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LOCAL NEWS

## Leading Ladies to honor Town Councilor at Oct. 14 luncheon

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By JEN CARDINES

STAFF WRITER

The Leading Ladies organization will honor Town Councilor Dawn Miceli at their annual event at the Aqua Turf on Friday, Oct. 14. The award will highlight their fundraising event, which runs from noon to 4 p.m.

The annual luncheon is held each year to raise money for the Leading Ladies Immediate Response Fund (LLIRF) at the Main Street Community Foundation.

“We choose a woman who embodies what Leading Ladies stands for. We look for someone who has made a significant impact to our community,” said co-founder Donna Ayer.

Founded in 2000 by Ayer, Pattie Dunn, Pauline Levesque, Kathy Reinhard, Beth Smedick and Susan Urillo Larson, the Leading Ladies organization honors women in the community for their contributions through politics, work, or volunteerism.



SoCCA director Mary DeCrose, left, will be the keynote speaker as the Leading Ladies honor Town Councilor Dawn Miceli, right, on Oct. 14.

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Miceli was the perfect fit. She has served on the Town Council since 2009, and on multiple council committees. She is a member of Southington UNICO, a board member for the Chamber of Commerce, and current president for Southington Community Cultural Arts (SoCCA). She is also a founding member of the Southington Education Foundation.

Additionally, she was named the 2015 “Person of the Year” by the Southington-Cheshire YMCA.

“I think it’s awesome to be a Leading Lady, but I think there are thousands of leading ladies in Southington,” Miceli said.

The special guest speaker for the luncheon is Mary DeCroce, executive director of SoCCA and 2014 Leading Lady. “I’m looking forward to sharing my journey of renovating the historical Gura Building into SoCCA, one of Connecticut’s premier arts centers,” said DeCroce. “I am thankful to have a platform to show my appreciation to the community for helping to make the impossible possible.”

Miceli and DeCroce first interacted years ago after DeCroce gave a speech at a YMCA event about wanting to create an art center in town. Miceli said she was so moved by it, that she contacted her when the Gura building was in question for demolition. The two toured the building and decided to work together to make DeCroce’s dream become a reality.

The two women helped each other through many hurdles while seeing the Gura Building project to fruition, and they are now close friends.

“Our story is the epitome of what Leading Ladies stands for: women helping and supporting other women in their goals and dreams,” Miceli said. “I was very humbled when I learned I was a Leading Lady, but so excited to be paired with my friend Mary DeCroce.”

Tickets for the luncheon cost \$40 and are available through Oct. 14. All proceeds benefit the LLIAF.

“Some of the organizations that have benefited from the group are Prudence Crandall Center and Women’s Center of Southington to provide mammograms for women who cannot afford them,” said Ayer. “We purchased books that portray strong female role models for all the elementary schools in town, the dating violence program at Southington High School, the Girl Power program, Bread for Life, Miracles Salon for wigs for cancer patients and Jane Doe No More.”

*For more information or to purchase tickets, contact Pattie Dunn at (860) 747-6960.*

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