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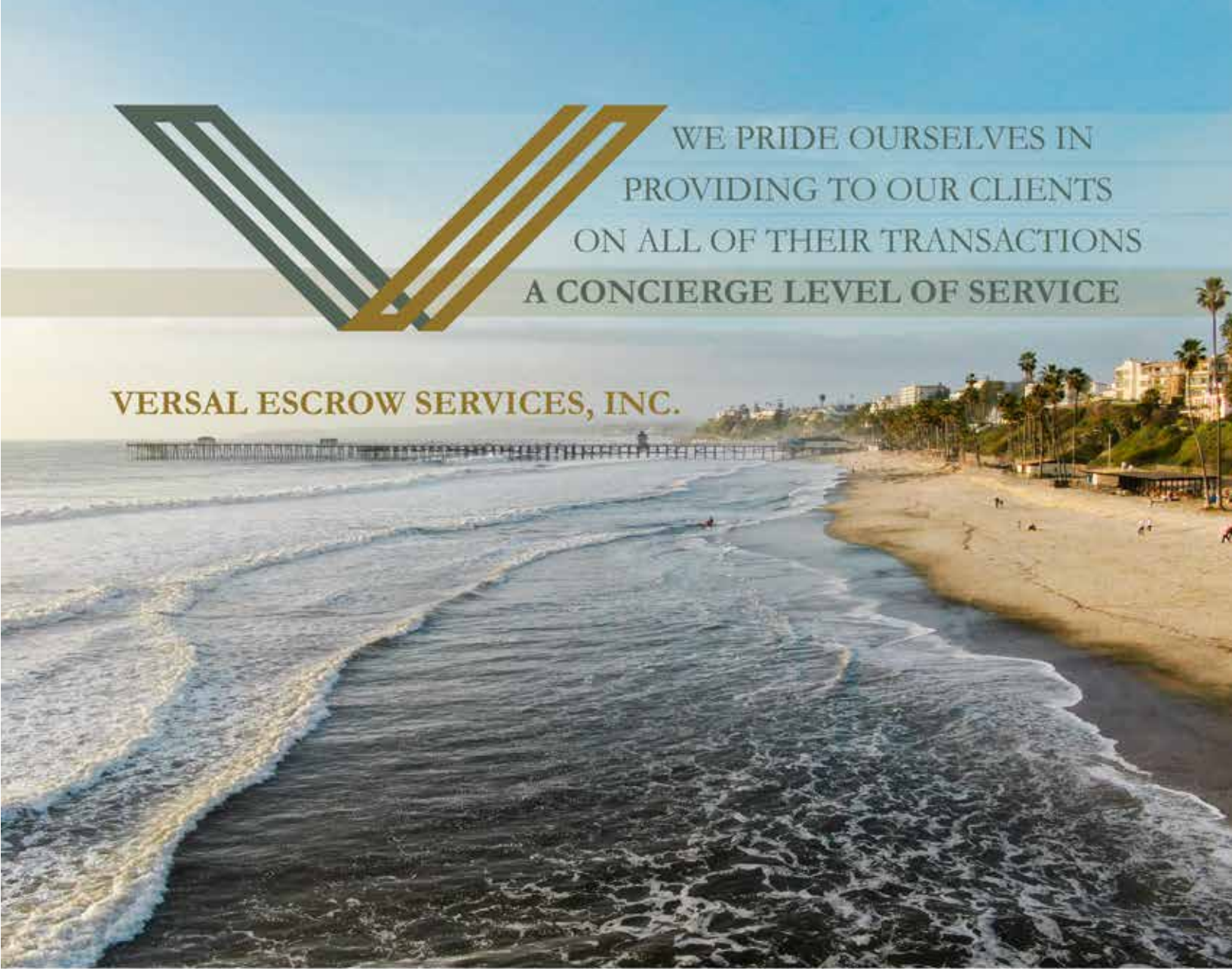


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By Lindsey Wells
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melody
SMITH

Creating a Culture of Belonging



...



