

GTA Realtors committed to learning

BY ANN HANNAH

From coast to coast, most of us agree on the many benefits of homeownership. Today, more Canadians own their own homes than ever before, perhaps because few investments are as hard working as real estate; it serves double duty, offering you shelter and the potential for long-term profit.

While Greater Toronto Realtors believe firmly in the advantages of home ownership, we are also quick to espouse the benefits of education because, like real estate, few other investments offer such worthwhile returns.

Choosing a career in real estate involves a lifelong commitment to learning. In our province, Realtors are required to earn 24 Continuing Education credits every two years – and it's a requirement that we embrace.

Many Greater Toronto Realtors go well beyond the provincial mandate because in the incredibly dynamic GTA real estate market there is no such thing as the status quo.

Virtually all of the factors that affect your transaction are constantly changing, and it's our responsibility to ensure that, as a client, you're equipped with current, insightful information.

You can count on your Realtor, for example, to offer valuable advice on the current state of the market. Real estate is a local business in which conditions can vary from neighbourhood to neighbourhood.

If you're buying a home in the city of Toronto, we'll advise you to budget an extra \$6,000 on average, for the municipal portion of the double Toronto Land Transfer Tax. We have been working for a number of years incidentally, to help city councillors see that this is an unfair levy on homebuyers.

To help you keep money in your wallet we can also counsel you on government programs like the RRSP Home Buyers' Plan under which generally, you can withdraw up to \$25,000 (\$50,000 for a couple) from your registered retirement savings plan to buy or build a qualifying home as a first-time homebuyer.

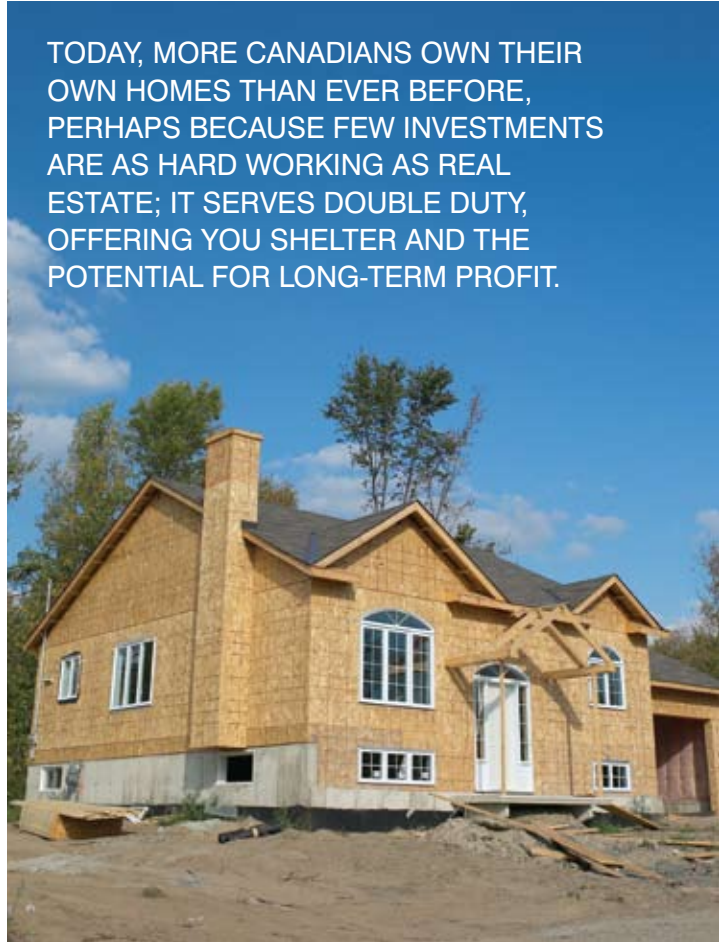
In order to qualify for a mortgage you'll need to meet specific criteria, and since it often changes, we can advise you on how to plan for a successful outcome.

Before you choose a home it's important to consider usage limitations that result from factors like municipal zoning restrictions and condominium bylaws. Your Realtor can help ensure you're prepared on this front as well.

Given that every transaction is unique, it is also vital to consult a Realtor so that your interests are protected through the use of appropriate real estate forms and clauses.

Keeping pace with all of the information that is required to offer you sound advice means that Greater Toronto Realtors routinely incorporate Continuing Education sessions into their schedules.

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We are so committed to learning that we offer four scholarship grants and an opportunity for an internship at our professional association, the Toronto Real Estate Board, on an annual basis.

For a glimpse into the many ways a Greater Toronto Realtor's knowledge can help you, be sure to visit TorontoRealEstateBoard.com.



Ann Hannah is the President of the Toronto Real Estate Board, a professional association that represents 34,000 Realtors in the Greater Toronto Area.

Realtors help build communities

BY ANN HANNAH



When it comes to turning an average street corner into the heart of a prosperous, revitalized neighbourhood, Greater Toronto Realtors play an important role. Through research, marketing skills and networking activity, your Realtor can help turn a humdrum area into a vibrant, desirable community. Their work has been pivotal to breathing new life into areas like Liberty Village, Regent Park and Ossington Village, and their efforts aren't limited to existing downtown neighbourhoods.

From being in-the-know with respect to the toniest new condo projects to having an ear to the ground on the latest up-and-coming neighbourhoods, Torontonians are indisputably preoccupied with all things real estate, and this fixation benefits our city on a number of fronts.

For example, studies have shown that real estate transactions create jobs and economic growth in many sectors. Research from Altus Group estimates that between 2008 and 2010, residential Multiple Listing Service (MLS) housing transactions created \$19 billion nationwide in spin-off activity and more than 155,000 jobs annually.

The allure of Toronto real estate has also contributed to our city's high ranking in a range of independent international surveys. From being one of the most livable cities, to one of the world's most promising economic engines, to one of the most successful towns overall, Toronto consistently achieves top marks on a global scale and, in doing so, continues to attract buyers from all over the world.

One of the most concrete examples of our real estate fixation's pay-off relates to community revitalization. Ours is a city of neighbourhoods and from the reaches of the 905 region to the heart of the downtown core, no matter what area we call home, we tend to be fiercely proud of it. This fervent loyalty is a positive thing: Studies have shown that people with strong connections to family and friends in the community are consistently happier than those without social ties.

With their access to a database of new construction projects in the GTA, Realtors also play a key role in promoting new developments throughout the city, planting the seeds that, in time, grow into strong communities.

The ability to make enthusiasm for a community contagious, to advise you as to the specific plans on every corner, and to connect clients with the right residential and commercial developers involves considerable commitment. Greater Toronto Realtors are genuinely passionate about life in our city. They are often the first in line to support elements that are woven into the fabric of every prosperous neighbourhood like minor league sports, street festivals and community clean-ups.

Getting an early lead on an up-and-coming community can result in a very profitable long-term investment, and helping you recognize an area's hidden potential is where your Realtor comes in. If you are interested in taking advantage of opportunities in the next emerging Toronto neighbourhood, talk to a Greater Toronto Realtor and visit TorontoRealEstateBoard.com.



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