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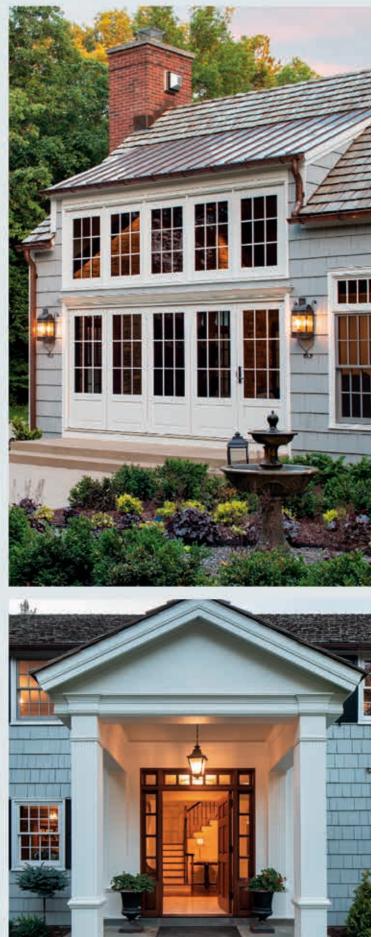


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APRII

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Nominations for Stroll Seniors Issue. We plan to celebrate our seniors in a special June issue again this year. We accept nominations for articles featuring seniors and their Precious Pet's, Travel Tales, Volunteer Work, Musical and Artistic talents, and more! Open to all Schuylkill Township seniors from any school. Please send nominations to schuylkill@n2co.com.

Welcome New Sponsors. This month we welcome Carmen Garcia House Cleaning, Michael O'Connor Fine

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Deborah Graver

Publisher Stroll Schuylkill Township

To see more of what is happening in our community please like and follow us on



PHOTO BY LAURIE CARROZZINO PHOTOGRAPHY

The Schneider family shares the story of their move, an important battle, and the strength of community.

New ginnings

i! We are the Schneider family: TJ, Brooke, and Tripp (1). We moved to Phoenixville in 2020; our offer on our home was accepted on the first day of the COVID quarantine. Our home is nestled in a great neighborhood off of White Horse Road. Our neighbors are truly wonderful and friendly, and there are a few other kids for Tripp to play with.

TJ grew up in Linfield. He attended The Montgomery School and played ice hockey for Utica College (NY). He is now a senior manager for Otsuka Pharmaceutical in Princeton, NJ, and still plays hockey twice a week in West Chester. Brooke is from Harleysville, where she became an avid equestrian. She is the ultimate Penn State fan and received her bachelor's and master's degrees there. "We're hoping Tripp will become a Nittany Lion too one day!" Brooke works in supply chain for the Chinook helicopter program at Boeing and truly enjoys *The Real Housewives*.

In 2022 they decided to renovate their home. Brooke was pregnant with Tripp and they knew they wanted more space. TJ's father Tom is a general contractor and oversaw the whole project. Over the next year, their 1900 square foot cape turned into an almost 4000 square foot colonial. They added two full stories above the existing footprint, adding 3 bedrooms and two full baths. On the first floor, a steel beam was installed to create an open-concept kitchen and living room. Lastly, the old garage was converted into a mudroom, giving the family a nice space for coats and Our family, friends, and neighbors who supported us during the last two years have made us feel so fortunate.









bags. One of their favorite parts of the renovation is the new porch and walkway -- Tripp's footprints are stamped in the concrete right by the front door.

During that time the couple had another set of challenges. While Brooke was 5 months pregnant, she was diagnosed with breast cancer. She received 4 rounds of chemotherapy through Main Line Health at Paoli Hospital before Tripp's perfectly healthy arrival in August. Their oncologist, Dr. Rastogi, came to see them as soon as Tripp arrived and she walked into the room with a huge stuffed elephant! After 6 more rounds of chemo and surgery, Brooke was declared cancer-free in December of 2022. In the highs and lows of treatment, a highlight was their experience with the Schuylkill Township Police Department. "After completing chemo, the department invited our family to the station and we sounded the alarm on a police car in celebration. Sergeant Brian McCarthy let us tour the station, talk to fellow officers, and set the sirens off in a police vehicle in a celebratory fashion. This was such a fun experience that made us feel so connected to our community" shares Brooke.

