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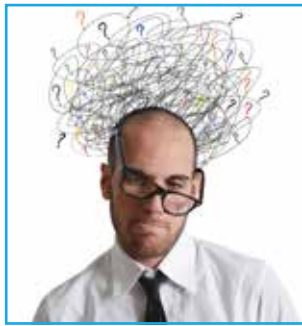


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**Michele Kader**  
Owner/Publisher  
(949) 280-3245  
michele.kader@  
realproducersmag.com



**Ellen Buchanan**  
Editor



**Bodie Kuljian**  
Photographer



**Lindsey Wells**  
Writer



**Heather Nelson**  
Account Manager/  
Ad Strategist



**Thomas Pellicer**  
Event Photographer



**Tyler Bowman**  
Bowman Group Media



**Lauren Pulver**  
Event Planner

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**George Delgado**  
Account Executive  
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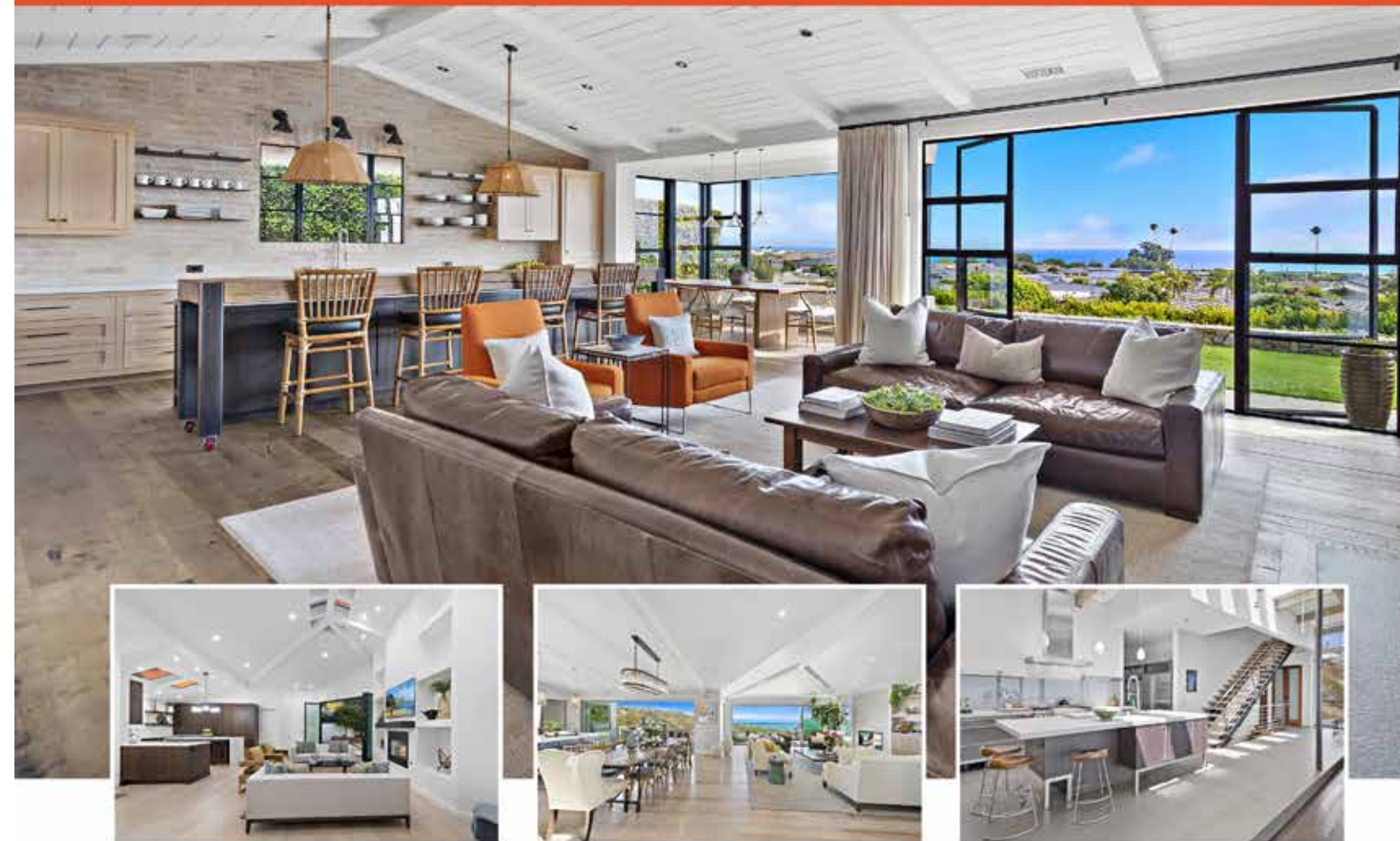


