



Melissa Gilbo, left, and Amy Pocsik say their organization is built on the belief that women are naturally inclined to want to help each other. They strive to bring women together so that they can uplift and inspire one another to succeed.

time so that business organically happens," Pocsik adds.

Gilbo, 44, and Pocsik, 36, now devote themselves full time to running the organization. They are supported by a team

that includes an executive assistant and community builder and guided by an advisory board.

They say research backs up what they have personally experienced — that

networking, particularly among women, is powerful.

"Harvard Business Review has done a ton of research into the way that women connect, and it's reassuring, even though we know anecdotally what works," Pocsik says.

Pocsik also has a theory that she calls "the Rolodex effect," built on the belief that women have a natural inclination to help others. If a woman shares a problem she is having with another woman, the woman on the receiving end is likely to offer a solution from her own Rolodex of experiences and resources, Pocsik says.

During the pandemic, for example, members have looked to each other for help when purchasing personal protective equipment, applying for business loans and shifting their business models to comply with changing public health guidelines.

There's also a ripple effect with the Women's Business League, they say. In addition to aiding individual members, the organization can benefit their clients, too, by allowing them to tap into a network of professionals with a host of different specialties. For example, if a person is looking to hire a Realtor, he or she is more likely to pick one who can also connect

'We are all rooting for each other'

Heading up the Tri-Town chapter of the Women's Business League are Callie Umenhofer and Valerie McCormack.

A Realtor with Keller Williams Realty in Topsfield, Umenhofer says that the league "is like no other network group I've belonged to."

"We focus on getting to really know each other and forming strong relationships," she says. "It's a wonderful place to share ideas, get advice, talk through business challenges and celebrate our successes. We are all rooting for each other."

The 47-year-old mom of two teenagers has lived in Georgetown for 21 years but was born and raised in Topsfield, where her parents still reside.

McCormack, 45, an estate planning



Callie Umenhofer



Valerie McCormack

attorney with Wagner Law Group, highlights the league's "safe and nurturing environment."

"Not only are there opportunities to network, there are opportunities for growth with their educational webinars and network of professionals," she says. "With a WBL chapter, you get your own cheering squad."

McCormack moved from Wenham to Boxford this summer with her children, who are

with an insurance agent, a mortgage broker and other professionals involved with the business league who offer additional services the person may need.

For members looking to provide their clients with more exposure, the Women's Business League also offers them a chance to guest blog on the organization's website and provides opportunities for shout-outs on community social media pages.

Additionally, each Women's Business League chapter selects a charity every year to aid with donations, time and resources. Beneficiaries of the chapters' benevolence have included Lucy's Love Bus in Amesbury, Beverly Bootstraps, Black Girl Ventures and Lifebridge North Shore.

Pocsik says that she and Gilbo have been particularly "blown away" by the collaboration of members on every level,

10 and 8.

She says that women can help each other professionally by being positive, present and involved.

"We need to be proactive and encourage each other to go out there and make it happen," she says. "Whatever 'it' is. We are our own worst critics, and we need to remind each other of what we are capable of and what we deserve every single day."

Umenhofer agrees.

"By giving each other moral support, focusing on the positive and helping each other make important connections, we can all grow professionally, as well as personally," she says. "It is important to remember that there is room for us ALL to succeed."

The Tri-Town chapter has several openings and meets every other Thursday from 12:30 to 2 p.m. via Zoom. For more information, visit www.womensbusinessleague.com.

not just in their own inaugural Georgetown chapter, but across other chapters, as well.

"Honestly, it's the kindness. It's the authenticity of the community," Pocsik says. "It's the willingness of the members to connect and collaborate."

"There is power in showing up," Gilbo says. "Imagine if I never showed up for that coffee with Amy." 🌸



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