

Fill Your Tanks with Optimism!

*by Ron Schildknecht, Association Executive,
Greater Texoma Association of REALTORS®*

During the holidays, my wife and I had the opportunity to take a “road trip” to St. Louis, Missouri. While on the trip, we marveled at the bright prospects for our nation’s future. After being exposed to all the negative stories filled with doom and gloom every day in the newspapers, on television and the internet, it was refreshing to see our country at work and refill our tanks with optimism.

Along our drive, we saw building sites under construction, experienced new roads being built (lucky for me, that always seems to happen when Cindy is driving), passed retail stores with grand opening banners and visited new home subdivisions with families in the process of setting up homes. We saw an optimistic nation trying to make a better world for tomorrow despite the lagging economy, global warming debates and war fighting on two fronts.

In St. Louis, America’s optimism was, once again, demonstrated to us. Cindy and I had the opportunity to share a holiday meal with Dawn, a co-worker and friend of our daughter. Although we had not yet met, this young mother eagerly invited us for dinner. Dawn wanted to share her family traditions and open her new home to us. Without hesitation, we accepted her invitation. Although she had never really tested her cooking skills for a large holiday meal before, I must say it was one of the best meals we have had in a very long time. You see, Dawn “spiced-up” her home-cooking with the optimism we saw while traveling.

Dawn is young, just really getting started on her career and has a nine year old daughter. Despite her tiny size, she works a physically demanding job (think unloading 40-pound boxes from semi-trailer trucks) and is paid by the hour. She works hard to instill the “right” values in her daughter and worries about paying the bills like everyone else. But she is optimistic.

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Taking advantage of the first-time homebuyer’s tax credit program, Dawn just purchased her first home. Before dinner, she excitedly

gave us the cook’s tour of her modest 1960’s era, 3 bedroom, 1 bath home. She explained her desires to repaint and remodel. She told us about her future plans and the bright tomorrow she envisioned. Her optimism, fueled by her sense of pride and desire for a better future for

her daughter, led her to homeownership. She purchased a home with a fixed-rate mortgage which she could afford on her present salary. Dawn has taken the first step in a more secure, optimistic future. Best of all, she no longer pays rent to a landlord. She is investing in her family's future.

To me, Dawn epitomizes America's future and past. Like our ancestors, she faced adversity and struggled to make the best of her current circumstances. She recognized the reality of her challenges and made decisions that can lead to a better tomorrow. Dawn did not buy her "dream home" with a champagne mortgage and a beer budget. She set realistic goals, studied her options, took advantage of the opportunities America has to offer and started the next chapter in her life. Dawn is not paralyzed by a weak economy, unrealistic dreams, a modest budget or the lack of a "can do" spirit. She is using her skills and optimism. She is seizing the moment. Dawn is living the American dream.

Dawn's American experience today is not unlike American experiences of the past. The Pilgrims, traveling

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across storm-tossed seas, founded America on optimism. President Abraham Lincoln led our nation through a difficult and divisive civil war driven by optimism, knowing the United States would have a brighter future if all men were truly treated as equals and could enjoy the full citizenship of this great nation. For hundreds of years immigrants with an optimistic view have risked everything to come to America for a better life. Men and women of our military forces have fought and died around the world so America could be a place of opportunity for their fellow citizens.

Today, we still can all live the American dream. Despite the pessimistic daily headlines, the United States of America is the greatest nation the world has ever seen. As Americans, we can each do our part, no matter how small, to improve our lives, our futures and those of our neighbors. We just need to build on Dawn's courage to dream and work for a better tomorrow and a brighter future. The optimistic America still exists, and I am thankful for that.

For more information on living the American dream through homeownership, visit TexomaRealtor.com or a REALTOR® member of the Greater Texoma Association of REALTORS®. With the help of a \$6,500 to \$8,000 tax credit, now is a great time to begin living the dream. Optimism is infectious...May each of you enjoy an optimistic, brighter 2010!