

***emerit* Certified Event Coordinator – Making the Difference**

Many non-profit organizations rely on the skills of their special events coordinators to run successful fundraising events. When an organization has a national reputation but happens to be a small, regional chapter with limited resources, those skills become even more essential. The Multiple Sclerosis Society (MS) in Dauphin is a case in point. It has the additional challenge of representing an extremely large geographic region with a small population base.

“Event management is a priority for us,” says Robin Searle of the Dauphin MS chapter. “When we first opened here about 10 years ago, I did everything from administration to programs to fundraising.”

About four years ago, Searle recognized that continued success for a professionally run organization would need a professional to take care of the special events. These events mean the chapter’s survival because the funds raised not only go to research but are its sole revenue source.

Around the same time Searle began looking for a professional for the events management, she had decided it was time to launch a major event – specifically, a bike tour.

“I wanted a professional because the event is part of a long-term vision, not just about an immediate fiscal year,” Searle explains.

Searle believes an *emerit* certified special events coordinator can bring essential skills, including: flexibility, not just in terms of hours but in terms of adapting quickly to situations as they arise; customer service and knowing when to use a formal or an informal approach with potential sponsors; and an ability and desire to do the job beyond just satisfactory.

“A special events coordinator needs to be willing to do whatever it takes to get a job done,” Searle says. “It’s about having a personal commitment to the job, not just an obligation.”

Searle sees the professionalism and commitment illustrated not only in the obvious tasks to do a job but in the little things. In being able to think creatively to handle the inevitable situation when resources are almost non-existent but a challenge must be overcome. In listening to the concerns of one individual volunteer or participant and trying to resolve that without losing sight of the bigger picture.

“When you are hiring someone, you need to ask questions to get a feel about the person not just for their professionalism but in terms of their confidence, their kindness, their passion,” Searle emphasizes.

The *emerit* professional special events coordinator who will make a difference for any organization will be the person with that excitement and a vision that goes beyond the closure of the event day. It’s the person who goes the extra mile with professionalism and enthusiasm.