

## Introduction to Embraceable You: The Book

New Hope is a small, scenic river town nestled along the Delaware River in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. Located just hours away from Philadelphia, New York City, and most parts of New Jersey, it offers an enchanting escape from the fast-paced routines of daily life. Since the early 1900s, New Hope has attracted a following of artists from all walks of life. Painters, sculptors, writers, actors, and musicians have come to this picturesque place to soak up the beauty of the surrounding countryside and to enjoy the camaraderie of like-minded colleagues.

Today, New Hope combines the historic charms and creative atmosphere of bygone days along with an edgy, eclectic, and playful style. “Quaint” and “Quirky” are two words I use often to describe this town. Yes, New Hope is still known as a haven for artists, but it is also . . . a paradise for shoppers, a showcase for antiques dealers, a hangout for food lovers, a romantic hideaway for couples, a fun-filled destination for families, a gathering place for entertainers, a hot spot for ghost hunters, a home for the famed Bucks County Playhouse, and a landmark village filled with numerous historic sites. Within just one square mile, New Hope offers you all of these amazing things.

I invite you to immerse yourself in the riches of our town. And what better way is there to get an intimate portrait of New Hope than by hearing from those people who know and love it best—the people who call it home. Home because they live here or home because part of this town now lives in them.

Within the pages of *Embraceable You*, fifty-four writers present their personal perspectives on New Hope. Many tell how they first arrived. All write about some aspect of why they love the New Hope area, whether it is the beautiful landscape, the history, the arts, the music, the food, the fun, or the wonderful people who have graced the streets of this town.

Some of the writers are established authors, some are apprentice writers, and others enjoyed the process of collaboration as they wrote their stories with a little help from friends. The stories range from observances seen through the youthful eyes of an eight-year-old to the experiences of a ninety-four-year-old. Each essay will give the reader a unique, colorful, and absorbing look at our town. Some writers are attracted to the history of the area, some reveal deeply personal remembrances of love and friendship, and others write about the way New Hope has served as a catalyst for their creative, emotional, and spiritual development. You’ll get a peek into the life of famous sculptor Selma Burke as told by one of her longtime New Hope friends. You will come to understand the impact noted woodworker George Nakashima had on a child who met him as a ten year old and then returned to the studio many years later to buy a piece of handcrafted Nakashima furniture. You’ll discover how the tiny town of New Hope helped launch the career of United States Congressman Patrick Murphy. You will also discover that many famous personalities and historical notables such as Albert Einstein, George Washington, Abbie Hoffman, Julia Child, Norah Jones, Rod Stewart, Robert Redford, and Liza Minnelli had their moments in our town and, also, in our memories.

The authors of these stories comprise a wide range of individuals: residents, visitors, shop owners, town historians, community and spiritual leaders, entrepreneurs, past editors of the local newspaper, and renowned children's illustrator Dorothy Grider, as well as our elected officials State Senator Chuck McIlhinney and State Representative Bernie O'Neill. The ghosts of New Hope even check in with the help of writer Adi-Kent Thomas Jeffrey.

The New Hope cast of characters generously responded to the call to write their own personal stories. You'll enjoy the potpourri of writing styles and the variety of recollections. Each saga will help you to discover the magic and wonder of New Hope. Most of all, I hope you will come away with an understanding of how New Hope has energized and inspired people to feel, think, create, work, play, heal, and dream in countless ways. As a teacher for thirty-three years, I've always believed we reach our maximum potential when we felt accepted and embraced by the people who surround us in our daily lives. This belief holds true within our families, our communities, and in our country.

Perhaps the one quality that has made New Hope such an outstanding community throughout its history is the fact that it has always been a place where differences (whether they be racial, ethnic, religious, cultural, or sexual orientation) are not just tolerated—they are embraced and celebrated. William Penn founded Pennsylvania over three centuries ago based on the Quaker beliefs of equality, social justice, peaceful co-existence, and brotherly love. I think he would be proud to know that our town has become a shining example of a community committed to those same values.

Through good times and bad times and the inevitable challenges that all communities face, we have been held together by a core conviction that all people should be respected for who they are as individuals. I believe it is this culture of openness, acceptance, and diversity that has allowed New Hope to prosper and thrive.

My vision of advancing the ideals of respect and unity resulted in the creation of Up River Productions, Inc. and the Embraceable You project. It is a three-fold endeavor that includes a documentary film, a music compact disc, and a book. The purpose of this entire project is quite simple: to demonstrate how our community exemplifies HOPE, not as a dream or an aspiration, but as a reality. It is my sincere wish that you, too, will find room in your heart to welcome and nurture this same spirit of inclusiveness and togetherness.

Once you embrace hope—anything is possible.

Geri Delevich