

BACKSTORY

INTERVIEW BY DILLON STEWART



Ryan Slipka

**GENERAL MANAGER, PARTNER
SOUTHVIEW DESIGN
ST. PAUL, MINN.**



Slipka married his high school sweetheart, Mary, 12 years ago. Together, they have a 7-year-old daughter Evelyn, a 5-year-old son Griffin and a 2-year-old son Everett.



Slipka is as a volunteer firefighter for Rosemount Fire Department. "I've been responsible for helping bring six people back to life, so it really puts what's important in life in perspective," he says. "Plus, every little boy's dream is to drive a fire truck."

"I never planned on a career in landscaping. I needed a job, wanted a tan and the football and soccer coaches said to stay in shape over the summer, so it was natural to take a job like that."



"I realized there were a lot of good landscapers but not a lot of skilled landscapers with an education in how to run a business."



When he's not fighting fires—literal ones and figurative ones in the office—you can find him coaching youth sports or playing in men's leagues.

"Being able to call on professionals in other industries and ask for outside advice has been a key to our success and my own personal success."

See page 6 for a look at Southview Design's work.



"I spend a large amount of my time working on the company culture and helping people on our staff grow their careers, and that's really exciting for me."

EDUCATION

Rosemount High School
Rosemount, Minn.
Class of 1999

University of Mary
Bismark, N.D.
Management information systems/finance
Class of 2003

WORK EXPERIENCE

1996-1999
Krech Landscaping
Laborer/Supervisor
St. Paul, Minn.

1999-2004
Mulligan's Landscaping
Supervisor
Northfield, Minn.

2004-2006
Southview Design
Project Manager
St. Paul, Minn.

2006-2008
Production Manager

2008-2014
Vice President, Operations/Partner

2014-2015
Executive Vice President/Partner

2016-present
General Manager/Partner

WORDS OF WISDOM: "You run a business on cash, you build a business on referrals and you don't have either one of those things without employees." • "As landscapers, we deliver a very emotional purchase. We're not selling a commodity. We're selling a discretionary, emotional purchase, and it's vital we hold that level of excitement throughout the entire process. We can't do that without a great staff and great business plan."