



470 Norristown Road, Suite 300 · Blue Bell, PA 19422  
(P) 610-260-9931 · (F) 610-260-9951 · [www.mcarealtors.org](http://www.mcarealtors.org)

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Contact: Jessica Rupell  
Communications Specialist  
610-260-9931  
[jrupell@mcarealtors.org](mailto:jrupell@mcarealtors.org)

## Staging your Home for an Open House

### *Small Things that Can Make a Big Difference*

BLUE BELL, PA (May 25, 2011) – On June 4 and 5, numerous Montgomery County homes will open their doors to welcome potential buyers looking for a new home while mortgage rates are still at historic lows. With the number of house hunters who will be out in force during June 4 and 5, as part of the Realtor® Nationwide Open House Weekend, prepping a house to attract the most potential home buyers is crucial.

While a Realtor® can sell the many unique features and amenities of a home, Montgomery County Association of Realtors® President Jane Maslowski believes that the seller can also do small things around their home to boost the home's value and potentially speed up the home sale process. "Sellers need to make their house feel warm and inviting from the second a potential buyer walks through the front door," Maslowski said. "If the buyers are easily able to picture themselves living at the property, it could be the difference between them wanting to make an offer and them moving on to the next open house."

To make a home more impressive, Maslowski said it's as simple as making small appearance-enhancing changes. "Emotion plays a large role in home buying, so sellers need to make sure their house is giving off the right impression," she said. "You can't change the bare bones of a house, but making low-cost, high-impact improvements such as using neutral-colored paint and removing clutter can make a world of a difference to an on-the-fence buyer."

To get the most of the Realtor® Nationwide Open House Weekend, Maslowski recommends home sellers consider the following when prepping for their own open house:

- **De-clutter.** Pack away vacation mementos, furniture, newspapers, small decorative items, and knickknacks. Also be sure to put away out-of-season clothing and leave closets one-third empty to show the ample space available.
- **Depersonalize.** While you don't want to remove style and personality, putting away family photos, education degrees, trophies and awards can help a potential buyer better picture their own items in the space.

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- **Clean it up.** From shampooing the carpets to cleaning the stove and refrigerator, cleaning your house from the basement to the attic not only makes for a sharp first impression, but also reinforces that the house has been well cared for. Additionally, thoroughly cleaning helps eliminate unwanted smells caused from cooking, smoke, or pets. Don't forget to tidy your yard as well!
- **Lighten and brighten rooms.** The objective is to keep the property looking light and fresh. Get rid of heavy curtains, furniture and rugs. Paint the walls white or a lighter color. Replace all broken light bulbs. Thoroughly clean windows and screens to let in as much natural light as possible, and use fresh, white towels in the bathroom to create the essence of a spa.
- **Make minor repairs.** Be sure to fix torn screens, leaky faucets, and cracked caulking. Though minor, if these repairs go unfixed, it may give buyers the impression that the house is not well-maintained.
- **Define spaces.** To help potential buyers visualize where their personal items would go in the home, be sure to thoroughly define each room with the appropriate furniture and décor. From setting the table with a centerpiece and fancy dishes, to accentuating a fireplace with logs or a basket of flowers, creating the space takes away the guess work and allows the home buyer to see the house's true potential.

"With the number of open houses, home sellers really need to do all they can to make sure their home sticks out in comparison to others," Maslowski said. "Sellers typically only have one chance to make a first impression to potential buyers, so they really need to make it count."

For more information about the Realtor® Nationwide Open House Weekend, tips for buying or selling or home or a to find a Realtor®, please visit [www.BuyHomeinMontgomeryCounty.com](http://www.BuyHomeinMontgomeryCounty.com).

### **About Montgomery County Association of Realtors®**

The Montgomery County Association of Realtors® is comprised of approximately 2,200+ Realtors® and affiliate members who serve the entire Montgomery County community, and beyond. Its Realtors® members are licensed real estate professionals who subscribe to a strict code of ethics as defined by the National Association of Realtors®. For more information about the Montgomery County Association of Realtors®, please visit [www.mcarealtors.org](http://www.mcarealtors.org) or call 610-260-9931.

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