

De-clutter your home to sell quick

BERGEN COUNTY – According to many real estate agents and a Bergen County firm that helps individuals organize their homes, houses generally sell quicker and for higher prices after they are “de-cluttered.”

“More and more home owners are realizing that they need to prep their house to sell it in a competitive market,” said Connie Mellides, of Coldwell Banker’s Allendale office, and one of Bergen County’s top real estate agents. “A disorganized and cluttered house is a sure turn-off to prospective buyers. They’re trying to imagine what their new home will look like – and it’s difficult when toys, sports equipment and everyday household items are all over the place.”

What’s worse, according to Gayle Gruenberg, president of Let’s Get Organized, LLC, based in Park Ridge, is that bad organization can make even the biggest house seem smaller to a prospective buyer. If a home seller’s house is small to begin with, clutter will make it seem unlivable to someone looking at it for the first time.

“People accumulate their belongings slowly over time, and whatever organizational systems they had slowly disappear,” said Gruenberg. “Many times they don’t even notice the chaos in which they’re living. When someone is looking to buy a new home, there’s no doubt that the well-organized one will get the highest offer.”

Gruenberg has worked with many clients throughout Bergen County, helping them make the most of their living space

– whether they’re selling their home or not. The most common areas of disorganization, according to Let’s Get Organized, are also a house’s prime real estate: kitchens, dining rooms, family rooms and closets. All four areas are highly used by home owners and highly valued by prospective home buyers.

Among the tips Gruenberg provides home sellers are:

In the kitchen, invest in containers and letter organizers. Kitchens seem to be the most lived in areas – so it’s no wonder it accumulates the most goods. Mail, the infamous and always overflowing “junk drawer” and other household gadgets seem to clutter most kitchens needlessly. When space is exhausted in the kitchen, the excess – especially mail and newspapers – seem to find their way to the dining room table.

In family rooms, create mini-shelving or a stacking area for toys, books and videos. Use containers for small toys, action figures and fast-food trinkets that seem to multiply faster than rabbits. At all cost, pick up items from the floor – even if it means using wall space to do so, says Gruenberg.

In closets, donate any piece of clothing that has the dry cleaning wrap on it for more than a year, and invest in some sort of shoe rack.

“Getting organized and staying organized is an easy, but continuous process,” said Gruenberg. “And when it comes to selling a home, it can also be a profitable one.”