

The Chamber's Women's Business Council to Honor 2025 ATHENA Awards Recipients

The Chamber will give the 100th ATHENA award that's given annually to local leaders and organizations that strive to empower, inspire, and uplift women.

By Danielle Joseph

Lehigh Valley, PA (October 14, 2025) – The Chamber's Women's Business Council will honor two local individuals and one local company at an awards ceremony on Thursday, October 30, 2025, at 11:00 am at ArtsQuest, Bethlehem.

The prestigious ATHENA Award, presented annually by the Chamber since 1985, actively shares ATHENA International's mission to support, develop and honor women leaders, inspire women to achieve their full potential and create balance in leadership worldwide.

Since its inception at the Chamber, the ATHENA Awards program has honored 99 leaders and organizations that have come from all walks of life, representing diverse industries, nonprofit organizations, and businesses of all sizes—united by their lasting impact on the Lehigh Valley.

"The ATHENA Awards shine a spotlight on women and organizations that create meaningful change, open doors, and inspire the next generation of leaders," said Danielle Joseph, of the Women's Business Council. "We celebrate individuals and organizations that embody the values of leadership, service, and mentorship."

The Women's Business Council of the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce is dedicated to strengthening the Lehigh Valley by empowering, recognizing, and inspiring women in business and the community.

2025 ATHENA Leadership Award Recipient

Congresswoman Susan Wild has been a member of the Lehigh Valley community for more than 35 years. Her two adult children were born and raised in the Valley, where they attended public schools. Susan built a successful legal practice while raising her two children and became an accomplished litigator at Gross McGinley, LLP, as well as the first woman to be appointed as Allentown City Solicitor. In November 2018, Susan was elected as the first woman to represent the Greater Lehigh Valley area, otherwise known as Pennsylvania's 7th Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives. Congresswoman Wild served on the House Education and Labor Committee and the House Foreign Affairs Committee and was a senior member of the House Ethics Committee. Her time in Congress was devoted to fighting for our community, and particularly for its most vulnerable citizens. Susan has enjoyed mentoring young people and women since early in her legal career and remains committed to ensuring the education and professional growth of individuals so that they can accomplish their dreams.



2025 ATHENA Emerging Professional Leadership Award Recipient

Veronica Gonzalez is the Chief Executive Officer at Valley Health Partners Community Health Center (VHP), a Federally Qualified Health Center Look-Alike (FQHC-LA) dedicated to advancing the health and wellness of the region's most vulnerable community members. She collaborates with the Board of Directors to establish long-term strategic goals for delivering high-quality healthcare to underserved populations. Under her leadership, VHP was named a gold-level health center quality leader, awarded to the top ten percent of health centers in the country. She brings over sixteen years of healthcare administration experience with expertise in process improvement, leadership, fiscal responsibility, and community-based program management.

Veronica's career progression reflects her passion for serving vulnerable patients. She began her career at Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN) in 2005, working first as a Secretary and later as a Trained Medical Interpreter. Always an advocate for the underserved, she advanced through multiple leadership positions overseeing Interpreter Services, the Centro de Salud Latino Health Initiative, Lehigh Neurology, and the Center for Women's Medicine. As Administrator of Community Practices, she successfully led their transition to VHP.

A lifelong Lehigh Valley resident, Veronica is dedicated to serving the community. She is a board member of the Pennsylvania Association of Community Health Centers, the United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley, and the Lehigh Valley Community Foundation where she also participates in their Community Relations Committee.

Veronica has been recognized as a Woman of Influence and a Forty Under 40 honoree from Lehigh Valley Business. She completed the Rider-Pool Foundation's Pool Fellowship for Health and is Lean Certified. Veronica earned her MBA with a concentration in healthcare management systems from DeSales University and her B.A. in business administration from Muhlenberg College.



2025 ATHENA Organizational Award Recipient

MKSD architects is a visionary, women-owned architectural firm founded in the Lehigh Valley, Pennsylvania, with a 20-year legacy of inclusive design and leadership. Guided by the belief in "Design, for Everyone. Equally.", MKSD has built a practice grounded in empowerment, collaboration, and the shared purpose of enhancing life through the built environment.

With a strong culture of inclusion and respect, MKSD is known not just for what they create—but how they create it. Their success lies in deep partnerships with clients, a commitment to listening, and a design process fueled by passion, creativity, and experience. This people-first approach has earned them the reputation as "the architect that listens."

Led by dedicated partners who are personally invested in every project, MKSD's team brings a wealth of expertise to a wide range of projects—from transformative renovations to complex, community-centered buildings. Each design solution is carefully tailored to meet the unique needs of clients, with services spanning the full arc of planning, design, and interiors.

As a certified Women Owned Business, MKSD is proud to elevate voices, promote equity in the profession, and lead with integrity. Their work is more than architecture—it's a reflection of their values, their clients' missions, and a deep commitment to designing spaces that uplift, inspire, and endure.

For more information about the ATHENA Awards or the Women's Business Council, visit www.lehighvalleychamber.org.

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