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EDITOR'S NOTES

Welcome to yet another issue of *The Pocono Business News*, the Pocono Mountains' premier alternative and independent publication established to provide our residents with accounts of business development and growth. As such, *The Pocono Business Newsmagazine* will gather, print, and disseminate positive information about people who have exhibited exemplary leadership in business, industry, education, arts, and the profession, as well as provide a forum for the exchange of ideas, job opportunities, and other information necessary to showcase business and commerce.

Consistent with our objectives, we have gathered 25 local women from all disciplines and ethnicity to spotlight and highlight their extraordinary accomplishments and contributions to our community. The women profiled herein are exemplary leaders and role models who elevate us all. These women excel in the halls of society, and we could do no better than praise and honor them.

The Pocono Business News magazine sends sincere thanks to governor Josh Shapiro for his unwavering support of local business, local women and their families, and The Pocono Business News.

To all the women herein profiled, we salute you for your dedication, vision, courage, and determination for your crowning achievements as leaders.

Elseah W. Chea
 Managing Editor
 MA., Teachers College Columbia University
 BA., The City College of New York

All bios herein were edited for brevity by staff.

Message from Governor Josh Shapiro to 2023 Women of Excellence of the Poconos



GOVERNOR
 JOSH SHAPIRO

May 6, 2023

Pocono Business News
 East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania

Greetings:

It is my pleasure to join with Pocono Business News to welcome everyone gathered for the 2nd Annual Women of Excellence of the Poconos Awards Gala.

Women of every age, race, ethnicity, and economic background have made historic and significant contributions to the growth and strength of Pennsylvania. Our Commonwealth thrives when individuals dedicate themselves to pursuing their talents while also utilizing their skills to inspire others. As we recognize those honored today, I hope you are each filled with pride for the work you have achieved to being a leader in this community. The Commonwealth is truly privileged to have you as an example of fortitude, commitment, and passion. I am certain that all those gathered will continue to represent Pennsylvania with great esteem and distinction for many years to come.

As Governor, and on behalf of all Pennsylvanians, I am delighted to recognize this important event. Please accept my very best wishes for continued success.

GIVEN under my hand and the Seal of the Governor, at the City of Harrisburg, this sixth day of May two thousand twenty-three, the year of the Commonwealth the two hundred forty-seventh.

Governor Josh Shapiro



Office of the Governor | Harrisburg, PA 17120 | www.pa.gov



THE POCONO BUSINESS NEWS

Elseah Chea, Editor-in-Chief
 Chief Alibert Davies, Deputy Editor
 Kendrick Chea, Assistant Editor

Design & Layout: Elseah Chea

Webmaster/WebDesign:
 Damilola Olakunle Ajila,
 Oluwatimileyin Kausara Ajila

Contributors Writers and/or Advisors
 Gail Lewis . Dr. Neva Alexander
 Jack Signorelli . Phil Andrews . Gbenga Omotayo

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Congratulations To All 2023 Women of Excellence of the Poconos!

Honorees were nominated



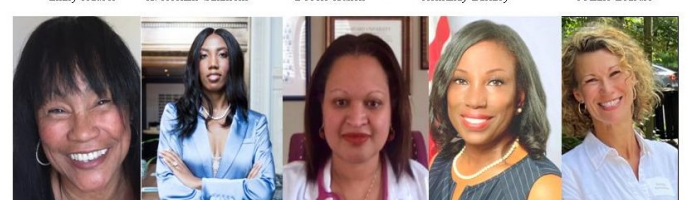
T. Bailey-Romey S. Baker F. Bazile Dr. D. Bonilla-Rodriguez Macone Brevitt-Pink



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2023 Women of Excellence in the Poconos

Tiffanie Bailey-Romey

Owner/Broker, Bairo Realty, President, PMAR



Tiffanie Bailey-Romey is the Broker and owner of Bairo Real Estate PA/NYC/GA.

An award-winning real estate broker, Tiffanie has over 25 years in real estate. Prior to her career in real estate, she owned and operated a salon in New York City, where the majority of her clients were celebrities.

Tiffanie Bailey-Romey is a barrier-breaker. The long-time real estate broker was elected in January as President of the 2023 Pocono Mountains Association of Realtors. With her election, Ms. Tiffanie becomes the 1st African American to lead the century-old real estate organization.

Under her leadership in 2022, BAIRO Real Estate had its first annual Juneteenth Family and Friends celebration in the Poconos.

Dubbed "A Community Celebration of Freedom, funds generated from the event

were used for local scholarships for youngsters interested in a career in real estate. A philanthropist, Tiffanie also travels to the West Africa nation of Ghana a few times throughout the year to oversee her humanitarian projects in building water tanks village by village.

Sabrina Baker

Creative Xpressions Preschool for the Arts



Sabrina Baker is the owner/founder of Creative Xpressions Preschool for the Arts. Sabrina is committed to helping young children explore and learn through an art-based curriculum with hands-on play-based activities that teach students positive social and emotional interactions.

A veteran educator, Sabrina is a former preschool/pre-k teacher for the Lehigh Valley & Pocono Mountains regions. Growing up, Sabrina's dreamed of owning and operating her own Early Childhood Center. In August 2021, Sabrina opened the doors to her art, music, yoga, and play-based preschool at the Day Street Community Center in East Stroudsburg, PA.

Today, given the increased enrollment, Sabrina has begun offering families a traveling co-op preschool program. A one-of-a-kind program new to the Poconos!

Sabrina is a licensed child development professional. She holds a license in early childhood from the Council for Professional Recognition of Washington D.C. and from Penn State University.

Fabienne Bazile

Family Nurse Practitioner (NP)



Fabienne Bazile is a Board-Certified Family Nurse Practitioner and CEO of Bazileway Medical Company. Her areas of expertise include but not limited to Nutritional Consultation and Health Coaching, with extensive experience in Primary Care, Pediatrics, and Geriatrics. She is Licensed as a Family Nurse Practitioner in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York. Fabienne Bazile is enrolled in PECOS and as a Nurse Practitioner works in many different specialties including primary care, pediatrics, cardiology, emergency, women's health, oncology, and geriatrics. Fabienne provides cutting-edge care with compassion, dignity, and respect.

