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If you are interested in contributing or nominating REALTORS® for certain stories, please email us at anita.jones@realproducersmag.com

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Publisher's Note

Written By: **Anita Jones**

Publisher Note – February 2021

In February we celebrate love and Valentine's Day. This month I want to turn your focus to your heart – that critical organ that beats nonstop and regularly if you are lucky. For those with heart issues, you have an appreciation for medical technology and medications that allow your heart to beat like it should.

Our special feature this month is the remarkable story of Anne Bolt Hitch, Broker in Charge of Edgewater Group, and her husband Jim Hitch, who was also in Real Estate. Jim, after months of waiting, received the wonderful news that he was going to get a new heart in May of last year. Bill and I wanted to bring this story to you for many reasons.

In talking with Anne, we discovered there are many people right in your real estate community who are dealing with serious medical issues.

Two days before Jim received his heart, Anne was notified that a REALTOR® here was getting a double-lung transplant!

We want to enlighten you through this story, that you are not alone. We want to inform you that it is as easy to become an organ donor, as checking "Yes" on organ donation when you apply for, or are renewing, your driver's license or you can go to this site to register: <https://www.donatelifesc.org/register/>.

If you decide to do this, please be sure to notify your family as they might need to be contacted to provide consent. We also want to spread the word about how this community steps up to help in big ways. The support Anne and Jim received from so many of you was tremendous.

Valentine's Day will have a new meaning this year for Anne and Jim and his new heart. But it will also extend to the love and heart of Cindy who was so instrumental in helping Anne keep their business humming without missing a (heart) beat.

May your hearts, love, and kindness expand to all those dear to you on this Valentine's Day!

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▶ carolina coast real producers – faqs

REAL PRODUCERS

– A New Concept in the Grand Strand

Q: Who receives this magazine?

A: The top 10% producing agents in the Coastal Carolina Real Estate Association MLS. We pull the MLS numbers (by volume) once a year. For our 2020 list, the minimum production level for our group in the top 10% was over \$6 million. And that is in the year of Covid-19!

Q: What is the process for being featured in this magazine?

A: It is really simple – every feature you see has first been nominated. You can nominate other REALTORS®, affiliates, brokers, and owners. Office leaders can also nominate REALTORS®. We will consider anyone brought to our attention because we do not know everyone's story, so we need your help to learn about them.

A nomination currently looks like this: **You email us with the subject line, "Nomination: (Name of Nominee),"** and explain why you are nominating them to be featured. It could be they have an amazing story that needs to be told – perhaps they overcame extreme obstacles, they are an exceptional leader, have the best customer service, or they give back to the community in a big way.

The next step is an interview with us to ensure it is a good fit. If it all works out, then we put the wheels in motion for our writer to conduct an interview and for our photographers to schedule a photoshoot.

Q: What does it cost a REALTOR®/ team to be featured?

A: Zero! It costs absolutely nothing, so, nominate away! We are not a pay-to-play model. We share real stories of real producers. In fact, neither REALTORS®, nor brokers can pay to advertise with us.

Q: Who are the preferred partners?

A: Anyone listed as a "preferred partner" in the front of the magazine is a part of this community. They will have an ad in every issue of the magazine, attend our quarterly events, and be a part of our online community. These are folks you want to know! Just like you, they are the best of the best.

We do not just find these businesses off the street, nor do we work with all businesses that are referred. One or many of you have recommended every single preferred partner you see in this publication. We will not even meet with a business that has not been vetted by one of you and been "stamped for approval," in a sense. Our goal is to create a powerhouse network, not only for

Since *Real Producers* is a new concept here in our wonderful Grand Strand, some of you may be wondering what it is all about. That is why we have created a "FAQs About This Magazine" page.

Here we will answer the most asked questions around the country regarding our program. Our door is always open to discuss anything regarding this community – this publication is 100 percent designed to be your voice.

the best REALTORS® in the area but the best affiliates, as well, so we can grow stronger together.

Q: How can I recommend a preferred partner?

A: If you have a recommendation for a local business that works with top REALTORS®, please let us know! Also, we would love to get your nominations as stated above.

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▶ partner spotlight

Written By: **Dave Danielson**
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TOP TO BOTTOM

HOME INSPECTION, LLC

TOP  BOTTOM

QUALITY COMMITMENT

When someone is dedicated to their craft, it makes a difference and people take notice.

That is the way John Pate goes about his work.

As Owner of Top to Bottom Home Inspection, John Pate brings a strong quality commitment to his work with area partners and clients each day.

