



Alicia Jacobs

A Passion for Bringing People Together

By Jenna Caputo/ Photos Contributed by Alicia Jacobs

Alicia Jacobs always knew she wanted to make a difference by helping people in times of need. As an empathetic person, she never wanted anyone to feel left out and has always included others in both events and conversations in order to bring people together. During her high school years, she coordinated social events with her friends, usually taking on the role of the detail and logistics coordinator. It was a natural inclination that eventually carried over into both her career and volunteer efforts, working with charities, planning events and leading communication and public relations initiatives. Once shy, she is now a vocal advocate for people who are not treated fairly.

Growing up in Albany, Alicia loved spending time with her family and friends, as well as taking road trips, summer vacations and boating on Saratoga Lake. She also enjoyed attending concerts at SPAC, going to Albany Firebirds games and seeing plays at Williamstown Theatre Festival. Not only a fan of watching sports, she also played on a softball team for Westland Hills Little League, as well as on the summer boys baseball team, Zoo League, long before girls were generally allowed on boys' teams.

Alicia graduated from the University at Albany and continued to earn her Master of Arts degrees in Communications with a concentration in Public Relations from Western New England University. In addition to communications and public relations, her varied background also includes marketing, special events and fundraising.

After graduation, Alicia worked full time at the Knickerbocker Arena (now the Times Union Center) in marketing and coordinated advertising campaigns for family shows and sport events. She also was appointed the Community Relations Director for the Albany River Rats (NJ Devils affiliate) and the Albany Firebirds. While holding these positions, she learned a great deal about football and sports terminology, especially when bringing the football and hockey players on media appearances. During this time, she met players on the NY Giants and has been a big fan of the team ever since. She's held other interesting positions as well, including a stint as a personal assistant to Steven Tyler for an episode of the TLC show, "Who Do You Think You Are."

In addition to her creative skills behind the scenes, she's also known for some creativity on the dance floor. In her twenties, she was chosen to be on the local TV dance show, "FM Dance Club," a show similar to "Club MTV." She also participated in an ensemble dance troupe while in college. She has always enjoyed dancing, even though she never formally trained.



No stranger to the TV scene, she served five years as an Executive TV Producer as part of the original inception launch crew for Capital News 9 (now Spectrum News). Her tireless dedication won her an Emmy Award for producing a half-hour home improvement TV special.

She considers herself fortunate to have had a career where one opportunity has led to the next. Through the years, she continued to plan events, galas, golf tournaments and fundraising events, with the goal of someday owning her own business. Her dream finally came to fruition when she launched AJ Management, a consulting business specializing in public relations, marketing and event planning for non-profit organizations and small businesses from the Capital Region to the North Country. In 2009, her business became a NYS-Certified Woman Business Enterprise (WBE). "Since I have a background in media, I am able to help others with reputation management and building their brand. I worked in many industries over the years, but the best thing about being a business owner is the unlimited opportunities to help others tell their story and raise awareness for different causes."

In addition to consulting projects, Alicia works full time in the marketing department at Excelsior College, leading the internal communications, public relations, community relations and employee engagement efforts. Outside of work, she spends a lot of time on volunteer projects. Her life's passion is working with non-profits and grassroots organizations to promote their messages. "I love helping others tell a story and making a difference in the community," says Alicia. "I love bringing ideas and people together!" Through the years, she has done extensive work with JDRF, starting as a Special Events Coordinator on staff to eventually becoming the volunteer leader as Chapter President, helping to spread awareness about type one diabetes research. During this time, she created their annual golf tournament, and in 2004, put on the one-time event, "Moolah for

Men & Women," an adult and children fashion show with a twist that not only raised \$20,000, but also led to a wedding when one of the participants eventually ended up marrying his date!

Returning to the sports field as an adult, she played center on the flag football team, Blondes vs. Brunettes, from 2012-2016 to benefit the Alzheimer's Association, and she continued to raise money for them off the field as well. She is an active volunteer with the "A Toast to Life" event committee – a fundraising event for the local breast cancer organization based in Delmar that provides support services, wigs, mentoring, workshops and more. This year's event has been moved to June 2 and will be a virtual event for the first time due to the pandemic.

Always striving for progress, Alicia also serves on the Town of Clifton Park Open Space, Trails and Riverfront Advisory Committee, advocating for open space. During a recent controversial campaign about the sale of land, she helped lead the public relations efforts by assisting the Friends of Clifton Park Open Space group. Succeeding in their mission, they preserved 37 acres in Clifton Park for public use. She also serves as a board member of the Public Relations Society of America-Capital Region (PRSA), a national organization for PR and Communications professionals that assists with education, networking, development and enhancing career growth. In addition, she served as a past board member for Rebuilding Together Saratoga County, a non-profit organization that provides critical home repair and accessibility modifications to low income homeowners in Saratoga County.

"I



enjoy helping with grassroots organizations where I can really make a difference by sharing knowledge and opening doors," says Alicia. This year, Alicia was honored with the Women of Distinction 2020 Award, presented by NYS Assembly member, Mary Beth Walsh, for outstanding volunteer

work and positive impact on the quality of life for the community.

"I feel fortunate to be in a position to help others who need it and to spread awareness while impacting the community. I believe charity starts at home. In my family, we kid around saying that I need a vehicle with a siren. I am often running place to place to help family members and strangers alike."

When she's not busy volunteering, Alicia enjoys spending time with her family, going out to dinner, concerts at SPAC, plays, comedy shows and sporting events – especially professional football games. Alicia is quite close to her family. Her parents, brother and his family all now live in Clifton Park as well, along with Alicia's puggle, Chloe. She adores spending time with her two-year-old nephew. "He brings such joy to the family!" she says. "My family is close. We are there for each other through thick and thin. We love to laugh. They also taught me a lot about being true to your convictions and fighting for what you believe in. My passion is helping others and connecting people to resources. I would be a great matchmaker! I feel strongly about equity and fairness. I don't like when others are treated poorly."

She is a high-energy, creative person that loves new projects and brainstorming, bringing projects from concept inception through to completion. "I love when details come together and turn into results of efforts!" she exclaims. Her mantra of "Nothing ventured – nothing gained," has served her well not only for her business but throughout the community as well.

Trying to make the best of the current pandemic situation, she has given herself a crash course in using technology for virtual



event planning. She led the efforts to coordinate an annual employee recognition ceremony in April for Excelsior College with over 350 people, PowerPoints and various speakers. She also recently coordinated a family reunion to celebrate a milestone birthday for her mom, hosting relatives from all across the country and Canada. "It was profound in many ways," she says. "Some family had not seen each other in decades; the stories shared, opportunity to learn about family history with everyone in a big conversation left an impact on many of us. It was so rewarding that we are holding another one in a few weeks!" She is also currently working on virtual events for PRSA and the Capital Region Hallmark Channel Fan Club, which she created during the pandemic. This group meets weekly on Saturday nights for watch parties to enjoy from the comfort of everyone's own couch. She even hosted a virtual happy hour prior to a movie to connect fans who've only met on Facebook.

Based on her success with these virtual event experiences, she is expanding her services at AJ Management to help other individuals and businesses with their virtual events. She encourages everyone to not be intimidated by technology as some of it is very user friendly. If you have an idea, but are not sure how to plan your personal or business event, feel free to reach out. As COVID-19 drags on, virtual events continue to pick up steam and will likely continue. "I think this will grow in the future as it enables people to connect without traveling and still have events, meetings and group gatherings," Alicia explains. "With social distancing, being isolated can be hard for many, but this really helps you feel connected. You can be distant and still be close!"

For more information about AJ Management, visit www.ajmanagement.com.

