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If you are interested in contributing or nominating REALTORS® for certain stories, please email us at [gina.miller@realproducersmag.com](mailto:gina.miller@realproducersmag.com).



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# MEET THE BATON ROUGE

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# ANTICIPATION



We love any chance we get to gather with our family in Texas, but as much fun as we have, leaving is never easy... for any of us. On our most recent visit, we barely made it out of the driveway when my phone rang... "Mom, Luke is having a really hard time. Can you come back for a minute?"

I'll be right there. I walked back in my daughter's house to find the sweetest 5-year-old boy with crocodile tears streaming down his face as he struggled to catch his breath in between sobs.

How on God's green earth am I supposed to drive back to Baton Rouge?! Distance is hard on adults, but we understand "I'll see you again", whereas children have yet to fully grasp the concept of time.

Oh Luke. I'm so sorry. I miss you, too. Every. Day.

Let's think of ways to stay connected. We decide on handwritten letters. Some good old-fashioned letters tucked inside envelopes with stamps that travel across the miles.

I promised I would write the first letter...and I did, but the letter did not arrive.

I mean it did eventually, but oh my goodness, the waiting was excruciating. It took 3 weeks! Do you know how long 3 weeks is to a five-year-old?

Forever. That's how long. The delay? A tiny mint. Yep.

I always carry mints in my purse and Luke will ask several times a day if he can have a mint. I am his grandmother, so the answer is always, yes. What kind of grandmother would I be if I said, no?! Sometimes he even gets ownership of the tin. That is a big deal to him...and to me, because it is to him. So, it's only natural that I would place a mint in his handwritten letter. Something to make it personal. Well, let me tell you that little extra-ness cost us time and money. Three weeks and fifteen cents. And it cost the nerves of a mom that had to answer fifteen times a day that the letter had yet to arrive. *Sorry, Paige.* The letter was waiting at the post office and would not be delivered because there are rules and the rules said it exceeded the weight limit allowed by my forever stamp valued at fifty-five cents.

Rules are rules. It takes me 11 hours without stopping to get from my house to his. So, I think seventy cents to deliver a piece of me that will one day be a memory, across those miles and hours is justified and magical. Mail is magical. It requires a little patience, but patience is a virtue. If you want to win my heart...write me a letter.

"The idea of waiting for something makes it more exciting."

- Andy Warhol

I hope you're enjoying the waiting on and receiving of this publication in your mailbox. This is our 11th issue! We celebrate our One Year Anniver-

sary of Baton Rouge Real Producers in just two months! Remember, it's because of our awesome Preferred Partners that any of this happens! We are so grateful for them and love connecting you with them so reach out if you need an introduction! Connecting is what we do!

We were happy to have several new businesses join us for this March edition. Businesses first recommended by some top producing REALTORS® who know how important it is to work with the absolute best!

**Say HELLO to:**  
**Brook North with Magnolia Plumbing**  
**Matt Carr and his team at D.R. Horton**  
**Henrietta Williams with Eminent Creations & Marketing**  
**Kirk Robertson with PhocusFilms**  
**Caprice Cline and her sweet family at Cypress Roofing**  
**Jeff LeSaicherre and everyone at Fleur de Lis Title**

We are growing and my heart is full. I pray the anticipation of this publication in your mailbox each month half matches that of my grandson waiting on his first handwritten letter from his Louisiana Grandma... *aka Bunny.*

Happy March,  
**Gina**



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►► broker spotlight

By Breanna Smith  
Photos by Aaron Cox

Engel & Völkers

AMANDA  
PARFAIT



success. She believed in Amanda, making her believe in herself.

“We all know once you truly believe in yourself, anything is possible. Encouragement and accountability are key! She has never stopped believing in me!” Amanda said.

Amanda now provides the same to agents, who are known as advisors at Engel & Völkers. She provides a foundation of encouragement, accountability, education and training to build future leaders.

**Building the Best in Others**

Amanda has a passion for negotiation and empowering people to strive for what they desire. Those driving forces have made her a brilliant broker – a Real Producer. It takes faith to step out and do the hard work necessary to make dreams come true. She has a strong desire for helping others while amplifying the natural abilities of her advisors through daily and weekly one-on-one coaching sessions.

“We work as a team in support of each other’s wins and challenges every day,” she said. “When we have wins, we celebrate them! Challenges bring priceless education and learning opportunities, which everyone embraces. We take it one step further and create consistency and intentional strategies which are the keys to their success.”

