

# DREAMS

REAL ESTATE MAGAZINE

NOVEMBER 2025

## THE HIDDEN LEGAL MAZE

Behind Your First Home Purchase

LEANNE GILES  
FOR ALL THE COMFORTS OF *Home*

## 7 Common Home Buying Myths BUSTED!

I'll Never Be able to buy a house in my lifetime...  
**BULLSH\*T!**

**Must-Know Facts for Ontario First-Time Home Buyers**



## SPECIAL UNTAMED EDITION

This edition is dedicated to Halton Women's Place and the women who need their services.

**THIS AIN'T YOUR GRANNY'S SAVINGS ACCOUNT**

# Proud to Support the Community I Call Home



**“We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give?” – Winston Churchill**

It is my ongoing commitment to help others and make a positive difference in my community. As a Miracle Agent, a portion of my commission on every transaction is donated to the Children's Miracle Network Hospitals. These donations support the care of millions of children each year - many of them in our own communities.

LEANNE GILES REAL ESTATE



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LEANNE GILES *Lg* REAL ESTATE

## My Vision

To empower and guide you through every step of your real estate journey with unparalleled dedication, expertise, and a truly personalized touch.

My goal is to transform the buying and selling experience into a seamless, stress-free process where you feel supported, informed, and confident from start to finish.

By combining cutting-edge market insights, meticulous attention to detail, and a designer's eye for presentation, I aim not only to meet, but to exceed, your expectations, ensuring your transaction is as smooth as it is successful.

At the heart of my mission is a commitment to building lasting relationships and making a tangible, positive difference in the lives of those I serve.

## My Mission

To redefine the standards of excellence in real estate by setting new benchmarks for client satisfaction, innovation, and community impact.

I am dedicated to being the trusted authority clients turn to, whether they're finding their first home, growing their real estate portfolio, or selling a cherished property.

I envision a future where expertise and integrity pave the way for transformative experiences, fostering trust, confidence, and success at every milestone.

Through my unwavering commitment to excellence, I strive to inspire change, strengthen community growth, and create enduring value for my clients, empowering them to make informed decisions and achieve their real estate aspirations.

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# TURNING *Dreams* INTO DOOR *Keys*



In this third edition of Dreams Magazine, we're focusing on a topic close to my heart which is helping first-time home buyers turn their dream of homeownership into reality. Many Canadians don't realize how powerful tools like the FHSA, RRSP, and TFSA can be in making that dream possible. When used wisely, these programs lower costs, build savings, and open doors to home ownership sooner than expected.

This Pink Edition is dedicated to 'From Wallet to Wealth', a women's community group dedicated to raising funds for Halton Women's Place. I've set aside my usual brand colours in honour of this issue and the women it represents. Since 2019, we have raised more than \$650,000 through 6 galas, 50+ monthly

#LEAVEITTOLEANNE

events, and a growing network of supporters. Each of these efforts help to create safer futures for women and children across Halton.

### **This Ain't Your Granny's Savings Account**

I'm excited to welcome Kelly Ross, CPA, to this edition of the magazine. Kelly knows how to make financial planning feel less overwhelming and more achievable. In her article, she breaks down the First Home Savings Account (FHSA), RRSPs, and TFSAs with clarity. You'll see exactly how each one can support your homeownership goals.

### **Think You'll Never be able to Purchase a Home? Think Again**

Whitney Hammond, CFP and Principal at Sovereign Wealth Management, delivers a bold perspective in this issue. Her article flips the script on what's possible for young Canadians who think buying a home is out of reach. With insight and urgency, she shows how the First Home Savings Account and RRSP contributions can be used as part of a powerful long-term plan. You'll come away with a clearer understanding of how to turn tax dollars into a down payment. Her message is especially important for parents and future buyers who want a strategy that works.

### **Myth-Busting and Must-Know Facts for First-Time Buyers**

Mortgage agents Keri and Desiree Gregorio have a gift for cutting through the noise and making

mortgage knowledge feel simple. Their article is the perfect starting point for anyone wondering what it actually takes to buy a home in Ontario. They outline key programs, first-time buyer perks, and common myths that often hold people back. This is a clear, easy-to-follow roadmap that removes confusion and builds confidence, perfect for anyone trying to figure out where to begin or what's really required to qualify.

### **The Hidden Legal Maze Behind Your First Home Purchase**

Timm Tian from Mani Law joins this edition to walk us through what really happens once your offer is accepted. His article lays out the legal steps of a real estate purchase clearly, from title searches and closing costs to what to expect on possession day. He also explains how a lawyer protects your interests at every stage and helps avoid surprises before you get the keys. If you've ever felt unsure about what your lawyer actually does behind the scenes, this article will give you real peace of mind.

I am also sharing the shining star from my dessert menu! Turn to page 18 for the secret that kept guests, family and friends wanting more.

I'll also be sharing the reasons why giving back to my community is so important to me, a story from a recent clients who became instant friends and so much more!

I'm glad you're here. Let's keep dreaming big and turning those dreams into door keys.

RESULTS  
YOU CAN *See*

SERVICE  
YOU CAN *feel!*

# What Was Your Experience Working With Leanne?

When choosing a Realtor, most people look for experience, knowledge, and professionalism. But for one family, it was a genuine personal connection that made up their minds.



## 1. You mentioned interviewing five top Realtors, what were you looking for in the right fit?

What drew us to Leanne was her deep interest in who we were first. Her friendly approach was deep from her heart, and we felt it. Just like the other Top 5 agents we interviewed, she told us about the reality of the market. But what set her apart was that she didn't just end there. She started finding out all the positives about our house and location. She began writing down everything about our house and justified its worth. Right away, it was a different approach from most agents. The other agents were total experts, and their presentations were well put together. If someone had recommended any of them, I would have immediately worked with them. But since we had no recommendations, we had to make our own choice.

