

Jodi DeAugustine
Chair

Russell Sturtz
Vice Chair

Elaina Burdick
Vice Chair

Warren Wolfson
Treasurer

Lorraine McGee
Secretary

Kathy Alaimo
Helena Zera Axelrod
Charles Beach
Melissa Bollman
James Borer
Randi Bregman
Amy Breuer
Caroline Brust
Margery Burstein
Carroll Clark
Kathleen Davis
Paul Dodd
William Fitzpatrick
Julie Flack
Mark Fuller
Polly Fuller
Rachel Galusha
Neil Gold
Sondra Goldberg
Tim Graham
Lisa Greenia
Kim Jeffery
Barbara Karper
Sang W. Kim
Jim King
Tom Magnarelli
Jennifer Mathews
Lorraine McGee
Denise McGraw
Edward G. Melvin, II
Patricia Numann
Tracy Porter
Jan Price
Anne Ruffer
Jeffrey VanBuren
Gloria Barbano Weyl

John A. Cirando,
Counsel

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 22, 2018

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:
Chris Benton
Vera House, Inc.
(315) 425-0818 x2248 or
cbenton@verahouse.org

**VERA HOUSE FOUNDATION HONORS LAURA SERWAY AND CINDY SEYMOUR AT
27th ANNUAL 'NEW BEGINNINGS' GALA**

Saturday, December 1, 2018 6:00 p.m. at the Oncenter, 800 South State St, Syracuse

Syracuse, NY - The Vera House Foundation will present its 27th Annual "New Beginnings" Gala on Saturday, December 1 at the Oncenter from 6 to 11 p.m. Special tribute will be paid to Gala Honorary Chairs Laura Serway and Cindy Seymour, of Syracuse, for their unwavering commitment and support of Vera House.

Vera House Executive Director Randi Bregman expressed her excitement about Laura and Cindy serving as Honorary Chairs and noted, "Laura and Cindy have a heart for Vera House and for this community. Not a day goes by that they aren't actively doing something to improve the quality of life for the most vulnerable among us. If you don't love Laura and Cindy, you probably haven't met them yet."

Laura and Cindy co-own Laci's Tapas Bar, Laci's Real Estate Ventures and Laci's Luscious Sauce. In the last seven years, they have donated more than \$95,000 to various non-profits in the Central New York area.

In 2014, they were awarded the first ever Community Visionary Award, from Center State CEO, sponsored by Wegmans. The vision and the energy that they both brought to the Hawley Green Historic District has helped re-energize an otherwise deteriorating neighborhood.

WISE Women's Business Center chose Laura and Cindy as the recipient of the Ann Michel Distinguished Entrepreneur Award in 2015. In 2016, Temple Concord named the couple "Mensch of the Year." In 2017, they won the Grossman Family Innovation Award through AccessCNY for their commitment to the relocation and improvements for the David Clark Learning Center.

Laura Serway was born and raised in Central New York. Her work took her to numerous cities throughout the country until she decided to move back home in 2003. Retiring in late 2012, Laura now dedicates her time to current projects but still assists companies in Central New York with media relations and event marketing concepts.

Cindy Seymour moved from Florida to Central New York in 2003 and now considers Syracuse home. Cindy previously worked in law enforcement, serving as a Commander with the United Nations Mission in Kosovo. She is a strong advocate for the Susan G. Komen

Foundation, where she served as the Race Director in 2006; for Vera House, where she volunteered extensively and served as a board member from 2014 to 2015; and for the Q Center, which is a safe space for LGBTQ youth. In 2012, Laura and Cindy put in a commercial kitchen in the Q Center, promote cooking skills and facilitate a monthly meal where volunteers come and cook and eat with the kids. Cindy started a nonprofit in 2011 to help women veterans. The mission statement is “To empower, enrich and enlighten the lives of women”. Her nonprofit has recently partnered with Rescue Mission to build two tiny homes for homeless women veterans.

“New Beginnings” is the annual gala sponsored by the Vera House Foundation Board of Trustees to benefit the programs and services of Vera House, Inc. Now in its 27th year, the “New Beginnings” Gala will bring together over 500 guests to celebrate the season and support the agency’s mission to end domestic and sexual violence.

The evening will begin at 6 p.m. at the Oncenter with a cocktail hour and silent auction. A sit-down dinner will follow.

Tables of 10, as well as individual tickets, are available at patron and donor levels. Patron tables of 10 are \$2,500 and donor tables cost \$2,100. Donor tickets are \$210 per person. For more information or reservations, please call Vera House’s Special Events Office at (315) 425-0818 x2234, or make your reservations securely online by visiting www.verahouse.org.

The Vera House Foundation “New Beginnings” Gala is made possible through the generous underwriting support of the following organizations: Nascentia Health and Wegmans.

Vera House works to end domestic violence and sexual assault in our community through various programs and services. The agency provides a 24-hour crisis, support and information line, and emergency shelter to ensure that all individuals are safe from violence. Actively engaged in domestic and sexual violence education and training in the community, Vera House offers counseling and advocacy services for victims of domestic and sexual violence as well as youth and elder abuse education programs. For more information about Vera House, please visit our website at www.verahouse.org.

###