

# Corcoran's Commitment

An Interview with Pamela Liebman,  
President and Chief Executive Officer, The Corcoran Group

**EDITORS' NOTE** Shortly after joining The Corcoran Group as a broker in 1985, Pamela Liebman was named Director of the company's first downtown office, which grew from 12 to more than 70 agents under her guidance. She was appointed to her current position in 2000. Liebman studied at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and the European Business School London. She is frequently quoted as a real estate specialist by leading news organizations, and in 2002, she was named one of New York's rising stars in Crain's New York Business's annual "Forty Under 40" issue. In 2003, the New York Post selected her as one of the 50 most powerful women in New York.



Pamela Liebman

**COMPANY BRIEF** Founded in 1973, The Corcoran Group ([www.corcoran.com](http://www.corcoran.com)) is the largest residential real estate firm in New York. After expanding into other luxury markets, acquiring leading firms in New York and Florida, the firm now operates 48 offices and employs more than 2,000 agents.

**Corcoran has always placed a major focus on corporate responsibility and involvement in the community. How critical is that to the culture of the organization, and what are some of the areas of focus for Corcoran?**

It's very critical to our company's culture. We're a very caring organization, both internally and externally, and because real estate is inherently a local business, we like to make sure we're part of the local community. We have greatly benefited from the business community, so we like to give something back to people who have been less fortunate or organizations who may be in need. Our focus is on smaller organizations where we can really make a difference. We contribute in two ways: first, each office has a pool of funds available to give to local charities that they would like to support; second, as a company, we have a pool of money we use to support certain organizations that are chosen by the brokers. They nominate organizations and the Corcoran Cares committee, which is made up of brokers and a couple of managers, votes on the organizations that we would like

to support that year. So this is not something that's coming from the top down; this is coming from everybody in the company. Everyone is encouraged, but not mandated, to donate a portion of their paychecks if they're employees, and to donate a portion of their commission checks if they're brokers, and we have an extremely high level of participation.

In addition to that, we run many events every year. The local offices and chapters of Corcoran Cares put together parties and fundraisers – everything from bowling nights to margarita nights – with live and silent auction items. And this year, we are supporting several different causes from helping animals to fighting domestic abuse. For example, we support the Mayor's Alliance for New York City Animals; READ, which prepares at-risk children to become readers; the Partnership for the Homeless; Friends In Deed; and the Empire State Pride Agenda. I'm also on the board of the Intrepid, and Corcoran Cares is a supporter of the Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund as well as the Red Hook Initiative in Brooklyn, and the East End Hospice on Long Island. Those are just a few of the causes we support.

**In addition to the funds, have you also put the focus on committing the time to different causes?**

Yes. We have put together groups of people to work with the food banks to distribute turkeys for Thanksgiving. We did a Dress for Success event in the Hamptons, and when the Intrepid reopened in New York, we had a group of volunteers help with the opening day ceremonies. Corcoran Sunshine also did a big cleanup day in Central Park. So for those who can't give money, or who can but also want to give their time, we encourage community participation. In times like these where people may not be making as much money, they are actually asking for more community involvement.

**You personally created the Wipe Out Leukemia Forever (WOLF) Foundation. How were you drawn to that cause, and how has WOLF evolved?**

About seven years ago, the son of a very dear friend of mine was diagnosed with pediatric leukemia. Fortunately, he was treated at Columbia and had a very successful outcome. After a couple of months of his treatment, when

it looked like he was going to be fine, I suggested to my friend that we should think about giving something back. I said that I wanted to help them form an organization to raise money to help other families dealing with this, and also to help try to find a cure for pediatric leukemia. That's where we came up with the name, Wipe Out Leukemia Forever. We asked a couple of other friends to participate, and they immediately stepped up, and we decided our first venture would be a golf outing. A colleague of mine at Corcoran, Maria Manuche, happened to be a member of Winged Foot Country Club, and she was able to help us have our first golf outing at Winged Foot, which was a huge success. I was so thrilled at how many friends and business colleagues jumped to support this cause, and we continued doing it every single year. My daughters got involved, and their friends got involved, and our friends' kids got involved, and they've had several community service projects to raise money for WOLF. We had our kids selling blue rubber bracelets all over the schools; we've had spin-a-thons and dance-a-thons and all kinds of different things to fight for this cause. An unexpected side note to this is that several families whose children have leukemia have reached out to my friend and to me asking for treatment advice, as well as for ideas on what they can do to help expand WOLF. So it's amazing how people really want to help a good cause. I'm very proud of the work we've done. We gave more than \$1 million to Columbia over five years, which is great. And we're continuing our efforts.

**There seem to be a number of organizations that you are engaged with and focused on, in addition to leading Corcoran. How challenging is it for you personally to balance your time?**

It is challenging to get to it all, but I'm so committed that I make it happen. And when you really want something to work, you find a way to make it work. I do not get involved in organizations I'm not passionate about, because I won't follow through. When I really feel this attachment and need to help, I try to be there, give it my all, and feel very good about the results. It's important as a business leader not just to reap the benefits, but also to share in social responsibility. ●

