

# Scholarship fund benefit feeds body and soul

Maria Evans

Joan Connors owned a staffing company for 20 years before life took many turns for the worse.

In 2003, she became ill and endured several surgeries. Then her son was killed in a car accident, and she was unable to work.

Her husband went into heart failure and spent months in the hospital and on transplant lists (he is stable now).

Only three months before her son died, her stepson and granddaughter moved in. Connors has since adopted her granddaughter and relocated to Doylestown, where her son is buried.

"I'm in recovery, but I relapsed when I had to take pain medication," Connors said. "We lived in Upper Makefield and lost our house, our business, our cars. I had to get sober again. I had to raise my granddaughter."

Connors also felt compelled to volunteer, to teach women in jail about recovery "because they had no support system when they get



Four of the seven 2010 scholarship recipients: Kristin Armwine, Sharon Twyman, Dee Veneziale and Patricia Wills.

out," she explained.

Two years ago, she decided to pursue a degree in psychology so she could counsel women when they leave jail.

"I know many women who are three, four years sober with normal jobs and normal lives, who just need a support system," she said.

But with she and her husband on disability, and her granddaughter to raise, they struggle financially.

A woman in church told her about the Women in Business

(WIB) Scholarship Fund. With more than 280 members, WIB is the largest committee in the Central Bucks Chamber of Commerce.

The scholarship fund assists Bucks County women who overcome substantial challenges and wish to re-enter the workforce by educating themselves.

"I can only handle four classes a term," said Connors, who attends Penn State-Abington campus, "So the scholarship enabled me to take classes over the summer to stay on

track to graduate."

All proceeds from WIB's signature event, the Gourmet Getaway, go to the WIB Scholarship Fund.

Open to the community, the Getaway features more than two dozen local purveyors of food and drink, many featuring demonstrations, such as dipping strawberries in chocolate.

Dozens of raffles and silent auction items add to the festivities.

Since 1983, WIB has awarded 90 scholarships to deserving women, totaling more than \$241,000.

The awards are presented at a dinner.

"Although we live in an affluent area, it is important to recognize that there are local women in desperate need of help," said 2010 Scholarship Chair Christine Smith, financial advisor and vice president of Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner and Smith, Doylestown.

"We often have scholarship recipients that come to us through the Bucks County Opportunity Council. These women are trying very hard to make a positive change in their lives and just need the support, both financial and emotional to know that we are there in their corner rooting for them."

## Michener guest curator to offer new Ali perspective

Join Dr. Michael Ezra for an illustrated lecture on the story of Muhammad Ali, an iconic figure around the globe, at the James A. Michener Art Museum.

The talk, including a book signing, will take place 3 to 4 p.m. March 20.

Ezra is guest curator of "Muhammad Ali: The Making of an Icon," a photographic exhibit on view at the museum through Sunday, May 15.

Muhammad Ali (born Cassius Clay) has always engendered an emotional reaction from the public. From his appearance as an Olympic champion to his iconic status as a national hero, his carefully constructed image and controversial persona has always been

intensely scrutinized.

A specialist in the African American experience and Civil Rights, Ezra is the author of "Muhammad Ali: The Making of an Icon" (Temple University Press, 2009).

Ezra considers the boxer who calls himself "The Greatest" from a new perspective. He writes about Ali's pre-championship bouts, the management of his career and his current legacy, exploring the promotional aspects of Ali and how they were wrapped up in political, economic and cultural "ownership."

The cost is \$20 for nonmembers and \$10 for members.

For information, call 215-340-9800.

## Gourmet Getaway takes senses on tasty excursion

The Central Bucks Chamber of Commerce Women in Business Committee will present the Gourmet Getaway, Cuisine for a Cause, 5:30 to 8 p.m. Thursday, March 24, at Keenan Motors, 4311 Swamp Road, Doylestown. Tickets for the event are \$45.

The Gourmet Getaway is an evening of food and beer and wine tasting from the area restaurants, caterers and other establishments including Buckingham Valley

Vineyards and Winery, Chaddsford Winery, Crazee Daisee Edible Creations, Crossing Vineyards and Winery, Crystal Rose Catering and Special Event Solutions, DISH Catering, Havana Restaurant and Catering, J. Scones, Inc., Jamie Hollander Gourmet Food and Catering, Laurie's Chocolates, OOKA Japanese Restaurant - Doylestown, Sandcastle Winery, Soup to Nuts Caterers, Taste,

Ted's Montana Grill, The Chocolate Bar, The Talking Teacup, Triumph Brewing Company, Town Crier Bakery, Vintage Grille, The Waterwheel Restaurant, Wegmans Food Markets and Wycombe Vineyards.

Live entertainment will be provided by Lou Pompilio Entertainment.

For information, call 215-348-3913.

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# FASTER

## Bethlehem Steel is the topic of Easton lecture series

National Canal Museum will begin its spring lecture series in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Canal Society on Thursday, March 17, with a presentation on iron and steel making at the former Bethlehem Steel Corporation.

Donald Young will present an illustrated talk on iron and steel making at the former Bethlehem Steel Corporation. Young served as "pit boss" and supervised the casting of super large steel ingots for nuclear power plants and submarines.

The lecture series will be held at the Two Rivers Landing auditorium, National Canal Museum, 30 Centre Square, Easton.

Admission is \$5, and all proceeds go to the National Canal

Museum history fund.

Call 610-559-6613 with questions.

## "Black Field" comes to County Theater

New Hope Film Festival will present an exclusive screening of the Canadian film "Black Field" on March 21 in Doylestown.

Set in the 1870s, the gothic drama tells the story of two sisters living in the Canadian prairies and the mysterious man who comes between them. The screening will be at 7:30 p.m. at County Theater, 20 E. State St.

Admission is \$5, and all proceeds go to the National Canal Museum history fund. Call 610-559-6613 with questions.

Filed by Danishka Esterhazy, "Black Field" made its U.S. festival debut in New Hope in June 2010, and won the Honorable Mention - Best Picture Jury Award at the 2010 festival. The film recently received worldwide distribution via London-based producer representative Altadena Films, which also has offices in Los Angeles and New York.

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