Fabienne Bazile is also a Financial advisor licensed in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, and Georgia. She provides clients with an understanding of their financial goals, such as retirement strategies, college funding plans, insurance protection, long-term care planning, estate preservation, investment

advisory services, executive compensation programs, and business continuation programs.

Fabienne Bazile was educated at Chamberlain University, where she earned her Master's and Bachelor's degrees in nursing. She also earned an associate in Nursing from Union College.

A married mother of three children, Fabienne Bazile is Haitian-American. She holds membership in several organizations, prominent among them Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing, Haitian American Nurses Association (HANA), to name a few.

Dr. Damary Bonilla-Rodriguez

Educator

Dr. Damary M. Bonilla-Rodriguez is a national leading authority on leadership development, especially as it pertains to diversity and inclusion. She delivers keynote addresses and presentations drawing upon her experience from roles in the non-profit, private, and government sectors, as well as her doctoral research. Her research about Latina leadership in the United States has served as the foundation for events, conference sessions, publications, and content development - to address the urgency of leadership development for a fast-growing population and create a pipeline of diverse leaders.

Dr. Bonilla-Rodriguez holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Spanish and Social Work from the College of New Rochelle where she received the College President's Medal, graduated with Departmental Honors, and was awarded the Sigma Delta Pi Spanish Award. She also holds a Master of Science degree in Organizational Communications and a Specialized Certification in Corporate Communications, both from the College of New Rochelle. Personal endeavors of overcoming statistics and accessing higher education, led her to earn a Doctorate in Education focusing on Executive Leadership from St. John Fisher College.

To change the political and leadership landscape for Latinos, Dr. Bonilla-Rodriguez ran for State Representative in the 189th District of Pennsylvania in the 2016 election cycle where she became the 1st Hispanic to make a State ballot in Pike and Monroe Counties. In November 2019, she became the 1st Hispanic elected as School Board Director in the East Stroudsburg

Area School District where she chairs the Education committee. Passionate about supporting professional organizations, she is a Board Member of the Brodhead Watershed Association, Colonial IU 20 where she serves as Vice President, Prospanica NY where she serves as Vice President of Professional Development, ACLU of Pennsylvania, Latina VIDA, Latinas on the Plaza and an Advisory Board member for several organizations including: The Board of Hispanic Caucus Chairs,



Monroe County Children and Youth where she Chairs the Education committee, the League of Women Voters of PA's Equity Steering committee, SciGirls, the Alliance for Positive Youth Development, and the Pennsylvania Department of Education Equity Task Force where she Chairs the Advocacy subcommittee. In addition, she was appointed by Governor Tom Wolf to represent the Poconos Region on statewide commissions on Redistricting Reform and Latino affairs where she chairs the statewide Education committee.

Dr. Bonilla-Rodriguez was recognized as a 2014 Coors Light Lideres finalist and is the recipient of numerous awards including a proclamation from the NYS Assembly, the Proud to Be Latina Soy Ponderosa award, the GACLA recognition award and the SISGI Beyond Good Ideas Excellence in Nonprofit Leadership award. Her published written accomplishments include the books Gender, Race and Ethnicity in the Workplace and Today's Inspired Latina (Volume II), as well as contributing to the Huffington Post and being featured by several media outlets including NBC Latino, Chief Writing Wolf, and the Empowered Latinas series.

While she is proud of her many accomplishments, she highlights her greatest as being the mother of twelve-year-old twin boys, Caleb and Joshua. She resides in Pennsylvania with her boys and husband Robert. Her favorite quote is: "If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants" (Newton).

Women of Excellence in the Poconos



Maxine Brevitt-Pink Cosmetologist

Maxine Brevitt-Pink is a woman who lives by her morning mantra: "If you love what you do, you never work a day in your life." As the owner of Discover Beauty Salon in East Stroudsburg, Maxine is living her calling and making women feel special with every head she blesses.

Originally from the stunning island of Jamaica, Maxine began studying cosmetology at the Art Academy in Jamaica and then transitioned to an educator after obtaining her cosmetology license. After migrating to the United States in 2002 together with her hus-

band, they owned and operated their first salon in the Bronx before relocating to the Poconos and settling in East Stroudsburg.

Maxine's passion for the beauty industry led her to become a salon manager at East Stroudsburg's Shawnee Inn Resort, where she helped create the Inn's first-ever salon and spa. Although she enjoyed the experience and joy of full-time work at Shawnee Inn, Maxine was moved by her "Passion for having a unique trichology/cosmetology salon." Consequently, Maxine left shortly after to start her own business. She has owned and operated Discover Beauty Salon in the Poconos for 14 years now.

Maxine is a proud parent of three children and her story is one of dedication, passion, and the pursuit of one's dreams.

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April Butler Farmhouse Restaurant

April Maiya Butler is owner of Farmhouse Restaurants, with locations in Bartonsville and East Stroudsburg. In 2022, Farmhouse Poconos won "Best Brunch" as Pocono Record Readers Choice.

"I am a creative multi-tasker, an entrepreneur at heart, a business woman by trade, and a "foodie," says April. An award-winning filmmaker and event planner per excellence, April is a Poconos transplant by way of Los Angeles, CA, April and her husband fell in love with the area after a fateful weekend visit to the Poconos Mountains.

April grew up in Los Angeles, CA and graduated from the University of California, Irvine, where she majored in political science with plans to attend law school, but her creative mind and entrepreneurial spirit led her down a different road to movie production. April admits that she became disenchanted

with law school during the application process, so she used a portion of her student loan money to buy a digital video camera. She then began documenting her adventures to music concerts which she packaged as a Video Music Magazine.

April Butler made her debut in the independent documentary *Chronicles of Junior M.A.F.I.A.* (2004) featuring rappers The Notorious B.I.G and Junior M.A.F.I.A. She produced and directed *Life After Death: The Movie* (2007) featuring actor Jamie Hector as the narrator.