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# 9 WAYS OPS BOSSES™ AVOID DECISION FATIGUE

► ops boss coaching™

By Christy Belt Grossman

One of the magazines I like to read is *Harper's Bazaar*. They have a column called, "A Day In The Life." The subject is often a fashion designer — think Tom Ford, Michael Kors, Donna Karan. After reading the column for a few months, I realized these successful entrepreneurs had SO much in common:

- They have set routines (think time blocking). They often describe themselves as "boring."
- They accomplish their most important things first thing in the morning.
- They eat healthily (and usually eat the same thing frequently). Christian Louboutin says, "I have lunch in two places."
- They exercise regularly.
- They have some sort of daily uniform. Armani has 42 navy t-shirts. Donna Karan has 60 black bodysuits, and wears skinny jeans and a black leather jacket daily.

**It's said we make 35,000 conscious decisions a day.**

Gosh, no wonder we are tired by day's end! There's even a term for why we feel tired — it's called "decision fatigue."

As I've gotten older (and hopefully wiser!), I have made the move to simplify my daily life. I only have so much room in my head, so I want to make sure I use my brainpower on the things that matter most.

Here are 9 ways Ops Bosses™ avoid decision fatigue:

## 1 Have a daily uniform.

Don't get me wrong, I love expressing myself through fashion. But on a daily basis, I live more like the fashion designers above — with a (less expensive) uniform. For example, in the winter, it's black leggings, black over-the-knee boots, a tunic-length top, and lots of bling. I keep the same color palette most of the year — black, white and pink. This makes getting dressed easy. It makes packing to travel easy. And it's one less decision every day.

## 2 Eat the same thing daily, or have a weekly menu.

I'm an empty nester. So we eat out daily. At the same places. When I arrive, they already know what I want.

If you bring your lunch to work and cook dinner at home, do what my mom did. Lunch was a sandwich and a piece of fruit. Dinner was a revolving menu, but the same things each week: tacos, spaghetti, hamburgers, fried chicken, enchiladas, roast beef. You get the idea. Doesn't matter what you choose (if it's healthy!). Just set a theme and stick to it. One less decision to make. (Actually, it's more than one, because you can set up the same shopping list when you know what you'll be eating regularly.)

## 3 Have things automatically delivered.

Set up a regular Peapod (or Instacart, Amazon, etc.) delivery for your groceries, pet supplies, prescriptions, and other "usuals."

## 4 Time block.

If you don't time block, then you spend your entire day deciding what to do next. Ask yourself on Friday what your priorities are for the next week, then time block them. This includes your personal schedule.

When our kids were small, my husband and I used to meet for 15 mins every Sunday to coordinate schedules for the week so we knew who needed to be where.

Each day, ask yourself, "What is the one thing I need to accomplish to win the day?" Don't put your feet on the floor until you know the answer.

And when you are "in" your time blocks, turn OFF your email and alerts. Because every time one pops up, you will have to make a

decision whether to read it or not, and whether to act upon it or not. As Bob Newhart would say, just STOP it!

## 5 Have a morning and evening routine.

Get up at the same time. Do the same things. In the same order. Wind your day down with a routine. And teach your family the same thing. Kids are great accountability partners for this. They LOVE routine.

