

Landlord Profile: Andre's Syracuse University Apartments and Houses

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Andre El-Amir has been serving Syracuse students for over 25 years with his [Syracuse University apartments](#), but he's been a member of the community for far longer.

El-Amir's family emigrated from Syria when he was a just 9 years old in 1974. He grew up on Lancaster Avenue and hasn't strayed far since. Growing up in the shadow of Syracuse University, he learned skills from his carpenter father and business sense from his mother that would pay off a great deal later in life. As a teenager, El-Amir bought a lawnmower at a garage sale. He saved his money by mowing lawns for families and the elderly living in the University area and in the wintertime shoveled their sidewalks. He attended Syracuse University and after graduation, he purchased his first house in 1989 after working in NYC for 3 years as an accountant. His housing business kick started in high gear ten years later. His biggest asset in the student housing business is the knowledge and ability to keep his properties well-maintained.

"I get a lot of referrals from my current tenants, and I pride myself on my reputation," he said recently in a conversation with Rent College Pads. "I don't ignore issues. I take care of them. I don't get a lot of problems at all anymore, not as much as when I first started because everything has been renovated. All of the porches have been knocked down and rebuilt, all appliances are new, plumbing has been updated, electrical is all new."

New interiors were a necessity, as he's run into a situation that many landlords across the East Coast have experienced: aging homes. Many of the homes built on or near East Coast campuses have stood for a hundred plus years. But aging doesn't have to mean deteriorating. Andre's experience in carpentry has helped him stay current on maintenance and given him an eye for what to look for when hiring on help.

"What they are really now is houses that are over a hundred years old that were built in those locations, but everything in there is brand new inside," he said. "If you look out for all the campuses around the east coast like Tufts University or the University of Temple, all of those campuses are all built back almost 100 years ago and all of the housing around there too."

He originally did maintenance himself, but as his property count grew, he knew he needed to start bringing on some help. That's where a background in maintenance helped out once again. A carpenter can always tell if another carpenter's work is up to par.

"The trouble for me was finding dependable people that I could trust, and that took time," he said. "Because when you know how to do it, you know how it should be done. And so if you don't know how to do it these contractors are going to take shortcuts."