

Finding “The One”

by Allison Estin Hull, Andrews Kurth, LLP, WCEE Member

Ready...set...mentor! The Mentoring Committee held its inaugural Speed Mentoring event on Thursday, August 20, 2009 and we are pleased to report that it was a tremendous success. The event was widely attended by approximately 35 WCEE members from a variety of industries and professional perspectives.

Speed mentoring is a unique concept modeled after “speed dating,” except that rather than searching for a romantic connection, speed mentoring focuses on developing professional connections. It is designed to provide a quick-hit of information for participants to seek out their own mentoring relationships. The goal of the WCEE Speed Mentoring event was to introduce potential mentors and mentees without the formality of a traditional matching process and allow people to interact and share experiences in a fun, relaxed, environment. Participants were split into two groups and each professional met one-on-one with another participant for five minutes, getting to know each other and allowing the connection to develop organically. At the end of five minutes we rang an obnoxious “bear bell” (which apparently is more commonly used to frighten bears away), indicating that it was time to move on to the next participant.

The initial intention was to have a group in which there were an equal number of more experienced professionals and professional women newer to their careers. What we discovered in setting up the event and during the course of the event was that all of our WCEE members have considerable experience in a variety of areas; those who thought themselves mentees could also serve as mentors, and visa versa. As a result, the event blossomed to include opportunities for networking (before, during, and after these organized conversations), in addition to the personal pursuit of a mentoring relationship.

Afterwards, participants expressed how much they truly enjoyed the event and each walked away feeling as though they gained something. Our members provided helpful and generous feedback, including requests for another speed mentoring event. Based on this positive feedback, the Mentoring Committee is already working on planning another, similar, speed mentoring-type event in the future.