

SUCCESSFUL WOMEN IN BUSINESS

CELEBRATING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Deb Spence

Architecting the Future of Community Connectivity

Deb Spence is a visionary entrepreneur and the founder of LevelFlat.org, a pioneering initiative designed to transform the way communities share knowledge and connect.

Driven by a mission to “architect” rather than just live in a city, Deb is currently spearheading the development of “Digital Twin Cities.” This groundbreaking project began with a prototype in Pottstown, serving as a living digital infrastructure that centralizes the scattered wisdom of a town — from local services and unwritten civic rules to trusted community contacts — into one accessible platform.

At the heart of Deb’s impact is the ONE Calendar©, a system she describes as the “heartbeat” of the community. By synchronizing local events, deadlines, and resources into a single shared stream, she has created a tool that helps residents stay aligned and informed. Her ecosystem of tools — including the “Welcome Mat” for new residents, a transparent Landlord Registry for tenant protection, and a Medical Equity Tracker — demonstrates her commitment to using technology to restore the human pulse of neighborhoods.

Deb’s journey is one of resilience and bold reinvention. Described as a “56-year-old visionary rebuilding Pottstown from the ground up,” she has leveraged her deep



understanding of local dynamics to create a “central nervous system” for the community. Her work bridges the gap between data-driven technology and real-world civic life, making the navigation of local government and small business services easier, more accountable, and more human for everyone from long-time business owners to first-time renters.

Beyond her technical innovation, Deb is a dedicated advocate for local prosperity. By making small businesses more visible and civic life more navigable, she is empowering the Pottstown region to speak with a collective voice. As she continues to expand the LevelFlat model, Deb remains focused on her core belief: that technology’s highest purpose is to empower people, protect the vulnerable, and ensure that every member of a community has the tools they need to thrive.

Lana Potgieter

Lighthouse Leadership Coaching and Development

My journey into coaching started on the “client side.” In 2003, I completed a leadership coaching program through my employer, and it reshaped how I thought about potential, performance, and purpose. At the time, I was young, confident (read: a bit arrogant), and more of a do-er than a thinker — I tended to “jump and build the plane on the way down.” A year later, I stepped away from traditional employment, trained as a coach, and began the work I now consider my life’s calling: walking alongside leaders as they turn pressure into clarity and good intentions into consistent action.

That calling was pressure-tested early. I launched my business just before an economic downturn, with a new home payment and kids in middle school. I loved the freedom of being my own boss, but I learned quickly that if I valued flexibility more than discipline, the business would stay a “nice thing to do” instead of becoming sustainable and profitable. I adjusted — slowly and steadily — and the results followed. I began working with larger organizations and long-term engagements, and I became more resilient, more teachable, and more accountable, supported by coaches and peer advisory groups who pushed me to grow.

Over time, my work expanded across industries — from manufacturing and service to nonprofit — and across borders, including the United States, South Africa, and the United Kingdom. I became known for helping leaders cut through complexity, strengthen communication, and build teams that take ownership instead of waiting for direction. I’ve been honored with LMI awards including Motivator of the Year (2017, 2020) and Facilitator of the Year (2019), but the recognition I value most is



quieter: when clients triple their results through “slight-edge” changes, when a spouse thanks me for what shifts at home, and when the work ripples out into families, friendships, and communities.

Today, I’m based in Pottstown, Pennsylvania, where my husband and I relocated to be closer to our daughter and grandchildren — and I’m building again in a new country. I didn’t expect how hard it would be; in some ways, my past success became my weakness. Leaving an established client base meant rebuilding contacts, context, connection, and credibility from scratch. That season challenged my identity and confidence, but I’ve risen from the “moving boxes” with a deeper commitment: to serve both my clients and my family without sacrificing one for the other — it’s an AND, not an OR.

Women’s History Month matters to me because leadership is influence, and women influence more than we sometimes realize. We can create environments where others rise, contribute, and succeed—at work, at home, and in the next generation. That’s the impact I aim to make: developing leaders, in life and business, that others love to follow, and building healthier, more capable workplaces — one conversation at a time.

GROW YOUR CIRCLE & YOUR BUSINESS CONNECTIONS

with amazing women of the Pottstown area!

