

AREA/STATE

WHAT'S RED, WHITE AND BLUE ALL OVER? FLAG-DOTTED TREEMONT, THANKS TO REALTY AGENT

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A Chesterfield County real estate agent combined a gesture of good will with a bit of advertising and blanketed her neighborhood in red, white and blue for the holiday weekend.

H.K. Maxwell, an agent for Century 21's Chester office, planted 500 American flags in and around the Treemont subdivision Friday and Saturday to celebrate Independence Day. She was assisted by her husband, Art, and her 19-year-old son, Tedd. Attached to the flags was a small, blue flier with Maxwell's phone numbers and e-mail address.

Maxwell, who immigrated to the United States from Korea in 1977 and became an American citizen in 1981, said she got the idea at a convention in San Diego in March and decided the flags would be a great way to express her appreciation for the community's support.

"I just wanted to say thank you," she said yesterday. Placing a flag next to everyone's mailbox was also a perfect way to improve her name recognition and help unify the area for the holiday, she said.

"One united neighborhood, that's what I like," she said. "I feel good when everybody feels good."

Some of Maxwell's neighbors said they appreciated the flag distribution. Joe Kuzmick, who has lived on Chester Forest Lane for 15 years, said the flags are fantastic.

"I don't care if she's advertising herself or not," Kuzmick said. "No one in 15 years has thought to do that."

Kuzmick's wife, June, said Maxwell could have chosen another advertising method like sticking cards in mailboxes. But putting flags in everyone's yard helped people think about the meaning of Independence Day, she said.

"It's a cool way to drum up business," Mrs. Kuzmick said. "I always admire when someone comes up with a unique twist on something."

While this patriotic form of advertising might be new to the Treemont area, other neighborhoods are accustomed to it. One of Maxwell's fellow agents, Diane Wiley, has distributed flags on previous Fourth of July holidays and did so again this year, said Libby Gatewood, managing broker.

Even one of Maxwell's competitors said she came up with a good idea.

"I thought it was a very nice gesture," said Bill Watson of New Horizons Real Estate, who lives three doors from the Maxwells. "I think she put the spirit of the holiday first."

The Kuzmicks said they'll be saving their flag to display next year and hope others will do the same. If they do, residents might have two flags in their yards next July Fourth.

"I plan to do it again next year," said Maxwell, who wants to distribute to a wider area. "Next year I'm going to order 1,000."

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