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NT waterfront venue Harbor House a hub for events serviced by local businesses

BY LAUREN CATHERINE

Since opening in April, entrepreneur Megan Leith has already brought bustling new business to her waterfront venue, Harbor House, formerly known as Michael's Landing, at 369 Sweeney St., North Tonawanda.

The indoor-outdoor venue accommodates up to 100 people and serves mainly as a space for private events, including weddings; showers; birthday, graduation and anniversary parties; corporate events; along with life's many other occasions and milestones.

The venue features a bright event space inside, and a patio overlooking the Erie Canal.

"It's a beautiful venue on the water with an outstanding view – you can't beat it," Leith said. "It's very peaceful – you hear the birds, see the boats going by. It's just very serene."

Leith was looking to purchase an event venue when a mutual friend reached out to her and told her the space was available for purchase.

"It was already well-established and everyone knows it," Leith said. "I was left with this wonderful gem and I don't take that for granted at all."

Leith is no stranger to doing business in the NT community, as one of her locations for another business she owns, Barretend – offering barre and yoga workout classes



Harbor House owner Megan Leith stands outside on the venue's patio with the Erie Canal as her backdrop. (Photo by Sarah Bridgeman and Brandon McClintsey)

– is located at 15 Webster St., in the city. The other (and initial) Barretend location is at 503 Delaware Ave., in the City of Buffalo's Allentown neighborhood.

During the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, Leith hosted yoga classes outdoors at Delaware Park,

and she noticed many participants came from North Tonawanda – leading her to do business there.

Leith said she was drawn to purchase the North Tonawanda venue, in large part, due to her positive experience in the community.

"When I opened up Barretend, (I realized) there is something about the NT community, meaning if you're (living) in NT, you often don't leave NT – and you're very loyal to NT. It seems everybody knows everybody. It's a really great community and we felt so welcomed," she said.

Vendors Come Together to Create Customizable Event Options

Leith described Harbor House as "the shell" for events: "People can come in and make it their own."

While chairs and tables are provided, those who book an event at Harbor House can bring food, drink and decorations to make the space fit their taste and vision.

Many local vendors offer services for clients who choose to hold their special events at Harbor House.

Cute Charcuterie co-owners Leah Guagenti of Cheektowaga and Lisa Serion of Williamsville have already offered services at the venue since it opened.

Through their business, they offer custom charcuterie boards and graze tables for larger events, including at Harbor House.

SEE HARBOR HOUSE, on Page 12

Niagara Area Habitat for Humanity breaks ground on new home

Volunteers now sought for latest project in Falls

Niagara Area Habitat for Humanity celebrated the first Saturday in June with a groundbreaking on their newest Habitat for Humanity home in Niagara County, a four-bedroom new build on 61st Street in Niagara Falls. The home continues Niagara Area Habitat for Humanity's mission to help families build strength, stability, and self-reliance through affordable homeownership. The 4-bedroom home will be the 31st Habitat home built in Niagara County and 28th in Niagara Falls since 1993.

Mayor of Niagara Falls Robert Restaino, Habitat board members, sponsors, volunteers, and community members gathered at the 61st Street site for a groundbreaking ceremony, putting shovels in the ground to commemorate the start of the project.

"Habitat homes in Niagara Falls have a major tangible impact in our community beyond just the homeowner" said Habitat executive director Gina Beam. "Each year,

our homeowners contribute more than \$70,000 in property taxes back to the community, helping to fund our schools, roads, police, and firemen."

Thanks to a partnership with National Fuel, the 31st Habitat home will become a Net Zero home, the second such home built by Habitat in Niagara County, according to the Habitat release. The home will be built using energy efficient construction, combined with the use of high efficiency natural gas equipment and a solar panel system. These practices ensure a Net Zero home minimizes carbon emissions while simultaneously making the home more affordable by reducing the homeowner's monthly energy costs.

"In this home, through the use of solar panels and high efficiency insulation and HVAC systems, we will create a home that produces as much energy as it uses, resulting in a lower energy bills" Beam said. "We



Habitat for Humanity celebrates the groundbreaking on their newest home in Niagara Falls. Pictured (left to right), Chiuwike Owunwanne of KeyBank, Habitat Executive Director Gina Beam, Niagara Falls Mayor Robert Restaino, Jeff Kwiatowski of National Fuel, and Fourth District Niagara County Legislator Jeffery Elder. (Submitted photo)

want to build in ways that contribute to the sustainability of our planet, and we want to make change in our communities that is both transformational and sustainable."

The lucky future homeowner of the 61st Street home will be determined by Habitat later this year.

SEE HABITAT, continued on Page 8

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