The Feather Report A Leading Lady Collective Newsletter

From the Desk of AliceAnne:



s spring unfolds around us, I'm reminded of how nature embraces transformation. The trees don't question whether they should grow new leaves, they simply do what they're designed to do. They trust in their own innate wisdom and embrace the season of growth with open arms.

In many ways, we're called to do the same in our businesses and lives. This quarter, I invite you to step into a season of

intentional growth with the same confidence as those blossoming trees outside your window.

The mindset shifts we've been cultivating in our community are beginning to bear fruit. I've watched so many of you replace "I can't do this" with "I can't do this yet" and witness how that tiny word creates enormous possibility. I've seen you let go of rigid goals in favor of flexible processes that allow for those beautiful "scenic detours" that often lead to unexpected opportunities.

This quarter brings us three powerful themes that will shape our journey together: Financial Empowerment in April, Work-Life Integration in May, and Strategic Networking in June. Each month offers us a chance to deepen our understanding and strengthen our businesses in ways that honor both our professional aspirations and personal well-being. I'm particularly excited about our focus on building meaningful connections and strategic partnerships – something I've seen transform businesses time and again in our community.

In The Collective, I've witnessed the magic that happens when women entrepreneurs gather with intention. Even if you can't join us in Annapolis, I encourage you to find or create your own empowering network. Start small – even a monthly coffee meetup can be the seed of something powerful.

As we dive into this quarter, remember that your journey doesn't need to be a solo expedition. Your authentic confidence doesn't come from external validation but from consistent small actions that push you beyond your comfort zone. Your unique personal brand develops when you trust your voice and embrace your distinctive way of showing up in the world.

I truly believe there's enough success to go around for all of us. When we support each other and share resources, we all grow stronger. Your unique talents and perspective will always attract the right clients to you.

Here's to a quarter of growth, connection, and transformation. I can't wait to see how you bloom.

With warmth and belief in you,

xo, Mel June

Leading Lady Ambassador Spotlight



Gala McCray

Gala McCray is the owner and lead financial consultant at Two Arrows, a boutique bookkeeping and advisory

firm specializing in helping service-based business owners achieve financial clarity and control. With nearly two decades of experience in operations and financial management across corporate, government, and small business sectors, Gala empowers entrepreneurs to step into their executive role with confidence. Her expertise in bookkeeping, cash flow planning, and strategic financial insight allows her clients to make informed decisions that align with their long-term goals. At Two Arrows, she believes that true financial empowerment comes from shifting beyond the day-to-day into proactive, strategic leadership.

When did you most powerfully experience financial empowerment in your professional life? What lessons were available to you in this experience?

Financial empowerment and wealth management are at the heart of my work, helping business owners move beyond financial overwhelm into clarity and

TWO ARROWS

THE ART OF BOOKKEEPING

control. My most powerful experience happens when I see business owners step into their role as leaders and executives rather than getting stuck in the day-to-day operations. When they shift from reacting to their finances to proactively managing them, everything changes – confidence grows, decision-making improves, and their business aligns with their vision.

One key lesson I've learned is that financial empowerment isn't about just having money; it's about understanding and leveraging it strategically. Wealth management isn't just about accumulation – it's about sustainability, intentionality, and making financial decisions that support long-term success. Through my work at Two Arrows, I've helped clients step into this executive mindset, ensuring their financials work for them, not against them. That transformation is where true financial empowerment happens.

Contact Gala:

Website: www.twoarrows.co









"Your authentic confidence doesn't come from external validation but from consistent small actions that push you beyond your comfort zone."

- AliceAnne Loftus



Lisa M. Van Wormer

Lisa M. Van Wormer is an Army veteran and the Owner of Abrado Analytics,

a solutions-focused woman and veteran-owned small business dedicated to infusing creativity and innovation into mission success. She has dedicated her life to supporting the missions and the people who continue to put their lives on the line to protect our freedoms and way of life, both through her business and her writing. She loves to support new and leading-edge projects leading them from idea to market, and is always ready to jump on a new challenge with a creative attack strategy.

