

A Special Section of the Sullivan County Democrat • October 2022



Congratulations to
Krissy Walsh
Pat + Glenn Smith
And all the honorees

17294

Merrell Benco

Insurance Agency

Personal coverage

- Automobile
- Homeowners
- Umbrella policy

Business coverage

- · Business automobile
- Package policies
- · Workers' compensation



67 East Broadway, Monticello, NY 12701 (845) 796-1500



Instant online quotes at: mbagency.com

Businessperson of the Year Award:

BY PATRICIO ROBAYO

Kristine Walsh

Perseverance is a word that Kristine Walsh of Thompson Sanitation lives by, and one of the reasons she is the Sullivan County Chamber of Commerce Businessperson of the Year.

Walsh worked for Thompson Sanitation while she was in Monticello High School after her father, Paul Walsh, started the company in 1986.

Walsh left Sullivan County after graduating from Monticello and thought her life would be outside of Sullivan County.

"I was a city girl trapped in [the] country," said Walsh.

After graduating high school, Walsh went to Fisher College in Boston, Massachusetts, and achieved her Bachelor's degree from Eastern Nazarene College in Quincy, Massachusetts, and received her engineering degrees and certifications from Boston University.

Walsh got to work as a computer network consultant that took her all across the world and had her living in Phoenix, Boston, and New City at various times.

Walsh returned to Sullivan County in 2001 as she transitioned to a new city to live, but while staying in Sullivan County, New York City's Twin Towers were attacked by terrorists.

"That was the week I decided I wanted to raise my family here. I didn't want to live in a city; I didn't want to travel. I traveled for work on an airplane almost every day, and I did not want to do that anymore," said Walsh.

With all her belongings still inside a U-Haul—after being moved from Phoenix, Arizona—she felt she had to be home, "My father was here. My childhood friends are

[Sullivan County]. I was going to have a family here. I was going to find a career here. And I was going to make the very best of my community," added Walsh.

Walsh says her father, Paul, has been—and still is—an instrumental part of her life, who

she credits as part of her success.

"My father is a volunteer fireman, and he's always been active in the community. I had

a good mentor, someone who was involved."

here. That day just completely changed

everything for me. I was going to live here

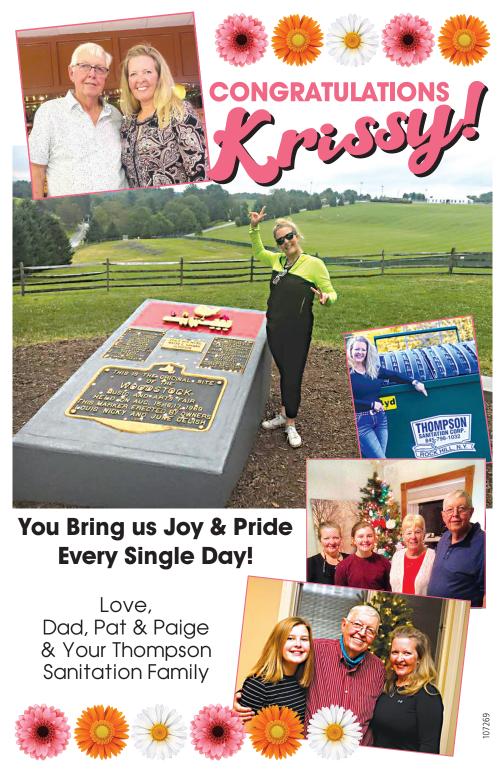
After moving back, she didn't go to work for her father right away, but after buying a business in Rock Hill, she decided to dip her toe in the family business and help her father.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Kristine Walsh of Thompson Sanitation is the Sullivan County Chamber of Commerce 2022 Businessperson of the Year.

continued on page 5



continued from page 3

"I really wasn't thinking that I would be taking the business over; truthfully, I came here because I wanted to help my dad. I have a technology background, a corporate background, a sales background; I could do anything," said Walsh.

Soon after joining, a position opened up in the company, and her father asked what she wanted to do, and she said, "Grow the business," and her father said, "take it and go."

Thompson Sanitation now employs 40 people and recently has acquired two sanitation companies, Empire State Sanitation and GFL County Waste, which has expanded the reach of the business.

