



# Senior Life: Make Your House Ready to Sell this Spring

January 27, 2020

By Marlene Stocks  
Owner, Senior Transition Services

2020 has arrived! For many, the New Year was marked with resolutions that will inspire a healthier outlook and lifestyle. The New Year may also be one of great anticipation for a special event, like a graduation, wedding, birth of a baby or new home. If the latter is on your personal "to do" list in 2020, like any large undertaking, much planning is required for a seamless completion of a change of address, especially when it requires the sale of a house.

It's a well-known fact that the "spring selling season" is the busiest period of real estate activity of the year and the earlier a house is listed for sale, the more quickly it is expected to be sold. In part, that's because the inventory of houses for sale is low at the front end of the spring selling season. In order to benefit from this trend, now is the perfect time to prepare a house for sale and capture a competitive edge by having a decluttering and depersonalizing plan to maximize the house's appeal.

## **Declutter**

Declutter is a verb that means "remove unnecessary items from (an untidy or overcrowded place)". Houses that have been stripped of obvious clutter allow a prospective buyer to quickly see the special features of each room. This is an example when "less is truly more"! More natural light can filter into the rooms if the windows aren't covered with hanging plants and heavy window treatments. The floors will stand out more if extraneous items have been removed. Granite kitchen countertops can be noticed if they have been cleared of small appliances, dishes, and canisters. The size of rooms will appear larger and more open if redundant furniture is removed or repositioned to allow for better traffic flow. A fireplace can be better showcased by minimizing the bric-a-brac on the mantel.

Once the clutter has been removed, determine what to do with the items. If the plan is to retain selected items and move them to the new residence, pack them away in a box marked "move" and conceal them in closet, attic or basement until moving day. Consider gifting heirlooms or special items to family but don't be disappointed if the offer is rejected. If so, you may have success selling the items using internet sites, like Craigslist or Facebook Marketplace, consigning with a consignment shop or auction house or dealing directly with an estate liquidator. Any slightly used items, like furniture, artwork, books, lamps, sports equipment, collectibles and decorations could be boxed and donated to a charity in return for a charitable donation receipt. Discard the obvious trash. Be mindful that paperwork with social security numbers and other personal, financial information be properly shredded.

## **Depersonalize**

Depersonalize is also a verb meaning to “remove personal identity”. This task is often harder than decluttering because it usually entails the temporary removal of beloved family photos, large decorative collections and unique, exotic accessories. This task is not meant to be a judgement on the seller’s decorating style. The purpose is for prospective buyers to envision living there with their own furniture and decorative style. As with decluttering, items like the family photos that will be moved to the new residence, would be packed up and eventually used to decorate the new home.

With an open and uncluttered look to the house, the amount of time it remains on the market will likely be reduced and the SOLD sign more quickly displayed.

*Marlene Stocks is the owner of Senior Transition Services, a senior move management company based in Huntingdon Valley. As a certified senior move manager, Marlene and her team provide their clients and families “peace of mind” by managing every detail of the client’s move, as well as their content removal needs. Senior Transition Services has proudly served 1,000 families in the 5 county area and South Jersey since 2008. [www.Senior-Transition-Services.com](http://www.Senior-Transition-Services.com). 215.947.5490.*