

Organizational skills fit right into place

By Jeff Smith
STAFF WRITER

TYRONE TWP. — As the one-woman work force that comprises Logical Placement, Betty Houtari brings order into the lives of those who sorely need it.

Her clients include overtaxed working mothers juggling career and home, office workers drowning under a sea of clutter, and organizations wishing to make a big impression with a big event.

"The people who come to me are the ones who are feeling overwhelmed," Houtari said. "They're feeling frustrated. They're tired of losing their keys, they're tired of losing their glasses."

"(They're) people who know they're spending way too much time trying to find things."

For more than a year, Houtari has gone to clients' offices and homes to help them organize their spaces, their time, and invariably, their lives. While Houtari received her training from the National Association of Professional Organizers, she credits her mother for passing the organizing gene down to her.

When Houtari was growing up in Timmons, Ontario, her mother was a woman with such a can-do reputation, the subdivision depended on her to organize the neighborhood gatherings, Houtari said.

And like mother, like daughter. "I've always been organized. It was helpful for schools, getting projects in, deadlines met," she said. It was also helpful in juggling motherhood with a position as a computer sales representative.

Eventually, Houtari said, she soured on that job. After opting to work part time to raise her children, she was laid off three times in two years. And that was the incentive for her to become her own boss.

But Houtari was unsure what career to pursue until she saw an episode of "The Oprah Winfrey Show."

Julie Morganstein, author of "Organizing from the Inside Out" was a guest on the program.

Houtari was so impressed by her, she eventually contacted NAPO, which provided information on how to become a professional organizer.

Thus Logical Placement was born in September 2001.

Drumming up clients has been simply a matter of networking. Houtari, who lives in Tyrone Township with husband, Keijo, daughter, Katrina, 5, and son, Mikko, 4, is a member of the Fenton Area Chamber of Commerce, Fenton Area Business and Professional Women's Club, Women's Exchange of Fenton and the Organizing Specialists Network.

She has spoken before a group of Flint-area real estate agents and at a Novi home and garden show.

Last November, she was hired to organize a used-baby clothing sale, sponsored by Southern Lakes Parks and Recreation. More than 200 people attended the event.

As a professional organizer, Houtari brings her work to her client. And that has offered her some insight into some common organizational problems.

While the information revolu-



Betty Houtari, owner of Logical Placement, displays this set of photos — before (left) and after — of an office makeover she recently completed.

tion was supposed to lead to a paperless society, the opposite has occurred, she said. Computers add to clutter because people are printing out and saving their e-mail, she said.

Another common mistake is the failure to organize work spaces. For example: a person who needs pay or send bills should place all the necessary materials, en-

velopes, stamps, pens and checks, within easy reach of each other, she said.

And while she noted men and women share common organization challenges, women are far more likely to take on more responsibility than they can possibly handle. So one bit of advice she gives to some clients is, learn to say "No."

Logical Placement is reached by calling (810) 348-1772 for an appointment. Houtari is willing to travel some distance, provided the client covers the cost.

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