“I am working for clients, and I have their best interests in mind,” John explains. “I treat the inspection as if I was buying the home myself.”

Getting His Start

John started out in retail sales working with his dad. He also worked in the

light construction industry with some remodeling projects. Plus, he worked on docks and seawall construction, as well as log home building.

As John explains, “The bottom line is I like the construction business, but I knew that wasn’t my end game. After I did sales for an exterior supply company for 20 years, I decided to look at doing something else for myself and got into the home inspection business.”

Deliberate Approach

John takes pride in his deliberate approach to his craft.

“Average home inspections take three to three and a half hours. I take an average of five to six hours,” he says.

“I believe you really want to slow down and take your time. There is no reason to be in a hurry. I book one inspection a day. That way, I can take as long I need to do it correctly for the buyers.”

John’s results speak for themselves—so do his reviews. In fact, he has received 100 five-star reviews in 2020 remarking on his thorough approach.

“I really appreciate those reviews, and I think it’s a sign that I have helped to save some people some money,” John says.

Essential Service

Service is an essential part of the experience, and John delivers.

“When someone contacts me, I make myself readily available to talk with them and respond to people the same day.”

When you talk with John, you immediately understand the love he has for his work.

“Every day is different. No two houses are the same. They have been built differently in various years, styles, and ways. They all have their own challenges. Every day is a different adventure,” John points out. “I look at the home inspection process almost like a puzzle that I’m trying to solve.”

Rewarding Partnership

The partnership John enjoys with his real estate partners is rewarding also.

“We always strive to get the report back to the agent and the buyer the same day we do the inspection. I get feedback that my reports are easy to read, with lots of pictures depicting the issues. The process seems to be exceptionally smooth for everyone involved,” John says. “Once an agent contacts me, I schedule the appointment and I get a notification back that we are good to go. I then forward that to the agent and buyer. I am available to answer any follow-up questions and make the process almost seamless for them.”

At the end of the day, John feels a mission to serve people during this stressful time of handling such a large financial transaction. He knows they are depending on him to inform them of anything that might be wrong with the house.

“The home inspection can be one of the most stressful things for buyers. They have often fallen in love with the home and are probably on pins and needles that day. I try to make it easy with online scheduling,” he says. “I try to be as flexible as possible for people’s schedules. Most of the time,



Johns spends a lot of time on the roof!



we can give them a report back the same day even though it might be 8 or 9 o’clock at night.”

Family Time

Away from work, John enjoys time with his wife of twelve years, Bobbi, who owns the Bearded Stag Barber Shop in Myrtle Beach. They look forward to time spent with their son, Eric, who lives in Charlotte, where he manages an Office Depot store.

In their free time, John and Bobbi enjoy camping, going to the beach, and spending time in the mountains. They also enjoy watching sports, especially football, and look forward to moments with friends and neighbors.

John also belongs to BNI (Business Network International) and supports local organizations such as Fostering Hope, as well as seasonal gift and coat drives.

When you look for a partner you can trust for quality and commitment, the answer is clear. John Pate and Top to Bottom Home Inspection are a great solution for you and your clients.

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“ I TREAT THE INSPECTION AS IF I WAS BUYING THE HOME MYSELF. ”



LIFE LESSONS ON FRAMING YOUR PERSPECTIVE

Have you heard this story about the wise, old farmer? There once was a wise, old farmer who had worked his crops for many long years. Then one day, his horse ran away. Upon hearing the news, his neighbors came by to visit him. “Such bad luck,” they said sympathetically. “Maybe,” replied the old farmer.

The next morning the farmer’s horse returned, bringing with it three other wild horses. “How wonderful,” the neighbors exclaimed. “Maybe,” replied the old farmer. The following day, the farmer’s son tried to ride one of the untamed horses. But he was thrown off and broke his leg. The farmer’s neighbors came again to offer their sympathy for his misfortune. “Maybe,” replied the old farmer.

The day after that, a military official came to the farmer’s village to draft all the young men into the army. Seeing that the farmer’s son had a broken leg, the official passed him by. The neighbors congratulated the farmer on how well things had turned out. “Maybe,” replied the wise, old farmer.

The story could go on and on, with each day bringing a new obstacle or opportunity to the farmer. And each day, his neighbors would reply by bringing new sympathies or congratulations to him. The difference lies in each party’s perspective of the situation.

