



HMK Principal Tim Kurtz (L) and Personal Lines Agent Gail Kitson (R) are trusted confidants of Bell Gate Farm owner, Stephanie Stevens (C)

Dinner parties for over 200 guests can easily be accommodated inside the all-weather barn. Various décor options are available for the discerning party planner.
Alyssa Eve Csuk Photography

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Reserved seating for the bride and groom is the centerpiece of this wedding reception. Unparalleled attention to detail is a hallmark of the Bell Gate Farm service team.
Alyssa Eve Csuk Photography



Intimate conversation areas are strategically integrated throughout the first and second levels of the beautifully renovated establishment.
Alyssa Eve Csuk Photography

It is now September 15 and Bell Gate Farm's first event is scheduled for October 8! "We literally had three weeks to complete the major renovations," said an astonished Landrigan. "My job, as I saw it, was to make Stephanie's dream a reality."

If any one element had not aligned, the October opening would have been in jeopardy. "Vendors like Monarch Precast came through big time. Paul Stein, President, was on site for the concrete septic tank installation and it couldn't have happened without him," according to Landrigan.

Not one person dropped the ball.

Landrigan continues, "The Department of Health performed the kitchen inspection within five days from our initial request, which is unheard of these days." And thanks to Singer Equipment Company and the kitchen operator, Rodale, and their collective extensive experience and professionalism, the kitchen passed 100%! The permit was literally received the day before the Certificate of Occupancy."

Stephanie remained unwavering and steadfast with her vision, even when others mired in the organized chaos couldn't see as clearly as she.

This is a story about how Stephanie Stevens followed in her father's footsteps and kept the memory of Richard and his beloved wife, Joanne, alive. It's a story about a single mother who master minded a phenomenal undertaking...the total transformation of a rural Coopersburg property into a state-of-the-art event venue, impressive enough to draw corporate event planners and brides-to-be from all over the northeast, including New York and Philadelphia!

In the end, Stephanie's stars were aligned and her father's advice rang true. The fruits of her labor can be seen in this photo story.

Message from the President



Anyone who knows HMK knows we are constantly motivated to do what is right for our customers. In the 40 years I have been with HMK – the last 23 as President and CEO – that principle has guided us through every major decision we made. HMK is unwavering in this regard. So when we observed national, publicly-owned brokers aggressively acquiring locally-owned, independent agencies throughout the country, we were inspired to do something significant that would ensure our agency future and protect our clients.

Two years ago, HMK initiated a strategy to strengthen our position and laid out a plan to join forces with 23 other like-minded agencies throughout the United States. The new organization, now a reality, has \$158 million in annual revenues and more than 750 employees in 40 offices across 15 states. We call our new parent company The Alera Group. Our enhanced services to clients will include combined national resources, constant collaboration, additional technical expertise, shared best practices and cutting-edge innovative thinking. Our local ownership remains intact; our employees remain committed to our success and we feel confident about the future.

Alera means success. It represents speed, simplicity, and efficiency, as well as a sense of alertness and clarity. It is clear to me that as an Alera Group Company HMK is now positioned stronger than ever before.

Much has evolved since our founding in 1914. We remain firmly rooted in our local community but now have access to tremendous resources enabling us to serve customers at new levels. From all of us here at HMK, thank you for the trust you have placed in us. Doing what is right for you, our customers, will always be at the core of our evolution.



Welcome to Bell Gate Farm in Coopersburg, Pa., now open for business. Planning a wedding or special corporate affair? The perfect setting awaits you here.
Steve Wolfe Photography

The Challenge of a Lifetime

Meet HMK client Stephanie Stevens and Bell Gate Farm

"If you are faced with a challenge that terrifies you but you know that you can do it, it is the right thing to do."

That was the advice prominent Allentown attorney Richard F. Stevens offered his daughter, Stephanie, 20 years ago. Those words of wisdom became Stephanie's personal mantra as she moved through life and challenges presented themselves all too willingly. Additionally, Stephanie's parents embedded in her an unconditional love for her family, a philanthropic soul, and an unwavering work ethic.