Amanda Parfait decided to take her real estate business to the next level by investing in the Engel & Völkers franchise for the Greater Baton Rouge area. Engel & Völkers – a privately owned, German firm known for its global expertise in luxury real estate. Their vision is to drive thousands of professionals who represent Engel & Völkers worldwide and link together the aspirations of discerning individuals around the world, be it in private or business context –with total passion. To achieve this vision, they have established a set of core values: competence, exclusivity and passion.

After many years of being in an executive corporate leadership role as the supervisor of multi-family, commercial and short term rental properties, starting a real estate company was a natural progression in Amanda’s business plan. She learned from the best – Beth Kobeszko, a dear friend and Amanda’s first broker who founded the Slidell and Mandeville areas first Engel & Völkers brokerage in 2016. Beth has encouraged Amanda since she was licensed in 2002, and with her expertise, pushed her towards

In her free time, she soaks up quality time with her husband, children, grandchildren, and their Goldendoodle, Stella Grace. She and her family enjoy fun on the river in their boat, traveling, being involved in church and her community. Her daily love of reading, listening to podcasts, and tuning into Clubhouse Audio App, an audio-based social network with voice chat rooms full of people having conversations on any topic under the sun. Amanda’s interest lies in coaching, real estate, and developing leaders. She’s wholly committed to helping others make the best life for themselves. “Mindset matters! If we could see ourselves how other people see us, we’d realize that our destiny and purpose is much greater,” she said. And that’s the message she works to spread – in the office, around the dinner table, and in chat rooms on Clubhouse.

She encourages her advisors to work toward their unique dreams and goals serving as a mentor and guide throughout their journey. Amanda offers business planning and ongoing coaching for advi-





RIBBON CUTTING. The brokerage celebrated the grand opening of its first Baton Rouge office at the Mall of Louisiana on December 3, 2020.

sors to determine their goals and what it will take for them to reach them. As an advisor at Engel & Volkers, it is important to know your Why.

**Find Your Fit**

Every real estate agent should find the best brokerage for them before signing on the dotted line. Amanda insists on real estate agents interviewing at least three brokers before “hanging up your license with that broker.” She knows what it feels like to fit – and how it feels when you don’t. “At Engel & Völkers we recognize that everyone is not for us, and we may not be for them, and that’s ok,” she said.

The brokerage celebrated the grand opening of its first Baton Rouge office at the Mall of Louisiana on December 3, 2020. The trendy and modern,

yet cozy, space is situated adjacent to the Apple Store in The Boulevard shops. The completion of the office marked Amanda’s first commercial build-out – and she nailed it. “I have poured my heart and soul into making sure this brokerage is successful and introduced to the market on a very high level,” she said.

The response to the grand opening event was remarkable. More than 100 people gathered outside, and socially-distanced, as she cut the ribbon on Engel & Völkers of Baton Rouge.

“That shows me the success that’s to come.”

Since opening, the brokerage’s team of advisors has grown from eight to more than twenty. The team will cap out around 50 advisors. She is curating a

team destined for huge accomplishments because she’s fully committed to providing the resources, coaching and education they need to conquer their goals.

“If you plan to be in this for the long haul, come fully prepared to hone your skills, education and ability to serve the client,” she said. “It is your clients’ expectation and your reputation! Our training, robust technology package, marketing capabilities, and global network help our advisors competently meet a client’s real estate needs no matter how unique. Clients can expect a customized strategy and specialized services that work exclusively for them.”

Amanda lives by the motto: “Just remember: The people that say ‘your dreams are impossible’ have already quit on theirs.” –Grant Cardone.