The Power of Perspective allows you to see things from different angles. You can see things positively, negatively, or apathetically. Your perspective on your circumstances is determined by your experiences, beliefs, world view, and attitudes. Each person’s perspective is unique and individual to them. That is why in the story above, one could see a lost horse or broken leg as a setback. While others, like the farmer, may see them as a setup. A blessing in disguise, even.

How to Reframe Negative Events

While the lessons here can be applied to many areas in life, I want to focus on framing things from the vantage point of leading your business. In real estate, there are several negatives that can be reframed as positives by

simply shifting your perspective. The rest of this article will cover three big ones.

1. Look at Failing as a Learning

Opportunity. Many people struggle when dealing with failure because they mistakenly view *themselves* as a failure. This is flawed because your identity is much greater than the sum of your actions. Sure, who you are includes what you do. But just because you do something wrong, does not mean you are a bad person. As my mentor, John Maxwell, says in his book, *Failing Forward*: “Failing forward is the ability to get back up after you’ve been knocked down, to learn from your mistakes, and to move forward in a better direction.” When you begin to look at failure as an *event*, not part of your identity, you become more resilient, creative, and wiser for it. Remember, failure is an *event*. Not a *person*.

2. See Criticism as Proof You are

Taking Chances. People criticize others for different things. Sometimes it is because they have a valid reason. Often, their criticism is a reflection of their own negativity. People complain about the petty, mundane, and insignificant in an attempt to feel better about themselves.

That is why if you find yourself around someone who is regularly critical of you, you should consider removing them from your life.

That may sound harsh. But I believe in the “elevator principle” of human relationships. That means people either take you up, or take you down. For healthy people to grow, negative influences need to be greatly reduced. And ideally, eliminated completely from your life if possible. I have had to “quit” people who have dragged me down before. I have had to fire employees. End friendships. And limit contact with family members when toxic people refused to change. In each and every case, I felt more free, relieved, and happier because of it.

As Zig Ziglar once said: **“Don’t be distracted by criticism. Remember, the only taste of success some people have is when they take a bite out of you.”** Aristotle is attributed with the

quote: **“The only way to avoid criticism is to do nothing, say nothing and be nothing.”** So, if you want to avoid criticism, you best hide in a cave. But if you want to have any degree of influence — *and that means everything from serving your clients to changing the world — then you will need to learn how to “brush your haters off.”*

3. View Rejection as a Means for Your Protection. This was the most recent lesson I have had to learn. Before starting my entrepreneurial career, I had risen to the second-highest rank in three different organizations...and then I was subsequently fired from all three of those roles. I basically came up with new visions, ideas, and suggestions that either threatened or disrupted the existing structure of those companies. You could say my rejection from corporate life was by design to protect my

entrepreneurial enthusiasm. My termination was more of a release than it was a reprimand. That’s why I love the anonymous quote: **“Rejection is merely a redirection. God’s way of giving you a course correction to your destiny.”**

Each of these three positive reframes and **requires intentionality.** You may need to dig into one or two of them in more detail to get their full effect on your life. You may need to seek out resources. Or find the courage to act on what you need to do to shift your perspective towards the positive. And you may need to reprogram certain beliefs, limiting thought patterns or habits that are keeping you from reaching your true potential. In any case, know that you can adjust your perspective so you can start seeing more breakdowns as breakthroughs, and setbacks as a setup for greater success.



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MARIA MENDOZA

► rising star

Written By: **Dave Danielson**
Photography By: **Alex Mocyunas**
Make-up Artist & Hair Stylist By: **Kelly Melendez**

BRINGING PEOPLE HOME WITH STYLE

The world is filled with those who touch the lives of others. In the process, each person has a unique set of skills and abilities that make an impact. As this month's Rising Star, Maria Mendoza lets her talents shine through as she supports her clients' dreams.

As a REALTOR® with Century 21 Coastal Lifestyles, Maria is bringing people home with style.

DESIGNS ON THE FUTURE

The style part of Maria's life has been part of her since the beginning — as a little girl growing up in Mexico.

"I was born in a very small town in Guanajuato, Mexico, called Caracheo and raised there until I was 12 years old," Maria remembers. "My mom used to have most of her clothes made and I was enrolled in a pattern-making program when I was very young. I knew how to sew by hand and cross-stitch, so I was quite familiar with making garments. I loved making my Barbie doll's clothes."

As she grew up, Maria's father worked in the United States, so she only saw him once or twice a year.