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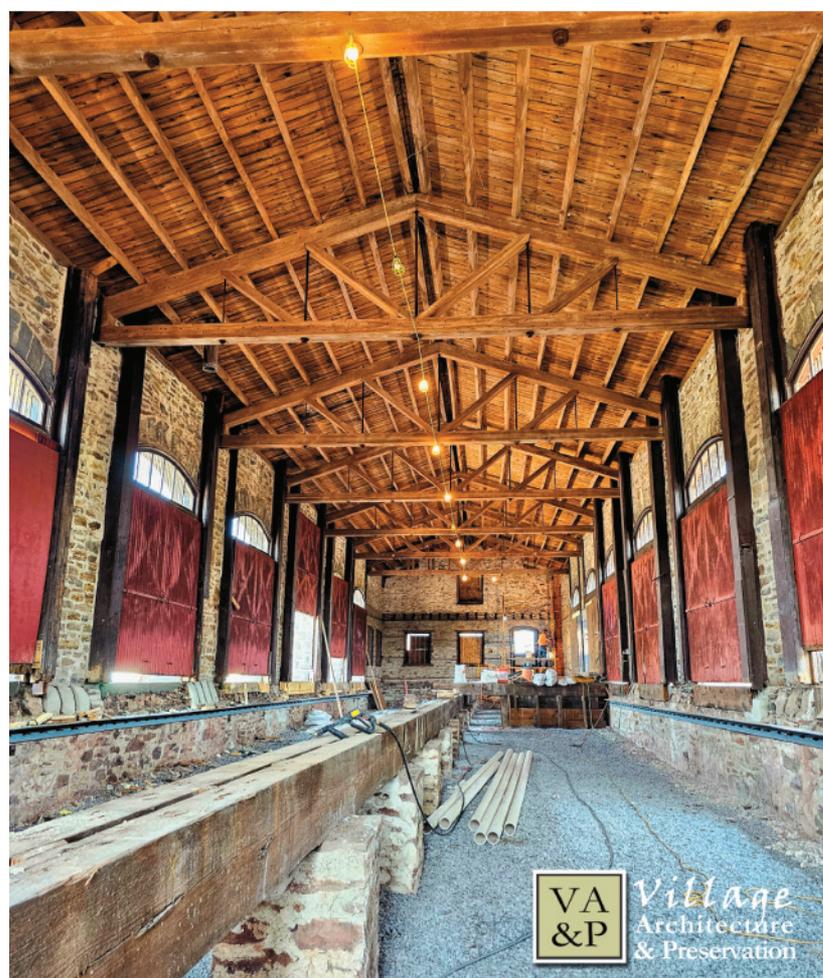
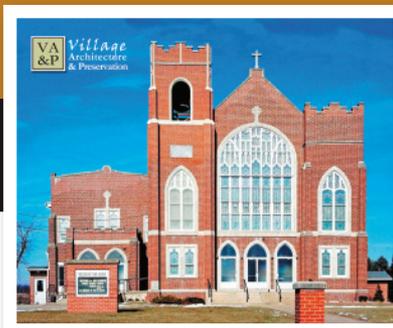
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Jessica Zeigler-Cihlar, AIA, LEED AP BD+C

Founder and Principal Architect Village Architecture & Preservation

Village Architecture & Preservation was founded in November 2011 as a home-based sole proprietorship, in Lionville Village Historic District, Chester County, Pennsylvania. VA&P's founder, Jessica Zeigler-Cihlar, was a working mother, newly unemployed due to impacts of the recession on the construction industry and determined to succeed in a role she had been quietly considering for decades.



Jessica began preparing for her career long before most youth have their first jobs: first, observing her father build his business, Thomas L. Zeigler, PE, Inc., from the ground up under similar economic challenges. Later, she worked in his office on drafting and office administration tasks. It was there that Jessica decided she loved building design, but having a greater proclivity for art than math, Architecture became her chosen career path. After graduating from Penn State University, Jessica earned an architect intern position at John Milner Associates, Inc., in West Chester, PA. She climbed the ranks for the next decade, becoming the Senior Preservation Architect in JMA's West Chester office. Her work experience was especially unique during this time, collaborating with planners, con-

servators, historians, and archeologists on projects from New York to Kentucky. When the Architecture department closed its doors, Jessica's long-term dream suddenly became an overnight necessity, and she walked through the next door toward business ownership.

