

A PLACE TO CALL HOME

How one broker fights to end homelessness, increase diversity, and make Minnesota welcoming to all who live here



For Denise Mazone, founder of the Mazone Real Estate Group and Chair of Minnesota Realtors® Diversity Committee, community is the driving force behind her career in real estate.

“I wanted to build my community from within my community,” said Mazone, recalling what inspired her to enter the profession 28 years ago. Coming from a family that owned numerous rental properties in Minneapolis, Mazone fielded a lot of inquiries from people who wanted to rent; people whose families had rented for generations and were having a hard time getting ahead. “And I’m thinking, ‘why aren’t you buying your own house?’ So, I got licensed to sell.”

From those early sales to family and friends, Denise expanded her clientele and watched community thrive and grow strong for new generations.

“Not only have they maintained where they’re at, they’ve called me to sell them another place. And now I’m selling to their children and their grandchildren,”



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Mazone said. “That’s because home ownership takes you to the next level. You don’t have to worry that every 12 months you have to find a new place or your rent’s going to go up exponentially. Stability is so important. You can’t get anywhere when you don’t know where you’re going.”

To take her community building efforts to the next level, Mazone launched Mazone Real Estate Group in 2009 with a mission to serve a diverse clientele, inclusive of all. One of Mazone’s big passions is helping homeless people off the streets into safe housing, and on a path to a better life that could include homeownership.

“I know a family right now living in a hotel. Husband, wife, and two kids. It’s very hard,” Mazone said. “Well, we’ll work on getting them into affordable housing, and eventually I think we’ll get to home ownership. It can be a long road.”

Part of the solution to achieving these goals is mobilizing the Realtor® community. That’s one reason why Mazone joined committees at the Minneapolis Area Realtors® (MAR) and Minnesota Realtors® (MNR) that foster multiculturalism and diversity.

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As Chair of MNR's Diversity Committee, she is working to get the word out about the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion. But making a plan that is truly effective requires bringing more diverse membership to the table. So, she is soliciting more participation from ethnic minorities within the real estate community and encouraging members of more diverse groups to join the ranks of Realtors. To achieve this, she recently recommended having a local expert on diversity join the committee.



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She is also partnering with the National Association of Realtors® and diversity-affiliated groups like the National Association of Real Estate Brokers (NAREB), which is a group for African American real estate professionals, the National Association of Hispanic

Real Estate Professionals (NAHREP), the Asian American Real Estate Association of America (AREAA), and others.

"We all come together on diversity," Mazone said. "I think everybody should be involved."

She strongly encourages new Realtors® who are people of color to explore opportunities with their local, state, and national associations as soon as possible.

"Get involved with whatever your area of interest and expertise is. We need your voice and perspective," Mazone says. "Communication is key. Talk to each other. Join various groups, especially diversity. You can make a difference."

Looking forward, Mazone sees a more open, united real estate industry that represents the ethnic tapestry of the state, and better serves its diverse clients. She envisions a time when everyone who needs a home has one.

"I think that if we stay on the course that we're on now, we will see justice. The only thing that we're asking for is equality. Nothing else. Nothing more. I would hope that we would accomplish that," Mazone said.

CONSUMER CAMPAIGN

Minnesota Realtors® launched **Sold! My Realtor® Story** — a consumer campaign that highlights the value of a Realtor® through a series of consumer testimonials, stats and facts, and videos of clients talking about their experience. Using the words of satisfied customers from around the state, the campaign educates customers about the value Realtors® bring to every transaction.

www.mnrealtor.com/myrealtorstory

Look for this on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn!



Our Realtor® explained all of the documents we needed to sign & what they meant.

She made all those complex details easy to understand.



SOLD!

**My
Realtor®
Story**

**- Lisa,
Homeowner
EDEN PRAIRIE, MN**

