

Time to shop! Women's Expo returns to Centereach on Oct. 9

One of the North Shore's favorite fall events is turning 25! The Women's EXPO will be celebrated at the Middle Country Public Library in Centereach on Thursday, October 9 from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. More than just a trade show, it showcases the talents, products, and businesses of women entrepreneurs.

The Women's EXPO was created by the Middle Country Library Foundation and the Long Island Fund for Women and Girls to provide a platform for Long Island women to display their products, network with business professionals, and share resources. Over the years, it has grown from a small group of 30 women entrepreneurs into an anticipated event with more than 75 exhibitors and over 2000 attendees.

"It has been a highlight of my career to have participated in the EXPO since its inception," said Sophia Serlis-McPhillips, Director of Middle Country Public Library. "Fostering the growth of women entrepreneurs and small business on Long Island has been part of the Miller Business Center's mission and we are truly thankful to the Middle Country Library Foundation and all of our sponsors and partners for supporting the EXPO."

Twenty-five years later this popular event continues to support the work the library's Miller Business Center does all year to help local entrepreneurs.

"Supporting local entrepreneurship, especially women-owned businesses, is vital to the well-being of our community," says Alexandra Mallilo, SVP, Commercial Private Banking at BankUnited and EXPO Education Sponsor. "The EXPO isn't just a marketplace. Women entrepreneurs build lasting relationships through a network of professionals that extends far beyond the event. Shoppers get access to high-quality, unique products and they're helping these business owners turn passion into profits."

The Women's EXPO celebrates local entrepreneurs and underscores the vital role women-owned businesses play in strengthening Long Island's economy and community. Beyond attracting thousands of shoppers, the event fosters meaningful connections among the entrepreneurs themselves. "The EXPO gives women a unique chance to build connections, share experiences, and work together. When we come together in this way, we strengthen a network of support and creativity that helps women grow both personally and professionally," says Elizabeth Malafi, coordinator of the library's Miller Business Center.

This year, the spotlight shines on a diverse group of women business owners who will share their stories and showcase their work at the EXPO. Let's meet some of them:



Middle Country Public Library will magically transform into a shopper's paradise next Thursday.

Photo by Heidi Sutton/TBR News Media

Rebecca Dolber, R.E.D.

Creativity has always been at the heart of Rebecca Dolber's life. While working in film and television in New York City, she often found herself drawn to making things with her hands. She leaned fully into that creative drive, eventually launching her own jewelry line, R.E.D., in 2020.

Her work features striking, handmade designs crafted from beads and vintage objects, giving each piece a unique character. "My pieces are not trendy," Dolber explains. "I just make what I like." That philosophy, she says, has become one of her greatest strengths as a designer. "When you put things out with a true expression, people respond."

And respond they have. Dolber not only sells her jewelry but also hosts workshops from her studio in Center Moriches, sharing her love of artistry and craftsmanship with others. She's eager to take her business to a wider audience at her very first Women's EXPO, where she looks forward to connecting with new people and introducing them to her jewelry.

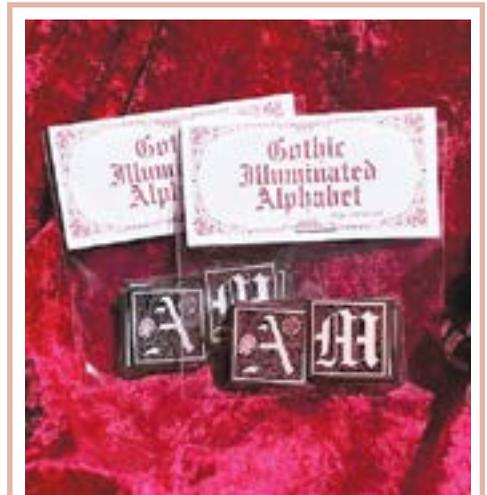


Kimberly Jackson-Brown, Kimberly N. Brown, Inc.

For Kimberly Jackson-Brown, the EXPO is more than just a place to showcase her products — it's an opportunity to grow as a business owner. She first learned about the event at a Long Island African American Chamber of Commerce meeting held at the Miller Business Center in 2024, and decided to exhibit for the very first time that year.

