

Bloomfield Hills

AN EXCLUSIVE NEWSLETTER FOR THE RESIDENTS OF BLOOMFIELD HILLS

APRIL 2015

Living



Donna Yost is featured with The Life Chest in our "Making A Difference" article this month!

100
UNFORGETTABLE
DRESSES

making a DIFFERENCE

Donna Yost: Architect of Dreams ... Past and Present

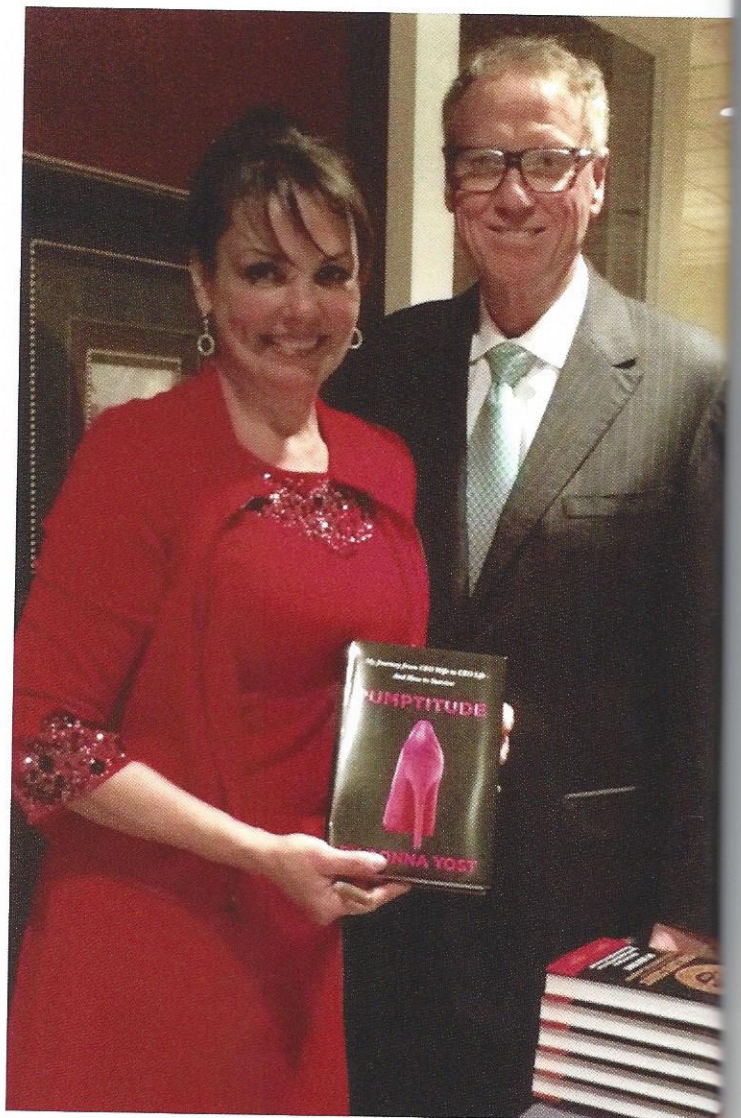
By: Lynn Stinson

When it's all said and done, preserving our heritage is what we all hope to do. Most of us have multitudes of memories that we hold dear, whether it's our life or the lives of our family members.

Parents, grandparents, students, veterans and even small children ... all need a place that is special, tasteful and beautiful.

Mementos, pictures, special keepsakes and letters that are special to only us, deserve to be kept in a special place.

Enter the CEO and President of The Original Life Chest, Donna Yost.



Donna and Kim Yost at the *Pumptide* book signing.

"The Life Chest" is a beautiful piece of furniture designed to contain and preserve such memories. Donna's husband, Kim Yost, originally created The Life Chest. He is a marketing genius for some of the largest furniture corporations nationwide and knows the value of committing to a dream and making it a reality. The original design pattern is framed and hangs on the wall in The Original Life Chest offices in Troy, Michigan.

Although the concept for the Original Life Chest began in 1968, the idea lay dormant and was waiting to be discovered until Donna Yost, Kim's lovely wife, decided the time had come to run with the project; and run she did! A high fashion, high-energy entrepreneur, Donna is a 24-hour kind of gal. One of those amazing people that doesn't seem to require much sleep, she is either on a plane or jumping out of one (literally), while selling her enthusiasm for The Original Life Chest the entire time. It is her focus and mission to help everyone preserve their heritage. "It's not about the money, it's

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Donna Yost and Julie Donegan at The Original Life Chest executive offices.



The Life Chest preserves photos, keepsakes and mementos.



Donna Yost presenting President George Bush with a Life Chest for his 90th birthday.

about the mission," Donna states with her trademark passion for the cause.

These magnificent custom made chests have as many opportunities for use as one can imagine. College students, baby gifts, wedding shower gifts and hometown heroes ensure their memories are treasured within the Life Chest. As a special gift in the living room at Christmas time or in a hospital room, these chests literally create conversation and memories.

Veterans find themselves wanting to be remembered before and after tours of duty. Families are brought closer during their time apart by sharing the keepsakes within the chest.

Amazing events happen to people with a mindset of unlimited possibilities. One such event happened when Donna was standing in line buying coffee in South Carolina near Ft. Bragg where she met Mike Elliott, the president and founder of the All Veteran Parachute Team (all-veterantroupe.com). Becoming friends they shared their mutual ideas. Mike Elliott described his mission to bring attention to the wounded soldiers who are dealing with PTSD. "Twenty-four veterans with PTSD commit suicide daily," he stated somberly.

His biography states that "With over 9,000 skydives as a U.S. Army Golden Knight, Mike Elliott is the master of the sky and considered to be the world's #1

paratrooper." Elliott has taken President George W. Bush sky diving on his 80th, 85th and 90th birthdays. On his 90th birthday, the senior Bush was presented with his own Life Chest after his successful jump with Mike. Referring to the Life Chest as "the most soulful product on the planet, because it's about our souls," Mike has pledged his help, the help of 100 volunteers, and 250 Life Chests to be given to veterans with combat-related disabilities. Recently, Donna was taken on a jump with Mike guiding her every foot of the way. Flashing her trademark smile, she infused everyone around her with her joy.

Donna states in her biography, *Pumptitude*, "Did I know I would be jumping out of a plane to bring awareness to the world about the soldiers who have sacrificed so much for our freedom? Definitely not, just as I could not have imagined how powerful it would be to attend conferences and hear the fears and triumphs of young women, men and children fighting for their lives as they battle cancer."

She goes on to say, "When I dream, I dream big. And when I decided to take on The Life Chest it was no different. The faith I have that there is a heartfelt purpose behind The Life Chest leads me every day."

Her biography, "Pumptitude" ... My Journey from CEO Wife to CEO Life – and How to Survive, is now available for purchase at Pumptitude.com.

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Would you like to have someone from your volunteer organization featured in the neighborhood publication? We are looking for anyone who has a good making a difference story to share! For more information please email Susan Kehoe at svkehoe.n2pub@gmail.com.