



## An apartment with a balcony and a view

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By **Patricia Wren**

Dustin Drake moved to Victoria Plaza three years ago. He was living downtown but decided that he wanted to be closer to the western suburbs where he grew up.

Victoria Plaza is a 19-story high rise in North Olmsted with one-, two-, and three-bedroom apartments. He initially moved into a one-bedroom unit, and later switched to a three-bedroom suite.

He now lives in a two-bedroom unit "with a balcony, plenty of closet space, and a good-sized kitchen." But what he especially prizes is the spectacular view. His apartment is on the 19th floor and overlooks the Cleveland Metroparks, which gives him great views of the trees and the changing seasons.

Victoria Plaza has a state-of-the-art workout facility that he uses daily. He also enjoys using the hot room after his workout. In the summer he swims in the outdoor swimming pool.

Drake is a mortgage broker. With the current refinancing boom, he puts in long days at the office, coming and going at all hours.

He appreciates having 24-hour access to the building's staff. When he once lost his car keys and apartment key, he called the building's 24-hour service number. The person on duty cut a new door key for him on the spot.

Drake's likes the convenience of being 20 minutes from his place of work, a 10-minute drive from Crocker Park in Westlake, and a half hour from downtown. "Highway access is right there. My office is in Parma off of Interstate 480. I have a 15- to 25-minute commute to work, although the average is 20 minutes."

### Close-knit community

Drake especially enjoys the closeness of the apartment community. "There are a lot of young professionals, families with children, and many elderly residents. It's a very diverse community."

One thing that contributes to the friendliness of the apartment complex is its many social activities. No-cook nights are popular with the residents, especially Drake. "Three or four times a month, really good food is brought into the apartment complex and offered to residents at discounted prices. Sometimes it's pizza for \$5; sometimes it's a



Dustin Drake

home-cooked meal prepared by a catering company. It's really convenient to walk into the building after work and know that you can get a good meal without having to cook it yourself."

The management, Burton Carol, organizes fundraisers that pull the residents together, including collecting clothing for children. "Once they offered to waive the application fee for new residents who would trade in their cell phones, which were then donated to charity."

"There is bingo night in the community room, which has a large television that residents like to watch. There are also arts-and-crafts activities for the children. And the place is always decorated at the holidays with flowers that are appropriate to the season. At Christmas, there are poinsettias, and in the fall there are scarecrows, corn stalks, and carved pumpkins."

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