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# TABLE OF CONTENTS



**06**  
Preferred Partners



**13**  
Meet the Team



**14**  
Event Announcement



**16**  
Top Producer:  
Benjamin Lang



**22**  
Agent Spotlight:  
Ava Sharrak



**28**  
Partner Spotlight:  
Horizon Financial Group



**32**  
Agent on the Rise:  
Blake Johnson



**38**  
Event Recap:  
Thank You For Attending!



**44**  
Agent Spotlight:  
Tammy Jonna



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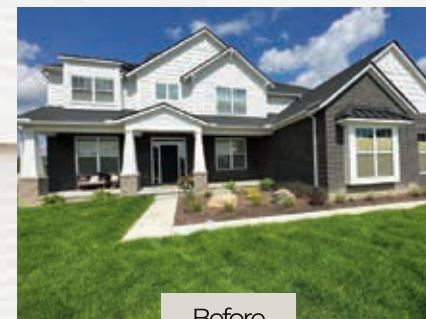
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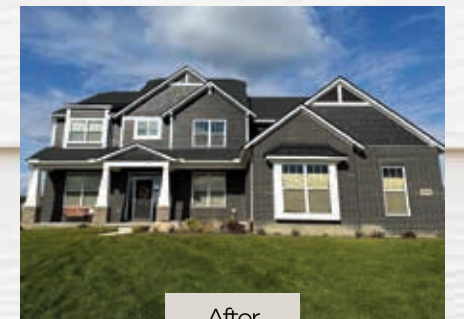
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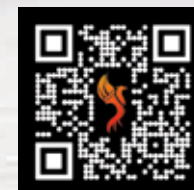
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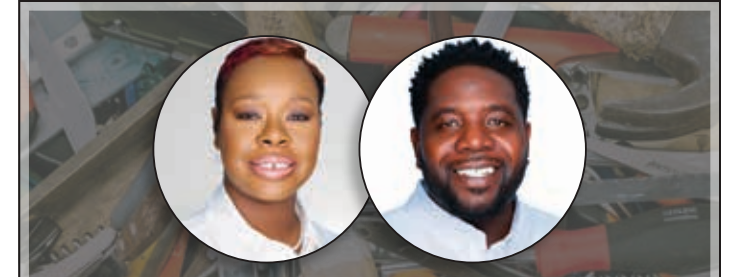


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# BENJAMIN LANG

## A CONTINUOUS JOURNEY OF RISING ABOVE ADVERSITY

Benjamin Lang is the dynamic force behind Lang Estates at eXp Realty. With a propensity for excellence and an insatiable drive for growth and knowledge, Ben's journey has evolved from an associate broker to a role model within the real estate industry. As a certified coach and captivating public speaker, as well as a national trainer with Club Wealth and Growth CEO Advisors, Ben's abilities extend beyond the ordinary.

Bolstered by his profound understanding of psychology — a discipline he mastered at the University of Rochester with the highest accolades — Ben has a unique way of connecting with people and strategizing effectively. Since 2003, his unwavering commitment to success and his passion for his work have set him apart as both a leader and a professional. Along with his broker's license, Ben is certified by the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR) as a Seller Representative Specialist (SRS), Short Sales and Foreclosure Resource (SFR®) and Accredited Buyer's Representative (ABR®). He is also a Certified Distressed Property Expert (CDPE®) and a certified coach and trainer for Maxwell Leadership — a testament to his competence and dedication.

Prior to embarking on his real estate career, Ben was a skilled real estate investor who successfully flipped homes and acquired rental properties. "My move from Lansing to Oakland County in 2005 presented me with an opportunity to fully pursue my real estate dream, which prompted me to transition into the industry," he shared. "I joined Keller Williams in Troy and quickly immersed myself in the business, cultivating a robust clientele and establishing a solid reputation in the field."

With almost two decades of experience in the real estate industry, Ben has embarked on a roller coaster journey filled with triumphs and setbacks. "My greatest success came during the short sale boom when I emerged as one of the leading short sale agents in Metro Detroit," he said, reflecting on his path. "It was in 2012 when I assembled my inaugural team, laying the foundation for me to

establish my own brokerage in 2014. For several years, everything seemed to effortlessly fall into place until the tragic loss of my sister in 2016."

This devastating event led Ben down a destructive path of substance abuse, eventually landing him in a rehabilitation clinic for over 30 days at the end of 2017. "As 2018 began, the consequences of my addiction caught up with me, resulting in the complete dismantlement of everything I had worked so hard to build. I had plunged my life into the depths of despair through my addiction, reaching the darkest depths imaginable. My addiction led me down a path so dark, it seemed unimaginable."

