



PITCHING IN
FOURTH-GRADE STUDENTS IN A LOCAL "WASTE WARRIORS" CLUB LEND A HAND.

Community PRIDE

TOP PRODUCER RHONDA NAVRATIL'S FOCUS ON CIVIC-ORIENTED EVENTS HELPS STRENGTHEN HER COMMUNITY - AND HER BUSINESS

BY BARBARA HALL

WHEN RHONDA NAVRATIL first envisioned a community recycling day, she didn't imagine that the idea would take hold as firmly as it did.

Navratil, a perennial Platinum Club producer with RE/MAX River City in Edmonton, Alberta, and a Lifetime Achievement Award recipient, started by creating and placing a poster for the June event in the clubhouse at Summerside, a small lakeside community in Edmonton. Dubbed "Take Pride Summerside," the event allowed community

members to bring trash, televisions, old stereos and other electronics for a free drop-off.

"I first heard about this type of event at a marketing seminar a long time ago, and I've thought about doing it for years," Navratil says. "I like to do things that are not so directly self-promotional and are more community-oriented - initiatives that really make an impact."

For example, on Canada Day, she places small Canadian flags in yards around the community of about 3,500 homes. "It paints the whole community

with the red and white flags blowing in the wind, and some people leave them up for weeks," she says. The flags include a small sticker that reads: "Proud to be Canadian - compliments of Rhonda Navratil, RE/MAX River City."

"A lot of people express appreciation to me for helping make our area look like the most patriotic one in the whole city," Navratil says.

Navratil also sends out regular mailers advertising her listings, with something of general community interest on the flip side, such as information about

PHOTOS BY AMBER BRACKEN

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the local farmer’s market, a fall community celebration or a neighborhood garage sale.

“If clients or community groups support me, then I should support them as well,” Navratil says. “I try to buy from vendors in my city. If a client has a business or effort I can get behind, I do that too. I feel a responsibility to give back to others who have helped me achieve the success I’ve attained.”

Often her involvement resonates with others, helping to build momentum. As she was planning the recycling event, for example, a teacher from a local school noticed the Take Pride Summerside poster and contacted Navratil about helping out. The teacher’s fourth-grade class had recently started a “Waste Warriors” club, and the teacher volunteered the class’s efforts.

It was a great fit. The kids and their families all volunteered. The teachers organized them in shifts, and by the end of the day the crew had filled two 40-cubic-foot bins with household waste and hard-to-recycle items like gas barbecue grills, construction debris and old computers. Some people even brought one load, saw the size of the effort and went home to get more.

The school contacted a company that recycles electronics, which brought its own bins and collected batteries, keyboards and other small electronics to be broken down and reused. The Salvation Army also brought a truck and parked it at the event.

“It grew to encompass much more than I’d originally envisioned,” Navratil says.

Navratil’s costs were minimal. The city gave her a grant for renting and dumping the waste bins, and she approached local businesses about donating prizes and food.

“I was prepared to spend \$1,000 or more on the event,” she says. “But ultimately the only real cost to me was



my time and printing some customized recycling bags, which we gave away.”

Navratil plans to repeat the community-recycling day next year, along with other events. She and her assistant created a binder with information and checklists to help with planning. Navratil also leaves binders filled with community information inside her listed homes.

“Many agents who show my homes who aren’t as familiar with the area as I am,” she says. “The binders really help promote the neighborhood and give potential buyers a sense of the community.”

And events like Take Pride Summerside bolster that sense of community even more. †

GROUP EFFORT RHONDA NAVRATIL (LEFT) SAYS SUPPORT FROM THE LOCAL COMMUNITY – AND ESPECIALLY FROM AREA STUDENTS – HELPED MAKE THE RECYCLING EVENT A SUCCESS.



PLANNING A SUCCESSFUL EVENT

- Identify a need or underserved segment within your community.
- Reach out to potential partners who would also benefit from being involved.
- Promote the event through advertising, local media outlets and social media.