



Schenectady Business & Professional Women's Club, Inc.

2016 Schenectady BPW Woman of the Year Ellie von Wellsheim Founder of The MoonCatcher Project



Ellie von Wellsheim is a serial entrepreneur with a deep concern for social justice. During her lifetime she has initiated, organized and moved forward several far-reaching efforts beginning with the Companera Project in the 1980s; an international endeavor in response to human rights injustices and the US government's intervention in Nicaragua.

Moved by the devastation of Hurricane Katrina in the gulf coast, Ellie organized teams of volunteers to staff 16 re-building trips to New Orleans and surrounding areas. She also started and continues to coordinate the Dining for Dollars fundraiser to support this effort and her most recent endeavor - The MoonCatcher Project.

This new venture provides reusable, washable menstrual pads to keep girls in the poorest communities worldwide, in school. These pads are made both locally, nationally and internationally. In the US they are made by small groups of volunteers coming together for a sewing bee and in Uganda. The MoonCatcher Project funds and trains women's sewing cooperatives to make these pads. At its sewing bees, known as "Moon Bees", The MoonCatcher Project also collects disposable hygiene products for local homeless shelters.

Ellie has been an active volunteer with Girls Incorporated of the Greater Capital Region, the Electric City Food Co-op, the Albany AIDS Luncheon, the Unitarian Universalist Society of Schenectady, and the Women's Global Giving Circle in Saratoga.

Ellie has also owned and operated numerous for-profit ventures throughout her working life including a house-painting business, Spectrum Sewing (a fashion design and sewing concern), a catering company, a professional organizing enterprise to create beautiful spaces, and she is a founding partner of the women-owned consulting company, The Thalia Group LLC.

Ellie is one of ten siblings and a native of Newville, NY. She is a long-time resident of Schenectady where she lives with her husband and where they raised two children together.