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The Best Lollipops are Blue
by Kay Steele Faulk

What do blue lollipops have to do with housing in the Ashland Area of Kentucky? A lot, if your name is Anna and you're two years old and one of the area's newest residents.

A few months ago when Asha and Mathews Joseph moved to Russell, Kentucky, their daughter, Anna, was two years old and son, Christopher, three weeks. A nephrologist (kidney doctor), Mathews had accepted a position with Ashland's Tri-State Nephrology after completing his residency at LSU Medical Center in Shreveport. The Ashland Area's tri-state location proved right for the couple as it would allow Asha to complete the final two years of her pediatrics residency at Marshall in nearby Huntington, West Virginia.

With a new baby and only a month's maternity leave for Asha, when the Josephs visited the area to find a house, they needed a realtor with a knack for making things happen. They found just that in the Brooks Wells Century 21 realtor Teresa Wright Jarrell. Teresa knew of an ideal house in Russell's Kenwood Hills about to come on the market. She persuaded the owners to let her show it. The Josephs, too, thought the 4-bedroom, 2-bath traditional perfect and they bought it. When their moving van was seven days late, stranding them with a new baby and no washer and dryer, to top it off, Teresa's mother did their laundry!

Although Asha has had little time to explore the community since moving, she's been impressed by the friendliness and helpfulness of the people. "When our things were late, all the wives in Mathews's practice brought everything we needed for the baby. And, of course, there was the kindness shown to us by Teresa and her mother. Then, the other day when I went to the bank, Anna was with me, and the drive-thru teller remembered from our first visit there that Anna's favorite flavor lollipop is blue. It was such a small thing, but the thoughtfulness behind it really touched me...and Anna was thrilled!"

According to realtor Lucian Ross, owner of Real Living Ross Realty, the Ashland Area housing market is steadily improving with the average home price at \$101,000. "Each year always seems to be better than the last," he said. "All downtown areas have older homes that remain in demand, and several new subdivisions are being opened for new home construction in both Boyd and Greenup Counties."

In Boyd County, The Franz Group has two subdivisions under development. Both are restricted and controlled. Lakin View Heights in Catlettsburg will have 172 homes built in five phases and priced from \$140,000 to \$200,000. Brookewood Estates in Ashland has ten homes priced from \$300,000 to \$1.2 million. Homebuyers can make all of their selections from flooring to cabinetry right in The Franz Group office. "Both subdivisions have been fun projects," said The Franz Group President and CEO, Jason Franz. "This has been because of the excitement generated by newcomers from other parts of the country who fall in love with our people, our climate and the beauty of the land."

In Greenup County, family-owned and -operated Quality Development has four subdivisions under development. Indian Meadow Estates in Flatwoods has seven lots left of the 25 total. Homes there range from \$190,000 to \$250,000. In Raceland, Derby Hill Estates has 12 lots left of the 24 total with homes ranging from \$115,000 to \$200,000. The newer Keeneland Hills Estates, also in Raceland, has 26 lots priced from \$27,000 to \$35,000. With 34 lots available, Oldsteam Farm Estates in Greenup, Kentucky, offers lots ranging from one to fourteen acres in size and from \$18,000 to \$60,000 in price.

As its name implies, Quality Development has a reputation for developing land for the construction of single-family homes with outstanding workmanship and design. “My family’s company is dedicated to connecting homebuyers/homebuilders with affordable, quality options,” said Quality Development’s Project Manager, Kristie Patterson. “And one of our main goals is to make the process of building a home an enjoyable experience for both newcomers and longtime residents.”

With the help of realtor Judy Robinson of Real Living Ross Realty, finding a home was easy for Larry and Pam Jones, who moved to Ashland from Starkville, Mississippi, for Larry to assume the position of Northeast Region President of Community Trust Bank. Larry purchased their contemporary house in Ashland’s Woodbrook subdivision without Pam’s even seeing it. The home’s 4 bedrooms and 3.5 baths offer ample space for the couple’s two grown children to visit.

A former Mississippi State University employee, Pam calls herself a “professional volunteer” in her new Kentucky home. She serves as president of the Paramount Women’s Association (PWA) and chairperson of the Festival of Trees. Pam and Larry

enjoy the Ashland Area YMCA and Bellefonte Country Club, and Pam is especially fond of walking in Central Park with her friends.

When meeting new people, Larry said the first thing everyone wanted to know was where they go to church. “Pam and I felt this was a good indication of the character and ethics of the community, and we were right.” The couple joined First Baptist of Ashland where they met Ron Reed, former Ole Miss assistant basketball coach. Coach Reed introduced them to Dr. James Payne who had played football at Mississippi State in Starkville, Larry and Pam’s hometown. Expressing the fun he and Pam have since had traveling to Mississippi State games with the Paynes, Larry said, “There’s such a broad range of people here, you just never know what friendships will be formed. This potential fills each day with an excitement that makes living in the Ashland Area very special.”