

## Helping clean up your act

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When you were a child you probably hated having to clean your room. But once you put all the dirty clothes in the laundry, organized your comics and made the bed, chances are you felt much better. It's kind of that way with Susan Borax, except people pay her to help them clean up their clutter. Borax and her company Good Riddance make people feel good about their living and working spaces again. That's usually because they've spent months or years living in disorganized or poorly put-together spaces before she walks into their lives and creates order.

It's a rejuvenating process for people, said Borax, part of a growing number of individuals working as professional organizers. She compares herself to a personal coach at times.

"You find out an awful lot about people. When you're in someone's home, they tell you about their lives," she said.

One of her favourite tips for people that lack organization is "purge."

For example, most people wear 10 per cent of their clothes 90 per cent of the time. She recommends boxing up those unused clothes and giving them to a community charity.

Many of her clients are those who need to downsize. Either they're moving into a smaller dwelling or their parents are leaving their longtime home for a seniors facility. Rather than toss out unneeded household items that still could be used, Borax works with Burnaby's Consign Home. The consignment store will sell those items for the client, often making enough money to pay for Borax's services.

In the case of client Paul Cyr, his 350-square foot basement suite is a work in progress. His space is used for both living and working, her organizing speciality. Cyr had to get rid of some junk, but not a lot. Mostly, he had to make his space functional while keeping a clear separation between work and living areas.

Cyr was already on the right track. A large closet had been converted to an office space, or what he calls his "cloffice." Borax came in and organized the office by clearing off his desktop so he had a functioning workspace. She also tweaked the living area with some inexpensive storage and took advantage of unused area.

Expect professional organizers to become more common in the future, she said. There's a number of popular television shows devoted to cleaning people's spaces, like Clean Sweep and Neat.

"They're helping create a market. They're making people aware and excited about this," said Borax.

The profession is also a sign of the times. People are so busy these days. They know they have to de-clutter their lives but they just don't know where to start. They're like the child that has to clean up a messy bedroom.

"The reason they call us is many of them don't have the time or the patience to do this," said Borax.

"And some people are really ashamed because their rooms are so messy. They're the ones that are the most relieved when you help them."

Susan Borax can be reached at 604-421-5952. For a complete list of local professional organizers



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**Susan Borax of Good Riddance, a Burnaby company devoted to organizing people's clutter, tidies up in one of her client's office spaces.**

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