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Business Person of the Year

Dr. Joseph D'Abbraccio

BY PATRICIO ROBAYO

It was a surprise to Dr. Joseph D'Abbraccio, owner of Catskill Veterinary Services, when he received the news that he had been chosen as the Business Person of the Year by the Sullivan County Chamber of Commerce.

"It was a shock; I didn't expect at all to receive the award," said D'Abbraccio.

Dr. D'Abbraccio's journey began with a strong passion for animals. As a teenager, he started working in veterinary hospitals in Fulton County and discovered his natural affinity for caring for and working with animals. His early exposure to the world of veterinary medicine ignited a passion that never wavered.

After graduating from Monticello High School and earning a degree in Veterinary Service Technology from the State University of Delhi, he set his sights on becoming a veterinarian. He worked as a veterinary technician in various practices, constantly striving to achieve his dream. Driven by a strong commitment to providing high-quality care, he eventually realized his goal of becoming a veterinarian.

In 2012, Dr. D'Abbraccio embarked on a new venture by starting a house call and phone call practice in the Hudson Valley region, a move that would prove to be both innovative and impactful.

Despite initial uncertainties about the success of such a practice in the area, Dr. D'Abbraccio's determination and the ever-growing need for his services led to the flourishing of Catskill Veterinary Services.



Dr. Joseph D'Abbraccio

"When I first came here, there was a lot of opposition to my practice from the area, saying there's not enough work here. And the skill and the level of medicine that I wanted to practice would not survive here, but I think that we've proven them false," added Dr. D'Abbraccio.

One key factor in Dr. D'Abbraccio's success is his unwavering commitment to providing excellent care for animals and treating clients with respect and fairness. His family's strong entrepreneurial background, rooted in the principles of hard work and a commitment to education, has also been a driving force behind his achievements. He firmly believes that by doing good work and treating people well, success will naturally follow. This belief has been proven time and time again as he continues to expand and grow his practice.

continued on page 5

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“My family really helps to enforce and instill education and that you can do whatever you want in this country, as long as you are willing to work hard for it,” said Dr. D’Abbraccio.

Beyond his practice, Dr. D’Abbraccio is deeply involved in organized veterinary medicine. He serves as the President-Elect for the New York State Veterinary Medical Society and is passionate about representing the Hudson Valley. He is also involved in various nonprofit boards, including Tech Alive in Middletown and the Veterinary Information Foundation.

In addition to his professional endeavors, Dr. D’Abbraccio enjoys traveling, watching movies, and indulging his love for history. His commitment to giving back to the community is exemplified by his participation in free veterinary care clinics in underserved areas of New York City.

Looking ahead, Dr. D’Abbraccio and

Catskill Veterinary Services are poised for further growth. They have purchased property in Rock Hill, with plans to build an 18,000-square-foot Veterinary Medical Center that will provide comprehensive care for animals in the region. Additionally, they are opening a secondary office in Middletown, expanding their reach to Orange County.

Dr. Joseph D’Abbraccio’s journey from a young, animal-loving teenager to a successful veterinarian and community leader is a testament to the power of unwavering passion, hard work, and a commitment to excellence.

“The big key to success is do good work, and treat people, treat your customers well, treat your staff well, and be fair,” said D’Abbraccio.

His dedication to the welfare of animals and the people who love them has earned him the well-deserved recognition of Business Person of the Year. This title underscores his significant contributions to Sullivan County and beyond.

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Distinguished Achievement Award:

Mike Taylor

BY ALEX KIELAR

Always on the lookout for new business opportunities, Mike Taylor of Monticello wears a lot of hats in Sullivan County. Not only has he been the CEO of Combined Energy Services for many years, Taylor also runs All Gas Welding Supply Co. and recently undertook reinvigorating Ski Holiday Mountain.

Taylor is this year's recipient of the Distinguished Achievement Award for the Chamber of Commerce's Pride Awards for his dedication to Sullivan County and giving back to the community.

