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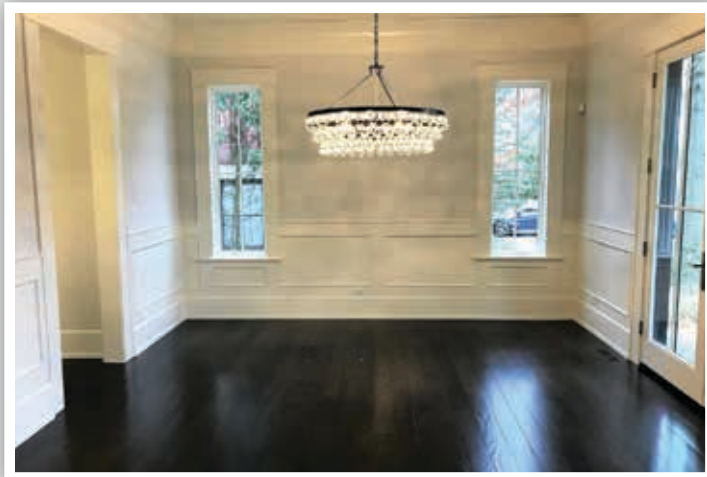






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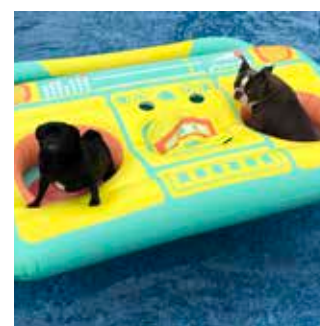
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# MEET THE DUPAGE REAL PRODUCERS TEAM



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## Plus Ça Change, Plus C'est La Même Chose

### ▶ publisher's note

I learned that bit of French from a Rush song. It means "the more that things change, the more they stay the same." While there are a great many underlying details in what I am about to simplify, you have shifted successfully in this crisis because you have a success mindset:

- Respecting new boundaries
- Innovating to meet new demands
- Caring for clients and communities
- Valuing family and friends
- Supporting and celebrating front-line fighters
- Rejecting fear and maintaining mission focus



The leaders in the DuPage real estate community – managing brokers, top agents, lawyers, lenders, tradespeople, inspectors, photographers, everyone – did what you always do. You persevered.

Less time in the field has meant more time at home, and we wanted to capture that in this special issue. There are no traditional features, only selfies and self-written pieces submitted by REALTORS® sharing about life under shelter-at-home. This Publisher's Note is my piece, and my selfie. In this picture are the most important people in my life: my wife Cathy, and my four children, left to right, Maggie (16), Patrick (19), Joey (21), and Becca (15).

Monopoly is our favorite board game, and we take it seriously. We play by the rules and it takes skill as well as luck to win at our table. We've had some memorable games while home-bound.

Maybe this quarantine time is a little like going to jail in Monopoly. You didn't do anything wrong to go there, but you have to be there for three rolls while time marches on. While we collectively loathe the effect of coronavirus on our society and pray for the courageous people fighting for our safety, we have been given the gift of time, life's most precious commodity.



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# STEPHANIE ALBANESE

BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY STARCK REAL ESTATE, BLOOMINGDALE

*What feels like life changed overnight dealing with COVID-19. I'm sure most of us never imagined it would come to this. There has been such a sense of uncertainty. Along with being a mom of two girls, Gianna (15) and Giuliana (5), and a wife to my husband Ben, I am also a REALTOR® who is trying to stay on top of the market helping friends, clients, and consumers buy, sell, and refinance.*

While we are all trying to keep ourselves and families safe there are a lot of emotional stresses that we feel as well. I cope by staying positive for everyone else as much as I can. I have breakdowns, where I sit in my room and cry. I watch Gianna cry in her room because she misses school and her friends. My 5-year-old has so much energy, that I literally can't keep up. My husband feels stressed daily as he still works and is considered a first responder.

We have a slew of emotions. We feel blessed that we still have an income but we are scared because the market is changing, and banks have modified what loans look like and this will affect my clients. We feel suffocated at times being quarantined and at times we feel like the downtime is needed.