With over 25 years of design experience, Jessica is a Registered Architect in Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey, and New York. She is National Park Service-qualified as a Historic Architect, a LEED BD+C and NCARB Certified Professional, and a graduate of the Cornell University Sustainable Preservation Certificate program and Leadership TriCounty Class of 2022. She is a proud member of the Tri-County Area Chamber of Commerce and Morgantown Area Business Association. In recognition of her efforts to lift up and mentor fellow working women and rising professionals, Jessica was presented with the 2024 TCACC REACH Woman of Influence and Empowerment Award. Community support and volunteerism are common themes in both her work and personal life, where she is currently serving as the Vice Chair of the Caernarvon Township Zoning Hearing Board, Secretary of the Hay Creek Valley Historical Association, design consultant for Central Presbyterian Church grounds and building projects, and a coach for the Twin Valley Mountain Biking Team. She is married to her Penn State Architecture sweetheart, who shares in parenting of their three

teenagers and a rescue dog in Elverson, Berks County.

Now, as the Founder and Principal Architect at Village Architecture & Preservation, Jessica enjoys providing custom design services for home expansions, business renovations and fit-outs, church and school facility and accessibility upgrades, and historical building adaptive reuse projects. Favorite aspects of her work include discovering the unique characteristics of each project site and getting to know the individual needs of her clients. Jessica strives to prioritize owner-design team relationships, creative solutions, practical long-term building use, and efficient use and reuse of spaces. Each client is a critical part of the project team, collectively dedicated to the project's success.

Celebrating its 15th year of business, Village Architecture & Preservation is a certified WBENC and SBA Women-Owned Small Business. Recent, exciting local projects include: Lansdale Freight House Rehabilitation, Heller Homestead Park Open Space and Barn Restoration Master Plan (consulting role), Rhoads Opera Farm to Table Restaurant and Market, Little Mates Child Development Center Renovation, Union Township Municipal Complex Meeting Room Rehabilitation, and numerous residential projects throughout Montgomery, Berks, and Chester Counties. To talk with Jessica about your building project goals and ideas, please contact VA&P here: 610.389.9387 | info@village-architecture.com.



SUCCESSFUL WOMEN IN BUSINESS

CELEBRATING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Jennifer Scotese

Express Data Payroll / Panacea Payroll Processing

Improving business environments is in Jennifer Scotese's blood. The Pottstown native started in purchasing but it's when she went to work for her father's company that she really blossomed into an advocate for small businesses. Today, Express Data Systems is dedicated to providing the highest quality payroll processing and related services to regional businesses of all sizes.

Express has been providing reliable payroll services to local employers since 1987 and now offers a full cadre of professional support services.

Jennifer started working for Express Data Systems in 1988 as office manager but quickly accepted more and more responsibilities over the years as the business grew. In 2002 Jennifer took over as company President when founder, Jay Berman, retired. Since her ascension to the lead role at Express, Jennifer has overseen steady growth of the company that now services nearly 500 clients with an all-female staff of nine.

"The workplace is a natural environment to learn from one another," says Scotese. "I'm constantly mentoring women inside and outside of the organization." Scotese who graduated from Susquehanna University in 1987 with degrees in biology and art has a wealth of practical business experience behind her.

Leading the growth of Express has also come naturally to Scotese, who oversees operations, sales and marketing. Since being named President she has implemented improvements for clients related to payroll processing to enhance Express Data Systems value as a partner.

"I brought in Teresa Kearney in 2010 as a full-time sales associate," Scotese adds.



"Teresa wasn't the first female salesperson Express has employed but she's far and away been the best."

In 2014 Scotese and her team added enhanced Human Resources and Timekeeping options so clients would have a reliable one-stop shop for quality business service support. After that, they brought in new and improved "Pay as You Go" Worker's Compensation and most recently rolled out applicant tracking and employee on-boarding.

The successful woman managing Express Data Systems has created a quality support system for small businesses owners and managers in the Philadelphia tri-state area and she replicated the model for a specialized market.

Panacea Payroll is a mirrored offering of Express but with a national service area. Designed specifically to support businesses in the cannabis industry, Panacea Payroll employs specialists with knowledge of the medical marijuana category.

Learn more by visiting www.ExpressDataSys.com or PanaceaPayroll.com. Both companies are headquartered at 3277 West Ridge Pike in Pottstown.

Joanne Washington, INC Public Benefit Corporation (JWI)
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Joanne D Washington

Joanne Washington INC (JWI), a Public Benefit Corporation (PBC)

I am the go-to girl. I am Intelligent, witty, informative, business savvy and full of know-how... the least of my assets. Best known for my servitude of and for people, my hospitality, prayer warrior spirit, nutritious and delicious dishes, and funny personality... which are my greatest assets. I leap bounds and knock down walls of protocols with the unstandardized abilities to help people transform mindsets from surviving mode to thriving mode, from being "maintenanced" to maintaining, and understanding how personal responsibility and accountability, the key components, are needed to achieve balance in the transformation of lifestyle wellness. I am determined to make sure no one leaves my presence the same way they came.

