

COURIER NEWS  
**Business**

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2010

CONTACT US: Bob MakIn Phone: 732-565-7319 Fax: 732-565-7208 E-MAIL: [business@MyCentralJersey.com](mailto:business@MyCentralJersey.com)



STAFF PHOTO: LAURIE LEVOY

Karen Kessler (left) and Mindy Cohen own Evergreen Partners, a Warren-based public relations firm, which also provides event planning.

## Warren pair provides publicity, event planning

By LAURIE LEVOY  
STAFF WRITER

**WARREN** — For 15 years, Mindy Cohen and Karen Kessler worked out of their Scotch Plains office before they opened Evergreen Partners in July 2008 in a self-standing building tucked into one of the four corners of this downtown's flag plaza.

Before that, Cohen and Kessler worked together on a gubernatorial campaign, which is how they met.

"We only knew each other about six months before we decided to go into business together," Kessler said.

As if to complete Kessler's thought, Cohen added, "We didn't even have a business plan, but we knew about each other's serious work ethic."

But realizing their backgrounds were business compatible — and that each was ready for a change — the duo joined forces and has never stopped passing that virtual "Go" on the Monopoly game board.

Kessler's strong experience in communications, including a role as vice president of corporate communications for the American Stock Exchange, pointed her to be Evergreen's specialist in community relations and reputation management.

"I work with high-profile people or companies who are in a mess and with the attorneys representing the client," Kessler explained.

Kessler described one case that involved nine sets of lawyers in five states. That's why Evergreen Partners has a lawyer on staff.

"Whether the case is large or small, out of state or in Somerset County, we're proud we have a high rate of client retention," Kessler added.

Event planner Cohen deals with event-based fundraising for nonprofit organizations in New Jersey, New York, Washington, D.C., and Los Angeles.

### AT A GLANCE

#### EVERGREEN PARTNERS

**Address of business:** 51 Mount Bethel Road, Warren

**Type of business:** Public relations and event planning

**Principals:** Mindy Cohen and Karen Kessler

**How long in business:** 17 years

**Number of employees:** Eight

**Telephone number:** 908-322-1100

**Website:** [www.evergreenpr.com](http://www.evergreenpr.com)

"My season is starting with an October fundraiser for NJPAC (New Jersey Performing Arts Center), their largest event, and will end with a United Nations gala next year. In between, I manage another eight or so events," Cohen said.

These are large-scaled, multilayered events, Cohen said. "None less than 300 to 400 people."

Both women said their emphasis on client service, coupled with a passion to work hard, are what sets them apart.

Even so, they find time to sit on a board of trustees. Each is the first to be chairwoman of her respective board: Kessler with Atlantic Health, and Cohen with Newark Public Radio, better known as the jazz station WGBO 88.3-FM.

"Business has been very good in this recession. It's because we can provide a service in a cost-effective manner. You know, some companies cut back on their employees but hold on to us," Kessler said.

Again, completing Kessler's thoughts, Cohen added, "With nonprofits, as funding has dried up, our job is to look at the best way to raise the most dollars for the least amount."

Laurie Levoy: 908-243-6614;  
[llevoy@MyCentralJersey.com](mailto:llevoy@MyCentralJersey.com)