We do a lot of cooking. It seems to bring us together as a family and then we are able to sit at the dinner



table, all four of us, to eat the amazing meals we put together. We have dance parties every Saturday night. We come up with new projects around the house. Most of all we are mentally overcoming fear of the unknown and wondering when life will resume to "normal." In the meantime, we will continue to embrace every moment of it!

# KRIS BERGER

COMPASS REAL ESTATE, HINSDALE



Working out with Gordy the Golden Retriever

*My daily life is still busy and I'm fortunate for that. I am continually talking to clients all throughout the day and having more in-depth conversations with them which for me has been really great. As I became busier over the last decade, I felt I wasn't as connected with all of my clients like I had been and that's super important to me.*

I'm trying to stick to a routine and do my Burn Boot Camp which is now at 10am instead of 8am. I have been sleeping in a little later because my workout is later, so my whole day has kind of shifted a little later. I am constantly

on my home computer in my kitchen, which has become my 10x15 sanctuary. It's my desk, my workout area, the kitchen, and laundry is pretty much where I am all day unless I'm out on appointments.

I've been on a lot of webinars with all kinds of people and listening in on talk session with corporate Compass executives and economists, and learning a ton. I've always been an optimistic person and I'm truly thankful every day for what God has given me. That's my daily reminder, and then I get going and try to stick to my daily plan!

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# LEE ERNST

EXP REALTY, NAPERVILLE



*With this slow-down in business, I have been able to get some continuing education done, and plan on finishing all of it soon. In the last few weeks, I have been on more Zooms and webinars*

*than the previous twelve months combined; that could actually turn out to be a good thing.*

As top producers, we try and cut out the unnecessary driving around to time-wasting events or meetings. My hope is the stay at home order has made the less-willing tech people embrace the video conferencing meetings. I plan to use them in the future for client and agent meetings.

I am still listing and buying homes but with caution. I am wearing a mask, gloves, keeping my distance and using disinfectant wipes in my car to wipe things off. This could turn into the new norm, but we don't know for sure yet.

The good news is that we are still getting listings and buyers, maybe not breaking our previous sales records but doing well enough to pay our bills. I believe the years of hard work has put us in a much better position in times like this. I am looking forward to a few months down the road when the pent-up demand brings us a late Spring Market!

I have such great respect for our community and those on the frontlines of the battle who are keeping our families safe. THANK YOU!

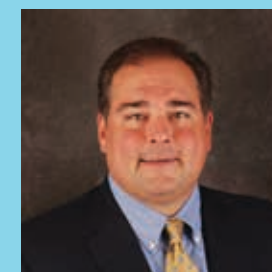


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# JOE KENNY

REALTY EXECUTIVES MIDWEST, DARIEN



How many REALTORS® does it take to change a Coach Light?

*One of the greatest things about being a REALTOR® has to be setting your own schedule and being your own boss. With that comes the challenges of getting things done around the house. I seem to never have enough time or knowledge to do the little projects around the house that my wife always wants me to do.*

Since COVID-19 took us into hibernation mode, my office has been on our dining room table. Two weeks ago, my wife Lisa asked me to do a small job as I was getting ready to sit down at my computer. Lisa is a nurse, and one of our heroes, so I abandoned the idea of getting some work done so I could do whatever she had in mind. (Hey, Facebook can be work, right?!)

We recently had the house painted and some of the old wood-style light covers were still in place. Lisa asked me to replace the covers when I had some time. Well, I guess I had time right there and then, and started taking the covers off, a five-minute job. "By the way," she said, "Do you think you can change that dimmer to the new style with a slide?" I have always been afraid of electricity but figured, "What the heck, the computer and YouTube are only three feet away!" I changed two dimmer switches, a three-way switch and four coach lights.

I also sold a home off the Private Listing Network and secured \$3,000 in grants for the Rotary Club of Downers Grove to go towards the purchase of 4,000 KN95 masks for first responders and nurses at Good Samaritan Hospital...all without leaving home. COVID-19 has taught me how to work smarter!

# KATHLEEN LAMANNA

BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY STARCK REAL ESTATE, BLOOMINGDALE

## Lessons from the Garden

Why does a fragile flower survive a storm while a big tree snaps in half?

