

PUTTING “COMMUNITY” BACK IN OUR COMMUNITIES.

By Sara E. Barry - Former CMCA PCAM, Current Community Association Manager, UNLV Certified Paralegal and Legal Secretary, and current license Nevada Insurance Producer.

How many of you live in a “place” where garage doors close before you can even say hello? Having a ***Know Your Neighbor*** party in your community can, most of the time, help to solve this problem. In just one event, you can get reacquainted with old neighbors, welcome new ones and build a sense of community which helps in the long run in helping each other.

I had a new neighbor who moved in across the street from me and I made a point to introduce myself and offer any help I could give to help them move in and be comfortable. I don’t know if they thought I was being a nosey neighbor or took my offer serious, but think about how it would be if the whole community welcomed them before the year is out.

One community that did this had a progressive dinner where they created a delightful party atmosphere at multiple homes. One home served Indian and Mexican hors d’oeuvres, while the next home served a BBQ and vegan buffet. They finished with dessert around the pool with a pool speaker flashing. People mingled inside and out and every last bite was consumed. Mild music was played, but people could have danced if they wished. Everyone was invited, young and old, and who would have thought that a party could have something for everyone, regardless of age, culture, food, language and more? They hailed success when both a young mother and a family of three generations, each remarked on how nice it was to feel included and enjoy good food and good company.....

At the end of their party, they started planning the next one? They were able to budget in their next year’s budget to ensure that the funds were there to use for things that were not donated. After this function they were thrilled to have more neighbors attending their board meetings. Their “Know Your Neighbor” party sparked a brand-new spirit of belonging and community. They were getting to know each other again.

Consider putting this idea on the next board agenda. Look for volunteers to start this process as your property values will definitely increase as well since people who live in your community will talk positively about your community to the outside world vs. talking negatively all the time. It really does work and helps people enjoy living in your community where they even don’t mind, most of the time, giving up some of their rights in living in your community.

One other recommendation that I would like you to consider is sending all new owners a welcome letter which includes another copy of NRS 116.41095. All owners have to sign this form in escrow, but I had a real estate broker stand up in one of my pre-licensing classes to tell me that one of the schools who teach new real estate licensee to get their license tell them how to hide this document to make the sale. When he saw my response, he wouldn’t tell me which school. This “Before you Purchase Property in a Common-Interest Community” is very important for them to be happy living in your community. If it is hidden from them in the signing process, they don’t fully understand issues that could arise. Help them by giving them another copy to see by putting something like the following at the top of the document:

VERY IMPORTANT DOCUMENT, PLEASE READ CAREFULLY! YOU HAD TO SIGN THIS IN ESCROW WHEN YOU PURCHASED YOUR HOME AND WE FEEL IT IS IMPORTANT FOR YOU TO SEE AGAIN TO ENJOY LIVING IN OUR COMMUNITY!

Please consider working to build a Sense of Community in your HOA to help our industry get a better name out there vs. all of the negative continually broadcast by the news outlets.