

Accolades

■ **The Van Wezel Foundation** announced **Maria Schardler-Luera** as the winner of the **Appleton Arts Integration Award** at its 20th annual Inspiration Gala back in January. The Appleton Arts Integration Award, given annually, honors a local teacher or educator who best incorporated arts integration techniques in their approach to better the community.

Schaedler-Luera is a Brazilian-born educator and artist with extensive work experience and knowledge in theater, music, arts and literacy, and cross-cultural engagement. In the past year, she has facilitated and piloted drama, mental health, mindfulness and professional development workshops and programs throughout the community. Schaedler-Luera also had the opportunity to present her culturally relevant work at the John F. Kennedy Center conference.

The Foundation also named Jillianne Abbott and Talia Casey as recipients of the Van Wezel Foundation Merit Scholarships. They'll receive scholarships to attend an approved national conference in arts integration or a local or virtual conference, respectively.

Appointments

■ The law firm of **Porges, Hamlin, Knowles & Hawk, P.A.** (PHKH) has promoted **Bryony G. Swift, Esq.**, to principal and shareholder. In addition, the firm recently hired **Micaela Cleall, Esq.**, as an associate attorney.

Swift has been with PHKH since 2013. She joined the firm after earning her Juris Doctorate and a Certificate of Advocacy from Stetson University College of Law. **Swift** specializes in condominium and homeowners' association law, real property litigation, civil and business law and litigation, landlord/tenant law and related matters.

Cleall joined the firm as an associate attorney in December 2021. She holds a bachelor's degree in Business Administration and Management from Auburn University and a Juris Doctorate from Barry University School of Law

and was admitted to the Florida Bar in 2021. She will assist all attorneys at PHKH in many practice areas, with specialization in real estate transactions, real property law, estate planning and probate.

Located in downtown Bradenton, Porges, Hamlin, Knowles, & Hawk, P.A. firm celebrated its 50th anniversary in April, 2020.

■ **Gulf Coast Community Foundation** has promoted **Kelly Carlstein** to Vice President of Brand



Kelly Carlstein launched Gulf Coast's 25th anniversary campaign and brand. She will lead the public relations and communications efforts that enhance and position the Gulf Coast brand across the region.

Before joining Gulf Coast, Carlstein served at Healthcare Corporation of America's (HCA) Blake Medical Center where she worked on the marketing and public relations team and was involved in marketing strategy, campaign launches, events, and community sponsorship and engagement. Learn more at GulfCoastCF.org.

■ The law firm of **Icard, Merrill, Cullis, Timm, Furen, and Ginsburg, P.A.**, has announced that associates **Bianca N. Manos, Nicole M. Price, and Patrick C. Seidensticker** have been promoted to the position of member.

Manos has a diverse practice working in the areas of family law and civil litigation, with a particular focus on matters involving breach of contract, dissolution of marriage, child custody disputes, alimony, paternity, prenuptial and postnuptial agreements, and child support. She earned her J.D. from the University of Florida Levin College of Law. In 2020, she was recognized for providing 100+ hours of pro bono work and was listed a Florida Super Lawyers Rising Star.

Price's law practice focuses on community association law and general civil litigation, with additional experience in construction litigation, personal injury litigation, and family law matters. She received her J.D. from the University of Florida Levin College of Law. **Price** coordinates Icard Merrill's pro bono program and was recognized in 2020 for contributing 100+ hours of pro bono work.

Seidensticker's law practice is concentrated in the areas of commercial real estate, land use, and property

valuation. He received his J.D. from Stetson University College of Law. In addition, he is co-founder of Tableside Restaurant Group in Sarasota.

■ **The Van Wezel Foundation** has added an executive director of education and lifelong learning to its team as the result of a grant awarded by the Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation.

Kelli Maldonado, an educator and



leader in the local, regional and national arts community, will lead the effort to prioritize lifelong learning at the new Sarasota Performing Arts Center. Most recently, Maldonado served as the director of education and community engagement at the Van Wezel. Prior, she held arts and education positions at Asolo Repertory Theatre here in Sarasota and Manhattan Theatre Club and New Amsterdam Theatre in New York City.

