

GERANIUM'S BOAZ FEINER

Building his career from the ground — up

As the son of one of Geranium Homes' partners, Boaz Feiner can attest to the fact that a family connection does not necessarily guarantee an easy path to leadership. Feiner is now President of the Housing Division having earned his position over 17 years of hands-on experience, starting right from the beginning as a labourer on a Geranium construction site. This intensive career path gained him a broad knowledge of construction and experience in all aspects of the home building business. This has proven invaluable to his understand-

ing of the industry, and to steering Geranium Homes toward the future.

By 2007, Feiner was Vice President of the Housing Division and ready to launch phase 1 in the company's first master-planned community — The Neighbourhoods of Cardinal Point in Stouffville. This was a company milestone, as during the previous decade Geranium Corporation had become a vertically integrated land development and home-building company intent on establishing itself as a major provider of low-rise neighbourhoods.

The Cardinal Point master plan included a large central park, a naturalized pond, an upgraded boulevard of trees and a substantial entry feature. All of this was installed before the first move-ins at Feiner's insistence. "We had to justify to the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville that higher-density development in the form of townhomes could be done well," says Feiner. "We believed that a percentage of home buyers would pay a premium for imaginative design and superior construction."

This strategy was proved correct, and with the immediate success of Cardinal Point, Feiner was advancing his plan to re-energize Geranium's stake hold in the marketplace. "We had a legacy of strength, stability and legitimacy earned over 35 years. Our home building division was given the opportunity to show leadership and adopt a cutting-edge approach to designing and building. Our strong in-house team had the vision and ability to follow our instincts so we could capture the imagination of homeowners at many levels."

By the spring of 2012, Geranium had launched its sixth phase at Cardinal Point; started sales and construction of an all-bungalow community in Port Hope; was building three Model Homes in the adult-lifestyle community of The Village at Sally Creek in Woodstock; had almost sold out of 26 unique detached homes in Pickering; and had only nine estate lots remaining in the multi-award-winning Forest Trail Estates in Ballantrae.

Feiner is a strong advocate of proactive thinking in all aspects of home building. He points to Geranium Green, the firm's established, stringent building practices, and the fact that Geranium made a commitment in 2010 to build all its communities to ENERGY STAR® standards to add further value to the homeowner. Feiner





believes that in addition to continually raising Geranium's own construction standards, the company's commitment to forward-trending home design will carry them into the future.

Participating on the board of BILD has been an eye-opener for Feiner. He has developed new relationships in pursuing the association's function to educate the public, strengthen government relations, provide a strong industry voice and support job creation.

On the horizon, Geranium Corporation, along with a joint venture partner PACE Financial, is pursuing approvals for up to 85 residential suites, in addition to ground-floor commercial space, where PACE will remain

in the location on Main Street in Stouffville. On Ninth Line, the company is in the design/development process to introduce back-to-back and stacked back-to-back townhomes to broaden homeownership options in the community. Building on the success of its manor homes collection, Geranium is working on the approvals for new estate lots in Ballantrae, with plans to market them by summer 2013.

Farther afield, the housing division is responsible for construction of the residences in Friday Harbour on Lake Simcoe, a major Geranium Corporation resort community development. On Barrie's northern boundary in Midhurst, a new master-planned community has

been approved. This community is planned to accommodate 10,000 new residences over the long term, plus parks, schools, employment and commercial uses, as well as opportunities for transit and over 1,000 acres of preserved natural heritage land.

In 2013/14, Geranium will have close to 500 new homes available in the community of Hillsdale, and a secondary plan in Craighurst will add approximately 500 homes to the company's offerings in Simcoe County. "As well in 2014, we will be building homes in the Village of Bond Head in the Town of Bradford-West Gwillimbury. And, we continue to look for opportunities," says Feiner.

Boaz Feiner explains that he has benefited enormously from his mentors, Geranium's founding partners Earl Rumm and Barry Feiner, as well as President Mario Giampietri. "For the first 15 years, I was exposed to working on construction sites, managing sales, learning the financial side and speaking with homebuyers. I have been allowed to forge my own path, and I'm still energized and enthusiastic."

As for the future, Feiner says, "We will never be satisfied with the status quo. We'll continue to introduce new designs and be aware of trends, educate ourselves on technologies, and engage in sustainable and green initiatives for our homeowners." ■

