

by Ivan Sandoval

One aspect of rental living that will have a major impact on the quality of your experience in the building is the building superintendent. This all-around, on-site person will keep the building clean, perform many day to day maintenance tasks and minor repairs, let you in to your apartment if you've accidentally locked yourself out, shovel the snow and much more. You might not realize what a positive impact a good superintendent can have on your overall experience as a renter.

If you are lucky you might find yourself living in a building where the superintendent has been there for a long time. Their presence will greatly improve the standard of maintenance in the building and often creates a safe and friendly environment for residents, in a residential community.



FERNANDO MEDEIROS is one of three long term superintendents I spoke with recently. He has been the superintendent at 715 Finch Ave. W. for 18 years. In addition to his responsibilities at that building, he also looks after a couple of retail properties for the building owners.

Fernando is highly conscientious and takes great pride in doing a good job. He came to Canada from Portugal where he gained many useful skills, like plumbing and carpentry, working on the job with various tradespeople. When you walk into the lobby his pride in his work is apparent. "I treat this building like my home," he says. The lobby is comfortable and inviting, with a beautiful display of indoor plants. "When I clean it, it stays clean," he says, with satisfaction.



MULATU GEBERTSADIK lives and works at 440 Winona Drive, a quiet residential building near Vaughan Road. He was promoted to superintendent after working as an assistant after three months, and has been the superintendent there for 19 years. "I like the location and the building very much," he says.

"The building was very messy when I started," he says, "but I straightened it out well. The tenants here are very good – there is a strong sense of community in this building. Many of our residents are referred by people who already live here. Some people have even lived in the building for 30 years!" That's a good sign – you can always tell that things must be well taken care of if residents stay in a building for that long.



DONNA DUNFY has been the resident manager at 130 Jamieson Avenue in Parkdale for 20 years (since 1986) but has lived in the building since 1974. "The building was going downhill and my husband suggested we have a go at improving it, so we did," she says. Donna even has a daughter who was born and brought up in the building who is still living there. Recently, Donna moved to an apartment on the first floor so her daughter could live in the apartment she grew up in with her husband and their daughter.

"In this building," says Donna, "we all help each other – we're a family. The building was featured in Toronto Life Magazine for its magnificent display of Christmas lights. (Before Christmas, Jamieson Avenue is beautifully decorated for Christmas).

"Setting a good example really helps to keep things at a certain level," she finds. "I have respect for the building, and as result, the residents do too," she says. "A few years ago I decided to close up all the garbage chutes and keep the garbage outside the building. Now the residents take all their garbage out to the side of the building. It helps to keep the building clean smelling and free of roaches and mice."

Living in a building where the superintendent has been working for a long time translates into a good living environment for you. You know the building is secure and stable and you will be well looked after. I hope you will be fortunate to find a building with a superintendent as nice and professional as Donna, Mulatu, or Fernando.