Taylor grew up in Sullivan County, where he graduated from Monticello High School in 1986. Following high school, he attended Southern New Hampshire University where he received a Bachelor's in Business Administration.

Taylor has been in the propane and fuel oil business since he was a kid in the 1970s after his father, Walt, started Combined Energy Services in 1968.

The family-owned propane gas and heating oil company now serves the tri-state region of New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. It is multi-faceted in supplying home energy needs. From that company, grew All Gas & Welding Supply Co, Tri-State Carbonation Service & Wechsler Pool Supply Co.

Taylor is now the Owner and CEO of those companies, as well as Strongtown



DEMOCRAT FILE PHOTO BY FRED STABBERT
Mike Taylor

Self Storage which opened in Ferndale this year. Walt passed away in 2021, and Mike continues to carry on his father's legacy through all of his endeavors.

Taylor took his love for skiing into owning his own ski hill, buying Holiday Mountain from Craig Passante earlier this year. He grew up skiing in this area and wanted to bring the fun back into it.

The entire Taylor family has a love for skiing which makes the endeavor that much more enjoyable for Mike.

"I grew up skiing in this area, so I said why not own it and make it really fun," he said. "Bringing skiing back to this

continued on page 9

Congratulations to all of the 2023 Pride Award Recipients:

*Joseph D'Abbraccio, Mike Taylor,
Al Frangipane, Julian Dawson, Bradlyn
Matican, Nick & Kate Rusin, Joel
Weinberg, Denise & Rob Lombardi, Doug
Doetsch & Susan Manning, and
Joan Patterson!*

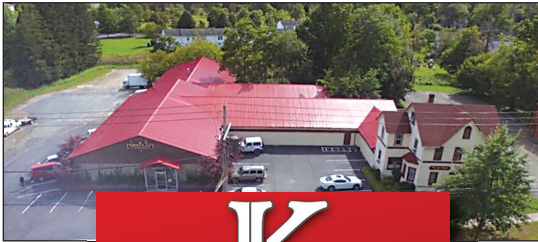


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county and getting kids to do activities outside is important. I want to bring in after-school ski programs to Holiday Mountain.”

One of the biggest goals for Taylor with this ski mountain project is giving locals an avenue of exercise during the winter. He always looks at different aspects of giving back to the community, and this combines his love for the activity of skiing with his love of giving back.

On top of all of these business endeavors, Taylor also serves as a coordinator for the Catskill Mountains Jeep Jamboree, which recently held its 26th annual event in Monticello. A jeep owner himself, Taylor takes his passion for off-roading into the Jeep Jamboree.

Mike Taylor has invested millions to help rejuvenate Holiday Mountain into a ski destination.



DEMOCRAT FILE PHOTO BY ALEX KIELAR

Mike Taylor

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DEMOCRAT FILE PHOTO BY ALEX KIELAR

Mike Taylor

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Distinguished Service Award

Al Frangipane

BY ALEX KIELAR

In regards to giving back to the community, Al Frangipane says that it should never be looked at as a commitment. This year's recipient of the Sullivan County Chamber of Commerce's Distinguished Service Award, Frangipane lives by the motto that if you serve the community in any capacity, the goal should be to make a difference.

Frangipane has served and given back to the community many dif-

ferent ways over his time in Sullivan County, through community service, fundraising and more.

Al and his wife, Maria, moved to Bethel from Brooklyn with their three children - Denise, Claudia and Nicholas - in 1976. Their oldest child, Denise, is the CEO of Sullivan 180. Maria passed away four years ago.

Al worked on the Supreme Court for 34 years before retiring in 1995, after which he and his family decided to continue on page 13



DEMOCRAT FILE PHOTO BY AUTUMN SCHANIL

Al Frangipane puts his heart and soul into everything he does, including the WSUL Heart-a-thon. This photo shows Al, second from left, with his daughter Denise, left, Jodi Goodman, center, and Julie and Jared Kaufman, who were chairs of the 2016 event.

