

LOS ANGELES

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LOS ANGELES — Fundraising dinners follow the same pattern: small talk, bland food and long speeches and then a line for the valet that resembles something in front of a ride at Disneyland.

The Women Lawyers Association of Los Angeles has decided to spare members and supporters the hassle of at least one more fundraising dinner this year.

But the organization still wants their money.

In June, nearly 1,000 letters went out to members and supporters asking them to stay at home and cook dinner with their friends and family.

Included with the letters were recipes for a dinner and a donation request.

"We decided that our members' most precious resource was time," said Jennifer Landau, the association's president-elect and a partner at Sidley Austin in Los Angeles.

"As a result, we decided that rather than asking them to come out for another event, we would give them a gift of an evening with their families or friends."

Barbara Carson, the organization's executive administrator, said the group aims to collect \$3,000 from the drive, which comes after a full-scale fundraising event in June.

"We've received an enormous amount of positive feedback," Landau said. "Although funds are still trickling in, this was much more profitable than many of our past foundation fundraisers."

Susan Steinhauser, a member of the group, said she and another member thought of the idea before

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coming to a meeting.

The Night at Home is similar to the Los Angeles Public Library's annual drive, which calls for a night at home with recipes provided in exchange for donations.

"I grew up with my mom's friends, the elementary school making cookbooks every year," she said. "I belong to community groups that put together cookbooks. The idea of sharing tried-and-true recipes is not unusual."

She said this fundraiser is efficient because of the low cost and members are grateful for being able to share an evening with their families.

"I haven't tried any of the recipes," she said, "but I sure wrote a big check because it was just such a great idea."

The funds will go toward the association's projects, like its domestic violence project, through which volunteer lawyers provide legal services at the Sojourn Legal Clinic for battered women.

Other initiatives include the Jail Project, in which volunteer lawyers advise detained women on noncriminal matters. The scholarship fund for law-school students also will receive support from the campaign.

The prescribed dinner starts with Perfect Salad and World's Easiest Salad Dressing. The entrée is Spicy Salmon Pasta, topped off with the Super Simple Lemon Granita.

"I for one have tried the pasta recipe," Landau said, "and I'm delighted to confirm that it was delicious."

But the association, hasn't totally abandoned the tried and true rubber-chicken dinner.

On Sept. 27, the organization will hold an installation dinner in honor of new officers and board members at the Omni Los Angeles Hotel.

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