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NAWBO gives female business owners all they need to succeed

By Jessica White
Trend Editorial Staff

Female business owners in the region can find assistance, kinship, support and educational opportunities through the local chapters of the National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO).

According to the organization's Web site, www.nawbo.org, the National Association of Women Business Owners has existed since 1975.

What started out as a group of 12 women in Washington, D.C. has grown into 80 chapters with over 9,000 members nationwide, including chapters in the Greater Philadelphia and South Jersey areas.

The NAWBO mission is multi-faceted, according to its Web site. It works to promote economic development for women in business; create changes in the business culture that are beneficial to women; form alliances and connections between business owners and change governmental policies

and laws to be more beneficial to female entrepreneurs.

"Basically, we want to help women business owners be more successful [and] make more money," said Nancy Davis, president of the NAWBO Greater Philadelphia chapter.

Davis added that the organization connects women who have common interests and can benefit each other both professionally and socially.

"We definitely are a conduit for putting women business owners in the Greater Philadelphia area in touch with each other," Davis said.

"Through the women that I've met, I've made a lot of contacts," said Paige Miller, president-elect and marketing co-chair of the NAWBO Greater Philadelphia chapter. "I've just had a great experience."

Many different types of business owners are members of the NAWBO, from women just starting out as entrepreneurs to those who own million-dollar companies.

"It runs the gamut," said Davis.

Davis said that she is beginning to see women in more nontraditional fields, such as aerial photography and construction, become members of the organization.

Younger women are also deciding to become business owners, and some of them are taking the reins of a family business.

"We're seeing mothers and daughters now in business with each other," Davis said.

NAWBO's reach goes beyond that of a networking organization, according to Davis. Networking happens naturally because the organization brings women together, but it is not the sole purpose of the association.

Sandy Spadaro, president-elect of the NAWBO South Jersey chapter, was drawn to the organization because of this larger scope of focus.

"The pull for me was the distinct presence of a national entity with resources that span not only my immediate area, but throughout the country," she said in an e-mail. "In partnership with the other local chapters,

such as the Central Jersey, Greater Philadelphia and Delaware chapters, this organization offers me a reach far greater than that of other local business associations."

Upcoming events sponsored by the NAWBO in South Jersey will combine networking and educational opportunities, including "Women Rock," an event co-sponsored by the South Jersey and Central Jersey chapters on Oct. 3 that features both motivational speakers and an opportunity to connect with women.

Education is a large part of the organization, according to both Davis and Spadaro. Programs sponsored by NAWBO teach women about all the financial and legal aspects of owning a business, and the best methods to help that business grow.

Spadaro said that, in light of recent economic stressors, the NAWBO chapter in South Jersey is beginning to place a focus on convenience education, which allows women to attend business seminars in their homes or places of business through the Internet and teleconferencing.

The Greater Philadelphia chapter of NAWBO offers CEO roundtable sessions with trained facilitators to help women figure out the things they need to do to expand their businesses to the next level.

Along with education, the NAWBO focuses on cultivating leadership qualities in women. Women can participate on various committees within the chapter and can campaign for a position as a board member.

"We try to give women leadership opportunities," Davis said.

The Greater Philadelphia, South Jersey and Delaware chapters of the NAWBO also sponsor a program, ATHENA PowerLink, that allows one new female business owner to receive professional advice from a panel of experts free of charge for a year.

And, the organization sponsors fun events, too, including days at area spas, wine and cheese tasting events, and women's wellness workshops.

For more information about local chapters of the NAWBO, including membership requirements, visit www.nawbophila.org or call 215-628-3875 for the Greater Philadelphia chapter, and visit www.nawbosouthjersey.org or call 609-923-5889 for the South Jersey chapter.

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WOMEN IN BUSINESS

DR. JUDY WEINSTEIN

Dr. Judy Weinstein, owner of Jubili Beads and Yarns in Collingswood, N.J., has come a long way in becoming a business owner.

A former successful diagnostic radiologist, Weinstein had to leave medicine because of severe injuries to the nerves in her neck.

Weinstein also developed a chronic pain disorder, RSD, which made it difficult for her to move any parts of her body. For five years, she faced extreme pain while going through physical therapy and several surgeries to make her body work again.

"I was completely, utterly disabled and in excruciating pain," Weinstein said. "Needless to say, it was very difficult to deal with."

As she gradually recovered, Weinstein decided to become a mom — daughter Lilia was adopted from Russia in 2000.

Crafting was always a hobby of Weinstein's, and she used crafts to bond with her daughter and forge connections with other crafters.

After Lilia started school, Weinstein realized that she was still saddened by the loss of her former career and lifestyle.

"I was very much grieving the life I lost, and I wanted to stop doing that," she said. "I started to think about taking that hobby outside of the house."

And, with that, Jubili Beads and Yarns was born in June 2003. The name "Jubili," a combination of her, husband Bill and Lilia's names, is a tribute to Weinstein's triumph over her years of pain.

Originally, the storefront of Jubili Beads and Yarns was small, but because of customer demand for craft materials and more crafting classes, Weinstein moved into a larger facility in October 2005.

Tagged "the best place anywhere to nurture your creative spirit," Jubili Beads and Yarns is more than its title suggests.

"We don't just want to be here to sell beads," Weinstein said.

The business hosts a variety of classes taught by Weinstein, her staff and world-renowned crafters, including precious metal clay classes, and birthday parties for both children and adults. Teachers can take classes at Jubili for continuing education credits, and Weinstein plans to offer classes for people with special needs, as well.

Weinstein has branched out to other entrepreneurial endeavors besides her store — she is currently working on a multimedia firm, SunGlow Media, that provides graphic design and Web site design to small businesses. Weinstein specifically wants to focus on crafting businesses, who may not receive adequate attention from larger companies.

Jubili Beads and Yarns is located at 713 Haddon Ave. in Collingswood. For information, visit www.jubilibeadsand yarns.com or call 856-858-7844. For information about SunGlow Media, visit www.sunglowmedia.com.