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BUFFALO NIAGARA CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN BUSINESS OWNERS

Fall 2025



Holiday Fundraiser & Celebration

December 3, 2025

Rizotto Italian Restaurant



NAWBO
BUFFALO NIAGARA
National Association of Women Business Owners

President's Address



Stephanie Kennedy

Welcome to the 2025-2026 year at NAWBO Buffalo-Niagara! I am beyond excited to welcome you to a year filled with **education, connection, and—most importantly—support.**

NAWBO Buffalo-Niagara has always held a special place in my heart. When I first started my business, I was grateful for the guidance, encouragement, and wisdom I received from my NAWBO sisters. Less than six months after launching, I was sponsored to join by Joyce DeLong, one of our Past Presidents. She encouraged me to **connect with the women in this chapter** and see them as the powerhouses they truly are. And I did.

Shortly after, life tested me in ways I never expected. My family faced a devastating series of events. We lost my grandmother, and just one month later, my mother, Amy, was diagnosed with Glioblastoma Multiforme—an aggressive form of brain cancer, which she, just two years later, lost her battle with. During this time, I kept running my business, leaning on the support of my NAWBO sisters. Their encouragement didn't just help me survive—it helped me **thrive**. Without them, I honestly don't know where I would be today.

Eight years later, I am humbled and honored to serve as **your President**. I am grateful for this sisterhood, for this community, and for the incredible opportunity to give back and help create even more connection and support among our members.

Being champions of women-owned businesses has always been our mission. But building **friendships, community, and meaningful connections**—that is the cherry on top.

This year, I encourage you to **share**.

Share in each other's wins. Share in each other's losses. Share your joy. Share your gratitude. But also—share your struggles. Ask for help. Be vulnerable. Because without the dark, we cannot fully appreciate the light. And no matter where you are in your journey, there is always something good just around the corner.

We are all in this together—not just as women in NAWBO, but as **women, period**. Together, we are building a legacy—for ourselves, for our sisters, and for the generations of women who will follow.

NAWBO has a 50-year history of dedication, advocacy, strength, and resilience. I am so proud to be part of this legacy. And I can't wait to build the next 50 years with all of you.

Thank you, and let's make this year unforgettable.

With gratitude & love,

Stephanie Kennedy

President, NAWBO Buffalo-Niagara

Stephanie Kennedy is the owner of Reach Digital Media Solutions, LLC

A Message from Our President-Elect



Aly Luccari

I'm excited to share that this year, we've re-imagined our chapter meetings to make them more engaging, valuable, and intentional for every member. (By "we," I mean this is the work of many phenomenal members.)

Each monthly gathering now follows a refreshed structure designed to balance connection, learning, and action:

- **Meaningful Networking** – We're creating space for real conversations that spark collaboration and build relationships that includes our creative members.
- **Focused Learning** – Every meeting features a guest speaker or panel offering practical tools you can use right away in your business.
- **Chapter Impact** – We'll highlight ways our chapter is making a difference—through advocacy, philanthropy, and supporting one another as women business owners.
- **Celebrating Wins** – Together, we'll recognize new members, applaud successes, and lift each other up.

Our goal is simple: when you walk into a NAWBO Buffalo-Niagara meeting, you feel welcomed, energized, and equipped to take something meaningful back to your business and your life.

I hope you'll join us for upcoming meetings and experience this new structure for yourself. We're building a vibrant chapter where every woman's voice matters, and I can't wait to see you there!

Aly Luccari is the owner of Bright Organizing Solutions LLC and NAWBO President-Elect 2025-2026

NAWBO MEMBERS!

Be sure to bring your marketing materials to our monthly meetings to share at our Membership table.

What is a Mastermind and How Can it Help My Business



Lynn Tranchell

I have participated in many masterminds over the years. It includes a small or smallish group of people committed to generously giving of ideas and solutions to help others become more successful. It takes confidentiality and an openness to share.

Napoleon Hill has a whole chapter about it in "Think and Grow Rich." Hill says:

The "Master Mind" may be defined as: "Coordination of knowledge and effort, in a spirit of harmony, between two or more people, for the attainment of a definite purpose."

"No two minds ever come together without, thereby, creating a third, invisible, intangible force which may be likened to a third mind."

A group of brains coordinated (or connected) in a spirit of harmony, will provide more thought-energy than a single brain.

You tap into that higher power. A synergy gets created where answers flow.

I can remember one occasion when someone asked a question. I was just about to answer when another person said the exact same thing that came to me.

That's the power of the mastermind.

How it works...

You come with a question or problem. Everyone joins in and offers possible solutions. It is confidential. You simply allow the answers to be said without any notion of what is being said. You take all the answers and after they end, you get to decide what to do with them.

You will receive new ideas.

