



## YWCA honors Women Who Make a Difference at gala in Ivyland

By Liz Johnson, correspondent May 11, 2017

On Thursday night, the YWCA of Bucks County will celebrate its 26th anniversary of Women Who Make a Difference, honoring 22 county movers and shakers at a dinner to be held at Spring Mill Manor in Ivyland.

“This year we have some wonderful nominees,” said YWCA spokeswoman Kristin Chapin. “Linda Grass, Lower Bucks Hospital’s CEO; Penn Community Bank’s Jeane Coyle; Tam St. Claire, president of Women’s Advocacy Coalition; Patty Rooney, human resource director of Parx Casino, they’re just a handful of the nominees we’re going to be recognizing.”

The Bensalem-based YWCA’s mission is to eliminate racism and empower women, particularly in the county’s more vulnerable communities, said Chapin.

“We want to showcase the remarkable accomplishments of our volunteers and the contribution of women in the community by spotlighting them and the fabulous work they’re doing here in Bucks County,” she said

This year’s award winners are:

Mary Fran Bontempo



YWCA

Mary Fran Bontempo

Speaker, writer, mentor and humorist Mary Fran Bontempo is best known for her blog, books and mantra “Not Ready for Granny Pants!” But it’s her experience as the mother of a son addicted to heroin that has garnered her the distinction of the YWCA’s Women Who Make a Difference Award.

“A woman’s self-talk is her most powerful influencer, mainly because it never shuts up. It can lift her up or bring her to her knees, sometimes within minutes,” Bontempo writes

on her Web site [maryfranbontempo.com](http://maryfranbontempo.com).

Through her involvement with the Ambrosia Treatment Center, she offers hope to families struggling with addiction. Grounded from an experience few can comprehend, she validates their fear as they face an uncertain future.

Author of the "The Woman's Book of Dirty Words," Bontempo helps women overcome their self-imposed limitations. She gives them permission to relax in their imperfections and thrive in their lives. Her message is simple: Even in our darkest days we can make the choice to create only positive self-talk and bring about great change.

As a mentor, Bontempo nurtures women and their families with the support they need to move forward even in their most difficult times.

Kimberly Cambra



Kimberly Cambra  
YWCA

For the past 10 years, Kimberly Cambra has served as the executive director of CB Cares Educational Foundation, the educational partner of the Central Bucks School District. She works as a catalyst to connect students with the community through CB Cares programs such as the PumpkinFest, MLK Day of Service and CB Cares Volunteer Teens.

Cambra, of Buckingham Township, is a member of the Village Improvement Association, which founded Doylestown Hospital. She has a passion for Bucks County history. Last year, she produced and directed a documentary about the women of the VIA to mark its 120th anniversary called Then, Now & Forever — The History of the Village Improvement Association.

Gwen Coverdale



Gwen Coverdale

Doylestown's Gwen Coverdale is the mother of a child with neurofibromatosis, a genetic disorder that leads to non-cancerous tumors on nerve tissues, producing serious medical problems. It has no cure or treatment.

In 2012, Coverdale organized a committee of local NF parents and — in only nine weeks — launched Philadelphia's inaugural NF Walk, held that June in Doylestown. Their goal was to have 200 walkers participate and raise \$25,000. Instead, 350 walkers showed up and nearly \$50,000 was raised for NF research — both records for an inaugural NF walk. Today, the walk has grown to more than 500 people and raises more than \$70,000 annually, making it one of the top three NF Walk fundraisers in the nation. This year's walk is scheduled for June 17 in Doylestown.

Coverdale was recently named to the national Children's Tumor Foundation's Volunteer Leadership Council, which raises money for NF research and advocacy.

Jeane Coyle



Jeane Coyle

Courtesy Lynn Goodwin

Jeane Coyle began her career in the banking industry in 1983 at First National Bank of Allentown after graduating from Muhlenberg College. In the past 33 years, she has worked at both large and small financial institutions in the Philadelphia region while earning an MBA from Saint Joseph's University.

In 2006, Coyle joined First Federal of Bucks County. In 2013, she was named president and CEO of the bank. Two years ago, she spearheaded the merger of First Federal of Bucks County and First Savings Bank of Perkasie to form Penn Community Bank, which she now heads.

Coyle serves on the board of the Bucks County Opportunity Council, the board of the United Way of Bucks County and the advisory board of Habitat for Humanity of Bucks County.