During treatment, Brooke benefitted from an organization called Unite For HER, which provides supplemental therapies to breast and ovarian cancer patients. "We are very involved with Unite For HER and try to participate in as many fundraising events as we can for them. Please consider running in their 5K in West Chester, or attending their Harvest event at Phoenixville Foundry."

"We really enjoy the small businesses in downtown Phoenixville and the surrounding areas. We frequently



visit Weitzenkorns, a family-owned men's apparel store, and our corgi Harlow loves it when we stop by Maddie's Castle for dog toys and treats. Our go-to restaurants include Kimberton Inn, Butterscotch Cafe for breakfast and lunch, and Birchrunville Store Cafe for our special occasions. Kolb's Dairy in Spring City is another hidden gem in the area - we had their ice cream truck come to Tripp's first birthday party! When the weather is nice, we enjoy walking through Valley Forge Park and grabbing lunch at Washington Memorial Chapel's cabin shop. Fun fact: we were married at the chapel in 2014 and Tripp was baptized there in 2023!"

"Our family, friends, and neighbors who supported us during the last two years have made us feel so fortunate. We're excited to make new memories as a family of three and to watch Tripp grow up as a great little hockey player in this wonderful area".





MUSICAL PURPOSE

Isabelle Gottfried is pursuing her destiny through hard work and passion.

t is such an honor to be one of the local artists featured in *Stroll* magazine. Music is the one thing I know I was destined to pursue. For my entire life, I have been heavily influenced by the greatest rock and soul singers, even when I didn't know it. Growing up my mom would play music all the time and my brothers and I would have dance parties in the kitchen to artists like Elvis and Etta James. But it wasn't until Covid, when we were confined to our homes, that I took the chance to discover my newfound respect for all different types of genres and developed a completely new pallet of skills. I was able to look at different genres in a whole new light. I am so grateful for the experiences and connections I've made so far in my career. This summer, I had the life-changing experience of visiting all different parts of Europe and being in the backing band for Jon Anderson (the lead singer of the band YES) with The Paul Green Rock Academy. I can't even begin to explain how impactful this experience was for me. I was able to learn so much about music, culture, and touring. I realized how much I loved being on the road, sleeping on a tour bus, and being able to do what I love to do every single night. I didn't want to go home. After that experience, I have been determined to dedicate my life to hard work and curiosity to make music and be on my own tour someday. I have always been infatuated with live performance and the audience. My favorite thing in the world is interacting with the crowd, a sort of adrenaline rushes over me and it's very hard to hold back. I want to give the audience something they will never forget and the bonus is... it's so fun! I strive to be as creative as I can as a songwriter. It's so easy for me to get too in my head about writing, so the best advice I've ever stuck by is quantity not quality. (Writing is just free therapy, seriously you should try it.) Lots of music to come, and the journey is just beginning!











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Seth Manning

Age: 9

Grade: Third

School: Montgomery School

Favorite classes: Math, PE, science, and technology

Special talents: I can dunk on a 7 foot basketball hoop

Sports I play: basketball, flag football, and baseball

Other interests: Reading and playing video games

Something unique: I'm the tallest kid in my grade

When I grow up I'm going to be: An NBA player

FAVORITES Activities/Hobbies: Reading, playing sports, video games Color: Light blue

Animal: Dog

Food: Cheeseburger

Movie: The Lord of the Rings Trilogy

Music: Rock, pop, and hip hop

Place to play: My backyard

Sports teams: Eagles, 76ers, and Phillies

TV show: Peanuts

Vacation: Alaska

Holiday: Christmas

Seth lives with his parents Matt and Nicole, brother Clay (6), and Black Lab Tank in the Meadows at Valley Forge.





