

Diamond Engagement & Wedding Bands



FARNAN Jewelers.
FINE DIAMONDS EST. 1915
610-687-1323 • Farnanjewelers.com

Three Generations Of Integrity
105 N. Wayne Avenue, Wayne PA 19087



Best Place to buy an Engagement Ring

Opinion

Home / Mainlinetimes / Opinion

http://www.mainlinemedianews.com/mainlinetimes/opinion/village-view-two-important-celebrations-to-cheer-about/article_69964c85-a120-5f5b-8abe-23a89430fad8.html

Village View: Two important celebrations to cheer about

By Bonnie Squires 17 hrs ago



Digital First Media

Many Main Liners were involved with two important celebrations this week: the 25th anniversary of the Bala Cynwyd-based French International School, and the 75th anniversary gala of JEVs Human Services.

Deborah Willig, Esq, chair of the French International School in Bala Cynwyd, greeted the 350 guests at the school's 25th Anniversary Gala Saturday night, March 25, the Beyond Borders Gala. Willig, a past chancellor of the Philadelphia Bar Association and head of the law firm Willig, Williams & Davidson, grew up in Lower Merion and has chaired the board of the Bala Cynwyd-based school for 10 years now.

Her daughter, Sydney Casey-Willig, who served as a student ambassador last Saturday night, is now an eighth-grader and will be graduated shortly. A number of her classmates also served as student ambassadors at the gala.

As I wandered around the fabulous Carousel Room in the Please Touch Museum, I found at least half the guests speaking fluent French. Parents of students, like Nadine and Gerard Durham, of Havertown, were very proud of the fact that their child was their translator when the family went to Paris on vacation recently. They shared their enthusiasm with board member Marc Simmons of Bryn Mawr.

Lonnie Levin, of Wynnewood, said her husband, Board Member Murray Levin, has been taking French lessons for years now, as he has served for a very long time on the board of trustees.

Michael Scullin, Esq., Honorary Consul of France in Philadelphia and Wilmington, and his wife, Pat, were busy talking with the Honorary Gala Chair, the Honorable Michel Charbonnier, Consul General of France, who had come up from Washington for the celebration.

Andy Chirls, past chancellor of the Philadelphia Bar Association, a Narberth resident, has one daughter enrolled in the school and is expecting twin girls shortly.

The school now welcomes more than 300 students from pre-kindergarten through eighth grade across two campuses in Bala Cynwyd. The school also serve a broader community: not only French expatriates and American Francophiles, but families from all over the world.

And the raffle prizes were works of art and photography created by the school's students.

On Monday night, at the Hyatt at the Bellevue, Jay Spector, of Bala Cynwyd, president and CEO of JEVS Human Services, and his wife Genie Cohen welcomed 500 guests to the 75th anniversary gala. Former board chair Jeff Pasek, Esq., and his wife Professor Kathy Hirsh Pasek, of Ardmore, had made a special contribution to the gala: getting their Academy Award-winning and Golden Globe-winning son and songwriter, Benj Pasek, and Ben Platt, the Obie award-winning star of Benj's Broadway hit show "Dear Evan Hansen," to give up their one night off and come perform at the JEVS gala.

They sat side by side on stage, along with a piano played by another Ben who accompanies the Broadway show each night. They kibbitzed, they joked, and Ben Platt showed off his "pipes" — especially with an hilarious medley of Jewish songs about holidays and food, food, food. Benj Pasek finally sang a duet with Platt at the end of their set, receiving a standing ovation from the audience.

I happened to bump into Susan Lodish, of Wynnewood, at the JEVS gala, and she was hot off her success at Temple Beth Hillel Beth El and her directing of a successful musical. She showed me something she had brought along, something she had been saving for decades: a newsletter about a show she directed at Temple Beth Hillel a long time ago — a musical for children called "Noah's Animals." And she showed me the paragraph about a seven-year-

old Benj Pasek who played a raccoon in the children’s musical. His mother Dr. Kathy Hirsh Pasek had written the music for the children’s book at Lodish’s request. I hope Lodish had an opportunity to show the write-up to Benj!

The ballroom was filled with board members, supporters and past board chairs. I learned a lot about JEVS, which started 75 years ago as an agency to assist Jewish immigrants but has now evolved into an organization which works with all ethnic groups, all ages, and assists children and adults with disabilities to lead independent lives. Four representatives of the younger generation spoke about the services they had received.

Spector and board chair Buz Eizen also honored philanthropists Vivian and Oscar Lasko who are responsible for many JEVS programs, especially the Orleans Technical College. With a vast array of programs and services, JEVS reaches 35,000 people each year.

The ad journal, by the way, was a clever imitation of the theater Playbills, only it was called “Playguide.” And I learned from the journal that my Lower Merion classmate Frank Ash is not only a past president of JEVS but also funds the Franklin C. Ash Intern program there.

Bonnie Squires is a communications consultant who writes weekly for Main Line Media News and can be reached at www.bonniesquires.com. She hosts the weekly Bonnie’s Beat TV show at Radnor Studio 21 and Main Line Television which airs Monday nights at 7 p.m.