## 6 Keep a bag packed.

Don't switch professional bags daily. Keep one awesome bag. Have it stocked with everything you need. I do the same thing with my travel bag for teaching. It stays packed year-round with the essentials. All I add is my actual outfit.

## 7 Have a signature gift.

One of my BFFs loves Glassybaby hand-blown glass candle holders. They are personal and unique. And a general enough gift that you can send them for almost any occasion. Having a go-to gift cuts down on shopping time and decision fatigue.

## 8 Stop being a control freak.

Let other people make decisions. Let your family decide where to go on vacation. Let your friends choose the restaurant or bar you'll meet at. Set a budget, and let your team choose what your team closing gift will be.

## 9 Set micro rules.

Even small decisions add up. I set rules for myself that cover some of these small decisions. Example: elevator or stairs? My rule is, "Always take the stairs." Another rule I have is, "Always choose the line to the left." This comes in handy at places like Disneyworld or airport bathrooms with multiple entrances. At the grocery store, my rule is "Don't debate the pennies." I used to compare brands to save money. Only to realize I was spending my very valuable time to just save pennies.

**Bottom line:** There are lots more things you can do. These ideas will get you started. True Ops Bosses™ ensure they avoid decision fatigue so they can focus on decisions that are TRULY impactful.



Christy Belt Grossman is the CEO & Owner of Ops Boss Coaching™, and a Director on the Board of NARESP (National Association of Real Estate Professionals). Christy's passion for raising the bar for Ops Bosses™ was fueled by her past experience as COO of one of the nation's first real estate teams to sell \$1 Billion. Ops Boss Coaching™ provides classes, a video resource center, group and 1:1 coaching and an annual conference focused on real estate operations professionals. FREE Reports and Resources at [www.OpsBossCoaching.com](http://www.OpsBossCoaching.com). Contact: [Christy@OpsBossCoaching.com](mailto:Christy@OpsBossCoaching.com)





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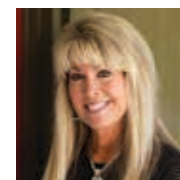
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►► cover story

By Lindsey Wells

Photography by Bodie Kuljian

# JEFF GRAY

## ALL ABOUT BEING OF SERVICE

“I can’t ever lose the fire I have for helping people. As soon as I lose that fire, I can no longer be a value to them.” —*Jeff Gray*

...





Jeff Gray, his wife Jennell, and their three children love spending time outdoors and getting to the beach as often as they can.



**I just knew that I could provide for my family better in real estate.”**

...

Four years ago, Jeff Gray set out to find a career that would allow him to better provide for his growing family. Before real estate, he worked in the nightlife and restaurant businesses for a handful of years, and while he enjoyed that, the long overnight hours and less-than-competitive pay started to take its toll. Jeff studied architecture in college and always had an interest in homes and structures, so a

career in real estate seemed promising. Being an all-or-nothing type of individual, he took a leap of faith, earned his license, and started his journey in real estate at Keller Williams Realty on April 1, 2016. Now, he is the owner of Gray Real Estate.

When he first started in real estate, Jeff said he is not the least bit ashamed to admit that he watched

HGTV religiously and caught up on real estate reality TV shows from every city he could find. He was determined to succeed; it was either sink or swim. “I just knew that I could provide for my family better in real estate than I could in the restaurant business,” he says. “As much as I liked the restaurant business, if all three of my kids got into college at the same time on the salary I was getting at a major restaurant, there’s no way I could have supported all of that.”

Jeff sold over \$50 million in volume in his first four years in the business and is on track to continue that increase each year. But, if you ask Jeff, it’s less about the numbers and more about the people he can help. “Real estate is a big deal to people. It’s a big decision. I know that I have to be Johnny-on-the-spot, 1,000 percent engaged with every single transaction because it’s probably the biggest financial move they’ve

made and it’s going to affect their family for the next handful of years,” he says. “I don’t have a choice but to take it super seriously and provide a ton of value.”