When Walsh was notified that she would be awarded the Businessperson of the Year from the Sullivan County Chamber of Commerce, she said the honor humbled her.

"It shows the hard work I've put into making my team successful. I didn't get this award because of myself; I got this award because I am surrounded by incredible employees who work hard through any weather. Our biggest focus is customer service. It's about servicing the customer, or we would not be in business," Walsh said.

And being local is what Walsh is about, as her employees all live and work in Sullivan County and Walsh said she is proud of that.

"What has made Sullivan County stay afloat is doing business locally. My message always has been, keep your business local. It's the local businesses that support the sports teams. It's the local businesses that support each other. It's the local employees that support the businesses. And if we keep our business local, we will thrive," Walsh added.



Kristine Walsh (right) with her father, Paul Walsh, and daughter Paige Gallet.

Walsh reflects on the experience of working side-by-side with her father. "I feel blessed," she said.

Having been raised by her father, Walsh said he has been critical in her life, ensuring she was successful.

"It's nice when you have a cheerleader every day rooting for your success," said Walsh.

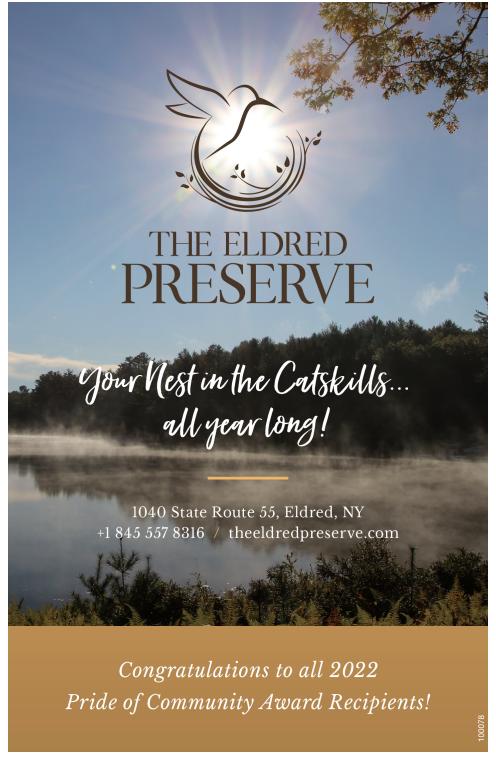
When Walsh is not working, she loves to spend time with her 13-year-old daughter Paige Gallet and volunteer her time with the community, from litter pick up to helping the Sullivan County SPCA and being the President of the Rock Hill Business Association.

WSUL's Heart-A-Thon is one cause near and dear to Walsh as she suffered a heart attack when she was only 44 years old.

"Catskill Regional [now Garnet Health Medical Center - Catskills] saved my life, so I am indebted to always raising money for their cardiac department," added Walsh.

She constantly attacks life with perseverance and an exceptional work ethic.

"You've got to get up, show up and persevere every day. No sick days," said Walsh. And it's something she tells her daughter every day when they get up in the morning, "You have to rise and grind."



Distinguished Achievement Award: Pat & Glenn Smith

STORY AND PHOTO BY MATT SHORTALL



Pat and Glenn Smith are the 2022 recipients of the Sullivan County Chamber of Commerce's Distinguished Achievement Award.

ivil Engineer Glenn Smith says he's busier now than he ever has been in the past 40 years. It's an indication of resurging interest in the area and a sign of the times that Sullivan County is open for business.

Glenn and his wife Pat are this year's recipients of the Sullivan County Chamber of Commerce's Distinguished Achievement Award for their work to build a better Sullivan County, both through engineering and community service.

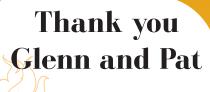
Glenn has been a licensed professional engineer since 1977 and started his own business - Glenn L Smith Consulting Engineer - back in 1986 right on Broadway in Monticello where they still are today. At the time Pat was working for Peter Rhulen at the Rhulen Agency, and joined him as the temporary office manager.

"That was in 1986 and she's still here," Glenn said with a smile. "And a little over a month ago was our 50th wedding anniversary."

Glenn worked for a short time in Baltimore but was ultimately drawn back to his roots in Sullivan County. A Monticello native through and through, Glenn's ancestors were some of the original settlers back in 1803.

