

Smart Moves

with **Kaushansky** **Brown**

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Spring 2014

Your Community Real Estate News

Market Watch

Market Watch April 3, 2014 -- Toronto Real Estate Board President Dianne Usher announced that Greater Toronto Area REALTORS® reported strong year-over-year increases in Toronto MLS home sale as well as the average selling price in March 2014. Home ownership affordability, backstopped by low borrowing costs, continued to be a key factor underlying this growth.

A total of 8,081 sales were reported in March 2014 – up by 7.2% in comparison to the same month last year. Sales growth was much stronger in March compared to the first two months of the year. Sales for Q1 as a whole were up by 3% compared to the first three months of 2013. “Sales activity in the GTA accelerated last month. Compared to last year, a greater number of buyers found affordable home ownership options, as evidenced by sales growth for all major home types. Against this backdrop, however, overall inventory at the end of March remained lower than last year. This means competition between buyers increased, which is why the average selling price continued to climb,” said Ms. Usher.

The average selling price for March 2014 sales was \$557,684 – an increase of 8% compared to the average reported for March 2013. The average price for the first quarter of 2014 was up by 8.5% year-over-year. “With borrowing costs remaining low, and in fact declining, strong home ownership demand will continue to butt up against a constrained supply of listings. Strong price growth will be the result for the remainder of 2014. If the pace of price growth experienced in the first quarter is sustained, TREB may revise its outlook for the average selling price,” said Jason Mercer, TREB’s Senior Manager of Market Analysis.

Our hope here at the KB Real Estate Team’s office is that with the spring thaw, more sellers will put their homes on the market giving buyers more choice.

Updates From Our Office

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RED Day (Renew, Energize and Donate) is an initiative dedicated to celebrating Keller Williams Realty’s year-round commitment to improving our local communities. Each year, on the second Thursday in May, tens of thousands of associates from across the United States and Canada participate in a wide range of projects, devoting our time to renewing and energizing aspects of the neighbourhoods in which we serve.

On Thursday, May 8th, 2014 our Keller Williams Neighbourhood Realty office has committed to removing the remnants left by winter around the neighbourhood. We are looking for volunteers to help with cleaning the streets, alley ways and store fronts along Dundas St.W. from Quebec Ave to Indian Road Cres., and plan to have a BBQ at the train station (located next to 2968 Dundas St. W.) from 4-6pm to thank everyone involved.

Please let us know if you’re available to help out at 416-259-2444 or admin@ireneandphilip.com. Either way, we’d love to see you out at our BBQ to celebrate our company culture!

“RED Day isn’t about cleaning up a park. It is a one-day expression of what happens 24/7 in the Keller Williams culture. It is seeing a need, discovering who can meet that need and then getting it done.”



Irene Kaushansky B. Sc., A.S.A. & Philip Brown B.S.W., A.S.A.

Sales Representative

Sales Representative

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Tips from the City of Toronto Water Department

In the summer months, municipal water use doubles. This is the season when Canadians are outdoors watering lawns and gardens, filling swimming pools and washing cars. Summer peak demand places stress on municipal water systems and increases costs for tax payers and water users. As water supplies diminish during periods of low rainfall, some municipalities must declare restrictions on lawn and garden watering. By applying some handy tips, your lawn and garden can cope with drought conditions and you can minimize water wastage. Much of the summer peak demand is attributed to lawn and garden watering. Often water is applied inefficiently, resulting in significant wastage due to over watering, evaporation or run-off. Here are some general watering tips to help avoid wastage: Before watering, always take into account the amount of water Mother Nature has supplied to your lawn or garden in the preceding week.

*** Leave a measuring container in the yard** to help you monitor the amount of rainfall (empty it once per week) and follow the tips below to help determine how much water to add. Also bear in mind any watering restrictions that may apply in your municipality.



*** Water in the early morning, before 9 a.m.,** to reduce evaporation and scorching of leaves from the sun. Water on calm days to prevent wind drift and evaporation. Set up your sprinkler or hose to avoid watering hard surfaces such as driveways and patios. If you're not careful, its water and money down the drain.