"We kept ourselves active back home. I used to write poetry then," she says. "I



won an award for my poetry and got a scholarship. I have always been creative and loved to draw as a child. But I liked to be active too. I loved to play basketball and was surprisingly good at it!"

CRUCIAL CROSSROADS

After finishing middle school in Mexico, Maria was about to experience a big change.

"In the spring of 1999, my mom and brothers left to go to the United States with my father. I stayed to finish out the school year with my sister," she says. "After that, my sister and I came to the states with my auntie who lives in Charleston, SC."

Maria dove into middle school and high school here in the states, learning the English language that had fascinated her for so long. By the end of her high school career, Maria had finished in the top 10 of her graduating class.

She was eager to attend college. Maria had so many interests, she was not sure what degree she wanted to pursue, but knew she wanted something in a creative field. She was originally thinking about an art degree at Coker College. Then she thought

about going to a culinary school in Pennsylvania. Finally, with serendipity at work, she got a cold call from a recruiter at the Miami International University of Art & Design wanting her to come there. They were looking for bright students and they had a plethora of creative areas for her. In the fall of 2005, she found herself enrolled here and living in Miami.

MAKING HER WAY FORWARD

She took every opportunity she could to learn and grow.

"When I got to Miami, I made a decision to reinvent myself. In fashion school, I learned a lot of different aspects of the business by doing several internships. I worked as a talent coordinator at Telemundo, an American Spanish-language television network. I worked for local fashion designers as their production coordinator and as an assistant to a celebrity stylist working with many Latin artists and celebrities. We got to work for several magazine shoots, red carpet events, TV shows, music videos and commercials. Working

with the lead stylist, it helped me learn how to style clothing and how to put all the concepts together. It was a lot of fun and exciting. I loved every minute!"

When Maria graduated from college, she found herself in the middle of the nation's economic downturn of 2009. "Now that I was out of school, my student loan payments were coming due," she remembers. "As stylists, we worked a lot, but we did not get paid until two months later. She needed to supplement her income, so she got a job as an assistant pattern maker. (Thanks, mom!) She was able to parlay her intern experience into a great job with Thomas Pink, a British shirtmaker established in London owned by luxury goods conglomerate, LVMH headquartered in Paris. She started as a part-time sales associate and worked her way up to store manager. They moved her to New York City in August 2011 to open their new concept stores.

Over the next several years, Maria would embark on a wild and successful ride in the world of high-fashion retail — that led her to gain much success in New York City. In the process, she worked for such giants as LVMH, Salvatore Ferragamo & Bloomingdales. In fact, she even managed her own stores and worked on her art. She won many awards including, "Highest Performing store in US and Canada." She even hosted her own art exhibit to showcase her work.

COMING HOME

New York City is a fabulous place for a young energetic and creative graduate to start out. She learned so much about the industry and herself. Think about the major moves Maria has made in her life — from Mexico to



MY EXPERIENCE IN HIGH-END RETAIL TAUGHT ME THE VALUE OF PREMIUM QUALITY PRODUCTS AND CRAFTSMANSHIP, TAILORED CUSTOMER SERVICE EXPERIENCE AND BRAND POSITIONING.



the United States – from sleepy South Carolina to the flashy lights of Miami – and then to the bright lights of one of the most famous and fast pace cities in the world – New York City. Maria, it appears, is afraid of nothing!

The up-and-down life of fashion in New York City wore on Maria. And, in 2015, she moved back to the area. She missed her family and her home state.

“Intuitively, I knew I was going to get into real estate,” Maria says. “My experience in high-end retail taught me the value of premium quality products and craftsmanship, tailored customer service experience and brand positioning. That is one of the reasons I have a good eye for the premium workmanship in a house. “

About that time, Maria’s sister, who owned a house cleaning business, was taking time off to have her baby. She gave her the opportunity to take over her cleaning business while Maria also attended school at night. Maria was never afraid of hard work and was always reaching to learn new things. Going from high-end retail in

New York City, to managing a house cleaning business was another big change of pace.

BUILDING HER BUSINESS

Maria, at a crossroad, had considered real estate, but she was not sure. She reached out to some of her previous mentors. Each one thought she could find success here. With their advice, she decided to get her real estate license and started yet, another new journey. She earned her license in 2017. Maria has always been savvy in seeking opportunities and connections to grow her business no matter what she was engaged in.

“Some of my first clients when I started in real estate, were my customers from the cleaning business, as well as family and friends,” she says. “At the same time, I also got a part-time job in retail at Chico’s as a sales associate so I could get to

know other people in the area and study my target market. I was also selling some of my art at this online luxury consignment shop-the-real-real.com and taking commissioned work. I participated in a local small artwork show and won the ‘People’s Choice Award’ on my piece.”