"When you have roots like that it gives you a greater attachment to where you

continued on page 9



for the many years
of friendship.
Your loyalty
and commitment
does not
go unnoticed.

Congratulations, from Gary Packer





live," Glenn said.

Unbeknownst to the Smiths when they bought the office building on Broadway, Glenn's grandparents had lived there in the early 20th century and his two uncles were born there.

"When I bought this place I had no idea that my grandparents actually lived here in 1910," he said. "It was like destiny called

Congratulations and best wishes to the greatest engineer in the Sullivan County region.

Jack, Jeff & Isaac

CONTRACTING CORP.

me back here."

From his grandparent's former home, Glenn has prepared plans for "hundreds and hundreds" of new homes in just the past several years. Their company has helped turn some of the biggest projects in Sullivan County from ideas to reality, including the YO1 Wellness Center in Monticello, The Chapin Estate luxury home development in Bethel and the Center for Discovery's major Hurleyville redevelopment.

"When you see the fruits of your labor it's a very good feeling," Glenn said.

The job keeps Glenn busy as he works nearly seven days a week while traveling to planning and zoning board meetings across the county. He also works as the municipal engineer for Monticello, Bethel, Neversink and Liberty.

Beyond work, Pat and Glenn have stayed

continued on page 23





Shannon Cilento You make the world a better place.



 $Hard\ Work \cdot Determination \cdot Perseverance \cdot Flair$ Congratulations on your Distinguished Service Award.









GRANITE ASSOCIATES

IO PRIDE AWARDS 2022

Distinguished Service Award:

Shannon Cilento story and photo by Joseph abraham

t the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Mexico, NY native Shannon Cilento was faced with a choice ... go home or stay in Sullivan County, where she had immersed herself for the past three years.

"I had already felt so connected to the community," said Cilento. "Sullivan County became home and I didn't want to leave."

While sending out resumes and job applications, she began to focus more on volunteer work. As a Monticello Rotarian, Cilento coordinated the delivery of meals by her peers as part of the joint Operation Feed effort between the Liberty NY Rotary Club, Rotary Club of Monticello NY, Fallsburg NY Lions Club and A Single Bite. Operation Feed delivered meals to healthcare heroes and local families that needed it in Phases I and II, respectively.

Around that time, an opportunity with the Upper Delaware Council presented itself, and she became their Resources and Land Use Specialist, before being hired by Sullivan Renaissance as their Community Development Program Manager about a year ago.

In her current role, she administers Renaissance's four Community Development Grant programs, which engages the community and supports local municipalities in creating projects that increase equity, community health, revitalization, public art, recreation, etc. Examples of recent projects they've funded include new park signs at the Town of Thompson Park and the walking corridor from Pete's Market to Bridge Street in Narrowsburg.

Outside of Renaissance, Cilento also does outreach for Honesdale, Pennsylva-



nia-based Sustainable Energy Education and Development Support (SEEDS), and is a part-time cycling instructor at the Chi Hive in Narrowsburg.

When she isn't working, most of her time is spent lending her talents to various organizations. For example, in addition to being a Monticello Rotarian, Cilento is on the Sullivan County Chamber of Commerce Foundation Board, where she takes an active role in Leadership Sullivan.

continued on page 14

We are so proud of you Lindsay Wheat! We value your support of the emergency services community; and your devotion to serving people struggling with substance use disorder.



Congratulations on your Distinguished Service Award. Keep up the great work!









GRANITE ASSOCIATES

106873

I2 PRIDE AWARDS 2022

Distinguished Service Award:

Lindsay Wheat

STORY AND PHOTO BY JOSEPH ABRAHAM

s a little girl, Lindsay Wheat would run to the front door when the fire alarm sounded, pleading with her father, Alan Kesten, to let her tag along.

His dedication to the community as a Monticello fireman, as well as that of her grandfather, Seymour Kesten, a former Village of Monticello Judge, coupled with a stellar work ethic she says she picked up from her mother Jan, all contributed to her passion for community involvement and making Sullivan County a better place. She adds that she is lucky to have three parents — Alan, Jan and her stepfather Donald Bennett.

Lindsay, 37, is the Outreach Coordinator for Sullivan 180, where she works to share the education and resources that exist in Sullivan County.

