



Young Professionals in Nashville Raise Serious Funds for RPAC at Governor's Mansion Event

In Tennessee, the Young Professionals Network leadership has demonstrated unequivocally that the industry's youngest members are not just about light-hearted happy hours: They can take on serious issues and raise serious funds – and put on a great party while doing so!

At an RPAC fundraiser the Greater Nashville Association of REALTORS® YPN chapter hosted this spring at the Tennessee Governor's Mansion, they were clearly thinking big. Bringing together REALTORS® from across the state, they created a valuable networking opportunity in a glamorous and prestigious setting, and raised approximately \$35,000 for RPAC.

The event came about during a YPN brainstorming session at the 2,700-member Greater Nashville Association of REALTORS®. It became apparent, as they were identifying a date to host an RPAC fundraiser at the Governor's Mansion, that there was an opportunity to open it up for state-wide fundraising, rather than just for YPN members at GNAR: the Tennessee Association of REALTORS® Spring Conference was scheduled for late March, coinciding fortuitously with the planned event. Thus, it expanded to include all of the state's REALTORS® – those coming from across the state to attend the TAR Spring Conference, as well as those living and working in Greater Nashville and Middle Tennessee.

As the fundraiser had become a state-wide event, it was largely funded – with impressive speed – by Tennessee RPAC. Because of certain legal regulations in the state, the National Association of REALTORS® was prohibited from contributing additional necessary funds directly to the state or local associations for the event. Still, when they heard about the promising opportunity, they asked how they could help. "NAR's quick and generous response sent a really strong message of support," says GNAR Chief Executive Officer Don Klein, "they didn't say 'too bad, so sad.' They said 'ok, we can't write a check to the state or local association for this. What else can we do?'" What they did was to write a check for \$2,100 directly to the catering company, and sent ribbons, balloons, and printed material to make the event especially festive and informative. The funding from NAR was in place within 48 hours of the initial conversation.

Most outside events at the Governor's Mansion are, in fact, held at a facility on the property called "Conservation Hall." In a gracious gesture for this event, Governor Bill Haslam and his wife Chrissy allowed tours of the actual residence. "The Governor's Mansion never looked better," confides Klein, "everything was in perfect bloom, the sky was blue, and the sun was shining. Because the legislature was in session, we couldn't expect the Governor to be in attendance – but we do see him here and there, so that's all right. The fact that he and his wife so kindly opened up their beautiful historic home for a private tour in the first hour of the event was a real boon, and it sure got everyone there on time!"



Region 4 Vice President Milton Shockley of Greenville, South Carolina attended the event – and is looking forward to the next time: “I get invited to all these events, and this was exceptional. I’d not only support it again, but I’d recommend that others try it,” he says. “It may be just a little easier to generate this kind of enthusiasm in an election year, but I don’t think that was the only reason these young folks were so fired up. It was great for those of us already involved to see the excitement of the up-and-coming generation.”

Cynthia Shelton, NAR RPAC Liaison, is originally from Nashville and returned to her roots for the event. “I was just amazed, both by the elegance of the event, and by the great turn out. The energy was phenomenal – everyone was clearly thrilled to be there, and when we started asking point-blank for contributions, they really got into the spirit. That enthusiasm was channeled into real support.” In her remarks, Shelton told the lively crowd that she’d been in real estate for 36 years, “I’m seasoned – and you’re the new seasoning!” At the end of the day, she says, events like this are effective networking opportunities for the young professionals. “These young people absolutely get the importance of RPAC. But we also wanted to convey that the more involved they become, and the higher they raise their profile in the community and the industry, the more likely the rest of us will call them with referrals. Come to these fun events – and boost your own bottom line.”

Shelton’s partner at the podium was Brian Copeland, a Nashville native and the 2011 National YPN Chairman. As a Major Investor Councilmember for NAR, he applied a certain amount of friendly peer pressure, calling out his youthful colleagues by name, noting “I know the market’s tough, but I also know you just closed a deal and have a sizeable commission coming in...” The way he sees it, “I had to get creative with brokers partnering with their young professional REALTORS® to help them jump to a major level. Giving them the opportunity in public to raise their hand and ‘step up’ is the first step in making that successful confident ask.”

When the proverbial dust had cleared, over \$25,000 was raised through the event, with another \$10,000 or more in pledges received as a result of the RPAC Challenge presented that evening. GNAR, YPN, and RPAC are already planning to replicate this great Tennessee success on an annual basis. Who says youth is wasted on the young?



Brian Copeland, Amanda Stone, Laura Monin, Pete Prosser, Rebekah Byrd, Deb Dawson



Tennessee Governor's Mansion

Greater Nashville Association of REALTORS®
YPN RPAC Event at the Governor's Mansion



YPN Chair Andrew Terrell



Andrew Terrell, Fay Robinson, Don Klein, Janice Carlton, Lois Killebrew