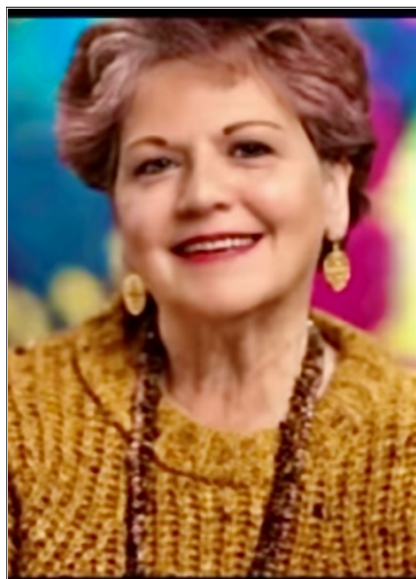
April's reel caught the attention of filmmaker Reginald Hudlin. He became April's mentor, recruiting her to work with him as a Music Supervisor at Paramount Pictures. Mr. Hudlin soon rose to the position of President of BET Network in New York, and in 2008 she began work for Black Entertainment Television (BET) as a Producer and directed music group Wu Tang Clan's documentary, *Rise Of A Fallen Soldier*. With her assignment as Producer for BET network's music based content

in New York City, April re-located to BET's New York City office.

In 2014, April began working for P. "Diddy" Combs, developing digital content and merchandise for his *Bad Boy Records*. April created design and strategy for the Bad Boy Reunion Tour and Invisible Bully Clothing Line. After the tour, she was promoted to Family Manager to Mr. Combs. In her role, April managed Combs' domestic and personal affairs, planning his dinner parties and soirees from five-star dinners and New Year's Eve galas.

April recently produced a feature film, "Housekeeper," starring actress Denise Richards and has several other film projects in development. She shares that she plans to shoot movies all around the Poconos. "All four seasons are gorgeous here!" April is married to music executive Damon "D-Roc" Butler and the couple resides in the Pocono with their family.

Jane Dovidio-Gagliardo



Jane Dovidio-Gagliardo is a native Ohioan born to an Italian family. An avid believer in human rights, she marched for civil rights and women's right to choose and the right to be heard.

Jane married her high-school sweetheart, John Gagliardo and the couple moved to the Poconos in Pennsylvania where they raised three adult sons.

Jane shared that in 1996, after a decade-long employment with Connaught Laboratories, she was dismissed for alleged poor performance, but Jane, who was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis in early 1980s, said she knew it was because of her disability. She took legal action against the company. In 2002, following a week-long trial, a 12-person jury found in the case of Gagliardo vs. Connaught Laboratories. Jane's case became a landmark case.

Shortly thereafter, Jane met journalist Sherry Blackman who felt it essential to tell Jane's story in a book titled "Call To Witness," written in collaboration with Jane, her children, and her attorney Patrick Reilly. The book was submitted for a Pulitzer Prize and

has won numerous awards, including The Pocono Image Award. Jane has been invited to tell her story throughout the country. "Call To Witness" also received rave reviews on Amazon.

Jane is an active member of the East Stroudsburg Youth Association Board of Directors, Commissioner of Cheerleading, Secretary for the Football Mother's Association. She is a member of St. Matthews Catholic Church where she volunteers much time in fund raising activities. Passionate about making sure the voices of people with disabilities are heard, and she continues to be an active force toward this goal.

Jane's achievements and accolades are numerous, but the woman she is today cannot be measured by anything other than her genuineness and heartfelt commitment to achieving equal rights for all members of the human family. She is the grandmother of six wonderful grandchildren who she enjoys spending time with and seeing life through their eyes.

Marialides Hann (DJ Ruby)



Marialides Hann, also known as DJ Ruby of Ruby Entertainment, was born in Barquisimeto, Venezuela. Ruby can spin any vinyl just like any male party disc jockey, if not even better! It's an art she is very passionate about and for which she earned the nickname DJ Ruby.

DJ Ruby was always at the center of attention at family gatherings. As she grew up, she found herself being asked to play music for her friends. Ruby officially began disc jockeying 10 years ago in the Pennsylvania region, offering her services at gatherings—at small as well as large events. She has gone on to showcase at functions held by organizations such as Pocono Mountains United Way, The American Cancer Society of Monroe County, and more.

Ruby further gained reputation within the Latin Community when she was offered the Manager position at Blue Tequila Bar and Lounge in East Stroudsburg, PA. Today, Ruby is a fixture not only in Pennsylvania, but she also plays at gigs in New York, New Jersey, and other states. As a testimony to her DJ skills, Ruby was nominated Female DJ of the Year Award by Telemundo 47 / Premios Viva la Juventud. The ceremony was held in the Dominican Republic, where she traveled to receive her award.

Aimee Ellison



Aimee Ellison is the HPE K-12 Department Chairperson for East Stroudsburg School District, the Advanced Strength and Adapted PE Teacher at East Stroudsburg High School, the Head Coach for the Unified Bocce and the Unified Track & Field Teams at East Stroudsburg High School and a Special Olympics Pennsylvania Coach.



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2023 Women of Excellence in the Poconos



Shaina Hayden
Mad Apple Restaurant

Mastered chef Shaina is owner of Mad Apples Eatery at 422 Seven Bridge Road in East Stroudsburg. Shaina has over 15 years experience in the culinary and catering industry. Chef Shaina is a Gordon Ramsey Hell's Kitchen Season 16 contestant and knows what it takes to be successful in the kitchen. Mad Apples provides fresh and exquisite comfort food that makes customers come back for more. Led by our master chef, Shaina Hayden, we present a great selection of food and a five-star dining experience.
<http://www.madapplesloaded.com/comfort-food-about-us-2/3>.

Emily Hauser

Emily is Vice President of the Heberling Agency, Inc., her family-owned independent insurance agency. She is currently trying to revitalize this business so that she can keep it alive for generations to come.
She is a very organized individual and you will always find her with a smile on her face. Emily is the chairwoman of the Pocono Chamber of Commerce's Women in Business Council and was named Young Professional of the Year 2021 for Monroe County.



