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S Y R A C U S E
WOMAN
magazine

COVER STORY
**JENNIFER
PROCHNA**
A magical life

SPECIAL FEATURE

Happy Chicks Farm

WISE WOMAN

Katie McQuaide

HEALTHY EATING

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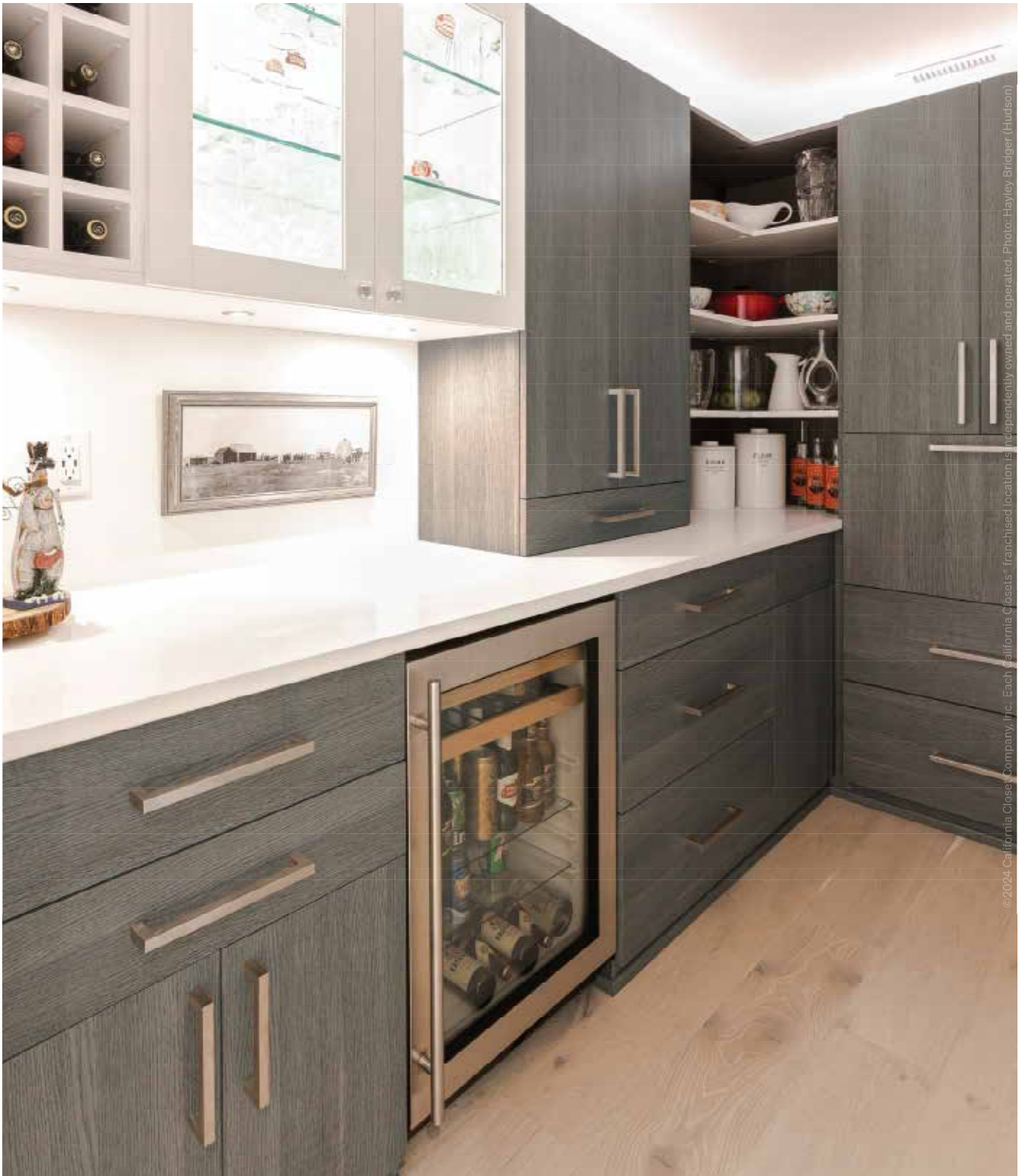


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Carol Eaton

Start your Summer in Syracuse checklist

Summer is in full swing here in Syracuse and Central New York and we all know what that means . . . an endless array of festivals, outdoor concerts, farmer's markets and favorite summertime cuisine. Align that with stunningly beautiful parks, trails, lakes, sunsets and more and there is, quite honestly,

no better place to be.

When invited to pen a guest commentary themed around the wonderful seasonal activities that take place in CNY, I knew it would be impossible to provide all the options to make a "Summer in Syracuse" the very best it could be, so consider this your assignment to start to make your personalized checklist . . . right here, right now.

Envision some of your favorites, like a hike around Green Lakes or a cruise on Skaneateles Lake. Have an amazing night at the ballpark with the Syracuse Mets, buy something uniquely yours at the Downtown Syracuse Arts & Crafts Festival, and while you're there, take a stroll over to the Northeast Wine & Jazz Festival. Meet the babies at the Rosamond Gifford Zoo as they'll surely warm your heart, or discover something new, like the fabulous public art adorning the streets of our community - take a self-guided tour and have your phone fully charged because you'll definitely want that photo as you immerse yourself in the historic and multi-cultural beauty presented by a multitude of talented artists.

With so many opportunities, you're likely wondering how to begin YOUR list. Start by taking a stroll through www.VisitSyracuse.com and learn a little bit about Visit Syracuse - who we are and what we do. You'll see that our mission is to showcase the beauty, historic charm, diverse cultural richness, four distinctly inviting seasons, and alluring array of events, festivals and attractions that define our region, inspiring visitors and residents alike to create fun-filled memorable experiences. Browse the blogs and find an adventure that's just your speed and let the VS Events Calendar serve as your source for all things happening throughout the region. Stay current and engaged with what's trending by joining the thousands who follow us on social media, and share your stories and ours about this great place we call home.

The dedicated team at Visit Syracuse considers it a privilege to promote our destination with sales and marketing partnerships designed to stimulate economic vitality for our stakeholders and create a prosperous future for our community through consistent growth and development of leisure tourism, conventions and film and television production, driving direct visitor spending in a \$1.1 billion-dollar local tourism economy.

As I write this, my colleague and I are preparing for a trip to New York City to participate in an I Love NY Media Night Reception. The evening event will provide us with the opportunity to meet with more than 50 travel journalists and influencers based in the tri-state area to showcase summer travel across New York State.

We'll invite some to visit and see for themselves what we've known all along, that Syracuse and Central New York is a place where you feel at home in an accessible and inclusive community. One that welcomes and inspires music lovers, history buffs, art aficionados, outdoor adventurers, sports fans, culture-seekers, and self-proclaimed foodies. And the best part is, there's always something new to discover.