*** Water slowly to avoid run-off** and to ensure the soil absorbs the water. Regularly check your hose or irrigation equipment for leaks or blockages.

*** Collect rainwater from your roof in a rain barrel** or other large container and keep it covered with an insect screen. Direct the down spout of your eavestroughs into the rain barrel.

Choose an efficient irrigation system. A soaker hose placed at the base of plants on the ground applies water to the soil where it is needed—rather than to the leaves—and reduces evaporation

Drip or trickle irrigation systems are highly efficient because they deliver water slowly and directly to the roots under the soil surface. This promotes deeper roots, which improve a plant's drought resiliency. If you use a sprinkler, choose one with a timer and that sprays close to the ground.

*** Established lawns generally require about 2.5 cm (1 in.) of water per week to thrive.** If Mother Nature is providing this amount of rainfall, your lawn will thrive without supplemental watering. When rainfall does not provide adequate moisture, your grass may start to turn brown. This does not mean it is dead—it's simply dormant. An established lawn will recover and resume its green appearance shortly after sufficient rainfall returns. Apply



these tips to save water and money without compromising the health of your lawn: Apply about 2.5 cm (1 in.) of water not more than once per week and skip a week after a good rain. The correct amount can be estimated by placing an empty tuna can on your lawn as you apply water evenly across the surface. When the water level reaches the top of the can, you've applied about 2.5 cm (1 in.) of water which is all your lawn needs. You can time how long it takes to reach this level, then set the timer on your sprinkler. Water thoroughly. Deep watering at this rate is better than frequent, shallow watering because it encourages deep roots. Don't water your lawn excessively. When it's waterlogged, it may turn yellow and develop fungus and diseases. Oxygen and mineral uptake may be restricted on heavy clay soils. Too much watering can also lead to thatch and fertilizer leaching.

Check with your municipality to see if watering restrictions are in effect. Avoid mowing and unnecessary traffic on your lawn when the lawn is dry or dormant.

*** Don't cut your lawn too short.** Set the blade on your lawn mower to cut no lower than 6 to 8 cm (2.5 to 3 in.) so that the roots are shaded and better able to hold water. Aerate your lawn once a year in the early spring or fall to improve water penetration.

Charities: Where to donate furniture, appliances, clothing, sports equipment

By: Nancy J. White Living Reporter

An old couch, outgrown hockey equipment, stacks of books, even a kitchen sink — your clutter is a charity's treasure. Although most groups don't take used baby furniture because of safety concerns, nearly every other item in good shape can be donated. So which charities should you call? Here are a few ideas about who takes what — and where it goes:

Furniture Bank: Most types of furniture, small appliances, televisions with screens 37 inches or less, bed frames and unstained mattresses. While items must be gently-used, Furniture Bank does steam clean them. The organization's pickup and delivery service is a social-purpose enterprise that employs people with limited job opportunities and helps fund the group's services. The pickup fee varies, usually starting at about \$70. Items can also be dropped off at Furniture Bank, 25 Connell Court in Etobicoke. For more information and to arrange a pickup in the GTA, call 416-934-1229 x 1 or visit . Tax receipts are issued for furniture. The group works with Toronto's Streets to Homes program as well as with 73 shelters and agencies serving abused women, refugee families, and at-risk youth. Visit furniturebank.org.

The New Mom Project was started to provide marginalized families with some basic baby necessities to get them off to a loving start. They collect donations of gently used or new baby items and distribute them to families in need. They are always in need of baby clothes from 0-12 month sizes, baby blankets, small infant toys, nursing supplies, strollers and high chairs. For the month of April (2014), they will have a drop box located at This Little Piggy in the Parkdale Community. They can be found at 1594 Queen Street West and drop off hours are: Tuesday – Saturday 10am – 6pm, Sunday 11am – 5pm.

Children's Book Bank: Gently used children's books for newborns to age 12. The Children's Book Bank gives away about 300 books a day to youngsters in low-income neighbourhoods. Drop-off is at 350 Berkeley St., near Gerrard St. Visit childrensbookbank.com.