We meet the third Tuesday of the month at noon via zoom. Come when you can. Be open to give and receive. The more you attend, the richer your experience.

See you there...

Interested in attending? Contact Lynn for the meeting link at Lynn.Tranchell@clearahead.com

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Planting Seeds of Hope & Healing This Fall



Lesley Martin

As the seasons shift, fall reminds us of both endings and beginnings. The harvest shows us what has grown from our efforts, our careful nurturing, our investment of energy. Meanwhile, the planting of bulbs, ideas, desires is an act of quiet faith—trusting that beneath the surface, life is preparing to bloom again when the time is right.

Hope and healing move in a similar rhythm.

They ask us to tend gently to what is present, while believing in what we cannot yet see. As women business owners, we carry not only our own dreams but also the responsibilities of leadership, creativity, and community.

It is essential that we nurture both ourselves and one another in these cycles.

Here are three ways to plant seeds of hope and healing this fall:

- 1. Within Yourself** – Give yourself space to pause. Just as the soil rests before spring, allow moments of stillness to renew you. Reflection, journaling, or simply a quiet walk can reconnect you with your inner wisdom and replenish your energy.
- 2. Within Your Business** – Look at what you are harvesting right now. Celebrate even the small wins, and consider what “bulbs” you want to plant for the future. This may mean investing in a new skill, deepening relationships with clients, or creating systems that will support growth in the coming year.
- 3. On Behalf of Another** – Sometimes the most healing gift we can offer is presence. Reach out if someone comes to mind. A simple text, a phone call, or an offer to meet for coffee can remind a colleague that she is not alone. We often underestimate the power of connection to restore hope.

As the days grow shorter and the nights longer, let us remember that beneath the surface, life is always renewing itself. Together, we can hold hope for one another, creating a community where both healing and growth are possible.

If you find yourself going through a tough time—or if you hear that someone else is—please know this: you don’t have to carry it alone. Reach out. We are here for you.

I mean it.

Lesley

Lesley Martin, MA, LMHC, CLC is the founder and CEO of Lesley Martin Coaching

Uncertainty at Every Turn: One Business Owner's Fight Against Rising Tariff Costs



Paula Greene-D'Amico

When Jackie Lennert opened Rove Jewelry, Accessories, and Gifts LLC in May 2015, she envisioned a welcoming shop where customers could find stylish clothing and accessories at prices that fit a middle-class budget. For nearly a decade, she delivered on that promise. But today, shifting tariffs are threatening the foundation of her business - and the livelihoods tied to it.

“It starts right at the buying level,” Lennert explained. “One month prices are up, the next they are down. There is no consistency.”

She first felt the impact this past April when tariffs were introduced on many of the items she purchases wholesale. At first the costs increased modestly - two to four dollars more per item. But soon, some suppliers began applying surcharges across entire orders, adding lump sums that were then spread across each product. “It became a ricochet effect,” Lennert said. “I would load items into my wholesale cart, and the prices would change from one day to the next.”

The result? Costs skyrocketed. “I have never in my life paid \$36 wholesale for a coat. Now I am.”

That increase has forced difficult choices. To keep inventory moving, Lennert has shifted to lower-cost suppliers, but that often means gambling on quality. Trade shows, once a reliable way to plan for the year, now pose their own risks. Businesses typically place orders six to eight months in advance, locking in prices. But with tariffs in flux, even orders placed months earlier can arrive with unexpected surcharges. “This year, a \$2,000 freight bill turned into \$2,400,” Lennert shared.

The unpredictability doesn’t stop with her. Customers, many of them loyal, middle-class shoppers, are feeling it too. Items that once retailed for \$39 now sit on shelves marked at \$44 or higher. Though many customers understand the situation, the changes still alter shopping behavior. Foot traffic has slowed. Buyers are more cautious, calculated in every purchase. “Sometimes people don’t even come in, because they don’t want to be tempted to spend,” Lennert said.

To cope, her business has had to reduce employee hours, trim growth plans, and rethink inventory. “There’s just no room for growth,” she admitted, her voice heavy with frustration. “And that just makes me feel really sad.”

Still, she takes pride in her commitment to service. Staff members make sure shoppers know why prices have shifted and emphasize value. Her store remains a place where \$100 can still buy a complete outfit. But it’s clear that the weight of tariffs has shifted the entire equation - not only for her business but for her customers, too.

That is why Lennert joined other small business owners in Washington, D.C. during the National Association of Women Business Owners’ annual Advocacy Days. Together, they shared their stories with lawmakers, hoping to make the ripple effects visible.

“My message to lawmakers is simple,” Lennert said. “Please evaluate it all the way down the line - to the average consumer, not just those with expendable income. People need consistency. They need to feel comfortable that they can still buy what they need without wondering, ‘Am I choosing this over that?’”