Ben's consequences were crushing — a turbulent divorce, financial ruin, failed business ventures, legal troubles — a complete rock bottom. However, it was during this trying time that Ben unearthed his inner strength and the indomitable spirit within



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By Robbyn Moore  
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SUPPORTING  
ONE ANOTHER  
AND IN  
FOSTERING A  
COLLABORATIVE  
ENVIRONMENT  
THAT  
ENCOURAGES  
GROWTH AND  
CELEBRATES  
ACHIEVEMENTS.  
”



him. He refused to succumb to the surrounding darkness and embarked on a transformative journey of self-discovery.

Slowly but surely, Ben began to repair his life, piece by piece. Despite the challenges he faced, he refused to let adversity define him. He rebuilt from scratch, launching himself onto a courageous path to resurrect his career — which was fueled by his unwavering determination, faith and humility. “I not only successfully rebuilt my business, but I also established a dynamic and talented team in 2021,” Ben shared. This bold move serves as a testament to Ben’s resolve and commitment to pushing boundaries and embracing new opportunities.

The Lang Estates team is setting themselves up as a top real estate team in Metro Detroit, renowned for their professionalism, integrity, humility and compassion. Their vision is to consistently demonstrate

the utmost dignity and respect toward clients, vendors and co-op agents. “We are devoted to upholding ethical values and performing at our best each day,” Ben stated proudly. “We believe in supporting one another and in fostering a collaborative environment that encourages growth and celebrates achievements. Above all, we are deeply passionate about our work and strive to find joy in the process of selling a substantial amount of real estate!”

Ben has a noble mission: to shape individuals into world-class achievers. He accomplishes this by wholeheartedly serving his agents and empowering them to achieve unimaginable growth. “Our ultimate focus is to cultivate the next generation of leaders and icons in the real estate industry,” he explained. “We are committed to motivating and inspiring our agents to surpass their perceived limits and unlock their fullest potential.”

Ben’s family is his utmost priority, and he cherishes every moment spent with his wife, Lisa, his daughter, Makenzie, and their three beloved rescue dogs. In his leisure time, Ben finds joy in maintaining an active lifestyle through activities such as going to the gym, biking and hiking. Additionally, he places high value on family vacations — not only as a means to recharge but also as an opportunity to create lasting memories and strengthen the bond with his loved ones.

Today, as Ben stands tall amidst the remnants of his past struggles, his relentless determination and resilience serve as a beacon of hope and inspiration to all who encounter his extraordinary story. With each step he takes of self-discovery and redemption, he reminds others that even in their darkest moments, everyone possesses the inherent power to overcome adversity and forge a path of light. His spirit and drive to pursue personal growth not only shaped his character but also led him to become an example to others. He ultimately demonstrates that it is not the challenges in life that define us, but rather, how we choose to respond to them that truly sets us apart.

No matter how dire a circumstance may seem, Ben serves as a reminder that it is always possible to make a triumphant comeback, rebuild, and continue growing. “Despite life’s most formidable challenges, I remain resolute in my determination to emerge stronger every time I’ve been knocked down,” he said. “I will continue to claw my way toward greatness, no matter what life may throw at me.”

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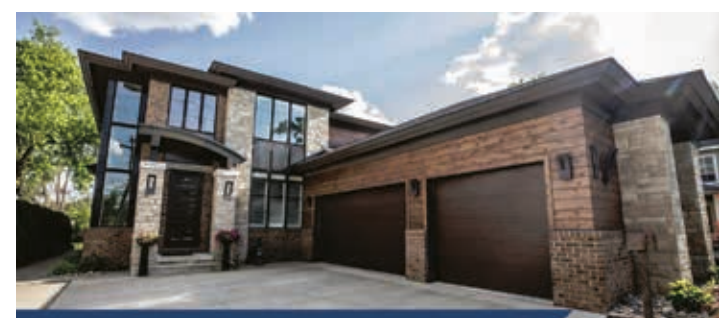
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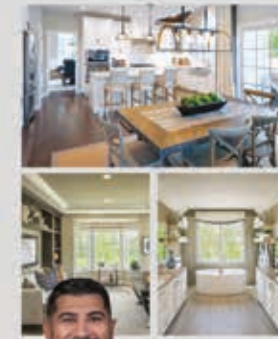
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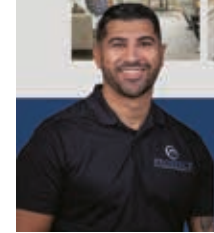
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# AVA