## 2. What stood out most about your first meeting with Leanne?

Leanne went into so much detail about our property that we were impressed. Her photographic memory of where things were was incredible. She took a deep interest in the house, but more of her time

was spent listening to us, asking very important questions we had never heard before about our property.

## 3. How did Leanne's approach differ from the others you met with?

Talking with Leanne felt so free that we all learned a lot about each other. We were not looking for a people pleaser, but someone who would tell us the truth. We knew that working with Leanne meant that we were not just another transaction.

Every minute we talked around our dining table, with my wife, son, daughter, and Leanne was like a beautiful family reunion.

Her depth of research and writing down every detail was impressive. She did not leave anything out. What made us choose Leanne was that she sold our home as if it were her own. She developed a strong connection with our home and focused on the uniqueness it offered. She saw much more deeply why we called our home a paradise, and why it would be paradise for anyone else.

Her strategies were focused on as if she were selling our home to her own family. She wanted to hear every detail. She even studied the city area for any development in the near future.

After introductions, she showed us comparable houses in the area that we had not seen before. She was able to have a better pulse of our property's worth. She made follow-up calls to ensure her data was correct. She was the only Agent we had twice at our home. And the later meeting was even more thorough with her findings and evaluation. Even though the market is still bad, she believed that we may not get what we want, but we have a great chance that we may get higher than market value, and the only way to know is to test it out and let the market decide. And she was right all along.

#### **4. Was there a specific moment when you knew Leanne was the right agent for you?**

We had an open house, and the rain was pouring that day. People were waiting in their cars to get a chance to view. But despite the weather, she and Sommer, helped people go through the house in comfort.

My family didn't just want her as our agent, but to have a long-lasting relationship with her, and she wanted that too. That sealed the deal.

The final sale was above the predicted market value from all of her research and ours. Whilst we knew that we would have a loss, as we bought very high, she worked tremendously hard to be fair to the house, the uniqueness of it, the location, and the beauty from every window. Once she knew we were good with her plan, she went into overdrive to explain every detail to visitors and agents. Before we chose Leanne, she said she would be so excited to sell it - every inch is so clean and well kept that we don't need any staging, just maybe a light fluff is all. She was speaking our language in her own stunning way. Her excitement was genuine, and that made us wish we had had her as our agent before. The house was sold in 8 days. Which is awesome in today's market.

The emotional impact of selling was hard, even though we knew we wouldn't reach close to breaking even. She talked us through, as before, what the market is saying. And she said the market spoke, and we have an offer that is above market value. The buyers appreciate all our hard work and wanted to pay extra for it. She showed us how many people turned out, about 60 people altogether, and the offers people made. The final offer was all about how people really liked what we have done to our home. She said the decision is still ours to make and left us to take our time to make that decision. She was very happy we decided to sell, because the market may not work in our favor if we wanted to wait for more, and she gave us examples. She also knows our personal story and was very supportive.

#### **5. What part of the process surprised you the most (in a good way)?**

What surprised us most was her thoroughness in her approach. She has an incredible intellect that commands attention from other realtors or agents. She does not take nonsense from them. She works for us, the client. But she still assists the buyer's agent, so there are no surprises. We have never seen anyone go above and beyond to make all parties work professionally and happily together. One out-of-town agent wanted to do things her own way, and Leanne laid down the

rules, which they did not want to follow, all to protect us.

My neighbour texted me, "SOLD"! It was a bittersweet feeling since it was our long-term paradise, but for personal reasons, we had to leave. The sign felt like closure to some very good decisions we made with Leanne. Sold meant, according to my wife, "The house chose its new owners so that it would be happy with them", and that warm feeling was nice to experience after a long struggle of deciding what to do.

My wife told the house to "choose the family you want from all the families that would be passing through. This is your decision. We gave you all the love we can give you, and we want you to give all the love you can to your new family, and we would be incredibly happy for that". So the sold sign was our home answering and assuring us that it would be happy with the new owners.

#### **6. What advice would you give to someone trying to choose a Realtor**

If we could give anyone advice who's looking for a realtor, we would tell them to look for someone who will understand the home, not the transaction; the transaction is the easy part. Getting someone who cares about both the house and the buyers who will purchase it is more important than the transaction. Both parties must be well cared for, and Leanne makes this a top priority and ensures transparency. She is a most remarkable gem that loves her work, her clients, and the industry. If you are looking for a quick buck and don't care about the other side, do not choose Leanne. Her integrity and honesty are impeccable; do not waste her time.

#### **7. If you were to describe the experience in three words, what would they be?**

If we have to describe working with Leanne in 3 words, it'll be: Best Friend Ever

#### **8. Would you recommend Leanne to others?**

When Leanne was telling us about her life and struggles, it really resonated with our own experiences. Learning about the various support groups she is a part of assured us that we had chosen someone who was way beyond our highest expectations. We knew she would care about our personal lives too, something that is very rare indeed.

#### **9. How did it feel to have someone truly take care of every detail for you?**

Working with Leanne has inspired and encouraged us to follow her example. My family and I run our own Website Design agency, and we understand how important authenticity and integrity are, but with Leanne, there is no comparison. We learned a lot from her for our own business.

**More Than a Realtor,  
a Trusted Friend for *Life!***

# Meet the Experts Behind This Edition

This issue brings together trusted professionals who share the goal of helping Canadians make informed, confident decisions about home ownership and financial wellbeing.