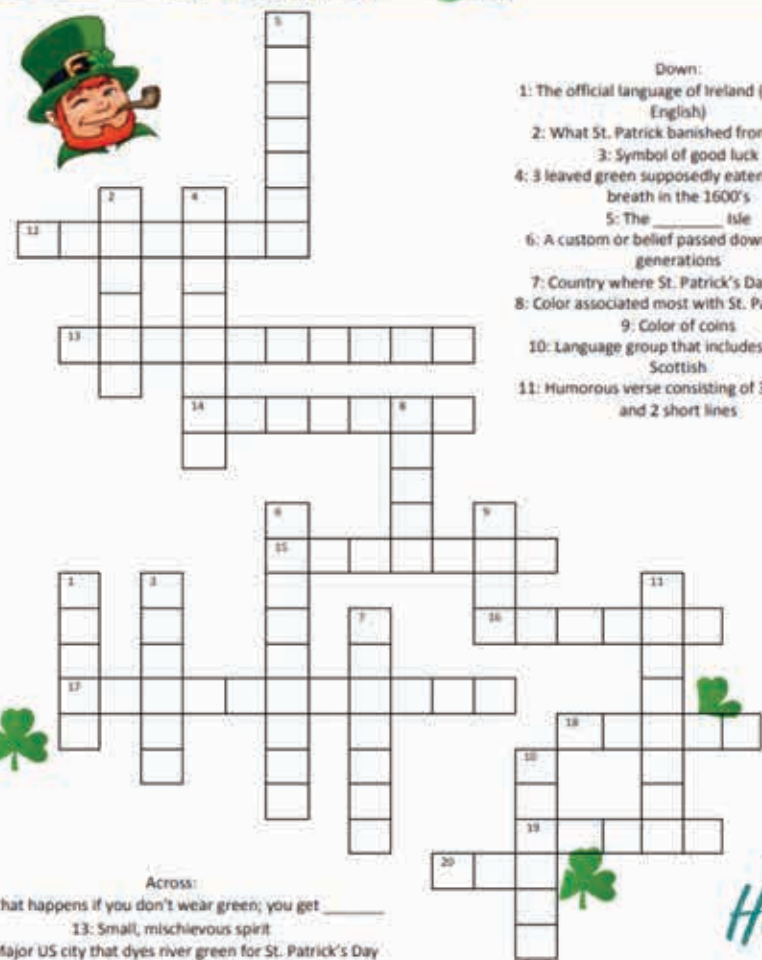
“ We work as a team in support of each other’s wins and challenges every day. ”





# REAL PRODUCERS CHALLENGE

Find all of the answers in the crossword puzzle, snap a photo of the completed puzzle, and text or email to Anthony Williams or Nathan Tallo with Eustis Mortgage (by the end of March) for a chance to win a \$50 Visa gift card!



- Across:
- 12: What happens if you don't wear green; you get \_\_\_\_\_
  - 13: Small, mischievous spirit
  - 14: Major US city that dyes river green for St. Patrick's Day
  - 15: What you follow to get to the pot of gold
  - 16: Capital of Ireland
  - 17: Day of the month that St. Patrick's Day falls on
  - 18: Month that St. Patrick's Day is in
  - 19: Having good luck
  - 20: What you find at the end of the rainbow; \_\_\_ of gold

- Down:
- 1: The official language of Ireland (along with English)
  - 2: What St. Patrick banished from Ireland
  - 3: Symbol of good luck
  - 4: 3 leaved green supposedly eaten to freshen breath in the 1600's
  - 5: The \_\_\_\_\_ Isle
  - 6: A custom or belief passed down through generations
  - 7: Country where St. Patrick's Day started
  - 8: Color associated most with St. Patrick's Day
  - 9: Color of coins
  - 10: Language group that includes Irish and Scottish
  - 11: Humorous verse consisting of 3 long lines and 2 short lines

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▶ rising star

By Breanna Smith  
Photos by Aaron Cox

# Joanie MONTECARO

Energized & Prioritized



“  
Gratitude is  
essential to  
happiness  
and joy.”

After nearly three decades in the banking industry, Joanie Netterville Montelaro joined RE/MAX Professional under broker Lisa Landers. The genuine spark in Montelaro is evident, even upon first meeting her. She’s full of energy, zeal and understanding and lucky for us, she has a passion for sharing it.

#### The Best of Both Worlds

Joanie is first and foremost a mother to her son Christian, Jr. and daughter Ainsley Dubroc. Her desire to spend more time with them as they entered the critical middle and high school years pushed her to move from banking to being a full-time mom.

“After a few years of that, I said ‘okay, they seem to be fine,’” she said, laughing. And she wanted to get back to what she knew – hard work with good people. She’s not one to make a plan, or even a statement, without thinking it through first.

“I thought, what can I do where I can have the best of both – where I can still earn a living and be around people and work with people. Banking is all I’ve ever done, so what can I do?”

She vetted every idea that came to mind, looking for ways to use her finance degree from LSU without punching a clock so she could be there for every sports game, dance recital and college visit. “I kept coming back to real estate.”

When she finally vocalized what she was thinking to her husband, Danny, he was immediately on board with her plan. Without a doubt, he is her biggest supporter, she said.

