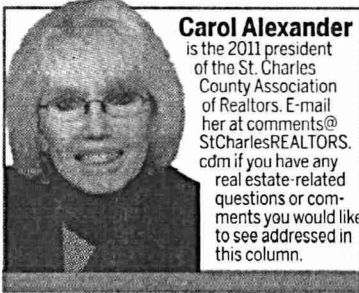


Real estate can make dreams come true in 2011



Carol Alexander is the 2011 president of the St. Charles County Association of Realtors. E-mail her at comments@StCharlesREALTORS.cdm if you have any real estate-related questions or comments you would like to see addressed in this column.

"I grew up on a farm in Mexico, Missouri," I told my fellow Realtors when I stood before them in October after I was installed as the 2011 president of the St. Charles County Association of Realtors.

I went on to tell the members of my Realtor family how real estate helped to make my dreams of a better life for myself and my family a reality. I concluded my remarks by urging my fellow Realtors to strive to make their dreams come true in 2011.

How fortunate we are as Realtors to make our dreams come true and to provide for our families by making the American Dream of Homeownership a reality for the families we serve. Across St. Charles County and everywhere in this country, families are ringing in the new year this weekend in homes they own, because there was a Realtor in their lives. The first time I gave a young couple the keys to their first new home, I knew that being a Realtor was much more than just a job. I was making a difference in the lives of my clients.

My real estate career has allowed me to make my dreams come true by helping the families I serve find the home of their dreams. It is this appreciation for my profession and the work my fellow Realtors and I do on a daily and weekly basis that inspired me to give back to my industry and

my Realtor family. I have been proud to be an active member of the St. Charles County Association of Realtors since I got my real estate license and joined the association in 1982. Through the years, it has been my privilege to serve at the local, state and national levels of our organization in a variety of capacities.

Realtors know there is more to the American Dream of Homeownership than just the bricks and mortar we sell. The dream includes creating communities that are great places to live, work and raise our families.

Realtors work for local, state and national government policies that promote property ownership and the private property rights of homeowners and owners of all types of real estate. We support tax policies that promote homeownership and real estate investment, as well as regulatory policies that do not place unnecessary and excessive burdens on property owners. We support candidates for office at all levels that support the American Dream.

At the local level, we are proud to have four members of our association serving as aldermen in St. Charles County cities. They are Karen Vennard in Lake Saint Louis, Judy Bateman in St. Peters, Ken Hill in Weldon Spring and Rick Stokes in Wentzville.

Realtors work for good public policy all year, not just at election time. Later this month I will lead a group of St. Charles County Realtors to Jefferson City where we will join Realtors from all over Missouri to talk with our legislators about the importance of homeownership to the families of Missouri. Last fall, Realtors led the successful effort to ban any future transfer taxes on the sale of real

estate in Missouri. This will save Missouri homeowners millions of dollars every year.

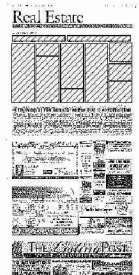
Promoting family friendly government policy is just one of the ways Realtors work to make our communities better. We know the quality of life in our communities is an important part of what makes St. Charles County a great place to live. You will find Realtors active in schools, churches and civic organizations throughout the county.

Realtors also work hard to help those less fortunate than you and I. Whether it is collecting food for local food banks or raising money for the Karen Weidinger Foundation or Ronald McDonald House, Realtors are there for those in need in our region.

As I said on installation night, real estate has made my dreams come true. I am proud of the work Realtors do for our community and the families we serve. If your dreams for 2011 include a new home for your family, now is the time to call your St. Charles County Realtor. Yes, lending standards have returned to the responsible lending practices of the past, but don't be misled by the media. Today, lenders have money to lend at historically low interest rates. If you have good credit and secure employment, a new home has never been more affordable than it is today.

A home of their own is still the best long-term investment available to the average family. More importantly, home is where our dreams come true. Home is where memories are made that last a lifetime.

I feel very fortunate to be able to call myself a Realtor. I could not have pursued my passion for giving back to my industry and com-



munity without the support of the great agents at the St. Peters office of Coldwell Banker Gundaker where I have the honor of serving as broker manager. I want to thank all of them and the management of Coldwell Banker Gundaker for their support.

I look forward to communicating with you in the year ahead. Don't forget, call your St. Charles County Realtor today and start fulfilling your dreams.