Goodwill: Clothing, accessories, books, records, CDs, toys, sports equipment, dishes and utensils, pots and pans, lamps, working electronics including MP3s, TVs, DVD players and VCRs. No pickup service, drop-off at donation centres. Visit goodwill.on.ca to find the nearest one. Some donation centres accept furniture. Goodwill sorts and sells donated items at its stores. Revenues help create and fund jobs for people facing employment barriers.

Habitat for Humanity: Windows, doors, large working appliances such as refrigerators and stoves, kitchen cabinets, sinks, toilets, bathroom vanities, lighting fixtures. Contact the closest Habitat for Humanity ReStorehabitat.ca/restore or call 416-755-7353. Some ReStores accept dining room sets, armoires and other non-upholstered furniture. In some cases, a ReStore will arrange, with no charge, for a crew to dismantle and remove cabinets, countertops, sinks and other pieces being donated. Tax receipts are issued for some items. ReStore profits fund administrative costs of the Habitat for Humanity affiliate that runs the store, so that other donations go directly to building homes for the needy.

Jessie's, The June Callwood Centre for Young Women: Car seats less than five years old, foldable strollers and high chairs, maternity clothes, gently used toys and clothing for kids up to age 10. Call 416-365-1888 about dropping off donations at Jessie's, 205 Parliament St. Jessie's offers services to women aged 18 or younger who are pregnant or have children.

New Circles: Clothing, shoes, children's books, sheets and towels, small toys, prom dresses, jewelry and new makeup appreciated. No pick-up. Visit newcircles.ca or call 416-422-2591 about dropping off donations at the agency's office, 10 Gateway Blvd., in Flemingdon Park. New Circles offers new and gently used clothing to Toronto's low-income families and new immigrants, with a focus on residents of Flemingdon Park, Thorncliffe Park and Victoria Village.

Oasis Clothing Bank: Clothing, shoes, linens can be dropped off at Oasis boxes around the city. Bicycles, books, computers, exercise equipment, small appliances and furniture, sporting goods, stereos, toys, tools can be picked-up free at your home. Call 416-751-0553. Donated items are either given to participants in Oasis's addiction recovery program or sold to help fund recovery services.

Pegasus: Clothing, jewelry, accessories, books, housewares. Drop off only. Call 416-913-2544, Pegasus Thrift and Gift Store, 931 Kingston Rd. in the Beach. Proceeds support Pegasus's programs for adults with developmental disabilities and autism.

Woodgreen Red Door Family Shelter: Table and chair sets, sideboards, dressers, night tables, desks, shelving units, coffee and end tables. Furniture is given to clients moving out of shelters or abused women. There's a pickup fee of \$25 to \$45 depending on location. For more information, visit reddoorshelter.ca/moving-program or call 416-915-5671 ext. 222. Gently used clothing and household items such as dishes, pots and pans may also be needed. Call 416-915-5671 ext. 234. Drop off is at the head office, 21 Carlaw Ave. in Toronto.

Super Service Professional Directory

Our clients are consistently asking for referrals for trades and services. Many businesses promise high quality service and advice but then fail to deliver! When we take on new clients in our real estate practice, we promise them a high level of service. Please give us any feedback, positive or negative (we need to be certain they are consistently providing service), when you use any of these services and make sure to tell them Irene and Philip sent you!

Cleaners

Nordic Cleaners 416-404-1075
Claus Olsen info@nordiccleaning.ca

Liliana Nikolov 416-423-1759

Granite and Marble Supply

City Home Granite Depot 416-259-0800
Cathy Li

Makomo Marble Care 416-620-6677
andrew@makomomarle.com

Hardwood Flooring

PK Flooring 416-330-1340
Paul Kelly

Heating and Air Conditioning

Atlas Air Climate Care 416-626-1785 x 210
Michael Grochmal mgrochmal@atlascare.ca