Are we flexible to react in challenges or unbending where it destroys the very goal?

If I stare at a seed, can I see it grow in real time?

Do we see progress right away or learn patience is a virtue?

Why does consistent water and sunshine produce a plant?

Do consistent habits over time produce the desired result?

What happens if you over-water a plant or give it too much or too little sun?

Does force make things happen faster or does balance of inspiration, insight, knowledge provide the growth?

Nature infuses ideas...lay on the grass and watch clouds go by, certainly a different perspective. Ocean waves roll in, tickle sandy toes, whoosh back out...where did your thoughts go? What happens to time as a warm summer breeze gently brushes your face? Sunshine on a cold winter day brings you closer to the window, a smile?



Default buttons: where do you go, what do you do when life happens in unexpected ways?

Redirect energy. Worry, stress, anxiety are energy. In the garden, redirected, pulls weeds, positive conversion. Breathing changes, fresh air inhaled, senses come alive, mind expands, visual senses magnify.

Butterflies dance on fresh flowers, jewel color hummingbirds flutter in mid-air, magical moments in front of our eyes...are they open?

Seeds planted, cuttings rooting, flowers grow, energy converted. Soon, the garden will move outdoors. Nature's good morning, dew on the leaves, singing birds, sun glow rising, all give hope and inspiration in a raw pure form.

At the end of the day, the sun sets, night vines shine in moonlight, we are grateful for our blessings in life and renew the passions that ignite us.





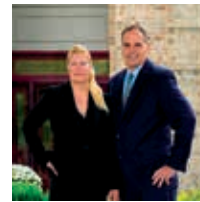
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# TOM MAKINNEY JR.

@ PROPERTIES , ELMHURST

*The coronavirus epidemic caused us all to stop in our tracks. Like everyone else, within a few days, we figured out how to move forward. I am grateful for my innovative never-say-die team and all of the support from @properties!*

Under shelter-in-place, it was time to think about what I can do for our community. I can't jump in with the healthcare workers and first responders – how grateful I am for all of them! But I can't just stay home and wait it out either. I had to find a way to serve in some capacity.

My wife Sarah and I have always had a heart for animals, especially dogs. We'd heard about "freedom rides" – people driving long-distance to partner with another shelter to transport rescued pets from a part of the country with lower demand to a part of the country with higher demand, so more pets can stay alive and find homes.



Tom and Sarah Makinney on their "Freedom Ride"

We conducted our first freedom ride for Second City Canine Rescue on April 23. In cooperation with Heart of Alabama Save Rescue Adopt, we

road-tripped 630 miles to rescue 15 dogs. This also opened up the opportunity for more dogs to be rescued by the Heart of Alabama shelter!

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# TINA MARIE MATEJA

BAIRD & WARNER REAL ESTATE, DOWNERS GROVE

*How has life changed during the COVID-19 shelter-in-place? More family dinners. More time for gardening. More time to get the back patio and yard ready for summer entertaining. More time with each other. It's amazing how much I enjoy the extra family time.*

We've tried to make the best of it by having more family dinners, more family game nights, more movies together. I've introduced my kids to the entire Die Hard series. Who knew there were five of them?

I've learned to use the Instapot I got for Christmas. Our family room has become our gym. It now houses dumbbells, yoga mats, jump ropes, and gymnastic equipment. Our dining room table has become an e-classroom for my 7th-grader.

The passenger seat in my car "office" is usually filled with brochures, files and contracts. It's been replaced with gloves, masks, bleach wipes. My showings are very different, opening doors with the gloves on and wiping all the switches and door-knobs we touch with bleach wipes. My clients greet each other with elbow bumps and celebrate closings through windows of title companies.



Tina's son as "Dan the Dinosaur"

At showings, we talk to each other through our masks, trying to stay 6 feet apart, taking extra breaths every once in a while and removing our eyeglasses when they steam up.

I've sold a house without my buyer client actually going to see it. I've done home inspections without my clients being there and rotating who is in the home so we never had more than four people. I did my first virtual open house live on Facebook. It was a complete disaster from not knowing how to turn the camera around to actually recording the

entire thing upside down but now I know all the things not to do live on video. I guess that's good!