“He’s a big, big cheerleader,” she said.

Joanie made a plan, got to studying and has since risen to the top of the Greater Baton Rouge real estate market.

Since working from home together amid the coronavirus pandemic, Danny has a newfound appreciation for REALTORS®.

“Once the pandemic started, and we were both working out of the house he said ‘man, you work hard!’”

#### Energized by Others

Joanie is most energized when she’s around others, especially during her high-intensity interval training (HIIT) workouts at Iron Tribe Fitness.

“I feed off of other people’s energy, so I have to be in a group. I can’t go to the gym – well, I could – but I’m not



•••

inclined to go to the gym and just exercise by myself.”

After signing up for a six-week challenge, she thought she would complete the challenge and move on. Wrong. She truly found her tribe there and now can't imagine working out anywhere else.

“My tribe is almost as essential to my mental well being as prayer.”

#### Priorities

Thankful, Grateful and Blessed is a motto Joanie lives by. She carves out time each morning for prayer, a devotional and to jot down notes in her gratitude journal, a process often

accompanied by a steaming cup of coffee. She focuses on being thankful for the little things – moments with her family, quiet mornings and busy afternoons. She's thankful for all of it and blessed because of it.

“Gratitude is essential to happiness and joy,” she said.

Right now, Joanie is most thankful for the time she has with her family all under one roof as Christian, a senior at Catholic High School, prepares for college. He's eyeing LSU, Alabama and Baylor. Joanie, an LSU alumna and Baton Rouge native, has a clear favorite, but she'll wave a Crimson flag if it means supporting her son.

She's been listening to and loving the *Hustle Humbly* podcast by Alissa Jenkins and Katy Caldwell, two local top producers who discuss all things real estate, but above all else, how to foster community over competition.

“You have to feed your soul good stuff because it's so easy to get depleted,” Joanie said.

Joanie keeps her mind focused on gratitude – a sustaining and empowering snack for the brain – as often as possible. It's no wonder she was named an Influential Woman In Business by Baton Rouge Business Report.





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# Behind the Scenes with AARON COX

**Name:** Aaron Cox

**Age:** 29

**Education**

Associates in Business from Bossier Parish Community College

**How many years have you been in the photography industry?** 5

**Other occupations?**

Yes. A few. Videography, both commercial and weddings.

During the summer, as a side hustle, I work for a friend of mine cutting lawns. Income diversity has been a big part of being able to do what I love!

I'm also part-time staff at LifePoint Church in Prairieville.

Serving at a local church has always been one of the biggest priorities for me. I'm the Technical Director, meaning I manage and serve on the technical teams such as the media, sound, lighting, and live stream teams.

**Any Hobbies**

I love film photography. It can become expensive very quickly with the cost of development, but to me it's the

most rewarding thing, to capture an image and not be able to see it until development. It requires you to slow down when shooting. Very different than digital where you can rapid-fire all you want at no extra cost. I also love the colors of film and the process of it altogether. It feels more real and special to me.

I enjoy camping, hiking and traveling and I also play drums and have played in church since I was 13 years old.

**Favorite Book, Podcast, Music, Movie**

**Book:** One of the most challenging and inspiring books I ever read is *Miracle Morning Millionaires*. I mention this book too because I feel like the people reading this magazine could most benefit from it. It focuses on the power of best utilizing your time in the mornings, and how your morning routine has the power to change your life.

**Music:** I love so many artists and genres it's hard to pick a favorite, but I love listening to jazz. That's probably what I listen to most. Artists like Glenn Miller, Miles Davis, and Phineas Newborn JR. I keep the local jazz station on most of the time in my truck, 90.3 FM.

**Movie:** I don't watch a ton of movies but I love anything Wes Anderson. His color palettes and cinematography are actually one of my biggest sources of inspiration for photography.

**Quote or Scripture:**

Jeremiah 29:11 "For I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope."

"Successful people do consistently what others do occasionally."

-Craig Groeschel

**What do you love about photography?**

It's one of the biggest ways I express myself as a person, especially my film work. It's my favorite way of "creating something."