Carol Eaton is the senior vice president and director of marketing at Visit Syracuse.



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Savoring Science

The Milton J. Rubenstein Museum of Science & Technology (MOST) held its 24th annual Savoring Science event, presented by Luck Grove, featuring a cocktail hour at the museum with remarks by MOST president Lauren Kochian. Attendees then took a "Savoring Stroll" down the street to Lemon Grass for an outstanding 15-course meal by chef Max Chutinthanond. The sold-out event of more than 325 people was the museum's largest gala ever and helped raise critical funds to support the MOST's many STEM education and outreach programs.



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All Smiles at Seneca River Days

Baldwinsville's annual Seneca River Days were held June 7 and 8, bringing community fun for all ages, celebrating the riverside community and raising funds for local programs. The event is a fundraiser for the Baldwinsville Rotary Club and proceeds are given back to the community through programs such as the school Backpack Program, Bee Full Pantry, B'ville Meals on Wheels, and Baldwinsville Food Pantry. Photos by Lori Newcomb



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Laura Clary,
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Learn about our Founder's inspirational fight with breast cancer

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Fashions for Francis House

The Auxiliary hosted its 2024 Annual Spring Luncheon & Fashion Show at the Double Tree by Hilton in East Syracuse on May 16. Thank you to Chair Melissa Braun and the entire planning committee for a wonderful spring afternoon. Bev & Co. Boutique owners Renee Neiderman and Ashley Neiderman provided the fashions for the models, who included Sister Colette Walter, eight Francis House staff members, and seven Youth Auxiliary members. Tessa Biagi Photography





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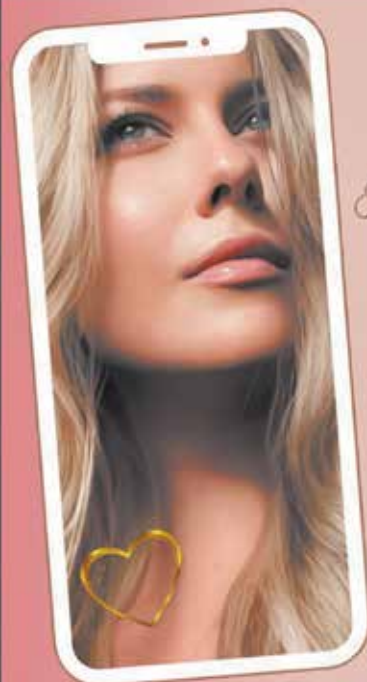
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Care for Care Givers

A near perfect evening was the backdrop for the Taste of David's Refuge, held on June 14 at Heritage Hill Brewhouse in Pompey. About 400 people attended the fundraiser for David's Refuge, which provides support for the caregivers of children with

special needs. Pediatric neurosurgeon Dr. Zulma Tovar-Spinoza (May 2024 SWM Cover Woman) was the honored guest at the gala event. Photography by Brittni Stasiuk.



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Happy Chicks Farm

TINY PRODUCE WITH BIG NUTRITION

Alyssa Dearborn

Gail Tosh and her wife, Jen Lawrence, are the proud owners of Happy Chicks Farm in Baldwinsville. The pair have been operating Happy Chicks Farm for just over a year and the farm is one of the only farms growing microgreens in Central New York. But the two had a love of the country and nature long before starting their business.

"We bought a house and were both thinking environmentally," Gail said when asked about how she and her wife had gotten into farming, "We were thinking of how we could lower our carbon footprint and do good things for the environment and teach our kids good life skills... We decided that we were going to raise chickens and have a big garden. We've kind of grown from there."

She added that Jen is a natural country person, that she wants to know where her food comes from and that farmed animals are raised humanely.

Although these greens are lesser-known members of the produce aisle, they are slowly gaining popularity for their variety and versatility. Microgreens are edible greens that are the earliest stage in a vegetable plant's development after the sprouting stage. They are harvested in their most nutritious state and are known to be rich in both macro minerals – such as calcium, magnesium, and potassium – and micro minerals – such as iron and zinc. From a taster's perspective, they range in flavor depending on the type of vegetable plant and make a great addition to salads and sandwiches. Happy Chicks Farms offers microgreens in broccoli, sunflower, pea, and radish varieties.

"It looked like fun," Gail said about the choice to farm microgreens. "It looked healthy. It looked new. When I first looked at it, it looked like the next big thing... microgreens farming is [also] easy. You can decide what kind of medium you're going to grow them in. Do you want to grow them in soil? Do you want to grow them on bromat? I mean, there's different ways that you can do it. We went the soil route only because we were just getting started."

Happy Chicks Farm faces the same challenges that most other small businesses in America face. According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 99.9 percent of all businesses in the U.S. are small businesses. It is also estimated that 627,000 new small businesses are opened each year. However, the Chamber of Commerce also states that 18 percent of small businesses fail within the first year while 50 percent fail after five years. Competition from large corporations and

a lack of community support create a brutal business environment for small businesses. Despite this, it is important to have hope for America's small businesses.

"First of all, you're not paying to pollute the earth with diesel fuel that the trucks are using to drive from California to New York," Gail said about the benefits of buying locally grown food. "Number two, when you buy local, the money stays in the community. You're financing someone who is doing something like farming and raising animals on their farm. Then you buy [from them], putting directly back into the local economy. Small businesses are really what makes our country work. I mean, we're losing our small businesses, but that's really where we should be putting our attention."

Despite the challenges of owning and operating a small business, Gail and Jen, who just celebrated their seventh wedding anniversary, find fulfillment and joy in farming. Being able to work with the

land allows them to live more environmentally friendly and connect with the community.

"Oh my gosh, working outside! Being outside in nature. There's something about being outside," she said of her favorite part of farming. "Yeah, you're sweating, but it's summer and you're happy and you're doing something for yourself, you're doing something for your community. We also raise bees, so you're also doing something for the environment. There's just a lot of positive things to it."

Being able to spend time in nature and have a positive impact on the environment are great reasons to

get into agriculture. But being able to experience the unique sense of community in the world of small farms and business is rewarding as well. Having that community, according to Gail, can be invaluable. "Just try it," she said when asked about advice she had for those interested in trying the farm lifestyle, "Don't be scared. And reach out to other people who are doing the same thing, because people are often afraid to ask for help. But generally, when you ask for help, you're going to get more help than you ever knew you would have needed. It's a very giving community out here." SWM

If you are interested in learning more about Happy Chicks Farm's microgreens or want to learn how you can have locally grown greens delivered to your door, visit www.happychicksfarmbv.com.



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JEN PROCHNA

A magical life

Maggie Nerz Iribarne

// t's magic."

This is how stylist Jen Prochna describes the palpable energy at a cabi fashion party where the room is full of women trying on clothes, talking and laughing.