As Maria says, she has moved forward with courage and tenacity since then.

“I wanted to do something in sales, and I knew that real estate was my next big opportunity. This was great fit, because in involved people and sales. I had always wanted to have my own business,” she smiles. “People are my thing. I love connecting with people and learning their stories. I believe that people are one of our greatest assets in life. For everything we do in our lives, there are other people involved. My passion is simply people.”

One of her favorite people who helped Maria get her start was one of her office mates — Sales Manager and REALTOR® Gary Pelehaty who recently passed away in October. Maria credits Kemp Nash, broker in charge of Century 21 Coastal Lifestyles with taking a chance on her when she had no experience.



“Gary would challenge me, and he taught me everything about the laws

and contracts. Most importantly, he believed in me when I did not believe in myself. When he passed away, I was crushed,” she says. “I went from being a terrified new person in the business to working with 21 sellers last year. I’m sure Gary is coaching people in heaven.”

Her results have been remarkable. In fact, since starting in 2017, Maria has already amassed over \$20 million in sales volume, including nearly \$9.5 million in closed sales volume in 2020 as her first year being full time in the business.

FULFILLING LIFE

Away from work, Maria is dedicated to her family, including her mother, Juana, and her father, Isidro, along with her siblings and nephew, Chilito.

“My mother taught me that when you go through things in life, you can use those as leverage to build momentum forward, and with my father, I’ve learned an especially important lesson ... that you don’t just talk about things. You do them. He is an inspiration. When we moved here, he started with nothing, and then put me and my siblings through college and my brother through pharmacy school,” Maria says. “All of my siblings are great, hardworking go-getters. Everything I have done here is because of my family. I am grateful for all of them especially for my sister Angelina who helped me and opened a door for me.”

In her free time, Maria has a love for travel. She also has a passion for painting and following the art and fashion world.

When you meet Maria, you instantly are struck by her positive and inspiring charm ... her genuine care for people.

“I believe that, no matter what age, people always teach me something



and I hope they also learn something from me too. I try to do everything I do with all my heart and with a spirit of excellence,” Maria emphasizes. “Life is about evolving and moving forward. Be present and even the small challenges, enjoy them as nothing lasts forever. Everything in life is temporary. Like one of my favorite life coaches Tony

Robbins would say: Life does not happen to you, it happens for you.” You have the power to reinvent yourself over and over again.”

Day in and day out, those who work with Maria Mendoza see the way she cares. In the process, she helps to bring them to their next home — with style.

Quotes OF Love

HAPPY VALENTINE'S



"All you need is love. But a little chocolate now and then doesn't hurt."
— Charles Schulz

"If you would be loved, love, and be loveable."
— Benjamin Franklin



"There is only one happiness in this life, to love and be loved."
— George Sand

"Love is something sent from heaven to worry the hell out of you."
— Dolly Parton



"Love recognizes no barriers. It jumps hurdles, leaps fences, penetrates walls to arrive at its destination full of hope."
— Maya Angelou



"The giving of love is an education in itself."
— Eleanor Roosevelt



"The best and most beautiful things in this world cannot be seen or even heard, but must be felt with the heart."
— Helen Keller



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2020 IS A YEAR MANY WOULD LIKE TO FORGET, BUT FOR ANNE BOLT HITCH, BROKER IN CHARGE, AND OWNER OF THE EDGEWATER GROUP, IT WAS A MIRACLE IN THE MAKING.

Anne was raised in Augusta, GA, and graduated from Wake Forest University where she had the privilege of being a cheerleader during some of the most exciting times in ACC basketball. “It was great fun – Dean Smith, Valvano, Krzyzewski, Lefty!” She moved to the North Myrtle Beach area 30 years ago and loves her community. She supports many local charities and the missions of her church, Trinity United Methodist. Because of her husband’s heart issues, The American Heart Association has become incredibly special.

Anne happened upon a real estate career in a roundabout way. After 20 years of successfully marketing everything from investments to products on eBay, she found her passion in construction and real estate. Upon the completion of her personal home, she found herself in 2004 on a local developer’s construction team, first as an assistant, then as project manager. SC and NC real estate licenses soon followed. “I credit my parents with everything. They taught me to be motivated, enthusiastic, honest, and always have faith.”