Like her father, Alan, Lindsay is a member of the Monticello Fire Department. She is also their vice president, as well as a commissioner for the Monticello Joint Fire District.

She's also an "angel" with the Hope Not Handcuffs program, a member of the Sullivan County Drug Task Force's Hope and Prevention Pillar, a County Narcan Trainer, a member of the NYS Assembly Policy Pillar, Sullivan Allies Leading Together, PARFACT, and the Sullivan County Chamber of Commerce's Training and Development Committee.

"What's the point of being here if we're not doing something in the world that we all live in?" said Lindsay about the motivation behind her community involvement. "Why wouldn't we give everything to our community to make it better?"

Lindsay added that serving her community has always been a gratifying feeling, and now, Sullivan 180 has become the vehicle to further her passion. She used the recent International Overdose Awareness Day as an example.

"Just getting people from the community who didn't have knowledge about our resources and how much we're doing as a County, to



continued on page 15



continued from page 11

She's also a member of the Sullivan O&W Rail Trail Alliance, and is running the New York City Marathon next month to raise awareness and funds for the Allyson Whitney Foundation, which provides grant money to young adult cancer patients, to ease their financial burden, so that they can concentrate their energy on healing.

Furthermore, Cilento is a former member of the Town of Thompson and Village of Monticello Planning Boards, and will soon be a part of the Town of Thompson Master Plan Committee.

Cilento credits her parents, Deanna Ware and Joseph Cilento, for instilling the value of service in her at a young age, as she was very involved with the local Lutheran church.

For her seventh birthday, Cilento didn't ask for any new toys, but rather to collect donations for the local food pantry. Her mother helped organize the effort, and together with her sister and friends, they

also served hot meals at the soup kitchen.

"My parents just raised me that way and always taught me to help others who aren't as fortunate as me," said Cilento, "and meet people from all walks of life."

While Cilento has given a lot of time to service efforts, what she says she received in return, is community, adding that being involved with community projects and organizations has allowed her to create a network.

Cilento also recognizes her partner Jacob Lerner (who she met through Rotary and Operation Feed) and his family, thanking them for becoming her family, too

"That network is what ties me to Sullivan County," said Cilento, "and I think that's probably the greatest gift that service has given me. Because of those interpersonal connections, I've been able to meet so many people with different experiences from my own, and that helps me personally and professionally in so many ways."

Congratulations Shannon!

Wishing continued success in your commitment and dedication to service in our community, and in all that you do.

Jacob

0737

continued from page 13

come and learn. In that moment, if we ended the stigma and brought awareness to five people, we won," she said.

Lindsay says the County, while resilient and full of resources, needed to be better connected, and Sullivan 180 has been working to bridge that gap.

"Watching that happen, and knowing that we're making an impact is unbelievable," she said.

Lindsay had high praise for Sullivan 180 Executive Director Amanda Langseder for her leadership and the faith she has in her staff.

"Even though I have all these passions and the desire to do good things, I wouldn't be able to do it without her support and allowing me to be my free self," says Lindsay.

She also encourages her peers to get involved in their community.

"We all hold something inside of us that is useful and beneficial to others," she said. "If every person gave a little bit of their best selves to others, could you imagine? It would go a very long way."





Emerging Leader Award:

Joseph Abraham

BY CAROL MONTANA

oseph Abraham has a natural passion for community, mostly gleaned from family and friends. Born in Lancaster, California in 1992

Born in Lancaster, California in 1992 to Pat and Bob Abraham, Joe was whisked away to different cities in North Carolina because of his father's construction business.

Educated at a free, public charter KIPP (Knowledge is Power Program) high school, Joe says the 41-hour/week schedule taught him about "hard work, prioritizing things and how you're never finished, because there's always something that's needed to do." He studied social justice and other classes you may not find in a regular public institution.

Ironically, considering where he is now, Joe admits he was not a great writer, getting 50s and 60s on his writing assignments in his 10th grade AP World History class. His mom encouraged him to redo and rewrite based on his teachers' comments, and he pushed his grades up to the 80s and 90s. By the end of the year, he passed the AP test, crediting his teacher Diana Bailey with helping him succeed. "She said I was a sponge, I soaked up stuff."

And that's how Joe developed a love of writing.

