

New Member, New Voice

As the 5NE New Voices co-chair / MD5 New Voices coordinator; it was depressing to witness the gloom across our state during the isolation of our society from March until May. The voices of Lions seemed to be wiped away without a whimper.

Then, as a few Lions clubs were trying to get JAZZED UP for safe service projects, I saw a glimmer of HOPE for one little Lions club in a little town.

It was during my June visit to the Davenport Lions Club when I met a dynamic woman named Noel Balderas. She and her husband Tony are new to the area, having purchased their home over a year ago. Tony had recently joined the local Lions, and believed it was an activity that they could enjoy together while helping their new community.

At the meeting, as Noel was describing her “Yard of the Week” idea, I saw heads nodding in agreement, a motion was made, seconded and passed by the members to give her the lead on the new project.

Noel said, “I was over the top excited. Not only was this idea to uplift people moving forward (from the Covid shutdown), it was getting the community to come together also.”

First, Noel went to Sign Pros in West Fargo and the guy who designed the sign was also a Lion, thus giving her a real deal. Next she went to the Davenport Supper Club; purchasing \$10 gift certificates for each weekly winner. She then designed a promotional sheet which her children and others in the neighbourhood used to inform the residents of Davenport about this exciting project.

At the end of the project, each weekly winner’s name would be tossed into a hat to be selected for a \$50 Scheels (sporting goods) Grand Prize, as well as smaller amounts for the second and third names drawn.

Since July 15 of this year, the “Yard of the Week” has given the nominated homeowners bragging rights each week and a dinner gift. (PLUS its an overall boost to the local economy during the original 12-week plan.)



On September 24, DG Grant Kahlbaugh inducted Tony and Noel, Callie Albright, and Jennifer Gjistvange, PLUS he presented Noel with the New Voices certificate for Marketing.

WHY? She had replied during my phone calls about how happy the homeowners were to be selected for the week. Some did not even know there was a Lions club in town or they thought some clean-up projects were being done by the local Park Board. This project is a great example of how to promote and inform the people of a small town about Lions, and to be seen by the public as doing a service for the community. That is marketing.

New Lion Noel explained there was great support and positive response from those in the community. In addition to placing a New Voices pin upon her blouse, I gave a donation to fund the project until the end of October.

It was a way to say THANK YOU not only for a great idea but to also encourage her to strive for continued service in Davenport. Isn't appreciation for service what we all need right now?

By the way, the Davenport Lions Club will start up the “Yard of the Week” again in early December, to encourage and promote the joy of Christmas with lights and holiday decorations.

- Crystal Dueker,
Fargo Gateway Lions (25 years)
and MD5 New Voices coordinator