While trying to keep my 13-year-old off electronic devices, I paid him to dance around one of my new listings dressed as Dan the Dinosaur while I took photos and he also showed up at my virtual open house. He's an entrepreneur now, looking for others to pay him to dance in a dinosaur costume!

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# ELAINE PAGELS

BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY HOME SERVICES, DOWNERS GROVE

*During the first couple of weeks, our team and company had daily virtual meetings to discuss the new protocols for our team, clients, and what we can change in our business to adjust to the shelter in place order. Berkshire Hathaway Home Services Chicago was ahead of the curve by preparing for the shelter in place order, which made agents' lives smoother and our clients' success possible. How do we adjust marketing for our sellers? How do we show homes virtually? How do we deal with the many new concerns that arose with the fast changes? We accomplished so much in a short amount of time!*

Speaking with clients has been fruitful to ensure we are on the same page with changes. It's another reminder that real estate is a personal business; one that technology cannot replace. COVID is the challenge versus a housing crisis, but I believe agents will be met with new challenges they have never experienced before, just like seasoned agents had to adjust during the housing crisis.

Luckily, I work on a team with my mother, Lucy Hilt, sister, Laura Michicich, and daughter Brita Pagels. We are very fortunate that Laura and Brita are handling what our buyers and sellers need like preparing vacant listings for showings and keeping up with analysis and correspondence.

My daughter is immunocompromised and has moved home for the short-term since she lives in a multi-unit building. For that reason, I have decided to not leave our home. I am so enjoying daily walks in the woods near my home, taking in all nature has to offer. It's been a beautiful time of quiet, listening to birds that

seem louder than usual due to lack of traffic, listening and watching cranes and ducks migrate overhead, enjoying the deer and foxes cutting through my yard, and seeing gardens blossom. My own garden has never looked better!



Elaine in her Garden

# DEBBIE PAWLOWICZ

RE/MAX ACTION, LISLE



*Since this shelter-in-place has begun, I have witnessed my fellow REALTORS® accomplish some fantastic goals. Their homes are spotless, organized and repainted and they top that all off by creating gourmet feasts. I am in awe at their success but wondering what CE class I must have missed because nothing like that is happening at my home.*

What just became our empty nest has transformed back into a safe haven for our immediate family, AKA quarantine buddies. I quickly relearned that my private office is my refuge against the constant distractions of home. Well, truth be told, no one at home is actually demanding any of my attention and I think the distractions can really be defined as a case of FOMO for me. What are they talking

about? Are they making plans without me? Are those my grandchildren I hear? What are they eating?

As our clients' needs have changed, it was important to quickly respond with understanding and safety in mind. Zoom, video tours, FaceTime, Matterport, Docusign, sanitizer, masks and gloves have been our key tools. The safety protocols proved to be the most important as well as the biggest challenge. Imagine a two hour listing appointment with sellers you are meeting mask to mask for the first time. Not only are you melting under the mask after hour one, but their facial expressions are a mystery. And then you question if you can even recognize them in the future.

These silly inconveniences pale in comparison to what our communities are experiencing. I am so proud to be a member of our REALTOR® family that not only takes care of their families, improves their lives but continues to give their time, talents and treasures to those in need.

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# MATT PITTMAN

KELLER WILLIAMS PREMIERE PROPERTIES, GLEN ELLYN

*Life in the COVID-19 quarantine has been very different. It started out with a lot of fear for the health of my family and the unseen future. Watching the news had us wrapped up in it for the first day or so, until we decided to turn off the news. I slipped into some bad habits right from the get-go. Every day I slept in. I spent too much time watching Netflix, ate way too much junk food and was just plain lazy. After a week or so I had enough.*

I needed to get back into my old routine. I got back to getting up early, working out, doing my daily gratitude journal, planning, prospecting, and calling current, past, and future clients. I was able to get a majority of my work done in much less time and spend a ton of extra time with the family. I found that going on long walks while making calls was very efficient and I got some fresh air and exercise as well. It felt great!