A lifelong learner, Lisa has a Master's degree in



Negotiation, Conflict Resolution, and Peacebuilding from California State University Dominguez Hills and an MFA in Creative Writing and Publishing Arts from the University of Baltimore. She loves the challenge of a new tool or technology and is a staunch believer that an Android phone is far superior to an iPhone.

Lisa is also a wife and mother who does all she can to support her family, friends, and community. She is a community champion and always makes the time to help someone find their path to success and happiness.

<u>Contact Lisa</u>:

Website: www.abradoanalytics.com



Leading Lady Ambassador Spotlight



Maria Winters

Maria is passionate about starting real conversations around mental health. As a licensed clinical professional counselor

in Maryland with over 20 years of experience, she has supported adults and adolescents in a variety of settings, including community clinics, foster care, juvenile detention, private practice, and a hospital ER. Maria is also a published author, podcast host, and the creator of The Emotional Fitness Studio in Annapolis, MD. As the founder of The Coaching Therapist, LLC, Maria's mission is to make emotional health a priority and something that feels relatable in everyday life. She does this by providing practical tools through workshops, education, and training. Maria makes mistakes, cries when she feels like it, forgets things, loses her cool at times, and loves chocolate and hugs. She's also fully bilingual in English and Spanish.

What advice would you have for a fellow entrepreneur about work-life balance and mental health?

As an entrepreneur in the mental health field, my advice would



be to prioritize self-care and set clear boundaries. Building a business requires immense energy, but it's crucial not to neglect your own well-being in the process. Be open to seeking support, whether through mentorship or professional therapy, and remember that success doesn't mean doing it all alone. Surround yourself with a supportive network, and don't hesitate to ask for help when you need it. By nurturing your mental health, you're not only setting yourself up for long-term success but also creating a healthier, more sustainable business.

Contact Maria:

Website: www.thecoachingtherapist.com









Leading Lady Collective Monthly Topics

Financial Empowerment & Wealth Management: April focuses on transforming relationships with money from anxiety to empowerment. Members will explore concrete financial literacy skills, sustainable business models, and wealth-building strategies that support both business growth and personal financial health. The Leading Lady Community will provide resources, workshops, and expert guidance on creating abundance through practical financial skills and mindset shifts.



- Work-Life Integration & Mental Health: Success is not measured by burnout. May's programming centers on strategies for integrating work and personal life in ways that honor both. The community will explore practical approaches to protecting mental health while building a thriving business. Workshops will address recognizing signs of burnout, implementing sustainable work practices, and developing healthy boundaries that allow for both business success and personal fulfillment.
- Networking & Building Strategic Alliances: June transforms networking from dreaded small talk to meaningful connection. This month highlights how strategic partnerships can become a business superpower, creating collaborations where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. The Leading Lady Community will explore partner selection, creating detailed agreements, leveraging complementary strengths, and maintaining communication for successful long-term partnerships. Members will learn to approach business relationships with an abundance mindset that creates room for everyone to thrive.





Chelsea Adams-Cook

What advice would you have for a fellow entrepreneur about networking?

Effective networking is crucial, yet finding the time and energy to actively engage can be challenging. For business owners, networking isn't just about attending meetings or special events; it involves being consistently present and engaged in your community. This commitment means integrating networking seamlessly into your daily activities and recognizing opportunities to connect in various settings. Whether it's through formal networking groups, community events, or everyday interactions, it's important to be strategic and proactive. The focus should be on quality over quantity. Prioritize events and interactions where you can meet potential clients, partners, or mentors who are likely to have an interest in your services or products.

Tailor your approach to each situation, ensuring that you are not just present, but also actively contributing in ways that highlight your expertise and the unique value your business offers.



By fostering

meaningful connections and genuine interest in others' success, you not only expand your network but also build a strong reputation within your community. This approach will not only help in gaining immediate business opportunities but also in establishing long-term partnerships that are mutually beneficial. Effective networking is about making sincere connections that lead to collaborative opportunities and mutual growth.