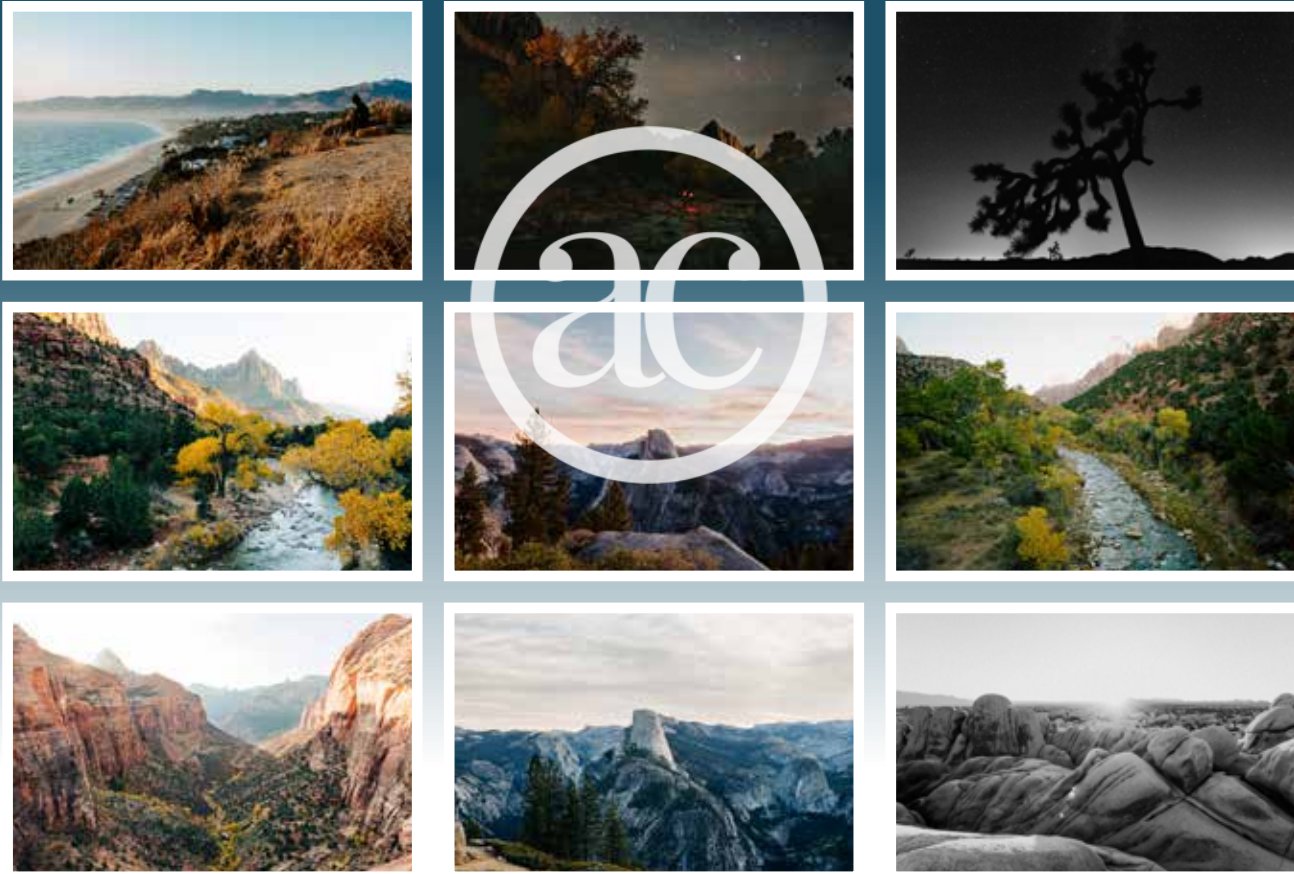
Another thing I love is being able to capture organic moments. I love capturing happiness and those "in-between" moments in a session where a genuine laugh or smile comes out without having to stage it

**Who/what is your inspiration?**

Film Photography would have to be one of the biggest inspirations. It was film that got me into photography to







“ Film Photography would have to be one of the biggest inspirations. It was film that got me into photography to begin with. The colors. The process. The waiting.

begin with. The colors. The process. The waiting. There was an Australian Photographer, Tim Coulson, that I found on Instagram that made me finally give in and buy a film camera. Although he's not mainly a film shooter, It was some rolls that he shared back then that moved me probably more than any other photos I had seen before.

**Do you have a favorite shot? (Can you share it?)**

So hard to pick one! But I'll say a film photo of a friend of mine looking up at El Capitan in Yosemite Valley.

**Any funny stories about a particular session you'd like to share?**

Sondra Richard climbing on top of her truck for a photo without me asking!

