

on the market

New home activity has been affected by the new government implemented mortgage lending criteria. As many as 20% of new mortgage applications are being rejected under the new rules when they would previously have been approved.

However, credit unions and private lenders do not have the same lending criteria and new prospective home purchasers are finding ways to own the home they seek through these alternate channels.

Affordability remains the main driver of purchasing behavior and we are witnessing high volumes of sales amongst well priced builders. Grand Valley in Orangeville by Cachet Estate Homes had 40 sales in the opening week of their new release and Bear Creek Ridge in Barrie has sold 60 of 120 units in just a few months in their four-storey condominium buildings Olympic and Kodiak.

Examples of notable sites are Olympic in Bear Creek Ridge (Barrie) by Pratt Homes; SanDiego Homes in Innisfil; Grand Valley in Orangeville by Cachet Estate Homes; The Classics in Brampton by LIV Communities; and, Towns at The Rouge Valley in Scarborough by Tribute Communities



Orangeville

Grand Valley Cachet Estate Homes

Prices range from \$399,990 to \$759,990/1,326 sq. ft. to 2,985 sq. ft. Freehold Townhomes 20', Bungalows 40' and Single Detached 40' www.cachethomes.com



Brampton

The Classics LIV Communities

Prices range from \$959,990 to \$1,209,990/2,274 to 4,163 sq. ft. Detached Homes 38' www.livhere.ca



Scarborough

Towns at The Rouge Valley Tribute Communities

Prices range from \$504,990 to \$674,990/955 to 1,300 sq. ft. Condominium Townhomes www.tributecommunities.com



Barrie

Olympic in Bear Creek Ridge Pratt Homes

Prices range from \$319,990 to \$515,990/793 to 1,464 sq. ft. 4-Storey Condominium www.pratthomes.ca



Innisfil

SanDiego Homes in Innisfil

Prices range from \$759,990 to \$1,104,990 1,230 to 3,900 sq. ft. Single Detached 50' Lots www.sandiego-homes.ca



Salah Dib and Dabbah Dib are two of the 10 students learning to build a brick wall in the bricklayers' lab space at the Skilled Trades College of Canada in Vaughan, Ont.

Skilled trades program is a win-win

Syrian brothers' work ethic shows college on track to ease GTA bricklayers shortage



RICHARD LYALL
RESCON

Salah and Dabbah Dib — those names are like music to my ears whenever someone brings up the GTA's bricklayers shortage.

The Syrian brothers are two of the 10 students receiving free tuition at the Vaughan campus of the Skilled Trades College of Canada to learn how to brick a house.

They are grateful to have escaped a war-torn country seeing one of the biggest refugee crises since the Second World War and live in Canada; they're also thrilled to be on track to landing lucrative jobs at the end of the college's eight-week program.

"Getting into this program is offering me a great opportunity for my new life here in Canada," says Salah, who was a construction labourer in Syria. "I'm excited to be learning new skills to help me build a new career."

Most of all, perhaps, streamlining these two good men and their eight classmates through the pre-apprenticeship masonry program and into jobs will alleviate some of the pressure caused by the shortage.

Brick is a key construction product for new-home buyers of townhomes, semis and fully-detached homes — many of them want a brick

façade, and there aren't a lot of bricklaying crews to be shared around the region.

One bricklayer contractor told RESCON he commonly turns down two bricklaying contracts per month because his crews are too busy.

It's not just a GTA problem either. According to the Government of Canada's Department of Employment, there will be 4,100 job openings for bricklayers in the 2015-2024 period with only 3,500 new job seekers expected to fill them.

How does this impact new-home buyers? You might have to wait a little longer to get your occupancy. The delays in bricklaying are one of the main, current stumbling blocks for finishing new homes.

Let me explain how this program started: last March, a group from RESCON visited the college, which has graduated 5,000 students from its Vaughan and Mississauga campuses in electrician and plumber programs.

We were impressed with the facilities, the positive attitudes of the students, and the professionalism of the faculty and staff.

I told college director Ralph Cerasuolo and operations manager Mike Di Donato that they had to take a hard look at using some of the Vaughan facility's 15,000-sq.-ft. lab space to teach students how to brick a house.

They listened. In January, they launched the program and locked in funding in part-

nership with Human Endeavour and the Ontario Trillium Foundation, for the pilot class of 10. The goal is to push out 40 graduates this year, ramping up to 200 by 2020.

"We're happy to be part of the solution to educate and train bricklayers, help the industry and get new immigrants, refugees and under-worked individuals into lucrative jobs," Di Donato says.

Cerasuolo adds: "The industry needs man power, and these guys are good people looking for a break. It's a win-win. Mike and I can relate to their situation — our families are immigrants who came from Italy many years ago and made their way in construction. They told us the stories of how difficult it was to come to a new country, find a new job and start a new life."

"These guys are the next wave. We can't say how proud we are to be making a difference in these guys' lives and for the industry as well."

And we are proud of our relationship with the college. Best of luck to Salah, Dabbah and all of the other bricklaying students with their education and careers.

— Richard Lyall, president of RESCON, is also a frequent speaker and writer on issues related to the construction industry. Contact him @RESCONpres or at media@rescon.com.