My team and I started looking at this as an opportunity. While the majority of our peers are sitting on the sidelines, we're trying to come up with creative ideas to help the community. It's just another way to get in front of more people and let them know that we're here to help them with personal and real estate needs. When things get back to normal hopefully we'll be the people they reach out to you when they have real estate needs. Either way, we are here to help the community. If someone needs some toilet paper, a meal or even a job, we are willing to step in and help. We are all in this together and we need to do our best to serve others.

One of the best parts of all this has been that I've been able to get all my work done in a half-day and still have



a ton of time to do stuff at home and hang more as a family. We spend time taking daily walks, enjoying movies, watching documentaries, having dance parties, coloring, making cookies and hanging out together. It has been awesome! We've focused our time and energy on being grateful for each other and that we are safe and healthy. The future is

uncertain but we are so thankful for the health and safety of our loved ones. Thus far, no one has been severely affected by this virus and that's a blessing. We will continue to stay positive and be grateful for all of God's blessings!



# DEB RITTER

KELLER WILLIAMS PREMIERE PROPERTIES, GLEN ELLYN

*The way we live, socialize, work and go to school radically changed in March 2020. As we emerge from this pandemic, some things will go back to the way they were, but many great changes will emerge.*

We'll definitely see changes in the way houses are designed and used. In 1918, when the Spanish Flu was a pandemic, homes started to be designed with a vestibule at the entrance along with the addition of half-baths near front entrances so people could take off their shoes before entering the main house and wash up so as not to infect others in the house. In 2020 and beyond, I think the next trend will be that existing rooms will be repurposed into work from home offices. New construction homes will feature at least two office/study options in some form or another.

Since I've been working from home and thinking about ways to repurpose my own home into three office spaces, because three of us are working from home, I decided to be more intentional about enjoying my deck whether I'm relaxing or working at my patio table as another work from home space. Normally, I don't put out potted plants on my deck as I don't have a green thumb - but I'm up to the challenge this summer since I'm home more. Maybe I'll gain a new skill!

I'm looking forward to enjoying my deck more during this quiet summer ahead. It will be a good reminder to slow down a bit, notice what's happening around me and be grateful for many blessings.

Home sweet home, indeed.



Deb Taking a Break at Home



Bronx and Brooklyn Chillin' in the Pool

# BRIDGET SALELA

COLDWELL BANKER RESIDENTIAL, NAPERVILLE

*This time has been very strange, to say the least. But like everything I am choosing to look at the positives! Being married to a division chief at Naperville Fire Department (NFD) during a pandemic has been a challenge. As we know this is a scary time that we, hopefully, will never have to experience again. Through it all, our kids are our number one priority.*

My husband knowing "too much" information has been a blessing and a curse. NFD has been amazing implementing protocols to keep our community and NFD employees and their families safe during their heroic acts. We have tried to move on as normal as possible. In a normal Spring Market, I would not be around very much because this is our busiest time. I have loved this lockdown with my three children, husband and two dogs. Not having anything to do or anywhere to go has been fantastic!

I know this time will not be forever and the fall will come and my now senior will be heading to the University of Nebraska. Now is our time! We have loved movie nights, card games, reorganizing, house projects, working out together and now our favorite thing to do, swimming in our pool! (Thank you, weather!)

Throughout this time my team has been closing deals which have been extra challenging. Some fell apart, others took longer than normal but finally closed. We are getting busier every day and I know that once this lifts, we will have our Spring Market all over again. But for now, I am enjoying every minute of this time with my family!

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# KELLEY SCHMIDT

BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY STARCK REAL ESTATE, BLOOMINGDALE



Ashton Schmidt, 2.5 Years Old, Finding Adventure in the Simplest of Things

*Life, as we know it right now, can be summed up in one word: chaotic. We are a family of five that includes two working-from-home parents, two kids with school work, and one mischievous toddler, all trying to adjust to a new "normal." We are typically always on the go, busy, SOCIAL people. Now we spend our days confined at home while trying to meet deadlines for both work and homework.*

Shelter-in-place was "OK" at first. We took it in stride and came to grips with what it entailed. As the dates extended and we started to miss out on very important activities, holidays, birthdays, and time with friends and family, it became a harder pill to swallow. We know this is for good reason; how-

ever, it still has been a tough thing to come to terms with. With that being said, we feel very fortunate to be together, safe, and healthy.

