

SOPHISTICATED LIVING

{Chicago's Finest}

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TEEN

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THE TEN

Ten Chicagoans to know, love and follow in 2018.

By Bridget Daley / Photography by Anthony Tablier

Ashley Walter Pettit

Certified holistic nutritionist, personal trainer, fitness chef, on-air healthy living expert and the founder of LIVING with Ashley (livingwithashley.com) // [@living_withashley](https://www.instagram.com/living_withashley)

"My new year's resolutions start with developing an even closer relationship with Chicago—attending more events, meeting new people, expanding socially and professionally in all ways. I want to date my town!" says Ashley Walter Pettit, 36, whose wellness company provides thousands with dynamic nutrition and fitness resources to improve your health from the inside out. (We're obsessed with her foolproof, 21-day plan called "Tell Fat to Eff Off"). "Personally, I plan to continue to work on my confidence as a woman, a business owner and as someone who is sometimes too sensitive. I want to own all that I am and make no apologies for being true to myself. And, most importantly, I want to spend as much time as possible with my 3-year-old daughter, Reese. Mommy-and-me time is a priority I will always put first."



J. Ivy

Award-winning performance poet,
recording artist, songwriter, author and actor

(j-ivy.com) // @j_ivy

"I'm really excited about 2018 and what it has to offer. To be on point, I want to be better at the things I'm great at and correct the things I'm bad at. I want to eat better, workout more, write more, read more, stay conscious of helping others, see more of the world and spread genuine love every day,"

says J. Ivy, 41, the South Sider whose resume includes more than a few impressive collaborations and appearances (he was featured on three seasons of HBO's *Def Poetry*, performed a poem alongside Jay-Z on Kanye West's Grammy-winning album *The College Dropout*, and narrated the documentary *Muhammad Ali: The People's Champ*, which snagged an NAACP Image Award, to name just a few highlights).

"Consistency is key. You can be passionate, but being mindful to maintain the pace you set at the beginning of the race is something I'm working on now and want to continue throughout the year and beyond. With each choice, I want to be honest with myself and make great decisions. But most of all I want to raise my vibration and smile!"



Naomi Beckwith

Marilyn and Larry Fields Curator at the
Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago
(mcachicago.org) // @mcachicago

"I never make personal resolutions for the new year. I'm not saying that I'm perfect, but I just think one should correct issues as they arise, not on a turn-of-the-year schedule," says Naomi Beckwith, 41, who is excited about opening the first major survey of African-American artist Howardena Pindell next month (*Howardena Pindell: What Remains to Be Seen*, Feb. 24-May 20 at the MCA). "But if I could work on anything right now, it would be to get my desk in order and stay on top of the multiple projects I've committed to—exhibitions, trustee work for community arts organizations and women's groups, professional development for curators, writing, diversity work, making sure I spend time with family... As for the city, I'd like to work on seeing more public art and monuments that recognize the amazing contributions that women have made to Chicago and the world."



