

Business Awards Winner: **Corporate Citizen**

Casual Dressing for a Cause

By *Margaret DeMarino*

Sometimes the best ideas don't come out of the boardroom. Instead, they come from the break room, and conversations around the water cooler.

This was the case at the law firm Kahan, Kerensky & Capossela, LLP, as a commitment to raise money for community groups began to take shape.

"There were four of us," Eva Holmes, the firm's estate planning and probate department coordinator remembers.

"Fund-raising is something we decided on our own we'd like to do, and the firm agreed," Holmes says. "That's how it started, and at this point, it's very successful and we are proud of what we've done."

The fund-raising committee formed by Holmes, and her colleagues Karen Welch, Lorraine Hicks, and Arlene LeRoy, has been responsible for raising \$22,000 for local, regional, and national charities.

Donations have been made to organizations such as the Hockanum Valley Community Council Inc., Kidsafe Connecticut, Opportunity Works Connecticut, End 68 Hours of Hunger, and Camp Courant.

Denim Days, established eight years ago, is at the heart of the fund-raising efforts. Once a month, employees make a donation to be able to deck out in denim for the day. "We thought it would be a fun and easy way to raise money," Holmes says.

"Because we are a professional business, we have to dress professionally, of course," says Welch, a paralegal. "In order to let clients know why we were wearing jeans, we put up a notice in the lobby that says, 'Please excuse our appearance,' and tells about the organization we are raising funds for that month."

"Sometimes when clients see the sign,

they even contribute."

The fund-raising efforts "are extremely rewarding for all the employees here," says Welch. "They are all extremely enthusiastic about the local agencies we help fund."

"We have a list of agencies we tend to contribute to, but we leave things open in case an employee hears of a local organization that needs help," Welch adds.

In addition to Denim Days, the committee oversees several bake sales, food drives, two toy drives, and a coat drive.

"Every year at Christmas, we pick a low-

income family in the Storrs/Mansfield area, and buy the whole family individual Christmas gifts as well as a family gift, such as a gift card to the movies," Holmes says.

Responses from the recipients are typically touching, like the woman who started crying when the gifts, which included bikes from the attorneys, were delivered.

Giving back to the community is a hallmark of Kahan, Kerensky & Capossela, a general practice law firm. The

firm's attorneys serve on the Vernon Economic Development Commission and the Tri-County Board of Realtors, are members of the Rockville Downtown Association, and are involved with the Vernon Community Arts Center. One is a youth sports coach and others are members of rotary clubs, historical societies, and serve on the boards of directors of local organizations.

"KKC is very proud of its community and fund-raising efforts," says Holmes. "We are really grateful to have the opportunity to do things like these."

Kahan, Kerensky & Capossela, LLP was founded over half a century ago and has offices in Vernon and Storrs. They can be reached at 860-646-1974 or 877-758-4552 or at www.kkc-law.com.

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