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Professional Organizer Transforms Author From Stress To Elation In One "Move!"

Professional Organizer Amy Trager takes the "stress" out of moving and makes coping with moving a dream.

Posted by dylan jordan , November 13, 2012 at 02:19 PM

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What are your pet peeves? I know for me, my top 2 are: 1. Cigarette smoke & inching a close second at number 2. Moving!

After living in the same Condo/Townhome for a solid decade and faced with the fact that my incredibly smart 13 year old daughter was about to begin high school up north one year early, the reality of moving finally came to fruition.

After a week of drafting my girlfriend and daughter to assist me with the early stages of packing, it became clear-cut that bribery might be my next option, even though to their credit both of them cheerfully collaborated with me to lighten our load.

Over 50 black lawn/garbage bags worth of "stuff" that needed to be purged and after several trips to The Salvation Army in Morton Grove to donate (and I am NOT exaggerating: 70% of my wardrobe, numerous toys, books and other treasures), I still found myself standing in the middle of my finished basement wishing Peggy Lee was on the other side of the room crooning "Is That All There Is" Accapella!

Instead, as I stood in the middle of what looked to be (dare I say it?) "Organized Chaos," I felt overwhelmed, defeated and it seemed that no matter how much of our "stuff" we purged or recycled, we couldn't move past the mountain of a decade's worth of items that had apparently been secretly hiding in our closets, pantries, drawers and storage areas. The irony? We weren't even Pack Rats!

Even though my girlfriend was a cheery willing participant (and a trooper at that!) and my daughter couldn't be more generous with her attentive, upbeat attitude, I still found myself making numerous late-night runs to recycle and alleviate the refuse that seemed like a never-ending flood of "things!"

So one morning I hopped onto my I-Mac and began Googling Organizers and Organizing companies, thinking: "This will just be for kicks and giggles, so I don't feel like I left any stone unturned."

I happened upon an Organizer (In fact, a Certified Organizer...Whoo-Hoo!) named Amy Trager who is based in my old neighborhood that I grew up in on the north side of the city. Could this be serendipity???

Turns out, she was really calm, easy going and optimistic (sort of like an Organizing Shrink for all the neurotic, fearful moving clients who are on an exceptionally tight deadline and feeling like they might meet their moving date on time).

So, like a little kid who just stubbed his toe and was in need of a band-aid, I whimpered: "Do we have enough time for you to work your magic (because in my mind, anything short of a miracle would mean that we would not be moved out on time for my new tenant's move-in deadline) and..."Will this cost alot?"

So Amy, with her calm, soothing sense of self and humor, assured me that everything would be "more than fine" and that she would stop by to provide me with an estimate and an assessment based on her knowledge for breaking down these scenarios and her expertise.

When Amy showed up, she had a deceptively sweet smile and baby face that hid an ultra-determined demeanor but that did not mask her sense of purpose as she moved from room to room taking notes and asking ALL the right questions. I had to admit, I was duly impressed and somewhat blown away by her sense of analytics having always admittedly had an issue with "spacial" challenges. My brain works better on the side where song creation with guitar in-hand begins, NOT organizing a 1,999 square foot move!

Needless to say, Trager was quick, efficient and had her proverbial "game-plan" within 15 to 20 minutes and shockingly enough, her prognosis did not sound panicked in the very least. She presented a 2 tiered set of options: 1. Amy does all the packing over a 2 or 3 day period in increments of 4-5 hours and in 12 hours, done. or 2. Amy and an associate work in tandem, time cut essentially in half. I had to admit, I was pleasantly surprised by her timeline, considering I had already invested 2 full weekends and my place still looked like a cyclone had hit the upstairs home office, my daughter's bedroom and our infamous basement.

So I ended up going with Option 1. Amy doing the lion's share of the packing (with a little help from us the day before here and there). I had to admit that while I was thrilled to have an extra set of hands, I was mildly curious and a little skeptical having never hired not just an Organizer, but a certified Organizer at that. Amy Trager could be construed as an Organizer X 10! (or would she?) Only time would tell and time was the one element we were running out of!

On day 1, Amy showed up with (organic) lunch, her baby face, freckles on her cheeks and an ear to ear grin as if to say: "Watch me slay your mess." Like a baby-faced assassin, she diligently went to work by herself and slyly shooed me away. I took one final look back at my basement and glanced at her as she quietly sized up the situation. I could see the wheels turning in her head as the right portion of her brain broke down and analytically began categorizing what items would be boxed in which order. Than I turned on my heels and trekked upstairs hoping she wouldn't go running out of my basement tearing her hair out a half hour later.

Within an hour and a half, I come downstairs to ensure that she's still breathing, has not passed out from the sheer stress and there's Amy Trager, taping up her final two boxes and neatly scribbling/labeling the goods with a black Sharpie. Like the Outlaw Josie Wales, she had neatly and efficiently taken down my entire basement and neatly "cleaned" up the entire town. I could almost detect a playful ("See, I told you so") as her eyes danced across the spectrum of the room seeing my jaw drop in graceful shock!) Trager had started by attacking the most difficult portion of the mess...I mean house and literally transformed it into the way it looked when I bought the place for goodness sakes!

Had I not known better, I would have suspected that Thing 1 and Thing 2 were hiding in my boiler room and that her assistants were giggling behind the door.

By the end of the afternoon, I could see and sense a ray of hope that my deadline was suddenly attainable. The following morning, Amy showed up, on time and ready to finish off the remaining task while my girlfriend Veronica and I packed a few incidentals.

Amy not only proved to be a super-organizer, she had a remarkably intuitive knack for figuring out ways to organize our household goods with very minimal guidance while easing and removing the stress associated with the most difficult and challenging aspect of moving-Packing, organizing & labeling. Her attention to detail, listening skills and ability to take ownership of her client's goals is unmatched. Her prices are beyond reasonable, considering the amount of time and stress she is able to alleviate during a process that 99.9% of the population typically find extremely stressful-what I would usually label a "Dread." The fact that she makes it pleasant and stress-free is a testament to her determination and skill-set in concert with her wonderful persona.

Amy Trager is not simply a Certified Organizer, she belongs in the global Organizing Hall of Fame! She took a decades worth of household and made it look easy. What would have taken me another week or two took her two days-no exaggeration and dare I say (clearing throat), she actually made the process fun with her easygoing (yet smoldering determination). Did I just say fun???

For more information, contact Amy Trager at: 773-384-0633 and be sure to go to her website at: www.amytrager.com

Amy has been featured on most of Chicago's networks and in the major newspapers and on WGN radio as well. Be sure to catch her upcoming segment on ABC-7 with Sylvia Gomez, Linda Yu and Tracy Butler soon and PS:

Don't leave home without her!

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