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May xx, 2018

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**MIDDLE
PENNSYLVANIA
CHAPTER**

MPI Middle Pennsylvania Chapter celebrates 10th anniversary

HERSHEY, Pa. – Meeting Professionals International Middle Pennsylvania (MPIMP) chapter is celebrating its 10th anniversary serving the area between Pittsburgh and Philadelphia.

MPIMP isn't the oldest or largest chapter, nor does it include a major metropolitan area, but year after year, it is recognized by MPI as a top-performing chapter on a global scale. Most recently, MPIMP was recognized as a top performer in the MPI Chapter Recognition Program for excelling in categories such as member satisfaction, retention and growth, volunteerism rates and relevant educational offerings. It was among 13 chapters, out of 90 chapters and clubs in 19 countries, to receive the honor.

"MPI Middle Pennsylvania is a chapter with strong membership and dedicated enthusiastic chapter leaders," said Maria Marchesi, MPI chapter operations manager. "The chapter leaders are always looking at how they can provide their members with more educational resources and also make sure to let the membership know they are appreciated."

MPIMP was established in 2008 to provide middle Pennsylvania meeting and event planners and suppliers with professional development and networking opportunities. The initiative came from a group of industry leaders who noted a lack of access to education and professional development outside of Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. The first meeting of the chapter was held on June 4, 2008, at the Hershey Lodge.

Cyndy Cosner, 10-year member and assistant director of resorts sales at Hershey Resorts, said that the success of MPIMP as an instrument of both networking and education was immediate. "At the very first formation meeting, I was sitting next to two meeting planners who were in need of a space for an event," she said. "I booked that meeting by the end of the day!"

Cosner, who serves on the board of MPIMP as vice president of special events, has been appreciative of the networking and educational opportunities ever since. She feels that the chapter's success hinges on its ability to lead. "Having strong presidents and board members since day one has helped our chapter become one of the most successful," she said. A strong and active leadership is vital to plan and organize educational events that appeal to members. When the events are successful and the leadership is enthusiastic, membership grows and members become volunteers.

Brian Griffith, president of MPIMP, has also been a member since the formation of the chapter. In his role as director of curriculum services at Capital Area Intermediate Unit, Griffith plans professional development trainings, conferences and meetings, something his background in education didn't prepare him for. "I joined the organization to learn more about the 'science' of meetings and events,

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and I've learned so much by attending the education events that MPIMP offers each month," he said. "Along the way I've also made so many new friends and built lasting relationships with a group of people who I would otherwise not have gotten to know."

MPIMP is celebrating its 10th anniversary on May 24 with a member gala at the Hershey Lodge, the same location that it held its first event.

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About MPI

Meeting Professionals International is the largest and most vibrant global meeting and event industry association. The organization provides innovative and relevant education, networking opportunities and business exchanges, and acts as a prominent voice for the promotion and growth of the industry. MPI membership is comprised of approximately 60,000 members belonging to more than 90 chapters and clubs in 19 countries. For additional information or to join, visit www.mpiweb.org.

About MPI Middle Pennsylvania Chapter

MPIMP, established in 2008, empowers its 150+ members to increase their strategic organizational value through education and networking opportunities. The chapter's vision is to build a rich global meeting industry community making its members successful in building human connections to: knowledge/ideas, relationships and marketplaces. For more information on MPIMP, visit www.mpimp.org and follow the chapter on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.