Contact Chelsea:

Website: www.kneadedmassage.co









Maureen Benkovich

Maureen Benkovich is a certified alcohol freedom and wellness coach, author of The

Role of Alcohol in Depression and Anxiety (The Life Coach's Toolkit, Chapter 4), and host of the Sober Fit Life podcast. She helps high-achieving, health-conscious women break free from the exhausting cycle of overdrinking – promising themselves they'll cut back, only to fall into the same patterns of unwinding with wine or weekend binge drinking to escape life's demands.

Through her neuroscience-based coaching, Maureen offers a compassionate, judgment-free approach to lasting habit change. Her Soberfitchick Coaching program helps women take back control – without relying on willpower – so they can wake up feeling energized, think clearly, and show up fully in their businesses, relationships, and lives.

With a deep understanding of the challenges high-functioning women face, Maureen helps them create a life where alcohol becomes small and irrelevant – so they can focus on what truly matters.

Tell me how you relate to work-life balance and mental health. When did you most powerfully experience the chosen theme in your professional life? What lessons were available to you in this experience?

Work-life integration and mental health became a defining theme in my professional life when I

realized the disconnect between the healthy, high-performance lifestyle I valued and my own



relationship with alcohol. As a high-achieving woman, I thrived on discipline, wellness, personal growth, and healthy relationships – yet I was engaging in a habit that quietly worked against all of those priorities.

The most powerful moment of realization came when I acknowledged that alcohol wasn't just affecting my physical health – it was impacting my mental clarity, energy, relationships, and ability to show up fully in all areas of my life. I wasn't hitting rock bottom, but I knew I wasn't operating at my highest level. That awareness led me to dive into the science of habit change and neuroscience, exploring how to create lasting shifts without relying on willpower alone.

The biggest lesson? True wellness and success aren't just about what we do – they're about what we no longer allow to drain our energy and potential. By reevaluating alcohol's role in my life with curiosity instead of judgment, I unlocked a new level of freedom, focus, and alignment. Now, I help other high-functioning women do the same, so they can step fully into their potential.

Contact Maureen:

Website: www.soberfitchick.com













Trish Brewer

Trish Brewer is a certified traumainformed Breathwork Coach, Reiki Master Teacher, and Intuitive Guide who'll be your

guide back to your whole self. Whether you're overwhelmed, unable to cope with life's challenges, or find yourself in a period of transition, she's there to create a nurturing and compassionate space to begin healing. She believes when we allow ourselves to be supported, we expedite our healing and self-discovery. Her sessions are sensitively designed to anticipate the messy and unexpected aspects of the healing process, acknowledging both the light and the dark and witnessing the beauty along the way. Trish earned her Breath Coach Certification from Yoga Teachers College, studied under David Elliot, a Breathwork pioneer, received her Usui Reiki training through Divine Tri Source, completed her trauma training with the NARM Training Institute, and continues her work today with Gwen Dittmar. She sees herself as a lifelong student.

What advice would you have for a fellow entrepreneur about work-life integration?

Entrepreneurship demands our whole selves – often blurring boundaries between work and life until we feel stretched impossibly thin. In this space

of constant expansion and contraction, our mental health becomes not just a priority but a foundation for sustainable success.

The most powerful tool
I've discovered is intentional
breathing. When business challenges arise or
self-doubt creeps in, I pause. This isn't merely
taking a moment – it's creating sacred space to
reconnect with body, mind, and purpose.

Through box breathing (four counts inhale, hold, exhale, hold), we activate the vagus nerve, shifting from sympathetic stress response to parasympathetic calm. This physiological reset brings immediate mental clarity and emotional balance.

The entrepreneurial journey inevitably includes overwhelm. Instead of pushing through, I invite you to pause – lie down if needed, acknowledge your inner child's fears, and breathe intentionally through turbulent emotions.

This practice creates integration rather than separation between work and life, allowing your authentic self to guide both. When we lead from this centered place, we don't just survive entrepreneurship – we thrive within it.

Contact Trish:

Website: www.trishbrewer.com









Jessica Gilbert

Jessica Gilbert is a
Business Banking
Relationship Manager
at M&T Bank. In her
current role, Jessica serves
as a partner, advisor, and

advocate for businesses in the community. Jessica is responsible for managing a portfolio of business and deposit relationships, developing new banking relationships, evaluating credit requests, working with internal and external partners to expand the M&T footprint. Jessica partners with branches in Anne Arundel County to fulfill the needs and deliver excellent service to existing and potential clients.