Kelly Ross, CPA

Kelly Ross is the Managing Director and CEO of Ross Professional Corporation. She is a member of CPA Canada leading with strength, knowledge and passion, having over 20 years of experience in accounting and taxation. Through her career she worked in a multi-national CPA firm, then moved on to be a subject matter expert for development of an accounting program at a college. She is also the founder and Managing Director at TPS Tax and Accounting in Oakville.

Kelly's interest and passion for accounting came from her mother whose career was in the accounting realm. Kelly has a love for the arts and entertainment industry, which stemmed from having a father who had talent and love for music. Kelly herself played the piano, trumpet and was a dancer through her early years.



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Whitney Hammond, CFP, CLU,

Whitney Hammond has been in personal practice since 1997. She desired to own and operate her own private wealth firm and launched Sovereign Wealth Management in 2004. Working closely with clients' accounting, tax and legal advisors, Whitney helps them understand and select will planning, testamentary trusts, tax deferral and asset accumulation strategies. Her expertise with wealth and risk management focuses on client's goals and values allowing Whitney to build high levels of trust and establish multi-generational relationships.

Most recently, Whitney turned her focus toward empowering women through her exclusive "Keys to the Vault" events. She educates financially accomplished women on the importance of wealth building and financial literacy. Her mission is to ensure that women have the knowledge and confidence to make informed financial decisions and build a legacy that lasts for generations.



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Timm Tian Lawyer

Timm Tian is the Principal Lawyer at Mani Law Group, where he and his team bring more than 23 years of combined legal experience to clients across Ontario. Known for his clear and practical approach, Timm focuses on making legal solutions accessible, reliable, and cost-effective. His team assists with real estate transactions, wills and estates, corporate law, debt resolution, and more.

Through strategic partnerships in mortgages, investments, real estate, and business consulting, Timm offers clients seamless, well-rounded support. Guided by their commitment to Educate. Protect. Expedite., Mani Law Group helps clients move forward with clarity and confidence.



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Keri & Desirée Gregorio, Mortgage Agents

Keri began her career in 2006, helping families across Ontario find the perfect mortgage solutions. Following in her mother's footsteps, Desirée joined the industry in 2022. With nearly two decades of experience, this dynamic duo brings together the perfect balance of wisdom, compassion, and innovation. Rooted in trust and family values, their approach is simple, treat every client

like family and every mortgage like it's their own. Keri brings years of experience and deep industry knowledge, while Desirée adds a fresh, modern perspective and a passion for helping first-time homebuyers navigate today's market.

Together, they're more than just mortgage agents they're advocates, educators, and problem-solvers dedicated to making homeownership achievable and stress-free.

Whether it's your first home, a refinance, or an investment property, this trusted duo is committed to guiding you every step of the way — with integrity, care, and expertise you can count on.



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# Proud to Support the Community I Call Home



## Peaceful Perogies & Negronis

A TASTE X OF UKRAINE



Prepared by:

The idea of Peaceful Perogies and Negronis was created because my son felt there was a need to support refugees coming to Canada, fleeing from the Ukraine. In an effort to bring awareness about the financial and social realities of what these families are experiencing as they navigate a new home and new life, I decided that we should bring awareness to the people of my community. With the community's generous contributions we extend our mission to remember those that are suffering the consequences of circumstances that are out of their control by distributing funds directly to families that need it.



**Together we raised \$26,000 for 5 Local families  
Who fled to Canada seeking refuge from the War!**



# THE HIDDEN LEGAL MAZE

## BEHIND YOUR FIRST HOME PURCHASE

Buying your first home is one of life's biggest milestones. It is exciting, but it also involves legal steps that many people find confusing.

A real estate lawyer helps you understand the process, protects your interests, and completes the purchase with confidence.

### **After You Sign the Offer: What Happens Next**

Once your Agreement of Purchase and Sale is accepted, your lawyer becomes your main contact for all legal matters.

They review the agreement to confirm that the details match what you agreed to. They make sure there are no clauses that could create problems later.

Your lawyer also keeps track of key dates, such as

financing and inspection deadlines, and begins the title search and other checks.

During this stage, they will:

- Contact the seller's lawyer to confirm all documents
- Review property descriptions and inclusions
- Prepare for title and tax searches
- Confirm that the agreement is binding once conditions are met

This first step sets a solid foundation for the rest of the transaction.

### **Breaking Down the Legal Costs**

The purchase price is not the only expense in a home purchase.

Your lawyer explains the costs that appear between the





Written by:  
Timm Tian, Principal Lawyer  
Mani Law Group



## Understanding your closing costs early helps you avoid surprises and gives you peace of mind

offer and the closing date so you can plan your budget accordingly.

Typical legal costs include:

- **Legal fees and disbursements:** Payment for your lawyer's work and any out-of-pocket costs such as searches and registration fees
- **Land Transfer Tax:** A tax charged by the province or city, based on your home's value
- **Title insurance:** One-time coverage that protects you against hidden ownership or registration problems
- **Adjustments:** Reimbursements to the seller for prepaid property taxes, utilities, or condo fees
- **Builder costs and HST:** Some first-time home buyers who purchase new builds may face additional builder-related costs, such as development fees, utility hook-ups, and HST on the purchase price

First-time buyers may qualify for rebates or credits such as the Land Transfer Tax Refund or First-Time Home Buyers' Tax Credit. Your lawyer will help confirm which programs apply to you.

### Understanding the Fine Print in Your Purchase Agreement

Your Agreement of Purchase and Sale is a legal document that sets the terms of your home purchase.

Your lawyer reviews this agreement carefully to make sure it protects your best interests and that you understand every clause before it becomes final.

If you are purchasing a new build, it is crucial that you send your signed agreement to your lawyer during the 'cooling-off' period. This gives your lawyer time to review it and alert you to potential surprises, such as builder adjustments, development charges, or large closing costs that may not be obvious at signing. Knowing these details early helps you plan and avoid unexpected expenses.