Always very interested in people – beginning around age five or six he would interview the people who opened their doors on Halloween – Joe thinks he got his curiosity from being sheltered and not being around a lot of kids at an early age. He watched ESPN when he was young, and thought he'd be a play-by-play announcer, but after joining his high school paper, "The Peanut," he realized that becoming a sportswriter was his ideal career.

Joe attended the University of North Carolina: Greensboro, where he delved into Media Studies. Probably around his third day on campus, he visited



Joseph Abraham

the student newspaper and told them he wanted to be a sportswriter. "The Carolinian" grabbed him up, and in due time, became their sports editor, and then editor-in-chief.

After graduation, he sent out resumes looking for work on the east coast. One day he got an email from Sullivan County Democrat Publisher Fred Stabbert III, who was searching for a sports editor.

Joe jokes about his first visit to the Democrat. "You all thought I was 12." But he came armed and ready, having researched every sports team from every school. And so, in May of 2016, he moved to Sullivan County.

Six years later, Joe is the Democrat's Managing Editor, is in charge of 50-plus special sections, helped to re-design the website and start a monthly Spanish paper, and recently won a First Place New York Press Association Award for his coverage of Sullivan

continued on page 17

County Government.

His community projects are many and varied. He is the youngest President-Elect in Liberty Rotary Club history, and serves as the club's public image officer; he chairs the club's Hummingbird Awards committee; and started a dance to benefit the Special Olympics.

Joe is a Board Member for the Sullivan County Chamber of Commerce where he also co-chairs their Training and Development Committee. He just stepped down as chair of the WJFF Community Advisory Board, and volunteers to "walk" and "jump in the lake" for the Alzheimer's Association.

"Growing up, I was always told by my mom, that you find little joy in life from material goods," says Joe. "I've always found the most joy from being around and helping people." Inspiration for community involvement comes from his Aunt Ro, a baker who "even when she was sick always put other people first."

Joe is also influenced by his Uncle Vinny who is developmentally disabled and in a nursing home. "He taught me to have compassion for peo-

ple with special needs."

Being brought up Catholic inspired Joe as well. "You're taught about doing good for others, not because I'm expecting a reward, but because that's the right thing to do. ... I'm just trying to do something that gives me joy ... knowing that I have some purpose in the world, or that I'm doing something

that is meaningful."

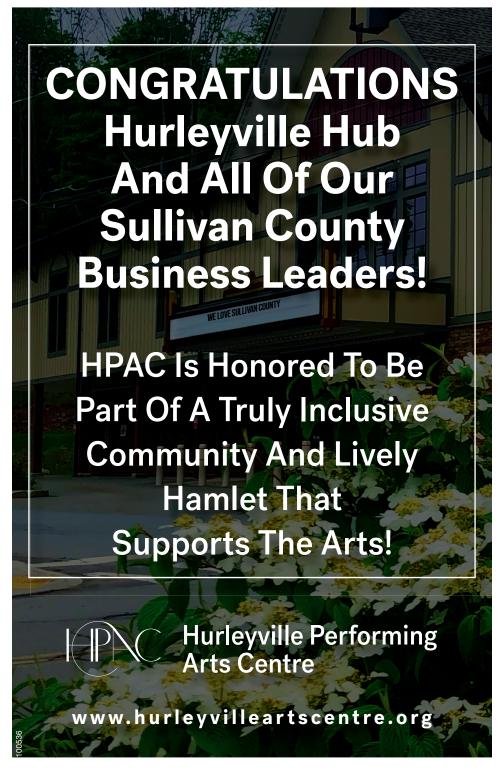
Joe is grateful for being trusted with leadership responsibilities at both the Sullivan County Democrat and in his community organizations. "I was put in leadership positions by people who were older and more experienced, even when I wasn't even sure that I was ready for that responsibility."

But Joe Abraham has proven that he was more than ready for the responsibility, and Sullivan County is better off for his presence.







