

# Shining Stars



★ JUDGE'S CHOICE ★  
Bekah Berger & Anthony Scalzi

## Stepping out for Mentoring

By JOHN HOWELL

Turn back the clock more than 11 years and Arlene McNulty, then president of the Rhode Island Mentoring Partnership, was looking for a signature event that set mentoring apart from other non-profits and at the same time spotlight mentoring.

Intrigued by the popular television show Dancing with the Stars, she envisioned an event where professional dancers would mentor community celebrities in a fundraising event.

Co-worker Joanne Schofield added a twist that in addition to judges selecting the most entertaining and technically accomplished dancers there be a "people's choice" selected on the basis of the total donations raised by that pair of dancers.

They had a winner.

In 11 years Dancing with the Stars of Mentoring has raised more than \$750,000 to help run the program that through its direct services matches 400 volunteer mentors with 400 students in Warwick, Cranston, Woonsocket, Newport, Middletown and Pawtucket. In addition, the network that has taken on the new name of Mentor Rhode Island serves as a focal point and resource for other mentoring programs linking 4,000 mentors statewide with 5,000 youths.

The event is a huge commitment.

Dancing Feeling has been a key partner from the start with many of the same professional dancers performing all of those years. Over the last four months Schofield has watched the evolution with the neophytes transforming with each practice session. There is also a partnership with the corporate community. The list is extensive with WJAR Channel 10, Cardis, Met Life Auto