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Harper, oneyear-old Golden Retriever, loves learning new tricks and making friends.

Where did you get Harper? Golden Glory, Downingtown PA

Is there a story behind her name?

The litter was named after the Philadelphia Phillies and Harper was her litter name. It was a perfect fit for our family because we are avid Phillies fans and enjoy watching Bryce Harper play.

Is there anything special or unusual about her?

Harper has a wonderful way about her. She loves all people who enter our home or pass by our house on their walks. She has a number of friends she plays with regularly but her best friends are Nala, Rip, Sonny, Snacks, and Teddy.

What do you like best about your Harper? She makes us all feel loved.

Any funny stories? Harper does have a sock/shoe problem. She loves to carry around our socks and shoes. One time she stole a shoe that did not resurface for a month! Other than a few missing socks and the occasional shoe, she is a real gem.

What else should we know about your pet? Harper is a quick study. She picked up on her electric fence almost immediately, can give both paws when asked to "shake", and is now learning how to "speak" or bark on command and hold things on her nose!

Harper lives with the Schwenk Family; Erin and Jeff, Kellan (9), and Merrick (7) in Sunwood Farm.



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

A STABLE SOURCE OF SUPPORT

Debbie Miller Dundon, Office Manager at Open Hearth. Inc in Phoenixville. shares about the organization's commitment to serving the community.

What is the mission of Open Hearth? Open Hearth, Inc. is a leader in resource coordination and community-building efforts, providing innovative programs to support and empower people to end the cycle of homelessness, acquire affordable housing, a means of transportation, workforce opportunities, and achieve financial stability.

Why was the organization started? Open Hearth was originally formed in 1989 as a local grassroots committee to assure equal housing opportunities for people who are traditionally isolated and systematically denied opportunities due to mental, emotional, or physical disabilities. Headquartered in Phoenixville, Open Hearth, Inc. received its 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status in April of 1991. Over the years our organization has grown and evolved to serve members of

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our community who are the most vulnerable including single parents, displaced families, those dealing with drug and alcohol dependency, and all income-eligible populations who come from diverse racial, cultural, and geographic backgrounds.

We believe our greatest strengths are staying abreast of emerging issues and best practices and then developing programs and effective partnerships to meet the needs of the community we serve. Because of this, as community needs have changed we have expanded our services to include asset building, financial education and coaching, transportation solutions, and case management, believing that the answer lies in prevention and education.

Our work at Open Hearth spans a continuum-from providing temporary housing for someone experiencing homelessness to providing a savings match for someone planning to purchase their first home. Our participants can rely on our staff to support them as they work to attain financial and housing stability.

What is your role with Open Hearth? As the office manager, I am primarily responsible for all of Open Hearth's operational support including facility management, accounts payable/receivable, and serving as the point of contact for our IT consultant. I started with Open Hearth in March of 2006 and was a program coordinator for a year. I then shifted to the office administrator role and also served as the coordinator of the monthly Phoenixville Area Resource Network meetings for ten years.

Any other information you would like to include? I've been excited to watch the growth of Open Hearth over the last eighteen years including our move from our rented office space in Spring City, to our property in Phoenixville, to the growth of our programs and staff.

Debbie has lived in Schuylkill Township at Spring Meadows at Valley Forge for 14 years. Her parents both had roots in Phoenixville and she grew up in the borough She currently lives with her fur babies: dog Kona (4), and cats Frankie & Freddy (4). Her adult daughters, Mary Beth and Amy, both live locally.

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oin Dan and Lauren, the Thorburn family, and hundreds of friends and neighbors in Phoenixville on April 27th as they gather to raise money in support of the JaxStrong Foundation. JaxStrong was established by Brian and Meghan Thorburn after their son Jax passed away from a year-long battle with brain cancer. JaxStrong supports local kids and families battling cancer. Up-to-date information on this year's event can be found at jaxstrongfoundation.com.









