

Happenings

Family Services to host Family of the Year Awards

The Ruge family and Don and Jill Veith to be celebrated for community contributions



Family Services will honor the Ruge family, left, and Don and Jill Veith as its' Family of the Year honorees.

-Courtesy photos

Two local families with decades of service in the community have been selected as recipients of Family Services' 2020 Family of the Year Awards. The Ruge Family, of Ruge Automotive, with locations in Rhinebeck and Millbrook, is being recognized with The Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of their significant impact throughout the Hudson Valley. Don and Jill Veith, of Veith Electric in Poughkeepsie, have been selected for The Good Neighbor Award for their dedicated community work as "unsung" heroes.

The Ruges and Veiths will be celebrated at the Family of the Year Awards on Thursday, April 30, from 5:30 to 9 p.m., at The Grandview, 176 Rinaldi Boulevard, Poughkeepsie.

For 30 years, Family Services has honored families who make significant contributions and reflect the ideals of Family Services by helping to create stronger communities where everyone has the opportunity to lead their best lives.

"We are delighted to shine a spotlight on the Ruge and Veith Families, both of whom have been so deeply involved in and committed to our Hudson Valley community, while also having demonstrated huge success in their respective professional and business pursuits," said Family Services' CEO, Brian Doyle.

This year's Family of the Year Awards dinner will be organized by Chair, Filomena Fanelli, and a dedicated team of community volunteers and agency staff. Major sponsors (as of publication time)

include: Nuvance Health; iHeart Media; Veith Electric; Marshall and Sterling; Feldman, Kleidman, Coffey & Sappe LLP; Rhinebeck Bank; and Ruge's Automotive.

"There are so many good people in this community who are deserving of the Family of the Year award; we're truly honored to have been selected and express our deepest gratitude to all involved," said Lewis Ruge, founder of Ruge's Automotive. "We love living, working, and volunteering in the Hudson Valley. We consider ourselves very fortunate and I enjoy every moment of it all."

In accepting the Good Neighbor Award, Don Veith, president of Veith Electric said, "Hard work and individual achievement is all well and good, but the commu-

nity has to rise up. By assisting Family Services, many people have received the necessary help they have needed and it is very gratifying to me to be a part of that."

The Family of the Year Awards dinner not only recognizes the strong commitment of the honorees, but also raises significant funds to support Family Services' vital work in Dutchess, Orange and Ulster Counties. To purchase tickets to the event, please visit <http://familyservicesny.org/events/2020-family-of-the-year-awards/>. For more information about Family Services, or to receive information on Family of the Year sponsorship and advertisement opportunities, please contact Whitney Humphrey, Director of Development, at 845-452-1110 ext. 3192 or whumphrey@familyservicesny.org.

Tips for hiring an ethical tax professional

The New York State Department of Taxation and Finance provides a checklist to help ensure that taxpayers who decide to hire a tax professional choose a qualified and ethical one.

Shop around. Friends, family, neighbors and coworkers may be able to refer

you to an ethical and competent tax preparer. Meet with all the tax professionals you're considering hiring. It's important to know if they've worked with others in similar tax situations, how long they've been preparing returns, and how you'll communicate moving forward.

You may be able to read reviews from previous clients. This will help you get a sense of the quality of the preparer's work, their timeliness, and customer service.

Check credentials. Preparers registered with New York State must meet continuing education requirements and minimum qualifications. Attorneys, certified public accountants and IRS enrolled agents aren't required to register, but do have other professional requirements. Ask to see the preparer's registration certificate or proof that they don't need to register. You can also verify that a tax preparer is registered online.

Ask about fees. Ask to see a list of fees up front. The fees should be directly related to the services provided and not the refund amount. Tax preparers in New York City must display their fees and their credentials in plain sight. Also, by law, preparers cannot charge to e-file your tax return in NYS.

Protect your refund. The fastest and safest way to receive your refund is to have it directly deposited into your bank account.

Ensure security. It's critical that your private information is protected. Question any potential preparer about how your sensitive data will be safeguarded during the tax filing process and after your return

has been filed, as well as how many people will have access to your files.

Look for red flags. Never hire a preparer who won't sign or electronically file (e-file) your return, and never sign a return before it's fully prepared. You and your preparer must both sign your completed return. Preparers must include their federal preparer tax identification number (PTIN) or Social Security number on the return, and either their New York State registration number or exclusion code.

Beware of preparers who say they will prepare your return for a percentage of the refund. If a tax preparer won't provide information about fees, this should tip you off that something isn't right. Never hire a preparer who promises a large refund without reviewing your information, and steer clear of those who suggest you claim a bogus deduction or credit.

In the end, you are ultimately responsible for the information reported on your tax return and any amounts you owe. Review your return carefully before it is filed. For more information, visit <https://www.tax.ny.gov/pit/tips-hiring-a-preparer.htm>.

If you suspect that a tax preparer is engaged in illegal or improper conduct, file a complaint with the NYS Tax Department online or by phone at (518) 530-HELP.

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