Jeff credits Keller Williams Realty with giving him the tools needed to become as successful as he has in such a short period of time. “Keller Williams has really good models — they wrote

the book on how to be a successful real estate agent,” he says. “I just listened to a lot of mentors and a lot of people that were where I wanted to be and had what I wanted, and I just took their advice.”

Jeff’s family consists of the love of his life, Jenell, and their three kids, ages nine, seven, and two. Jeff and Jenell have been married for 13 years and together for almost 20. When asked what the secret to a long marriage is, he laughs and says,

...



...

“I have no idea. I wish I knew. Do you know what it is? We still dig each other 20 years later. We still enjoy each other’s company; it’s that simple. She still laughs at my stupid jokes.”

A native of Orange County, Jeff comes from a family of surfers, so he tries to sneak off to the beach to surf every chance he gets. “I try to drag the family along as often as I can,” he says. “Jenell was able to take the kids to a lot of beach days this summer. It’s a very simple little getaway that the whole family loves.”

When he isn’t working, spending time with his family, or surfing, however, Jeff can usually be found taking part in one of the greatest passions in his life: helping people get back on their feet and recover from substance abuse. Three to four times per week, Jeff works with those in recovery, whether through group therapy, providing guidance, walking them through the 12-Step Program, or just being a shoulder to lean on. “The group that I’m part of is all about being of service,” he said. “I go to meetings today not for myself, but the newcomer. A lot of these people don’t know who to call or what to do next when they’re just getting sober. It’s a lot of fellowship, a lot of guidance, a lot of sharing my experience. No matter what, when you’re talking to someone who is struggling or reaching out to you, just share your experience, strength, and hope. That’s a huge part of what I do.

“Surfing and giving hope to the hopeless. Those two things are who I am.”



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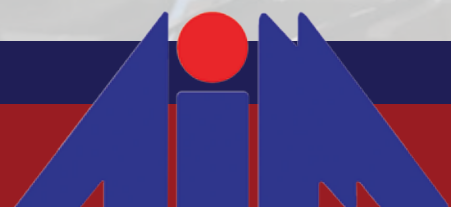


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» agent spotlight

By Lindsey Wells  
Photography by Bodie Kuljian



# Leilani

## SERRAO-BAKER

*breaking the stereotype*



Leilani Serrao-Baker, husband David, and daughter Ivey enjoy spending free time on their cabin cruiser, docked at Dana Point Harbor.

When it comes to her professional real estate career, Leilani Serrao-Baker hit the ground running after she retired from her 23-year career as a flight attendant. Leilani has always loved homes, especially the design aspect. In fact, as a child, when she and her family would go out to eat, the first thing Leilani would do upon entering the restaurant was run to the bathroom to see how it was decorated. She enthusiastically decided to enter the real estate profession and became a licensed California real estate salesperson nine and a half years ago, as well as a certified Realtor® with the National Association of REALTORS®. Now, she is a top-producing agent with Douglas Elliman Real Estate.

...





“ I love it when clients say, ‘Wow, you are not at all what I thought real estate agents were.’ That’s good for me and good for our industry. ”

...

Many of us are probably familiar with the career aptitude tests students take in high school to determine which career path(s) they should pursue. Interestingly enough, when Leilani took the test, her result was as follows: 1. flight attendant; 2. real estate agent; 3. teacher. Sometimes those tests return laughable results, but for Leilani, it was quite accurate, at least the first two. Since she has been in real estate, Leilani has set out to change the false stereotype that many people have formed surrounding real estate agents by exemplifying service to clients as her top priority.

“With buyers, I just love seeing how excited they are when we find the perfect home, and I can give them the deal they really want,” Leilani says. “But

I think sellers are my favorites; although I work with very good agents, many clients think that all agents are the same, and then they meet me and see how service-oriented I am and how much attention I give them and how I make them feel like they’re my only client. They’re always deeply appreciative, and it makes me feel good to get the job done for them and change that unfair stereotype. I love it when clients say, ‘Wow, you are

not at all what I thought real estate agents were.’ That’s good for me and good for our industry.” She also does all of her own staging, an incredible added perk for Leilani’s clients, and a way to make her service that much more personal.