Home Inspectors

Under the Roof 416-896-1666
David Snooks davidsnooks@sympatico.ca

All Seasons Home Inspections 416-752-4663
John Tackaberry allseasons@rogers.com

House Master Home Inspections 416-234-8500
Alrek Meipoom alrek@sympatico.ca

Home Stagers and Decorators

Home Stage Design 416-461-1078
Julie Longhurst julielonghurst@rogers.com

184 Décor 647-668-5224
Casey Sheehan info@184decor.com

House Coach 647-618-9845
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Ivanka Horvat ivanka.horvat@bmo.com

Home Free Mortgages 905-808-4040
Mark Mighton mark@homefreemortgages.ca

Jason Friesen 647-352-5825
Jason.friesen@premiermortgage.ca

Royal Bank 416-587-1246
Samm McLeod samm.mcleod@rbc.com

Transition Professionals

Red Coats 416-920-1317
Vicky Riley Keyes info@redcoatsmoving.com

Painters, Renovators and Contractors

Saffron Painting 647-801-2410
Don Hayward glennhayward@rogers.com

Alexander and Tencate, Custom Builders 647-204-8923
Seth Alexander seth@alexandertencate.com

Alex Pappot 647-262-0750
Smaller & medium sized jobs pappot1@gmail.com

Residential Rubbish Removal

JustJunk.com Call Centre 416-744-8080
Tom Dickson (mobile)647-294-7466
tomdickson@justjunk.com

Roofers

Canadian Roofing Company 416-485-0811
Jason Hunter 416-712-2225

We're always interested in hearing your success stories from experiences you've had with service and trades people. Please let us know if you think someone you've worked with in the past would be a good addition to this directory.

Looking to Reduce Your Risk of Basement Flooding? Read On...

Every home is at risk of basement flooding, even if there has never been a flooding incident. Water in your basement is most likely to occur when there's been a heavy rainfall, snow is melting or we're experiencing a spring thaw. The good news is that you can prevent or at least reduce the chance of this happening.

There are a number of reasons why basements flood. Flooding can occur:

When surface water seeps in the home:

- A crack or leak in your home's foundation, basement walls, basement windows or door.
- Poor lot grading or drainage
- Failure of the weeping tile system (foundation drains)
- Failure of a sump pump (in some homes) used to pump weeping tile water.
- Overflowing eavestroughs
- Leaking or plugged downspouts

From a sanitary or storm sewer backup:

- A blocked connection between your home and the main sewer in the street
- A back-up of wastewater in the sewer system (or a combination of wastewater and rainwater from the sanitary or combined sewer system)

Here are some steps you can take to reduce the likelihood of basement flooding.

What you can do outside the house

- Seal cracks or openings in walls, floors, windows and foundations, and seal all window wells.
- Clear eavestroughs and downspouts of leaves and other debris that prevent proper drainage.
- Disconnect your downspouts from the sewer system, where feasible.
- Make sure your disconnected downspouts are draining properly, ideally two metres (six and a half feet) from your foundation's walls.
- Ensure the grading around your home slopes away from the foundation wall to help drain water away from your home (without negatively affecting neighbouring properties).
- Increase the green space around your home with native plants and shrubs and install porous pavement to help absorb rainwater and melted snow.
- Repair/replace damaged weeping tile systems.
- Clear debris from roadside catch basins (grates) to help water enter the storm sewer. (If it is safe to do so.)
- Ensure drainage swales (shallow ditch) between properties are maintained and clear of obstructions.

What you can do inside the house

Ensure that your plumbing is in good working condition. Homeowners are responsible for the plumbing from the property line to inside the home. The City is responsible for the public portion of the service line.

- Hire a City-licensed and qualified plumber to install a backwater valve and a properly-sized sump pump and piping. Ensure the proper and regular maintenance of basement flooding devices in your home. Sump pumps need power to operate, so consider installing a back-up power source.
- Consider installing shelves to help keep items off the floor in your basement. Also, avoid keeping valuables or important documents in the basement. If you do, keep them in a watertight/water-resistant container.
- Avoid carpet in the basement, which retains water and is harder to clean up.
- Dispose of small amounts of cooking oil and grease in your green bin, not down the drain, which can cause a drain blockage. (Make sure there is absorbent material in the bin).
- Avoid flushing objects down the toilet, such as dental floss, condoms, tampons, razor blades, non-biodegradable products, etc., which can block the sanitary pipe.

