



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

## SERINO HONORS LOCAL WOMEN MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN OUR COMMUNITY

SUSAN SERINO July 20, 2018

| ISSUE: **WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT**



POUGHKEEPSIE, NY – As one of only fifteen women serving in the NYS Senate, Senator Sue Serino has long worked to bring together the women here in our community who have inspired her along the way in hopes of creating a network of local women who are making a positive impact on the area. This week, she held an event at Locust Grove in Poughkeepsie to honor and celebrate a dynamic group of area women who are making an impact here in our community and working to empower others along the way.

*“When women come together, we are a force to be reckoned with, and as one of only fifteen women elected to serve in the State Senate, I have been incredibly fortunate to meet so many inspiring women both here in our local community and beyond,” said **Senator Sue Serino**. “I am incredibly grateful to have had the opportunity to recognize these individuals for all of the work that they have done here in Dutchess and Putnam County and it is my hope that with events like this, we can continue to bring them together and create a network of dynamic individuals who are working to improve our local area.”*

Each of the women honored at the event have received recognition from Senator Serino throughout her time in office and they include:

**Local Women Making History Honorees:**

**Kelly Lyndgaard** – Founder and CEO of Unshattered, a nonprofit social enterprise operating out of Hopewell Junction that employs women who are winning their fight against addiction and teaches them how to repurpose textiles to make handbags and other products reflective of the incredible transformation going on in their own lives.

**Kathy Martin** – President of the Board of Directors of the Hudson Valley House of Hope, an emergency shelter for individuals and children that are the victims of domestic violence. The House of Hope provides shelter to these women in need, and offers different programs focused on empowerment, while giving them the skills necessary to retake control of their lives. Since its founding in 2008, it has sheltered over 1,500 individuals.

**Pari Forood** – Executive Director of Miles of Hope Breast Cancer Foundation, which funds critical support services and outreach for people affected by breast cancer within the nine counties of the Hudson Valley. Pari, along with the founders of Miles of Hope, Dana Efron and Cathy Varanuk, have worked tirelessly to relive the financial burden too many breast cancer patients and their families face when hit with a diagnosis and have empowered women across the Hudson Valley as a result. Accepting the award on Pari’s behalf was **Chairman of the Board, Joel Canter and Co-Founder, Cathy Varunok**.

**Robin Blue-Brown** – Program Director of Dress for Success Dutchess County is a local non-profit organization that works tirelessly to offer long-lasting solutions that empower women to break the cycle of poverty.

**Lea Bishop** – Founder and Director of the Women's Professional Network, an educational and networking organization that provides a supportive environment for enterprising women in the Hudson Valley. Through her work, Lea has connected countless women with one another to help them form invaluable professional relationships, inspire one another, and develop an entrepreneurial spirit.

**Krista Jones** – Executive Director of Sparrow's Nest of the Hudson Valley, which provides meals to the families of caregivers and children diagnosed with cancer. Sparrow's Nest was founded in 2012 and started by feeding only four families. Today, the organization has grown tremendously, and has since provided meals to over 1,000 in their time of need.

**Michelle Petrucci** – Associate Director of Explore Programming at the Art Effect, where she oversees a staff of around 30 teachers and teaching assistants during the school year. Throughout her career, she has worked with students who have either physical or developmental disabilities, and students who come from poor backgrounds. She is a graduate of SUNY New Paltz.

#### **New York State Women of Distinction Honorees:**

**Christina Boryk** (2018) – Executive Director of Rebuilding Together Dutchess County, a local non-profit organization dedicated to transforming the lives of low-income homeowners by engaging volunteers to help improve the safety of their homes and breathe new life into our community by revitalizing area properties.

**Nina Lynch** (2017) – Founding Member and President of “Rhinebeck at Home,” a membership organization that leverages the idea of neighbors helping neighbors to empower seniors throughout Rhinebeck to age in place, at home in the community.

**Marjorie Smith** (2016) – Former Chief of the Special Victims Bureau of the Dutchess County District Attorney's Office, Marj is a dynamic leader who completely transformed the way we address and respond to domestic violence in our community, and served as a passionate champion for victims. In her retirement, Marj has remained an important partner in the fight against domestic violence and advises key community leaders on ways to improve programming to better support victims.

**Libby Pataki** (2015) – Former First Lady of New York who worked tirelessly to raise awareness for children’s and women’s health issues – and to promote tourism and the arts around the community.

#### **New York State Veterans Hall of Fame Inductees:**

**Diana Gaetano (Inducted in 2016)** – Former Staff Sergeant in the United States Air Force, where she developed the Women’s Air Force Recruitment Program. She is now a member of the Pleasant Valley Fireman’s Ladies Auxiliary and continues to give back to our local community time and time again.

**Kathie Freston (Inducted in 2015)** - served in the United States Marine Corps (USMC), earning top secret security clearance in 1953, and running the famous ‘Enigma Machine’ at the communications center of the United States Marine Corps Headquarters at Quantico, Virginia. Kathie has remained a trailblazer in the local community, running a local nonprofit to engage young people.

While not all individuals who were honored could be in attendance, women from across the community turned out to celebrate the honorees and meet one another. Kimberly Kochem, Executive Director of the Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse, gave the opening remarks. Kochem, who is wrapping up her first year as Executive Director, spoke to the importance of building a network of supportive women in the workplace and discussed the various ways in which women throughout our area have motivated her and encouraged her to make a positive difference in our community.

The event was one in a series Senator Serino hopes to host throughout the year in order to continue building a supportive network of area women committed to making a positive difference here in the Hudson Valley. Those interested in participating in future events, should call Senator Serino's District Office at 845-229-0106.