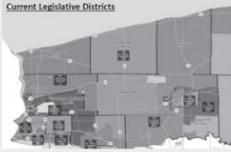


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Morinello recognizes October as National Women's Small Business Month

BY ASSEMBLYMAN
ANGELO MORINELLO

October is National Women's Small Business Month, which means it's time to celebrate the determination, drive and success of women-owned businesses everywhere, while recognizing the obstacles and challenges these female entrepreneurs have had to overcome.

Women in America have continually faced opposition to excel and break through glass ceilings. Following the near century-long women's suffrage movement and passage of the 19th Amendment,

it was clear there was progression, but the rate at which it was occurring and the challenges that remained were daunting. Yet generation after generation of women persevered despite the odds and playing field stacked against them to create a better future.

In 1972, women only owned 4.6% of all businesses in the U.S. and, until 1988, in some states women needed a male relative to cosign business loans. Today, women own over 42% of all businesses and there are nearly 13 million women-owned businesses in the US, employing 9.4 million workers and generating

revenue of \$1.9 trillion.

Women are starting businesses at a rate double the national average, with women of color comprising the majority, making them the fastest-growing group of entrepreneurs. In the last five years alone, women-owned businesses grew 21% and businesses owned by women of color grew at double that rate. Numbers for black women entrepreneurs grew the fastest, with an increase of 50%. In fact, as of 2021, women of color accounted for 50% of all women who owned businesses.

The grit, resolve and character of

these entrepreneurs is why, each October, we celebrate the milestones they've surpassed and honor the hard work of women across the country through National Women's Small Business Month.

However, gender and race-based discrimination, the gender wage gap and lingering disparities in revenue prove we still have work to do. I will continue to support and recognize the tremendous accomplishments of our women small business owners, and we salute them all here in the 145th Assembly District, New York and the US.

Help People Inc. celebrate its 50th

People Inc. is celebrating its 50th anniversary serving the Western New York and Rochester communities, and we hope you can help recognize this important milestone. As the region's leading nonprofit organization supporting people with disabilities, seniors and their families, tens of thousands of our neighbors have been assisted over the last 50 years.

You may know of someone whose

family has been helped in a life-changing way, or one of our team members who are dedicated to making a meaningful difference every day. Our direct care of thousands of vulnerable people is provided with an emphasis on quality and individualized support, while keeping an eye on expenses. In fact, People Inc. operates a lean organization, with 92 cents of every dollar directly to services.

Can we count on your partnership is supporting our 50th anniversary event on Oct. 21? We have pulled together the People Inc. Foundation, along with the Rivershore Foundation and Southeast Foundation to cohost our only special fundraising event this year – featuring a Fantasy Casino at Salvatore's Italian Gardens. A tax-deductible item would be appreciated.

(For more information) contact Melanie Wilkinson at 817-7450 or Melanie.wilkinson@people-inc.org. Thank you for your support.

*Nancy Dobson,
People Inc. Foundation chair
Jerry Wolfgang,
Rivershore Foundation chair
Richard Wetherby,
Southeast Foundation Inc. chair
Denise Bienko, executive officer*

Support 2020-22 Youngstown Free Library fund drive

Dear Friend of the Youngstown Free Library,

I'm sure it's no great surprise to you, but I paid exactly zero attention to our library's budget before I became board president. I'm sure I'm not alone in this.

The most important thing I've learned since then is that, unlike most area libraries, the funding of the Youngstown Free Library is not derived from our local school or municipality property taxation. Most libraries in WNY are, and that makes their budgeting relatively easy. Who knew?

We don't have a separate line on our school district or Town of Porter property tax bills saying "Youngstown Free Library Funding." If we did, our library would be 95% funded for the whole year, just like that.

Instead, for a number of years, about 60% of our operating funds have come courtesy of the Town of Porter's general fund, with most of the balance being made up through

fundraising events, grants, and the superb generosity of members in our annual fund drives. And that was fine, until COVID came along and put a wrench in the works. Because of COVID, the town has less money coming in – and we can't expect that to change much anytime soon. As a result, even with a conservative and carefully considered budget, our library is facing a 20% (\$30,000) deficit this year.

Clearly our approach to fundraising has to change. It is time to restructure the library's income sources. And so, we have to talk about money (ugh), which means being more forthright about such things with the people we serve, so they better understand the situation.

Our Friends have traditionally run several very important fundraisers throughout the year. Of late, we've also had the electronics drive. And there is, of course, this annual fund drive!

But to secure the library's long-term viability, the library is

transitioning to also making active appeals for support through new sources, such as estate planning and legacy giving, gifts through IRAs, corporate matching and corporate support, etc.

This is a new way of doing things for us, and you'll understand if I'm a little nervous in making this appeal.

This broader approach to fundraising is not a novel idea, of course, but it is not one that we have actively pursued in the past. With the disruptions to our income – and the fact that we had to start the year with a negative budget of \$30,000 – we are being forced to innovate and try something new. It's a bit scary. With a number of fixed expenses, there is only so much that a very fiscally conservative approach can mitigate over the course of the year to try and draw us back to the black.

Change is often really uncomfortable. But for our library to continue to thrive, we need to show some courage in the way we do things, and to move forward in

hope and confidence.

The support that you have traditionally shown our library has been incredibly appreciated, and respected. I hope that, as we seek to broaden our appeal for funds, our continuing deep appreciation is understood.

Perhaps the challenges we're working through are ultimately good things. Perhaps they will make our library a stronger, more responsive, and more vibrant organization. We're certainly approaching it that way. In the meantime, we move forward, finding new ways to respond to life's challenges, so that we may carry on and support the great tradition of this vital community library of ours.

Cheers.

PS: You can support our annual fund drive by going directly to our website, <http://www.youngstown-freelibrary.org/>.

*Sean Scarisbrick,
President of the Youngstown
Free Library Board of Trustees*

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