

Let's do lunch!



Where Enterprising Businesspeople Connect!

By Susan Scott

It started during a conversation in the car on the way home to Brooklin.

Sue Pitchforth and Debbie Williams hatched the idea of a luncheon series for businesspeople in Ontario after attending a similar event in Toronto.

"We've both owned businesses for several years but when we went to that lunch, we found it hard to relate to the challenges of a CEO of a large corporation in a room full of a 1000 people," explains Williams. "We wanted to create a friendly, positive group where both corporate and individual businesses would feel comfortable and motivated."

So, on that car ride home, they decided they would launch their own organization in the fabulous Durham Region and encourage people from all over Ontario - no matter what business they were in - to join them for lunch and business. Striving for stress relief, creativity, excitement and a fabulous Friday afternoon, while meeting new people at a business oriented event, they came up with the idea for Let's Do Lunch.

The pair, who have been friends for years, both live in Brooklin, just north of Whitby, organized their first luncheon in October 2004 at the Royal Ashburn Golf Club.

"We thought 'if 70 people join us for this wonderful event, we'll be happy,' says Pitchforth. To their surprise, 140 people showed up and the two haven't looked back.

Let's Do Lunch differs from other business organizations, in part, because there are four exhilarating events a year, while other groups often have monthly meetings and activities. Each event is totally different from the last, making the events excitedly anticipated by members and those hearing about the event. "Let's Do Lunch does very little advertising, it's grown mainly through word of mouth!" the two gals explain happily.

Today, Let's Do Lunch boasts close to 100 members, although luncheons still routinely bring in almost double that number.

The lunches attract businesspeople throughout Ontario who either currently own their own businesses, are contemplating business ownership, work for a business or large corporation or in the charitable sector.

"We've got women and men in all fields, from small to large businesses," says Pitchforth, who owns her own interior design businesses and serves on Whitby town council. Williams, owns a carwash and convenience store.

Everyone knows about the meetings you go to and hand out your business card counting down cards until you can leave, it's a mechanical thing. We wanted to do something different. We call it connecting. People want to connect with others and this is one way to do it," says Pitchforth. The group's website: www.letsdolunch.info features a list of members, upcoming events, sponsors and archived issues of the organization's newsletter.

Let's Do Lunch helps mentor young women interested in pursuing business careers. To that end, Pitchforth and Williams are very involved with Durham College. They also support a charity at each of their events. "We are both strong believers in giving back to the community," says Williams enthusiastically. "We have been involved with so many wonderful charities. Giving back to the community, through Let's Do Lunch, is motivating in itself." Once you've met these two passionate women you'll understand why Let's Do Lunch is such a success.

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