Melody Smith and her husband, Dan, have created a culture of support, inspiration, and empowerment for their agents at Anvil Real Estate.

Imagine waking up every morning excited and inspired to go to work. Visualize being part of a business family that encourages growth and invests in your future, a culture-based company where your success and happiness trump all else. If you think this scenario sounds too good to be true, think again. Anvil Real Estate is a different kind of real estate firm.

It all started with a dream similar to the one above. REALTOR® Melody Smith found real estate in 2006, and a year later met her now husband, Dan, who was transitioning out of sales after a successful real estate career.

Dan sold his brokerage and retired from sales to focus on professional speaking, writing, and real estate coaching.

Meanwhile, Melody was just getting started. Throughout her 16-year career, Melody made a name for herself locally and nationally, smashing records and setting trends while delivering concierge customer service.

Melody operated as a solo agent for the first 10 years, during which she partnered with some of the industry's top brokerages, and even co-owned a successful real estate company. Melody formed a team, Melody Smith & Associates, in 2016. While the small group achieved great success over the next few years, Melody wanted more for her team members and herself. She and Dan began brainstorming a concept for a real estate firm that would empower agents individually while still giving them team-like support.

Melody's vision was a firm driven by culture, powered by cutting-edge technology, and unparalleled in its client services. That vision became a reality in 2020 when she launched Anvil Real Estate.

Anvil's motto is "Built on trust, powered with tech, and inspired by you." The company's innovative platforms, advanced technology, seamless communication tools, and specialized marketing teams are built around client benefits while keeping the agent at the forefront every step of the way.

Another aspect of Melody's new model was focused on education. Dan, a professional real estate coach and trainer since 2006, doubles as Anvil's "Captain of Culture" and success



From left to right: Anvil agents Shannon Parks, Alisa Bates, Sterling Williams, and Bryan Suarez.



Dan Smith and Alisa Bates in the green room at Anvil Real Estate's team house and cultural hub.

coach. He hosts group training sessions and weekly one-on-one coaching sessions that agents are free to attend as needed. "This is not a forced coaching program; these are opportunities that agents are free to attend, as needed, that are aimed at helping to build their business," Dan explains. "We figure out what they are working on or what they want to learn, and then we work on getting them better at it. That's my wheelhouse."

In addition to world-class coaching and training, Anvil provides an ample amount of leads to its agents so they can focus on selling. "It's very difficult as a new agent — and sometimes as an experienced agent — to get leads and find business," Melody says. "We've spent years working on getting to the point where we can deliver



• • •

leads to the agents to help them build their business and build it quickly.”

Anvil Real Estate is one of the few teams in Orange County to partner with Zillow Flex, an exclusive, invitation-only program that filters connections and leads to agents. “That’s sort of like drinking from the fire hydrant, in terms of lead flow. Our agents are hitting home runs daily,” Melody says. Zillow Flex is one of many lead channels available to Anvil agents.

While Melody is still actively selling with Melody Smith & Associates, she does not utilize Anvil’s lead sources; those are reserved for the other agents. The majority of Melody’s business comes from Nellie Gail Ranch in Laguna Hills. She has spent over a decade in the 1,407-home community, cultivating relationships and becoming the go-to resource for buyers and sellers there. “I am hyper-focused on five-star concierge service for past clients and homeowners in an exclusive equestrian community,” Melody added, “and that’s what I have tried to create for Anvil as well.”

Anvil Real Estate’s mission statement is: “In this office, we hustle. We develop skills. We achieve goals. We are successful. We work together. We are a team. We are not a family business — we are a business family.”

Culture is the cornerstone of Anvil Real Estate. It is not uncommon to see the Anvil “family” dining out together, going to a concert, or hitting a golf course for a quick round.



Sterling Williams practices his putting at the green behind the team house.

