



“When hundreds of women gather together, men frequently ask me what we’re doing,” laughs Kimberly K. Schaller, a champion for women’s causes. “I assure them that we aren’t male bashing we love men! We aren’t even thinking about men. We are celebrating who we are, the value we bring. We are intuitive and we multi-task. We gather to elevate each other, not necessarily on the career ladder, but to strive to be the best we can be.” Kim’s motivational energy and enthusiasm, combined with her listening skills, empathy, and compassion have been instrumental in her ability to inspire and champion other women.

Hershey, Pennsylvania, is known as the Sweetest Place on Earth, and in her position as executive vice president and chief marketing officer for Hershey Entertainment & Resorts, Kimberly K. Schaller just may have the sweetest job on earth. Kim oversees the marketing responsibilities for Hersheypark, Dutch Wonderland Family Entertainment Complex, The Hotel Hershey, Hershey Lodge, Hershey Highmeadow Campground, Hersheypark Arena, Hersheypark Stadium, the Star Pavilion, the Giant Center, ZooAmerica, Hershey Laundry, Hershey Nursery, and the Hershey Bears American Hockey League.

Kim Schaller was born in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, where her parents met, married, and started a family. “My mom was from New England and my dad was an assistant golf pro from Virginia. In 1963 when I was five years old, my dad accepted a job as a head pro golfer in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, where we lived in a suburban community.”

Aptitude tests throughout school indicated that Kim would excel in the communication field. The television show “Bewitched” inspired her because of her interest in advertising, and her satisfaction in seeing a strong woman solve problems. “I enjoyed seeing Sa-

Breaking “SWEET” Ground

Kimberly K. Schaller’s Journey

By Mikell Worley



mantha come to the rescue when her husband Darrin needed the perfect slogan or advertising campaign to please his boss, Larry Tate.”

Kim graduated from Pennsylvania State University in 1980 with a bachelor’s degree in advertising, and married her husband Bill in October of that year. “We moved to Florida where we lived for two years, took odd jobs, and had a blast. Then we returned to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, to begin to build our careers,” remembers Kim.

“With no experience, I wasn’t able to find a job in my field, so I took a job as a receptionist in an advertising agency, PPO&S, Inc. (Partnership of Packer, Oesterling & Smith), for \$9,000 a year, and I eventually became media director.” In 1985, Kim received a job offer from a marketing director in Hershey. She accepted and worked there until 1995, gaining experience by working every job available.

“If a paper needed to be written, I would raise my hand. If they needed someone to serve on a committee, I volunteered. Initially I felt that the best course of action was to

act like a man, but later I realized that I just needed to be myself. I found I was more successful being the real, authentic me.”

The next step in Kim’s journey was as marketing director at Space Center in Houston in Clear Lake, Texas. “We were only there two years, from 1995 to 1997, when I received an offer that I could not refuse.”

Undoubtedly, Kim’s absence at Hershey had been noticed, because her former boss contacted her to offer a position that combined marketing and sales responsibilities for both the entertainment and the resort sides of the company. She returned to Hershey in 1997 and during the following seven years there she received both the “Top 40 Under 40 Award” and the “Tribute to Women in the Industry Award.” Then in February 2004 Kim became the first female vice president in her compa-

ny’s history. Additionally, her appointment marked the first time that marketing was represented at the vice presidential level. “Leadership in our company was male dominated. I work with a great group of men, but I believe I’ve had to work harder to reach this level.”

Throughout her career, Kim has encouraged other women to succeed, and she is happy to share the knowledge she has acquired. “First, find that job that you love. Explore different options. My daughter Carly is entering her second year of college this fall and I am encouraging her to take as many electives as possible. One of them may turn out to be her passion.

“Then be willing to learn the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that will enable you to be your best. It is all about mastery, not just related to the career track, but adding the most value in all areas of your life.”

She also advises that it is prudent to acknowledge that it is not all. “Women are thirsting for information on how to balance their lives. This will be easier when we realize that there is no such thing as ‘Superwoman.’



[who] work for one of the Family of Hershey Companies.”

The act of giving is central to Kim’s philosophy, and it is reflected in one of her favorite volunteer organizations, The Giving Tree of Hummelstown. “We are a grassroots organization, dedicated to providing food, household items, and basic necessities to women in our community who are in need. The group formed in December 2007. Food and a place to eat and sleep are our top priorities; and we also mentor, educate, provide tutoring, and identify resources.”

Whether she is extending a hand to help a woman in need, mentoring, or encouraging self-development and collaboration, Kim Schaller has found that life is sweeter when women support women. ❁

www.givingtreeofhummelstown.org

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We will make sacrifices and miss things. We can only do our best – give yourself a break!”

Of course Kim has faced personal challenges. However, instead of trying to hide problems, Kim strongly believes in allowing others to know that we are struggling and need help. “Ask, and then be prepared to tell people how they can help. I love it when someone says ‘Yes, here’s what I need you to do.’”

In April of 2004, Kim organized a women’s initiative program at Hershey called Women in Leadership. Initially it consisted only of the 16 women in management, but over time the group has expanded to include women of varied positions within the entire organization, such as administrative support. The administrative staff “hold us all up! We couldn’t do our jobs without them. I don’t know what I’d do without [my administrative assistant] Annette Newcomb. We are strong supporters of their development and many staff [members] receive opportunities to network and develop leadership skills through the International Association of Administrative Professional. Our initiative has grown, and we do several activities together every year – it’s [had an impact] in many ways,” Schaller proudly notes.

“Later I learned that the Hershey Company, Hershey Medical Center, and Milton Hershey Schools had similar women’s initiatives, so we collaborated with them and that has been really rewarding. We are holding a three-day

long symposium called The Women’s Leadership Forum, scheduled for September 17, 2010. We are expecting more than 700 women