A native of Hawaii, Leilani was living in New York City and working as a flight attendant for American Airlines when she met her husband, David Allen Baker, who was a passenger on one of her flights in April 1992. “I saw him at the airport and said to myself, ‘Oh, he’s cute, I hope he’s on my flight,’” Leilani recalls, laughing. “He did get on my plane, and when he got up to go to the restroom, I saw my opportunity, so I blocked his path back to his seat with a beverage cart. I really wanted to talk to him, and he was such a nice guy.” The rest, as they say, is history. Their relationship moved rather quickly after that; David moved to New York City (where he was a songwriter for Sony Music) from Nashville to be with Leilani, and the couple was married 11 months later. They moved to southern California early in 1997 and have now been married for 27 years.

When asked about her secret to a successful marriage, Leilani says, “We really like each other. When we’re not engaged in work or child duties, and it’s just the two of us, it’s like we just met. We have fun, we laugh, and we really support each other in whatever endeavor we decide to do.” Between 1997 and 2000, Leilani constantly flew and David toured internationally and domestically with The New Mamas and the Papas. After touring dried up and with few LA contacts, David tried a new business, but was miserable. So Leilani encouraged David to make music work. “I looked at him and said, ‘You need to find a way, and I totally support it.’” What a team!

And find a way, he did. David is currently the Lobby Lounge singer, pianist, and guitarist at the world-renowned Montage Laguna Beach, where he has performed for almost 12 years. It seems he has passed his musical talents on to the couple’s daughter Ivey, 11, who is an incredible singer and cellist. She also dances ballet, studying and training since the age of three, and she surfs. “And she’s amazing at all of them,” Leilani says of her daughter.

...



Leilani’s daughter Ivey started ballet dancing at three years old.







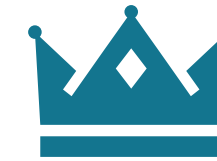
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During those rare moments when Leilani can find some down time outside of work and other responsibilities, the family enjoys their newfound passion for boating. “Since we purchased a cabin cruiser in 2019, boating is pretty much our go-to when we do have free time,” Leilani says. “Even just tied up in our slip in Dana Point Harbor, we entertain and swim off the back of the boat, grill, and play music on the boat.” Leilani also enjoys fitness training and putting together her beautiful magazine, *DANA LIFE*, which features local residents, businesses, and real estate.

“For me, it’s either selling houses or being with my family; that’s my life,” Leilani adds. “Whether it’s beach, boat, working out, watching my daughter dance, or driving her to and from ballet and cello, that’s my life, and I love it.”



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# ROY FENN

AMY SIMS TEAM  
COLDWELL BANKER REALTY

## FROM ROOKIE TO REAL ESTATE SUCCESS STORY

Whether new to the business or a seasoned agent, one thing about the real estate industry is clear to all: it is, and will always be, more about the people than the property. Perhaps this is why the transition into real estate happened so seamlessly for Roy Fenn just over a year ago when he re-entered the workforce and earned his license in July 2019. Now an agent with Coldwell Banker Realty-Laguna Niguel on the Amy Sims Team, Roy was already a respected member of the community before trying his hand at real estate. That, mixed with his sales skills and ability to relate to people on a higher level, has opened the doors to what has already proven to be a successful career in the industry.

Upon moving to Rancho Mission Viejo almost four years ago, Roy and his family didn't know anyone and immediately immersed themselves in the community. They noticed a need for more family-friendly activities in the area and thought a new club for families would be the perfect way to introduce themselves while also filling a void. RMV Family Fun started small, consisting only of family movie nights once every month or two. Today, the club hosts multiple large attractions per year, including Halloween and Christmas events and other fun outings for the family year-round.



