

The History of WCDNF Poinsettia Sales

In 1996, when I was Ways and Means Chairman, Joan Fleming suggested we consider selling poinsettias as our major fund raising project. Her initial idea was to rent space at the Danbury Fair Mall and members would take turns staffing the space. This wasn't met with great enthusiasm but Joan persisted and in 1997, with her co-chair Margaret Ducibella, the project was launched. The original goal was \$8,000 in sales but the final result was \$19,500 for a total profit of \$10,500. We offered three sizes all in red, cream and pink. The Medium were \$10, Large \$15, and Extra Large \$20. Our first delivery day was held in the basement of St. James Episcopal church. The truck had to pull into a small side street (Terrace Place) which necessitated our carrying the cartons down a small hill and across the lawn into the basement. As I recall, it was a drizzly day so we were a bit damp but very happy with our accomplishment.

In the spring of 1998, Joan wrote a detailed paper of recommendations which included having a set of committees such as Neighborhood Captains and "Captains' Captain" as well as a "Morale Booster Chairman" which has evolved into "Rose's Cafe" to feed the legion of helpers working throughout distribution day. Her dream and organizational skills set in motion one of the all-time most successful GFWC/CT fund-raising efforts in the state.

In 1998 we moved to Hatter's Park then in 2006 we moved to the PAL gymnasium to accommodate our ever-expanding sales. Unloading the delivery truck, separating the plants into their appropriate categories, filling and delivering corporate orders and members' individual orders, breaking down the boxes and leaving the gym as clean as when we started is a huge undertaking that is expertly and enthusiastically handled by our members with help from husbands and friends from the Danbury Men's Club. Through the years we continuously fine-tune the distribution process such that in 2013 we unloaded, organized, distributed and cleared out 3,354 plants in 6 hours and brought in a net profit of \$23,300.

Because of Joan Fleming and all those chairmen and members who have followed, this fundraising effort has allowed us to generously support scholarships and many local charities through the years. Well done!

Lynda DeLuryea
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