

Women Everywhere: Partners in Service Project, Inc.

Recognizes the Efforts of Cook County Associate Judge Rita M. Novak

On March 18, 2010, Cook County Chief Judge Timothy C. Evans hosted the Eleventh Annual Women Everywhere: Partners in Service Project, Inc.'s kick off reception to encourage judicial participation and support for Women Everywhere's annual service projects, which are dedicated to providing volunteer services to women and children in need. At the reception, the Women Everywhere Planning Committee and Board of Directors honored one of its most ardent supporters, Cook County Associate Judge Rita M. Novak, by presenting her with its 2010 *Outstanding Partner* award. Women Everywhere recognized Judge Novak's work to promote the Women Everywhere mission of working together to improve the lives of women and children in need and embrace the Women Everywhere call to action: "Together, WE can make a difference!"

In his remarks, Chief Judge Evans noted that he is proud of the powerful efforts Women Everywhere makes to introduce young girls to successful women in the legal field. In keeping with the theme of the Eleventh Annual Women Everywhere educational and service day projects, "Women of Tomorrow," Judge Evans told the crowd that judges and other legal professionals should make an effort to teach young girls that although there are struggles ahead to attain equality for women, there are women today fighting for the women tomorrow.

In presenting the 2010 *Outstanding Partner* award to Judge Novak, the Women Everywhere Planning Committee highlighted the ways in which Judge Novak's support and participation in Women Everywhere has been unwavering since its inception, and noted the fact that she maintained an active role in Women Everywhere throughout her diverse career. During her remarks, Judge Novak in celebration of Women Everywhere's eleventh anniversary discussed the history and evolution of Women Everywhere. Women Everywhere began as a

discrete service project of a few bar associations including the Chicago Bar Association Alliance for Women, but it has consistently expanded in size, mission, and reach since its inception. It now functions as its own non-profit organization, provides volunteer services to several dozen community agencies, provides educational programming for several hundred female high school students, and has developed a scholarship program available to students who participate in Women Everywhere's educational activities. Over the years, an increasing number of law firms and law departments have selected participation in Women Everywhere's Community Service Day as a group activity for their attorneys and summer associates.

A young woman by the name of Danielle Onipede met Judge Novak a few years ago during Women Everywhere's annual educational service day. Danielle spoke of the profound impact Judge Novak had on her life that day and about how much it means to her that Judge Novak continues to serve as a mentor to Danielle who is now in college aspiring to a career in criminal justice and social work. Judge Novak's impact on Danielle is just one example of why Judge Novak is so deserving of the Women Everywhere 2010 *Outstanding Partner* award.

The reception provided judges with the opportunity to meet with members of the Women Everywhere Planning Committee and Board of Directors to learn about the organization's activities and the ways in which volunteers can get involved in the project. The members of Women Everywhere spoke enthusiastically about the diversity of projects available to volunteers, and highlighted the ease with which volunteers can enlist through Women Everywhere's newly revamped website: www.wechicago.org.

Women Everywhere has several opportunities for people to get involved each year. This year, the project days are scheduled for April 16, 2010, the Educational Project Day and June 11, 2010, the Community Service Project Day (Agency Day Project). The Educational Project Day

includes courthouse tours, mock trials, presentations about legal roles in the courtroom, and a seminar on the importance of voting rights. The Community Service Project Day includes direct service activities such as painting, building, gardening or cleaning, and educational activities such as leading topical seminars on legal issues, mock interviews, and other discussion groups for agency clients.

Women Everywhere volunteer activities are prearranged and coordinated by the Women Everywhere Planning Committee. It is expected that several hundred volunteers, including individuals, bar association groups, law firms, and law departments, will participate in providing volunteer services to thousands of people in need. If you would like to enroll your law firm or to volunteer individually with the Women Everywhere: Partners in Service Project for the Community Service Day on June 11th, go to www.wechicago.org, or contact Women Everywhere Volunteer Coordinator Martina Brendel at mbrendel@kentlaw.edu. To make a donation or find out more information about Women Everywhere, contact Co-Chairs, Shital Patel (312.803.2511) or Michelle Kohut (312.346.3191).