Cindy Collins has worked with Anne since the inception of Edgewater. She met Anne while working with the same developer in 2005. They became fast friends and collaborated there for four years. Like Anne, Cindy had a wide array of jobs – radio advertising sales, club/bar manager, property manager up and down the east coast – before landing in real estate as a permanent profession. Cindy was raised in Fayetteville, NC, where she was crowned “Miss Fayetteville” and raised her five children. Myrtle Beach had been her second home for years. She said, “My parents owned condos here and I was able to come every other weekend.” Cindy moved to North Myrtle Beach permanently in 2005 and got her SC and NC real estate licenses.



Anne and Cindy are blessed to have each other. Best friends are a treasure. And look how cute they are!

Anne is married to Jim Hitch, a retired mutual fund wholesaler and former REALTOR® with Scalise Realty. Anne smiles remembering, “Jim and I were acquainted in the ’80s because we worked for the same brokerage firm in Charlotte. He was very entertaining. His personality was unforgettable.”



Anne continues, “We met again in 2009 when The Edgewater Group, including Cindy, was meeting at The Bonefish Grill and Jim’s party sat nearby. I heard a voice that I recognized from 30 years ago. I could not believe it. I looked at Cindy and said, ‘I used to work with him.’ Of course, Cindy struck up a conversation because they both had children at USC. He was living in Columbia and mentioned he *might* be interested in North Myrtle Beach real estate, so I gave him my business card. I had just launched The Edgewater Group and my focus was on my new venture, **not** dating. But three months later, we had our first date, and we celebrated our third wedding anniversary on June 30, 2020.”

Anne simply adores real estate. “What I love most about my business is building relationships. Our slogan is ‘Building Relationships That Guide You Home.’ We cherish our client base. For me it is all about faith in God (He deserves ALL the glory), believing in yourself, and having a strong work ethic. If you do those things, your business can and will flourish. Not to say that it is always easy because it is not. There certainly will be disappointments along the way with great achievements.”



...
Their dog, Sweet Baby James, rules the roost!

Cindy joined Anne at Edgewater in 2009 and they have a special bond. Cindy's friendship and work have been especially critical in the last year while Anne has been dealing with Jim's surprise heart transplant at the Mayo Clinic. Jim and Anne traveled to Jacksonville, Florida, for his transplant in May 2020 and stayed there for three months.

Jim's heart issues began twenty years ago because of Type 1 Diabetes. Following several surgeries, it became apparent around 2016 that to survive, he would need a new heart. "The evaluation process is tedious. Weeks of testing everything and interviewing with everybody from nutritionists to social workers. We were assessed three times by other institutions and were turned down each time. We never got a

complete answer as to why we were turned down, but Mayo was our fourth and **final** hope. We spent two weeks last February being evaluated at Mayo following an introduction by dear friends who had received a kidney transplant there. We had wanted to be closer to home, but when we got the call that we were under consideration, we were ecstatic!"

Jim was put on a waitlist to see if he could improve on his own through Cardiac Rehab, but his health deteriorated. At the end of April, his medical team suggested hospital admission until he received a heart. The hospital wait was an unknown. Anne recalls, "We didn't know if we would be there for three months or three years. We prayed and found peace knowing that God is in control. I immediately secured an apartment

close to Mayo that allowed for 30-day notices. My next step was to meet with Cindy."

On May 5, Jim and Anne arrived in Jacksonville and Jim was admitted to the hospital. From that point, communication and work consisted of a laptop, iPhone, and Facetime. "I cannot say enough about Cindy," Anne says emphatically. "She is not only my best friend, but she is my angel and my rock. She did everything that needed to be done. She Facetimed with me and our clients, she did our banking, she showed properties and went to closings for both of us, and the list goes on. She was doing it all during a crazy, busy summer! She and her sister even traveled to Jacksonville to help bring us home. God blessed me when He put her in my life. I am so very thankful!"

May 27, 2020, will be remembered forever. Anne continues, "Jim's doctor surprised us midday and said they had an 'offer' and Jim was a good match. We had hoped since he was a rare AB+ blood type that he would be considered sooner rather than later." After hearing the doctor's opinion, Jim fervently said, "Let's Roll!"

Anne remembers, "For the next 10 hours we laughed, cried, reminisced, and planned for the future. It is just mind-boggling – everything that goes through your head." He was wheeled into surgery that night about 11:00 pm with 15 nurses lining the hall giving him a standing ovation. What a great send off!

