

# NEWHOMES



The decision for now is to stay put and renovate as we are enjoying both the home and our neighbourhood.

## When a home is more than a house



MARTIN SLOFSTRA  
EDITOR'S  
NOTE

Should we stay or should we go?

It's a discussion we had recently that came about probably because we have watched as friends moved to quieter, slower-paced communities such as Paris, Simcoe, Barrie and Dundas, Ont., and so, it made us think about possibly moving too.

Regardless, the decision was to stay in our Caledon, Ont. home for at least five more years and probably longer than that, as quite simply, we love both our home and the neighbourhood.

The next question: Should we renovate, and we determined a basement renovation will meet our needs and can be enjoyed for years to come.

In our Cover Story, Linda White explores the phenomenon of empty-nester renovation, and unlike some of our friends, many aging Canadian homeowners are deciding to stay and renovate instead.

Nor are empty-nesters always opting to downsize. "Especially as our clients become grandparents, they tend to want more space for grandkids to play and spend the night," says designer Rebecca Hay in the story.

Further, suggests Hay, many families want to update their homes for entertaining, which by the way, exactly describes our needs. This year, we will be hosting four generations of family during the holiday season. We will need all the room we have and then some.

What have we learned so far? Two weeks into it, planning and undertaking a renovation can be a lot of fun. I've lost track of how many images I have downloaded and stored from places like Pinterest and Instagram, not to mention checking out various decor web sites.

I'm also having fun exploring the latest trends, hearing opinions and getting advice from designers and experts, such as Thursday night's Benjamin Moore 2020 Colour of the Year event. Picking out the right colours just may be the hardest decision of all.

The reality, though, and it is also a big part of our consideration, is financial, and how this will effect our retirement planning.

Very timely is a report from RBC stating that as Canadians work to build their retirement plans, home and home equity is playing a more prominent role in their financial plans.

According to the 2019 RBC Retirement Myths & Realities Poll, more than half (55 per cent) of non-retired Canadians aged 50 and over say they expect to leverage the equity in their home as a source of retirement income, which is up from 49 per cent in 2018.

Nicole Wells, Vice President, Home Equity Financing, RBC says. "More and more, we're seeing Canadians rely on their home as part of their retirement plans."

The research also showed roughly two-thirds (62 per cent) anticipate they will still be paying off their mortgage into their retirement years, which could lead to an additional strain on their retirement income.

Should your stay or should you go? It's not just about needs and desires, it's also finances.



RICHARD LYALL  
RESCON

Michael Lee still can't believe that he gets paid to his beloved Sigma tile cutter every day.

"It's a tool I use every day and the quality at which it cuts tiles cannot be beat," says the 22-year-old tile setter from Markham. "I knew I'd be good at this job because I have a strong attention to detail, I love working with my hands, and I love going home at the end of the day with a feeling of accomplishment."

As a tile setter and a star skilled trades professional featured in the Job Talks Construction video series, Lee's job is to enter a home when it's 70-80% complete then square, level and apply tiles to walls and floors in the kitchen, bathrooms and front entrance.

After graduating from Humber College with a certificate in design, and two diplomas in industrial woodworking and home renovation, Lee is using his strong attention to detail to build his career.

He credits the college's three programs with rounding out his knowledge, as well as RESCON's career-ready fund initiative for kickstarting his journey into the skilled trades.

"Humber's home renovation program helped me prepare for the trades by enforcing the theory behind why things are done a certain way," Lee says. "What got me interested in tile setting was the ability to use my keen eye for design along with being able to see the finished product."

While he is happy with the money he earns, there is a more important reason for



Michael Lee, a 22-year-old tile setter loves going home at the end of the day with a feeling of accomplishment.

him to set tiles than just lining his pocket.

"Being able to work with my hands and produce final products that people can love is why I enjoy tile setting," Lee says. "Plus, the ability to work on various sites keeps the job interesting."

Through a strategic partnership with Humber's School of Applied Technology, the Humber/RESCON/ORCCA Skilled Trades pilot program aims to place graduates from Humber programs. These included carpentry and home renovations, plumbing techniques, and industrial woodworking. Students were placed for work experience within residential sub-trades such as: tile installation, concrete and drain installation, high-rise forming, low-rise framing and railings installation.

Andrew Pariser, chair of ORCCA and vice-president of RESCON, says the pilot program has been a success and both organizations are happy with its results.

"This program not only directly placed graduates in skilled trade positions, but also laid the foundation for

future placements by enhancing the co-operation between employers and colleges. This has improved career clarity for graduates and expanded the talent pool for employers," Pariser says.

Back to Lee.

As a tile setter, he says hitting tight deadlines is the biggest challenge on the job, but hard work and a supportive team has ensured success.

When asked if he had advice to give to future graduates of the Humber home renovation program, Lee says: "Take your time to learn the trade. It will take time to get to the level you want to be at and you just need to keep at it. You are going to have good days and you will definitely have some bad days, but it is all part of the job and you have to learn to work through them."

For more information on dozens of different construction careers, visit the amazing website by Job Talks at [jobtalksconstruction.ca](http://jobtalksconstruction.ca).

Good luck!

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