Stephanie Stevens joyfully embraces original silo on her estate. She has breathed new life into the weathered property and her discerning design skills are evident throughout.

Alysha Eve Csuk Photography



Joe Landrigan, AIA, LEED AP, President, SAGE Design-Build, Inc. Joe's job, as he saw it, was to "make Stephanie's dream a reality" within an almost impossible time frame!

The concept of turning Bell Gate Farm into a state-of-the-art event center came to Stephanie after delivering her Mother's eulogy. Once she had completed her speech Stephanie stepped outside of what had now become "her barn" for a moment to collect herself. She

overheard friends and even family members comment on how she would never be able to financially support the 233 acres of land and the historic buildings she had just inherited. Was her childhood home truly in jeopardy?

At precisely that moment, Stephanie's unborn baby kicked so hard that it broke her from her self-sabotaging thoughts and she had an epiphany. She had just inherited an amazing space and knew that she could turn it into an extraordinary events venue. She could utilize her 16-year background in the production field when she had created never before done events for clients like American Express, Microsoft, and Verizon, to name a few. She could take that knowledge and experience and truly make Bell Gate Farm a destination for the masses.

In order to better understand Stephanie's successes, it's important to look at her failures, of which she admits there were many. In fact, any psychologist's list of the top five life events known to cause major trauma and potentially put someone over the edge were condensed into six horrific months for Stephanie: the loss of her parents who were both best friends and confidantes, childbirth, divorce, a serious illness, a significant career change and a long-distance move.

Stephanie not only persevered, she prospered. Her father's mantra kept ringing in her ears, and her mother's never wavering support of her endeavors gave her the energy and courage needed to put one foot in front of the other and move forward...life must go on.

Stephanie was certainly "challenged" and it was perfectly clear to her what "the right thing to do was." In February of 2013 she left Pittsburgh, leaving all of her belongings behind, and sought refuge with then five-month-old baby Parker at the family home: Bell Gate Farm, 7081 Bell Gate Road in Coopersburg.

Shortly thereafter, Stevens began making her dream into a reality by notifying the proper channels of her intentions and identifying the best team to execute her plan. That was when she met Joe Landrigan of SAGE Design-Build.



The closest attention is given to every decorative detail at Bell Gate Farm.
Alysha Eve Csuk Photography

The warm, welcoming facade of Bell Gate Farm's newly renovated barn is the perfect entrance for a bride and groom or an upscale corporate affair.
Steve Wolfe Photography



Yard games and outdoor activities including a huge fire pit and a conversation area draped with blankets for chilly evenings allow guests to enjoy themselves al fresco style.

Steve Wolf Photography

According to Joe, "Stephanie had an incredible yet complex vision for the property. We were in the idea and pricing phase for almost six months. Once building permits were secured in March of 2016 the real fun began! But this was not your run-of-the-mill project by any stretch of the imagination." Unforeseen challenges including the need for a new septic system and insurance company rejections would have deterred even the heartiest of entrepreneurs but Richard Stevens' advice about "persevering even when life throws you challenges" helped his daughter anchor herself safely through the storms.

"Having had an attorney as a father is interesting," says Stephanie. "I learned at a very early age that all actions have consequences. I was even terrified to ever consider having a party in the house. Mom and Dad always told me that if anything were to happen, we could be libel and possibly lose everything we worked so hard to achieve!" Smart tactic. But she smiles at the memory.

As part of the process of lining up all her ducks in a row from a business perspective, Stephanie sought the help of Tim Kurtz, an experienced agent and principal of HMK Insurance. There was a moment when the plug was almost pulled because of a major setback with one of the providers. Remembering her parents' rules about parties, this particular issue was a deal breaker for Stephanie, but in 24 hours Kurtz went to bat for her and turned the next-to-impossible insurance nightmare into an affordable policy that addressed all of the multifaceted issues on the commercial property.

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The Stevens' homestead, previously occupied by prominent Allentown attorney Richard Stevens and his wife, Joanne, rests peacefully adjacent to the newly renovated barn. Daughter Stephanie now lives in the home with her daughter, Parker.
Alysha Eve Csuk Photography