

CLIFTON PARK

MARCH 2023

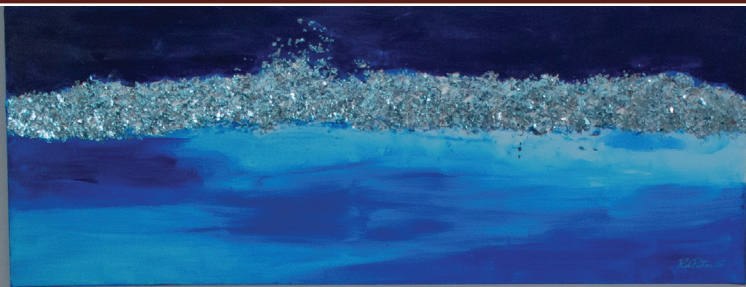
Neighbors

Reina & Tony Ciccarone
Connecting Through Technology



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Reina & Tony Ciccarone

Connecting Through Technology

By Jenna Caputo | Photos by Brooklynne Beebe, BB Photography & Contributed by the Ciccarone Family

Reina and Tony Ciccarone are all about connecting the community. Whether fulfilling a need during the beginning of the pandemic or now finding new ways to spread business locally, they strive to impact our community through their assistance, support, and art.

Originally from Johnston, Rhode Island, Tony grew up playing Nintendo games and learning the piano. At 12 years old, his grandmother found an old Commodore 64 computer that was about to be thrown out. She brought it inside for Tony to play with. It even still had a BASIC programming book with it, and Tony quickly became fascinated with trying to figure out how to make it work. His interest grew, and he attended technical school at Gibbs College in RI, receiving his Interactive Web Design diploma. He went on to work with some big-name companies like eBay, PayPal, and Ruckus Wireless before starting his own company, 3tone Digital, providing web

development, IT support, and digital marketing services to other businesses.

Reina grew up in Trumbull, CT, enjoying scrapbooking, outdoor adventures, and hanging with her family and friends. Her family was an artistic family, and art was always a big part of her and her brother's lives growing up. Her brother, Richard Patton IV, is now a professional artist in CT. Reina always had a creative mind herself and loved coming up with new ideas. She eventually attended Bryant University in RI, receiving her degree in marketing. She enjoyed marketing but eventually shifted her focus to more technical work, finding it exciting to have the ability to understand the code that creates the end product. She is now a website specialist with a certification in Responsive Web Design, working with Tony. She still nurtures her love of art through her work at the Artique co-op in Clifton Park, where she volunteers each month. Artique is a one-stop

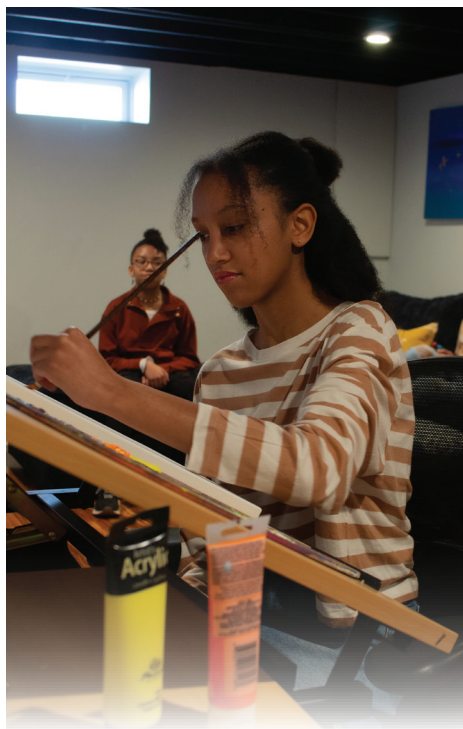


shop with a collection of over 100 local arts vendors offering unique gifts, jewelry, collectibles, antiques, classic records, and more in an in-person version of Etsy.

Reina and Tony met at a marketing agency in RI where Tony was working as a web developer and Reina as the project/account manager. “We formed a strong bond while working together and became close friends,” they remember. “One of our favorite pastimes was attending Water Fire, a seasonal event in RI that celebrates local arts and culture. We particularly enjoyed strolling along the river and taking in the sight of the illuminated star lanterns and the aroma of the burning fires.”

When it came time to upgrade to a new home together, they realized they wouldn’t be able to find a house that was





big enough within their budget if they stayed in RI. Tony's uncle, Alex Ciccarrone, is a realtor with Venture Reality Partners here in the Capital District, and he offered to show them some homes in this area. "Our second stop was our home in Clifton Park," says Reina. "We fell in love with the neighborhood and the location that was so close to Shen School District."