**Jenny Danzis**



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YWCA

Jenny Danzis is the director of community investment at the Bucks County Opportunity Council and the county's Community Action Agency. Hired in 2014 as the weatherization program manager, Danzis has served as director since July 2015. She now manages the Home Energy Conservation program, the newly formed First-Time Home Buyer program and the council's four offices including facilities and technical support.

For 13 years prior, Danzis was a stay-at-home parent. She's served on the board of the Central Bucks Family YMCA in Doylestown, chairing the Building and Grounds Committee. She was a member of the Facilities Task Force for the Doylestown Presbyterian Church and sat on its Renovation and Construction Committee for five years as the church designed and completed a \$7 million building project.

Danzis is a certified facilitator for Darkness to Light, a child sexual abuse prevention program. She and her husband, Loren, also served as Bucks County foster parents for five years.

Danzis has a master's degree in urban planning from New York University's Robert F. Wagner School of Public Service and a bachelor of arts degree from Trinity University in Washington, D.C., where she graduated magna cum laude and was a member of Phi Beta Kappa.

**Mary Ellen Davis**



**Mary Ellen Davis**

YWCA

A breast cancer survivor, Mary Ellen Davis is a member of the Bucks County Breast Friends Group and a spokesperson and advocate for the Susan G. Komen Foundation. She has been featured on NBC News Night Line and KYW 3, telling her story as a survivor. In 2010, Davis was named the breast cancer survivor of the year by Komen. She is also a spokesperson for the American Cancer Society.

Born and raised in Levittown, where she still resides, Davis earned her nursing degree in 1987 and an MBA from Holy Family University in 2015.

She is physician liaison and community outreach coordinator at Lower Bucks Hospital in Bristol Township, working to bring programs and services to Bucks County neighborhoods. Her work connects her to many of the community's health care and charitable organizations, and she is a known resource to hundreds of physician practices in the region.

Before joining Lower Bucks Hospital, Davis worked for St. Mary LIFE, a national program for all-inclusive care for the elderly; as a staff nurse at St. Mary Medical Center in Middletown for 10 years and in case management, performance improvement and clinical practice management.

### **Joann Dorr**



**Joann Dorr**

## YWCA

In 2005, Joann Dorr started St. Mary Medical Center's first childhood obesity prevention outreach program to address the growing epidemic. Today, that program reaches more than 840 children. Under the auspices of Families Living Well umbrella, Dorr has empowered thousands of families to eat healthy, move more and feel good about themselves.

Dorr has also expanded St. Mary's community outreach efforts to include access to nourishing, fresh, healthy food in Bucks County, particularly in low-income communities. She works with the Hunger Nutrition Coalition which collaborates with community members, agencies, donors, and others to connect residents with wholesome food. Dorr has worked on the assembly line to help build food boxes and other items for the most vulnerable in the community.

She is working on a bachelor of science in nursing and expects to graduate this spring.

## Heather Foor



Heather Foor

## YWCA

Heather Foor manages the food program for the Opportunity Council — the lead food agency for low-income residents of Bucks County — serving as the point-person for all state, federal and private food resources. Foor coordinates countywide food distribution to more than 65 food sites, including food pantries and senior centers. Under her leadership, more than 1 million pounds of food has been distributed to the county's most vulnerable neighbors.

Foor served on the United Way's Hunger Solutions Collective Impact Team and was instrumental in securing funding on behalf of a collaborative that includes the Opportunity Council, Philabundance, Rolling Harvest and St. Mary Medical Center. The collaborative facilitates "Fresh Connect," a weekly distribution of fresh produce directly to families in Bucks County.

Four co-chairs the Hunger Nutrition Coalition, which aims to educate and bring awareness to hunger issues in Bucks County. She serves as secretary for the Hunger Free PA Board and has been nominated to serve on the Emergency Food Assistance Advisory Committee.

### **Lisa Gaier**



Lisa Gaier  
YWCA

As a military spouse, Lisa Gaier helped establish a home-school program for families stationed at Andrews Air Force Base in Prince George's County, Maryland. As a volunteer coordinator, she developed and maintained a communication network between the military personnel and their families, especially veterans serving abroad.