M&TBank

Jessica has been in banking for 13 years on both the retail and business platforms. Jessica has her bachelor's degree in Psychology with a focus in education. She is currently the President of TCP Charity. Jessica is the proud mother of two sons and currently lives in Pasadena, MD. In her free time, Jessica enjoys football (GO RAVENS!), spending time with family and friends, and traveling whenever she gets an opportunity.

Contact Jessica:

Website: www.mtb.com



Flamingo Fact #204: Work-Life Balance

Flamingos instinctively alternate between intense feeding periods and rest throughout the day, maintaining precise rhythms that preserve their energy. During rest periods, they often stand on one leg to conserve body heat and energy — a reminder that sometimes doing less is the key to sustaining yourself for the long term.





Sophia Hardesty

Sophia Hardesty (formerly Tobin) is the Founder and Owner of Naptown Sings and Plays! With an unwavering passion

for music education, Sophia opened the **Naptown Sings and Plays!** studio in 2013 to offer a rich and exciting musical experience to local Annapolis youth. She holds two music degrees from The University of Maryland School of Music, College Park: a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance and a Bachelor of Music Education in K-12 Vocal/General Music. She also holds a Master of Music Education degree from Anderson University.

Sophia is a former Vocal/General Elementary School Teacher in Prince Georges County, MD. During her tenure, Sophia conducted award winning choirs, named for excellence in both technique and expression. She also collaborated with a 3-member team to rewrite the county's elementary choral curriculum. In addition, Sophia has worked extensively in the music industry, including behind the scenes operations at DC rock shows, promotions for DC101 Radio and administration for The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

In her free time, Sophia loves exploring the outdoors with her two kids, August and Irene, scenic runs along the Chesapeake Bay, and meeting her rockstar husband on tour in various cities.

Sophia currently directs the **Naptown Sings and Plays!** SELECT and ELITE Glee Clubs, which perform all over the Annapolis area, including at events like Eastport A Rockin, The Chocolate Binge Festival, The Annapolis Grand Illumination Christmas Tree Lighting, and First Sundays. Additionally, Sophia teaches and holds the vision behind the studio's early music classes for babies and toddlers and preschoolers. She works persistently to create programs that foster music education from



babyhood through the school years.

Sophia is grateful for the support of her amazing staff and the Annapolis community as her dream of offering full-service music education programs has become a very large reality.

Tell me how you relate to work-life integration. When did you most powerfully experience the chosen theme in your professional life? What lessons were available to you in this experience?

I most powerfully experienced Work-Life Integration & Mental Health when my daughter was born just after the world reopened in May 2021. My business grew exponentially overnight as parents wanted their kids out of the house and in activities. Staff called out in record numbers, and I was constantly putting out business fires while trying to keep a newborn alive.

Then, my father-in-law passed suddenly. At a time that should've been joyful, I was drowning in situational and post-partum depression and anxiety, trying to keep my family and business in tact. I slowly rebuilt myself with therapy, self-care, Lexapro, and business systems to prevent those fires from landing on me. It was the hardest, most empowering thing I've ever done and I'm a much better mom and business owner today because of it. The lessons I learned were invaluable and I am so proud of my ability to manage work and life today as one fluid unit. Even when the bottom drops out, I have plans in place to make sure everyone and everything is taken care of.

Contact Sophia:

Website: www.naptownsings.com









Divina Lourdes Cloney

Divina Lourdes Cloney is the founder and lead interior designer at her namesake firm, Divina

Lourdes Interior Design. Our purpose is to curate highly functional, elegant livable homes founded on classic design principles. We approach the design process by getting to know our clients, their lifestyles and how they envision living in their home. From there, we channel them in everything we consider for their project, culminating in a sophisticated home that far exceeds anything they could've imagined. We can partner with clients wherever they are in the process, from their home's architectural planning stage for new builds or renovations, through

furnishing a single room or the entire house. Based in Annapolis, Maryland, we also serve neighboring areas and beach communities



along the east coast, although we're happy to travel wherever our clients' projects take us! Our portfolio includes residential projects ranging from new construction custom homes to full or partial home renovations (which often includes an addition), kitchen and bath design, cabinetry and millwork design, space planning, furniture and lighting plans, and selections of interior and exterior finishes, lighting, furnishings, artwork, and accessories. We also design boutique commercial projects involving space planning, ADA bathrooms, and selections of interior and exterior finishes and furnishings.