Magic is, according to the dictionary, an extraordinary power or influence, something that seems to cast a spell, an enchantment. Jen Prochna is a wife, mother, friend, registered nurse and fashion stylist whose magical life shimmers with passion, purpose and gratitude.

Looking back, Jen's career in fashion seems fated. Between her undergraduate degree in psychology and earning an MBA at Syracuse University, she worked as a freelance model (something she continues to do to this day), doing advertisements, voiceovers, commercials, and fashion shows.

With her graduate degree in hand, she was set to start work at an insurance company when the sudden death of her father-in-law thrust her unexpectedly into the jewelry business. Prochna Jewelers in Armory Square became a successful 15-year venture with her husband, Gary. Jen jumped right in, quickly learning the market and customer base.

Continued on page 20

"Every woman needs and deserves to feel beautiful and special when she sets that foot outside the door."

—Jen Prochna



Photo by Alice G. Patterson

A magical life FROM PAGE 19

Over the years she and Gary ran both the jewelry store and another family business, Dependable Paving Company, from one office. Their three children, Sierra (now 32), Ryan (now 30), and Ava (now 25) grew up observing their busy parents first from office playpens and later as helpers themselves. When an incredulous five-year-old Ryan asked his mother why work stopped her from attending his Christmas play, Jen's exit strategy from the jewelry business was born, conveniently opening a door to fashion styling.

Three years later, in 2004, Jen found herself charmed after attending something called a cabi party at a friend's home in Camillus. This company presents and styles their high quality, fashionable (investment fashion, i.e., not cheap) clothing to small groups of friends in private homes. Soon after, Jen began hosting her own parties and then applied to become a stylist herself.

Each of the two cabi seasons begins with a fashion week in a different city where stylists convene to meet and study the latest line. Afterwards, boxes of clothes arrive at each stylist's home, where they work producing outfit combinations and accessories for different tastes and body types, preparing for the imminent styling/sales parties. Jen styles at about 15-20 parties each season. Between five and 30 people attend each event. Women find out about the parties by word of mouth, one friend invites another and so on.

Hostesses provide the wine and cheese and the space for the racks and in return receive half priced clothing and "cabi cash" to inspire further shopping.

"I present the current collection and we sip a little wine...then the action starts," she said. "We try on clothes. I assist with sizing and pairings...most of my clients I know so well that I have recommendations before we even begin. I've been doing this for 19 years...this fall is my 39th season!"

Surprisingly, Jen does not like to shop. Before becoming a stylist, Jen would go to the mall and buy multiple single pieces and then have to go back to find more clothes to match. Many commiserate with this experience of having many articles of clothing yet nothing to wear.

"They have items," Jen says. "Not OUTFITS!"

And styling is about the outfits. Jen's long experience gives her the, perhaps magical, ability to help women of every age, shape and size find the right clothing combinations to look their best.

Looking good is nice, but the friendships and connections forged and nurtured through these gatherings cast the most important spell.

"I have had thousands of clients whose lives I've touched and I am so proud of that...My two best friends are my assistants, my attorney and eye doctor are my hostesses, my hair stylist is a client," Jen said. "Many appointments extend very long because we take time to catch up, hash out the world's problems, exchange stories of husbands and kids! I have days, just like everyone, where I am not wanting to go to work...tired, weather, whatever the reason. But unbelievably, every time I come home energized and smiling."

"Her style advice is dead on and many of us in Onondaga County dress a whole lot better after Jen has come into our lives," said long-time client and friend Karen McGinn.

Jen's Top Five Fashion Tips:

1. **You don't have to follow every trend.**
You are uniquely you.
2. **Confidence and a smile are the best accessories.**
3. **Yes, you can wear yellow.**
4. **Buy a perfect bra.** The one you have probably doesn't fit right.
5. **Kick your wardrobe up just a notch.**
It's OK to be one of the best dressed people in the room!



Judy Bragg, a self-professed “die-hard cabi fan,” cites Jen’s incredible talent for everything from upbeat presentations to fashion knowledge to honest advice to customer care to business acumen among her many strengths.

Jen believes in fashion’s power to transform.

“When I am dressing a client and she looks in the mirror and I see the sparkle come back in her eye and she stands a little taller with new confidence, then I know I have been successful in my mission. Every woman needs and deserves to feel beautiful and special when she sets that foot outside the door,” she said.

However, fashion styling is not the only magical occupation in Jen’s life.

“My 50th birthday gift to myself was to become an RN... I had always loved medicine and I should have gone in that direction right out of high school, but what does a 17 year old know? So I asked my husband if he would mind if I went back to school for my RN. Understand, we already had two [children] in college and one in middle school, so it was hard.”

She attended Onondaga Community College for prerequisites and Crouse Hospital to complete her training before accepting a job in Crouse’s maternity center, where she’s worked the last 10 years.

“We take care of moms and newborns after birth (post-partum and post-surgical) and women who are with us antepartum (before birth) if they need extra care before delivery due to illness or a complicated pregnancy. I assess moms [and] babies... offer education in breast-feeding and newborn care. I do my very best to get my families out the door with good information, confidence and advice. I strive to give them the best possible start as a new family.”

Indeed, becoming a mother, a parent, is a magical moment, a metamorphosis. Jen participates in that magic by advocating for her patients, giving back what she received.

“I always remember this is their [her patients’] moment. I remember everything that happened to me and the people who were kind to me. I do for these new moms what was done for me.”

Jen believes she has the best two jobs in the world. Although motherhood has been the most defining role of her life, she finds both styling and nursing equally fulfilling.


So, what’s next for this inspiring woman of reinvention?

“It’s nice to know when you’re happy. I’m right where I want to be,” she says, “I am profoundly blessed.


Serving women is my passion!” SWM



Photos by Alice G. Patterson




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WOMEN IGNITING THE SPIRIT
OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

FEATURED ENTREPRENEUR

Katie McQuaide
LCSW-R, ADHD-CCSP
Owner, Alliance Counseling, LCSW, PLLC

Katie McQuaide is the founder of Alliance Counseling, LCSW, PLLC, a practice specializing in treating children with tick disorders and ADHD through evidence-based methods like Comprehensive Behavioral Intervention for Ticks (CBIT) and behavioral parent training. She launched her practice in December 2022 after more than a decade of working with children and families, driven by a deep passion for making a positive impact.

Katie's journey into entrepreneurship began with her experiences in childcare and education. Starting as a daycare worker and then as an assistant in a classroom serving children with diverse needs, Katie's early roles planted the seeds for her future business. Her later work as a caseworker for families of medically fragile children further ignited her passion for creating positive outcomes for children. This passion continued to grow as she became a social worker, working with families, and children with Autism and ADHD.