Photo by Bodie Kuljian

Although Roy's reason for giving back is done purely out of the goodness of his heart, his involvement in the community certainly didn't hurt when it came time to build his real estate client base. "A lot of people in their first year get really discouraged because they don't see any results from their labors. Fortunately for me, I've already sewn the seeds, and I'm harvesting those crops right now. I did all the groundwork before I started, which is what most

people do after they've started in the real estate business," he says. In Roy's eyes, he has already achieved success. "People have trusted me to handle the selling and buying of their houses; that, to me, tells me I'm successful, when I've had so many people that actually let me help them when I was so new. It just took that first person, and

behind-the-scenes all-star

By Lindsey Wells

once people saw that I was doing it and that I did it well, it just took off. It's very rewarding."

Another lesser-known fact about Roy is that he grew up in the foster care system, something that no doubt shaped him into the man he is today, both personally and professionally. "It doesn't matter what your circumstances are; as long as you keep a positive attitude and just work hard, you can reach any goal you want," he says. That experience is the reason Roy and his spouse opted to adopt their two children, Lucas (eight), and Oliver (six), from the foster care system. Oliver and Lucas are biologically related, so they arrived at their new home on the same day and were welcomed with open, loving arms from the very beginning. Oliver, the youngest, was seven months old, and Lucas was two. "I was adamant that the foster care system was the only way we were going to have children, even though it's more difficult."

As it has for everyone, COVID-19 has thrown a wrench in Roy's family's life. The kids are attending school from home, which keeps Roy on his toes. "We're actually in two different schools right now because I got my oldest into a charter school. The younger one is waiting to get into that charter school.

So I'm dealing with two different schools, two different schedules, two different online systems. It's a lot of fun," Roy says, laughing. When the kids aren't in school and Roy and his spouse aren't working, they can usually be found trying out new restaurants, playing tennis as a family, and traveling (when there isn't a pandemic to worry about). Roy also enjoys the occasional outing with his friends. "Girlfriend time feeds my soul sometimes. I love organizing get-togethers and wine nights because we all need that time where we can just kind of let loose, have fun, be in the company of just our friends and act silly and crazy."

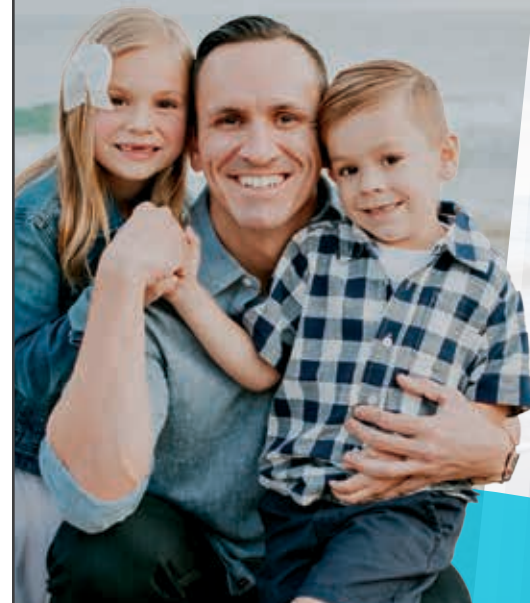
Now, with just over a year in real estate under his belt, Roy is grateful for Amy and his team at Coldwell Banker and the positive experience he has had thus far. "Amy is always adamant and corrects people that we're business partners; no one is better than anybody else on our team, and we all just work hard," he says. "There's a lot of respect, and

it's all equal. I just love that environment; there are no egos, and it's perfect for continuing to grow and learn."

For her part, team leader Amy Sims says, "Roy is an amazing friend, agent, dad, and husband. I'm so honored to have him represent our team and work side-by-side with him daily. He leads with his heart and ethics and truly strives to exceed all expectations. I am excited to continue to see his growth and experience continue on the same momentum. Anyone buying or selling with him is blessed."

Do you work with someone who truly makes a difference in the industry, in your business or in your office? Email Michele Kader at [michele.kader@realproducersmag.com](mailto:michele.kader@realproducersmag.com) to nominate them to be featured as a Behind-the-Scenes All-Star in an upcoming issue of *South Orange County Real Producers*.

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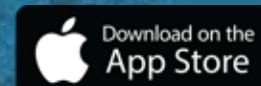
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