

VOLUNTEER

Kinnie not an activist, just dedicated

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 CALGARY HERALD

As a founding member of one of Calgary's environmental activism groups, Barb Kinnie devotes her days to advocating and lobbying for the protection and improvement of Calgary's ecosystem.

But she says she has never thought of herself as someone who should carry the label, "environmentalist."

"I'm just a person who is aware and wants to do my part to protect people and the environment from the harm," says Kinnie.

She started the Calgary chapter of the Sierra Club two years ago. The group tackles waste management issues, urban sprawl and a host of other environmental concerns through community education programs.

However, her main focus is the pesticide free yards campaign, an advocacy program designed to encourage people to use natural forms of pesticides on their yards and gardens.

She has devoted the last 15 years of her life to advocating the use of organic pesticides as opposed to chemical, because she said she knows first-



Ied Jacob, Calgary Herald

Barbara Kinnie is a volunteer with the Sierra Club and has been working to get people to use natural pesticides instead of chemicals.

hand what kind of harm they can bring.

"It's really a case of the personal becoming the political. I ended up with some very serious health problems many years ago because of pesti-

cides," says Kinnie.

"Since then I've been very ill and I realized that I didn't want this to happen to anyone else. I take it as my responsibility to protect other people."

Kinnie was exposed to pesti-

cides in the late '70s while working at a greenhouse in Nova Scotia. She claims she now suffers from an autoimmune deficiency that causes her to have terrible bouts of arthritis and fatigue because of it.

"Back then there wasn't as much information out about the harm chemical pesticides can cause," says Kinnie, who continues to garden avidly.

"There's this misconception out there that if you don't use chemical pesticides you can't have a nice garden, but that isn't true. My garden is completely organic and it's very beautiful."

Kinnie's work with the Sierra Club earned her a nomination for a 2005 Volunteer Calgary Leadership Award. Her nominator, David Keith, volunteer co-ordinator for the Sierra Club, says that her devotion to the community is remarkable.

"She's the most dedicated person I've ever seen to a cause. She puts in more time volunteering than most people put into work," says Keith.

"Her attitude is infectious, she has a way with motivating other volunteers because she leads by example."

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