Melody and Dan took their work culture to the next level this year when they purchased a house that the Anvil team now uses as its “cultural hub,” where agents can relax, socialize or even work. The home features a kitchen, living spaces, a full bar area, a “mastermind area” for group and community meetings or brainstorming sessions, a “quiet room” with yoga mats, and an all-green media room with a podcast studio. Outside, there is a putting green, fire pit, outdoor work stations, and seating.

Clients and the general public are not allowed at the house, and the physical address will never be released to the outside world. “This is our second home, and a place for our agents to get away from the office, to get away from home if needed, or to get away from real life for a while,” Melody says. “I think our culture of belonging is more important now than ever. So I created this to give our agents an anchor — somewhere safe and cozy to escape to.”

Melody and Dan have a full house of their own with four kids, two dogs, two tortoises, and five chickens. The family also stays busy with the kids’ sporting events. And, they love to travel. “We love getting away to new spots and experiencing new cultures, either overseas or in the U.S.,” Melody says. “That’s probably our favorite thing to do.”



Melody Smith, principal at Anvil Real Estate, still sells with Melody Smith & Associates, where the majority of her business comes from Nellie Gail Ranch in Laguna Hills, an exclusive equestrian community.

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By Lindsey Wells
Photography by Bodie Kuljian



MYA LOPEZ

FARMERS INSURANCE

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Those in the insurance industry know that while not all policies are created equal, the process, from application to approval, is the same for everyone. The same documentation must be produced, and the same set of requirements met. Insurance agents are proficient at dotting their i's and crossing their t's. From the outside looking in, there's not much to see. However, the vantage point of an insurance agent is vastly different. Just ask Mya Lopez, an agent for Farmers Insurance.

Mya sees what others don't. Behind each insurance policy is a family or individual with a story. She feels honored to be just a small part of each of their stories. Mya's own life story begins in New York, where she was born before her family moved to California. Most of Mya's childhood was spent in Orange County.

Seven years ago, Mya's life (and heart) grew by one when she had her son, Ezekiel. They're a musical duo; Mya was a music major in college and knows how to play several instruments. Ezekiel is the drummer of the family. When they aren't making music, Mya and her son can often be found on the beach together or spending time with their church family.

...



A couple of years ago, Mya was working an administrative job when she realized she wanted more for herself and her son. “I’m a single mom — I was just trying to stay afloat and work a stable job to provide for him,” Mya says. So, looking for a more lucrative and flexible career, she decided to try her hand at the insurance industry.

Mya started at State Farm before moving to Farmers Insurance, where she became the protégé of a mentor agent. Mya’s goal was to open her own agency, which required her to complete a year-long training program. Needless to say, Mya excelled in insurance; she finished the program in just eight months and opened the Mya Lopez Agency shortly thereafter.

Today, Mya is well-versed in helping her clients make educated insurance decisions. “I love being able to help people understand what they’re paying for,” she says. “So many people throw their money at insurance because it’s a requirement for something they’re trying to do, whether it be purchasing a home or driving their car, but they don’t really know what they’re paying for. And, a lot of times, they don’t understand what they have until it’s too late or they’re in a predicament.”

There is a saying in the insurance industry that rings true for everyone: “It’s cheaper to buy insurance 10 years early than one minute too late.” Mya’s agency offers virtually every

type of insurance except health insurance — auto, life, renters, business, motorcycle, recreational, condo, umbrella, and home. Her bread and butter is homeowners insurance.

Mya has had the opportunity to insure generations of families. “I love being that one person they can trust and that one person that they come to with questions because they know I will connect them to the right people,” Mya says. “Building those relationships is important to me.”

Clients of Mya’s also have the backing of one of the country’s biggest and most well-known insurance companies. Farmers Insurance has had an unwavering commitment to meeting the changing needs of Americans since 1928. When Mya found Farmers Insurance two years ago, she knew she’d found a company whose mission and values she could align with. “I fully believe in Farmers and the quality of products we offer,” she says. “As far as myself as an agent, I pride myself on being an advisor for my clients, so if I don’t truly believe that what I can offer is going to be your best bet, I will always do what’s in your best interest first. I believe in being honest and reliable.”

