Local administrators hone skills, make friends

By KATHY REMBISZ
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They range in age and work for different companies, but they share at least one common interest – membership in the local chapter of an international organization.

They're administrative professionals, known as admins, from around the Lehigh Valley, and they're part of the International Association of Administrative Professionals (IAAP). The organization's goal is to enhance the lives of admins, both personally and in the workplace.

The Lehigh Valley chapter celebrates its 55th anniversary this year; the organization as a whole got started 70 years ago. There are currently 50 local members of IAAP, and they come from 45 different companies here in the Valley.

Maryann Muschlitz, a resident of Moore Township, is currently employed by Lanta as an admin, and joined IAAP 11 years ago.

"The organization really helps to provide admins with cutting edge information in our profession," she said.

Muschlitz has found the networking opportunities available through the organization to be invaluable, with members offering assistance with everything from employment opportunities to challenging work situations.

Northampton resident Betty Hofacker agrees. Both an IAAP member and Air Products employee for 30 years, Hofacker initially found the local group after sitting for and passing her Certified Administrative Professional (CAP) exam. Her manager at the time encouraged her to join the local chapter of IAAP, and Hofacker has been involved ever since.

"I find the more you put into the group, the more you get out of it," she said.

While Hofacker, a past president of the local chapter, describes herself as an introvert, she credits the organization for teaching her how to stand up and speak before a group. She's confident the skills she has developed through IAAP have helped her in speaking with executives both locally and internationally.

In addition to offering updates on software and office procedures, IAAP holds monthly meetings with guest speakers. Past topics have included resume writing, staying organized, and tips for efficiently utilizing email.

"We always have exceptional guest speakers. I always get something out of meetings, either professionally or personally," Hofacker said.

The Lehigh Valley chapter of IAAP is a progressive, award-winning chapter, having been recognized for its website, special programs, and attendance.

For current vice president of the local chapter, Rosemary Geosits, a Coplay resident and Mack Trucks employee, membership in IAAP provides members with outstanding value in the form of friendships and education. However, there are plenty of opportunities for fun, too.

"One of our recent guest speakers was Rhonda Counts, a local artist who was an 'imagineer' for Disney for 30 years. It was a captivating presentation," Geosits said.

If these working women weren't busy enough with their careers and staying current in their field, the organization chooses a service project to participate in each year to give back to the local community.

"It's wonderful to work on committees with such a variety of people," Hofacker said.

Membership is currently open for the local chapter; visit www.iaaplehighvalley.org for information on joining the organization.

The next meeting will be held at 5:30 p.m. Monday, Jan. 23 at Four Points Sheraton in Allentown.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The members of the Lehigh Valley Chapter of the IAAP meet once a month for networking and honing their professional skills.