

AVENUE

Silver Spoon

For 30 years, from the grandest galas to anti-hunger organizations, GREAT PERFORMANCES has been serving New Yorkers from the heart

founded in 1979 as an all-female waitress staffing service, GREAT PERFORMANCES has since gone through several iterations. “We evolved through service,” says C.E.O. Liz Neumark of the company’s origins. “As a result, we really believe that, yes, people remember the food and we care deeply about the food, it’s vitally important—but what’s most important is how you are served. That remains a core value to us.” So while GREAT PERFORMANCES’ history has included many milestones (most obviously being the introduction of men to its staff), a strong commitment to service remains steadfast.

Today, from its Hudson Square headquarters just west of Soho, GREAT PERFORMANCES is renowned as one of the premier event planning and catering companies in the country. It has a full staff of 160 employees, which blossoms to approximately 800 when the on-call staff is needed. And needed they are: GREAT PERFORMANCES oversees 1,200 events annually, from intimate dinners to the highly anticipated non-profit and social events of

the season at the Grand Ballroom of The Plaza Hotel and Jazz at Lincoln Center. “The challenge is putting out 500 gorgeous matching plates and creating the kind of meals you can do when cooking for a small group.” Neumark says. “It’s the balancing of these extremes that makes things interesting.”

“People who come to our events feel taken care of,” she says. “They feel nurtured. I feel they are guests in my house. We hope they leave with that feeling.” In an effort to ensure that nurturing begins long before the food is served, GREAT PERFORMANCES started its own organic farm in Hudson Valley. The only national catering company to own its own farm. GREAT

PERFORMANCES is confident in its ingredients, from seedlings to harvest. Situated on 60 acres in Kinderhook, N.Y., including a pond used for irrigation and 10 acres of vegetable beds, Katchkie Farms is at the heart of GREAT PERFORMANCES.



“We thought, if we grew it and put our passion into it, you’d be able to taste the love in our food,” Neumark explains... and you can.

Photo credit: Chris Eastland, Johannes Courtens, Allan Zepeda

GREAT PERFORMANCES®

304 Hudson Street New York, NY 10013 T 212.727.2424 F 212.727.2820 greatperformances.com

AVENUE

Katchkie Farm was the perfect opportunity for GREAT PERFORMANCES to “go back to basics,” as Neumark says. This year the fall harvest included beets, butternut squash, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celeriac, chard, cilantro, jalapenos, kale, leeks, onions, poblano peppers, parsley, radishes and rutabagas, which all wound up on the plates at various GREAT PERFORMANCES events.

While the organic farm is an integral part of the company’s catering service, Neumark notes that Mother Nature, unlike GREAT PERFORMANCES, doesn’t take orders. So the caterer still works with produce suppliers to ensure it meets every clients’ menu request. “We will never grow enough food to cover all of our vegetables,” Neumark acknowledges,” but it’s sort of a revelation for everyone to reconnect with where food comes from.” Beyond Katchkie and other farms in the area, GREAT PERFORMANCES has a further commitment to local eating, frequently participating in events like Just Food’s Let Us Eat Local and *Edible* magazine’s Eat Drink Local Week.

Some of the most important individuals experiencing the revelation of local food firsthand are the children who benefit from Katchkie Farm’s non-profit, The Sylvia Center, created to educate

and inspire kids to eat well. The organization offers hands-on cooking classes and field trips to the farm where children learn about produce from the time it’s planted in the earth to the time arrives on their plates.

“Seeing so much prosperity and so much bounty, we feel we’re in a position—because we’re in this industry—to really share it,” Neumark continues. “Our food tastes better knowing that we share it.” So beyond catering and doing its part to educate the community, GREAT PERFORMANCES allots 5-to-10 percent of its harvest each year to Yorkville Common Pantry and other anti-hunger projects. It donates approximately 1,700 pounds of food to the food rescue organization City Harvest every six months in the form of leftovers from its events. And the company also participates directly in service

initiatives like City Harvest’s annual BID Against Hunger fund raiser.

Over it’s 30-year history, GREAT PERFORMANCES has served everyone from U.S. presidents to the needy with the same dedication to service that’s informed the company since

the beginning. It’s a passion for feeding both the stomach and spirit that flows through GREAT PERFORMANCES and onto each and every plate it sends out of the kitchen.



Photo credit: Chris Eastland, Johannes Courtens, Allan Zepeda

GREAT PERFORMANCES®

304 Hudson Street New York, NY 10013 T 212.727.2424 F 212.727.2820 greatperformances.com