When the pandemic hit, a number of social media posts from family and friends in the healthcare field caught Reina's attention. She learned that cell phone chargers were in desperately short supply as more and more people found

themselves suddenly in the hospital with no visitors allowed due to the COVID restrictions. They wanted to help, so Reina and Tony created 518Powerup, a website that called the community to action. Accepting both new and lightly used chargers, they were able to supply local hospitals with hundreds of chargers for their patients. "Albany Med informed us that our initiative helped with future plans to account for times like this by allocating additional funds for charging stations within the units," says Reina. Now that restrictions have been lifted, additional chargers are no longer needed, but it was an experience

that remains important to their family. In addition to helping the nurses who have been working so hard throughout the pandemic, their family also got the experience of doing something important for the community. "We're a family of six, we have children, and to me it's important to teach them the importance of helping their community, even if it's in a small way," says Reina.

And now they are continuing to do so in a new way with The Black Book. An online directory for black-owned businesses in the Capital District, The Black Book showcases black-owned businesses in the arts, beauty, clothing,



jewelry, and services. Just launched in January of this year, they are still building up the directory and are taking business nominations at <https://theblackbook.boutique>. The website is a great way to buy local and support the community at large.

Tony and Reina now have four children in their blended family. Ciana Williams (14) enjoys art and gaming. She sketches many anime characters and is part of an accelerated art class at Shen where she won first place in the Reflections Art Contest 2020. She also volunteers her time at Artique here in Clifton Park. Raja Patton (13) loves Marvel films and music. She is a student council member and Junior Honor Society member at Shen and is the family champion at Mario Kart. Faith Williams (11) loves reading, animals, and creating her own comic books and stories. Also an artist, she draws and creates crochet creations, having learned the skill from her grandmother. Her items are displayed at the “Pretty Things This Way” booth at Artique where she also volunteers. Landon Ciccarone (4) is a young coder in the making. Loving to learn new things, Landon uses Scratch Junior to create and play new computer games. He loves to solve puzzles and is often found playing Minecraft, Roblox, and Mario Kart on the weekends.

In addition to writing code and constantly learning new technology, Tony loves music—writing, singing, and playing the piano and guitar. Word has it, he’s also a good juggler! Reina is into yoga and Tai Chi and makes beautifully designed almond milk lattes. She enjoys potting succulents, gardening, and creating new things. She also writes poetry and enjoys paint nights as well as her virtual book club with her best friend from college. Together, Reina and Tony love remodeling and DIY home projects. Last year’s big project was creating a tiki bar out of pallets.

Their family is rounded off by two fish, Rojo and Nabby, and Belle, a male Tiffany Chantilly long-haired black cat. “We didn’t choose Belle, Belle chose us,” says Reina. “We named him Belle because we would get alerted by the Ring every time he came to the front door. One night we went outside, and Belle came up to us

and meowed and was so friendly. Soon it turned into a daily visit. One night there was going to be a big snowstorm and we felt scared that Belle would be in the storm. We opened our doors to him and from then on, he hasn’t left. He fits our family perfectly. He is loving to all our kids and is our perfect pet.”

When not working, Reina and Tony are Board members at the Friends of the Library here in Clifton Park, volunteering to create their new website with a planned launch in the spring of this year. The Ciccarone family likes to explore the outdoors, taking walks and hikes together as well as participating in their “treasure hunts,” visiting different antique shops, estate sales, and artisan events. They also like to hit up local craft fairs, farmers markets, and eateries in Saratoga and Schenectady. Friday nights are family game night with Mario Kart and Roblox.

Tony and Reina love to travel and have visited places like Germany, Paris, and Portugal. As a family, they always love heading back to their hometowns to visit extended family, hitting Narragansett Beach in the summer and stopping at Iggy’s for clam cakes and doughboys, which are powdered fried dough much like elephant’s ears.

They strive every day to continue using their skills and technology to bring their ideas to life, solving problems and finding new ways to help the community. They strive to make memories together as a family and to teach their kids the importance of hard work and volunteerism. To keep things in perspective, they keep the words of Martin Luther King, Jr. in mind—“If I cannot do great things, I can do small things in a great way.”

Reina and Tony hope to create a brighter future for their children by “embracing diversity and open-mindedness in learning and understanding different cultures, recognizing that while we may be different, we can still come together and build something great.” They urge their neighbors to support local business and to look for ways to create an open and culturally diverse environment in our community. “It’s



important to learn about new cultures and to be open, to help break down cultural barriers,” says Reina. “Being exposed to different customs, beliefs, and traditions can broaden our perspectives and foster a more inclusive community.”

To learn more about Tony’s company, visit 3tonedigital.com.

To support local black-owned businesses, visit theblackbook.boutique.