She is a board member for the Pocono Chamber of Commerce, a leadership advisory board member for local nonprofit Youth Infusion, a B.I.G. PA Pocono Founding Leader, Stroudsburg chapter BNI member, Pocono Leaders of Tomorrow committee member, and she enjoys reading, playing tennis, entertaining, and interior design. Her goal as a woman in business is to empower and support other women so they know there are no limits to what they can achieve.



Keisha Hoskins-Simmons
Owner, Sassie Girl Fashion

Keisha Hoskins-Simmons is owner of Sassie Girl Fashions, a women's clothing boutique and fashion styling company established in 2013. Keisha says, "It was birthed from a place of Keisha being affectionately referenced as Sassie Girl in her early teens because of her class, sass, attitude, and style."

Sassie Girl Fashion caters to a wide range of ages, with clients ranging from 21 to 65 and beyond. scene, needing help with your bridal party dresses or just looking for a new

look, The boutique offers a private shopping experience in East Stroudsburg by appointment.

To reach Sassie Girl Fashion, email info@sassiegirlfashion.com or visit sassiegirlfashion.com.



Romanay Lashley

Romanay Maureen Lashley is a Master level social worker who earned her BA in social work from Cedar Crest College and her MSW at Marywood University.

A twenty-five year Pocono resident and the mother of two amazing and successful sons, Romanay has worked hard toward impactful contributions within the community that include implementing Parents Embracing Diversity within the East Stroudsburg

School District, facilitating the Spirit Diversity Sensitivity Program, running for a position on the East Stroudsburg School District school board, providing local out patient mental health therapy, and finally creator and founder of Project 33. A nonprofit agency geared at meeting the unique and multidimensional needs of our individual communities through culturally competent education, intervention and resources. It is Romanay's passion to cultivate growth, equity, inclusion and generational advancement for people of every color in every community.

Debbie Kulick

Debbie Kulick served two terms as Middle Smithfield Township Supervisor and currently serves in her 8th year as East Stroudsburg Area School District School Board Director. As a member of the School Board she serves as Chair of the Policy Committee and member of the Education Committee as well as on various negotiations committees.

Debbie has owned her own business since 1992 specializing in the leasing of employees to the EMS industry, currently employing 20 providers. She has been a volunteer with Bushkill Emergency Corps for about 50 years and has served in many capacities within the organization.

Currently she serves as President, Crew Chief, Secretary to the Board of Directors, as a Training Officer, HIPAA Compliance Officer and as Secretary to the Safety Committee. She is a PA Department of Health EMS Instructor as well as an instructor for the American Heart Association. In addition, Debbie serves as President of the Monroe County Ambulance Association, is a founding member of the Rotary of the Stroudsburgs Satellite club, and a previous chair, serves as a Board member of the Pocono Mountains United Way, as Secretary and former President of the Friends of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, is a current County-wide representative for the Monroe County Public Library Board, Secretary/Vice President of the East Stroudsburg Area School District Halls and Walls of Fame Foundation, serving as the Chair of the St. John's Church Pastoral Council and President of the St. John's Columbiettes and is a volunteer columnist for the Pocono Record.

Debbie Kulick was born and raised in Middle Smithfield Township, Monroe County. She is a graduate of



East Stroudsburg High School (South) and East Stroudsburg University, where she obtained a BS in Elementary Education with minors in Communications, History, and Biology. Debbie also holds a Masters Degree in Organizational Management with emphasis on Non-Profits and Government from the University of Phoenix.

Debbie's son Joseph is a graduate of East Stroudsburg University and has a Master's degree from Clarkson University/CRC. He is a Paramedic with Bushkill Emergency Corps and is married to Jessica and has two beautiful children, Ember and Atlas.

Joanne Leasure

Founder and owner of Day One Accounting and Financial Services LLC, Joanne Leasure helps boost profitability and cash flow for businesses. Through accounting she has worked to solve the financial obstacles businesses and corporate departments face every day. Utilizing her over 20 years of experience in financial reporting, analysis, forecasting, budgeting, cash management, and building workflows and controls in a variety of industries such as manufacturing, real estate, travel, healthcare, restaurants, and non-profit to name a few, she provides a level of expertise that most Accounting and Financial service providers do not.



She has said, "Small businesses deserve professional, reliable and responsive accounting services and business guidance, and I have a proven record in the corporate environment that I strive to bring to my clients everyday". She has managed high net worth portfolios for principals of companies and has extensive knowledge of supply chain financial functions, treasury, accounts payable, billing, collections, payroll, project costing, and department leadership and management. For years through her hands-on involvement, she has focused on creative problem-solving and increasing efficiencies using strategies for her clients which work to help them dominate their sector.

Joanne is currently also a Grant Cardone Licensee, a 10X Certified Speaker, Mentor and Coach and she is the Chair of the African American Business Leaders Council of the Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce, Treasurer of the NAACP of Monroe County, Finance Committee Member of Habitat of Humanity Monroe County, Director of BNI NJ/PA, Former foster parent, and wife and mother. She lives in Effort, PA with her family.

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Dr. Damary Bonilla is the first Hispanic elected to the ESASD Board of Directors and is the only Hispanic elected official serving in Pike County.

As a current ESASD Board member, Dr. Bonilla serves as the Vice President of the Colonial Intermediate Unit 20 Board.

Dr. Bonilla is the Chair of both the Negotiations and the Education Programs and Resources committees; additionally, she serves on the grievances and the early bird negotiations committees.

Dr. Bonilla was appointed to Monroe County Children and Youth Advisory Board where serves as Chair of the Education Committee.

- Damary Bonilla
- DrDamary M. Bonilla-Rodriguez
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2023 Women of Excellence in the Poconos



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2023 Women of Excellence in the Poconos



Carole Lippold

Carole Lippold was born in Panama City, Panama, the oldest of six children. Hence, the caretaker for her siblings as her mother worked to support the household. At 14, Carole immigrated to the United States and lived with her maternal aunt in the Bronx, NY until she was old enough to care for herself.