Katie's decision to establish Alliance Counseling stemmed from her realization that involving families in the therapeutic process led to better outcomes for the children she treated. Transitioning from clinical roles to owning her practice presented challenges, including building her caseload and shifting from an employee mindset to one of a business owner. One significant challenge was the lack of the immediate support network she had from co-workers. However, Katie adapted when she realized she could maintain connections with her previous colleagues, even if she was no longer just down the hall from them. She reflects, "If there is something you feel passionate about and you have the skills to back that up, then you can fill in the gaps otherwise with connections to reach your goals. It is so important to surround yourself with support."

A pivotal moment in Katie's journey was the support from the WISE Women's Business Center. Through WISE, she gained confidence and accessed valuable resources. Mentorship and community support from WISE were instrumental in navigating the complexities of starting and running a business. This guidance helped Katie transform her vision into reality, enabling her to provide specialized and high-quality services.

Since becoming a business owner, Katie has embraced the creativity required to develop her business model, services, and therapeutic approaches. Her dedication to professional development drives her to seek additional education to improve her effectiveness as a therapist. Accepting that you don't have all the answers can completely change your trajectory as an entrepreneur. Katie believes in focusing on her strengths and outsourcing tasks where others can better serve the business. "You don't know what you don't know until you need to know it," she notes, emphasizing the importance of learning and adapting as an entrepreneur. Community and collaboration are central to Katie's practice and



entrepreneurial journey. She values building a strong support network and actively seeks connections in the business world. This collaborative spirit is reflected in her desire to expand Alliance Counseling to reach a broader population, including adults and families. Katie's innovative ideas, such as group counseling and wellness retreats, highlight her commitment to holistic care.

Looking ahead, Katie plans to expand her practice by hiring more therapists and diversifying services. Her journey demonstrates how a clinical career can successfully transition into entrepreneurship, underscoring the importance of community support and continuous learning as a business owner. Katie's success with Alliance Counseling is a testament to her ongoing commitment to refining her approach and providing even more specialized care in the future.

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WISE words of wisdom

things might look differently and they might feel differently, but you're really never alone in it"
-Katie Schmid



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Healthy summer salads and a little indulgence for people who live to eat

Chef Eric Rose

July has arrived, and with it comes the promise of sun-drenched days, backyard barbecues, and, of course, Fourth of July festivities. For many of us, the thought of hosting a summer soirée can be both exciting and daunting, especially when balancing work, family, and other responsibilities. But fear not, because I'm here to share some tips and tricks for hosting a stress-free Fourth of July party that will leave your guests impressed and your sanity intact.

The Secret to Low-Stress Hosting

Hosting a summer party doesn't have to mean spending hours slaving away in the kitchen or stressing over last-minute details. With a little planning and preparation, you can create a memorable event that allows you to enjoy the company of your loved ones without feeling overwhelmed.

One of my go-to strategies for stress-free entertaining is to choose fresh, vibrant ingredients that can be prepared ahead of time and refrigerated until needed. Whether you're whipping up a colorful salad or marinating proteins for the grill, prepping in advance will save you time and energy on the day of the party.

I'm a firm believer in the power of gourmet salads to elevate any summer gathering. Not only are they delicious and versatile, but they also offer a refreshing alternative to heavier dishes in the summer heat. By focusing on fresh, seasonal ingredients and simple yet flavorful recipes, you can create a menu that's both satisfying and nutritious.

Balancing Indulgence and Health

When it comes to planning a menu for your Fourth of July bash, I like to follow a simple philosophy: offer a selection of healthy appetizers and entrees so that you can indulge in a decadent dessert without the guilt. By prioritizing fresh, wholesome ingredients, you can create dishes that are both delicious and nutritious, allowing you to enjoy the festivities without feeling weighed down.

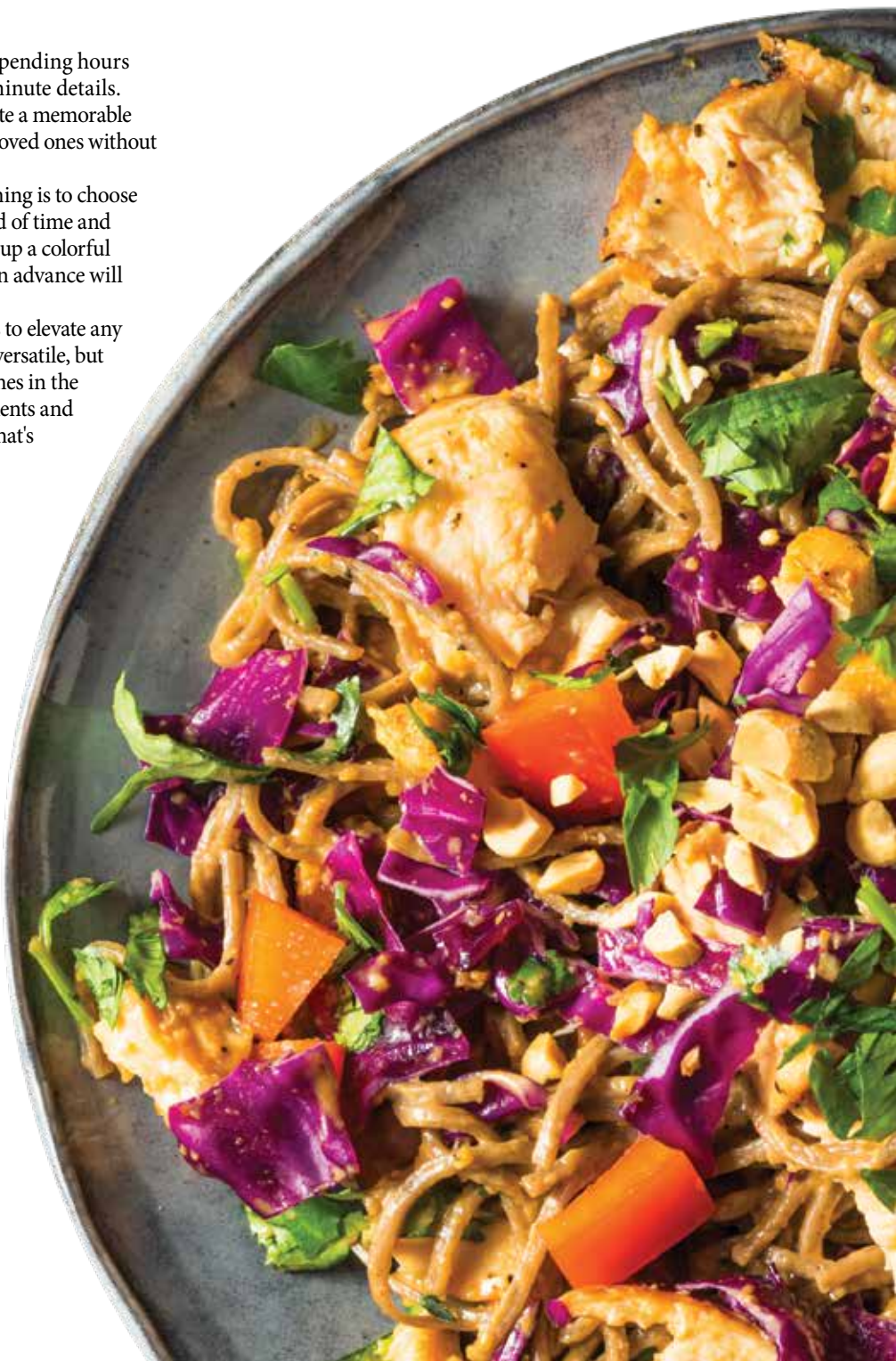
Whether you're grilling up chicken skewers, tossing together a vibrant salad, or serving up seasonal fruit skewers, there are plenty of ways to keep your menu light and refreshing without sacrificing flavor. And when it comes to dessert, why not treat your guests to a make-ahead sweet treat that's as easy as it is indulgent?