The OR nurse called Anne at 4:17 am and said that the new heart was in and beating. The surgeon called at 5:30 am saying the surgery was complete, and Jim was doing well! Anne tearfully recalls crying uncontrollably for hours. "Tears of relief, joy, but most importantly gratitude. Gratitude for God's presence and His blessings."

"Gratitude for the donor's family. While we had been given another opportunity at life, another family was grieving the loss of a loved one. I had so much gratitude for the doctors and medical staff, and gratitude for the endless support and prayers that we had received from our families, friends, our clients, and fellow REALTORS®." Jim, too, was filled with gratitude as he posted on Facebook, "My loving thanks to Anne who has borne the brunt of this trial heroically. I am not the easiest patient. Who would have guessed that?"

On June 8, Jim was released from the hospital and on July 26 they were able to return to North Myrtle Beach following the required Cardiac Rehab

and much improvement. "The Mayo Clinic is amazing!"

With regard to organ donation, Anne pleads, "Organ transplantation is the gift of life from another who has lost theirs. Please consider and make your wishes known. Put it on your driver's license. Our friend lost a 22-year-old cousin recently and his parents donated seven organs. Seven! Seven people who have been given a blessing of life! We learned while waiting for a heart that 250,000 people need a heart each year and about 2,500 people receive them. What a statistic!"

Life for the Hitch's has forever changed. There will be immunosuppressant drugs taken for the rest of Jim's life on a strict schedule. A compromised immune system, especially during COVID, means a lot of seclusion. No fresh fruit or vegetables at a restaurant are allowed because sanitization measures are unknown. Negative reactions with medication mean grapefruit and pomegranate are forbidden. No more oysters, sushi, or Ahi Tuna – some of Jim's favorites.

But as Jim says "I am so very thankful for this second chance at life. My personal trainer is pushing me to do things I have never done before. I am trying to give back. I walked my first 5K a few months ago for **Heart Walk Heroes** because I know that with **every** step, I am making a difference in another's life. When combined with other Heroes across the nation, we have an even greater impact through donations and research toward curing heart disease and stroke."

Have a heart this Valentine's month! You can help by contacting the American Heart Association at www.heart.org.



Jim getting admitted to Mayo – he does not know how long he will be here awaiting a new heart.



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BRITTANY & KEVIN FOY



LEADING BY EXAMPLE

Written By: **Dave Danielson**
 Photography By: **Jeremy Kierez** - High Tide Content

Leadership comes in many forms. But one of the most powerful is when it's carried out in a way that is inspiring to others.

That describes the way Kevin and Brittany Foy make a difference in the world.

Brittany is a Broker, and Kevin is a REALTOR® with Beach Realty Group (BRG). Together, they are truly leading by example.

“We are often helping someone with the largest purchase or sale of their life. We consider that to be a huge responsibility,” Brittany emphasizes. “At the same time, we believe agents should be well-trained professionals. Doing things the right way whether

it is how you treat people or how you write a contract matters to us. We do our best to lead by example.”

SHARING THE SAME JOURNEY

Kevin and Brittany first met when they were in college and were servers in the same restaurant.

They were of like minds, as they wanted to focus on learning about the economics of the real world in addition to their college studies. They both had an interest in real estate investing, even before they became licensed. In college, they lived without a TV and spent the majority of their time reading and researching various topics. They found they were particularly interested with those in the financial

education arena. Brittany says, “We were nervous to invest, but we jumped in and it worked out. We learned a lot and still own those first books we bought.”

“We got into real estate because we started buying rentals when we were in school,” Brittany explains. “I fell in love with the business. I was pursuing a business degree in school. When we both graduated and moved to Myrtle Beach, I got my real estate license and started with Coldwell Banker. My mentor was Dennis Blanton and no-one kept better records than he

“**WE HAVE A GREAT COLLABORATION. WE ENJOY THE PEOPLE WE GET A CHANCE TO WORK WITH. IT'S ABOUT MORE THAN JUST THE HOUSES,” KEVIN SAYS. “THROUGH TIME, THE PEOPLE WE WORK WITH BECOME OUR FRIENDS.”**”

did. He taught me about contracts, but was also a very good friend to me in the business.”

In time, Kevin joined Brittany on the path to real estate. Medicine had been his first career choice when in college. “I had been a Physician’s Assistant in the U.S. Army for eight years after graduate school,” Kevin recalls.

