



**THE KOTCHEN GROUP AND MASON ONOFRIO PUBLIC RELATIONS WIN
"BEST IN SHOW" AT 2009 PRSA MERCURY AWARDS**

*Alison Karam of First Experience Communications
Named Best Practitioner of the Year*

NEW HAVEN, CT, June 12, 2009. Mason Onofrio Public Relations in Bethany, CT and The Kotchen Group of West Hartford, CT have earned "Best in Show" awards for Public Relations Campaign and Tactics, respectively, at the 2009 Mercury Awards, hosted by the Southern Connecticut, Westchester/Fairfield and Connecticut Valley chapters of the Public Relations Society of America.

The awards were presented June 11 at Anthony's Ocean View in New Haven, among a total of 40 awards given at the fourteenth annual Mercury Awards, which recognizes outstanding work in the public relations, communications and marketing professions. Entries were judged by the Western Michigan Chapter of the PRSA. Desiree Fontaine and Gil Simmons News Channel 8 WTNH emceed the event.

Mason Onofrio Public Relations's award was for its community relations "Street Smarts" pedestrian safety campaign for the City of New Haven, which was cited by the judges as a "an exceptional job" where "the thoroughness of the research was exceeded by the thoroughness of the planning. The plan was well executed, which the results clearly show." The Kotchen Group won for media relations for the Hartford Marathon Foundation and its ING Hartford Marathon, which the judges praised for "excellent media results" and "objectives [that] were clearly stated and target audiences identified," as well as creativity in providing runner narratives and tie-ins to childhood obesity and eco-friendly initiatives. (See attached list for all winners.)

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PRSA announces 2009 Mercury winners

The individual award for outstanding practitioner of the year was given to Alison Karam, director of public relations, marketing and research for First Experience Communications in Glastonbury, CT. Karam, who is accredited by PRSA, was honored for her work in advancing the profession through significant achievements, involvement and reputation within the industry. The award was presented by Diane Dawson-Brown, president of All the Best People, who praised Karam for her professionalism, pro bono work within the community, and her volunteer leadership efforts.

The Mercury awards were created in 1996 by the Connecticut Valley Chapter to recognize outstanding work in the public relations, communications and marketing disciplines. In 2004, all three Connecticut-based PRSA Chapters joined forces to make this a regional awards competition, reaching all of Connecticut, Western Massachusetts and Westchester County and the Lower Hudson Valley region in New York. Named for the Roman god of commerce and travelers – the messenger and guide of the gods -- they are designed to honor creative and strategic excellence and encourage a higher level of performance. Information on the annual competition is available on the websites of the three PRSA chapters.

The Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) (prsa.org) is an individual membership professional society of more than 20,000 public relations practitioners. The Connecticut Valley Chapter serves Central, Northern and Eastern Connecticut, as well as Western Massachusetts (prsa-cvc.org). The Southern Connecticut Chapter serves New Haven and New London counties (prsact.org), and the Westchester/Fairfield Chapter serves Fairfield County and New York's Westchester County and Lower Hudson Valley region (prsa-wf.org).

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PRSA announces Mercury winners

The following awards were presented in the **STRATEGIC CAMPAIGNS CATEGORIES:**

Best in Show

Mason Onofrio Public Relations (Bethany, CT) – Street Smarts Campaign

Community Relations (For Profit)

Gold: Creative Partners (Stamford, CT) – The 2008 “Health Net Cup” Wii Senior Bowling Tournament

Community Relations (Not-For Profit)

Gold: Mason Onofrio Public Relations (Bethany, CT) – Street Smarts Campaign

Reputation/Brand Management (For-Profit)

Gold: Adams & Knight Advertising/PR (Avon, CT) – Jefferson National Insurance, Advisor Panel Discussion

Silver: Co-Communications (Simsbury, CT) – Attracting Buyers in a Challenged Real Estate Market

Special Events and Observances 1 – 7 Days:

Gold: Mason Onofrio Public Relations (Bethany, CT) – Street Smarts Launch Event

Silver: Durham Group (Farmington, CT) – One Thing Expo

Special Events and Observances More Than 7 Days:

Gold: Mason Onofrio Public Relations (Bethany, CT) – Mason Onofrio Public Relations and The United Illuminating Earth Day Celebration

Public Affairs

Gold: Adams & Knight Advertising/PR (Avon, CT) – Keep Our Hearts in the Right Place

Marketing Products and Services

Gold: Co-Communications (Simsbury, CT) – Technology as a Title Tool

Silver: tie: Silver: Co-Communications (Simsbury, CT) – Building Awareness of Learning Interventions

Silver: tie: Mintz & Hoke Communications Group (Avon, CT) – ARMOR Rugged Mobile Computers

Crisis Communications

Gold: Adams & Knight Advertising/PR (Avon, CT) – Konover Construction Corporation Crisis Response Campaign

Silver: First Experience Communications (Glastonbury, CT) – Hartford Cares

Integrated Communications For-Profit Business

Gold: Mason Onofrio Public Relations (Bethany, CT) – Connex Credit Union: What’s Up With Banks?