Creating Lasting Memories

At the end of the day, the most important thing about hosting a summer party is creating lasting memories with the ones you love. Whether you're gathered around the grill, playing lawn games in the backyard, or watching

fireworks light up the night sky, it's the moments shared with family and friends that make these celebrations truly special.

So as you prepare to host your Fourth of July party this year, remember to keep things simple, focus on fresh, vibrant ingredients, and above all, enjoy every moment with the ones you love. With a little planning and a lot of love, you can host a summer soirée that will be talked about for years to come.



Soba Slaw with Grilled Chicken

Chef Eric Rose

Serves 5-6

One night, I found myself out of dinner ideas, so I turned to our son Nolan for inspiration. Nolan, a fan of ramen and Asian flavors, eagerly began listing ingredients we had on hand, from fresh veggies to soba noodles.

As I started chopping, Nolan's excitement was contagious. The final creation, a salad coated in a silky soy-peanut dressing, was so delicious that it quickly became a staple in our summer menu.

This experience not only celebrated the joy of trying new things and making the most of what you have, but also highlighted the importance of keeping your pantry stocked with exciting ingredients. Explore the aisles of your local grocery store for unique pastas or grains, ensuring you always have something interesting to whip up at a moment's notice. My pantry is a testament to this philosophy, brimming with various pastas, rice, sauces, oils, vinegars, and an array of fresh vegetables, ready to inspire our next culinary adventure.

INGREDIENTS

- ½ head red cabbage, shredded and cut into 1½-inch pieces
- ½ cup snap peas, trimmed and cut on a bias (optional)
- 1 red bell pepper, chopped
- 1 bunch scallions, chopped
- 2 Tbsp finely chopped fresh cilantro
- 6-ounce (dry) package soba noodles or thin spaghetti, cooked and cooled
- 3 chicken breasts seasoned and cooked
- 1 sweet potato peeled and small cubed
- chopped peanut, to garnish

FOR THE TOASTED SESAME SOY-PEANUT DRESSING

- 3 Tbsp regular soy sauce
- 3 Tbsp toasted sesame oil
- 1 ½ Tbsp rice vinegar
- Juice of 1 lime (about 3 Tbsp)
- 1 ½ Tbsp peanut butter
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Spray cubed sweet potato and roast in air fryer or oven until it has color. Cool.
2. Season and cook chicken breast. Cool and cube. (can be added warm)
3. Mix the cabbage, snap peas, bell pepper, scallions, sweet potatoes, and cilantro in a large bowl.
4. Make the dressing: In a small bowl, whisk together the soy sauce, sesame oil, rice vinegar, lemon juice, peanut butter and garlic until well combined. Pour the dressing over the vegetables and toss to get everything evenly coated.
5. Plate each dish individually by placing the soba noodles on the bottom, then covering with salad. Top with cooked chicken and garnish with chopped peanuts.

Continued on page 36



Healthy summer salads and a little indulgence for people who live to eat FROM PAGE 27**4th of July Bar**

Chef Eric Rose

Serves 12

INGREDIENTS

4 Tbsp (½ stick) unsalted butter, plus more for greasing

½ cup cookie butter

2 tsp vanilla extract

1 tsp fine sea salt

5 cups marshmallows

One 10.8-ounce box Golden Grahams

1 cup chocolate chips or chopped chocolate

Pretzel salt, to garnish

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Spray an 8 x 12-inch pan with cooking spray or line it with parchment paper.
2. Lay gram crackers flat on the base of the pan covering the bottom.
3. Melt the butter and cookie butter in a large pot over medium heat. Stir in the vanilla and salt. Once melted, add 4½ cups of the marshmallows.
4. Don't let the marshmallows melt fully—they should retain some of their shape. When the marshmallows are three-quarters melted, carefully fold in the Golden Grahams, making sure the cereal is evenly coated with the marshmallow-cookie butter mixture. Remove from the heat.
5. Preheat the oven to broil. Add a layer of the cereal mixture to the bottom of the prepared pan and press down with parchment paper. Top with about 1 cup chocolate chips and repeat, adding cereal then chocolate, until you reach the top of the pan.
6. Cover the mixture with the remaining ½ cup marshmallows and ¼ cup chocolate chips. Heat under the broiler for 1 to 2 minutes, watching carefully, for a toasty, s'mores-like top. Sprinkle with flaky sea salt and cut into squares to serve. Store any leftovers in an airtight container at room temperature for 3 to 5 days.

Editor's note: Chef Eric Rose is an award-winning chef and nutrition coach.



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KELLY LANDAU



Not so Synple

HOW A NEAR-DEATH EXPERIENCE CHANGED A LIFE

Anna Edwards

Kelly Landau grew up dreaming of becoming a store owner. She spent her childhood playing storefront in her bedroom and coloring pictures that she sold to her neighbors. The spirit of entrepreneurship was always running through her blood.

As she grew up, Kelly set aside her dream of owning a business. She became an art therapist in a psychiatric unit and ran programming at *The Strong Museum of Play*. Both jobs allowed her to maintain her artistic nature, but she veered away from her dream of running her own store.

When she had her first son, she decided to leave her positions at the hospital and museum to stay home. She wanted to put her family first. She also started a stationery business called *Little Letter Shop*, where she cultivated her entrepreneurial skills. "I kind of had my hands dabbling in things that I loved and thought were amazing," Kelly said.

When Kelly had her second son, she was diagnosed with a heart condition called peripartum cardiomyopathy. "That's when things got really bad. I ended up almost dying in childbirth," she said. The condition was followed by other health issues and Kelly was forced to reevaluate. What did she really want out of this one precious life?

Kelly's near-death experience gave her the courage to take the steps that would make her dreams come true. "I don't think if that never happened I would have taken the risk of opening up my own store," she said, "You just never know if tomorrow is going to be your last day."

