



PIXEL PERFECT PHOTO

Erikka Perkins

There are few who work long hours, yet are willing — and happily so — to get out of a warm bed at 2:30 in the morning on a January night to give some old folks a ride. Erikka Perkins is a woman who really likes people, so she was more than eager to do just that because she reaps great satisfaction from lending a helping hand in more ways than one.

Erikka and her husband, who is a professional building mover, were living in Gloucester, Mass. He sometimes worked with Nantucket's Toscana Corporation, and in 1995 they hired him. A couple of months later Erikka followed in their move here.

"I came down sight unseen. I actually really liked it when I moved here. I felt very at home here," she said.

Her first job was at Cumberland Farms, then at Nantucket Office Products and next at Ryder Electric. She had administrative experience but wanted a change and real estate interested her. In 2005 Erikka began working part-time at Atlantic East (now Atlantic East/Nantucket Real Estate) as office manager and part-time as a broker.

"I just keep everything together," she said of her manager's position. "I answer the phones, I do the bookkeeping, I maintain the rental program and the listings. If something is going wrong I'm generally the person who needs to fix it. They're nice people — they're great people to work with. They are very supportive in every way."

Beyond her job responsibilities, Erikka wanted to become involved with the community in other ways. She has volunteered with the Nantucket Film Festival and did a walk for autism fundraising, but was searching for something to "sink my teeth into" that would allow her to give back to the community. That was when she learned about the island chapter of the American Red Cross.

"The Red Cross seemed perfect because they help people when they are the most vulnerable and come to their aid," she said.

Erikka began as a Red Cross volunteer last fall. In mid-January this year the plumbing went awry at Academy Hill senior apartments and when water destroyed the electrical system the elderly residents had to be evacuated. Erikka got a call at 2:30 in the morning, and within minutes she arrived at the housing to give residents rides to places arranged for them to stay until their building was repaired.

"The situation, considering what it was, went as well as could be expected. Everybody was really appreciative and very sweet, and it was nice to meet those people. It was very rewarding to me, but it was such a big deal to them to help them out."

Erikka is on call 24/7 with the Red Cross, but when she is free she treasures being with her three dogs, reading, watching movies, boating and recently, her obsession with the on-line game "Words With Friends." The move to Nantucket has proven to be one of the best experiences of her life, in great part because of the people she has met.

"I'm pretty content with my life now," she said. "I've accomplished more than I thought that I would, at least professionally. I appreciate what I have. What more could I possibly want? I feel grateful that I live here with all these cool people and in this beautiful place."

— Mary Lancaster
Property News Writer