For Lennert, it’s not just about numbers on a balance sheet. It’s about her employees, her customers, and her community. And unless stability returns, she fears that small businesses like hers will continue to struggle under the weight of decisions made far beyond their doors.

Update (October 2025):

After a decade in business, Jackie Lennert has announced that Rove Jewelry, Accessories & Gifts LLC will close its doors on October 15. Despite years of perseverance, the ongoing economic pressures and unpredictable tariff surcharges have made it impossible to sustain operations.

“I am so grateful for the memories, the community events, and the chance to support so many women-owned businesses along the way,” Lennert said. “Through it all, I’ve also been proud to serve the Buffalo Niagara chapter of NAWBO. Most of all, I’m thankful for my customers—their loyalty and kindness helped make Rove a place that truly felt like home.”

Her words capture the full circle of a business that began with purpose and ends with gratitude, underscoring the very challenges this story sought to illuminate.

Written by Paula Greene-D'Amico, owner of Paula D'Amico Productions and Blessings by Nature®

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Empowering the Next Generation of Women Entrepreneurs



Heather Jackson-Fassari

NAWBO's mission is to propel women entrepreneurs into economic, social, and political spheres of power worldwide. But our reach extends beyond today's business leaders — it's also about nurturing tomorrow's. That's where NAWBO NextGen comes in.

What is NAWBO NextGen?

NextGen membership is designed to support and inspire the next generation of women entrepreneurs. These are young women in high school or college who are on an entrepreneurship education track, as well as women of any age within the first three years of their first business.

Buffalo Niagara's NextGen Initiatives

Our NextGen Committee has developed three core initiatives that align with NAWBO's national vision.

1. Young Adult Speed Networking Events Twice a year, in October and March, our committee hosts Speed Networking Events designed for young adults and new entrepreneurs. These events include casual conversation, speed networking, and tips for those new to networking, in a fun, welcoming environment.

Attendees rotate through several short, structured conversations—sharing their aspirations, practicing introductions, and hearing career insights from successful women across diverse industries.

These events serve as a bridge between emerging entrepreneurs and seasoned business owners. For the young attendees, it's often their first taste of professional networking skills that can shape their confidence and future success.

2. High School Entrepreneurship Visits

Another cornerstone of our NextGen efforts is outreach to local high schools, where NAWBO members visit classrooms to talk about entrepreneurship, leadership, and the many pathways to owning a business.

These visits are particularly impactful because they expose young women—many for the first time—to the idea that business ownership is not just a career option, but a viable and empowering life path. We share personal

stories, discuss the challenges and rewards of entrepreneurship, and encourage students to explore how their passions and talents can evolve into business ideas.

3. "Shark Tank"-Style Event at Sacred Heart Academy

Building on the success of our school visits, our chapter supports Sacred Heart Academy in their annual "Shark Tank"-style pitch competition. Students work in teams to develop their business concepts, research markets, and present their ideas to a panel of judges. These are real companies that students can register and develop after the competition.

Judges read through business plans, listen to business pitches, ask follow-up questions, and then determine how to distribute the investment funds to the students.

How Chapter Members Can Support the NextGen Committee

The success of these initiatives depends on the engagement and support of our members:

- **Volunteer for High School Visits:** Join us in visiting local schools to share your story and inspire young women to consider entrepreneurship.
- **Participate in the "Shark Tank"-Style Event:** Serve as a judge for this event to share your feedback and encouragement.
- **Support Our NextGen Members:** Attend their business launches, share their services, offer advice, or simply reach out with words of encouragement.
- **Attend, Sponsor, or Promote the Speed Networking Events:** Join us as a participant, help spread the word about these events, or sponsor the event to keep the cost of the tickets down for participants.

Why It Matters

When we invest in the next generation, we're not just supporting students—we're building the foundation for stronger, more innovative women-led local economies. The entrepreneurial mindset teaches problem-solving, resilience, creativity, and leadership—all qualities that benefit not just business owners but our community as a whole.

Heather Jackson-Fassari is owner, fractional CFO of Interlink CFO and Chair of the NextGen Committee



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2025-2026 EVENTS

Monthly Dinner Meetings

Wednesdays • 5:30 pm

November 12th

January 14th

February 11th

March 11th

April 8th

December 3, 2025 Holiday Fundraiser & Celebration

Co-hosted with American Business Women's Association WNY Chapter and the Buffalo Niagara Chapter of NYS Women, Inc. to benefit Buffalo Prenatal-Perinatal Network, Inc

January 25 – 27, 2026 NAWBO Leadership Conference 2026 in Rio Grande, Puerto Rico

Mastermind facilitated by Lynn Tranchell Third Tuesday at 12 pm on Zoom

NAWBO Each One Reach One Wednesday, May 13, 2026

Wednesday, June 10, 2026 NAWBO Buffalo Niagara Officer & Board Installation & Dinner

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