Integrated Communications Not-For-Profit

Gold: Adams & Knight Advertising/PR (Avon, CT) – Girl Scouts of Connecticut Cookievote.com Campaign

Silver: Mintz & Hoke Communications Group (Avon, CT) – Connecticut Dept. of Public Utility Control Energy Efficiency Campaign

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PRSA announces Mercury winners

The following awards were presented in the **TACTICAL CATEGORIES**:

Best in Show

The Kotchen Group (West Hartford, CT) – Hartford Marathon Foundation – ING Hartford Marathon

Media Relations (For-Profit)

Gold: VMW Public Relations (Greenwich, CT) – Advancing Secondary Ticket Market Credibility and Transparency Among Mainstream Audiences

Silver: Mason Onofrio Public Relations (Bethany, CT) – 2008 Bruegger’s St. Patrick’s Day Green Bagels

Media Relations (Not-for-Profit)

Gold: The Kotchen Group (West Hartford, CT) – Hartford Marathon Foundation – ING Hartford Marathon

Silver: The Kotchen Group (West Hartford, CT) – School Nutrition Association – Annual National Conference

Newsletters

Gold: Hartford Foundation for Public Giving (Hartford, CT) – “Conversations”

Silver: Mintz & Hoke Communications Group (Avon, CT) – Wire & Cable Management Ideas

Magazines

Gold: Cheney & Company (New Haven, CT) – Yale-New Haven Hospital – “Impact”

Annual Reports (Not-For-Profit)

Gold: MAD Communications (East Hampton, CT) – 2008 TEEG Annual Report

Silver: Adams & Knight Advertising/PR (Avon, CT) – Girl Scouts of Connecticut Annual Report

Brochures

Gold: tie: Adams & Knight Advertising/PR (Avon, CT) – Symmetry Partners Brochures

Gold: tie: Braverman Marketing & Communications (West Hartford, CT) – An Admission Prospectus 2008-09: Miss Porter’s School

Silver: Cheney & Co. (New Haven, CT) – Latin School of Chicago Recruitment Package

Special Purpose Publications

Gold: Community Renewal Team (Hartford, CT) – Senior Services Launch

Silver: Silver: CEH Design (Bethel, CT) and Braverman Marketing & Communications (West Hartford, CT) – It’s How You Think About It: Miss Porter’s School

Direct Mail/Direct Response

Gold: First Experience Communications (Glastonbury, CT) – Greater Hartford Public Safety Academy

Video Programs

Gold: Mintz & Hoke Communications Group (Avon, CT) – See the Ability in Those With Mental Illness

Silver: The Connecticut Association of Foster and Adoptive Parents (Rocky Hill, CT) – Families Are A Work of Art

Television Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

Gold: Adams & Knight Advertising/PR (Avon, CT) – United Way PSA Campaign

PRSA announces Mercury winners

Editorials/Op-Ed Columns

Gold: Adams & Knight Advertising/PR (Avon, CT) – UMass Memorial Op-Ed, by Dr. Lee Mancini

Research Evaluation

Gold: Mason Onofrio Public Relations (Bethany, CT) – Hospital for Special Care

Creative Tactics

Gold: Mason Onofrio Public Relations (Bethany, CT) – 2008 Bruegger’s Patriotic Bagels
Silver: Department of Motor Vehicles (Wethersfield, CT) From the Driver’s Seat to the Director’s Chair: DMV Teen Safe Driving Video Contest

Web Site Marketing/External Communications

Gold: Adams & Knight Advertising/PR (Avon, CT) – Girl Scouts of Connecticut
Cookievote.com
Silver: Connecticut Economic Resource Center (Rocky Hill, CT) – CERC Web site

Non-Traditional Communications

Gold: Mason Onofrio Public Relations (Bethany, CT) – Connex Credit Union: What’s Up With Banks?

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