Kelly opened her lifestyle boutique, *Synple*, in 2019. The store is solely her creation and she makes sure that every product fits her vision. "I try to curate our store based on things that I love and that are true to me. I can't bring anything in that I don't like myself," she said.

Kelly decided to create a lifestyle boutique because she is passionate about interior design and fashion, but the store is far more than the products it provides. *Synple*, she said, is special because of the feeling it creates in its shoppers. Customers know her and know what they're getting when they enter the store. They come in when they are going through something or are simply having a bad day. Customers know they can always go to Kelly with an issue if they need advice or a listening ear. "They can just sit in my chair and cry ... They say that coming into *Synple* really helps to kind of ease the burden," she said.

Kelly believes both retail therapy and the overall feeling of her store make people feel better when they're going through a hard time. She refuses to pass judgment on her customers. "I just let everybody talk. I don't cast my own views. I kind of just listen to everybody ... I think people feel heard. I think they feel welcome. I think it's my therapy background and it's my staff. I treat everybody like they're human," Kelly said.

Many of *Synple's* customers are regulars that keep coming back due to their love of the store's environment. Kelly said she often sees the same customers weekly or biweekly. "I know their names, I know their kids, I know what they're doing in their lives ... What I love so much about *Synple* is that sense of community," she said.

Kelly believes the store is as impactful for herself as it is for her customers. "It's just a big situation tied in a bow. We help people, but it helps me. And I love what I do. I love helping people. I love making people happy," she said.

One of her favorite parts of her business is spreading joy, she said, and the store's tagline is 'A little dose of happy,' because the building was previously a pharmacy.

Kelly owns *Synple* because of the joy that it brings her. Retail doesn't make a lot of money and it's a lot of work. But for her, the long days are worth it because she is happy with what she's doing.

In May, Kelly extended her brand by opening a new store called *Synple Littles*. She opened the store at a time when her second and last child was graduating high school and getting ready to begin the next chapter of his life. "That's kind of the interesting thing about *Synple Littles* is that I'm opening it up at a time when I'm going to be an empty nester. So I keep saying that it's my new baby," she said.

Because her kids need her less, she has more time she can devote to her customers. Those connections are what *Synple* is all about and why Kelly feels so fulfilled. "It has given me a purpose in life ... It gives me a reason to get up every morning," she said.

Kelly stresses the unpredictability of life. She says things happen for a reason and emphasizes that, without her health scare, she never would have opened her own store. "Sometimes your path kind of twists and turns," she said. "It all gets you to where you need to be." SWM



SOPHIA SETTINERI

A rei of light

David Tyler

From the moment you meet Sophia Settineri, you know you're in the presence of someone with a strong sense of self. In both her clothing and jewelry, she dresses with flair. She speaks confidently about her faith, and how that faith allows her to help others.

After growing up in Syracuse, Sophia went to New York City to study at the Fashion Institute of Manhattan. While she was shopping one day, she met a man from Hugo Boss, who liked her sense of style and offered her a job, and soon she left school to work there full-time. It was a good job, and her fashion sense was a good fit, but ultimately there were things happening in Syracuse that caused her to come back home.

"My parents were separating and my brother was going into the Navy," Sophia said. "So I felt like I had to come back here and kind of pull everyone together."

The transition back to Syracuse, however, took her out of the heart of the fashion world, and while she still had an interest in fashion, she discovered something she was more passionate about – healing.

"I grew up very religious, but I think as my sense of spirituality developed," she said, "I felt like I wanted to work with people in healing."

It was then that she developed an interest in reiki, which satisfied both her yearning to help people and her faith. After she did more research, she decided to become a certified reiki practitioner.

According to the Cleveland Clinic, "reiki is an energy healing technique that promotes relaxation and reduces stress and anxiety through gentle touch." Reiki practitioners use their hands to deliver energy to the body, improving the flow and balance of the body's energy to support healing.

Reiki was developed in Japan in the early 1900s, but Sophia said the practice actually goes back thousands of years.

"When Paul was on the march to Damascus, Jesus told him to lay hands on people and pray and to heal that way," Sophia said. "So I think that's like an aspect in our traditions, regardless of what religious you are, that we somehow lost the knowledge of our innate healing [powers] through our creator."

A typical reiki session with Sophia starts with a conversation so she can evaluate what types of challenges the client is facing. Then, with her hands hovering over the seven chakras (energy points) of the client's body, she scans the body three times. She rarely ever touches a client, except perhaps their hands and feet. Through scanning the body, she said, she can clear the chakras of negative energy.

Although reiki practitioners have successfully treated patients with maladies like Parkinson's Disease, digestive issues, chronic pain and stress-related illnesses (according to the Cleveland Clinic),

Sophia said most of her clients don't come in with a

specific medical issue to treat, but rather a feeling that their body's energy is not right.

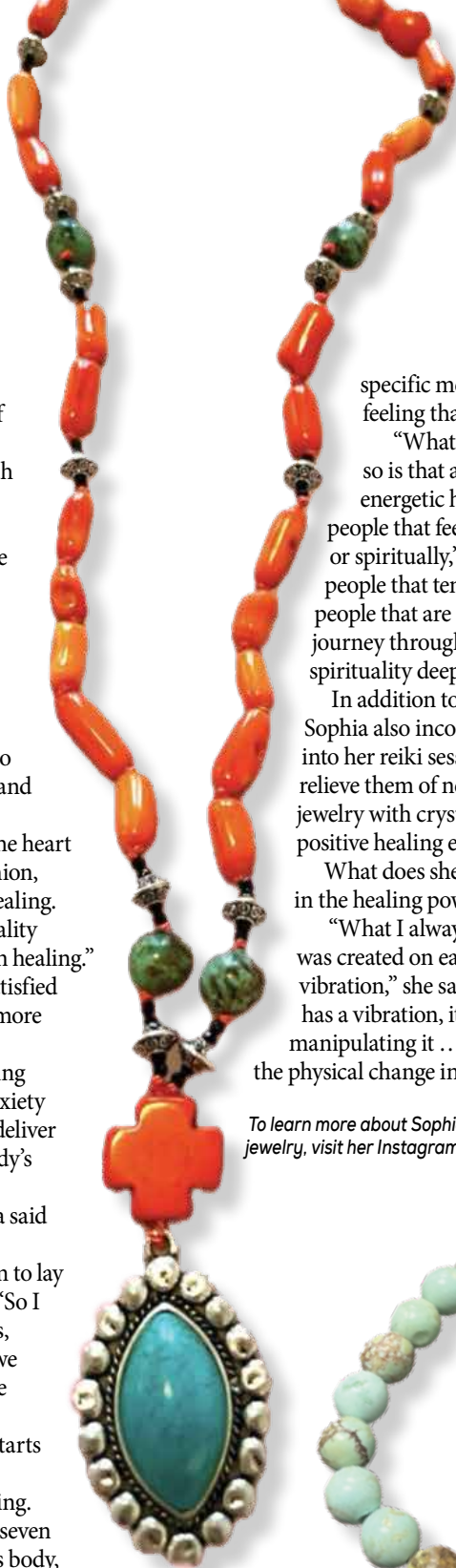
"What I found over the last 10 years or so is that anybody who seeks out reiki or energetic healing of any kind ... are usually people that feel some type of void emotionally or spiritually," she said. "It seems like a lot of people that tend toward alternative methods are people that are either confused on the spiritual journey through life or want to connect with their spirituality deeper."

