

DESIGNING HOMES THAT PEOPLE WANT



By Stephanie Lane, Geranium Corporation

Geranium builds large, detached family-sized homes, condominium apartments and many different styles in between, and like many GTA builders, we face upward pressure on our selling prices. The cost to buy and service land, higher municipal fees and development charges, increases in construction materials and labour costs, plus high demand all contribute to rising prices for homebuyers. There has been a great deal of conversation about this complex issue in recent months.

Homebuilders often introduce new and innovative housing options that offer quality home ownership at a price more in line with what first-time buyers can reasonably afford. As an example, this year Geranium completed a neighbourhood of stacked and back-to-back townhomes in Stouffville, which when launched for sale two years ago presented a new offering to the area

at affordable prices. The homes also appealed to empty nesters, as well as families moving up from smaller sized condos.

This fall, we'll be releasing another new housing form in Stouffville at Vista Flats & Towns. These will be two-bedroom, single-level flats and two-storey townhomes built atop an underground parking garage. We have garnered great interest from prospective buyers and we expect this to be another desirable new home community.

What makes us confident in our approach? Geranium Homes has been building in Stouffville for over nine years at The Neighbourhoods of Cardinal Point, and with that comes vast experience in recognizing the need and desire for new alternatives to existing housing styles. Pioneering another new product, we also pay close attention to the interior planning of the design phase; evaluating layouts from a functional perspective and asking questions:

Who would be most likely to buy this model? How will they live in this space? Where will furniture be placed?

We also understand the importance of location. Vista is a short walk to public transit and close to major highways. If there are children in the family, then having daycare, schools and recreation nearby is another consideration that Vista meets. Fitting the homes to what people want is how a builder remains successful.

But what about families who due to their circumstances are not able to find affordable home ownership? Fortunately, among the network of organizations and government agencies addressing this in our country is Habitat for Humanity.

Habitat for Humanity Greater Toronto Area (GTA) is a non-profit housing organization working with communities to build homes for local families in need of affordable housing. The organization empowers families to achieve stability and self-reliance. In August, Geranium sponsored a five-day build for a home being constructed on Main Street in Stouffville. The event gave 75 staff and invited guests the chance to help build a home for a family of four in a community we have long been part of. This was an exhilarating and fulfilling experience for participants, and a huge step towards stability for the chosen family.

Builders and industry professionals strive to help homeownership in many ways by evolving, but it is great to know that other options exist for those who require it.



Stephanie Lane is manager, sales and marketing for Geranium Corporation. Since 1977, Geranium has built more than 8,000 homes in fine neighbourhoods and communities throughout Ontario. GeraniumHomes.com.