# SHARRAK

## ▶ agent spotlight

By Robbyn Moore  
Photos by Stylish Detroit

Ava Sharrak, a highly accomplished agent and REALTOR® with an impressive track record, has achieved remarkable success in her five-year career, securing a career volume exceeding \$32.5 million. For three consecutive years, she has been honored as the top-performing agent, and in 2021, she achieved \$15 million in sales. Ava's unwavering determination and fearlessness in the face of challenges have driven her to step outside her comfort zone and take calculated risks, leading to her extraordinary accomplishments.



Ava embarked on her real estate journey in October of 2018, initially working part time as a real estate agent. Soon after, she joined Keller Williams Domain, under the guidance of Tushar Vakhariya, originally serving as a showing assistant and property manager. Tushar recognized her exceptional skills, and the two of them decided that Ava would be best utilized as a buyer's agent, a role in which she thrived in.

Prior to her career as an agent, Ava successfully managed multiple dental practices and played a pivotal role in the establishment of a thriving business alongside her family. Drawing from her experiences in initiating and managing successful ventures for others, Ava felt the time was ripe for her to fulfill her dream of building her own prosperous enterprise.

Born and raised in West Bloomfield, Michigan, as a Chaldean American, Ava possesses fluency in both Arabic and Chaldean. Her father, an immigrant from Iraq who arrived in America with nothing, greatly influenced her. Ava holds her father in high regard for his tireless pursuit of the American dream, which served as a constant source of inspiration for her strong work ethic and desire to succeed. Additionally, her mother played an integral role in her life, demonstrating unparalleled dedication to their family. These invaluable influences from her parents ignited Ava's drive to strive for more in her own life.

Motivated by her aspirations to create opportunities for herself and her family — and to expand her father's real estate portfolio — Ava made the decision to pursue a career in real estate. Her passion for the industry stemmed from a long-standing interest in real estate, architecture and design. Although she found fulfillment in her previous work in dentistry, Ava believed her talents and passions were better suited for the real estate sector. Above all, her fervor for assisting others and creating financial freedom instilled in her the courage to take a leap of faith and forge the life she had always envisioned.

Ava's path has been shaped by a fusion of personal values, interests and experiences. Her identity was significantly impacted by her travels to third-world countries, where she witnessed firsthand the hardships and adversities that individuals faced in various parts of the world. Her involvement with "Adopt a Refugee," a charity dedicated to aiding refugees who have fled war-torn countries — particularly the Middle East — in search of a safer and better life, deepened her appreciation for what she possessed. This experience further fueled Ava's determination to make a positive impact on the world.

Ava is passionate about building a reputable presence in the industry, assisting as many families as possible, and creating opportunities for aspiring professionals in real estate. She describes her journey as the establishment of an empire and an elevation of her skills to new heights. As a result, she is committed to leveraging her experience and knowledge, and aims to help others achieve their goals through the power of mentorship.

Ava has expanded her skills, developed new ones and continually evolved — both professionally and personally — as she has tackled the industry's challenges. While she acknowledges that the nature of this business entails encountering troublesome moments and scenarios, she has learned not to let these obstacles overwhelm her. Over the years, Ava has managed to achieve a better work-life balance by mastering the art of avoiding burnout and by knowing when to decline certain opportunities. She recognizes that she cannot always be in control, and she perceives mistakes and setbacks as chances for gaining valuable experience and devising innovative solutions. This mindset has proven instrumental in propelling her toward success.

For Ava, the most gratifying aspect of her business lies in the opportunity to assist families in making one of the most significant decisions of their lives. She feels a profound sense of fulfillment when she can guide clients through the process of finding their dream homes and assisting them with making sound financial investments. Ava also takes immense pride in knowing that she played a pivotal role in helping them make financially responsible choices.

Ava remains dedicated to staying updated on market trends and leveraging technology to deliver exceptional client service. She firmly believes that luxury transcends a mere price point: It also



encompasses an unforgettable experience. When it comes to her clients, Ava fearlessly embraces calculated risks. By reaching for greatness, she is not only achieving her own dreams but also standing alongside her clients as they achieve theirs.

Ava hails from a large and affectionate Chaldean family that holds an irreplaceable spot in her heart. They enjoy traveling together, indulging in movie and game nights, going out for brunch, and taking leisurely strolls on beautiful summer days.