A loving mother of five adult children, Carole earned a bachelor's and two master's degrees and had a career as a guidance counselor with New York City Board of Education until retirement.

Following her retirement from Board of Education, Carole moved to the Poconos, settling in East Stroudsburg.

Carole is a long time parishioner of Saint John's Church, where she is a member of the Catholic women's group, Columbiettes. Additionally, Carole is a member of The Focolare Movement, an international Catholic organization that promotes the ideals of unity and universal brotherhood. The Focolare Movement operates in 180 nations. Carole established a branch of Focolare at St. John's. She is very passionate about Focolare and says because it gives her a sense of purpose and joy to serve the community through the "word of life."

Kristana Ramanauskas



Born and raised in New York City, Kristina studied at Trinity College, Cambridge University and The University of Glasgow. She is a Private Art Consultant currently based in Monroe County, PA.

Kristina is also a member of the National Art Library in London, UK, Tate Museum and the Victoria & Albert Museum. She is an elected Democratic Committee Woman in Coolbaugh Township, member of the League of Women Voters, and Treasurer for Monroe County Progressive Democrats.



Dr. Nancy Monestime-Williams

Dr. Nancy Monestime-Williams is a Pediatrician in practice in the Pocono Mountains.

The daughter of Haitian immigrants, Nancy was born, raised, and educated in Massachusetts, but remains connected to Haiti, where she still has family. She attended and graduated from Harvard University where she received a liberal arts education and a degree in Biology while also serving the Cambridge and Boston communities in several capacities. She then moved to New York to attend Columbia University's School of Public Health where she obtained her Masters Degree in Public Health with a focus on Sociomedical Sciences: Health Promotion and Disease Prevention. After receiving her medical education from the Medical University of South Carolina College of Medicine in 2004, she subsequently completed her Residency training in Pediatrics and has been in practice for over 15 years. She has done research with the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and has been published.

Dr. Monestime-Williams currently resides in Pennsylvania with her husband, Dr. Allister Williams, and their two children. Given her particular interest in issues that pertain to youth, health, underserved population, and service, she is actively involved with her community as a member of

the Greater Pocono Chapter of Jack and Jill of America, Inc., serving as the Eastern Region Chair of the National Our Health Matters Task Force and as the First Vice-President of the Monroe County Branch of the NAACP and. She maintains her ties to her college alma mater by being a part of the Alumni Interviewing Program for Harvard College's Office of Admissions and Financial Aid. She serves on various boards and committees at Moravian Academy, is an active member of her church, and is also on the Martha's Vineyard Community Services Board of Directors.



Hawa Re

She doesn't have the trimmings of a college education, but Liberian-born Hawa Re is a success.

"My children have learned for me," says Hawa. They are in the medical field and I am so proud of them."

Born in the West African nation of Liberia, Hawa arrived in the United States in 1985, settling first on Staten Island in NY.

On Staten Island, Hawa shunned the traditional role or profession of immigrant women—home attendant, healthcare aide. Instead, she excelled in an area reserved for men. She founded Pressless Moving Company and her service was sought after.

Hawa relocated many years later to the Poconos, where she raised her children. She began Hawa Home Improvement LLC in the Poconos.

Hawa is a pioneer, a role model to hundreds, if not millions of women, black and white, for she went into a profession that was not "fashionable" to women, let alone African women.



Dr. Jamisa McIvor-Bennett

holding a contest to renovate rooms in five Philly homes.

Somewhere it is written that "If Wonder Woman was a person, Jamisa would be it! As she is a wife and mother of four, she shows that anything is possible and can be accomplished..."

At age twenty-nine, South Philadelphia-born and raised Jamisa McIvor-Bennett is the CEO and Founder of Rosebud's Investments, a real estate consulting company that she founded in 2017 to manage her properties and to teach financial literacy and

the beginning stages of real estate. Today, wife, mother, and author, Jamisa holds the deed to 26 mortgage-free properties, all of which she purchased outright! She is the architect behind a \$3.2 million real estate portfolio. And, magnanimous and socially conscious, Jamisa is

The oldest of 10 siblings, Jamisa was raised by her grandparents who instilled in her the values of leadership, compassion, and wisdom. Her introduction to home ownership began when in 2015 she inherited and sold her grandmother's South Philly home at age 20. Then she earned her certification as a Section 8 Landlord that year. In 2019, she became a Licensed Contractor. Then she earned her Honorary PhD in Business and Real Estate Management from Harvest Christian University.

Dr. Jamisa McIvor-Bennett has been featured in Forbes, Entrepreneur, and Business Insider Magazines, and she often presents at conventions and seminars, most recently at NAACP seminar and at a Ted Talk in Atlanta.




Tameko Patterson

Tameko Patterson is PA State President of National Council of Negro Women (NCNW), First Vice President for the Monroe County NAACP, and a Lifetime member of Jack and Jill of America, Inc. She is also a member of the board of directors for the Pocono Mountains United Way, Stroudsburg Little Bethel Historical Association. Additionally, Tameko is president of the Stroudsburg School Board and a member of Monroe Career and Technical Institute's Joint Operating Committee. Professionally, Tameko is Deputy Director of New Product Launch at Sanofi Vaccines.

Prior to Sanofi, Tameko was a project management institute and IBM certified project manager with more than 20 years of experience managing large, complex, multi-million dollar projects across several industries, including technology, banking, finance, securi-

ties, and pharmaceuticals.

Tameko has received numerous awards and recognitions including 2017 Ernest E. Just Scholarship Award presented by the Alpha Mu Nu Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc.; 2019 Trailblazer Award presented by Monroe County Commissioners; 2019 MLK Community Service Award presented by ESU; 2019 Community Service Award presented by Monroe County NAACP; and several citations from state and local elected officials.



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2023 Women of Excellence in the Poconos

Deidre Sears

Deidre Sears is Founder and Artistic Director of Elevé Dance Theater, Inc. since 2013. She implemented Dance After School Programs throughout the Tri-State lasting 10 years.