Backwater valves and sump pumps need to be inspected and maintained to ensure optimal performance.

Some work may need a building permit. For information on how to obtain permits, call 311 or visit Toronto Building.

What to do when your basement has flooded:

- 1. If you experience basement flooding, contact 311 immediately (24 hours a day, seven days a week). City staff will inspect the problem, assess the flooding and attempt to determine the source(s) of the flooding. Dial 311 on your phone or visit toronto.ca/311 to enter a self-service request.**
 - Don't use toilets and sinks unless it is absolutely necessary until the issue has been resolved. (Any water sent down the drain may end up in your basement.)
 - 2. Call your insurance company as soon as possible and report property damage caused by the flooding:**
 - Take photos of damage caused by flooding for your insurance claim.
 - Keep receipts from emergency repair work or clean-ups done to prevent or reduce further damage.
 - If the flooding is a result of a blocked drain pipe, leaking foundation walls or poor lot drainage on your property, then you are responsible for repairs and any subsequent damage caused by flooding. Contact your insurance company to discuss coverage.
 - You may submit a claim in writing with your name, telephone number, home address, date, location and details of the incident and send it to: City Clerk's Office, City of Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen St. W. Toronto, ON M5H 2N2 Or fax: 416-392-2980 or e-mail clerk@toronto.ca. Your claim will be forwarded to the City's insurance adjustors for evaluation. A letter of acknowledgement will be sent to you.
 - 3. Be mindful of health and safety when cleaning up your flooded basement. Exposure to contaminants carried by flood water or sewer back-ups into basements can be dangerous. Homeowners may be exposed to waterborne diseases, corrosive cleaning agents and irritants found in leftover sludge from a flooded basement. Electrical accidents may occur because of contact with water and electricity.**
 - Consider hiring a professional cleaning company familiar with cleaning sewage contaminated basements.
 - Keep children and pets out of the affected area until cleanup has been completed.
 - Dress appropriately – wear overalls, gloves, protective eyeglasses, rubber boots and a mask.
 - Open windows to let fresh air in.
 - Stay away from electrical equipment. Have a qualified electrician assess the situation, if uncertain of potential electrical hazards.
 - If you can, shut off the electrical power. (Note: would affect the operation of a sump pump or sewage ejector).
 - Water could extinguish a pilot light on a gas appliance. If you detect gas, leave the house immediately and contact the gas company.
 - Minor debris can be put out for regular garbage pick-up (See your Garbage and Recycling Collection Calendar for information).
 - Discard all contaminated items that cannot be washed and disinfected, (such as, mattresses, carpeting, carpet padding, rugs, upholstered furniture, cosmetics, plush toys, baby toys, pillows, foam-rubber items, books, wall coverings, and most paper products).
 - Wash all surfaces with hot water and liquid detergent, rinse and thoroughly dry and ventilate the area. Use de-humidifier and fans if necessary.
 - Sanitize walls and floors using a solution of household bleach (mix 1 cup bleach with 5 gallons of water). Never mix bleach with ammonia or other cleaning products. For more details, visit the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention's website.
 - Remove and discard drywall and insulation that has been contaminated with sewage or flood waters.
 - Wash all clothes worn during the cleanup in hot water (check manufacturer's washing instructions) and detergent. These clothes should be washed separately from uncontaminated clothes and linens.
 - Throw out canned foods, home-prepared food in jars, meats and dairy products and any packaged foods that may have been affected by the flood waters – check for damaged packaging, leaks, and corrosion at seams and joints of cans.
 - If your freezer's power is off, move the frozen food to another freezer or throw it out if you can't keep it frozen.
 - If in doubt, throw it out. Do not consume potentially contaminated food. For more information visit Toronto Public Health for information on food safety after a power outage.
 - Visit Toronto Public Health for more information on cleaning up after a flood.
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