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ed to make the move to Upstate. It didn't take long for the Frangipanes to acclimate themselves to Sullivan County. Al joined WSUL Heart-A-Thon in 2003, which he chaired twice - in 2004 and 2005. For the last 20 years that he has served on the Heart-A-Thon committee, Al said he has been referred to by the nickname "Heart Man."

"Someone called me that one day and it just stuck," Frangipane said.

He is also the chair of the Lions Club for six counties and has been on the St. Jude Children's Hospital research committee for 10 years. He co-chaired the St. Jude research committee with the General Manager of Gold Bold Media Group. Frangipane said that they raised \$14,000 for a golf outing fundraiser on August 20. The money raised was shared with Bethel Lions Club and St. Jude's.

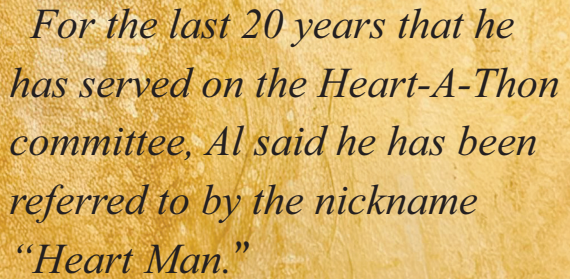
Frangipane and his wife joined the Red Cross disaster team before 9/11 and responded to ground zero during the attacks. He also remembers when he made a difference following the Paramount Hotel in Parksville.

"I remember the exact day - October 16, 2000," he said. "There was a fire at the hotel in Parksville and a bunch of the displaced ended up at Liberty Hotel. I responded, worked the crowd and eased the pain. Afterwards, it was brought to my attention that I would be a great patient advocate."

Thus, Frangipane started his work as a patient advocate at Catskill Regional Medical Center (now Garnet Health Catskills), which he did for a number of years.

"That's what it's all about," he said. "Just making people smile and making a difference."

Al said he is not really for getting his picture in the paper, but really appreciates getting the award.



For the last 20 years that he has served on the Heart-A-Thon committee, Al said he has been referred to by the nickname "Heart Man."

"This honor lends itself more to the moments that I made a difference in people's lives," he said. "I just want to thank all those who have shared in fundraising and a part of the committees I have been involved with. Being able to have an impact on people's lives without knowing how important it was to them is priceless."

Al spoke of moments over the years where people who he has helped and impacted have shown tremendous gratitude to him. He feels very humbled when people come up to him and thank him for something he had done to help years ago. He said that you never know how much impact you can have on someone, just by always striving to make a difference.



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Distinguished Service Award

Julian Dawson

BY ANTHONY MORGANO

Julian Dawson was nominated for, and won, a Pride Award for Distinguished Service this year. Dawson is the Chief Professional Officer (CPO) at the United Way of Sullivan County, a role which he has been in for more than

a decade.

Dawson began working for United Way more than 21 years ago, taking over as the CPO in 2013, and now oversees the day-to-day operations.

The United Way of Sullivan County focuses on mobilizing the caring power

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of the community to people in need through fundraising, volunteerism, advocacy, education and partnership. Their purpose is to improve lives and build a stronger Sullivan County.

Dawson graduated from Monticello High School before going to SUNY Sullivan. He began working for United Way while in college, climbing up the ladder as time progressed.

“My mother instilled it in me to give back to my community, and this has been a great way to do that,” Dawson explained.

Despite the challenges that Dawson faces through his work, the rewarding feeling of helping people each day easily makes up for it.

“If you help one person a day, you’re doing your job,” Dawson said. “Every

job has ups and downs, but this work has been very fulfilling.”

When asked about being recognized with a Pride Award this year Dawson said, “It’s a great acknowledgement, and it shows that people see and appreciate what you do. It’s a great honor to be nominated.”

On top of winning a Pride Award, Dawson will be inducted into the Monticello Hall of Distinction later in November, an honor that recognizes Monticello High School alumni for the work that they do within the community and beyond.

“I wanted to thank the Chamber of Commerce for nominating me for this award as well as the United Way Board of Directors for trusting me with this job and allowing me to help out in my community.”