After serving his country and making an incredibly positive impact in the U.S. Army with his medical license as an Army officer, Kevin looked ahead to his next steps. There are many great stories around the paths that REALTORS® have

taken on the way to finding their dream career in real estate. There are not too many paths though, that lead to this industry after being highly trained and educated as a medical professional. Brittany is very happy that Kevin found one.

“Brittany was getting busier and busier as a REALTOR®, and I thought it would be good to come over and help so that she wouldn’t get buried with the amount of new business that was coming in.” Kevin already had a passion for real estate and knew they would enjoy working together to grow their business.

The path these two share in life and business has been a rewarding one together.

“Some people stray away from working together,” Brittany says. “But we truly are good at different things, and the way we complement each other has actually been a huge help for us. What Kevin is great at I’m not, and vice versa.”

MAKING AND BUILDING CONNECTIONS

When it comes to the drive they feel for what they do, it all starts with connections.

As Brittany says, “I work with sellers the majority of the time now. I just love helping them achieve their goals and focusing on that end of the business. I also love helping the agents on our team, and seeing them grow and be a part of that.”

“We have a great collaboration. We enjoy the people we get a chance to work with. It’s about more than just the houses,” Kevin says. “Through time, the people we work with become our friends.”

TEAM TRIUMPHS

Their business — and results — have grown steadily through time. In fact, in 2020, Brittany and Kevin worked with their team to achieve over \$30 million in sales volume.

“One thing that is central to our success in life is our faith,” Kevin says. “Our faith in God plays a big role in our day-to-day lives.”

Success begins with teamwork. Kevin and Brittany are quick to shine the spotlight on the members of their team, including nine Buyer’s Agents and two Administrative professionals.

“We do a lot of collaboration, we laugh a lot and we do a lot of team events. It’s important to us to have that



Family is everything to us!



“**WE DID NOT REALIZE HOW REWARDING IT WOULD BE TO HELP BUYERS AND SELLERS MEET THEIR GOALS WHEN WE FIRST STARTED IN THE BUSINESS. IT IS AN EXCITING FEELING AND IS A GREAT MOTIVATOR FOR US.**”

4-year-old son, Jackson, and their 2-year-old daughter, Olivia.

connection,” Brittany says. “We are not just a handful of agents thrown together. We truly are a team.”

“Starting a team has taught us many lessons along the way. We firmly believe a team should be a group of people that truly work and grow together, rather than just agents who join forces to combine production,” Kevin emphasizes. “Since opening BRG Carolina Forest, we are now able to partner with agents and other teams. We have plenty of room for these agents and teams without them necessarily being part of our personal team. It has been rewarding to collaborate with these agents. We want to continue in that healthy growth of adding the right people for the right reasons.”

Brittany and Kevin are also appreciative of the brokerage and environment at BRG Real Estate. They are incredibly happy to have landed here. The leadership at BRG, including Owners/Founders Darren Woodard, Jeff Casterline and Brianne Bender, get the credit for starting such a great company.

LIFE’S FOUNDATIONS

Away from work, family is at the center of life for Kevin and Brittany, including their children — their

Brittany and Kevin also give a lot of credit to the family foundations that were built through their parents.

“My parents were a tremendous influence on me. They were the best parents I could possibly imagine for myself. We know that it is a huge blessing to have parents who are involved and care about you and we don’t take that for granted,” Kevin smiles. “We were always going on trips, having fun, playing in the yard, or working at my parents’ office when I was a child.”

“My mother has influenced me greatly. I learned about having a strong work ethic from her as well as perseverance. She always reminded me in tough times to keep going and that things would get better,” Brittany says. “Also, my sister, Crystal, was like a second mom to me and helped shape my views on the world through travel and sharing amazing experiences with me.”

Kevin and Brittany also have a 10-year-old Pekingese dog named Bentley.

“In our free time, one of the things we love to do is playing tourist with our kids and going to places like the aquarium and state parks,” Kevin says. “We also cook and travel together often.”

In addition, Brittany has a strong interest in doing research, while Kevin enjoys spending free moments painting.

Giving back is also a big part of their lives, with Grand Strand Miracle League, Convoy of Hope, Backpack Buddies and Operation Christmas Child being among their favorite groups to support.

DISCOVERING NEW REWARDS

As Brittany and Kevin consider their path together in life and business, they continue to discover new rewarding aspects each day.

“We did not realize how rewarding it would be to help buyers and sellers meet their goals when we first started in the business. It is an exciting feeling and is a great motivator for us,” Brittany says. “As team leaders, it has been just as rewarding to help agents learn and achieve more.”

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