A passionate education professional with over 10 years of experience in program development, implementation and management, Deidre holds a bachelor's from St. John's University, a master's degree from Walden University, and a Certificate in Non-Profit/Public/Organizational Management from New York University. She is a former Adjunct professor Lackawanna Community College where she taught an introductory college course, implemented new curriculum ideas for the College, and facilitated workshops with Financial Aid and Bursar Offices for first year students.

Ms. Sears holds membership in and serves as Financial Secretary for Jack and Jill of America chapter in Monroe County, PA. She is a recipient of numerous awards, among

them Monroe County Woman of Distinction Award by African American Network of the Poconos, and Community and Arts Leadership Recognition from PA State Rep Rosemary Brown, to name a few. She is Board Member/Youth Liaison of the African American Network of the Poconos.



Charece N. Sanders

Executive Director of Metamorphosis

A tireless advocate for better lifestyles for women and their families, Charece Sanders is the founder and Executive Director of The Metamorphosis Women's Empowerment Initiative, a multi-faceted community based non-profit organization established to build a multitude of relationships fashioned to enhance "the womanly experience."

Ms. Sanders was born and raised in Harlem, NYC and shared that growing up in the inner city inspired her to become a voice for the youth in the African-American community. In her early years in New York, Charece served as a writer and newspaper editor, youth activist, and advocate for teens who were survivors of suicide attempts, rape, and sexual assault. Driven by her passion for community service and outreach, Charece entered the medical field, becoming a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN). She worked for 16 years in several capacities, as a medical assistant, phlebotomist, and Ventilator/Tracheotomy nurse, servicing pediatric and adult clients who suffered from traumatic brain injuries. Adamant about leading by example, Charece continuously works to exemplify the true beauty of today's woman from the inside out. Consistent with her community service endeavors, Charece currently occupies seats as a board member of The City of Hope and Pennsylvania Treatment and Healing (P.A.T.H.). She

is also an active member of The Pocono Chamber of Commerce Multicultural Committee, The Interagency Council of Monroe, PA (IAC), Founding member of PA Chapter of Believe, Inspire, Grow (B.I.G).

Ms. Charece is a recipient of several recognitions, notable among them Health Equity Heroes Award 2021 given by The Pennsylvania Commission for Women and Adagio, 2022 Bizzy Award and Inaugural Woman In Business Award" by The Pocono Chamber of Commerce, and 2022 Best of Stroudsburg Award also given by the Pocono Chamber of Commerce.



Dr. Michelle Walker-Davis

Dr. Michelle Walker-Davis is a real estate developer and franchise owner, who is on a mission to re-circulate the \$3 trillion dollars within the Black community and raise the value system of women. A survivor of several life-threatening automobile accidents, she uses her existence to fulfill God's plan for her life.

"My mission is to change the trajectory for women by providing the technical assistance, education, and financial support needed," says Dr. Walker-Davis.

As such, she is the founder and visionary behind the leadership of Women of Power and Transformation (WOPAT) and its major initiative to create "1 Billion Successful Women Entrepreneurs Worldwide" using WOPAT as a HUB. A global leader, she is sworn to a 10-year term to UNACWCA – UNA GHANA for gender equality. She launched her initiative in Accra, Ghana and an agreement was signed at the Consulate of Ghana New York City, August 2022.



The Free Money Expert for Grants, Global Speaker, Serial Entrepreneur, Transformational Business Coach, Philanthropist, and Award-Winning Author, Dr. Michelle Walker-Davis is the Managing Partner for Imperial Management Group, a grant development firm in the \$850 billion marketplace. She is the co-author with Dr. George Fraser and others, of the highly acclaimed book, "Who Influenced You" where she gives a loving tribute to her parents, now deceased, and draws upon the Power of Family. She eagerly serves as an Alumni Ambassador and helped raise millions for Endowed Scholarships for black and brown students at Syracuse University.

Dr. Walker-Davis spent seven years early in her career working in Washington, DC on education. She was the senior advisor on education to former DC Mayor Anthony Williams, chief of strategic planning and policy for DCPS, and worked in the District's Office of Budget and Planning. Prior companies include rehabbing homes for single mothers, and representing artists, Young Simba in the Broadway Musical "The Lion King" and Motown Review at various casinos.

Dr. Walker-Davis has a Doctor of Education from Teachers College Columbia University and served as a volunteer board member for several education organizations, including an international Montessori training center, regional affordable housing organization, and a local educational reform initiative. A member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., AACCNJ, Pocono Chamber of Commerce. Dr. Walker-Davis hosts a podcast "Fresh Money Talk."

She is married to her college sweetheart and business partner of 36 years, and they are the proud parents of four amazing young professionals. All are alumni of Syracuse University, known as the "Davis 6".

Sonia A. Williams

I am a world traveler, and veteran whose career includes work as a army helicopter pilot, dee-jay, electronics specialist, and a train conductor. I was born in London, England of Jamaican parents, and moved to the US during high school. All my experiences have given me an appreciation of people from diverse cultures, and the wonderful art they create, particularly the Afro-centric pieces. I create my shadow boxes to showcase the art in unique, respectful culturally connected ways.



About 20 years ago, I became more and more interested in African American and African Art and taught myself to mat and frame. Soon I was matting and framing prints for friends and family. A few years ago, I taught myself the art of creating a shadow box. Now I am incorporating shadow boxes, African fabrics, and other techniques to complement the beauty of the original artwork, such as wood carvings and figurines. With the generous encouragement of friends and customers, I am now able to bring you one-of-a-kind shadow boxes. These shadow boxes come with a certificate of authenticity. I hope you enjoy them and thank you for your interest.

Now this is what I do: create one-of-a-kind shadow boxes for masks, carvings and figurines. It gives me such pleasure to create art that people love.

ECCR Group Awarded \$500,000 USDA Training Grant, Seeks Applicants for business Funding

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Ask Lisa-Anne



Lisa-Anne Ray-Byers

Q. My daughter has Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder-ADHD and I'm having a hard time finding a summer camp that will accept her and that will understand her special needs. How can I find her a good special needs camp?