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Photos by Aly Darin Photography

Josh Rubin and his team at Horizon Financial Group, Inc. are carving out a distinct niche by placing client interests at the forefront of every decision. As the founder of Horizon Financial Group, Josh has steered the company through more than two decades of success, amassing over 6,000 closed transactions and a remarkable \$1.3 billion in loan volume since its inception in May of 1995.

Horizon Financial Group specializes in residential mortgage origination, offering a comprehensive range of products and loan options. Whether it's a purchase, a refinance, home equity lines of credit, or construction and renovation loans, the company's commitment to a concierge level of service sets it apart. "We are true advocates for our clients," Josh said proudly. "Every single decision is made with the client's best interest in mind. Relationships, not money, motivate us."

Horizon Financial Group's dedication to client relationships has not gone unnoticed. "One of my processors has been with me for over 25 years,"

Josh said. This loyalty and longevity highlight the genuine connections the company forges with clients, some of whom are now the children of Josh's earliest clientele.

Josh's journey into the mortgage industry was fueled by a passion for helping others. "I love the opportunity to help others; it is what gets me out

of bed every day," he shared. Even after 28 years, Josh is still passionate about his career and relishes the chance to work with an incredible mix of real estate professionals from across the state and country.

The success of Horizon Financial Group is also attributed to its adaptability in a dynamic industry. Josh

acknowledges the current challenges, noting that interest rates are the highest they've been in over two decades. To navigate these trying times, the company focuses on genuine client advocacy, making sure that they secure the best deals available. Josh emphasizes the importance of transparency in an industry where not all lenders fully explain intricacies such as points to borrowers. "When you're at peace with what you do for a living, you can hold your head high and be proud of who you are and what you stand for," he said.

Beyond his business, Josh enjoys spending time with his family. He has been married to his wife, Mikki, for 23 years, and together, they have two children — Lainie, 20, and Ryan, 18. The family also includes two Australian labradoodles named Gibby and Vinnie. Josh is a passionate supporter of Detroit sports, an avid traveler, and a devotee of golf and pickleball.

Josh desires to be remembered for his integrity, which aligns with his broader philosophy of humility and appreciation for life's journey. "Success, to me, is being remembered as a 'mensch' — a person of integrity and honor," he said.

As Josh and Horizon Financial Group continue to thrive in the mortgage industry, their commitment to sincere client relationships and unwavering integrity remain the driving force behind their success. With a focus on transparency, adaptability, and a client-centric approach, Josh's story serves as an inspiration to both industry peers and aspiring professionals alike.

**For more information about Horizon Financial Group, visit [horizonfinancialgroup.com](https://horizonfinancialgroup.com) or call 248-538-7887.**



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# Blake JOHNSON

**REAL ESTATE  
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▶▶ agent on the rise

By Chris Menezes  
Photos by Stylish Detroit  
Photos taken at Lombardo Homes Model  
at Windridge Estates in Lyon Township

*With a deep love for people and architecture, and a strong commitment to faith, Blake Johnson has carved out a fulfilling career for himself in real estate. He secured his license in 2015 at the age of 20 and then spent his first few years in the commercial sector before transitioning into residential. While he has already accomplished a lot in his career in the past eight years, in many ways, he's just getting started.*

Blake started at the very bottom and worked his way up in real estate from a six-month internship at Schostak Brothers & Company to a full-time position within the brokerage. He learned the ropes of the industry by engaging in various departments, from leasing to property management to development. In the end, it was his love of people that led him to residential real estate.

Blake's first love has always been to help people. Before real estate, he was going to school to become a geriatric nurse. "People are my passion," he said. "I originally felt that I could best serve people in the nursing field, but after a shift of working on the hospice care floor, it really broke my heart, and emotionally, I knew I couldn't be my best in that type of setting."

Blake had just transitioned out of the nursing program when, one day, while working at the Lowe's in Woodhaven, a senior sales rep from Schostak Brothers & Company walked in. She needed keys to be made at the hardware desk and approached Blake, where she was so impressed by his customer service that she told him to come find her after he graduated if he wanted a job. Five weeks later, Blake got this real estate license and gave her a call.

While it was a chance encounter that got Blake into real estate, the foundation for that path was set long before. His father was a builder in the 1990s and early 2000s, so Blake grew up around homes and was drawn to architecture. "As a boy, I was always



drawing large houses with double staircases and columns throughout the foyer," he said, laughing. His life was also influenced by his mother, who had an amazing work ethic and zeal for pushing herself through college and obtaining a Ph.D. Blake even credits his mom for his now infamous slogan of "#MakeBlake your REALTOR® of choice!"

