

Extreme Pool Furniture Makeover

Kings Point wanted their old furniture to be removed and replaced. This presented some major challenges: first, to make the cost of the furniture fit Kings Point's budget; second, to coordinate the large deliveries of new furniture with Kings Point's operating schedule; and third, to make the old furniture go away.

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Delray Beach is a thriving community of more than 200,000 people located on the Gold Coast of Florida, midway between West Palm Beach and Ft. Lauderdale. With two miles of pristine, azure-blue Atlantic Ocean beaches and three live coral reef systems, the area is abundant with sea life of all kinds. Inland are miles of pine trees, scrub oaks, cypress swamps and classical Florida Delta areas.

Delray Beach has retained many Old Florida historical sites and is the center of a thriving cultural community. The city has worked hard in recent years to restore and modernize its roads and infrastructure while maintaining an atmosphere that is more laid back than the surrounding metropolitan areas.

Six miles west of the downtown area is Kings Point, a condominium association formed in 1973 with 816 homeowners. Today, Kings Point is a massive property with 7,200 units and over 12,000 residents. The complex includes a 1,300-seat community theater, three large, modern clubhouses, six large swimming pools, three whirlpools (each as big as a typical community swimming pool) and eight tennis courts. There are also volleyball, handball, racquetball, basketball and shuffleboard courts scattered around the property, along with a heart conditioning trail and two golf courses. Managing a recreation department with this many facilities is a major task, one that falls to Mike Hyman, president of Point Management, and a senior management staff that includes Cathy Hart, director of housekeeping.

Recently, Kings Point decided to refurnish its outdoor pool and spa areas with modern, high-quality outdoor furnishings to replace their aging, outdated furniture with a modern commercial grade stacking design of furniture (see the articles *Modern Construction and Safety* and *Re-strapping, Repairing, and Refinishing Your Old Pool Furniture* in *CondoManagement*, April and May 2004 for more information on this furniture.)

Kings Point wanted their old furniture to be removed and replaced with 1,200 new dining chairs and 400 new chaise lounges. This presented some major challenges: first, to make the cost of the furniture fit Kings Point's budget; second, to coordinate the large deliveries of new furniture with Kings Point's operating schedule; and third, to make the old furniture go away.

Making the furniture fit the budget was a considerable challenge. The amount Kings Point had budgeted to spend was considerably less than would typically be needed for such a purchase. Kings Point requested bids from vendors all over the state of Florida, but only Contract Furnishings was able to meet the budget without cutting specifications, features or quality. We were able to do this because the size of the job and its high profile nature allowed us to conduct special negotiations with the factories and suppliers of the furniture and materials.

Coordinating the deliveries with Kings Point's operating schedule was relatively simple. We sent six truckloads of furniture at scheduled times, a process that was nearly flawless.

Making the old furniture go away was the greatest challenge of all. In part, we won the bid because we included removal of the old furniture at no extra charge. We knew that we would be removing more furniture than we were bringing and that the old furniture did not stack. In our worst case scenario, we figured we'd need several more trips with our truck to remove the old chairs, and we factored that into our bid.

However, we did not anticipate how much of the old furniture there would be or how difficult it would be to place elsewhere. The furniture was an old-fashioned, non-stacking style assembled with thousands of rusted nuts and bolts that made it very labor intensive to re-strap or recycle. We thought a recycling company would jump at the opportunity to pick up thousands of pounds of free aluminum, so we offered it to several recyclers around the state. "No charge, just come get it."

Unfortunately, the four storms from Florida's 2004 Year of the Hurricanes had struck with devastating fury. Recyclers statewide were buried under tons of aluminum. The recyclers were not hungry, and did not want to come get the furniture from Kings Point. Oooooops...

Further complicating the problem was that Kings Point had more pieces of furniture than had originally been estimated. Every time we removed a truckload of the old furniture, Kings Point personnel found more of it on the property. The pile of furniture left at the end of our first six truckloads was about as big as the pile we started with, and nobody, anywhere, wanted the pile.

We made countless phone calls all over the state, looking for ways to make that nightmare pile of left over furniture go away without losing money on the deal. Goodwill Industries in Boca Raton said they would "take it all." They did send two trucks, and then said the couple hundred pieces they picked up was all they could handle. (Nevertheless, we appreciated the effort, because the pile that remained was much more manageable.) We sent our truck again to finish up, and finally the pile was gone, at moderate cost to us. We also appreciated King's Points patience with us during that process.

In the end, the furniture has been delivered and Cathy Hart says everyone is thrilled with it. Kings Point has moved on to other renovation projects, and their property is a showpiece.

Depending on the size of your association, replacing your outdoor furniture could be a big job. But the reward of having attractive new furnishings to beautify your grounds will be worth it. Just ask Kings Point.

Cathy Hart

Director of Housekeeping

Contract Furnishings' drivers and delivery personnel are impressive because they are so service-oriented. They arrived on time and were very pleasant and professional. They really showed a good work ethic. It was important to be well organized to effectively deal with thousands of pieces of furniture. We made sure the pool area was ready the night before delivery. Good communication was vital between our management and staff, the community and Contract Furnishings for this project to go smoothly.