After beginning her entrepreneurial journey in clothing, in 2021 Jackson-Brown shifted her focus to Italian leather handbags and accessories, building a line that reflects both craftsmanship and style. Like many small business owners, she has continually searched for new and meaningful ways to market her brand and connect with customers.

The EXPO, she says, has been an important part of that journey. "It helped me learn more about networking," Jackson-Brown explains, adding that she's eager to build on those connections at her second EXPO this month. For her, the event isn't just about sales, it's about meeting new people.



Tina Daube, Tina Jane Art

For Tina Daube, art has always been a passion waiting for the right moment. This year, after completing her Master's degree in Information and Library Science, she finally found the time to focus and make it a priority. With that shift, she has not only built a larger, more cohesive body of work but has also taken the leap into starting her own art business. One of her first major steps will be showcasing her prints, stickers and jewelry at the Women's EXPO.

The event is a familiar one for Daube, who works at the Middle Country Public Library. Over the years, she has seen countless women entrepreneurs share their talents and stories. Now, she's eager to stand alongside them. She has even sought advice from past participants to prepare for setting up her first booth. "I'm excited to experience the EXPO from a whole new perspective," Daube says.



Women's EXPO Continued from page B11

Kayla Barthelme, Soul Creations

For Kayla Barthelme of Soul Creations, the process of crafting herbal remedies begins long before she mixes her products; it starts in the soil of her farm in Mattituck where she grows the very herbs she uses. Working on the East End has shaped her approach to business and creativity.

"It is so inspiring," Barthelme says. "I am surrounded by so many hardworking farmers, fishermen, and business owners who have devoted their lives to their craft."

She is excited to showcase her products for the third time at Women's EXPO. "It is such a welcoming environment for female entrepreneurs from all backgrounds to come together," she explains.

For Barthelme, the EXPO is more than a one-day event, she returns throughout the year to participate in workshops and programs at the Miller Business Center that help her grow her business.



Malacia Anderson, Li Li's Creations

Malacia Anderson began sewing when she was 10 years old at the local 4H, but it was her mother who has been her biggest inspiration. She recalls, "My mother would put me to bed and then spend the evening creating a new dress for me to wear the next day."

That legacy of creativity and love for fashion stayed with her. In 2013, Anderson launched Li Li's Creations, a clothing line of African-inspired designs with rich cultural roots. Each piece is custom-made with one goal in mind — "to help women feel confident when they walk into a room."

One of her proudest career moments came in a most glamorous way with supermodel Iman sharing a photo of herself on Instagram, draped in a one-of-a-kind Li Li's Creations kimono.

Anderson is looking forward to sharing her unique designs at her first EXPO.



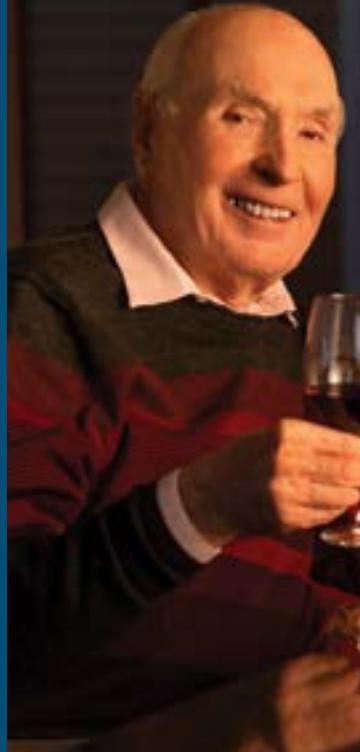
The 25th annual Women's EXPO will take place on Thursday, October 9 at the Middle Country Public Library, 101 Eastwood Blvd, Centereach from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Snacks and lunch will be available for purchase in the EXPO Cafe. Admission is free. For further information, please call the library at 631-585-9393 or visit www.womensEXPOli.org.

The Animal Lover



The Musician

The Wine Enthusiast



Tailored to you.

Enjoy a community as unique as you are.

At Jefferson's Ferry, we believe retirement should be as unique as you are. With a variety of personalized services, amenities and activities, we tailor your experience to match your interests and lifestyle. Whether you're looking to stay active, explore new hobbies or simply relax, we ensure that every aspect of retirement is designed with you in mind.

Ready to find your perfect fit?

Call 631-257-0769

or visit jeffersonsferry.com today!




**Jefferson's
Ferry**