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JULIAN DAWSON

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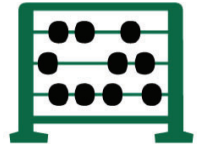


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Emerging Leader:

Bradlyn Matican

BY ANTHONY MORGANO

This year's Emerging Leader Award is being presented to Bradlyn Matican (Insight Cipher). The soon-to-be 31-year-old accountant has spent the past 14 years honing his craft.

Starting in 2019, Matican started his own accounting firm, Insight Cipher, in which he focuses on CFO services and client advisory.

His focus lies in helping clients make sense of financial statements, making the data easier to understand and assisting clients on the fiscal side so they can focus on their passions.

With a small client pool, Matican and the team at Insight Cipher can give the attention required by each business that they represent. Some of the services that Insight Cipher provides include Bookkeeping, Financial Statements, Forecasting, Budgeting, Analysis, KPI Dashboard, Tax Planning, Advisory and Tax Preparation.

Matican is a graduate of Monticello High School, where he moved with his mom at two-years-old after being born on Long Island.

He enjoys giving back to the community when he can, including the



Bradlyn Matican

Monticello Rotary and the Monticello Academy of Finance.

“The Academy of Finance was a wonderful program that allowed me to gain real life exposure to different business concepts through the various classes offered,” Matican said. “Some of the courses were focused on accounting, which allowed me to realize my talent and enjoyment for the profession.”

In his junior year of high school,

Matican received an internship in the accounting field which further solidified his college and career path.

The Monticello Academy of Finance is what started Matican on this path, and three college degrees later he is finding success with his own accounting firm.

Matican's degrees in Accounting include an Associate's Degree from SUNY Sullivan (2013), a Bachelor's Degree from SUNY New Paltz (2017) and a Master's in Forensic Accounting and Valuation from SUNY Polytechnic (2020). Bradlyn excelled in college, earning a cumulative GPA of 3.97.

Matican founded Insight Cipher

after realizing that he wasn't finding the work/life balance within the career path of private accounting that he chose to be too rewarding.

"Working long weeks, upwards of 60 hours, did not allow me to pursue my goals and passions to the fullest extent," Matican explained.

By pivoting to his own private accounting firm, Matican has been able to step back and take care of his mother and spend more time making memories with her.

"Winning this award means a lot to me," Matican said. "It's nice to be recognized, even though that isn't what I do it for."

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Township Award:

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Doug Doetsch and Susan Manning

BY FRED STABBERT III

“Old-fashioned Catskills Hospitality.”

That is what Doug Doetsch and wife Susan Manning say is served up most at their two-and-a-half-year-old business, Seminary Hill Cidery in Callicoon.

“It’s the kind of service and hometown feel our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents served up years ago,” Doug said of the great service and friendly atmosphere. “That’s what we were trying to do from the beginning – connect local roots with the market from the city.”

Seminary Hill has already caught the attention of many Metropolitan New Yorkers and has hosted 24 weddings this year, the same as in 2022.

“There is a pent-up demand,” Susan said. “We’ve established ourselves as a significant wedding venue.”

And Doug said the Sullivan County Chamber of Commerce’s Township Award was “very meaningful. We love the recognition.”

Doug and Susan said much of their success is due to their great staff, which includes many local people.

“We also use local purveyors as much



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Doug Doetsch and his wife, Susan Manning, have built Seminary Hill Cidery in Callicoon to a true wedding destination.

as possible,” Susan said, referring to menu items inside the Cidery.

But the real attraction – Seminary Hill Cider – is getting the most attention.

“We have everything from super dry to sweet and everything in between,” Susan said.

And Doug noted that Seminary Hill Cider is now carried at several restau-

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rants in New York City – including Gramercy Tavern.

“The stuff is flying off the shelves,” he said. “The city just hosted Cider Week and it was great.”

And in an effort to keep the fun going throughout the year, Seminary Hill Cidery is hosting a workshop on November 4 and 18 to teach people how to make their own hard cider.