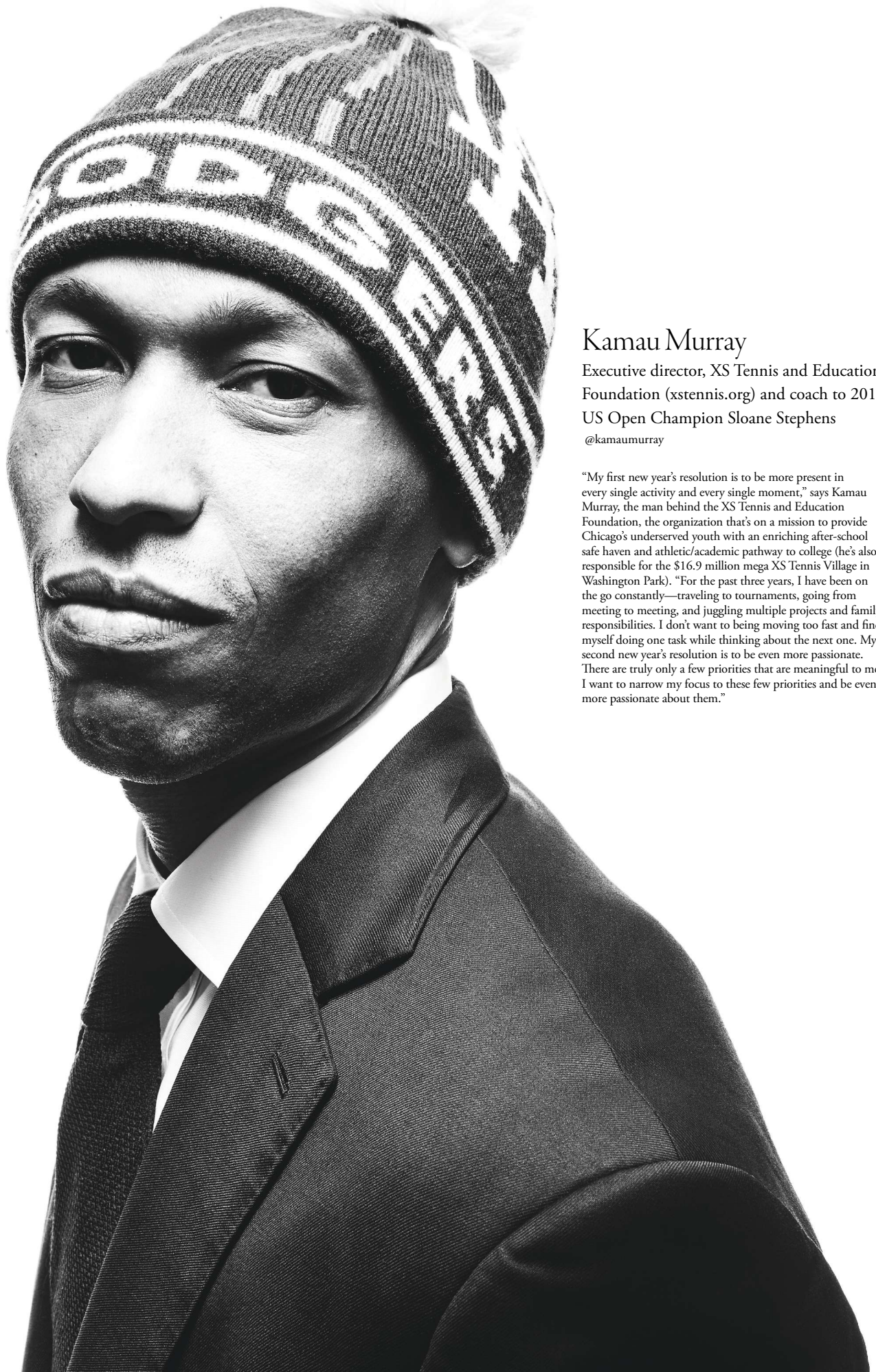
Miranda Rae Mayo

Chicago Fire actor, singer/songwriter and human rights and mindfulness advocate

@msmayoallday

"I am inviting myself into a practice of fierce, committed authenticity in 2018," says Miranda Rae Mayo, 27, who has a new song called "Be Alright" with singer/songwriter Lauren Bennett, as well as her first independently released EP, which both are being released early this year. "I plan to play a more prominent role in educating children in mindfulness practices with community groups like Holistic Life Foundation, I Grow Chicago and Bodhi Spiritual Center, sharing the authenticity of my experience along the way. I think there's a lot of power in transparency and vulnerability. It's crazy difficult, but the hope is that others will feel encouraged to be their most authentic selves and then turn around and empower their communities to do the same. It's a daily practice—we'll see how it goes!"

Hair and makeup by Base Salon, basesalonchicago.com



Kamau Murray

Executive director, XS Tennis and Education Foundation (xstennis.org) and coach to 2017 US Open Champion Sloane Stephens

[@kamaumurray](https://twitter.com/kamaumurray)

"My first new year's resolution is to be more present in every single activity and every single moment," says Kamau Murray, the man behind the XS Tennis and Education Foundation, the organization that's on a mission to provide Chicago's underserved youth with an enriching after-school safe haven and athletic/academic pathway to college (he's also responsible for the \$16.9 million mega XS Tennis Village in Washington Park). "For the past three years, I have been on the go constantly—traveling to tournaments, going from meeting to meeting, and juggling multiple projects and family responsibilities. I don't want to be moving too fast and find myself doing one task while thinking about the next one. My second new year's resolution is to be even more passionate. There are truly only a few priorities that are meaningful to me. I want to narrow my focus to these few priorities and be even more passionate about them."