During the conditional period for any purchase, your lawyer also reviews the seller's conditions and confirms they have been satisfied on your behalf. Unmet or unclear conditions can affect the quality, value, or financing of the property. Your lawyer ensures that everything required by both parties is fulfilled before the deal becomes firm.

If you are buying a power of sale or estate sale prop-

erty, your lawyer will also explain the extra paperwork and possible delays or risks that can occur with these transactions. These types of sales often require additional documentation and may involve longer processing times or specific legal obligations that differ from a standard purchase.

Key clauses your lawyer will review include:

- **Conditions:** Clauses that protect you if financing or inspection results are not satisfactory
- **Closing date:** The date ownership officially transfers to you
- **Title condition:** Confirmation that the seller owns the property and can transfer it without liens or disputes
- **Representations and warranties:** Promises the seller makes about the property's condition and legal status

Having your lawyer involved early reduces risk and ensures you fully understand what you are signing.

### Title Search and Title Insurance

A title search is one of the most important steps in a real estate transaction, and it must be done early to avoid delays at closing. Your lawyer performs this search to confirm that the property is legally owned by the seller and that there are no claims or issues that could affect your ownership.

A title search can uncover problems such as:

- **Unpaid property taxes** that remain attached to the property
- **Old mortgages** that were never properly discharged
- **Financing liens** placed by lenders, contractors, or HVAC companies
- **Tax liens** from the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA)
- **Easements or restrictions** that limit how the property can be used

If any of these appear, your lawyer works to resolve them before the deal closes. Clearing these issues protects your legal right to own the property free and clear.

Your lawyer will also recommend title insurance, which offers financial protection against problems that may arise after closing. This coverage protects



you from fraud, registration errors, survey mistakes, or other hidden title defects. It is a one-time cost that provides long-term peace of mind for as long as you own your home.

## Getting Ready for Closing Day

In the week leading up to closing, your lawyer coordinates the final legal and financial details to make sure the process is smooth and straightforward. They review all documents, confirm mortgage instructions with your lender, and update the statement of adjustments so it accurately reflects the latest taxes, fees, and credits.

You will meet with your lawyer to sign the closing documents and provide certified funds for the balance due.

Behind the scenes, your lawyer:

- **Prepares and registers** the transfer and mortgage documents
- **Transfers the funds** to the seller's lawyer
- **Confirms that property taxes, liens, and legal fees** are paid
- **Prepares and delivers** your final closing package promptly so you have all records of the transaction

Once registration is complete, your lawyer contacts you to confirm that the keys are ready and that ownership has officially transferred to your name. At that point, you can take possession of your new home with confidence.

## When Things Do Not Go as Planned

Even with careful preparation, issues can still arise. Mortgage approvals can be delayed, a title search can uncover a problem, or a seller may not meet a condition on time.

Your lawyer manages these challenges on your behalf. They communicate with the other parties, find solutions, and protect your rights if a dispute occurs.

If an extension or adjustment is required, your lawyer handles the negotiation.

## Choosing the Right Real Estate Lawyer

Choosing the right lawyer makes a big difference in how smooth and stress-free your purchase will be. Look for someone who aligns with the values that define strong legal representation:

- **EDUCATE:** Your lawyer should take the time to answer your questions, outline your rights and obligations, and help you understand what to expect from start to finish.
- **PROTECT:** Your lawyer ensures that your interests are fully protected. They review contracts, identify potential risks, confirm all conditions are met, and safeguard your investment.
- **EXPEDITE:** An effective lawyer manages deadlines, communicates promptly with lenders and other parties, and ensures all legal requirements are completed on time for a smooth closing.

Meeting your lawyer early in the process is always beneficial. They can review your offer before it becomes binding and make sure you are protected from the very beginning.

## After Closing: Legal Tasks to Complete

After you receive the keys, there are still a few legal steps to finish. Your lawyer provides a closing package that includes your deed, mortgage documents, and final statement of adjustments.

You will also need to:

- **Update** property tax and utility accounts with your local municipality
- **Confirm** your home insurance coverage
- **Store** all closing documents for future reference

Completing these final steps ensures your new home is properly registered and fully in your name.

## Buying a home is both emotional and technical.

A real estate lawyer makes the legal side clear and manageable. They protect your investment, explain your obligations, and help you avoid costly mistakes. With the right support, your first home purchase can be a smooth and rewarding experience.

When a deal hits a snag, your lawyer knows exactly what to do.



Written by:  
Whitney Hammond, CFP, CLU  
CEO, Sovereign Wealth  
Management



# I'll Never Be Able to Buy a House in My Lifetime...

# BULLS

## There's Never Been A Better Time Than Now & I'll Show You How!

Buying your first home has always been intimidating, no matter the generation. But today, many believe it's nearly impossible. Is this true? Absolutely not. In fact, there has never been a better time to buy. Let's debunk this myth.

### The Reality Check

- The average cost of a home in the GTA sits around \$1 million.
- A 20% down payment equals roughly \$200,000.
- The average household income is about \$121,000.

At first glance, those numbers might seem discouraging, but they don't tell the whole story.

### A Shift in Mindset

Today's young adults, roughly between 18 and 40, live in a completely different world than previous generations.

They are comfortable spending.

They value experiences and convenience.

# SH\*T!



Listen to the extended  
First-time buyer  
conversation with  
Whitney Hammond  
and Kelly Ross!



They've grown up with instant access to everything.

Their incomes, when adjusted for inflation, are actually higher than ever.

But they also face something unique: a technology cost for simply existing in the modern world—devices, apps, subscriptions, and digital tools that drain cash flow without them realizing it.

