

## PARTNERSHIP BRINGS NEW LIFE TO ARTS CENTER, HISTORIC MEETINGHOUSE

*Abington Art Center and Calfayan Construction partner on “old fashioned barn raising” bringing historic Abington meetinghouse into the 21<sup>st</sup> century as an arts center.*

**PHILADELPHIA, PA - April 1, 2010** - The challenge for the Abington Art Center (AAC) could be judged as overwhelming and too big to tackle: create an arts space while maintaining a Quaker Meetinghouse circa 1836 that sits in the middle of the Arts Center’s property.

Enter Calfayan Construction Associates and its founders Reis and Laura Calfayan whose volunteer efforts and a “good old-fashioned barn raising” have created a new out-building for art while preserving the nearby Meetinghouse.

On April 27, this collaboration will be recognized by the Arts & Business Council of Greater Philadelphia as a Business and Arts Partnership of the Year at its Annual Awards Luncheon to be held at the Pennsylvania Convention Center.

When the AAC became part of the Meetinghouse Restoration Committee, Reis volunteered to be project manager for the new outbuilding, explains Laura Burnham, AAC executive director.

“We had planned to use the Meetinghouse for art displays, readings and other events but the building doesn’t have modern amenities like electricity and plumbing. So we pitched the idea of a good old-fashioned barn raising to build a new structure adjoining the historic Meetinghouse. This way, the Meetinghouse would complement the artistic programs offered in the new structure,” Burnham adds.

The Calfayans say they saw the fun in collaborating on the pro bono project and for several weekends last summer, they worked side-by-side with the AAC staff, family members and community volunteers on the project.

“The new building provides restroom facilities, a water supply and storage that will compliment the newly-restored Meetinghouse and making it a viable public space,” Burnham says.

Although Burnham calculates the Calfayans contributed at least \$20,000 in labor and materials, “their willingness to really teach us some of the basics of construction and make everyone a part of this barn-raising” was invaluable.

And that’s why this arts business and arts partnership is being honored this year, says Karen B. Davis, President and CEO of the Arts & Business Council. “Of course the arts benefit by sponsorships and financial support, but it’s these partnerships where everyone comes together as a team that creates a lasting impact,” Davis adds.

“PNC Arts Alive, a five-year \$5 million grants initiative that supports the arts in the region, is pleased to be Awards 2010 presenting sponsor,” says Bill Mills, president of PNC for Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey.

“The arts play an integral role in our region’s economy and we are glad to support the arts through PNC Arts Alive and in particular through the Arts & Business Council’s Awards Luncheon,” Mills adds.

**About the Arts & Business Council of Greater Philadelphia**

The Arts & Business Council of Greater Philadelphia, an affiliate of the Greater Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce, develops relationships between business and the arts for the mutual benefit of both and in support of the advancement of the Greater Philadelphia Region. For more information, visit [www.artsandbusinessphila.org](http://www.artsandbusinessphila.org) or call 215.790.3620.