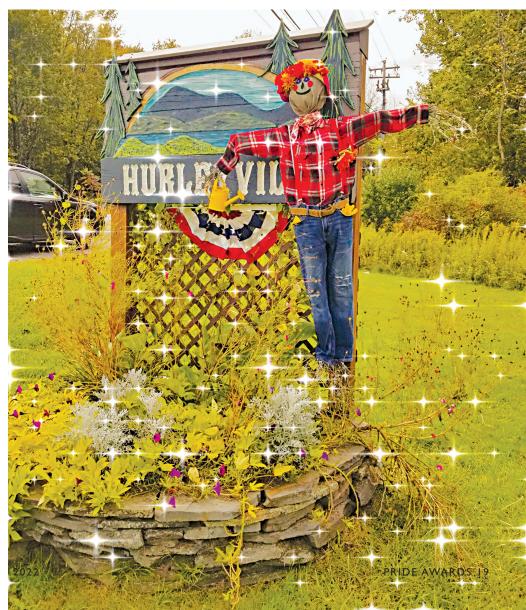


Township Award: Hurleyville Hub

STORY BY DEREK KIRK

The Hurleyville Hub recently celebrated their Scarecrow Festival and are prepping for their Holidays in Hurleyville event on December 3. s an informal collaboration of 52 various businesses, shops, restaurants, and art centers, the Hurleyville Hub is recognized for a 2022 Township Pride

continued on page 21





Cooper Arias, LLP Accounting & Accountability



Congratulations to all the honorees!

892 State Route 17B Mongaup Valley, NY 12762 Phone: 845-796-1800 2527 Route 17M Goshen, NY 10924 Phone: 845-343-2215 133 Route 304 Bardonia, NY 10954 Phone: 845-623-0300

www.cooperarias.com

7119

Award for their action and dedication as an organization of businesses to maintain the life and economic energy within the hamlet of Hurleyville.

A uniting tie creates a bond between these different businesses in the common interest of elevating Hurleyville into not just a hamlet where their brick and mortar stands, but a home where hearts cling to something special and neighbors care about each other's success.

Denise Lombardi, owner of the Hurleyville General Store and member of the Hurleyville Hub spoke on behalf of the organization, saying that they were grateful to the Sullivan County Chamber of Commerce for the award.

The Hurleyville Hub invites its members to participate in various festivals and events, with the latest being the Scarecrow Festival, where visitors to the hamlet engaged in challenges in order to enter into raffles. Residents and visitors to Hurleyville can look forward to the Holidays in Hurleyville Festival, which begins December 3.

"Hurleyville is a small town but has a huge amount of spirit," Lombardi said.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

At left: The Hurleyville Hub, a collaboration of businesses in the hamlet, are recipients of a 2022 Township Pride Award from the Sullivan County Chamber of Commerce.







Township Award:

Marilyn Lusker story by derek kirk

woman looking to make a difference in her community, Marilyn Lusker is the recipient of a 2022 Township Pride Award for her work in providing the sense of positivity and serenity of a Catskill Mountains getaway

at the Rose Cottage in De Bruce.

Marilyn, a retired teacher of 20 years, formerly owned and operated several businesses alongside her late husband before eventually settling down in the Catskills with the current project, the Rose Cottage in De Bruce.

vited to explore the local area where American fly fishing originated, stay the night in one of the five rooms that are available for booking, and indulge themselves with the locally-sourced dishes made in-house.



Right next door to the Rose Cottage in De Bruce is Davidson's General Store, which is currently in the care of Marilyn and the Rose Cottage in De Bruce team. Fly fishing events with local fishermen were recently held at the general store.

"I was just doing my thing, I wasn't trying to do anything special," Marilyn said about being a recipient for the award and her gratitude to her nieces for the nomination and to those who support her and her team.

"I am floored by it, it seems so unreal."

continued from page 9

involved in their community.

In addition to managing the office, Pat is a member of both the Sullivan County and Monticello Chambers of Commerce. For years she has been very involved in helping to organize Monticello's annual Bagel Festival, which draws thousands of people to Broadway. The 2023 bagel festival will mark the event's 10th year and plans to commemorate the occasion are already in the works.

"It's a great thing that has helped to make Broadway livelier again," Pat said.

Pat and Glenn are both animal lovers and are enthusiastic supports of the Sullivan County SPCA and Catskill Animal Rescue (CARE). On the invitations to their anniversary celebration they asked guests to consider donating to the two organizations in lieu of gifts.

"We collected over \$5,000 for the two rescues," Pat said. "They were thrilled with that. We try to just do what we can."

