

2015 Best Firm



“Do NOT  
BE AFRAID  
to step outside  
OF YOUR  
boundaries.”

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BEST CPA FIRM FOR WOMEN 2015

# Tara Stensrud

Women Leaders in Accounting



## Meet Tara

I am a wife, sister and very proud mom to a teen daughter. I am my daughter's biggest cheerleader at her many sporting events. We love the water and spending as much time as we can on our boat.

I also enjoy baking, gardening, cleaning, traveling and playing softball. I graduated from Central Michigan University in 2006. I am a member of the Alma-St. Louis Rotary, Alma Women's Club, and Alma Action Association.

## Tell us about your career with Yeo & Yeo.

I have always loved numbers and I have wanted to be an accountant since I can remember. I chose Yeo & Yeo for many reasons. I really needed a firm that provided work-life flexibility. I wanted to be close to where I grew up, in Shepherd, and the Alma office is only 10 miles away.

I wanted to work for a firm that was large enough to give me experience in all areas of accounting, but I didn't want to be confined to one industry or area. Yeo & Yeo provided all that. I specialize in consulting and tax, I am very proficient in QuickBooks and enjoy consulting with clients on their accounting software needs. I am the co-leader of the Client Accounting Software Solutions group. I also serve on the firm's Tax Services and Manufacturing Services groups.

The things I love most about my career are the challenges I face and the rewards. No two days are ever the same. I am always doing something new and meeting new people. I love working hard to make clients happy and love helping them grow their business. Their success creates my happiness! I also love the flexibility and responsibilities that I have. I take pride in my work and I like setting my own schedule with client work and feeling accomplished once things are complete.

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## Tara, describe a time where Yeo & Yeo's work-life flexibility positively impacted you.

This past April my daughter tore the ACL in her knee from a sports injury. She had reconstructive surgery the week after tax season. She required round-the-clock care for two weeks, followed by physical therapy three times a week. With the flexibility I have here at Yeo & Yeo, I was able to take the time off and work on necessary projects from home. My managing partner, Tom Coulter, told me to do what I had to do because family comes first. Sometimes unforeseen things happen and you need to take an extended period of time off of work. Yeo & Yeo has allowed me to take the time I need for my family. That is priceless. You can't put a value on that benefit and I will be forever grateful to Tom and my co-workers for their understanding and support.

## How does Yeo & Yeo encourage the advancement of your career and how do you develop future leaders?

Yeo & Yeo offers numerous trainings to support career advancement and provides a clear path on what you need to do to make it to the top. I am encouraged to take as much training as necessary. If I need more training in a particular area, they are always willing to send me to a training on the subject matter. I know that I cannot make it to the top unless I get pushed out of my position by the people underneath me, so I spend as much time as I can encouraging the staff below me to advance in their career. I help staff become members of the firm's specialization groups to get them involved. I take staff with me to community service meetings or events. I introduce them to as many people as I can to get their name out there in the community. I let the staff take responsibility for the work they have completed. No one feels more like a team member than when they can get credit where credit is due. I am a believer in giving a "pat on the back" for a job well done.

"If you want something you will have to work hard to get it. Nothing is free. In life, you get out what you put in."

## What challenges have you faced as a woman in accounting and how have you overcome them?

The biggest challenge I faced was early in my career. It was my age. When you are a new accountant meeting with clients, they question your ability because of your potential lack of experience. The first five years of my career I felt as if my advice was questioned by clients because I was young and inexperienced. To overcome this, I had to work hard to gain my clients' trust. I only gave advice when I was sure it was correct. I was not afraid to tell them that I didn't know the answer but I always told them I would find it, and get back to them promptly. They began to know that I would only give them honest, accurate advice. The farther along I am in my career, the less this happens, but I am still never afraid to research an issue before I give the client a definite answer.

## What advice do you have for women new to the accounting profession?

Do not be afraid to step outside of your boundaries. Going into this profession, I thought I would be in the office all day, every day. I was completely wrong. I spend a considerable amount of time consulting and promoting. It is important to not be afraid to look for more work. An easy way to promote services is to get involved in the community. The more people you know, the more friends you gain, and the more referrals come in.

## What is the best advice you have ever received?

The best advice I have ever been given was by my parents. They said, "If you want something you will have to work hard to get it. Nothing is free. In life, you get out what you put in." I use that advice every day in my career and life. I have worked hard to get where I am at today and it has not been easy, but the rewards I receive for my hard work make it all worth it.

*Yeo & Yeo is among 10 firms named to the 2015 Accounting MOVE Project Best Public Accounting Firms for Women list, conducted by Wilson Taylor, [www.wilson-taylorassoc.com](http://www.wilson-taylorassoc.com). Follow Yeo & Yeo on LinkedIn and Facebook as we profile women leaders within our firm through September.*