Phantom Fundraiser

On March 1st, the Phoenixville Community Education Foundation Fundraiser was held to both educate and celebrate. Attendees enjoyed a night of connecting with one another and learning more about the impactful work of PCEF.



he largest fundraiser of the year for PCEF brought together residents of Schuylkill Township and other Phoenixville community members, along with students and teachers from the Phoenixville Area School District. The evening began with the annual walk through the Student Showcase, where attendees had the opportunity to witness, and interact with, clubs and individuals who benefit from PCEF funding.

The evening continued with a live performance by the student acapella group, Vocal Fusion, and a brief presentation about the incredible work PCEF has done to support the community over the past 21 years. Through the generous support of the community, PCEF raised \$21,000 in under 5 minutes. Guests were then invited to mingle, dine, enjoy music, and bid on amazing silent auction items, many of which were donated by local businesses.

Proceeds from the Phantom Fundraiser will be used to continue PCEF's mission of enhancing and enriching the educational experience of PASD students so they learn, grow, and thrive both inside and outside the classroom.





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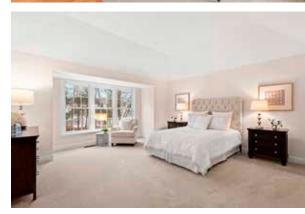
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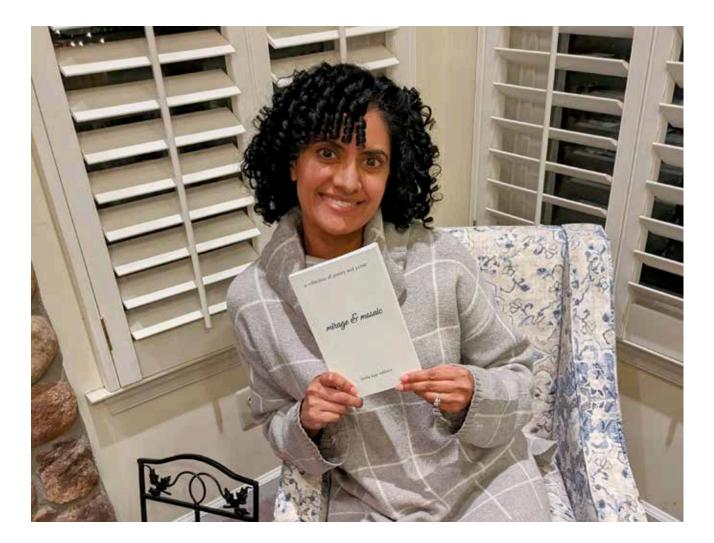
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RESIDENT WRITER

Mirage and Mosaic

Linda Valloor discusses the subject of her new self-published work.



What is the name of your book and what is the premise? The book, *mirage & mosaic*, is a collection of poetry and prose. The writing includes a lot of my childhood experience and adult reflection. I chose to self-publish this collection and it is available for purchase on Amazon.

What inspired you to write this book? I have been writing poetry since I first learned to read and write. After having taught poetry for years and encouraging my students to seek out publishing, I decided it was time to follow my own advice. Stepping away from classroom teaching in June 2023 allowed me the time and energy necessary to focus on reflecting and creating. I wrote this book to encourage my former students and my own children to share their voices with the world. I also wanted to honor a younger me who dreamed of being brave enough to publish parts of my life that are sacred and raw.

What was challenging about writing mirage & mosaic? I think writing about personal experience demands a certain amount of vulnerability. Much of my experience as a child of immigrants, a woman of color, and a public school teacher has created layered and complex memories and lessons. The poetry has always been in me, but deciding what details to include and how to craft my story was a step in the process that I found to be more difficult than I anticipated.

What would you like people to walk away with after reading your book? This particular work, mirage & mosaic, is about an individual journey. The details are mine, but no matter how different a reader may seem from me, I believe they will understand how much of our story is the same. The beauty of our experience, as people, is our shared connection through the human condition. The idea of love, belonging, and heartbreak is universal. I hope readers know that their story also deserves to be told to the world.



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