Maldonado will continue the Foundation's 30-year partnership with the Van Wezel and continue to underwrite popular, philanthropic educational programming that serves more than 50,000 students, teachers and families annually, while creating a lifelong learning program for the new Sarasota Performing Arts Center.

■ Beloved philanthropist **Jean Weiller** continues her legacy with a recent gift of \$1 million to **Boys & Girls Clubs of Sarasota and DeSoto Counties**. Jean has been a volunteer, a teacher, an advocate, and a leader.

This gift is designated to build and furnish the new Art Room and Technology & Robotics Lab at the soon-to-be-renovated Roy McBean Club on the Irving and Marilyn Naiditch Campus, renovation of the Lee Wetherington Club's Art Room, and the renovation and expansion of the administrative building.

This gift, supported by

discretionary funding from the Community Foundation, will lead to increased capacity with the creation of state-of-the-art learning spaces for club members and capacity-building space for staff.

In 2016, Jean and her family committed to give the organization \$500,000 in the form of a Matching Challenge if they raised \$1 million in new or increased funds by 2020 which they did.

The Matching Challenge has allowed Boys & Girls Clubs of Sarasota and DeSoto Counties to continue to enhance their quality of programming for the youth they serve. One million dollars of her Matching Challenge gift was allocated towards their endowment fund and \$500,000 was used to support Club operations and new initiatives, such as their teen program and state-of-the-art Tom and Debbie Shapiro Career Resource Center.

For more information, visit www.bgcsdc.org or call 941-366-3911.

■ **The Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce** welcomes **Catherine Roper** as Vice President, following a decade with the Ballston Business Improvement District as Chief Marketing Officer located in Arlington, VA. She'll be responsible for membership experience to connect, promote and support 1,200 member businesses in the Sarasota Chamber community.

Catherine brings over 25 years of experience serving the business community and commercial real estate industry in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area. In addition, she has an extensive background in non-profit management, marketing, communications, event management, and operations.

During her tenure, the Ballston Business Improvement District was recognized for excellence in marketing and strategic public relations, winning several Communicator and MarCom awards. In 2017 she was honored with a SmartCEO Brava award. In her role, Catherine facilitated two re-branding initiatives.

■ **Sunshine from Darkness** – a subsidiary of the Lee and Bob

Peterson Foundation – has hired its first-ever full-time executive director, longtime nonprofit professional **Marlene Hauck**. In this role, she will serve as the primary spokesperson for the cause, oversee strategic planning and implementation, planning and budgeting, and areas including fundraising, marketing and communications, event oversight, and board



Marlene Hauck

engagement and relations.

The mission of Sunshine from Darkness is to raise awareness of mental health and addiction disorders, and erase the stigma of both. Hauck has 30 years' experience in fundraising, donor and community relations, client and vendor relations. She has worked in the nonprofit realm for more than 25 years, with 10 years of leadership experience for two nonprofits. She served on the board of directors of Coastal Behavioral Healthcare and made the transition to director of marketing and development for First Step of Sarasota when Coastal and First Step merged in 2020. Other organizations Hauck has worked for include the Longboat Key Center for the Arts and Suncoast Children's Charities.

Hauck has served on the planning committee and as event coordinator – on a volunteer basis – for Sunshine from Darkness since 2019, when Jeffrey Peterson, the son of Lee and Bob Peterson and president of their namesake foundation, reinvigorated the Inspiring Hope Dinner and Journey to Wellness Symposium, events first conceived and presented by his parents. Over the course of 13 years, through Sunshine from Darkness, the Petersons raised over \$5 million and served as champions for research, treatment, education and efforts to erase the stigma of living with mental illness.

In November of 2021, the Inspiring Hope Dinner raised more than \$170,000 benefiting the local mental health and addiction programs and services of First Step of Sarasota, and cutting-edge research funded by The Brain & Behavior Research Foundation.

Sunshine from Darkness was founded as a subsidiary of and is underwritten by the Lee and Bob Peterson Foundation. To learn more, visit sunshinefromdarkness.org.



Jean Weiller with the Boys & Girls Club

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