When her husband retired from the Marine Corps, they relocated to Upper Bucks County. While attending law school at Widener University School, she interned with the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence, the U.S. Attorney's Office and the Bucks County District Attorney's Office. She then served as a Bucks County Assistant District Attorney and was actively involved in the county prosecutor's community outreach program, focusing on Internet safety.

Gaier helped organize the Community Accountability Panel in Upper Bucks, a quasi-judicial panel of community members that diverts first-time, non-violent offenders from the court system. In 2011, Gaier worked with the Quakertown Borough Police Department to start the "Shop with a Cop" program. It funds underprivileged children and pairs them with local police officers who take them Christmas shopping, promoting positive interaction between the community and police. An attorney at Antheil, Maslow & MacMinn, Gaier is also a Quakertown Borough councilwoman.

### **Linda Gaul**



Linda Gaul  
YWCA

Linda Gaul has been an instructional assistant in the Neshaminy School District for the past 34 years, helping children with disabilities become lifelong learners.

“When any need arises, Linda immediately volunteers. She is the behind-the-scenes powerhouse that helps make every project a success. She is the first to arrive to set up and the last to leave after cleaning up. Linda avoids the spotlight. She is the ultimate example of humility and caring,” said Jennifer Emrich, who nominated Gaul for the Women Who Make a Difference Award.

Gaul is involved in countless projects, helping infants to the elderly by providing new experiences for inner-city kids and transporting elderly friends to medical appointments. A mother of three and grandmother of nine, Gaul never misses a school function, athletic event or babysitting opportunity.

“Because of this, countless lives are enriched every day,” said Emrich.

### **Linda Grass**



Linda Grass  
YWCA

Linda Grass joined Prime Healthcare Services as chief executive officer of Lower Bucks Hospital in Bristol Township in 2015. She has since restored the hospital’s productivity, profitability, clinical success and service to the Bucks County community. Last year, she was named Community Partner of the Year by the Friends of Silver Lake Nature Center

in Bristol Township.

A Pennridge High School graduate, where she was a scholar athlete, she now lives in Perkasio.

She started her career as a physical therapist, spending almost 30 years in progressive leadership positions at Jeanes Hospital in Philadelphia, including a 13-year term as its chief executive officer. She was instrumental in expanding the hospital's programs and facilities until it became a member of the Temple University Health System.

Grass is a Fellow of the American College of Healthcare Executives, and an inductee of the Temple University League for Entrepreneurial Women's Hall of Fame. She was featured in the Philadelphia Business Journal's 2016 "Women in Healthcare." An avid runner, Grass has completed 20 marathons, winning the 1986 Jamaican International Marathon. She said she uses running as a way to motivate and mentor young women to be leaders and aspire for success.

### **Robyn Hirshburg**



Robyn Hirshburg  
YWCA

An independent consultant for Lula Roe, a women's clothing business that caters to women of all sizes, Robyn Hirshburg has made giving back an essential component of her success. She started her business a little more than a year ago after her own health issues made it difficult to continue working in corporate America. It's grown to 6,358 Facebook members.

Since starting her business, she has given to Lucky You Rescue, Red-Pets Rescue, Living Beyond Breast Cancer, Pennsbury Falcons hockey team, Alzheimer Association,

Laurel House as well as countless individuals in need. While on a cruise, she met a family from Belize and ended up donating more than \$300 in clothes to help keep the mom and daughter warm while they recovered from surgery at Shriners Hospital. She has given leggings to women going through cancer treatments, family crisis or who have lost belongings in a fire.

In addition, she has volunteered at Rescue Purfect and the Bridge Clinic in Bensalem, helping with their in-house animals, adoptions and working on the company's Facebook and Twitter accounts.

### **Kathleen Holt Whyte**



Kathleen Holt Whyte

ywca

Owner of Success Strategies, a business that provides interactive trainings and presentations on activating personal power, Kathleen Holt Whyte's passion is helping underserved youth create positive change in their lives and communities. As a member of Bucks County Chapter of The Links, Inc., she co-chaired the development of the Teen Leadership Institute, now in its 10th year.

Whyte is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.; Omega Zeta Omega chapter, and Jack and Jill of America, Bucks County Chapter. She has served as facilitator and speaker for various Bucks County events including Bucks County Community College Women's Scholarship Tea, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service events, the Peace and Social Justice Summit and has emceed the YWCA's Salute to Women Who Make A Difference Gala.

