

Finkelstein & Partners attorney combines education and advocacy to make the community a safer place

By Alyssa Seidman

Elizabeth A. Wolff always wanted to be a teacher. But during her undergraduate studies as an elementary education major, a professor inspired her to go to law school.

"I had a passion for education but also advocacy, and she made me realize that law was a way I could utilize both of those skills," she said. "I chose to help injured people because I see it as a service."

Finkelstein & Partners, LLP, is a personal injury law firm dedicated to helping critically-injured victims and their families recover and holding wrongdoers accountable. It was founded by the late Howard S. Finkelstein in Newburgh, N.Y., in 1959.

Today, more than 60 years later, the firm has offices throughout New York and New Jersey, including two locations in Albany. Wolff is a managing attorney at the Albany location on Central Avenue. She has been with the firm since 2005, and was hired fresh out of law school.

"We don't tell our clients what to do — we help them understand how the law applies to their case so they can make educated, informed decisions," she said. "This firm has been around longer than I've been alive, and it's because of the fact that we look to hire people who care. That's hard to find."

The staff dedicates free time toward volunteer work to carry on the core principles of the firm's founder: commitment, community, and compassion. For the past 10 years, Wolff has delivered powerful presentations at local events and area schools to spread awareness about the dangers of distracted, drunk, and impaired driving.

During school visits, students in grades 7-12 engage in different activities. These include driving a golf cart or shooting free throws while wearing visual impairment goggles, and operating a texting simulator that mimics the different distractions one encounters while driving.

Wolff also presents slideshows based on real-life cases the firm has closed, which deal with victims who were impacted by instances of distracted, drunk, or impaired driving. She shares these presentations at the schools, and during community events like Latin Fest, LarkFest, and Guilderland Night Out.

"Distracted and impaired driving is like a

pandemic, and even if we teach people all the right things and they *do* all the right things, they can still be victims of people who *don't* follow the rules of the road," Wolff said. "What we're trying to do is grab people of all ages and talk to them about making good, safe choices when they're driving."

Together with the firm's media partner, WRGB Albany CBS6 News, Wolff has spoken to thousands of young drivers through the "Drive Safe" initiative. She's also filmed many public service announcements on the subject.

"We want the roadways to be safer for our whole community — our moms, dads, kids, grandparents — everyone out there," Wolff said. "It feeds my soul to get the message out about how lives can be impacted in split seconds by poor decisions."

Visit Finkelstein & Partners at 1701 Central Ave., Albany, N.Y., 12205, and 41 State St., Suite 604-21, Albany, N.Y., 12207 by appointment only. For more information, call 1-800-529-2676 or visit LawAMPM.com.

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Elizabeth A. Wolff is a managing attorney at Finkelstein & Partners, LLP, in Albany. For the past 10 years, she has delivered powerful presentations at local events and area schools to spread awareness about the dangers of distracted, drunk, and impaired driving.