A. It can be very hard to find a summer camp for children who have any kind of learning disability. For any summer camp, you need to start looking now! First, you must decide if you want a fun camp, day care or an academic camp. Either way, camps should involve fun. Second, you want to find ones that will accommodate your daughter's needs. How much do they know about ADHD? How do they discipline? Are they easy to contact, especially in an emergency? Do you want day camps only or overnight camps? Are there enough adults per child? Then finally, you want one that fits your budget. To accomplish this, you must start looking early. Here are some resources that I hope you find helpful:

1. The National Dissemination Center for Children with Special Needs (NICHCY) <http://www.nichcy.org/InformationResources/Pages/camps.aspx> provides this quick connect to camps and summer opportunities (Feb 2010).
2. CHADD Summer Camp Award Fund 2010. www.chadd.org/Content/CHADD/Membership/SummerCampAward/default.htm Awards of up to \$8,000 each designed to help parents or guardians.
3. ADHD-LD Summer Camp Guide http://www.additudemag.com/adhd_guide/camp.html Learn how specialized camps can benefit your child, and search the camp programs listed in the ADHD Summer Camp Directory.
4. ADHD Summer Enrichment Camp at the Leelanau School. Introductory program from July 18-23 intended for students entering grades 5 through 12 and their parents. <http://www.drhallowell.com/blog/adhd-summer-enrichment-camp-at-the-leelanau-school-july-18-introductory-and-july-25-2010-advanced/>
5. Looking for Special Needs Camps? Summer Camps Directory <http://www.summercampsinfo.com/categories/special-needs-summer-camps.asp>
6. National Directory of Day and Residential Camps, Camp Easter Seals. <http://www.easterseals.com/site>
7. The American Camp Association (ACA; 765-342-8456), one of the largest camping organizations in the U.S., also operates a "find a camp" service at CAMP-a Resource for Families.
8. SOAR, Inc. is a non-profit wilderness adventure program for AD/HD and LD youth.
9. National Camp Association, Inc (NCA). By phone (800-966-CAMP). Also <http://www.summercamp.org/>.
10. National Camp Association - Guidance and referrals. <http://www.summercamp.org/guidance/>
11. KidsCamps.com includes a directory listing for Special Needs Camps and Military Camps.
12. CampSpecialists.com - summer camp referral program.
13. Bridges4Kids <http://www.bridges4kids.org/SummerCamp.html> has a comprehensive listing of Summer Camps across the nation.
14. Religious camps at <http://www.ccca.org/> Also check out your local YMCA, churches, community organizations, libraries, schools and colleges for camps close to home and small enough to accommodate your daughter. Good luck!

—Lisa-Anne Ray-Byers is a licensed and certified speech-language pathologist who has worked in education for over two decades. She holds graduate degrees in speech-language pathology and multicultural education. She also holds certification in educational administration. She is the author of the book, *They Say I Have ADHD, I Say Life Sucks! Thoughts From Nicholas and co-author of 365 Ways To Succeed With ADHD* both available at www.Amazon.com. She is a member of the National Education Writers Association. She is currently employed in the Hempstead School District. You may contact her at speechlrb@yahoo.com or by visiting her website at www.AskLisaAnne

Take It or Leave It ...Right Now!

Ever watch the game show *Let's Make A Deal*? A costume clad audience member is faced with several prize options and must make an instant decision as to which to choose. Curtain #1? Maybe curtain #3? The prize choice must be made quickly; after all, it's only a 30 minute show!



Some salespeople ask for an instant decision from their customers. With a one-time customer, as with a retail sale, asking for a quick decision is expected. After all, in retail, the mall closes at 9, and customers must vacate the premises. But when building a long-term relationship with a customer, salespeople might want to rethink the quick sale approach.

"Take it or leave it...right now" might make a potential long-term customer sprint away faster than the Road Runner. Build a relationship with a long-term customer by avoiding hard-sell, I-need-a-decision-right-now-or-nothing pressure. Instead of demanding an instant decision, ask your customer for a time you can visit or call to get a decision. With a returning customer, take the time to build the relationship. The return on your patience might just be a life-long client.

—Gail Lewis, M.A., teaches Communications and is a corporate trainer with The Communication Depot, and she never passes up an opportunity to watch *Star Trek*.

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4. Bids For The Business—slow times ahead? People still need goods and services and will spend for them. There is business out there, and your competitors will be bidding for their share--and yours. Advertise, so they that they don't bid for your share!
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6. Holds Public Awareness—once you build a business, you can keep it going with a consistent ad program. If you cut your advertising, you lose public awareness. It's like starting over again to get it back. Don't let this happen to you!
7. Pre-Sells Customer—your advertising is part of your sales force. Ads help pre-sell the customer and close the sale faster. That saves you time and saves you money.
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Making Business Sense



Dr. Neva Alexander

Conditions that hinder business communication

Communication is an essential attribute of an organization. We spend our time either receiving or requesting information. Lack of communication creates tension and demolishes both personal and organizational relationships. The ability to exchange information or conversation with others is essential to the success of the individual, family or organization. Communication can be hindered when a person cannot make sense of a message. This could be due to a number of circumstances such as language barrier, defensiveness, inarticulateness, poor writing skills and interpersonal skills.

In New York the staffs of most organizations are very diverse. Although this is a great asset to an organization, at times you will

come across an individual that knows English as a second language. Sometimes these workers may be leaders in the organization. This may cause miscommunication and misunderstanding, which may result in staff members or leaders becoming defensive. When one is defensive it becomes difficult for them to be articulate.

In addition, poor writing skills can hinder the communication process. In today's society, we spend a great deal of time sending text messages. As a professor, I noticed that sometimes my students use some abbreviation to communicate in class. Using abbreviation at times can stop the flow of communication on a professional level. Some leaders lack interpersonal skills, thus causing them to be unapproachable. Staff members may avoid communicating with these leaders in fear that they may not have a positive result.

