

Looking For A New Home? Why Not Swap



Reporting
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PINECREST (CBS4) — Today's real estate market has people coming up with creative ways to sell their property and one idea has to do with swapping homes permanently.

In the movie "The Holiday", Cameron Diaz and Kate Winslet both escape heartbreak by swapping their homes for much needed vacations. Winslet moves into Diaz' Beverly Hills mansion while Diaz hides out in Winslet's cozy cottage in the English countryside.

The two find each other online through a home exchange site. The swap turns out to be a success in the movie and real life members of the site called HomeExchange.com say it has worked for them as well.

"We love it we've traveled to Rome, to France and its been so easy and so much fun," said Leonardo Brito, a HomeExchange member.

Leo and Heidi Brito have been traveling to exotic locales ever since they became members of Homeexchange.com. The couple, along with their three young children, has stayed in homes generously offered by other members on the site. Their Key Biscayne home is offered in return.

If you think it sounds like a great idea, why not take it one step further, like swapping your house permanently.

The Brito family did just that and swapped their smaller home with a Key Biscayne neighbor who wanted to downsize.

The Brito's aren't alone.

The Bartha family of Pinecrest also swapped homes. After they lived in a 9 bedroom, 2-acre Pinecrest Estate for 9 years, they were ready to downsize.

"My realtor came to us and said 'I'ma why don't we exchange homes, this family is looking for something like you have'. That's how it happened," said Ilma Bartha.

With the help of their realtor, EWM's Miriam Poggio, they found the perfect five bedroom Palmetto Bay home. The other family quickly fell in love with the Bartha's home and in the meantime, found out they had a lot of things in common.

"They had candles with little rocks all over them. I had candles with the rocks. They had a cross collection. We had a cross collection our style was the same it was the perfect match," said Bartha.

So the deal was done. But when homes are swapped, everything has to happen simultaneously. They close on the same day and even move on the same day.

"They packed one living room and the other living room and both trucks crossed on Old Cutler Road and they unpacked the living room and went on to the next room all the same way like that," said Bartha.

EWM's CEO, Beth Butler says in a house swap the only thing that needs to be negotiated is the difference between the two homes. While it may sound easy, it's not too common but she says in today's real estate market anything is possible.

"I think people are more open in this type of market that has a lot of inventory. People become more creative in how they sell property," said Butler.

The Bartha's say their house swapping transaction went pretty smoothly and if they needed to move again, house swapping is something they will definitely consider.

To find out more about the home swapping program go to www.homeexchange.com or visit www.ewmrealty.com.

Video

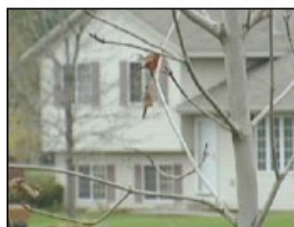
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