So, while it might feel harder to buy a home today, the challenge isn't just about prices, it's about priorities, planning, and understanding how money actually works in this economy.

This generation lives in a world where everything is instant. Access, delivery, information, everything is right at their fingertips. They're used to having what they want, when they want it.

Why?

Because we gave it to them.

They're an extension of us. We built a culture of "I want it now." We no longer tolerate doing things we don't enjoy. Survival no longer means finding food or shelter, it now means protecting our peace, our opinions, and our happiness.

But this mindset comes at a cost. It blinds us to the real opportunities that exist today. We focus on comfort and emotion instead of strategy and discipline.

The truth? A little discipline is all it takes to turn this around. There has never been a better time to buy a house.

So why is now the best time to buy?

Because that \$200,000 down payment is tax deductible.

That means this generation can literally use their own income tax money to buy their first home.

Think about it: they're already paying thousands in taxes every year. Why not redirect that money into something that builds their future?

In simple terms:

Instead of sending \$200,000 to the Canada Revenue Agency over time, they can build a strategy that uses those same dollars toward a home deposit.

## Let's unpack that idea.

If your child earns income and owes taxes, the first \$100,000 they pay, and the first \$100,000 their future partner pays, can be redirected into a smart, legal plan to fund a down payment.

Yes, it's absolutely possible. Here's how.

1. When your child turns age 18, have them open a FHSA (First Home Savings Account.) Even if they don't have money to fund it, it **MUST** be open to start the clock ticking on the 5 year window where \$40,000 in total can be contributed.
2. Your child will receive a tax receipt for every dollar contributed into this FHSA (account) UP to \$40,000. The tax receipts can be saved and carried forward for use in the higher income-earning years.
3. When your child begins working full time, its important for them to add 18% of their income into an RRSP instead of paying a payroll tax of 18%. They can swap the tax for an RRSP contribution of which up to \$60,000 can be drawn tax free to make their first home purchase.

**Would you rather...  
Give all your money  
to CRA in taxes?**



## Let's look at a real example.

Amy and Paul want to buy their first home. They could be siblings, partners, or friends, it doesn't matter. What matters is that together, they can access up to \$100,000 each, tax-free, to put toward their first property.

Both Amy and Paul worked through high school and university. Instead of spending on short-term wants, they chose to save with intention and focus on what would give them a return.

Age	FHSA Contribution	Total FHSA Savings	Tax Credits Accumulated
18	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000
19	\$8,000	\$16,000	\$16,000
20	\$8,000	\$24,000	\$24,000
21	\$8,000	\$32,000	\$32,000
22	\$8,000	\$40,000	\$40,000

By the time the child reaches age 22, they have \$40,000 of savings for their first home purchase PLUS \$40,000 tax credits for their future tax returns (their choice when they use the credits). Who doesn't like receiving tax refund money?

If they don't contribute right away, that's okay. The FHSA creates buy-back space, meaning the unused contribution room carries forward, just like RRSPs or TFSA's.

This strategy works whether they start early or later. The point is to open the FHSA at 18 to start the five-year clock. Every dollar grows tax-free and can be withdrawn without penalty when they're ready to buy.

The best part?

This money never needs to be repaid. It's a complete, tax-free gift to the first-time homebuyer!

**Or turn that same \$200,000 into a deposit on your first home?**



## Building on the Foundation

Amy and Paul each now have \$40,000 saved in their FHSA.

They haven't used their tax receipts yet because their incomes were too low to benefit from them. Smart move! They'll save those receipts for future, higher-income years when the refund value is bigger.

Both have graduated and started their careers, each earning about \$60,000 per year, growing to \$80,000 within five years.

They decide to save 18% of their income which is the same amount many people simply hand over in taxes.

Their choice: pay 18% in tax or save 18% toward their first home.

Here's how that plays out:

Age	Income	18% Saved	Cumulative RRSP Savings
23	\$60,000	\$10,800	\$10,800
24	\$65,000	\$11,700	\$22,500
25	\$70,000	\$12,600	\$35,100
26	\$75,000	\$13,500	\$48,600
27	\$80,000	\$14,400	\$63,000

After five years, each has \$63,000 saved in an RRSP.

Through the Home Buyers' Plan (HBP), they can withdraw up to \$60,000 each, tax-free, to buy their first home.

The HBP allows them to borrow from their RRSP and repay it gradually over 20 years. Repayments begin in the sixth year, with 1/15 of the original amount due annually.

If they miss a payment, the skipped amount simply gets added to their taxable income that year, a small price for the long-term gain of homeownership.

## The Final Numbers

Together, between their FHSA savings and their RRSP contributions, Amy and Paul now have \$200,000 available for a down payment on a \$1 million home (or less!).

That leaves an \$800,000 mortgage, which at an average 4% interest rate works out to roughly \$4,000 per month. \$2,000 each. That's less than rent in a lot of cities in Ontario!

So, it really comes down to one simple question:

Would you rather give your money to the CRA, or give it to yourself and buy your first home?

There has never been a better time to buy than right now.

# A Taste OF HOME



LEANNE GILES REAL ESTATE

## The Recipe Everyone Still Talks About

*Before real estate became my full-time passion, I owned a cozy little restaurant where food, family, and community came together daily. It's been years since the restaurant closed its doors, but there's one thing people still ask me about, my tiramisu. I get messages from old customers, neighbours, and even past staff who say they've never found another quite like it.*

*So for this edition of Dreams Magazine, I'm sharing the original. No shortcuts. No instant coffee. The secret has always been real espresso. That rich, bold flavour soaks into every layer and brings the mascarpone cream to life. It's smooth, decadent, and surprisingly simple to make once you know the steps.*

*This dessert holds a lot of memories for me, and I hope it brings joy to your table too. Pour the coffee, grab your whisk, and prepare to fall in love with the recipe that started it all.*

You can make it in a pan like a two layer cake or individual cups (I use a cappuccino cup). This is a large batch that serves 8.

