

Waterloo councillor welcomes potential new recruits as ‘Your KW Host’

Tours aim to showcase region and surrounding areas upon request

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A Waterloo city councillor has started a private business to help attract potential new recruits, and their families, to Waterloo Region.

Angela Vieth is Your KW Host — a venture offering tours to mainly corporate clients with prospective new employees who are unfamiliar with the local area.

“Most of these people — all of them, actually — have never been here before,” said Vieth, standing on a soccer pitch inside Waterloo’s RIM Park.

“If you’re being courted by a particular company to move here for a great job, you’ve maybe already gone through some interviews, but you’ve likely never been here,” she said. “They fly you in and you’re at the hotel, you’re at the office, back to the hotel and to the airport again — and have no idea what the community has to offer.”

While there are other tours geared toward wooing new professionals, such as the Greater K-W Chamber of Commerce’s physician recruitment program, Vieth says that hers aren’t prescribed and can accommodate individuals and groups, as well as partners, spouses and children.

Each tour conducted by Vieth is oriented to the individual interests of the potential hires, as well as their family members — with customized visits to schools, health care facilities, various attractions and recreational amenities such as RIM Park; a frequent stop, Vieth said.

Though she’s only conducted about 15 tours so far (the standard three-hour city tour for up to three people costs \$399), Vieth said that she was busy leading up to the new year, with at least one tour scheduled each week of December — including two women from California being courted by local tech firms.

Oftentimes, professional recruiters and companies aren’t well versed at taking people places or providing answers to questions about services in the community such as daycare, Vieth said.

That’s where her skills as a promoter and city councillor can kick in, as the testimonials on her website attest.

One group from the UK with five potential employees and spouses did most of a full day touring around in a van;

the next day, Vieth took their spouses out for lunch in Elora, before linking up with another woman who shared her story of integration after moving here from Israel.

Vieth's guests have included individuals from as far as the Netherlands and as close as Toronto, most of whom have no idea about St. Jacobs Market or the rural lifestyles offered in Baden and Ayr.

"People love that we're close to the country," she said. "If you work in downtown Kitchener but you want to live in Conestogo or Baden or St. Jacobs, it might be a 20-minute commute, but that's nothing if you live in Toronto — and the cost of living here is tremendous compared to what a lot of people are coming from."

Depending on the person or families, Vieth's tours can be formatted to focus on rural areas, tech, or any one of the region's three cities.

"We have an amazing symphony here, a tonne of music you can get into, training centres and trails — people just don't know about it," Vieth said. "People just don't realize the quality of life we have."

More information can be found at yourkwhost.ca.