



**GROUP ESTES** *realty*

## Looking Forward and Looking Back

Dear Friend,

*December 2011*

Happy December holiday season! I hope you are enjoying the season and taking time for yourself, experiencing gratitude for all that you have and for all that is coming in the new year. And with the thought about the new year, let's not talk about resolutions, let's talk about accomplishments. What do you want to have happen? Clearly defined goals are the key to creating the life that you imagine. And while you are defining what you want for the new year, I encourage you to also look back and recognize all that you accomplished in 2011 as well.

Setting goals can be an intimidating process for many. However, the information I'm sending you this month explains how to create feasible and measurable goals that will move you forward and help you achieve your dreams. While the first page explains how to set SMART goals through visualization, page two offers suggestions to help you overcome the common obstacles to achieving your goals. Common sense advice that is so easy not to do... yet by taking the time to build strong habits and healthy practices, and to spend time with loved ones, we can create so much more joy in our lives. That is my new year's wish for all of us.

So what else do we have for you this month? Of course we have posted many new articles on our website and Facebook page... from national and local market news, to new FHA loan amounts (they're back up to \$567,500!), major improvements in the Home Affordable Refinance Program, helpful information for future homebuyers who have had a foreclosure, bankruptcy or short sale; also some great information from the American Society of Home Inspectors including a place to go to get Consumer Alerts and product recall information.

We have also added some new information services to our website. The local Market Statistics review now has a *Comparison to Highest and Lowest Average Sale Price* section. While we all know that the value of properties has dropped dramatically since the 2007 peak, there is good news for those who have owned their properties for ten years or so. Which also means good news for the rest of us once we have held our properties for a while... It is truer than ever that real estate is a long-term investment. And owning your own home is certainly the right answer if you want to be able to paint your walls, choose your own landscaping, have pets, even move a wall or two (people whose eyes gleam when they think of wielding a sledgehammer as part of redecorating for instance! you know who you are...). In short, if having it be *yours* is important, these numbers should give you confidence that holding for a while will get you back into a better set of numbers. And since market pricing is so advantageous to buyers right now, this should make you prospective buyers feel quite encouraged too!

So what are the highlights of this November 2011, very first report? The Seattle Metro area has had the greatest appreciation since its low in November of 2002 – an increase of 33% in the average sale prices. SE Snohomish County is next at 31% since its low in January 2003. Check out the display to get more of the specifics. And we'll update it each month.

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We have also added a community search feature to our Property Search engine. Let your curiosity have its way and check out whatever you'd like. And if there is a community that you are specifically interested in that we don't have on the list yet, just let us know and we'll see if we can get it added for you!

Locally, the market in November was definitely soft in terms of pricing. Looking at the average for 2010 compared to the year-to-date average for 2011, the Eastside is down 6%, Seattle is down 7%, SE Snohomish is down 7%, SW Snohomish is down 12% and Pierce County is down 11%. There is good news, however! And that is that inventory continues to come down, and in most cases properties are selling about as fast as they were last year if not a bit better. Supply and demand will send the prices back up at some point. Not skyrocketing up, but up. For now, we continue to feel the impact of distressed property pricing, and the fact that many sellers continue to wait for a slightly more favorable market. The question is when will we start stabilizing again as we did for almost all of 2010.

Would that we all had a crystal ball for the national and local economy, the jobs outlook and what it means to housing prices. Since we don't, hopefully this statistical information will give you the confidence that comes from a longer term historical perspective.

Before wrapping up with this last newsletter for 2011, we of course have our five highlighted vendors for you. It is a pleasure to share information on the resources that we refer with confidence. We look forward to sharing many more next year!

#### Spotlight Vendors for December

Charlotte Benson - Living Well Senior Placements, LLC - 425-823-2552 - [charlotte@livingwellseniors.com](mailto:charlotte@livingwellseniors.com)  
Elder Services

Marc Setter - Pacific Mechanical NW - 425-485-2811  
Air Conditioning / Furnace

Mike Martinez - Mike's Plumbing & Drain Cleaning - 206-524-0159 - [mikes\\_plumbing@msn.com](mailto:mikes_plumbing@msn.com)  
Plumber

Dr. Justin Favreau - Align Chiropractic - 206-397-3457 - [posture@favreauchiropractic.com](mailto:posture@favreauchiropractic.com)  
Chiropractor / Human Body Work

Cathy Gaspar - Gaspar's Construction - 206-324-8199 - [cathy@gaspars.com](mailto:cathy@gaspars.com)  
Contractor

Wishing you a peaceful and joyous holiday season, with tremendous hope and confidence for the new year.

