

Hello and good morning, thank you for listening to my story.

I owned a downtown Calgary condo that I rented to a tenant for 2 years. She, among countless others, lost her job in the oil downturn and left the city. I was stressed. The rental rates plummeted, and I would not be able to cover my mortgage, condo fees and expenses with the new rates. I am not rich, and I do not have a trust fund waiting for me. My condo was supposed to be a smart investment to save for my retirement. Instead it was a money drain. Cornered and uncertain of my financial future, I decided to put the condo on Airbnb since Stampede was just around the corner. I never stopped since.

I have expanded into 3 Airbnbs throughout Calgary and my small business has enabled me to hire a family of cleaners (mother, daughter and aunt) to clean on a rotating basis. I provide them steady, stable, predictable work in a downturn. My work has allowed my youngest cleaner to be there at night with her son after he returns home from school. The local laundry service I use has hired extra staff to wash, iron and fold my linens because of the additional workload that my small business has provided them. Finally, I have given additional work to local handymen and trades people to repair, renovate and maintain my homes.

I have hosted over 700 groups to date with an average rating of 4.8 out of 5. I'm proud that I can invite guests to come in from all over the world and explore Calgary at an affordable rate. I'm delighted that I can offer families and groups an affordable, spacious place to stay, rather than having to rent multiple hotel rooms with no kitchen option.

I fear that strict regulations similar to Vancouver or Toronto would shut down my Airbnbs. I support regulations such as business licenses (with a reasonable annual fee) to ensure accountable hosts. However, my small business and the small businesses of my cleaners, handymen and laundry services would shut down if the city imposed primary residence rules, impose restrictions on the number of rentable nights or unreasonable zoning restrictions. Calgary is not Vancouver or Toronto, we do not have the same rental vacancies issues as them. I am a proud Airbnb host and I want to continue inviting guests to be part of our energy.

-Tina