In addition to the power of healing touch, Sophia also incorporates crystals and essential oils into her reiki sessions to help center her clients and relieve them of negative energy. She also designs jewelry with crystals and beads that promote positive healing energy.

What does she say to those that may not believe in the healing power of reiki?

"What I always tell people is that everything that was created on earth has a vibration, a measurable vibration," she said. "And since every living thing has a vibration, it's just a matter of alkalizing it and manipulating it ... It's a subtle thing. But you can feel the physical change in yourself." *SWM*

To learn more about Sophia Settineri, her reiki practice and her jewelry, visit her Instagram page @reioflight00.





OLIVIA
LUCIANI

Laced By Liv

FROM SIDE HUSTLE TO SOLE SUCCESS

Janelle Davis

Many people love to express themselves through their attire. A great way to represent your personality or values is through customized sneakers. Olivia Luciani, the owner of Laced By Liv, never envisioned she would be a sneaker artist managing a successful and growing custom-designed footwear company.

Laced By Liv is a customization service where Luciani hand paints or airbrushes jackets, sports gloves and sweatshirts, but mainly sneakers.

Art was never a focus for Luciani. She grew up playing sports and shared that her mom is artistic. That, combined with her love of shoes, brought out this talent in her. "Some things just fall into place, and this is one of them," she said.

From Syracuse, it all started as a way for Luciani to make extra money while attending Buffalo State University. "I played basketball, so as a student-athlete, I didn't have time for an off-campus job. I started cleaning shoes, which turned into fixing people's shoes until one day, someone asked me to change the color of their shoes completely. Discovering my talent to draw and paint with my love for sneakers sprouted a business," Luciani explains.

Luciani quickly increased her social media presence by networking and designing free sneakers for the celebrities who visited her college once a year.

After college, Luciani started working for Nike. "I love Nike, but I realized I didn't want to make a ton of money for someone else while not being rewarded. I felt I was being held back," Luciani said. She said that was the wake-up call to take her customized sneaker business to the next level and full-time. Since doing so, she hasn't looked back. As Laced By Liv skyrocketed, Luciani started designing sneakers for professional athletes and people in the entertainment business, such as WNBA star Breanna Stewart, New York Knicks guard Jalen Brunson, and singer Bryson Tiller.

Luciani plans to include more corporate clients. "I love working with athletes. Sometimes, getting ahold of them is challenging, or they may have a contract with a specific brand, so opportunities may be limited," Luciani said. "With corporate clients, the orders are large, and it's guaranteed income."

Luciani explains that corporate is different in that it's more of a personal relationship where she can travel, attend events, and network more. She's been working with many CEOs who give their employees shoes as gifts, promoting hundreds in an order. Corporately, Luciani has worked with the owners of the New York Mets and Boston Celtics.

Even so, Luciani still services whoever is interested in owning personalized sneakers. According to her website, her mission as an artist is to "bring your message, ideas, and values to life through unique, durable custom-designed footwear."

"I have been a part of quite a few special moments," Luciani said. She shared that her favorite clients are those who request "tribute shoes" to honor loved ones who have passed away by getting their portraits painted on the shoes. She also enjoys servicing meaningful moments, like graduations.

Luciani just finished a pair for Natasha Howard of the WNBA. "Natasha wanted to commemorate her 11th season, so I included every logo of every team she's ever played on with every award she's won," she explains.

Laced By Liv also has all-in-one kits to teach people how to make their own shoes. "It comes with a QR code that links to a video of me explaining how to do everything," she said.

The business savvy in her realized this idea was not on the market, so she created it when the pandemic hit, giving people something to do while they were home.

Something to watch out for from Laced By Liv is her Athletic Sponsorship Program, which will launch in the fall of 2024 or the beginning of 2025. Luciani will pick two high school athletes in Syracuse, one boy and one girl, to sponsor and provide custom shoes throughout the season.

"Some people think I only work with celebrities or certain people. I want to remind everyone that I am from Syracuse and want to give back. I see it as a platform for people in Syracuse. There is a lot of talent here, and I'd love to help sponsor them," she shared.

Luciani will have a form on her website for students to apply for the Athletic Sponsorship Program. She plans to choose two students but expects a significant demand, so she expects to choose more.

Luciani's goal is to be known as the international bulk order customizer. "There aren't a lot of sneaker customizers right now and nobody's doing it to the scale that I am," Luciani explains. She just hired her first employee and looks forward to adding to her team to match the increasing orders.

Luciani loves supporting Syracuse businesses. She works with many out-of-state companies and wants to work with more in Syracuse to help them use shoes to communicate their ideas.

"Shoes are like a walking billboard," she said. "Instead of putting an ad out, put your message on your shoes. Sneakers are becoming more popular. People are always looking at them." *SWM*



St. Joseph's Health welcomes Jennifer MacBlane as a midwife



Jennifer MacBlane

Jennifer MacBlane has returned to St. Joseph's with more than 17 years of experience in the fields of obstetrical care, gynecology, pharmaceuticals, teaching and health care management. Jennifer is no stranger to St. Joseph's Health. She earned her associate degree in nursing from the St. Joseph's College of Nursing. Prior to working in a private midwifery practice, she worked at St. Joseph's Health Hospital as a labor and delivery nurse, a childbirth educator, a registered charge nurse and a medical biller as well as a clinical instructor at St. Joseph's School of Nursing.

"From my education to my job experience, most of my professional career has been at St. Joseph's. My mother, father and brother all worked at here and I've had all three of my children here," said Jennifer. "Returning to St. Joseph's has been like coming home. It feels like I'm reuniting with family, even those that have just started here. I always felt so comfortable here and that feeling has only magnified with our growth."

Jennifer is board-certified by the American Midwifery Certification Board and is a member of the American College of Nurse Midwives.

Jennifer received all her education in New York state. She earned her bachelor's degree with honors from Utica College. She has a Master of Science in Nurse Midwifery from Stony Brook University (honor society); an associate degree in nursing from St. Joseph's College of Nursing (honor society); and a Bachelor of Science in Humanities from Buffalo State College.