She is an alumna of the Lower Bucks County Chamber of Commerce Leadership program. A nationally recognized leader on youth engagement, Whyte has contributed to numerous publications including *The Adolescent Brain: New Research and its Implications for Young People Transitioning from Foster Care*.

Whyte has consulted for several advocacy events held at the White House, co-created a fellowship for youth advocating for national policy change, and serves on a national race equity team.

### **Toby Kahn**



Toby Kahn  
YWCA

Toby Kahn has been instrumental in organizing Bensalem's Unity Week, which takes place during the week of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday. The event brings together nine houses of worship, showcasing their distinct culture. It includes a brief prayer service and attracts more than 1,000 individuals over the course of the weeklong celebration.

Kahn is a member of Building a Better Bensalem Together, serving on its diversity committee as both chair and co-chair. She has been key to building diversity programs in Bensalem schools, including organizing fairs and cultural awareness events. She is a leader in Bensalem's "No Place for Hate Community" through her work with the Anti-Defamation League, where she's also helped bring Holocaust awareness programs to the township.

In addition, Hahn has worked on a variety of civic improvement projects over the last 15 years.

### **C. Annette Kelton**



C. Annette Kelton  
YWCA

C. Annette Kelton has dedicated her time and energy helping teens develop leadership

skills through the Links Youth Council.

The program aims to teach self-confidence, sound judgment and create awareness of civic and community issues such as social and economic needs that impact high school students and their families.

Links Youth Council students discuss local and global issues and increase awareness through social media, reading world-wide publications, conducting research, attending workshops and participating in United Nations forums on local and global economic and educational issues.

"Annette Kelton is a great mentor and leader not just in my life, but in the lives of others as well," said student Alexander Smith, who now attends Purdue University.

"Since I met (Kelton) in youth council at the age of 14 (she) has shown me countless life-changing lessons and opportunities and continued to support me throughout my college experience," said student Brandon Hodges, who now attends University of Connecticut.

## **Patty Rooney**



Patty Rooney  
YWCA

Patty Rooney is the human resource director of Training, Development and Safety for Parx Casino in Bensalem, which has more than 2,500 employees.

She is a member of the board of directors of the YWCA and serves on the board for White Dove Charities. Rooney's lifelong passion is to empower women through all walks of life and is recognized for her strong leadership talent, focused communication skills and innate ability to build credibility and trust.

The majority of Rooney's career has been in human resources where she's worked in training, organizational development, policy and procedures, safety, employee relations

and employee engagement.

Rooney has worked in many industries, including entertainment, telecommunications, financial services and pharmaceuticals and for companies throughout North, South, and Central America, Europe, Asia and South Africa.

She holds a bachelor of science degree in business and accounting from the College of New Jersey and obtained her certificate in human resources — PHR designation from the Society for Human Resources and a coaching certificate from Association of Talent Development.

## **Neha Shah**



Neha Shah  
YWCA

In 2010, Neha Shah, who has a doctorate in pharmacy, and her husband, neurosurgeon Nirav Shah started the Neha Shah Family Medical Mission Foundation to serve impoverished regions of Bonao in the Dominican Republic by providing access to health care and education.

Shah has been co-chair at St. Francis Medical Hospital in Trenton and volunteered for years at St. Mary Medical Center Gala fundraisers. She was treasurer and board member of St. Mary Medical Center Women's Community League.

She organized a benefit for Spinal Research Foundation, established and co-chaired the first Princeton Diwali Gala and raised more than \$7,000 the India Disaster Relief Fund. She's brought cultural diversity programs to Bucks County schools and provided free children's art and theater programs to Newtown Township. Recently, she was chosen as the Champion of Hope honoree at AIR that supports mental health awareness.

Shah continues to organize events to gather donations and increase awareness for their foundation. In her spare time, she enjoys playing tennis and family time with her

husband and two boys, Rayan and Arin.

### **Amy Spicer**



Amy Spicer  
YWCA

Amy Spicer is a woman who wears many hats. Worker, mother, community activist and yoga practitioner, Spicer is a specialty territory representative for Romark Laboratories. She also owns and operates Yoga Love Studio in Yardley.

Spicer has done a lot over the past eight years to bring a healthy lifestyle, wellness, encouragement and serenity to those who cross her path or come to her studio. She donates her time to those suffering from addiction and gives back to the community through regular food and clothing drives and donations to local charities.

