

Bon Appétit for a Good Cause

Food Fight and Girls On the Go and Women on Their Way

BY ANN CARESANI

Prepare your palate for this year's Food Fight, coming up on May 24! As you may have heard, this spirited, good-humored cooking competition between some of the area's finest law firms and professional companies has returned by popular demand for a second year.

What Started the Food Fight?

Thinking back to grade school, any good food fight has a back story, so here it is. In 2010, the Women in Law Section embarked on an ambitious initiative: BIG – Build, Innovate, Grow. The goal was to help members reach their true potential personally and professionally, while also making a bigger difference in the lives of other women, and ultimately in the strength of our city. The initiative, led by Women in Law Co-Chairs Elaine Eisner and Irene Renillo, was a resounding success. This year's Co-Chairs Nicole Quathamier and Manju Gupta have carried forward the BIG theme and demonstrated what a dynamic group of women can accomplish!

Keeping in mind that a key purpose of the CMBA is to enhance Greater Cleveland through member, civic and community service and leadership, Women in Law members challenged themselves to develop a program that would empower Cleveland girls and women. "Girls On the Go and Women On Their Way" is a collaborative empowerment event rolled out in conjunction with some of Cleveland's most instrumental community organizations, including: The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland; Cuyahoga Community College, Women in Transition; and the Cleveland Rape Crisis Center.

On May 21, 2011, under the guidance of Advocacy Committee Co-Chairs Rebecca Ruppert McMahon and Nicole Gray, volunteers of Women in Law championed a day-long conference. The goal of this conference was to touch the lives of young women and adult

women in transition. Women lawyers listened and spoke to the issues challenging the personal development of young girls, the professional development of young women and the legal obstacles which all too often undermine their ability to achieve. Through conversations, interactions and stories, Women in Law hoped to help women in all stages of life know that they are valued, strong and capable of self-actualization, meaning and respect. We hoped to create a day for all participants to experience change and take the next steps to self-empowerment.

This year's Advocacy Committee Co-Chairs Whitney Todd and LeeDaun Williams are assembling a team of great volunteers, and are working to roll out two Girls on the Go and Women on Their Way programs this year. They will be held at the Fatima Center on April 28, and

on October 13. The programs provide Women in Law members with a great opportunity to give back and help mentor girls and young women, through preparation for these events, or providing support on the day of the event.

The Advocacy Committee also has a number of initiatives under way, perhaps most notably a scholarship to be offered in the near future to encourage advancement of women in the legal profession.

What is Food Fight?

Great ideas don't bankroll themselves; Food Fight is a key funding mechanism for this initiative.

Many of you attended last year's Food Fight, whether your role was to cook, judge, volunteer or simply to eat great food and enjoy the fun. For those new to Food Fight: this fundraiser is held at the Cuyahoga Community College Hospitality Management Center, next to urban bistro Pura Vida. Three-member culinary teams are provided with a selection of possible recipes and ingredients, and a designated professional to answer any questions during the competition. Teams are judged based on best execution of the intended dish. Winners include Best Overall Dish, as voted by the Celebrity Chefs, and People's Choice Award, as voted by VIP Judges Pass Holders. But attendees are not required to cook, and are not limited to tasting the burnt offerings of their friends and colleagues. Rather, they also get to enjoy the culinary artistry of Pura Vida.

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We Need You!

If any tickets are left by the time you are reading this, we encourage you to snap them up. Tickets sold out quickly for last year's Food Fight, and returning event Co-Chairs Elaine Eisner and Irene Renillo promise even more fun this year.

In addition, last year's program described mouth-watering gift baskets that were donated for the Silent Raffle, and I would be happy to explain what we need to add your basket and your name to this year's program!

Women in Law members appreciate the support of all those attending a Food Fight, and want to make certain that CMBA members know just how much Food Fight contributes to the efforts of our hundreds of Women in Law to make a difference, reach out to other women, and change lives. We know that when we join together our considerable and varied talents, we can achieve something worthwhile, something greater than ourselves, something that makes a difference in the lives of other community members. If you aren't a member of Women in Law, please consider joining this dynamic group of women.

The Women in Law Section extends many thanks to everyone who has contributed, and continues to contribute, to the Women in Law initiatives. *Merci Beaucoup & Bon Appétit!*



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