**What's in your camera bag?**

All Canon Cameras:  
Eos R  
Eos RP  
Eos 3 (film)  
Lenses:  
Sigma art 50mm 1.4  
Canon 24-70 L 2.8  
Canon 100mm 2.8  
Canon 16-35 L 2.8

**You can have dinner with one famous person. Who is it, where do you go and what do you eat?**

Shaq and Papa Johns Pizza for the irony of it.

**What would be a dream photography assignment?**

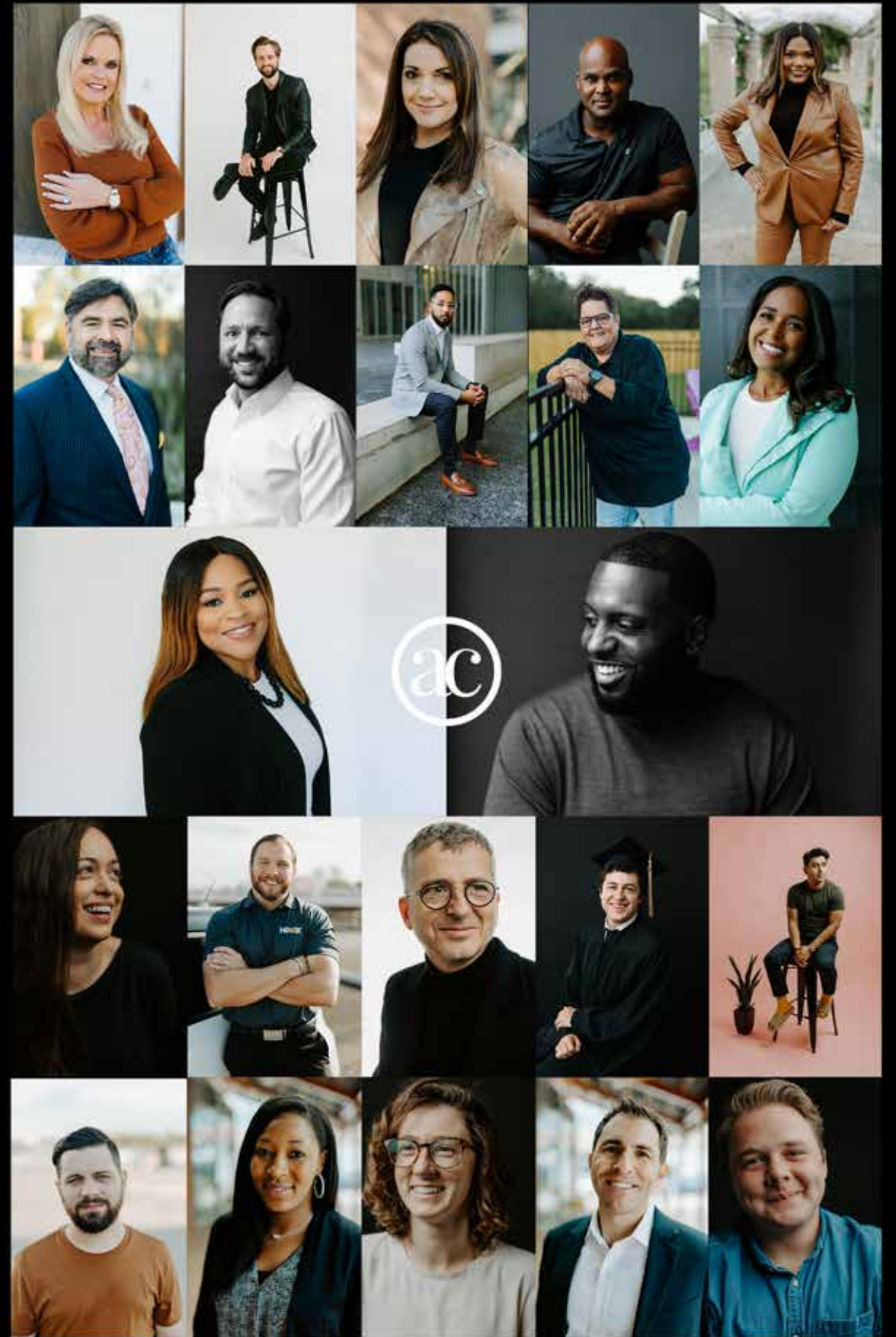
Just being able to travel, take landscape photos, and sell them as fine art prints.