While her insurance knowledge and trustworthiness are invaluable, it’s Mya’s faith in God that sets her apart. “That is the foundation of how I aim to run my business and serve my clients,” she says.



“... I pride myself on being an advisor for my clients, so if I don’t truly believe that what I can offer is going to be your best bet, I will always do what’s in your best interest first. I BELIEVE IN BEING HONEST AND RELIABLE.”

—Mya Lopez,
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agent spotlight ◀◀

By Lindsey Wells
Photos by Bodie Kuljian

HELPING PEOPLE GET RESULTS

Mark

ELMASRY

“Self-discipline is the magic power that makes you virtually unstoppable.”

Given his success in the world of real estate, as well as his prowess in mixed martial arts, it's safe to assume that REALTOR® Mark Elmasry has mastered the art of self-discipline in all aspects of his life. Mark was a professional MMA fighter when he decided to launch a real estate business on the side while interning at a physical therapy clinic. His plan was to go to physical therapy school and become an outpatient physical therapist. However, as he continued training clients and athletes as a strength and conditioning specialist, Mark realized that he had a passion for real estate, a business his family had always been involved in. Once he went full-time, Mark began seeing the fruits of his labor and was closing deals left and right shortly after that.

After almost eight years in real estate, Mark is motivated by improving his clients' lives, much like he was as a personal trainer. “As a strength and conditioning coach, I got to see people get results, and I saw their quality of life get better.

Now, I get to help make someone's investment come to life and watch them make money in real estate. Like the person who always dreamt of having another bedroom for when they finally have kids—I helped make that happen. Are you kidding? That's awesome,” Mark says. “I get super excited about that. It's all about how I can help each specific person in each specific case benefit from a transaction in real estate.”

Mark grew up watching his father, a broker, navigate the real estate industry. Now that they're both in it, this father and son can call on each other for advice when needed. “Now, it's almost flipped, where he will ask me about the current dos and don'ts of the contract since he's much more old school,” Mark says, “and I'll ask him for advice on consulting with my clients about their financial decisions.”

Mark has no doubt channeled the self-discipline he uses in his MMA training into his real estate career. High school wrestling was what first piqued Mark's interest in

...



Mark loves family time with his wife Leah and son Ezra.

“
As a
strength and
conditioning
coach, I got
to see people
get results,
and I saw their
quality of life
get better.
Now, I get to
help make
someone’s
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come to life
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...

the sport. He eventually became involved in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu and Muay Thai kickboxing and has been hooked ever since. Although he is no longer a professional MMA fighter, Mark still trains a couple of times a week to stay in shape and help out his training partners. And, he just loves the sport. Mark is a brown belt in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu and is looking to get his black belt in the next couple of years.

“A lot of my training partners have high-level fights coming up. A couple of them have fought in the UFC. They keep me in check, and I help them with the experience I have. But, I’m not on the same wavelength as I used to be. I would just rather train with them as a hobby now,” Mark says, adding that he dreams of one day coaching his children in their martial arts competitions.

Although he ultimately veered away from his original plan to go to school and be a physical therapist, Mark counts his lucky stars for that chapter in his life, as the clinic where he interned is where he met and fell in love with his now wife, Leah, an occupational therapist. They had their first child, a son named Ezra, in March of last year, right as the COVID-19 pandemic was unfolding. At the time of this writing, in late July, Mark and Leah recently found out they are expecting their second child in February 2022.

“Family time is everything to me,” Mark says. “We’re not super exciting, but we like cooking with family, going on hikes, going to the beach, that kind of thing.” Mark’s two younger sisters and nieces and nephews live locally, as well as Leah’s younger sister and older brother. Leah’s sister is expecting a new baby the same week in February that Mark and Leah’s new bundle of joy is scheduled to arrive. Congrats to both families on their new additions!