“We will provide all the materials and each person will walk away with three bottles,” Susan said.

Doug also noted, “This winter we will also be featuring snowshoeing on our trails.

“You can snowshoe then come inside to get something to warm up,” he said.


“We really want people to experience what this beautiful area is all about.”




Susan Manning believes Seminary Hill Cidery has built its great reputation of service by modeling the generations of business owners who came before them.

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Doug Doetsch + Susan Manning
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Township Award:

FALLSBURG

Denise and Rob Lombardi

**STORY AND PHOTO
BY FRED STABBERT III**

Denise and Rob Lombardi, along with their son, RJ, enjoy small town life.

Four years ago the couple decided it was time to venture out of Long Island and find a place in the country, where they could become part of a special community.

And that community ended up being Hurleyville. On October 13 Denise and Rob invited the entire community to their Main Street General Store to celebrate their 4th anniversary.

“The community has wholeheartedly been welcoming and embracing to our family and our son and we are so grateful for that,” Denise said as an afternoon customer popped in the door for lunch.

“We were meant to be here,” she said.

And this year, the Lombardis are the proud winners of the Sullivan County Chamber of Commerce’s Township Award for the Town of Fallsburg.

“It’s an honor,” she said. “I have no words to express my gratitude.”

The Lombardis – and especially Denise – have curated a store that speaks General Store.



Denise and Rob Lombardi have operated the Hurleyville General Store for four years.

“We have a little bit of everything,” she said. “We like to promote products that share the same mission we have. Businesses that provide an opportunity for people with disabilities to thrive.”

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From candles to puzzles, games, soaps, scents, clothing, greeting cards and books, many items have been designed or made by a developmentally disabled person.

The Lombardi's son has developmental disabilities but likes to come to the store to help out.

"He's most interested in being our official taste tester," she mused. "The best part of being here is working with people with disabilities from multiple organizations."

Denise is a former CPA from Melville while her husband recently retired as an Air Traffic Controller.

"We both had great careers," she said, as the next adventure in their life unfolds.

"We like to promote products that share the same mission we have. Businesses that provide an opportunity for people with disabilities to thrive."

The couple recently bought the home across the street from the Hurleyville General Store, greatly reducing their commute.

And with seven-days-a-week hours, it pays to be close.

And the Lombardis are thrilled by how well they have been received.

"People come to meet each other," she said. "This is a real community space."

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CONGRATULATIONS

DENISE & ROB LOMBARDI



HURLEYVILLE GENERAL STORE

AND ALL THE HONOREES

117356

Township Award: LIBERTY Nick and Kate Rusin

STORY AND PHOTO BY DEREK KIRK

Nick and Kate Rusin are the recipients of the Township Award for their work in the Liberty community. They have two children, Julianna, 2, and Caleb, 10.

Kate

As an educator in Liberty Middle School over the past 10 years, Kate has recently become the Middle School Assistant Principal.

Her husband, Nick Rusin, and her father, Frank DeMayo, have been pivotal in building bridges between the town, the village and the school — creating a synergy within the community that allows for continuity between school and civic life.

Collaborations are frequent with local organizations such as Sullivan 180, Fortress Bikes, Bridge and Tunnel Brewery, Liberty Parks and Rec, the Sullivan County Museum, Hurleyville Performing Arts Center, the Rail Trail alliance, and the Village of Liberty.

“A highlight for our students and community was the SnO&W and National Trails Day clean up that took place on the village sections of the rail trail. Most recently, our National Junior Honors Society and other students joined the community for the Dove Daffodil Dash,” Kate said.

“Our mission in the Middle School is to promote academic excellence, respectfulness, independence, and responsibility. Our goal is to give stu-



Kate and Nick Rusin

dents the tools and resources they need to work within a diverse community and be productive citizens,” she continued.

“The partnership with the town has opened doors for students to take these tools and apply them to life outside of school. Now as Assistant Principal, I look forward to continuing to build these relationships and further the connection between the school and the town.”