**Where do you see yourself in five years?**

Still doing what I love and enjoying life with who I love! Married, hopefully with kids, a golden doodle, and a house with a fenced back yard.

**What is the best thing about being the photographer for BRRP?**

The opportunity to hang out with some of the most successful people in Baton Rouge! REALTORS® are some of the most hard-working people I've ever met. They inspire me.





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By Breanna Smith  
Photos by Aaron Cox



# MARQUITA ROBINSON

Marquita Robinson keeps God at the center of her life – she seeks to follow His plan, and that has never let her down. When her husband of 14 years, Willie Robinson, ventured out into a career in real estate in 2003, she supported him, as the loan originator and administrator. She loved her supportive role, but God had bigger plans for their business.

#### Called to Serve

You know it when you first meet Marquita – her purpose is to serve others, and she takes that calling very seriously. During the 2008 mortgage crisis, Marquita returned as a full-time employee with the Ascension Parish School Board. With their three children at home, she knew she needed to provide a stable income while Willie continued to pursue his career in real estate.

“Things didn’t go as planned, of course, but there was never a time we went without,” she said. “He showed His faithfulness throughout the trials in the real estate industry that we were able to overcome and continue on.”

That’s when she knew they were in the right place.

“We believe that if we take care of the people God has enabled us to serve, He will take care of us, meeting all of our needs.”

In 2012, Willie opened Ascension Realty of Louisiana and Marquita returned to help him in the financial and administrative areas of the business.

“God saw Willie’s passion for helping others, so He put me in a position where I could assist him with those efforts. In doing so, it ignited something

within me that I wouldn’t have found otherwise because I wouldn’t have done it myself. I had the opportunity to help him through that transition as well as find what I love to do.”

Marquita became a licensed REALTOR® four years ago and hasn’t looked back. Her favorite part of real estate is building relationships with clients that last long after the transaction is complete. They host giveaways and offer free assistance for people who don’t qualify for homes – because their ultimate goal is helping others accomplish homeownership, not reaching a sales volume goal.

Whether it’s a phone call to ask about crown molding or educating people about building credit,



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“ God saw Willie’s passion for helping others, so He put me in a position where I could assist him with those efforts. In doing so, it ignited something within me that I wouldn’t have found otherwise because I wouldn’t have done it myself. I had the opportunity to help him through that transition as well as find what I love to do. ”

Marquita feels blessed to be a blessing, no matter how, why or when. Sometimes, the when is at 2 a.m., and she doesn’t mind one bit.

“I work best when the house is quiet and everyone is asleep,” she said with a chuckle. Commitment to service goes beyond the business for the Robinsons – it’s who they are at home, too. Marquita and Willie have instilled a desire to serve their three children, Jamilyn, 20, Willie, Jr., 16, and Amyri, 12.

In 2017, Willie and Willie, Jr. began the BLUE Foundation. BLUE stands for Building Leaders Up Everyday.

“It began when Willie and our son Willie Jr. decided to go out and mow the yards of single moms, widows and disabled veterans’ the summer of 2017,” Marquita said. “They’ve been doing this every summer since.”

And the movement has grown, with more kids signing up to mow yards and give back to their community.

The program is designed to equip young men with the spirit to serve, care, give and to be considerate of other people. The Robinsons believe that by doing that, young men will become better people and better leaders of the future. Today, the BLUE

Foundation Summer Program has mowed more than 50 yards and developed a mentoring program for participants.

**God’s Help**

Everyone needs a hand at one time or another, but when you have raised a business from its infancy – pouring your heart, soul, blood, sweat and tears into it along the way – it can be difficult to let someone help you. Marquita was used to dotting all of the i’s and crossing the t’s of Ascension Realty of Louisiana.

“We always, always are very protective of our baby,” she said.

She was reluctant to let anyone handle the administrative part of the business.

“I went for the longest trying to do everything myself – and, of course, it’s humanly impossible once you get to a certain point.”

Yet again, God’s plan prevailed.

While shopping at Tanger Outlet, Marquita stopped to use the restroom. Public restrooms are often the last place Marquita wants to be, and certainly the last place anyone expects to find a blessing – but she did.



The Robinsons: Amyri, Marquita, Willie, Willie Jr., & Jamilyn

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Noticing how clean the facilities were, she stopped a woman outside pushing a cart of cleaning supplies and asked if she was available to clean homes or an office. The woman gave Marquita her daughter's cell phone number, and a few months later, the mother and daughter duo came to clean Ascension Realty of Louisiana. Annette Flores, the woman's daughter, asked Willie if they were hiring. Marquita said no, but she was willing to meet with her.