Contact Divina:

Website: www.divinalourdesdesigns.com





Kimberley Palmiotto

Dr. Kimberley Palmiotto is a licensed clinical counselor, educational psychologist and mom

of 4 girls. She founded Nurturing Girls as a way to help moms and daughters navigate the rollercoaster of the teen years as their daughters enter adolescence. Dr. Palmiotto has been in education and mental health for over 25 years working in public and private schools and private practice to help families in her communities navigate the ups and downs of parenting, learning challenges, and surviving and thriving during adolescence. After seeing an increase in challenges with clients that struggled with navigating the changing relationships during their teen years, Dr. Palmiotto launched Nurturing Girls to share her knowledge and experiences with other moms that are entering this crazy, yet amazing time of parenting...raising a teen girl! The Nurturing Girls website offers a wealth of information for both moms and girls to help them. In addition, Dr. Palmiotto is very active on social media in order to offer valuable information with a strong following on both TikTok and Instagram @Nurturing_Girls.

Tell me how you relate to networking and building community. When did you most powerfully experience the chosen theme in your professional life? What lessons were available to you in this experience?

We are always told that networking is important but when you become a mom it gets amplified. I

had a built in network of friends and family when I had my kids because I lived in a 120 mile radius of where I grew up and went to college so when we moved across the country I had a massive shock at how hard it was to make



friends and find my people to build both my business and personal network. It becomes harder as you get older in new places and we take it for granted until we have to start over. For awhile I just sat back and didn't do anything, afraid to jump in and feeling like people had already set up their camps of friends. When I did try, it often just reinforced my bias that there wasn't room for me. It wasn't until I decided to just go to things for me...not to fit in or find my place in other groups. Just for me to do the things I wanted to do and see if anyone crossed my path that I felt connected to. Once I started to do this, I settled into a place of peace. I still have a very small network of close friends here but my business network of women is growing mightily and I am so grateful to have found powerful, intelligent, brave women to surround myself with! So here is what I learned and remind myself of...When you feel like not going... GO! When you are scared to put yourself out there... GO BIG! And when you find people that light you up... find ways to keep connecting!

Contact Kimberley:

Website: www.NurturingGirls.com













Jenna Porzillo

Jenna Porzillo is the proud co-owner of a locally owned and trusted auto repair shop, Crownsville Automotive, which

she runs alongside her husband. With a strong background and degree in business, she brings a strategic and global approach to the shop's operations. The couple purchased the business because of its stellar reputation for honesty and integrity – values that continue at the heart of everything they do.

In addition to her work in the auto repair industry, Jenna is also involved in business brokerage, helping others buy and sell businesses with the same level of love and dedication she puts into her own ventures.

Outside of work, she's a busy mom of four kids who are heavily involved in hockey and other extracurriculars. When she's not at the shop, selling businesses, or on the sidelines of a game, Jenna enjoys



reading non-fiction books, dancing, and spending time in the great outdoors. She's passionate about giving back to her community and believes in supporting causes that make a positive impact.

Through her work and personal life, Jenna embodies the values of hard work, honesty, and a deep commitment to family and community that she hopes to relay to all through her career.

Contact Jenna:

Website: www.crownsvilleautomotive.com





Elizabeth Robb Janney

An Annapolitan since 2003, I have come to love everything this amazing city and

surrounding areas has to offer. I currently live in Admiral Heights with my husband, three year old daughter and our sweet rescue pup.