As an Agent of Change! I am a voice for the voiceless. I advocate fearlessly for the rights of people with visionary foresight... "people have an equitable right to live and work in the community they economically sustain". I have developed the formula for developing community building... constituents + community = commerce.

As the Founder and CEO of JWI, I welcome collaborations with like-minded agencies of social advocacy to provide goods, services, information, and resources for those experiencing marginalization / vulnerability with dignity, respect and love.

As a business owner, continue to



progress with in house businesses and outside partnerships that not only provides goods and services for profit but invests in people through program and community creation and development, management, training, homeownership, employment opportunities, education, and progressive recovery learning systems and applications;

As a leader I am a creator and innovator, I lead by example putting my life on display for all to know that hope and faith in God paved my way while innovating failed programs to stop chronic cycles of systematic program failures that produces the chronic behaviors.

As a cultivator, my voice shapes and mold communities through designing and creating... events, programs, relationships, food, clothing, perfumes, friendships, etc... "If there is a need for it, I can create it!"

I leave you with this... "A program is not successful unless the people are successful!"

Have a wonderful day **on purpose!**

For additional information, please call 267.770.9678 and visit www.joannewashington.com.



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Debra Basile

Spring Hollow Golf Club

Debra "Debbi" Basile is a dynamic business leader whose career reflects resilience, entrepreneurship, and a deep commitment to advancing women through both executive leadership and community service.

A graduate of Daniel Boone High School and Penn State University with a degree in Marketing, Debbi began her career in Baltimore before transitioning into the beauty industry, where she built a successful professional path that included experience at About Faces Day Spa and Arrojo Studio in Manhattan. She later founded and operated SASS Salon, a boutique salon in Baltimore, leading the business with distinction until its closure during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2020, Debbi joined her family's business, Spring Hollow Golf Club in Spring City, Pennsylvania, stepping into a critical leadership role during the hospitality industry's recovery period. As Director of Sales & Marketing and Chief Operating Officer, she strengthened operations, rebuilt event revenue, and positioned the organization for long-term growth.

Beyond her executive role, Debbi serves as Interim Vice President of Soroptimist International of Phoenixville,



an organization dedicated to improving the lives of women and girls through education and economic empowerment. In her second year as a member, she secured four of the five major sponsors for the organization's signature "Beef, Beer & Bubbles" fundraising event — demonstrating exceptional leadership in sponsorship development and community engagement.

Debbi's leadership is defined by adaptability, strategic vision, and a steadfast commitment to empowering women and strengthening the communities she serves.



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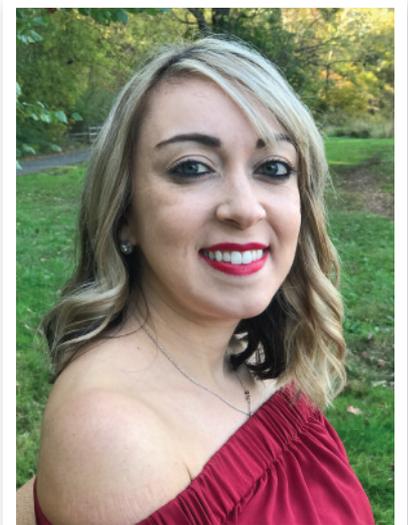
Dr. Alisa Zitter

Serenity Dental Spa

Dr. Alisa Zitter is the owner of Serenity Dental Spa in Pottstown, Pennsylvania, where she has created a unique practice that blends comprehensive dental care with advanced facial aesthetic treatments in a relaxing, spa-like environment. Patients can improve their smile and skin in one convenient setting through services such as Botox, dermal fillers, laser skin resurfacing, and RF microneedling.

Serenity Dental Spa is redefining the traditional dental experience by offering a welcoming atmosphere that feels more like a boutique spa than a typical dental office. Through continued training in advanced technology such as Fotona laser systems and Potenza RF microneedling, Dr. Zitter brings innovative treatment options to the Pottstown area that were once only available in larger metropolitan markets.

At Serenity Dental Spa, the focus is on helping patients look and feel their best by enhancing both oral health and natural beauty in a serene, personalized setting.



For additional information, please call or text 610.624.6166 and visit www.serenitydentalspaofpa.com.



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