Individuals bring to organizations set of characteristics that influence how information is processed. Organizational communication contributes to creating relationships and as-

sists both individuals and organizations in achieving diverse purpose. Effective communication is best achieved when the idea of the message is clear and the subordinate ideas effectively identify and relate to the main purpose in a naturally convincing manner. Some solutions to lessen the impact due to the hindering of communication includes having face to face meetings with your employees, documenting your conversation, writing in a manner that is readable by all staff members, and being approachable. Effective communication is necessary for an organization's development. Any hindrance can prevent an organization's growth, and therefore it should be eliminated.

—Dr. Neva Helena Alexander, an educator and motivational speaker, and author, is Founder/President of Neva Global Alliance. Dr. Alexander can be reached at E: admin@nevaalexander.com

How to Start Your Own Business

First Engage In Side Hustle!

My advice is that before you resign your job to begin your entrepreneurial journey, try to operate your business as a side hustle until it can well generate your monthly income or at least something close to it. Instead of taking a second or third job, you should dedicate time to researching and developing the concept or idea for your business properly. If you need to go to school or get trained, use this time to do it. When you carry out your side hustle to a point where you feel you now have a good grasp of the business idea, or you are generating substantial income or at least have all the necessary tools needed for successful business, and when you know you can no longer handle the pressure of the two jobs, you can then let go of your salary job to focus fully on your business endeavors.

For example, I operated my businesses as a side hustle between 2010 to March 2014, before I actually decided to pursue it full time. Was it easy for me operating a business alongside a full time job as well as family and other commitments? Of course, it wasn't easy at all, but the passion to succeed, fulfill my destiny

and also break out of the monotonous mundane life of being an employee was just too much drive for me to notice the temporary inconvenience. I sensed it strongly in my spirit when it was time to move on to doing my business full time. After discussing the decision with my wife, we both agreed to do it and my life has never been the same again.

Discover What God Has Called You to Do

For most people, what God has called them to do is wrapped up in what they already like to do. Go back through your childhood and reflect on the things you were interested in before you became entangled with life. Find the things that came or come easy and natural to you. The intersection of what you like to do and what comes natural for you to do is what

you are called to do. The problem is that most people know what this is, but they put it aside because someone has told them they couldn't make money doing it. Knowing fully well that our society do not celebrate mediocrity and average, I believe you will excel doing what you like and what comes natural because you will do it better than anyone else on the planet.

Get Employed In the Areas of Your Callings

Rather than making a choice of employment based solely on financial or monetary gains, you should rather consider skill development, experience, exposure, contacts and expertise in the area of your interest. The best way to do this is by working, interning or volunteering for someone or a company that is already do-

ing it at a high level. If this happens to be a low paying job compared to your worth, let it not bother you because you will not be tempted to stay there your entire life. I was able to walk away from my regular 9-5 job without too much headache simply because the pay was not too impressive. I personally know many people who have been trapped at their job for years and find it difficult to leave to answer the call of entrepreneurship simply because of the attractive salary.

Create another Job for Yourself While Working

While you are working for someone else on a low paying job developing your skills, you should begin the process of creating additional income based on those skills. For example, I have volunteered or work at some projects mainly just to acquire the needed skills. At such times, I have developed my skills on the side as an Event Producer and Event Marketing Consultant. 90 percent of what I am doing today was laid out while working 5-9 job.

—Gbenga Omotayo @MeetGbenga
Like my facebook page

Gbenga Omotayo is passionate about helping people develop their God-Inspired business in the areas of Events Marketing, Marketing communications & Business Networking!

Actor Kevin Byrd Certified As Marquis Who's Who In America



Kevin Byrd
President
Brown Byrd Foundation Inc.

them, Samuel L. Jackson and Bernie Mack.

Additionally, Mr. Byrd acted in Al Roker's Production *Honored Deferred* and he has roles in *Release, Law and Order, Basketball Player U5, Brooklyn Boyz, The Last Dayz*, Bollywood's film, *When Kiran Meets Karen*, to name a few.

Much to his credit, Kevin has graced the covers of numerous publications—King Magazine, The Epoch International Times, IflowMag.com, Vibe Magazine, Essence, Hush, Urban Buzz, Parle, Caribbean Life, New York Times, Metro NY, Black Star News, BET, and, Hempstead Uniondale Times.

An international sensation, Kevin Byrd is the President/CEO of BrownByrd Prostate Cancer Foundation (www.brownbyrdfoundation.org). His work has caught the eyes of world leaders who have accorded him honors.

Accordingly, Mr. Byrd has received over 100 Proclamations and Honors from renowned world figures such as Queen Elizabeth II, Pope Benedict XVI, former Presidents Barack Obama and George Bush, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, New York former Govern-

- **April 2023**
Kevin Byrd's *Marquis Who's Who in America* biographical induction into the history books publication established in 1898 by Albert Nelson Marquis.
- **February 2023**
Kevin Byrd statue unveiling commissioned by Big Statues Matt Glenn.
- **February 2, 2023**
Kevin Byrd honored with his 11 time Niagara Falls Illumination honoree on behalf of the Brown Byrd Foundation Inc.

www.brownbyrdfoundation.org

The Marquis Who's Who Publication Board Certified has on April 15, certified Actor Kevin Byrd as *Who's Who in America*, according to a press release by WA Public Relations.

Kevin Byrd is an internationally-acclaimed actor, songwriter, performing artist, playwright, producer and motivational speaker. Mr. Byrd has appeared in films and sit-coms alongside several actors, prominent among

nors David A. Patterson and Mario Cuomo, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, along with some 40 United States governors.

Kevin Byrd's hometown of Utica in Oneida County in upstate New York designated every October 1st as Kevin Byrd's Day. Additionally, he was inducted to the Oneida County Historic Museum and his life's work is on display at the Museum as part of the Museum's History Makers: A Salute to Contemporary African Americans" Exhibition of

Oneida County. Kevin Byrd has the distinction of being the first black person to be given this honor in the Museum's 145 years history.

Kevin Byrd's recent certificate and induction of his biographical record are the cumulative result his decades long work as actor and prostate cancer awareness advocate throughout America and around the globe.



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