

# Community Ties

*Storage facilities should take steps to be part of the neighborhood.*

It is one thing to advertise your self storage facility in your local community, but it's quite another to actually be a *part* of your community. While having Santa Claus come to your facility to meet local kids is always a good thing, what are you doing to get out into your community to let people know who you are?

It may take a little more time, and even a little more money, but making it so your local business leaders, realtors, high schools and Little League teams know who you are can go a long way toward cementing a very positive reputation for you and your facility in your community. Sure, people can find your facility on the Internet, but do they know your face?

Lisa Fowles is the regional manager of three Storage Solution facilities in Yucca Valley, California, and is the single mother of three who enjoys cheering them on at their baseball and softball games. And part of her baseball enjoyment has resulted in Storage Solution sponsoring Little League baseball teams, just one of many things she does to spread the word about her company.

"I take pride in seeing the Storage Solution logo on the backs of all those Little League players," Fowles

said. "I also go out in the community to pass out business cards and flyers with little gift bags to local businesses, as well as constantly try to improve our customer referral business.

"I have also set up some affiliate marketing programs with other businesses," she added. "I offer free water bottles and always have a candy dish filled with tenants' favorite candy. Tenants and past tenants have stopped by the office to just get the candy! It's the little things they remember and they make a big difference."

Here are a number of ways to become part of your community:

- Be a member of your local chamber of commerce. Go to the meetings, host meetings at your facility, and get to know your local business leaders.
- Offer free storage space to local churches and police departments, especially if they are in need of storage for special promotions like Toys for Tots.
- Sponsor local sports teams. With your facility's name on the kids' jerseys, you will get a tremendous amount of exposure and appreciation from parents.
- Buy ads in local high school and college sports programs. Also, buy sponsorships with the high schools and colleges that allow you to put signage up at the football and baseball fields.
- Get behind environmental cleanup efforts at area lakes, rivers or beaches. Provide bottled water with your company's name on the bottles to those helping with the cleanup efforts.
- Be a major part of special community holiday gatherings, like Christmas tree lighting ceremonies, where you can again hand out water.
- Be a part of local parades, be they for Christmas or the Fourth of July.
- Invite local realtors to come to your facility for private tours and wine and cheese gatherings.
- Get to know local clubs, like antique auto clubs, and invite them to have gatherings at your facility so the public can walk around and appreciate your place (as well as the cars).
- During election season, invite local politicians from both sides of the aisle to a meet the candidates BBQ at your facility. ❖

