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WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 2009

Community Sports

## Local Sports

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# New baseball fan works to grow the sport

Posted By Sean Meyer

Posted 1 day ago



As the London Majors continue with their spring training in preparation for the Intercounty Baseball League season, Anna Gladysz, the team's marketing manager, is already in mid-season form. Anna's position with the team has many aspects, including seeking out sponsorship opportunities with local businesses and creating ways to grow the support for the team in a typically hockey-focused city.

Sean Meyer Photo

Anna Gladysz played some baseball in elementary school, but wasn't a big fan of the game and actually wasn't really into sports at all.

These days though, Anna, 27, has not only become involved in the local sports scene as a member of the London Sports Council – and even coaching her son Nickolas's T-ball team last year – but she has also become a big fan of baseball.

And while her son's interest in baseball is one reason for her change of heart – the six-year-old is even trying out for a competitive team this year – working for the London Majors has made a pretty big difference too.

Anna is entering her third season as marketing manager for the Majors who are busily preparing for the new Intercounty Baseball League season, which begins for the defending league pennant winners in Hamilton this Sunday, May 10. The team's home opener at Labatt Park takes place next Sunday, May 17, in a rematch against Hamilton.

For Anna, working with the Majors has not only helped make her a baseball fan, but also given her the opportunity to grow as a business professional as well.

"Now I really get into a baseball game, I love watching it. I truly appreciate the game," she says. "I can sit there and try and figure out the moves, what's going on, what's going to happen next. It's fascinating.

"But the work too has really been a tremendous opportunity for me. I love doing my job. Really, I don't even consider it a job. Every night I put my son to bed and get to work, making phone calls, sending emails, there's so much to do."

That busy schedule has proven to be a great classroom for a young woman who has no formal schooling in marketing. "There's so much to learn, so much I want to do. Not having the marketing background (Anna is thinking of taking some courses at Fanshawe College) I have learned so much working with Roop and Scott (team co-owners Roop Chanderdat and Scott Dart). My background in sales helps, but really this is the best possible classroom for me, working with them, working for this team."

Anna's efforts haven't gone unnoticed by the owners of the team.

"Anna's really been tremendous," says Roop, who adds Anna's lack of experience didn't bother him in the least. "She brings an enthusiasm and professionalism to the job. She's so eager, she gets involved in the community. She really gets out name out there.

"I like to give people an opportunity to those who maybe aren't as experienced, but are willing to learn on the job. Anyone who can handle the workload, who wants to learn and do a good job, you have to give that person a chance."

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Anna has been in London for 20 years after her parents decided to leave Poland looking for better opportunities in Canada. After a short time in Italy while waiting for the family's paperwork to get finished, Anna came to London as a seven-year-old and soon learned things in Canada were a little different.

"I was in Grade 3 when we came to London," she says. "I don't remember too much about that time, but mostly I remember school was fun and I met a ton of kids. I had already learned a lot of the stuff we were taking in Grade 3 while going to school in Europe, so I had a lot of fun in Grade 3. Everything there was so disciplined. Here, there was a lot more free time."

Anna would go on to high school at St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Secondary School before enrolling at Fanshawe College in general arts and science. She eventually took a marketing job at Costco, a position that put her in contact with Roop and Scott, as Costco was a team sponsor at the time.

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When Scott was facing some serious health issues a few years ago, Anna was approached to become involved with the team. "I thought it was a great opportunity; I just jumped in and helped out. It was my own personal time, it's not like I get paid for working for the team, but what I get out of it is so important."

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Anna says it is a challenge she has grown to enjoy.

"There are so many aspects to my job, finding sponsorships for the team, planning group dates with major companies, schools, other groups. The marketing aspect of what I do is important for the team, so I have to go out and show companies there is value to advertising at Labatt Park."

Fundraising opportunities is another option Anna puts out to organizations across the community.

"Fundraising is a big thing. Whether it's a company or an organization or a school. Fifty per cent of what they sell in terms of tickets, they get to keep. We've booked 10 or 12 schools this year for that," Anna says. "Tamara Chapman has been helping with that, with group sales. We've really put a focus on schools. We have a daytime game this year, Tuesday, June 16, which we are calling the School Getaway Game. We are hoping for a big turnout for that. There really are just so many opportunities."

At a time when the economy is making lives difficult for so many Londoners, Anna says the Majors are no different in that Intercounty baseball is not exactly a huge moneymaking enterprise to begin with.

However, Anna is quick to add the team's success on the field is helping her promote the London Majors off the field.

"I do feel the pressure. But frankly I would be more worried if we hadn't had such a successful season last year. That has us all excited about this season. And really I think the community is excited about baseball," Anna says. "Even as successful as the team has been, a lot of people just don't know about us. We really appreciate what we have with Labatt Park, a tremendous place to watch a baseball game."

IF YOU WANT TO GO

London Majors play their home games at Labatt Park. Admission is \$6 for adults, \$4 for children under 12 and seniors. Group rates are \$4 for adults and \$2 for children under 12 and seniors. For more information visit [www.londonmajors.com](http://www.londonmajors.com).

HOME SCHEDULE

Sunday, May 17, 1 p.m. vs. Hamilton

Friday, May 22, 7:30 p.m. vs. Mississauga

Sunday, May 24, 1 p.m. vs. Guelph

Friday, May 29, 7:30 p.m. vs. Kitchener

Friday, June 5, 7:30 p.m. vs. Guelph

Friday, June 12, 7:30 p.m. vs. Brantford

Tuesday, June 16, 11 a.m. vs. Mississauga

Sunday, June 21, 1 p.m. vs. Brantford

Friday, June 26, 7:30 p.m. vs. Guelph

Sunday, June 28, 1 p.m. (doubleheader) vs. Barrie

Wednesday, July 1, 4 p.m. (doubleheader) vs. Toronto

Sunday, July 5, 1 p.m. (doubleheader) vs. Oshawa

Friday, July 10, 7:30 p.m. vs. Kitchener

Friday, July 17, 7:30 p.m. vs. Kitchener

Friday, July 24, 7:30 p.m. vs. Hamilton

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