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Total Clean Celebrates 25 Years of Spotlessness

By Sophie Braccini



Kim Winter with dog in her Rheem Boulevard office
Photo Sophie Braccini

When she was a student at Saint Mary's College, Kim Winter started cleaning homes. According to her, not only was it a way to help finance her education, it was also a relaxing occupation that took her mind off her classes. When she graduated, she decided to transform that activity into a real business and she developed "Total Clean" with a partner. The business has been growing in Lamorinda for 25 years. She now employs 19 people and is in charge of the cleanliness of hundreds of homes. "Having grown up here and contributing to the community in many ways is how I develop my business," says Winter, "We've been part of so many people's lives for so long now; it's the trust we build that keeps us successful."

According to Veronika Erickson, who helps with customer service and other tasks in the office, one of Winter's keys to success is the way she takes care of the women who work with her. "Some of them have been with her for twenty years," says Erickson, "she gives them the flexibility they need to raise their families, she is interested in their lives and supports them as much as she can." Winter learned Spanish at Campolindo with Mrs. Lola Danielli (who still teaches there), and helps with such things as the translation of legal papers and communication with the teachers of her employees' children.

"Part of taking care of the ladies who work with us is to have them insured, bonded and protected if an accident happens," adds Winter. She also provides her employees with cleaning products that are as environmentally friendly as she can. "This is good for the workers, it is good for our customers and good for the environment."

Suzanne Murphy of Moraga has been using Total Clean for 13 years. "I love them," says Murphy, "I look forward to coming home after

Total Clean has cleaned my house, it looks spotless, it smells wonderful, and I've never had a complaint."

Kris Holst of Orinda has been both Winter's customer and accountant for some 20 years. He attributes Winter's success to the fact that she used to clean herself and that she trains her staff in how to do things. "Kim is very detail oriented," he adds, "it shows in the quality of the cleaning, just as it simplifies our monthly financial reporting and payroll management."

According to Winter, her business has been steadily growing. Although 2009 was slower than usual, "I was able to keep all the employees and we've noticed a rise in demand in recent months," she adds. Winter admits that her pricing is at the top of the range for cleaning services but says, "People would rather pay a little more and have the peace of mind to know that the people who will be working in their homes are insured, will offer consistent, quality service, and they never have to worry about the cleaning products." Most of her clients are located in Lamorinda; they have their homes of all sizes cleaned once a week or every other week, and Winter does not hold them to a contract.

Winter recently joined the Moraga Chamber of Commerce. The mother of two school-age children, sole proprietor of a business that used to be a partnership, she does not have a lot of extra time, "But it is important to give back to the community that supports you," she said.

Total Clean is located at 329 Rheem Boulevard, Suite B, in Moraga; call 376-1004, or go to ww.totalclean.biz.

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