

# STEPHANIE LANE

DIRECTOR, SALES AND  
MARKETING  
GERANIUM

by WAYNE KARL



If you're looking for a new lowrise home in the GTA, better yet a luxury new lowrise home in an established neighbourhood, Geranium might well be on your list of prospective homebuilders.

With expertise in land acquisition, planning and process, engineering, servicing, design and construction, this fully integrated land development and building company has built more than 9,000 homes and completed many master-planned communities across southern Ontario.

With a focus on designing neighbourhoods best suited to the features of the area, with the intent to improve homebuyers' quality of life and add value to the community, Geranium presents a pretty compelling scenario.

We sat down with Stephanie Lane, director of sales and marketing, to learn more about this company's approach, and why community support is a central part of its mission.

**Let's start with a general topic... how do you view the market these days?**

There are new-home buyers in the market, and they are taking time to

evaluate their options, contacting our sales teams with questions while doing their due diligence before deciding. As a result, those who are purchasing are very qualified and confident in their decision. Homebuyers are acclimatizing to current interest rates, which are not unreasonable when you look at rates over the past 30 years. Great options remain for all, even with lower inventory levels in both the new and resale markets.

**Geranium recently launched three communities - Allegro in Aurora, Clarehaven Estates in Claremont, and Springwater near Barrie. How are things coming along in each?**

At the time they opened for sale, Allegro in Aurora and Midhurst Valley in Springwater both received great market reception, with excited homebuyers wanting to belong to these two different communities. Because of this interest, our construction sites are very active today and we've been welcoming new families into these neighbourhoods all year.

Clarehaven Estates, which launched mid-October, has been a tremendous success and is already

60 per cent sold. There was pent-up demand for large estate homes on lots of up to one acre, situated in Claremont, Durham. We continue to receive interest in this desirable community and will be starting construction of the homes next year.

**What is it about each of these projects that sets them apart from others in the area?**

Clarehaven Estates is a stand-alone community of 70 large lots with bungalows, bungalows with loft and two-storey detached homes, offering a lot of choice for families. The site is very well located for convenient commuting, daily living and recreational options.

Allegro is an infill setting in the heart of downtown Aurora, with homes and streets woven into an existing community of mature trees and large residences. Homeowners have the benefit of a brand-new home built to today's building code and design preferences in a neighbourhood that is already established.

Midhurst Valley is a four-season community that is surrounded by nature. It is highly suited for outdoor activities and only 10 minutes from

the conveniences in Barrie. Families purchasing here can set down roots in an up-and-coming area.

**A commitment to quality construction and workmanship seems to be a key focus of what Geranium does. How has this evolved over the years? For example, growing consumer demand for Green features...**

In the early 2000s, we developed our Geranium Green Plus program, which incorporated enhanced building materials that exceeded Ontario Building Code at the time. With enhancements to the Code, this has evolved into a stringent behind-the-walls construction program focusing a great deal of planning, design and cost into less visible elements of the home, such as the structure, HVAC and insulation. This is coupled with an internal quality assurance process that results in a home of truly lasting value. Our client care team undertakes a walk-through of each home, prior to the homeowner's pre-delivery inspection, to ensure the finished home meets our own exacting standards.

**And what about design, the growing need for flexible and work-from-home spaces... how much of that are you seeing in your customer demands?**

Geranium's homeowners are looking for an assortment of different

amenities. Flexible spaces such as media rooms and home offices are available in many of our designs, not just our larger estate homes. As well, for many years in our larger layouts, we've offered optional elevator plans, affording additional convenience, whether needed right away or in future. In some models, we also offer main floor guest suites or future in-law suites. We invest time, carefully identifying a new community's prospective homeowners and designing layouts that offer optionality and meet the needs of our future buyers.



**What are you sensing from prospective buyers these days? There's so much discussion about supply, interest rates and other issues... Or does Geranium's focus as more of a boutique builder of luxury lowrise homes provide you a unique position in the marketplace?**

We have built many luxury home communities and continue to offer homes in this category, but we are a versatile land development and building company with a varied portfolio, from 20-ft. semi-detached to 100-ft.-wide estate lots, and everything in between.

However, some of our communities are attracting buyers who are downsizing in house size and/or acreage, and who have accrued considerable equity in their existing home that is being used to purchase a new one. This is the case, for example, for some in Courts of Canterbury in Port Perry, where we offered an adult-lifestyle community of bungalows and bungalows with loft designs. However, that is not always the situation, and anyone needing a mortgage of any amount is taking the higher interest rates into account when considering a new home purchase.



**What is it about Geranium that you would like prospective homebuyers to know?**

As a vertically integrated land developer and homebuilder, we have the opportunity and the responsibility to design new planned communities that respect, complement and enhance the existing area. This may include additional greenspace, park infrastructure not currently offered, trail and pathway connections, or creating lot and home sizes that are compatible with those in the surrounding neighbourhood.

Courts of Canterbury in Port Perry is a great example where the existing homes are bungalows, and we added approximately 100 new bungalows and bungalows with lofts. We also expanded and renovated the community clubhouse to accommodate all residents.

In Aurora this past summer, we celebrated the opening of a new town park of approximately 21.3 acres. Situated in the centre of Allegro, the park design offers something for all ages, has multiple access points from the older neighbourhood, and is the result of a collaboration among Town staff, Geranium and residents.



**Community support seems to be an important part of Geranium. What is the genesis of this, and what are you focusing on these days?**

Giving back to the communities we build in has been an important philosophy since the company's inception in 1977. We look at different ways to support local businesses, charitable entities, sports groups, schools and more, not only through sponsorships but by also creating opportunities for face-to-face engagements where we can connect with local residents.

An example of this is our annual sponsorship of Aurora's Mayor's Celebration of Youth Arts, where

we're heading into our seventh year as the lead sponsor. Each year, we look forward to attending the exhibit and speaking with the students whose artwork will be on display. They can follow our social media channels for other community updates and keep an eye out for our bright red Geranium tents at events. Come and say hello... we'd love to meet you.

**What's next for Geranium?**

We are heading west of the GTA to the outskirts of Fergus. In 2024, we'll be launching a new neighbourhood of estate homes on half-acre lots.

[geranium.com](http://geranium.com)

*& on a personal note*

**How do you spend time away from the office?**

As a city dweller, I like to unwind by heading north and getting outdoors into a nature-filled environment, so I make that a priority.

**What or who inspires you to do what you do?**

In this line of work, I have the incredible opportunity to help create legacy, not just for the company but for buyers who place immense trust in us to build their new home. Knowing that I've directly or indirectly helped someone through their homebuying journey and seeing them living and thriving in their home with their family is incredibly rewarding and continually inspiring. Even more rewarding is that Geranium has many repeat homebuyers. When someone buys a second, third or even fourth home from us, we know we're doing something very right.

**What's on your reading list or TV binge-watch list these days?**

I am a big Toronto sports fan and enjoy watching the Leafs, Raptors and Blue Jays primarily. If there's a game on, I'm usually watching. As a supporter of positive mental wellness, I enjoy listening to podcasts about psychology and mental health. TED Health is one that I often tune into.