

21st annual Wonder of Women event set for May

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SOUTHINGTON – The 21st annual Wonder of Women event will be held May 3 at the Aqua Turf Club in Southington.

The event will feature Ayodele Casel, award-winning tap dancer and choreographer.

Casel is serving as a leading tap choreographer on the revival of Broadway’s “Funny Girl.” She moved to Puerto Rico in her youth before returning to New York in 1990. She was born in the Bronx, New York. Her tap dance style is influenced by salsa music. She has performed at Carnegie hall, the Radio City Music Hall and the White House, according to “Tap Dancing America, A Cultural History.” She is considered a student of Gregory Hines and Savion Glover and was recently featured in The New York Times for her work. The newspaper considered her one of its “Biggest Breakout Stars of 2019.”



File photo The Wonder of Women event will be returning for its 21st year.

“This expert tapdance who is likely internationally known is coming to our community,” said Main Street Community Foundation President and CEO Susan Sadecki. “She’s a great example for women of all ages.”

The Wonder of Women event is put on by the Women & Girls Fund at the Main Street Community Foundation to help enhance the lives of area women through unique opportunities. The fund has given over \$668,000 in grants since its creation in 2001 and serves as an endowment with the foundation, according to fund co-founder and co-chair Carolyn Ziogas. The fund is one of the oldest with the foundation.

The fund serves women in Wolcott, Southington, Plymouth, Plainville, Bristol and Burlington. Sadecki said it provides up to \$50,000 a year in grant funding to area initiatives yearly.

“It’s about bringing someone to the community who will inspire others,” said Sadecki of how a keynote speaker for the WOW event is chosen. “We’ve had comedians, local TV hosts and authors. We’ve never had someone from the performing arts.”

Ziogas said one of the focuses of WOW this year was to bring area youth from the foundation’s six communities together in order to hear Casel speak.

“She didn’t start tap dancing until around 19, so what that does for the older (students) says you can pursue anything at your age,” said Ziogas. “Since covid, I think there’s been a lot of attention to the performing arts and people focused on it at home.”

The event will be held May 3 at 5:30 p.m. For more information about how to attend, contact Samatha Rajotte at 860-583-6363 or email samantha@mainstreetfoundation.org.