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Nick

Town Supervisor Frank DeMayo and Nick take a hands-on approach to community development, with a large portion of the work for the town involving seeking and securing grant funding to support projects and development that enhance quality of life in the community.



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“Engaging with the community directly is the best way to understand who is living here and what their most important needs are. To provide a platform to connect town government with the community, Frank and I re-established two community organizations to help us accomplish that goal,” Nick said.

The Parksville Priorities Committee (PPC, re-established 2021) — A group of 45-50 Liberty residents who live in the hamlet of Parksville who are dedicated to the economic and cultural revitalization of Parksville.

When many towns lost residents throughout the pandemic, Liberty, and more specifically, Parksville, gained, with an influx of creative people interested in living a more rural life-style while continuing to pursue their craft have moved in.

Through the PPC we have organized Parksville specific events like the annual B’Kawk festival and Halloween parade. The group has also worked to secure grant funding that will help redevelop currently abandoned and unused buildings on Main Street in Parksville.

Liberty Rising — Frank and Nick understand that village demographics are changing. Recent data suggest that the village is young and diverse. Liberty Rising was established for the Village of Liberty specifically to connect residents in the village to community events, news, and each other. This year the village celebrated its very first Cinco de Mayo festival and relaunched a very successful 4th of July celebration.

Nick attributed his success with the creation and continued work of the two programs to the guidance and foresight of colleague and Town Supervisor, Frank DeMayo.

CONGRATULATIONS!

2023

Kudos to the stellar recipients of the 2023 Sullivan Pride Awards! We at FORMAGGIO wholeheartedly celebrate these remarkable souls whose dedication illuminates the true gems nestled within our mountains.



For over two decades, FORMAGGIO has been honored to call Sullivan County home. As we've grown, so has the county around us. We eagerly anticipate our intertwined futures, flourishing side by side. We've grown in the embrace of this land and its remarkable people. The horizon beckons, and we eagerly await the future. Together.

Township Award:

THOMPSON

Joel Weinberg - Mountain Mall



PHOTOS BY FRED STABBERT III

The Mountain Square Mall on East Broadway in Monticello is a shopping mecca for many Sullivan County residents, offering a wide variety of stores in a convenient location, thanks to Joel Weinberg, this year's Town of Thompson Pride Award winner.



CONGRATULATIONS
to all the Sullivan County Pride Award Winners!


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Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Joan Patterson RN, MSN

BY ANTHONY MORGANO

Joan Patterson has been working for Crystal Run Healthcare since November 7, 2011, nearly 12 years to the day of outstanding work and involvement with Sullivan County. She was nominated for, and won, the Pride Award for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion this year.

Patterson is the Director of Operations in Sullivan County for Crystal Run Healthcare, putting her in charge of a lot of day-to-day operations at the Rock Hill location. From building oversight to direct nursing responsibilities, Patterson keeps herself busy at work.

“I love being able to interact with patients, staff and providers,” Patterson said. “Sometimes I’ll start a conversation with patients in the parking lot, I’m a people person and I like to connect with people whenever I can.”

Other responsibilities that Joan handles involve recruitment, interviewing and hiring prospective employees as well as other adminis-



Joan Patterson

trative duties.

Patterson was born in Jamaica and moved to the United States at 16 years old, where she graduated from high school and college. She is newly widowed, with four sons and two grandsons.

Outside of work, Joan dedicates

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her time to six different boards - including the Sullivan County Chamber of Commerce, in addition to spending time with family, at church or “running” 5Ks.

“I feel as though I don’t keep busy enough,” Joan said. “I’m in awe of the members of the community that

“I’m a people person and I like to connect with people whenever I can.”

do so much.”

With over a decade of experience with Crystal Run Healthcare, Joan is grateful for the company and all that they offer.

“The opportunities fuel me to do all of the things that I do,” Patterson explained. “And hopefully inspires the people around me to do as much as they can do as well.”

Joan closed out by saying, “I want to congratulate my fellow award winners and thank the Sullivan County Chamber for considering, nominating and awarding me.”