"I set up the meeting and the next day we hired her on – and the next week, she started. It has been phenomenal to have someone you can trust to do things in a way that you can do it – sometimes even better," Marquita said, laughing. "I have been blown away. A lesson learned in that is to allow God to move and create space for you to grow in every aspect of life."

**Being Present is The Gift**

For Marquita, everything has come full circle. She has always defined success as being a blessing to others. She planned to support Willie behind the scenes, but God's plan was better. Now, they're helping more people than they ever thought possible – all while being there for their kids, which has always been priority number one.

"We both came from single-parent homes, so we understand the importance of being there for our children, with their recreations and fostering great relationships with each of our kids and spending that much needed time with one another," she said.

Marquita ranked #21 in the 2020 production standings in the Greater Baton Rouge area and #3 in regional sales for DR Horton.

**"I'm a firm believer that when you are truly operating in your gift, God allows things to flourish. In our case, to an extent, we cannot even take credit for."**



We FEARLESSLY approach each day knowing that we have each other's back and GOD by our side. We serve one another and our clients SELFLESSLY. We understand that we cannot be EASILY OFFENDED and we must be able to accept constructive criticism, as we grow together and as a team. We know that love NEVER FAILS – our love for one another will push us to the highest of heights, for we are better together. Lastly, we know that GOD's love is ENDLESSLY—we understand that regardless what each day may bring, GOD will see us through. We are so very grateful for HIS everlasting love that overflows through us. We were all called to be the light in this dark world and we believe that real estate is one of the ways GOD allows us to be the light!

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► healthy living  
By Shauna Osborne

# Wild & Wonderful ELDERBERRIES

The month of March brings the timely end of cold and flu season as well as the beginning of spring allergy season. And after a year like 2020, everyone is significantly more concerned with boosting those immune systems. Let's learn more about elderberry, one of the most commonly used medicinal plants in the world.

Nutritious elderberry berries and flowers come from *Sambucus nigra*, a medicinal plant native to Europe and grown worldwide that has confirmed antibacterial and antiviral properties. The berries of the *Sambucus* plant can be found in small black or blue-black bunches and should not be consumed raw (the raw berries could be poisonous, at worst, or cause digestive issues, at the least). Elderberry is generally consumed through syrups

(raw elderberry syrup is the most potent preparation), lozenges, gummies, juices, jams, and teas.

While scientific research on elderberries is always ongoing, experts believe this medicinal plant shows promise in several areas of wellness, namely:

- **Nutritional content:** Elderberries are rich in vitamins and minerals, low in calories, and high in dietary fiber (over one-quarter of our recommended daily intake) and antioxidants (particularly, phenolic acids, anthocyanins, and flavanols). Elderberries are remarkably full of vitamin C, containing 6 to 35 grams per 100 grams of fruit, which accounts for up to 60% of our recommended daily intake.
- **Impact on cold and flu symptoms:** Elderberry has high bioflavonoid levels and has been shown to reduce the severity and duration of the flu, decrease pain and sinus inflammation, and reduce symptoms of upper respiratory infections.

This beneficial plant remedy slows the replication of viruses, which in turn reduces the severity of symptoms and lessens recovery time.

Elderberries have also been linked to health outcomes such as lower cholesterol and improved vision, skin, and heart health.

When available, elderberry products made locally – with local berries and local honey – are preferable, particularly when it comes to springtime allergies, as these products will contain allergens native to the region, believed to help desensitize the system and lessen allergy symptoms. Elderberry products are safe for both children and adults (though children under 1 should not consume honey); have few, if any, drug interactions; and are available widely across the U.S., from commercial products in big box stores to local concoctions at farmers' markets. As always, please consult your trusted healthcare professional before taking any new supplement.



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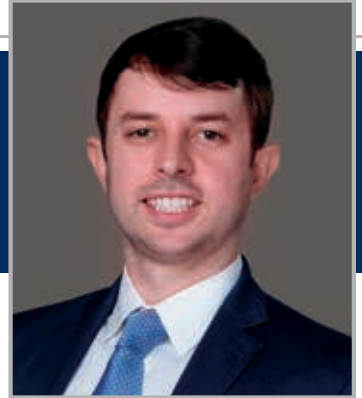
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