

QUINTESSENTIAL PEOPLE®

Honoring SUZANNE CORR

BY LISA STAMOS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY LINDA M. BARRETT

Leading the Way

THERE ARE NOT TOO MANY PEOPLE who can say their website, one representing a local-to-regional geographical area, gets over three million hits a year. Or that they receive more than 6,000 inbound calls a year from people inquiring about shopping, dining, and professional services in the Barrington area. But Suzanne Corr, the President/CEO of the Barrington Area Chamber of Commerce can say that, and she's earned those numbers with her astute and stalwart leadership across the past nine years.

Those who know Corr are familiar with her cheerful, confident, and unassuming style—including the over 800-member business members of the Chamber—yet they might be surprised to know that her work on their behalf follows an impressive and immersive career in media relations, real-life crisis management, public relations, and marketing communications. Her college education focused on television and radio production and theater. But she chose not to pursue television as a career due to the constant stream of negativity and lack of creative content production.

Corr's training is a set of thrown-into-the-fire drills that prepared her to excel at building and fostering strong relationships. Those Chamber relationships must nimbly traverse business to consumer and the reverse, and chamber to municipal to work. She makes this look easy.

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REMARKABLE FAMILY HISTORY

The Corr family has known the best of times, and the worst of humanity. Corr's father, Lou Joseph, was a Holocaust survivor. He was in a work camp in Germany as a young teen and escaped from his confines during a United States air raid, making it to Berlin. Shortly after the war ended, Joseph was reunited with his mother and brother, though he lost other family members who were in death camps. His story, documented by Steven Spielberg for the USC Shoah Foundation, is immortalized to help preserve history at the Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center in Skokie. Corr's grandmother was a Lutheran who was able to make it to the countryside and survive. After the war, she was reunited with her son Lou Joseph. Joseph later emigrated to the U.S., became a star reporter and media relations guru, and raised a family of eight children.

A JERSEY SHORE GIRL

Suzanne Joseph grew up on the East Coast, the Jersey Shore, near Atlantic City, where her mother Joy Joseph was raised and her parents met. Corr was the eldest in family of 8 children—seven girls and a boy. Even though the family moved to Chicago when she was 4, they returned to their beloved Shore every summer for years. To this day, Corr loves the ocean's beaches, birds, sounds, and salty air. Her mother Joy later wrote three books centered around life on the shore, her first one at the age of 77.

Corr attended Main West High School and enjoyed pursuing community theater and creative writing. At her years in Carbondale, Illinois, she was involved with the Southern Illinois University's student-run radio and television stations. While fun projects, it was

not her career calling. Instead, she embarked on jobs with big names like Michael Reese Medical Center, Evanston Hospital Corporation, and Baxter Healthcare. Following that was a job with Winston & Strawn LLP during the time former Gov. Jim Thompson and Dan Web were on board.

She left the city and went to work for Sam Huff & Associates for 12 years in Barrington. She and husband Tim Corr, as Cary residents, were beginning their family and it seemed time to take a job closer to home. Tim also hails from a family of eight children. The two knew each other from childhood family social events and reconnected at a holiday party as young adults. She literally overheard him tell another at the party, "I'm going to marry that girl." Indeed, he did! Today they have three children and two grandchildren.

THE CHAMBER WORLD

Corr volunteered for the Cary Arts Commission which led to a position with the Cary-Grove Chamber of Commerce that lasted for 13 years. It was in the chamber world that Corr could leverage her creative skills and abilities in working with the public. When hired to lead the Barrington Area Chamber of Commerce, Corr established a new set of business management standards and best practices that set the course for a successful future.

"I feel so fortunate, that I love what I do and never tire of helping others succeed," Corr said.

In her free time, she likes to cook and bake and belongs to a gourmet food club with her husband. She enjoys her children and grandchildren. And knowing Corr's high energy and passion for life, there's sure to be many fun adventures in the years ahead.

HERE ARE SOME WORDS THAT OTHERS SHARED ABOUT SUZANNE CORR

Christine Forssander, SISTER

Suzanne has always been a leader in our large family of eight children. She's carried this admirable quality throughout her careers. A strong speaker and master planner, she constantly finds creative ways to bring our family and her community together. Suzanne works diligently to find opportunities that the business community can use to grow their imprint. Her creativity, organizational skills, kindness, and compassion for others, makes her role as the Barrington Chamber president a perfect fit. Always looking out for the needs of others, Suzanne makes sure her Barrington community is inclusive, successful, and enjoyable for all. Barrington is the "Place to Be" and Suzanne has helped facilitate that growth. The Barrington business community has benefitted greatly under her leadership.

Suzanne is the sister we all looked up to. The sister we strive to emulate. Suzanne always looks out for her family. Her kindness and compassion are what we all admire the most and are thankful to be on the receiving end. Suzanne is also a very loyal friend, counting many life-long friends in her inner circle. She is a wonderful cook and baker. Suzanne loves to host dinner parties and takes great pride in setting a beautiful table. I enjoy anytime we

share a meal with Suzanne and her wonderful husband Tim, where we can catch up on the lives of her two daughters, Maggie and Shannon and son, Christopher. Of course, we can never get enough of the stories of her two adorable grandsons, David, and Rowen.

I'm so proud of my sister and the impact she's had on our family and in her professional career. Proud of all her accomplishments and her fierce love for her family.

Char Neault, COLLEAGUE

I've had the privilege and the pleasure of knowing Suzanne since she began her leadership at the Barrington Chamber. I was the Chair of the Chamber at the time and involved in the decision to hire her. I could tell from the start that she had a vision for the Chamber above and beyond our expectations. As a long-time member of the Chamber, I have witnessed her passion and devotion to create an outstanding resource for all local businesses, professionals, and non-profits. During her leadership she has promoted mentorship and opportunities through a network of elements, organizing activities, and events in a most professional way.



Suzanne demonstrated her resilience during the pandemic by being resourceful and an integral part of continuing the connection between member businesses to the community. Her energy and creativity never cease to amaze me. She has proven that membership is a valuable component of a marketing plan for all community businesses, no matter the size. During her time leading the Chamber, she has not only become someone I look up to, but also a friend. Her enthusiasm is infectious and that is the kind of person you want to be around. We are so lucky to have her as part of our community.

Jon Stickney, PRESIDENT OF BARRINGTON BANK & TRUST COMPANY, AND BOARD MEMBER OF BACC

I have been a member of BACC since 1992 and on the Board for the past several years. The Chamber has always been strong in our community and a staunch advocate for area small businesses; however, Suzanne Corr has taken BACC to a new level. Suzanne kept BACC relevant, especially during the period of Covid lockdowns. She quickly pivoted to a virtual community with members remaining active and supportive of one another. Suzanne brought critical informational resources when most needed, sharing best practices and solutions during an otherwise dark time. Remaining positive, professional, compassionate, and encouraging, Suzanne stitched the fabric of our business community together during a time of unravelling. Now emerging stronger than ever with membership growing and financially strong, the BACC proved its necessity in Barrington due to her leadership. I am proud to work alongside Suzanne in these efforts, and grateful to consider her my friend. 