Congratulations to all the honorees

You are truly the
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SULLIVAN COUNTY**

**Assemblywoman
Aileen Gunther**



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Congratulations to All of the Recipients of the Sullivan Pride Awards!



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Congratulations to Joan Patterson, RN, MSN!

Crystal Run Healthcare is proud to join the Sullivan County Chamber as you recognize our very own Joan Patterson, RN, MSN, Director of Operations, with the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Workplace Excellence Award! Thank you for all you do to support our patients, our Sullivan county team, and our community.

The Crystal Run difference is in the details—it's what makes Crystal Run Healthcare such a different experience for patients as well as those who have found their calling in medicine.



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CONGRATULATIONS

Joan Patterson, RN, MSN

Crystal Run Healthcare

**Workplace Excellence Award
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**

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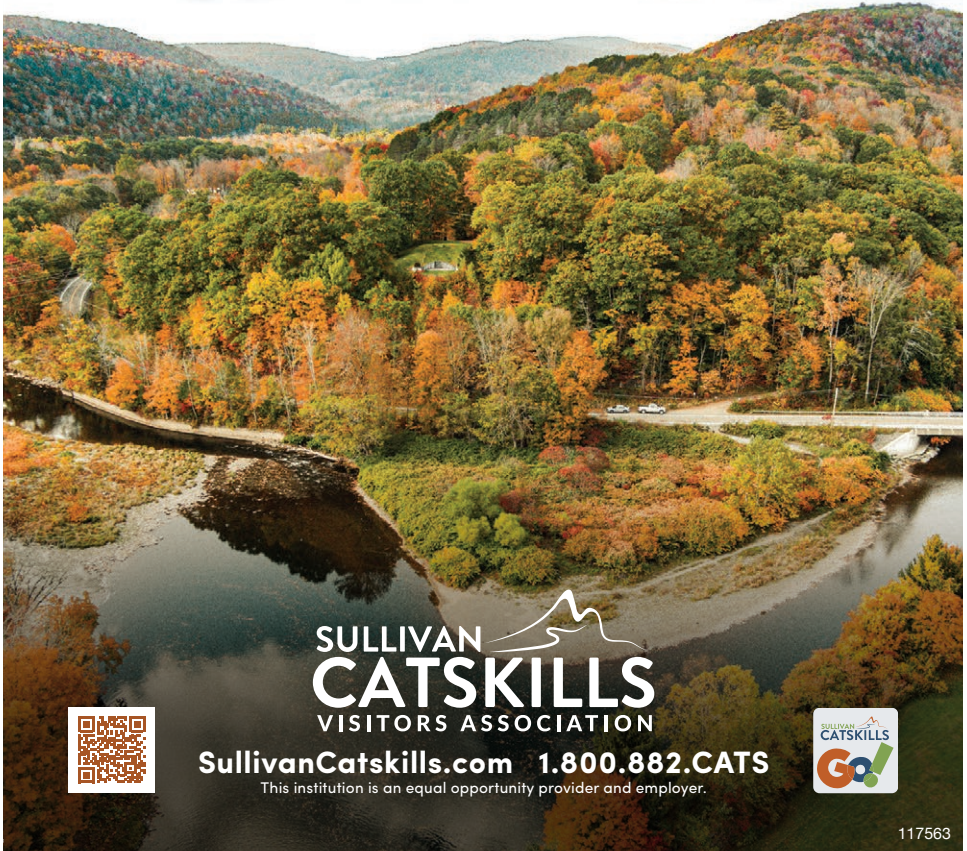
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Go!celebrate

Tonight, and always, we are one team, one community
and always filled with pride.

**Congratulations everyone and thank you for your
contributions to our Sullivan Catskills.**

Joseph D'Abbraccio, Mike Taylor, Al Frangipane, Julian Dawson,
Bradlyn Matican, Nick & Kate Rusin, Liberty Rising, Joel Weinberg,
Denise and Rob Lombardi, Doug Doetsch and Susan Manning,
and Joan Patterson



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