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Business

SCORE Helps Entrepreneur Change the Way Seniors Maintain Wellness

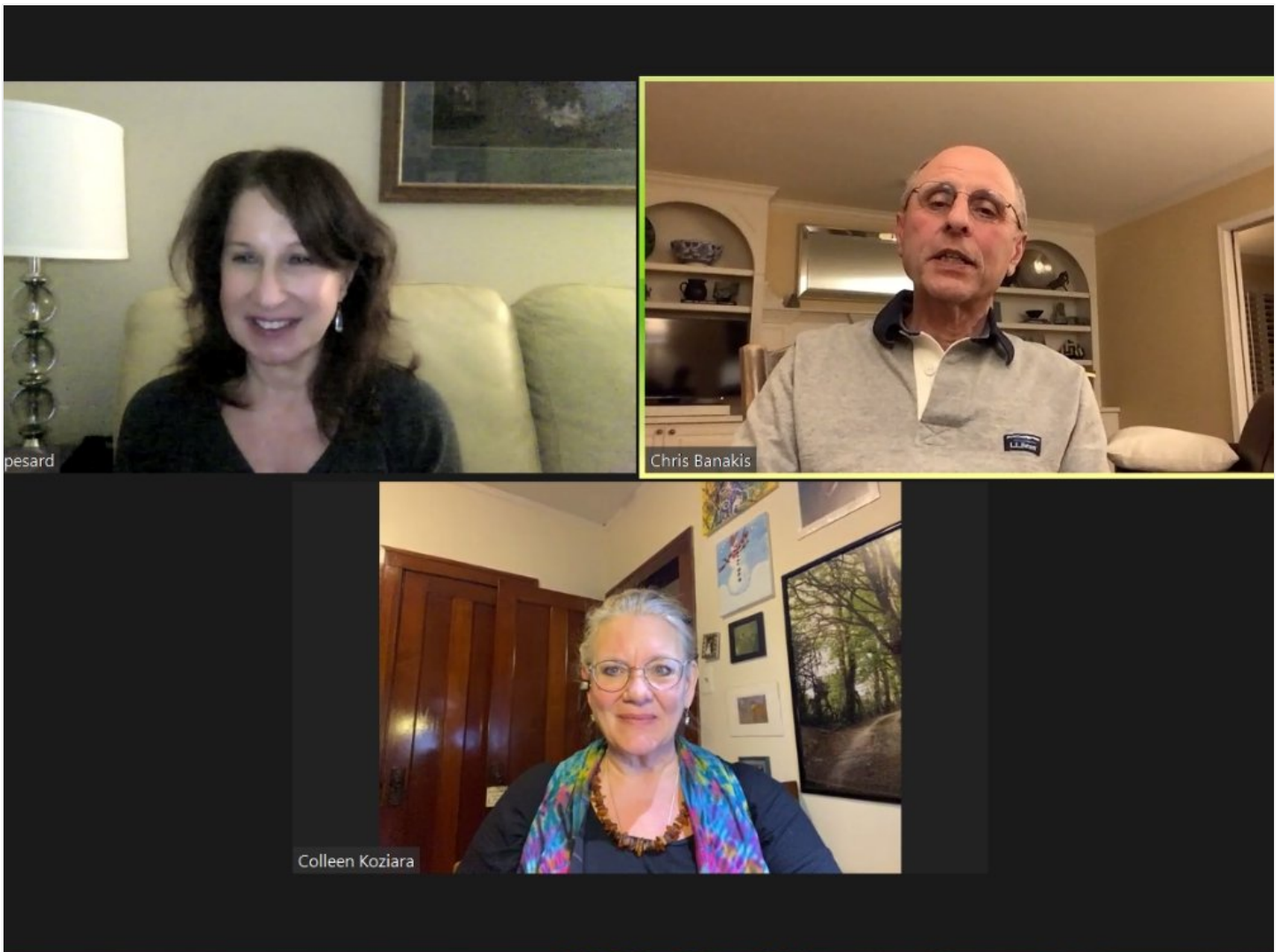
Colleen Koziara believes the path to senior wellness goes far 'beyond bingo'



Alan Blitz, Volunteer Media Writer, Community Contributor

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SCORE North Cook and Lake County client Colleen Koziara (center), CEO of Beyond Bingo, co-mentors with

Karen Spesard and Chris Banakis. "Bingo is clearly not front and center in the care plans we recommend for our clients," Koziara points out. (SCORE North Cook and Lake County)

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Beyond Bingo, has likely called her last Bingo game.

