

# 2011 Women of Influence

## *Debra Eiland*

Law Offices of Debra Eiland, P.C.

*F*or Debra Eiland, serving as city prosecutor for Manitou Springs perfectly rounds out her legal experience. The part-time position balances her mostly civil work as a private practitioner with an office in downtown Colorado Springs.

“I do it because I’ve always loved Manitou Springs, and it offers me the opportunity to interact with more people and to get different courtroom experience than I get in my private practice,” she says.

She was born in Colorado Springs, moved to Manitou Springs for elementary school, and then, after a short spell in Denver, was whisked away to rural Colorado where her father followed his love of farming.

“My soul has always been with Manitou Springs,” she says. “It’s a real community where everyone knows each other, they take care of each other, and they work together to make their quality of life better. I read every case file that comes in. You can’t give that kind of personalized attention to every case in the legal department of a big city.”

She offers Manitou Springs’ Restorative Justice Program as an example of the community’s sense of unity. Shortly before she took the prosecutor’s position, a task force had been formed to find a way to give first offenders a chance to take responsibility for their actions, and agree to repair the harm they’d caused in a way that would restore relationships within the community.

These discussions were under way when Eiland took office. Soon thereafter, a case came before her that seemed to have the perfect elements to test the Restorative Justice Program’s philosophy. “The task force had a structure but didn’t have the ability to implement it in the court system. I agreed to do that.”

The test case was adjudicated successfully. Now, Eiland refers several cases each month to the Restorative Justice Program. She says the community is the true beneficiary.

“There is no playbook or script. Each case is handled individually on its merits. You couldn’t do something like this in a big city. You don’t have the time, the flexibility. But in a town like Manitou Springs, it works.”

One more reason, she says, why her soul is in Manitou Springs.



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