

“Decluttering” Presentation

Nina Fuerth, professional personal organizer, gave a presentation on “Decluttering.” Nina provided attendees with a packet containing information she has gathered about decluttering and how and where to donate or dispose of unwanted items. Nina said the big issues with decluttering are “Motivation, where to start, and letting go.” She explained that getting rid of some of the “stuff” accumulated helps because then one has space to put things away.

When Nina visits a home she walks around the house with the clients to understand their concerns. She suggests that if you are starting on a decluttering project yourself that you first decide where you want to start and visualize a goal. The project need not be massive. She counseled, “Walk into a closet and pull out anything that doesn’t belong.”

In response to a question Nina noted that photographs are a lower priority than the room itself. She suggests that the individual “look at the bigger picture.” If one practices letting go, the process gets better and faster. Nina also suggested putting some items out of sight as an intermediate step to giving them away. She believes that the process is made easier if one knows something is going to a person who can use it, as with a donation. One of Nina’s handouts details the “Hierarchy of giving things away and letting go.” The steps go from easiest to hardest, in correlation with a person’s attachment to the item. The steps Nina lists are: 1) trash/recycle; 2) donate anywhere; 3) donate to somewhere special; 4) give to a family member; and 5) sell.

Nina admits there is “no magic” to letting go besides training the brain to accept giving things away. She recommends that one “keep it simple” by bringing everything to one location. Trying to divide items up among charities will slow down the process. Then, when the individual is caught up, items can be taken to special charities. Nina also finds that selling items slows down the process. Garage sales, she says are both “fabulous and terrible” because, although you can earn from \$0 to \$1000, they are a lot of work.

If someone gives something away and later finds the item is needed, Nina reassures them: “You’re OK, the world is OK and someone is using it who needs it.”

Nina was a guest speaker in the first year of the Village. At that time she held three sessions on decluttering; ever since, the Program Committee has received requests that she speak again on this popular topic. Nina is the daughter of Leon and the late Lynn Fuerth and grew up in their house on Crosswoods Drive. Her phone number is (703) 220-4107.