Blake was further inspired by his grandfather, who ran a successful glass business for over 40 years and really pushed him to pursue real estate after leaving nursing. "My grandfather taught me so much about customer service and how to serve people while I was growing up," Blake said. "He loves Jesus and his family more than anything, which I really admire. He had a rough childhood, too, but never let it define him."

Like his grandfather, Blake also had a rough childhood. His parents' divorce was hard on him, and he started using alcohol at an early age. By 19 years old, he checked into a rehab for alcohol use. "It was my 'rock bottom' moment," he recalled. "I was so depressed and unhappy in life. December 29, 2013, was the start of my sobriety from alcohol, and I celebrated 10 years last year. God truly gets all the glory in saving me and giving me a 'do over' in life. It sounds cliché, but my faith truly means more to me than anything. I am not a perfect person at all, but I am beyond thankful for my parents for raising me in the church and that I found my true passion and hope in Him."

Today, Blake's business is all about people. He thrives around his clients, finding joy in their stories and life

experiences. One of the biggest contributors to his success has been his discipline on social media and the following he has built on it over the years. While consistently creating content and generating new ideas isn't easy, his discipline and the hard work he's put into it continue to pay dividends in his business. In fact, for the past two years, Blake has been recognized among "The Top 50 Agents on Social Media" in all of Michigan and in the top 15% of sales in the entire country!

While Blake is technically a solo agent with Oakland Real Estate Group, he said his wife, Christine (aka Mrs. J, on social media), is the biggest help to him and that he wouldn't be anywhere in his career if it wasn't for her. "She is beyond amazing," Blake said. "She comes with me to countless showings, drives the car while I am writing up offers in the passenger seat, buys the clients their closing baskets, puts the signs in the ground, represents me at closings if I'm out of town ... I could go on and on."

Blake's ultimate goal is to become a broker and open his own real estate company. The prospect of meeting new people, showing stunning homes and serving his community fuels his drive. For him, success is a balance of having a strong faith, a loving family and a satisfying career. Money and possessions, he believes, fade away, but kindness, love and a strong foundation in Jesus Christ are more valuable than gold.

Outside of work, Blake enjoys a range of activities — from playing with his labradoodle, Dolly Sue, to singing in his church's praise team to playing competitive rounds of Scrabble at home with his mom. When looking to relax, Blake and Christine are typically out at the movies or out to eat, enjoying a culinary experience at Black Rock, watching a documentary or scary movie, or hanging out with family.



Blake and Christine are also committed to giving back to the community. They are both youth leaders at church and support charities such as Christy's Legacy of Hope, an organization that serves orphans globally.

Blake has certainly come a long way since starting his real estate career. As he continues to build his business, his passion for serving others, his unwavering faith and his determination will continue to take him to new heights. It will be exciting to see just how far he goes.

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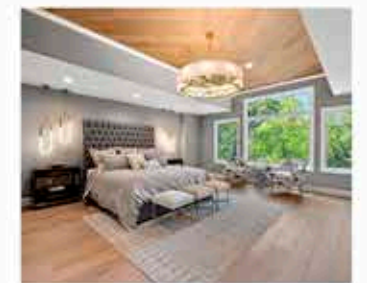
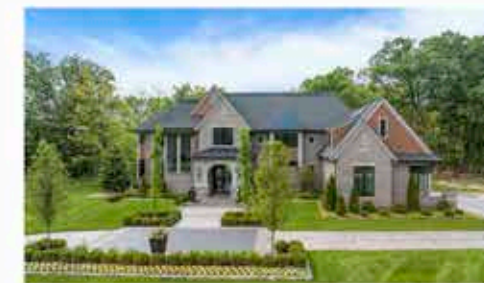
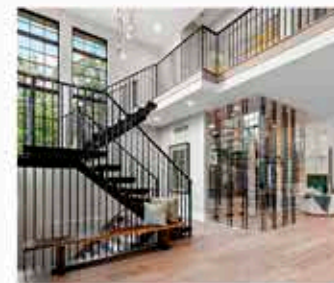
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# Tammy Jonna



## ► agent spotlight

By Robbyn Moore  
Photos by Jermaine Buie with Perfect Light, LLC  
Photos taken at Lombardo Homes Model at  
Oakland Hunt in Oakland Township

## *Inspired by a Life-Changing Conversation*

The life of Tammy Jonna was changed on many levels on Saturday, July 27, 2013. It was a day she will never forget because it was unknowingly one of the last conversations she would have with her mom. At the time, Tammy's youngest son was entering Montessori school, and Tammy was discussing her future plans with her mother, who proposed that Tammy get her real estate license and sell houses. "You'd be great at it," her mother suggested.

