

NMM WOMEN'S FORUM YEAR-IN-REVIEW

Looking Back and Moving Forward

The **Norris McLaughlin & Marcus Women's Forum** is off and running in its inaugural year. Literally and figuratively, from Girls on the Run to the Fall Festival of the Arts.

A year ago, the **Forum** was formed to promote the advancement of all women, while drawing on the particular legal expertise of each of the firm's women attorneys to connect with other women leaders throughout New Jersey and New York. The women recognized the significance of establishing reciprocal relationships among female professional colleagues inside and outside the firm.

Toward that mission and goal, the **Forum** hosted, attended and sponsored various educational, charitable and social activities geared toward women in business and leadership roles.

Off And Running

One of the first efforts of the **Forum** was Somerset County's Girls On the Run (GOTR) race, which was held on June 11, 2007, at Duke Island Park in Bridgewater, New Jersey. The **Forum** volunteered on race day to assist with the race activities and was a platinum-level sponsor.

"The NMM Women's Forum and the GOTR program share the goal of fostering an atmosphere where women can utilize their individual talents and abilities to become leaders in their communities," said GOTR Race Committee and **Forum** Member Deanna Koestel.

Girls on the Run is a program for third to fifth grade girls, which strives to educate and prepare them for a lifetime of self-respect and healthy living. The ten-week program culminates with the girls running a 5K race. The program currently serves more than 500 girls in the Somerset County area and continues to grow.

Front Runner

The **Forum** is a Founding Member of the New Jersey Council on Gender Parity in Labor and Education's *Forum on Workplace Practices in Law*, a consortium of law firms committed to women's leadership, workplace diversity and organizational effectiveness in the legal community.



Norris McLaughlin & Marcus Women's Forum is comprised of approximately 30 women attorneys, nearly half of whom are members of the firm

The Council launched a study on the advancement and retention of women in the legal profession. The New Jersey-specific study will identify current and potential inequities, and recommend practical solutions to assist law firms in addressing and overcoming them. The status of women in the law is critical to economic growth and the health of all law firms. The Council hopes to formulate and perpetuate a model that lawyers all over the country will adopt. They will look to New Jersey for having taken the lead in advancing the role of women in the law.

*There is no time more fitting to say
Thank You and to wish you a joyous
Holiday Season and a New Year of
health, happiness and prosperity!*

Norris McLaughlin & Marcus Women's Forum



Members of the Forum's Major Events Planning Committee present proceeds of its inaugural Fall Festival of the Arts to Somerset County's Resource Center for Women and Their Families and the Lung Cancer Circle of Hope (pictured from l. to r.: Annmarie Simeone, Major Event Planning Committee Chair; Joanne Kaiser, Director of Development for RCWTF; Margaret Raymond-Flood; Diane English, President of Board of Trustees for RCWTF; Erin T. Welsh; Susan Levin, Founder of the LCCH; Christine Socha and M. Karen Thompson)

Run For Your Money

The **Forum** raised over \$19,000 at its inaugural Fall Festival of the Arts on October 18, 2007, at The Madison Hotel in Morristown, New Jersey.

All proceeds from the Fall Festival of the Arts, a cocktail reception with live and silent charity auctions, were donated to the Lung Cancer Circle of Hope and Somerset County's Resource Center for Women and Their Families. "The Women's Forum is extremely pleased that it was able to raise substantial funds for the benefit of two such worthwhile organizations that are dedicated to helping women. We could not have achieved our goals without the support of our firm attorneys and staff, our clients and friends of the firm, who generously donated time, resources, and auction items and attended the event," stated Annmarie Simeone, member of the firm and Chair of the **Forum's** Major Events Planning Committee.

Auction items were from the world of arts and unique gift baskets, including sports memorabilia and tickets, wine, spa and salon gift certificates and other donations from local businesses. There were fine art pieces by local artists, as well as tickets to productions at area theatres.

The Lung Cancer Circle of Hope is a statewide not-for-profit organization based in Lakewood, New Jersey. It was founded by Susan Levin in 2006, after her mother was unexpectedly diagnosed with lung cancer. Its goal is to dispel the myths by distributing the facts about lung cancer, the number one cancer killer of men and women.



Ron Wyatt

Edd Hogan, a member of Norris McLaughlin & Marcus and licensed auctioneer, conducts a spirited live auction

The Resource Center for Women and Their Families is a private non-profit agency serving victims of domestic abuse in Somerset County. Its mission is to end domestic violence by providing protection, education, and resources to empower victims and their families.