## Ingredients

- 12 eggs
- 13 heaping tbsp of sugar (granulated)
- 2 tubs Mascarpone cheese (I always use Salerno but if you can't find any other brand will work)
- Savoiardi cookies (about 8 sleeves)
- espresso (if you don't have an espresso machine, you can go to Starbucks and get 2 venti (the largest) cups of french press for under 10 dollars)
- liquor (Frangelico, Sambuca, Amaretto and Brandy)
- cocoa powder



## Directions

### FOR THE ESPRESSO MIXTURE

Espresso mixture. I am guilty for not measuring, I go by smell. You can adjust to your taste, but I roughly use these amounts.

First, take your espresso mixture, room temperature, and add one shot of each liquor. I tend to use just a touch more of the brandy and Sambuca. Add all four to the espresso and set aside.

### FOR THE CREAM MIXTURE

You will need two bowls: one large and one medium. Separate the egg whites and whisk until they peak and set in the fridge. Add the sugar to the yolks and mix until a soft yellow.

Add one tub of cheese at a time. Once the two tubs of cheese is blended, you will see how thick the mixture is. Only if it is a thick consistency add two heaping scoops of egg whites and blend again. You don't want it too runny, more like a pudding thickness. Dip the cookies in the coffee mixture for one second, completely submerging the cookie. Place the dipped cookie in the pan and continue the first layer. Then add the cream mixture on top to ensure all cookies are covered in mixture. Repeat the next layer. Set in the refrigerator until ready to serve. Before serving, sprinkle with cocoa powder using a mesh strainer. Enjoy!



It is clear that Leanne is passionate about her profession and it translates in her work. Her hard work and dedication are greatly appreciated. I am so thankful I was able to work with her - her experience and knowledge was indispensable during the purchase of our home - I would highly recommend her services.

**Sonia Shelby**

Leanne's service was definitely "five star". Her on-line presentation was so amazing, I wanted to buy our own home! The staging was done efficiently and in good taste. She responded immediately to questions and concerns and was available each step of the way. Without hesitation, we would recommend Leanne! Thanks Leanne and your amazing team.

**Susan McDonald**

I've had the pleasure of working with Leanne on the purchase of three homes, and each experience has been nothing short of exceptional. She consistently goes above and beyond—not just in the details of the buying process, but in the genuine care she brings to every interaction. More than just a realtor, she's become a mentor and a trusted friend over the years.

**Vanessa Marujo**

Leanne has by far exceeded my expectations in support of selling 2 of our homes, and purchasing 2 over the past 10 years!! Leanne has also helped my senior parents with the sale of their home. She took extra care in supporting them during their sale. Gentle, kind and very sincere. She took extra time to explain everything during the process for them!

Leanne will go beyond the "work for you" as an Agent!

She is very efficient, thorough and very detail oriented!

"Let's make this happen!" is her motive for each sale/purchase! I highly recommend hiring Leanne, especially if you want the deal done and done to high expectations!

**Vicki Sargla**

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@LeanneGilesRealEstate



# Your First Home in Ontario: What You Need to Know Before You Buy

Buying your first home can feel overwhelming. There are programs, rebates, and incentives available that most first-time buyers don't even realize exist.

Here's a quick guide to help you understand what financial help you may qualify for — and what steps to take to make your purchase smoother and more affordable.

7

## Must-Know Facts for Ontario First-Time Home Buyers

1

### The First-Time Home Buyer Incentive

The federal government may contribute 5% toward a resale home or 10% toward a new build to help with your down payment.

2

### The RRSP Home Buyers' Plan

You can withdraw up to \$60,000 from your RRSP tax-free to use toward your first home. The funds must be repaid over 15 years, but it's a great way to access your savings without penalty.

3

### Land Transfer Tax Rebates

Ontario offers a rebate of up to \$4,000 for first-time buyers, and if you are buying in Toronto, you can receive an additional rebate of up to \$4,475. Your lawyer applies for these rebates on your behalf during closing.

4

### Minimum Down Payment Rules

5% for homes up to \$500,000  
10% on the portion from \$500,000 to \$999,999  
20% or more for homes of \$1 million or higher (no CMHC insurance available)

5

### Get Pre-Approved Before You Shop

A pre-approval gives you a clear idea of how much you can borrow and helps you make a stronger, faster offer when you find the right home.

6

### Budget for Closing Costs

Plan for 1.5% to 4% of the purchase price to cover legal fees, land transfer tax, title insurance, and inspections. Your lawyer and mortgage professional can give you a detailed estimate early in the process.

7

### First-Time Home Buyer Tax Credit

You can claim up to \$1,500 in federal tax relief on your income tax return after you close.



Keri Gregorio  
& Desiree Gregorio  
Real Mortgage Associates Inc

# 7 Common Home Buying Myths BUSTED!

Even confident buyers can get caught up in misinformation.

Here are a few myths that often stop people from moving forward with their first home – and the facts that set the record straight.

## Myth 1:

Student loans mean you can't buy.

## TRUTH

Lenders look at your overall income, credit, and debt ratios. Many buyers with student loans still qualify.

## Myth 2:

Renting is always cheaper.

## TRUTH

Monthly mortgage payments can be similar to rent, but they also build equity over time.

## Myth 3:

You don't need a lawyer to buy a home

## TRUTH

In Ontario, a real estate lawyer is required by law to close your purchase safely and register your ownership.

## Myth 4:

Wait for the "perfect" home.

## TRUTH

Focus on the right home for your lifestyle and your budget. You can always upgrade later.

## Myth 5:

Agents cost buyers money.

