise council, the Book of Psalms for its insight on leadership struggles and the New Testament.

Q What have you done as a leader that gives you pride and why?

A I am most proud of the community work we do, giving back to others and supporting worthy causes. We’ve been heavily involved with building programs for our church and school, donating a Veteran’s Memorial to our town and participation in the NALP Renewal and Remembrance event at Arlington Cemetery. Our work with the NALP foundation is also rewarding, investing and promoting the next generation of green industry laborers.

Q What leadership words or quotes inspire you most and why?

A Bible verses including “Iron sharpens iron” and “Blessed to be a blessing.” God wants us to do our best and expects us to encourage one another and build each other up.

Q If you were to give young leaders one piece of advice, what would it be?

A 1. Put family first; 2. prioritize your real purpose in life; 3. allow your work to provide for those values; 4. keep a strong work-life balance; 5. go on vacation for two weeks, allowing your team to make you proud. 🌱

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