When not working on the business or with the Chambers of Commerce, Glenn and Pat love to visit with their two children and eight grandchildren.

"It's very nice to get this award. There's a lot of worthy people out there. We're very appreciative of it," Glenn said.









SERVING YOUR AUTOMOTIVE NEEDS SINCE 1968!

Alignments • Brakes • Tire & Wheel Services • TPMS • Nitrogen Axle & CV Joint Repair • Steering & Suspension • Vehicle Inspection



THREE LOCATIONS TO SERVE YOU!

176 EAST BROADWAY, MONTICELLO, NY

(845) 794-4455

Mon-Fri 8 AM - 6 PM

76 DOLSON AVE, MIDDLETOWN, NY 395 ROUTE 211 EAST, MIDDLETOWN, NY (845) 342-2036 (845) 343-3328

Mon-Fri 8 AM - 6 PM

Mon-Fri 8 AM – 6 PM

Visit us online at www.TireDiscountCenter.com!

60200

Township Award:

Jatin & Hiten Patel (J&H Express)

STORY BY DEREK KIRK

ffering residents of Sullivan County a unique shopping experience in the form of affordable products and stellar service, brothers Jatin and Hiten Patel of the J&H Express markets are recognized for a 2022 Township Pride Award.

The Patel brothers began to Establish the J&H Express local chain in 2012, and have since provided a number of locally-owned and operated markets. They've worked diligently in an effort to give residents and visitors to Swan Lake, Liberty, and Youngsville a taste of reliable convenience and a positive environment.

ronment.

Jatin spoke of his family's gratitude continued on page 26

Brothers Jatin and Hiten Patel own and operate the local chain of J&H Express markets found in Liberty, Swan Lake, and in Youngsville.





continued from page 25

for the award from the Sullivan County Chamber of Commerce, and that the J & H Express business mission is to continue to make their customers happy.

Nominated for the award by Callicoon Town Supervisor Tom Bose, the Patel brothers hard work and good service has earned them a spot in the Pride Award winners this year.

Speaking of the impact their family and J&H Express' Youngsville location has on the community, Bose said, "They are a wonderful family. They're the only fuel station between here [Youngsville] and Liberty, and have a convenience store where you can get some groceries and a good sandwich. They work hard and you like them as soon as you meet them. We are very fortunate to have [the Patels] in our Town."



Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: Workplace Excellence Award:

Matthew Carrero

BY AUTUMN SCHANIL



y family is from Puerto Rico," said Matthew Carrero, "and I was raised in the Bronx."

Growing up in New York City, Carrero knows diversity well, and how important mentorship and opportunity can be for an individual, as well as a community.

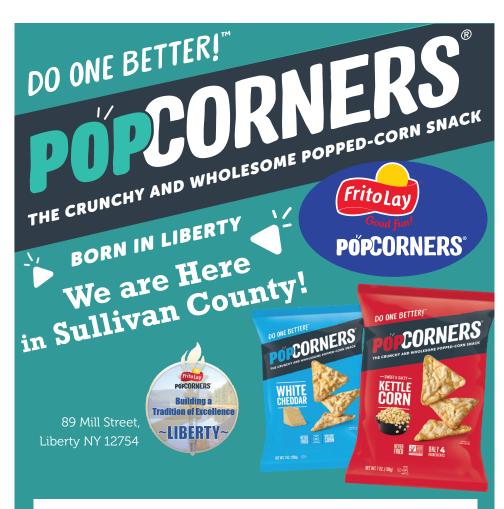
A graduate of San Diego State University with a Bachelor's in Business Management, and now the Human Resource Manager at Pepsico in Liberty, Carrero truly embodies Diversity, Equity, and

Inclusion in the policies he helps create and in the support he gives employees.

Originally recruited for a job at Ideal Snacks about seven years ago, Carrero said there wasn't much of a Human Resource (HR) department when he arrived. He felt it was a good opportunity to help build something, and so he got to work doing exactly that.

"I graduated with a degree in Business Management but I've always been attracted to HR. As a Puerto Rican kid

continued on page 29



Congrats to Matthew Carrero

Sullivan County Diversity Equity and Inclusion Award Winner 2022

www.pepsicocareers.com



growing up, I was given opportunity by people, and I had a mentor," Carrero stated, "and that's something that I always remember."