I started my real estate career in the Coldwell Banker Church Circle Office, on the 100 Million dollar, Historic development project, Acton's Landing in 2005. Since then I have helped hundreds of buyers find their dream home and sell their existing homes. While I



specialize in the luxury market, I am extremely passionate about helping buyers and sellers of all ages, income levels, and backgrounds. I understand that transitioning to the next home or stage in your life can be stressful and my goal is to make the process as seem-less as possible. I believe in partnering with my clients to make sure their individual goals are met. I only consider a closing to be successful if my clients walk away happy.

Contact Elizabeth:

Website: Elizabeth.Robb@cbmove.com



Maura Sniegoski

Maura Sniegoski serves as the Managing Partner of the Sniegoski Life

Group, an independent insurance brokerage serving families local and across the United States. With a wealth of expertise spanning 19 years across diverse industries, she employs a consultative communication style and demonstrates an unwavering commitment to identifying and delivering optimal solutions for her clients. Driven by a commitment to growth, she is focused on expanding her agency to new heights.

Tell me how you relate to financial empowerment. When did you most powerfully experience the chosen theme in your professional life? What lessons were available to you in this experience?

I don't recall experiencing financial empowerment

until I started my business and really seeing what was possible,



outside of the traditional job space. When I started Sniegoski Life Group, I was in a place of financial vulnerability and looking for an opportunity to make an income that would support my family. I quickly learned that I could create and build a life of abundance in the insurance space, while still being present in my personal life. My biggest lesson, to date, is that you will feel more empowered when you truly know what your money situation is. Look at all of the pieces, the good, the bad and the ugly – that is how you know where to change things up and most importantly, where you are having success!

Contact Maura:

Website: www.sniegoskilifegroup.com





Leading Lady Podcast Episodes

Listen in for inspiration on mindset, partnerships, and balanced success

- You Don't Have to Choose Between Business Success and Personal Well-Being
- Unlocking the Power of Strategic Partnerships
- Embrace An Abundance Mindset to Fuel Your Business Growth

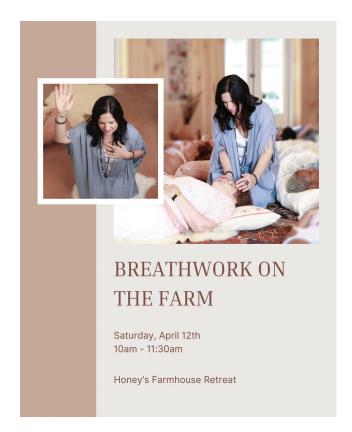






Leading Lady Collective Events

Upcoming Member-Hosted Events:





Be sure to check out all of these amazing events!







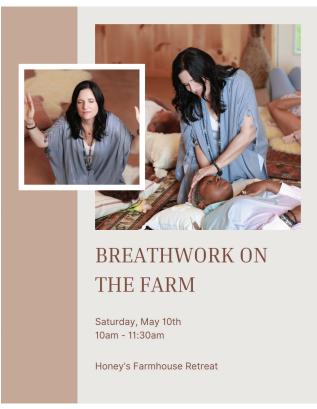




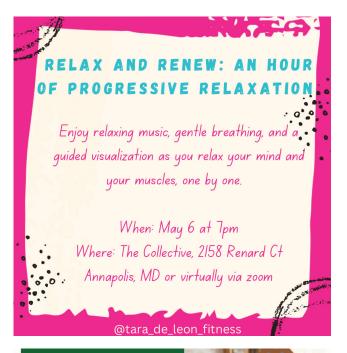
Leading Lady Collective Events

Upcoming Member-Hosted Events:



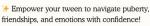








A 5-Day Creative & Fun Self-Care Workshop (Ages 9-12)

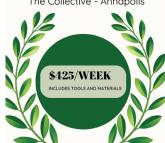


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The Collective - Annapolis





Fun, hands-on projects to reinforce learning and create tangible takeaways

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WORKSHOP OVERVIEW:

Empowerment Keychain & Values Vision Board **Day 4:** Friendships & Boundaries + Friendship First
Aid Kit & Social Map **Day 5:** Building Confidence + Self-Love Envelope &

REGISTER HERE



FIND MORE INFO AT

WWW.NURTURINGGIRLS.COM/CRAFTINGYOU

Scan QR code for the **Leading Lady Collective** events calendar.