Mark Elmasry was a professional MMA fighter before real estate and has continued in the martial arts with Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu (brown belt) and Muay Thai kickboxing



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September 13, 2021

South Orange County Real Producers' SECOND ANNIVERSARY PARTY

We held a fantastic party at Marbella County Club in September to celebrate our second anniversary in print! Thank you all for coming! It was wonderful to see you again, and we've gotten great feedback from everyone who attended. On the following pages, check out the amazing photos our photographers took at the event!

A big thank-you to **Marbella County Club** for the wonderful venue, and to **The Escrow Source** and the **Mazzo Group at CrossCountry Mortgage** for sponsoring our event. We couldn't have done it without you!

Our Fall Social is being held at BLK Burgzr on November 30. If you haven't registered and would like to attend, please email Michele.Kader@realproducersmag.com. Look for photos from that event in the December issue. And if you missed the second-anniversary party or our fall social, be sure to catch us at one of our next big *Real Producers* events coming up soon in the New Year!

For information on all South Orange Real Producers' events, please email michele.kader@realproducersmag.com.







MICHELLE RAHE
The Escrow Source

Dear Michele and South OC Real Producers,

I wanted to express my gratitude for the opportunity to participate and for being asked to sponsor the amazing *Real Producers' Second Anniversary Party* at Marbella Country Club on September 13. It was an honor to support this wonderful event, gathering as a community to celebrate *South Orange County Real Producers'* second anniversary in print.

Thank you very much to the REALTORS® who came out and attended the event. It was great to connect with so many of you, especially since we all have not had much opportunity to socialize in the past year. If I didn't have a chance to say hello personally, I will try and reach out to each of you individually in the coming weeks. And I hope I'll have an opportunity to see you at the next *Real Producers* event!

Please feel free to email me at michelle@theescrowsource.net. I look forward to meeting you!

With gratitude,

Michelle Rahe
Senior Escrow Officer/Manager
The Escrow Source



The Escrow Source Inc. is a full-service escrow company licensed in the state of California. Headquartered in Laguna Niguel, we serve all of California, but we specialize in Orange County and San Diego County because they're nestled right in our backyard. The Escrow Source is a proud member of the California Escrow Association, a statewide organization of professional escrow practitioners. We pride ourselves on strength, excellence, and integrity in our escrow services to you, as our consistent track record of integrity reinforces our customers' trust in us. Founded in 2011, The Escrow Source understands the ever-changing market and guarantees that your escrow transactions are managed professionally and in a timely manner. Visit us online at TheEscrowSource.net.



JJ MAZZO
Mazzo Group, CrossCountry Mortgage

Dear Michele and South OC Real Producers,

It was a great pleasure sponsoring the *Real Producers' Second Anniversary Party* at Marbella Country Club on September 13 and helping celebrate our success for the past two years!

I love being part of this *Real Producers* platform and enjoyed getting to meet so many of you at the event! We really appreciate all the agents who took the time out of their busy schedules to join us for some fun and to gather together as a community.

I hope to see you all again at an upcoming event. In the meantime, please think of the Mazzo Group at CrossCountry Mortgage for any of your and your clients' mortgage needs. I am always available, and we are here to help! Please don't hesitate to give me a call at **949.606.5486**.

All the best!

JJ Mazzo
Originating Branch Manager
Mazzo Group
CrossCountry Mortgage, LLC



When you come to me for your mortgage, I begin by listening. I want to understand your goals and priorities so I can offer a home loan that's right for you. You may be a first-time homebuyer or a long-time homeowner. You may be buying an investment property or looking for a renovation loan. I offer a wide range of loan programs, from FHA and VA to conventional and jumbo. You are an individual, and my recommendations will respect your unique circumstances. Communication is key, and sharing information is as important as listening. I will make sure you know what's happening with your mortgage as it progresses through the process and will be available to answer your questions. I'll be with you every step of the way, from application to closing and beyond. Whether you are buying, refinancing, or renovating, I am ready to give you the outstanding home loan experience you deserve.

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