## TRUTH

The seller typically pays the buyer's agent commission, not you.

## Myth 6:

Pre-approval equals a guaranteed mortgage.

## TRUTH

The property must still be approved by the lender, and your documents reviewed again before closing.

## Myth 7:

You need 20% down.

## TRUTH

You can buy with as little as 5% down on homes under \$1 million.



# This Ain't Your Granny's Savings Account!

Back in the 1950s and '60s, saving for a first home was simple, but painfully slow. Couples tucked cash into envelopes, opened joint savings accounts at the local bank, and hoped interest rates would do the heavy lifting. A down payment could take years of penny-pinching and postponed vacations.

Fast-forward to today, and the financial toolkit looks completely different. We now have tax-sheltered investment accounts, contribution matching, and government incentives designed to help first-time buyers build wealth faster. The modern homebuyer saves with a plan and a purpose.

If you're dreaming about your first set of keys, it's time to learn how to make your money work like it's living in the 21st century.

Investing and Real Estate have a very close connection and the reason for that is simple. Real Estate is an investment and before you buy that real estate,

you can invest smartly to really maximize your gains! Let's break this down into the main investment types I recommend and the reasons why you may choose one over the other first when investing.



Written by:  
Kelly Ross, CPA

Ross Professional Corporation



When this came out, I had re-read the rules multiple times as I just couldn't believe how great this was and here is why. It is a triple threat savings tool incorporating the benefits of RRSP, TFSA and HBP all in one!

To qualify you must be ages 18-71, a Canadian Resident, First Time Home buyer (which also includes if you haven't owned a home in 4-5 years or if there was a marital breakdown, conditions do apply). This is something I encourage also for parents and grandparents to have their children do and it's a great time to start contributing to for them in place of where you would have put money into an RESP for them and no longer can. It can also be a great gift to them for birthdays or holidays.



- ✓ Annual tax-deductible contribution limit is \$8,000 – yes you get a tax deduction for your contributions! Don't worry if you don't have substantial income in a year to offset, you can carry this forward to use in a future year when you do!
- ✓ Lifetime contribution of \$40,000
- ✓ This is an investment account so it will grow and it won't be taxable
- ✓ Contributions can be carried forward and deducted, as long as they are made prior to the qualifying withdrawal
- ✓ You can contribute after a withdrawal however will not be deductible, but are transferrable
- ✓ Important to note that unlike RRSP and TFSA, the account must be open for room to be created each year
- ✓ Can transfer unused balances within the FHSA to RRSP without effecting room however there is no additional tax deduction when this occurs.
- ✓ Can transfer RRSP to FHSA but does not restore RRSP room and uses FHSA room.
- ✓ It also won't allow for additional deduction on tax, however withdrawal would be tax-free. (Note: I don't recommend this one as you lose the RRSP room)
- ✓ Withdrawals for non-home purchases are taxable and do not restore room



RRSPs overall are a great savings mechanism for tax deductions each year as is for your retirement later on. When it comes to buying a home and you qualify as a first-time home buyer then after maximizing your FHSA you want to be putting money in here as well. This is how the RRSPs work:

- ✓ Room generated off employment income - 18% of earned income makes contribution limit increase for future year (there are maximums each year and for 2025 it is \$32,460 and 2026 \$33,810).
- ✓ Your RRSP room is reduced by contributions made by you or an employer into a RSP or RPP.
- ✓ Contributions offset same amount of taxable income.
- ✓ Your RRSP issuer will not withhold tax on withdrawn amounts of \$35,000 (\$60K with Bill C-69) or less.
- ✓ Certain conditions must be met in order to be eligible to participate in the HBP, including the following:
  - First time home buyer.
  - Written agreement to buy or build a qualifying home.
  - Resident of Canada when you withdraw/buy.
  - Intend to occupy the qualifying home as your principal place of residence within one year after buying or building it.
- ✓ Deadline – last day of February following the year you want to take the deduction for.

- ✓ The Home Buyers Plan (HBP) allows you to withdraw up to \$35,000 (Bill C-69 now 60K from Apr 16 2024 ) from RRSPs and pay back the withdrawn funds within a 15-year period (Budget temp deferral of repayment by 3 years).

Now one extra tidbit of information is if you don't need to use your RRSP for a home purchase, did you know you can withdraw for investment in yourself (or spouse's) career change using the Lifelong Learning Plan (LLP)?

- ✓ Repayment term of 10 years.
- ✓ Up to a total of \$20,000 from your RRSPs
  - Up to \$10,000 in a calendar year
  - Up to \$20,000 in total.
- ✓ You can participate in the LLP for:
  - Yourself, your spouse or common-law partner.
  - You can both participate in the LLP for either of you.
  - You cannot participate in the LLP to finance your children's training or education, or the training or education of your spouse's or common-law partner's children.
- ✓ Not limited to the amount of your tuition, you can use the money for any purpose.
- ✓ You have until January of the fourth calendar year after the year you made your first LLP withdrawal to make additional withdrawals, as long as you still qualify and the 10-year repayment period has not begun.



This is a great account for all the extra funds you have when you don't need a tax deduction and all the growth is tax-free! This is also a great investment to withdraw from in your retirement years as you don't report the withdrawals as income on your tax returns. The contribution room can change each year as declared by the government and for the last couple years has been sitting at \$7,000 per year. If you were 18 or older, your cumulative room including 2025 would add up to be \$102,000. Some key points to this account are below:



Room increases each year  
Growth not taxable and does not reduce future room



If you withdraw, the room will come back for future year contribution – just not in same year.



Non residents can keep their TFSA in Canada but can no longer generate room for those years.



No effect on other benefits

The excess amount you contribute to a TFSA is subject to a 1% per month penalty tax. So if you over contributed by \$2,000 in a given year, you would be paying a penalty of \$20 a month as long as the excess amount is still in your account.

## Smart Saving for a New Generation

As you can see, there are many smart investment options to explore when planning your first home, or when re-entering the market after at least four years off title—for example, following a major life change or divorce. Saving no longer means waiting years for a basic account to grow.

Your grandparents saved what they could and hoped for the best. You can do more. With education, strategy, and the right financial advice, your savings can become the foundation of something lasting. The dream of owning a home is still alive, it just has a smarter way of getting there.



Listen to the extended First-time buyer conversation with Whitney Hammond and Kelly Ross!



# THIS PAGE HAS BEEN HIJACKED!

Sometimes being the designer of magazines means doing some radical stuff... and tonight, I'm taking over this page! I'm not even asking her first, because someone needs to brag about this woman and I'm honoured to do so.

## A Realtor Who Leads With Her Heart

Leanne Giles is the kind of woman who makes you want to be better. Not because she talks about doing good, but because she just does it. Quietly. Consistently. With a full heart.

You probably know her as a Realtor. Maybe even your Realtor. But behind the scenes, she's been giving back in ways most people don't see. A portion of every commission goes to Sick Kids Hospital in Toronto. Over \$40,000 donated to Halton Women's Place. Fundraisers for Ukraine relief. Dancing her heart out for Easter Seals and helping raise \$100,000 for kids with disabilities. And that's just what I know about.



Leanne doesn't give for applause. She gives because it's the right thing to do. She builds community by showing up, again and again, for people who need it.

So no, this isn't about real estate. This is about legacy. About choosing to make the world a little brighter with every home you sell, every client you serve, and every dollar you give.

I'm proud to know her. And even prouder to take up a little space in her magazine to say so.

Amy Bell



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to Support the  
Community  
I Call Home

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Since 2019, we have raised more than \$650,000 for Halton Women's Place, helping provide safety, shelter, and support to women and children in need. Through six unforgettable galas, more than fifty monthly community events, and a growing social network of over two thousand supporters, we continue to build awareness, connection, and lasting change for those who need it most.

If you'd like to become an ambassador, visit this link for more information: [www.wallettowealth.ca](http://www.wallettowealth.ca)

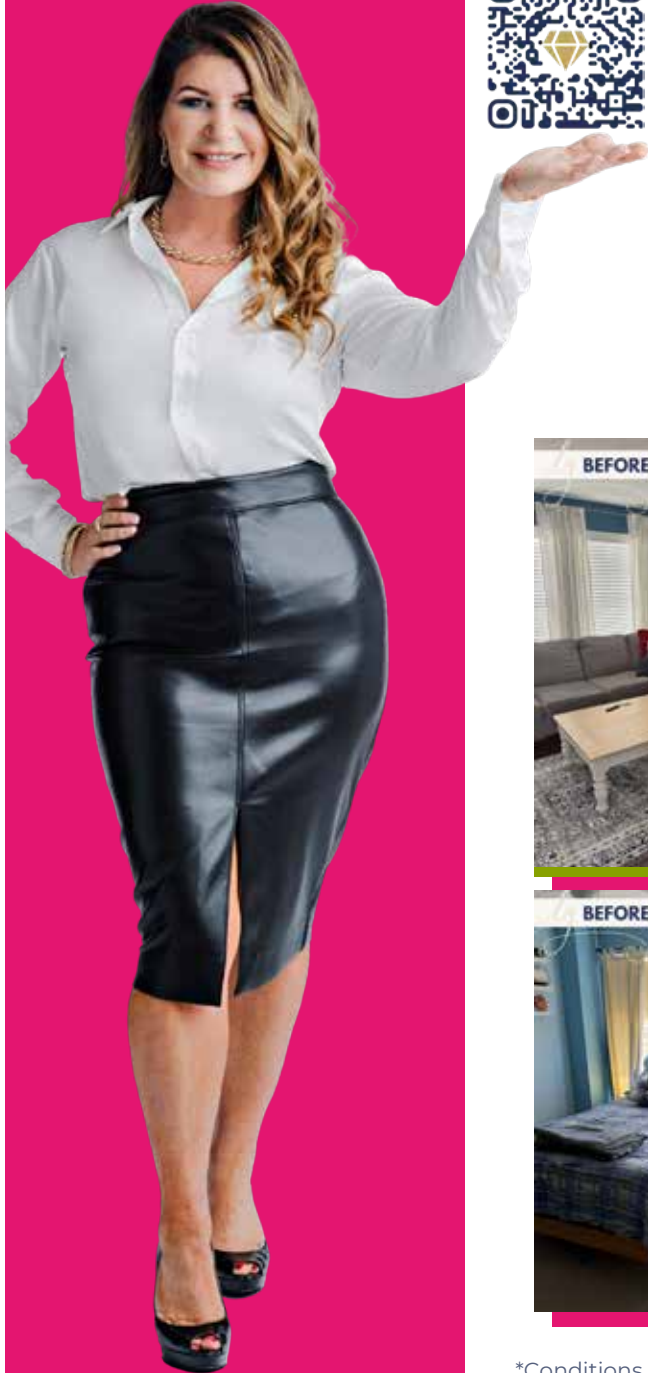


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## Your Home *Deserves* More than a Sign on the Lawn, it Deserves a *Strategy!*



Each home has its own story and so does every seller. That's why I create custom marketing and compensation packages that fit your goals, your timeline, and your home's unique personality.

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- Pre-list prep: deep clean, professional window detailing
- Trusted trades network: handyman, painter, and landscaper support
- Customized marketing plan and compensation structure designed to meet your needs and deliver results



\*Conditions apply to services included.