

## SCENE

THE WEEK OF MARCH 27 - APRIL 3, 2015

*Mindy Minerva**A woman who likes to fulfill dreams*

TRY AS YOU might, you can't get Mindy Minerva to talk about herself.

This dynamic, attractive, articulate lady who heads up the Visiting Nurse Association's funding arm's board of trustees, can speak volumes on the passion she has for the organization that's committed to managing the health and well being of anyone wherever they're needed and for whomever they are needed. She can quote statistics highlighting the amount of work the VNA has done for the numbers of people in all kinds of circumstances over how long a period of time. She can tell personal, heart-warming stories about when, where, and how the VNA has changed lives, and helped caregivers as much as those needing the care.

But she's reluctant to share the vital active role she herself plays in raising the hundreds of thousands of dollars necessary to provide those services to every need and every challenge of 21st century health care.

Meet Mindy Minerva – Brooklyn born and raised – a city kid, she'll tell you....married to a terrific husband named Dan...another city kid, she explains, but one who loves the sea and wide open spaces....mother of three, who gave up her career with a major company in New York to raise her children....a choice she made when she had three under 5 years of age and was commuting to New York while being the perfect mom. A mom who, when Craig, Lindsay and Corey were in school, devoted her time to being involved in school and parent activities, a mom who was happy she opted for the "joys of motherhood" over being in human resources for City Corp. A mom who, even now, wants to brag about her children and looks forward to the September wedding of her son Corey, when his fiancé Rachel, will also become part of the Minerva family.

Meet Mindy Minerva, the young bride who, with her husband, purchased their first home in Marlboro to get closer to those wide open spaces they both loved, then later moved to homes in Rumson and Fair Haven before settling ten years ago in Locust – the closest they've been to the water and a residence with spectacular views they truly appreciate.

Meet Mindy Minerva, the daughter, also daughter-in-law, who was following a parent's wishes and caring for each in their homes rather than in other facilities "because that's where they wanted to be, like almost everybody."

Then you'll know a little more about the Mindy Minerva who has to do more than show appreciation for all the VNA did for her and her family at a time they needed it. That will tell you a bit about the energetic, hard-working woman who now devotes no less than 40 to 50 hours a week doing everything she can to ensure that when anyone, anywhere, needs the help of the Visiting Nurse Association, it will always be there to provide what Mindy refers to as extraordinary service by an extraordinary team.

After discovering firsthand how VNA's services provide assistance for anyone in need, Minerva accepted an invitation to chair one of the major fundraisers of the organization, its first Stately Homes by the Sea. That was nine years ago, and she chaired three others since then. This year, the designer house benefit is being chaired by others, Minerva said, but she is very much a part of the enthusiasm which surrounds the bi-annual event that draws more than 13,000 people during a 5 week presentation.

The Visiting Nurses Association was founded under the leadership of the late Geraldine Thompson in 1912, to improve prison conditions and achieve a more humane approach to public assistance. Today, it is the VNA Health Group, still comprised of dedicated workers who are the region's premier provider of home health, hospice and community health services.

In 1984, the VNACJ Foundation, the Visiting Nurses Association of Central Jersey was established as the fundraising arm of the VNA, and a volunteer Board of Trustees was established to oversee the foundation. Minerva was named chairman of that board for 2015 and is tackling that all encompassing job with the same verve, spirit and élan in which she takes on every challenge. As chairman, she spends a lot of time speaking to others about the VNA and all it accomplishes, developing relationships, overseeing events, constantly seeking philanthropic efforts to ensure the VNA Health Group's newest goal – its 2020 Vision campaign – is funded. The Vision is to continue providing expert, compassionate care in patients' homes and other locations within the community, allowing the Health Group to

recruit top notch leaders to champion their innovative measures, while still providing the personal, at home care for all who ask. Minerva is eager to point out her job is made so much easier by all the volunteers who give so much of themselves, from the smart vital women who run the highly successful thrift shop in Manasquan, to the 1,000 volunteers who make the show house such a huge success every other year. She points with pride to the nurses, social workers, home health care specialists, pathologists, hospice workers, counselors and so many other professionals who keep the VNA Health Group standards as high as they are. She's proud the VNA has now partnered with the VPS, Visiting Physician Services in Tinton Falls who actually make old-fashioned house calls as needed.

With all her volunteer activity with the VNA, Minerva concedes she does not have a lot of free time to devote to other pursuits, something that bothers her not at all. But she does enjoy relaxing with a good book, taking in the beauty of the waterviews from her home, and relaxing with her family. The Minervas' nest away from home is on a quiet stretch of Long Beach Island where they can track migratory birds in their flight patterns, and simply soak in the beauty and tranquility of the ocean they adore.

But it's obvious, no matter where she is, no matter what she's doing, the VNA that gives so much for others, is never from her mind – and always in her heart.

By Muriel J. Smith