As he got older, Carrero knew he wanted to be in a field where he could mentor and support people, to give back the opportunities that he was given.

So, slowly, he began building HR within the facility creating attendance policies and procedures, employee expectations, employee safety, providing resources, learning what needed to be fixed, how to offer better support and fairness to workers, opportunities to advance, and most importantly being consistent.

"HR is all about creating an environment for our employees where they want to come to work, they feel comfortable coming to work, and they enjoy coming to work. It's still a job at the end of the day but if we're treating our employees well, they'll treat you just as well."

And part of what made Carrero stay during the transition from Ideal Snacks to Pepsico, were the values they offered to the employees, and the care they showed.

"This award is big. I take pride in it. I was excited because it means outside sources can see what we're doing, they can see that it's working. There's always going to be obstacles, but that's okay as long as you're constantly communicating," said Carrero. "We're a diverse culture here. We have nine different nationalities from 7 different countries. and we get along and we embrace it. As long as you're sending the right message, everything falls into place."

. HONOREES!



Commercial Office **Specialists:**

- ◆ Kyocera Printers & Multifunction Black & White & Color
- Office Furniture
- Computer Supplies
- ◆ Office Supplies
- Commercial Vacuums
- Computer Furniture

Home office Specialists:

- Desk Chairs, Chairs, Chairs
- ◆ Computer Desks ◆ Supply Items

- **◆** Laptops
- ◆ Desk Computers
- ◆ Low Volume Printers & Multifunction Black & White & Color

In Addition:

- **Extensive Copy Center**
- ◆ Authorized Fedex & UPS Shipping Center
- Extensive Art Supply Shoppe
- ◆ All Types of Framing

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: Workplace Excellence Award:

Pedro Tweed

BY ANTHONY MORGANO

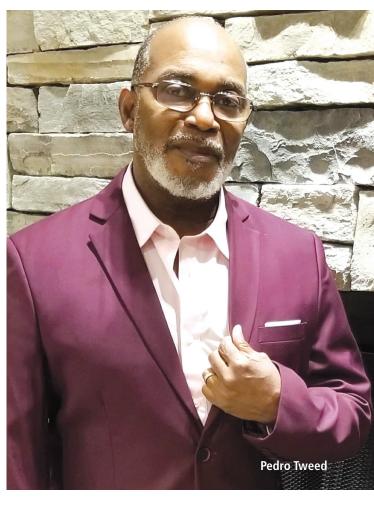
lexibility, or the capacity to adapt to the many changes of life, takes on a dual meaning with Pedro Tweed, who's lifetime love of gymnastics has guided him from the early days of his youth as a student of the sport, to a teacher of the next generations.

Born in the Dominican Republic before moving to the United States, Pedro spent his youth with a love for martial arts and gymnastics. His father was a boxer, and his fascination with the different schools of training led him towards competitive gymnastics.

"It became a way of life for me," Pedro said.

Pedro attended Benjamin Franklin High School in the Bronx, in which he joined the gymmastics team, as well as participating in martial arts shows.

His experience, and a move to Sullivan County, led him to become a



volunteer coach at the Recreation Department in Monticello. After volunteering for a few years, he was hired to work as a coach to continue teaching the skills that have brought him so much fulfillment in life.

"My main goal was keeping kids

off the streets and giving them something new to learn, and we grew into starting a competitive team," Tweed said.

During the school year, from September to June, the team travels all over New York State competing in meets.

When summer arrives, gymnastics camps begin, and they focus on developing skills and moving up to different competitive levels.

Aside from coaching gymnastics, Pedro is also a published writer. He has written motivational books as well as gymnastics-specific books.

During the pandemic, to keep people engaged, motivated and moving, Pedro and his wife began "Tweed Talks," which served as a motivational podcast that kept people entertained when they were stuck at

home.

Although the talks began at four days per week, as things settled back to normal, the talks were cut down to once a week, and now feature live interviews with some of their friends and different movie stars, writers and comedians.

As if Pedro wasn't busy enough, he has also been working on a short movie, and although not many details are available at this time, he emphasized how excited he is for the project.

Being recognized for an award is always great, especially when it's unexpected.

"It was a surprise to me," Pedro said.
"You don't think about these things when you're just doing your job, but I am very proud of the award."



2022