Sonat Birnecker Hart

Co-founder and president of KOVAL Distillery (koyal-distillery.com), co-founder and president of Kothe Distilling Technologies (kothe-distilling.com), president of the Jewish Diplomatic Corps of the World Jewish Congress (worldjewishcongress.org) // @sonatdistills

"As a manufacturer, my goal is always to demonstrate how Chicago stands for the highest quality and finest design, while being a bastion of economic opportunity for start-ups like mine," says Sonat Birnecker Hart, 44, who, with her husband Robert, left academia in 2008 (she has a PhD in German Cultural History) to make whiskey in Chicago with KOVAL. "Made in Chicago' is on every bottle we produce, and I intend to both personally, and in spirit, deliver this message to the world. I also hope that Chicago will continue to gain greater recognition, and momentum, as a world leader on a variety of issues, including climate change, for which it has already set the stage in hosting the recent North American Climate Summit. My personal goals for 2018 are to continue to grow KOVAL, to give back to our community and recognize—every day—that the journey is the goal, and in turn, live each day to the fullest."





Christopher Alexander Kent

Founder and principal designer
of Gold Coast-based studio CAK

(studiocak.com) // @studiocak

"My goal for 2018 is to strive to learn something new every day," says Christopher Alexander Kent, 33, who is currently busy with a gut-renovation of a pied-à-terre in the Palmolive Building (think Parisian flair in the form of beaucoup color and texture mixed with classic Art Deco details). "Learning deepens our character and fuels innovation. I want to serve as an inspiration for others, and be known more for being a good person than for any accolades I may receive for my work. This year, I want to donate more time and energy to organizations that give back within Chicago's design community. I want to be a support to those without a voice and a mentor to those who are trying to better themselves. I know firsthand how creativity can feed the soul. Let's achieve harmony through design and change the world one room at a time."



Sarah Grueneberg

Chef/partner of Monteverde Restaurant
& Pastificio (monteverdechicago.com),

James Beard Award-winning chef

(Best Chef: Great Lakes, 2017), runner-up

Iron Chef Gauntlet and *Top Chef: Texas*

@chefsarahjayne

“We have an awesome team [at Monteverde] and execute some fun programs, such as our made-to-order pastas and our ongoing sustainable composting, that I’m proud to continue,” says Grueneberg, 36, before teasing a 2018 TV project that’s, for now, very hush-hush. “As for my resolutions, professionally, I want to inspire our team to make healthier, delicious staff meals at work so we can all benefit from an overall healthier environment. And I’ll be heading back to Italy early this year to tour the southeast coast—Abruzzo, Puglia and Molise—to learn their traditional pastas. I’ve had most of my training in the northern regions and these areas make up much of the *cucina povera* cuisine. I know it will give me tons of inspiration for the restaurant. As for Chicago, I would love to see the city add composting pickup services for everyone—each residential and business address! There is so much good that can be done with compost.”

Lauren McGrady

Owner of RIDER for Life boutique in the West Loop and principal designer at RIDER by Design
(shoprider.us) // @ridershop

"Professionally I am trying to focus on being an excellent leader and teammate," says Lauren McGrady, 33, who, in addition to running her Lake Street shop for women's fashion, art, interior design goodies and apothecary curios, keeps busy consulting on residential design projects for some pretty cool Chicagoans (including actress and friend Sophia Bush). "Growing a business from seed to um... What is the largest tree in the whole world? A sequoia? Well, let's just say I am forever thankful to have an outstanding group of friends, family, mentors and customers to grow alongside. Personally, I'm working on self-care, taking chances and being okay with outside voices while trusting the grit that got me this far. My continued hope for Chicago would be for the West Loop and Fulton Market areas to maintain their authenticity and charm alongside the massive changes that are happening. This area is full of insanely delicious, beautifully designed restaurants—WonFun, I love you!—owned and operated by Chicago restaurateurs. It would be wonderful to see the retail scene follow suit."





Kiki Luthringshausen

Marketing/branding executive, networker, ideator, momager and partner of Spoonfed Agency (bespoonfed.com) // @spoonfedagency

"In life, if you don't risk anything, you risk everything," says Kiki Luthringshausen, 46, whose boutique marketing firm boasts big clients including chefs Giuseppe Tentori and Rodelio Aglibot. "That's my motto in business and in life. In 2018, my goal is to continue growing and expanding Spoonfed's national client base. Outside of the office, I'm an advocate for arts education. Students who receive more arts education do better on standardized tests, have better social skills and are more motivated. In Chicago, arts programs are being slashed because schools don't have the funds to run them. I've started working with Ingenuity [ingenuity-inc.org], the nonprofit committed to supporting CPS schools and teachers in expanding arts for students. As a Chicagoan, I want to see CPS thrive. As a mother to two artists, I couldn't be more passionate about making sure young, creative minds have the resources they need to reach their potential."