“Amy loves helping people find their voice and does so by working with them both in groups and individually — many times at no cost — in an effort to open their hearts and their eyes to all that is good in life,” said Liz Murphy of the New Jersey Education Association, who nominated her. “And she does this with grace and ease with no thought of wanting anything in return other than that they pay it forward. Many people talk a good talk but do not always carry these principles into the world. Amy exemplifies the goodness, purity, and integrity that she teaches to those who cross her path.”

### **Tam St. Claire**



Tam St. Claire

YWCA

Tam St. Claire has spent more than 35 years advocating for women and girls through education, decisive, principle-based action and promoting involved, informed citizenship. She works daily to improve the democratic process by connecting citizens and policy-makers, de-mystifying how government works.

She's held local and state leadership positions in the League of Women Voters, specializing in communications and health care policy. She's served as board president of A Woman's Place, which advocates for victims of domestic violence. She's founder of the nonpartisan Bucks Voices for Health Care Reform, a virtual clearinghouse for system reform, research and analysis of the Affordable Care Act. She's founder and co-owner of the Citizens Research Group which brings people together in communities across the nation to discuss critical public policy issues. St. Claire is currently president of the Bucks County Women's Advocacy Coalition, which she helped organize.

St. Claire is also a wife, mother of two, and grandmother of four, a gardener, a necklace maker, a knitter, a fly-fishing enthusiast and a loyal Phillies Fan.

## **Arta Szathmary**



Arta Szathmary

YWCA

Arta Szathmary is a professor emeritus at Bucks County Community College and a member of the STEM Department. She still teaches an Introduction to Information Systems online course for Bucks County Community College and an information

technology course at Villanova University.

Szathmary is a Massachusetts Institute for Technology App Inventor Master Teacher; serves on the curriculum committee for [TechGirlz.org](http://TechGirlz.org) and hosts STEMgirlz events for middle school girls at Bucks County Community College.

This year she taught STEMgirlz Techshops for 21st Century Learning in both Morrisville and Bristol, and served as a facilitator for Girls Who Code at Centennial High School. She is past President of PA4C, Community College Computing Consortium of Pennsylvania and secretary of CSTA Philly. She is currently a facilitator for the Pennsylvania Cohort of AP Computer Science Principles. Her motto is: Rewirement, not retirement.

### **Jessijou Tseng**



Jessijou Tseng  
YWCA

Jessijou Tseng joined General Electric's Bensalem campus in 2014 as a member of the Experienced Commercial Leadership Program. She leads the Greater Philadelphia GE Veterans Network and has been an active member of the GE Volunteer Council, volunteering in key events such as: bi-monthly dinners at the American Cancer Society Hope Lodge, GE Community Day, United Way campaign, and various projects within the Veterans Network.

Since joining GE, Tseng has volunteered more than 200 hours. In 2015, she received the GE Volunteer of the Year Award. She has taken the Veteran Network to an entirely new level, hosting monthly lunches with the veterans on campus and organizing various other Veterans Network events centered on awareness and volunteerism. She has maintained GE's partnership with the Delaware Valley Veterans Home, planned bingo events with the residents, fund-raised for Christmas donations and helped decorate the veterans home for the holidays.

"She is a fabulous woman who makes a huge difference in our community," wrote Elizabeth Colussi, of GE's Volunteer Council, who nominated Tseng for the Women Who Make a Difference Award.

### **Brigitte Walker-Quinn**



Brigitte Walker-Quinn

YWCA

Brigitte Walker-Quinn serves as the vice president and membership chairperson of the Bucks County Chapter of Jack and Jill, an organization of mothers of children ages two to 19 that's dedicated to nurturing future African-American leaders by strengthening children through leadership development, volunteer service, philanthropic giving and civic duty.

"Brigitte is a professional and goes above and beyond," wrote Dr. Ramona Hollie-Major, president of the Bucks County Jack and Jill, who nominated Walker-Quinn. "She is always well prepared and ready to jump in as needed. She serves as a sounding board, cheerleader, supporter, and go-to for all of the new and existing mothers within the organization and takes it in stride.

"Walker-Quinn's leadership enables the Bucks County Chapter to provide a means of furthering an inherent and natural desire, to bestow upon our children all the opportunities possible for a normal and graceful approach to a beautiful adulthood."