

## **MPI's WEC 2010 in Vancouver, BC**

**From Green Meeting Standards, to Knowledge Sessions, to Puppy Cuddling (and every session in between)**

After a very busy and gratifying year on the Northern California Chapter's CMP Committee - Ruthie Keidel, CMP, as 2009-2010 Co-Chair, and Diane Herzstein, CMP, as 2010-2011 Co-Chair-in-training - both were delighted to earn the MPINCC Scholarships to WEC 2010! It was Diane's first WEC. And, because they are seasoned meeting pros, both Ruthie and Diane approached the Congress with personal and professional objectives.



**Diane Herzstein, CMP**

After spending hours over all the electronic collateral that was available, I was ready with my game plan. WEC had sometime for everyone ... from beginning to advanced educational workshops in all industry areas of interest to numerous themed events and community outreach programs and

of course, a keynote speaker or two or three. It was difficult to decide how I was going to clone myself.

My goals were to:

1. Attend the Boot Camp to observe and be better prepared to organize a similar workshop for our Chapter this winter
2. Attend the 1st Green Meetings Standards Training Workshop powered by GMIC to better understand and implement sustainability standards in my programs
3. Attend an array of educational and self-improvement sessions
4. Network
5. Experience at least one "ah ha" moment
6. Have a "little fun"

The theme this year ... When We Meet, We Change the World. It's a bit taunting at first ... the World is a big place.

At the opening General Session, John Furlong, CEO of the 2010 Vancouver Organizing Committee, Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games said it best. "It takes a community ... many hearts to change the world. Each of us touch people everyday. When we inspire, we change. Together, we can change the world." ah ha!!! So, we make changes and influence others through the *small* choices that we make in our professional and personal lives everyday. Keep it simple ... baby steps. Together, we can make a difference!

*Diane Herzstein, CMP, owns Diane & Company, an independent meeting and event planning company. When it makes sense for a company to outsource for their meeting or event, Diane provides temporary pre-planning and on-site operations support. You can reach Diane at [diane.herzstein@aol.com](mailto:diane.herzstein@aol.com).*



**Ruthie Keidel, CMP**

The objectives I set out to achieve at WEC were to:

1. Reconnect with "my people." I see the meetings industry as an industry of passion: I don't do it because it's going to make me famous, or because it pays the most, or shows the earliest retirement statistics. I do it because it's IN me. The business of meetings is part of who I am, and I'm at my best when I'm engaged in meetings work. WEC provided an opportunity for me to connect with others who are just like me in this way.
2. Take advantage of educational opportunities in a focused environment. One of the many a-ha moments was during the session: "4Mat for Successful Meetings: Engaging Every Learning Style." While it's one of those topics that I have probably heard a dozen times or more, this time, Liz Weatherhead's vibrant and engaging style, along with group exercises, helped me with some concrete ways to engage the varied attendees for whom I produce meetings.
3. Experience Vancouver in the afterglow of the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

I also participated in the WEC Ambassador Program, where I was matched with a first-time WEC attendee. I exchanged a few notes in advance of the conference with Lauren, my meeting professional "buddy" from Atlanta, and offered to answer questions and help navigate the WEC schedule. It turns out, as soon as I walked with Lauren to find her Chapter sign at the Opening General Session, she was off and running!

One of a handful of Community Service Projects offered at WEC, was the repeated Puppy Cuddling sessions. Pacific Assistance Dogs (PADS) raises and trains assistance dogs for people who are facing the daily challenges of life with a physical disability or who are deaf or hard of hearing. The puppy cuddling sessions gave the puppies some down time from their serious training, and allowed the puppies to get acquainted with new surroundings and people. This is valuable socialization tool for these dogs. It turns out that this playtime was just as beneficial for me as it was for the puppies.

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