That evening, Tammy's mother suffered a brain aneurysm and passed away later that week. "It was the last thing she told me to do," Tammy recalled. "My mom's advice had always been sound, so when she told me this would be a good career for me, I knew at that point it was time for me to go full speed ahead. That spring, I obtained my real estate license, which I know would've made my mom proud."

Since she was 13 years old, Tammy has been drawn to sales and service. Her first job was working for her uncle at his market/deli. From there, her sales journey continued at Nordstrom, Inc., where she worked in corporate

retail sales in a position that was 100% commission-based. "At Nordstrom, I learned the true meaning of service," Tammy said. "The company has a reputation for stellar customer service, and they ingrained that in all of their employees. Those fundamental skills influenced and forever imprinted my approach to customer service."

While working in retail sales and attending college, Tammy earned a bachelor's degree in marketing from Wayne State University. After graduation, Tammy found her passion for residential real estate sales while working for a residential home builder, selling model homes. "I worked out of the on-site sales office where I would communicate directly with potential buyers," she said. "That intimate communication gave me key insight on what was important to buyers who were looking for a home."

After a couple of years with the builder, the recession hit, and the builder unfortunately ceased operations. "At that point, I began working in the marketing department for a fast-growing wireless company that was embarking on a rapid nationwide expansion," Tammy explained. "I worked with that company until I had my twin boys in October of 2008."

Tammy had three boys in less than three years and stayed at home to raise them. After the important job of raising kids — and once they were all in school full time — Tammy decided to go into real estate and was ready to ignite her career.

Nine years later, Tammy is lighting up the real estate market at DOBI Real Estate. She has an impressive career volume of over \$70 million — \$11 million of which she achieved last year.

With a service-forward mindset, Tammy puts the highest emphasis on communication with her clients and with all parties involved in the day-to-day real estate transaction. "I find fulfillment in knowing that I have helped individuals, young couples, families and empty nesters make some of the most important purchases in their lives," she shared. "I never lose sight of how stressful the homebuying process is and of all of the feelings and emotions involved. My clients' well-being is always at the forefront of my efforts."



“  
**MY CLIENTS’  
 WELL-BEING  
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 AT THE  
 FOREFRONT  
 OF MY  
 EFFORTS.**”



As parents of three boys — Tyler and Ethan, 14, and Derek, 12 — Tammy and her husband, Joey, spend much of their time attending their boys’ sporting events. When they’re not playing sports, the family is most likely attending a major sporting event, a concert or a premiere movie screening. On her own time, Tammy enjoys pilates and recently took up golf and pickleball.

For new agents just starting in this business, Tammy advised that they take advantage of free time by offering to help seasoned agents. “Whether it’s assisting with showings, inspections or open houses, there is so much experience to be gained from helping fellow agents,” she said. “Additionally, I take pride in my excellent communication skills and firmly believe that good customer service depends on effective communication. I always strive to be honest and transparent in my dealings, and I have built wonderful relationships with other real estate agents as a result.”

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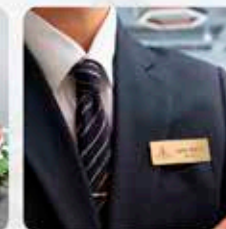
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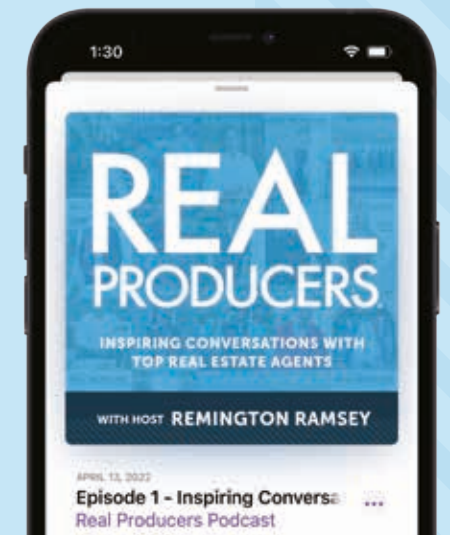
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