Sincerely,



*Always looking for more ways to be of service ... if you know of someone who would appreciate the level of service I provide, please call or email me with their name and business number, and I'll be happy to follow up and take great care of them.*

Share your goals with an accountability partner to keep you on track toward completing your goals.



# Goal Setting in the New Year

The new year is a popular time to think up new goals to achieve in the coming year. If you can picture the life you want to lead, you can achieve it through realistic, measurable goals.

## Set Achievable Goals

The key to attaining your dreams is simple: set S.M.A.R.T. short-, mid- and long-term goals. Short-term goals are tasks that are achievable within a brief amount of time, such as the next two weeks. Often, these goals are smaller pieces of larger mid- or long-term goals. Mid-term goals are attainable within a few months, while long-term goals are bigger, more challenging goals that can take time to complete. For example, if your long-term goal is to run a marathon, a short-term goal may be to complete a 5K race, while your mid-term goal may be to complete a half marathon.

## Visualize Your Success

Visualization creates a vibrant picture in your mind of what your life will look like when you've achieved your goals. For inspiration, consider:

- **The Positive Power of Why:** Why do you want to fulfill this goal?
- **The Price of Completion:** What are the steps you need to take to make this goal happen?
- **The Cost of Non-completion:** What will happen if you don't achieve this goal?

Visualizing your goals and answering these meaningful questions will help build a blueprint for your focus and aspirations. Once you have your big vision of your future, create smaller achievable goals to turn it into reality. Write down your goals, and post them where you will be reminded of them daily.



### SMART GOAL SETTING

- S. SPECIFIC & WRITTEN
- M. MEASURABLE IN PROGRESS & COMPLETION
- A. ACHIEVABLE OUTCOME
- R. REALISTIC IN TIME & SKILL
- T. TIME-BASED ACHIEVEMENT



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# Overcome the Common Challenges of Goal Setting

Goal setting can be an intimidating process and there are many reasons that people avoid it. To help you achieve your aspirations, avoid these common pitfalls:

**Challenge:** Setting impractical goals

**Solution:** Often, people set goals that may be unrealistic to achieve *right now*. However, that's not to say that the goal wouldn't be viable after some time and/or training. Break large goals into smaller, measurable short- and mid-term goals.

**Challenge:** Fearing failure

**Solution:** While some people set the bar too high, others set the bar too low or don't set it at all to avoid disappointment. Don't let the fear of failure paralyze you—continue to create challenging goals that propel you forward. Studies show that the additional effort and motivation required to achieve challenging goals makes them more fulfilling to accomplish than easier goals.<sup>1</sup>

**Challenge:** Not having a plan

**Solution:** A major part of goal setting is creating a plan of action to complete the task. To improve the chances of reaching the goal, give yourself a deadline and stick to it. Deadlines will hold you accountable to your goal and help you track your progress.

Sources:

1. Current Directions in Psychological Science, 2006
2. BBC News, December 28, 2007



Men are **22%** more likely to achieve a goal when it is specific and written down, whereas women are **10%** more likely to achieve a goal when they have told others about it.<sup>2</sup>

## 3 Habits of the Wealthy

1. Create and stick to a budget.
2. Pay down and eliminate debt.
3. Build wealth in a savings account or through wise investments.

## 3 Healthy Practices to Adopt in 2012

1. Eat a balanced diet.
2. Exercise. Walking 15 minutes a day has been shown to reduce the risk of heart attack or stroke.<sup>3</sup>
3. Reduce stress. Stress leads to anxiety, fatigue and physical tension.

## 3 Ways to Spend More Time with Loved Ones

1. Plan a date night every week with your significant other.
2. Eat dinner together as a family or set an evening aside for game night.
3. Volunteer together. Participate in a beach or park clean up or help out at a local soup kitchen.

Source: 3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention