



Celebrate National Homeownership Month

By *Kenneth Jones, President*
Greater Fort Worth Association REALTORS®

Thankfully, the Texas market is holding its own recently. In recognition of how lucky we are to be living here, Texas Realtors are celebrating National Homeownership Month throughout the month of June, 2009.

This is a great time to take advantage of the benefits of homeownership in Fort Worth and our beautiful surrounding areas. Interest rates are at near-record lows. Homes are affordable, and there is a great selection available. If you're a first-time homebuyer, you may even qualify for a tax credit of \$8,000.

And that's just the beginning. It's about pride too...the pride that comes from homeownership. It's so nice to have the ability to look around your own home and know that you can paint the walls whatever color you want and attach permanent fixtures without requesting a landlord's permission (or risking your deposit); what a great feeling. A few other benefits to homeownership are as follows:

- You can lower your federal income taxes if you itemize by deducting mortgage interest and property taxes.
- You'll set a basic cost-of-living expense that can also provide a monetary return on investment.
- You'll have access to home equity loans that you can use later on to finance your child's college or start a new business. They carry a much lower interest rate than what you will find on most credit cards or signature loans.
- You'll lessen the worries about the property owner raising your rent.
- You'll gain stability. Studies have shown that children whose parents own rather than rent a home actually perform better in school.

These benefits should alleviate a common concern, that stepping into the world of homeownership is a risky financial decision. You may think you can't afford to take such a step right now, but you may actually be closer to affording your own home than you think.

If you're on the fence, ask an expert. Almost one thousand Texas Realtors have been certified as Texas Affordable Housing Specialists, and Fort Worth has its fair share of these talented individuals. These Realtors diligently worked through a twelve-hour certification track that educated them about how to help buyers with low-cost financing, assistance programs, the impact of "green" technologies and materials on affordability, and a host of other options to make housing more attainable and sustainable.

So put them to work for you! They'll explain the housing provisions of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, signed into law by President Obama in February, which provides for an \$8,000 tax credit to qualifying first-time homebuyers.

They'll tell you that by joining the nearly 70 percent of Americans who own homes, you too can achieve homeownership goals and reap the rewards that await. This is actually a great time to jump into the housing market. If you make the leap now, we know you will be delighted with your decision and you'll join with us in saying, "Thank Goodness It's Fort Worth!"

Find more online at www.gfwar.org or visit www.TexasRealEstate.com.

The Greater Fort Worth Association of Realtors is working diligently to serve the real estate community within the expanded Fort Worth area. We are one of more than 1,400 local trade associations nationwide that comprise the National Association of Realtors (NAR). All Realtors are members of NAR and are dedicated to a high level of ethical and professional standards. The Texas Association of Realtors is the largest not-for-profit professional membership association in Texas and represents all aspects of real estate. We advocate on behalf of Texas Realtors and homeowners. To learn more, visit www.gfwar.org.

*Contacts: Rebekah LaMontagne, rebekah@gfwar.org or (817) 336-5165 , ext 112
Ashley Callais, acallais@phprinc.com or 817 924 2300*