

# BUSINESS PROFILE

## Twenty year later, an old business idea takes root

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Lynne Pietrzyk and her new business partner Kelly Pastore were Fort Myers roommates 20 years ago. Both worked at the Sanibel Harbour Resort and Spa and held other hospitality industry jobs over the years, while starting families. But they recently revisited an old dream.

"I reflected on my life and what really matters to me, and that's helping people," Pietrzyk said. "We've always talked about owning a business together, something that really gave back."

So in October they opened Simple Solutions Concierge, a service tailored to time-hassled professionals, or anyone who needs a little extra help. From a full-time office assistant to once-a-week grocery shopping, Pietrzyk said Simple Solutions can help simplify a busy life with almost any service, provided it is reasonable. For example, could Pietrzyk locate a private submarine for a client, if they so desired?

"We'd find it," Pietrzyk said. "I would. I mean, I helped (boxer) Evander Holyfield at Sanibel Harbour..."

"And we didn't even have the Internet back then," Pastore quipped.

If that sounds far-fetched, here are a few services they normally provide: personal shopping, dry cleaning pickup or rental car locating, pet walking and care, watching your maintenance person at home while you're at work, appointment setting, meal and travel planning. Recently, Pietrzyk and Pastore served as party butlers for a client.

"She wanted to be the cook, but without our help, she would have spent the entire

dinner party for 20 in the kitchen," Pietrzyk said.

Some requests are simple, like dropping off a letter at the post office. Others are more complicated scenarios: maybe someone needs their shirts ironed, kids picked up from school, a business partner notified of a meeting and dinner planned, all within the space of a few hours.

"It's kind of like a puzzle," Pietrzyk said. "You take the request and you go, OK, we're going to put this together for you."

Getting to know the client well is key, she noted.

"It's just like you need to have a relationship with a doctor or an attorney," she said. "You don't really need them everyday, but you need them ... we have a relationship so if they have a crisis, we're ready for them."

The cost of services runs about \$47 per hour. But different membership packages (silver, platinum and gold), promotions and a la carte rates for some services allows flexibility in choosing what you need help with and when. Call (239) 454-7323 for more information or visit [www.simplesolutions.com](http://www.simplesolutions.com). A rewards program is available to members, featuring some discounts like 10 percent off initial services, a free glass of wine at Dwyer's Prime Steakhouse & Fine Dining or a free wardrobe consultation from clothes designer representative Mary Lynn Ziemer.

"She rocks," Pietrzyk said. "She was just at my house yesterday ... she went through my wardrobe and fitted me for two suits and six blouses."

Businesses who participate in the program are rigorously screened, Pietrzyk said. They will also benefit by promotions



FLORIDA WEEKLY PHOTO EVAN WILLIAMS  
Lynne Pietrzyk

through Simple Solutions and be first on the list to help with Pietrzyk's client's needs.

Simple Solutions is also a member of the International Concierge and Errand Association, which caters to out-of-town clients looking for a local concierge. Through the ICEA, they have the contacts to refer local clients to similar services across the nation and overseas. But Pietrzyk said she won't be leaving town anytime soon — she loves it here in Fort Myers.

"I think what I like is I can go places and know people," she said. "This town is so small. Everybody knows somebody who knows somebody. It's like a hometown, but it's big. It's just like a relaxed atmosphere. I like that."

Pietrzyk was born in Anderson, Ind., and moved to Fort Myers in 1988. Her employ-

ment history includes concierge and trainer for Sanibel Harbour Resort, general manager at Pelican Landing Community Association, and custom design representative for Shadow Wood Preserve. Most recently she helped her husband open his own business, Tour Greens, which installs synthetic greens, cages and basketball courts. She has a daughter, 20, and two boys, 10 and 12. Pietrzyk has a particular empathy for busy moms.

"We know how busy moms are and how moms would like another wife," she said. "Time is something you can't just go to Walgreens and purchase ... so if you're spending your life on things that do not add value, you should not be doing them."

Both Pietrzyk and Pastore are involved with the American Heart Association, as members of the Patron Committee. The committee works on getting sponsorship from local community members who are not businessmen or women, just men and women of means. They are also members of the Fort Myers Women's Network, a group of business women who meet on a monthly basis to discuss, for example, how to raise scholarship money at Edison College and Florida Gulf Coast University.

Pietrzyk said she plans to make Simple Solutions the leading concierge service in Southwest Florida in the next five years. So far, she said, it's going well. Three weeks after opening the business, a friend of Pietrzyk's and Pastore's from the old days as roommates, called to say hello.

"Did you ever start that concierge business?" he asked Pietrzyk, who put down the phone to call Pastore and say, "Guess who just called?" ■



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