

Prepping Your Home for a *Perfect* Property Showing



Bountiful flowers in the garden, the sound of lawn mowers, and the sight of children riding bicycles are not the only clues that spring is upon us. A leisurely drive around the neighborhood reveals that it is also the time of

year when many homeowners sell their homes. If you are among the thousands of homeowners who are selling your home, you may have already realized that there's a lot of competition out there.

Rest assured, selling a home in today's real estate market takes more than just an astute REALTOR®, a full-scale marketing plan and a bit of good luck. Your own efforts to create an appealing, I-can-see-myself-living-here house are just as important as everything else that goes into selling a home.

Montgomery County Association of REALTORS® President Eileen Campbell acknowledges that there are limits on what she and other REALTORS® can do to make a home attractive to buyers. "The moment the potential buyer arrives at a listing, nothing I could do matters as much as the merits of the house and the feeling they get when they walk through the front door. It's that feeling that often sways them to act swiftly to make an offer."

Home sellers are cautioned to not overlook the importance of property showings. After all, it's the part of the home selling process that offers sellers a tangible opportunity to make their home as charming as possible. Campbell advises home sellers

to make some of these low-cost, high-impact improvements to create a stronger bond between the potential buyer and the property:

- ◆ Get rid of clutter. Throw out or file stacks of newspapers and magazines. Pack away most of your small decorative items. Store out-of-season clothing to make closets seem roomier. Clean out the garage.
- ◆ Keep everything extra clean. Wash fingerprints from light switch plates. Mop and wax floors. Clean the stove and refrigerator. A clean house makes a better first impression and convinces buyers that the home has been well cared for.
- ◆ Get rid of smells. Clean carpeting and drapes to eliminate cooking odors, smoke, and pet smells. Open the windows.
- ◆ Lighten and brighten rooms. Put fresh or silk flowers in principal rooms for a touch of color. Turn on all the lights. Even in the daytime, incandescent lights add sparkle. Put higher wattage bulbs in light sockets to make rooms seem brighter, especially basements and other dark rooms. Replace any burnt-out bulbs. Wash your windows and screens to let more light into the interior.
- ◆ Make minor repairs that can create a bad impression. Small problems, such as sticky doors, torn screens, cracked caulking, or a dripping faucet, may seem trivial, but they'll give buyers the impression that the house isn't well maintained.
- ◆ Tidy your yard. Cut the grass, rake the leaves, trim the bushes, and edge the walks. Put a pot or two of bright flowers near the entryway. Turn on the sprinklers for 30 minutes to make the lawn sparkle.

Information furnished by the Montgomery County Association of REALTORS® and the National Association of REALTORS®.