What keeps us sane and happy amongst the craziness are sweet moments captured that we would have otherwise missed out on. As weird as it sounds, I find myself saying "yes" more to my kids. Just when I think I am running out of ways to entertain them, we stumble upon a gem of an activity, like playing in the sink. Shelter-in-place has forced us to slow down, appreciate what we have as a family, and loosen the reins on our usual strict schedules. I know one day I will look back on this time and be oddly thankful that we had it!

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# KIM SCOTT

BAIRD & WARNER REAL ESTATE, NAPERVILLE

*As all this lockdown began in March my heart went out to all healthcare heroes, but two in particular. Two very dear friends, really my children's friends from high school who entered the field of nursing not even a year ago, are on the front lines.*

Megan Miller is working at the University of Chicago Hospital. When I sent her a text and an Instagram post and Venmo'd her a few bucks to thank her and for her to treat herself to something special, she sent back this picture. She thanked me and said she spent the money on upgrades to an industrial gown and COVID mask, as you can see in the picture. I'm so proud of her for working 12 hours a day and giving it her all!

Kristen George is in New York working at Mount Sinai Hospital as a physician's assistant. She was deployed to Neuro ICU. She sent this picture back, as she was recognized in the hospital magazine!



Clockwise From Left: Megan Miller, Kristen George, and Kim Scott

And then there I am, apparently also essential, though my inconvenience pales to their sacrifice! Both of these girls have to live alone and cannot see

their friends. Both say it's currently a sad existence. They return home sad, lonely, and exhausted.

I'm so proud of them. They are true heroes!

# COURTNEY BOHNEN STACH

COUNTY LINE PROPERTIES, HINSDALE



*Sheltering in place is something I am eternally grateful for, as it has been a second chance at maternity leave! In 2005, I greeted my first-born son and was negotiating a deal in the delivery room. I bounced out to Spring Market 2006 with him by my side in a baby bucket at the office and on appointments. Once daycare started, he was in a routine, and then Brother Number Two arrived. Again, with my second son, I hit the ground running, as he was born December 2007, just before the banks crashed and the Great Recession. The boys entered the world and my career was just taking off and this required a lot of juggling.*

Sheltering in place has been hard but it allows me to see my boys and husband 24/7 with no disruption. I get to help my sons with their school work, I

get to walk with them and not run out to the car to the next activity. I get to plan meals and cook them. I get to dust and clean my own cobwebs (literally), and take a hard look at myself and my everyday business practices to improve. It's really special to get to see my husband and children more than before work and after work; and we even dine together each night. We talk, connect, think of others and plan for the future. For that, I am grateful.

I've had time to call and contact past clients and really spend time with them, without getting pulled in another direction or meeting. This pandemic has been weird and horrible but honestly, it's created a PAUSE in so many things that it gave us back the concept of time to recalibrate and reacquaint ourselves with all the things that matter in life.

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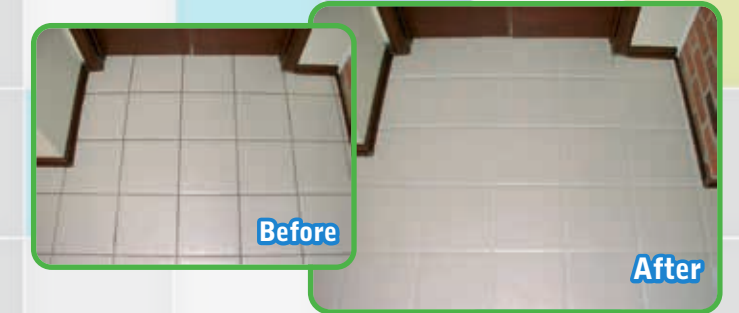
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# Stunning. Amazing. Beautiful.

These are all words we normally use to describe our staged homes, but we want to share them with all the real estate heroes who have worked hard to place homes under contract while the stay at home order is in place.

**Thank you!**



## Realtor Heroes

Ioana Juravle  
Finish Line Realty, Inc.

Maggie Zahradnicek  
Housecenter Realty, Inc.

Jeff Ohm  
Premier Realty Group, Inc.

Latrease Davenport  
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