Why do you deserve free office space? (500 words or less).

"Where's your office?" Since meeting new people is a large part of my job, I hear this question constantly. I want to answer directly, such as, "on NW 16th Avenue, next to AMJ." What I ultimately say sounds more like a rationalization instead of an answer. "My company's regional office is in Jacksonville and I maintain a home office. I see my clients at their home or office, whichever is more convenient."

So why after nearly six years of working at home I am ready for a change? I regularly meet with business owners, professionals and families who take precious time out of their schedule to seek my advice. As an agent with New York Life, I analyze my clients' financial situations and give them recommendations to help them reach their goals. Currently I cannot offer my clients a meeting space that is private, professional, and free of the distractions of their daily lives, namely their employees or children. Having an office would address all these concerns and would allow me to keep pertinent resources at my fingertips, including forms, product and company literature, presentation equipment and reference materials. I look forward to the simple acts of offering my clients a soda or directing them to a private restroom. This boils down to the number one reason I need office space: I want to create an overall better client experience.

Recently my husband gave me a framed display copy of a July Gainesville Sun article profiling me. While I am touched by the gift, I don't have anywhere to hang the article. The small amount of usable space on my home office walls is already overcrowded. The article is just the latest in wall décor that has nowhere to go. Other wall-ready items include an "Agent of the Year" award from the Gainesville Association of Insurance & Financial Advisors, a plaque commemorating my year as Chair of the Gainesville Area Women's Network, a Leadership Gainesville plaque, my Rotary Paul Harris Fellow certificate, my New York Life Executive Council certificate, my Certified Financial Planner certificate and my bachelor's degree from the University of Virginia.

While one of the purposes of my business is to provide my family with income, another purpose is to support the community. As an individual, I already give as much time and money as I am able to the abovementioned groups as well as the Alachua County Humane Society and No More Homeless Pets. Having an office would allow me to offer meeting space to the Boards of Directors, staff and/or volunteers of those groups.

Working from a formal office will be a point of no return in the best way possible! Once I move into an office, I will never again work out of my home. If given free office space for a year, I will vastly improve my clients' experiences, I will showcase my community involvement and accomplishments, and I will offer one more asset to the nonprofit organizations in which I am involved.