

Press Release

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Sholeh Veiseh Honored as 2023 Chamber Spirit of Community Award Recipient

Grand Haven, MI - The Chamber of Commerce Grand Haven, Spring Lake, Ferrysburg Spirit of Community Award was presented to Sholeh Veiseh at the Annual Chamber Celebration held at Spring Lake Country Club. The award honoring the community spirit of the late Daryl DuBridge was presented by Sharon Behm, Chamber of Commerce Board past chair and fellow retailer. The Spirit of Community Award acknowledges individuals that provide valuable service by devoting time and energy to improve the quality of life for others in the community and who demonstrate leadership and initiative in the development of volunteer projects.

Sholeh and her family arrived in the United States in 1984 and made Grand Haven their home 1987. After settling into their new home, Sholeh's entrepreneurial spirit found a connection with Mary Kay, but quickly opened her own store in Chinook Pier called La Pinata and that began her career track that led to opening Down to Earth in beautiful downtown Grand Haven. She became very involved in community projects with her two sons and husband Mike in building the first Imagination Station.

As a new retailer in the downtown community, Sholeh joined a group of merchants that were very involved in promoting shopping locally, and promotions are a great way to bring customers in the door. When merchants came together to host events or when the community held fundraisers for the catwalk or lighthouses, she was always there to ask "what can I do to help. We all know that 2020 and 2021 were hard years for anyone in the retail business. Sholeh found a way to connect with customers and build her customer base through weekly podcasts on Facebook that were filled with her warm and engaging personality and connected the audience to a fun retail experience right in their own homes.

In 2018, Sholeh chose Mosaic Counseling to be the recipient of the Downtown Fashion Show in collaboration with Buffalo Bob's and Earth's Edge and for the next two years, Porto Bello was home to this wonderful fundraiser. Then, not to be deterred in 2020, as the need for Mosaic Counseling services became greater, Sholeh said "the Show Must Go On," and it became an outdoor event with Lee and Birch joining the cast. In 2021, the "Show" moved to the Tri-Cities Museum and in 2022 it was sold out with Alegria joining the crew. Over the five years of fashion shows an amazing \$237,839 has been raised for Mosaic Counseling to provide affordable and accessible mental health services for their in-school counseling that is free to students and includes suicide prevention.

Sarah Lewakowski, of Mosaic Counseling says it best "this year's recipient is one of the most giving, loving people that I have ever met. She believes in the goodness of people. She believes that we as individuals and we as a community should care for one another. She believes that giving does not have to be big and grandiose, but can begin with a smile, an ear to listen, and a caring heart. This community is a better community because of her! Her light radiates to all of us, whether we know it or not."

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