Loretto announces two promotions



Jolene Crehan, RN,
BSN, LHNA

As The Commons on St. Anthony in Auburn continues to expand its service offerings two veteran Loretto team members have recently been promoted.

Jolene Crehan, RN, BSN, LHNA, has been promoted to administrator; and Rebecca (Becky) Staring has been promoted to Director of Nursing. Both women led in interim roles in their respective positions since January 2023. As administrator, Jolene supervises a staff of 361 and nine departments, overseeing day-to-day operations, census, and financial operations at The Commons.



Rebecca Staring

Crehan has worked at Loretto for almost 20 years. She began her career with Loretto at The Commons in 2005 as a Certified Nurse Aide. She became a registered nurse in 2007 and received a Bachelor of Science in Nursing in 2020, most recently serving as Director of Nursing at The Commons. Earlier this year, Crehan obtained a Nursing Home Administrator Certification from Utica University, passed her boards, and became a Licensed Nursing Home Administrator (LHNA).

Rebecca (Becky) Staring has 25 years of nursing experience working at Loretto and at The Commons. She started as a Certified Nurse Aide in 1999.

She became a registered nurse in 2003 and has held numerous nursing positions during her tenure, including managing long-term care units and serving as an educator. Earlier this year, she earned a bachelor's degree in nursing. In the director of nursing role, Staring manages the nursing department, overseeing more than 150 direct care staff including registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, and certified nursing assistants. She is responsible for quality assurance, policy updates, and process management to ensure positive outcomes for residents.

Loretto celebrates their employees



Kim Townsend
Gail Robedee-Teachout



Diane Smith
Jolene Crehan

Loretto celebrated 223 employees for reaching major milestones in their careers ranging from 5 to 50 years at its annual Benchmark events held on May 16 at The Commons on St. Anthony in Auburn, and on May 22 in Syracuse at Drumlins. Benchmark is a Loretto event to highlight its extraordinary employees as part of its commitment to demonstrate employee appreciation and this year, there were 56 employees celebrating 20-50-year anniversaries.

Both events featured food, drinks, and remarks from Dr. Kimberly Townsend, CEO and president of Loretto and a speech by honorees, Diane Smith and Gail Robedee-Teachout.

Gail Robedee-Teachout spoke about the changes she has witnessed over her 40-year career, and how she has grown as an employee and a person at Loretto.

Diane Smith celebrated her 50th anniversary as a Commons employee and said that her secret to success career is "being active and always enjoying getting up and going to work." She also shared that she keeps coming back every day because she truly loves working with the residents.

Solvay Bank announces recent hires



Rachel Perry



Sara Stevens

Solvay Bank, the oldest community bank established in Onondaga County, is pleased to welcome two recent hires to its team: Rachel Perry and Sara Stevens.

Rachel Perry joined the Solvay Bank team as a customer relations specialist with the customer relations and operations team. Rachel began her career in customer service in 2009, gaining valuable experience in retail with various well-known companies. Most recently, she worked for a leading marketing research firm.

Sara Stevens joined the customer relations and operations team as a payments and fraud specialist. Sara previously worked in customer service as an assistant manager, before joining the financial institutions industry in 2019, most recently as a Wire Room Assistant.

Oswego Health employee earns nursing degree



Jody L. Wood, MSN, RN,
CNOR, CSSM

Oswego Health believes in investing in its employees and so in 2020, launched a tuition assistance program to support individuals interested in enhancing their careers. To date, Oswego Health has financially invested over \$755,000 in our employees' education.

One employee they'd like to recognize who took advantage of the program, not once, but twice, is Jody L. Wood, MSN, RN, CNOR, CSSM, Director of Surgical Services. Jody just earned her master of science in nursing from Grand Canyon University.

The tuition assistance program offers up to \$10,000 per year to current employees at Oswego Health looking to advance their training in nursing, medical imaging, or laboratory science.

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Weekly

Friday Night Vibes

What: You've worked hard all week, so have a wine or whiskey flight and food and enjoy live music.

Where: Epicuse, Downtown Syracuse.

When: 5 to 9 p.m.



July 11-14

Middle Eastern Festival

What: Enjoy a menu of Middle Eastern food, live music, dance performances, and games.

Where: St. Elias Orthodox Church, 4988 Onondaga Rd., Syracuse.

When: Thursday and Friday, 4 to 10 p.m.; Saturday, Noon to 10 p.m.; Sunday, Noon to 6 p.m.



July 11-13

Skaneateles Curbstone Festival and Sidewalk Sales

What: Join for one of Skaneateles' most iconic traditions featuring over 50 merchants, nonprofits, entertainment and sightseeing cruises.

Where: Genessee, Jordan and Fennell Streets, Skaneateles.

When: Thursday and Friday, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.



July 13

Chinese Medicine Workshop

What: Diane Macchiavelli will facilitate sessions on the Five-Element Theory and Tai Chi and Qigong.

Where: Thekchen Choling Syracuse, 109 East ave., Minoa.

When: Session one, 9 a.m. to Noon. Session two, 2 to 5 p.m.

Info: \$45 for one session, \$81 for both.

Visit www.thekchencholing.us.



July 13 & 14

57th Annual Gem, Mineral, Fossil and Jewelry Show

What: Join the Gem and Mineral Society of Syracuse to shop minerals, fossils, crystals, and more. There will also be geode cracking, youth activities, lectures and demonstrations.

Where: Center of Progress building, New York State Fairgrounds.

When: Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Info: \$8 per person. Ages 12 and under free.



July 26-28

Arts and Crafts Festival

What: A spectacular showcase of the area's most talented artists and craftspeople. Enjoy shopping, demonstrations and performances.

Where: Downtown Syracuse.

When: Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**Antique and Classic Boat Show**

What: The show draws exhibitors from all over the state.

Enjoy a boat parade, performances from area bands, displays, guided bus tours, children's activities, photo opportunities and more.

Where: Clift Park, Skaneateles.

When: Friday, 3 p.m. to dusk; Saturday, 9 a.m. to dusk; Sunday, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Info: Free.



August 2

Brew at the Zoo and Dragons too!

What: Join this popular, annual beer-tasting fundraiser featuring regional beers, wines, and cocktails. Also enjoy food trucks, entertainment, animals on evening exhibits and a silent auction.

Where: The Rosamond Gifford Zoo.

When: 5:30 to 8 p.m.

Info: www.rosamondgiffordzoo.org.



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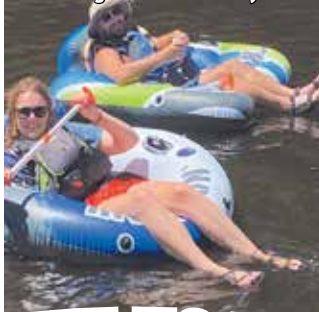
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