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Her passion has led to the establishment her consulting company, Beyond Bingo, to create a "Multi-Dimensional Whole Life Wellness Program" designed to support seniors in maintaining their independence.

"Bingo is clearly not front and center in the care plans we recommend for our clients," she points out. Visit: <http://www.beyond-bingo.com/>

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Let's go!

Koziara is a Senior Wellness Consultant and Programming Specialist, who is also a Nationally Certified Dementia Care Practitioner Trainer, a Certified Dementia Care Practitioner, A Certified Chair Yoga Instructor.

As a highly skilled artist, art instructor and muralist, Koziara facilitates creative art programming for seniors at all care levels from independent through Memorycare and End of Life, as well as Murals To Remember, a Beyond Bingo, Inc., trademarked program that engages the entire

community in the creation of reminiscence murals in senior communities and community centers.

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Colleen Koziara's SCORE Mentoring Experience: In Her Own Words

In a recent interview, Colleen shared many insights about her entrepreneurial experience and how her SCORE North Cook and Lake County mentors, Karen Spesard, Chris Banakis and Arnold Goldberg, assisted in developing her business. Visit: <https://northchicago.score.org/>

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What do you do?

Beyond Bingo's goal is to create and bring to the world, Multidimensional Whole Life Wellness Programming, that is carefully designed to support Seniors in maintaining their independence; inspiring their continued personal growth and exploration; and filling their lives with joy and a

renewed sense of purpose.

Our team specializes in the creation of signature programming models, conducts staff and management training, and has presented at ASA, ICAA and Leading Age conferences with average participant feedback scores of 87% or higher.

Colleen is a named creator on the 2010, and a named contributor on the 2012 ICAA International Innovators Award Winners for outstanding senior programming.

What inspired you to start your business?

It is very simple. I want to change the world. I believe Seniors have value to our society, our children and our world. I believe they are capable and deserve our respect and efforts. not lip-service and warehousing.

What have been the high and low points of being a business owner?

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High Points: Making a difference. Seeing a resident or a staff member that may never have painted before create something they are proud of. Even better, seeing their face when others compliment them! or their children or grandchildren try to "make off" with their creations to frame and hang on their walls! There is no better feeling in the whole world than helping someone know that they are special and that they can create beauty in the world that others appreciate.

Low Point: I had truly believed that our yearlong lockdown and the massive negative effects it had on the seniors would have taught us as an industry. That we would have learned, really learned how important programming was and that I would see a real shift in our industry where it needs to be in staff and supplies and budget for engagement programming.

What have you learned from your experiences as a business owner? You must be adamant about setting a schedule, carving out personal time and making it a priority. This was my greatest lesson during the lockdown. I had no idea just how exhausted I was until I finally had some time off.

Now I schedule my weekends off. I will make exceptions two times per month on Saturdays for a special client or rescheduling, especially if Covid-19 is the issue. But Sundays I will not work and beginning in January, I only take four evening sessions a month.

What advice would you give to someone thinking of starting a small business?

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My very first SCORE mentor knew the score! He said it is 16-hour days, seven days a week for about three years until you get there if you truly want to make this work. Are you REALLY ready for that? Don't start if you are not. He was absolutely correct.

The time requirement is FAR beyond whatever you might have imagined. Be sure you are ready. but if you think about all this and still want to do it? It is the absolute BEST decision I ever made! I wouldn't change it for the world.

What influenced you to seek help from SCORE?

A friend told me about them, I looked them up at the library on the northside, and that is where I met George Fink, my first mentor. Since I knew absolutely nothing about starting a business, it seemed like a good idea. I even laugh myself at the complete naivete in that statement. I am still amazed I have done this sometimes.

How Score Helped?

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Oh my goodness. How they have helped. Books, additional experts they have brought in, suggestions, work lists and of course, my mentors. (SCORE is funded by the Small Business Administration)

What would you tell a fellow business owner about SCORE?

I have already sent three friends considering starting businesses to SCORE in their area. My assistant prior to Covid-19 got temporary business support after starting with me and learning about SCORE. SCORE helped me apply for the SBA EIDL as well!

To request free business mentoring services, visit:

<https://northchicago.score.org/>

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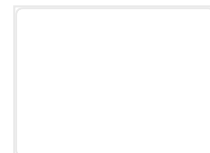


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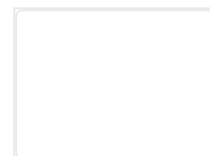
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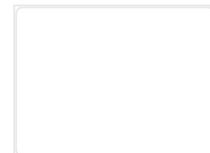
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