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On the Rise:

Carolyn Cerf
Eunice Jung

Partner Spotlight:

Janelle Iaccino
Rose Pest Solutions

WINTER EVENT

Ten-Ninety Brewing Co.
Thursday, February 17th at
12 PM

Details on page 18

FEBRUARY 2022



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If you are interested in contributing or nominating Realtors for certain stories, please email us at andy.burton@RealProducersMag.com



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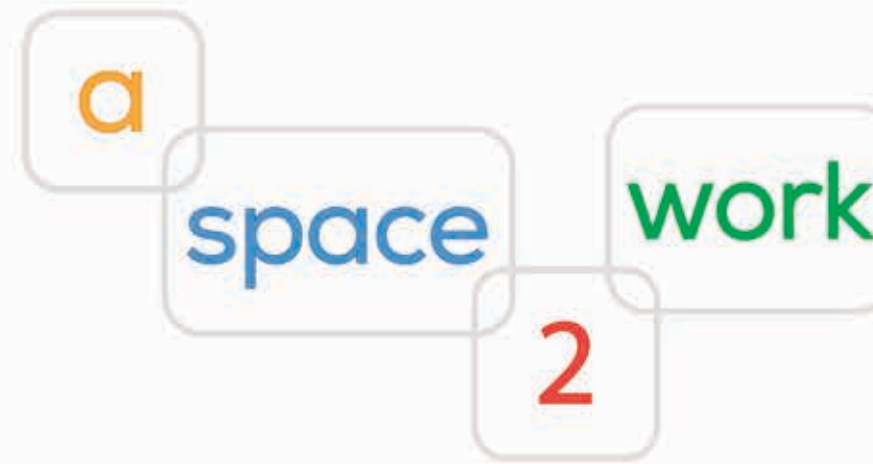
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➔ publisher's note

Two Steps Forward & Two Steps Back

After the holidays subsided, it seemed that we were back to square one with the current COVID-19 situation. Generally speaking, authorities do their best to educate the public to make informed decisions, but this is uncharted territory for all of us. The Delta and Omicron variants have become curveballs in our longing to get back to the way life was before 2020.



flexibility and work together to continue to connect, elevate, and inspire our community.

Andy Burton

Publisher, North Shore Real Producers

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If I have learned anything over the past twenty-four months, it is to be flexible. And even more so, to be flexible among my flexibility. Proverbs 16:9 comes to mind, "The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps." As a real estate community, we need to have an abundance of grace for one another. I am directing these words to myself more than anyone reading this.

On Christmas Eve, my wife and two oldest daughters tested positive for COVID-19. Thankfully the symptoms were mild, but they still had to take the necessary precautions and isolate themselves from the rest of the family. This meant I was on duty with our two youngest children (ages two and four) for the duration of the isolation time. This was not part of my plan for the holiday break; I planned to have some downtime with my (whole) family, rest, and catch up on some work-related tasks while I wasn't in the field. The first few days were not fun, only because I had not made the mental shift into my new "full-time single dad" role. It took me several days to embrace and actually enjoy the time with my two little kids.

When anticipating an event, a meeting, or any positive interaction, it is disheartening when it doesn't come to fruition. The pandemic has accelerated our learning curve to process change, and our Real Producers community has done a great job pivoting as needed. Since this is the current state of our world, we will brace ourselves for

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EUNICE JUNG

TAKING STEPS FORWARD



▶▶ on the rise
By Laura Zickert

Eunice Jung is a successful REALTOR® who embodies always doing your best and making the most of what life hands you. At every step of the way, she has moved forward as a leader and has used every challenge and obstacle she's faced in life as an opportunity to learn and grow.

Eunice began her real estate career in 2020. She says, "I actually passed my exam right before the pandemic hit and waited until December 2020 to join a brokerage." Prior to real estate, Eunice worked in sales and marketing and risk management at LG Electronics for eleven years—where she got to work with "a vast array of different people from different backgrounds and cultures"—before becoming a stay-at-home mom for five years.

During that time, "It was almost like a hobby for me to go on Redfin or Zillow each night to look at the different homes that came on the market," Eunice explains, "I know I am sort of a nerd, but I actually think it's really exciting to look at homes!" Not wanting another nine-to-five corporate job, Eunice was determined to take her passion for searching for homes and turn it into a career.

Eunice was also determined to present her buyers and sellers with a far better experience and far better customer service than she received when she bought her home. "When I was purchasing my own home, I felt my agent was not on my side," said Eunice. "I wanted to become a REALTOR® because I know that real estate is one of the biggest investments people make in their lives. I wanted to represent my clients in a way where they felt they had someone on their side to take them from start to finish during a real estate transaction, and as they make this important investment."

Born in Chicago, Eunice's family moved to Mount Prospect when she was four years old. She says, "My parents, who emigrated from Korea, moved into that home in Mount Prospect and stayed there for thirty-six years! I actually sold their home for them last year when I became a REALTOR®. It was



Photo Credit: Sophia Han from Sophia Han Photography

a bittersweet moment as most of my childhood memories were made in that home and city."

After Eunice got married, her husband, Jason, moved from Korea to the United States, and they settled in Northbrook. She says, "As a foreigner, there were a lot of cultural and language barriers he had to overcome. However, he was able to overcome them all and now is a successful business owner. He inspires me each day as a person, as the father of our children, and as a businessman." Jason is currently expanding his indoor golf business at the Arboretum Golf Course in Buffalo Grove.

Eunice and Jason have a beautiful yet unique love story. Introduced to each other through Jason's



“AFTER STARTING MY CAREER IN REAL ESTATE I NOW CANNOT IMAGINE MY FUTURE WITHOUT REAL ESTATE! I FEEL SO BLESSED TO HAVE FOUND A CAREER I TRULY LOVE AND ENJOY DOING.”



cousin, Eunice and Jason dated long-distance for a year and only met in person three times before deciding to get married. They have been happily married for nine years and have two beautiful children: their son, Elliot, is in third grade and their daughter, Claire, is in kindergarten. “We love to just lounge at home with some good food and hang out together,” says Eunice. “My favorite way to relax is lounging in my sweatpants with a glass of cabernet and some yummy snacks—with no kids of course!”

Having learned independence at a young age, Eunice now sees how her childhood helped her to become the

successful woman she is today. “Obviously due to the language barrier, my parents were not very involved in a lot of my activities, both inside and outside of school. So I learned quickly to take over the role of going over all the handouts from school, invitations from friends, and flyers for extracurricular activities,” says Eunice. “Looking back, I am who I am today because of life events.” While she notes that “Religion has always been a big part of who I am; it is a big part of my life,” Eunice also believes her training as a gymnast—from first grade through her junior year of high school—strongly influenced how she establishes values. “Training as a young athlete, I learned the core values of hard work, perseverance, practice, and teamwork. These values are something that I practice in my real estate career each day, and I believe they have shaped me to be the REALTOR® I am today.”

She is known for her ability to take all her life experiences and use them to better herself, her



Photo Credit: Genevieve True from Organic Headshot

view of the world, and to help others. Helping people is Eunice’s favorite part of her job, and she thrives on developing deep connections and building genuine relationships with people, especially those she is working with.

Eunice is dedicated to serving her clients and building more relationships as she builds her business. As she guides her clients through the buying and selling process, she finds that every transaction fuels her passion for her career. She says, “I now cannot imagine my future without real estate! I feel so blessed to have found a career I truly love and enjoy doing.”



Eunice with her family

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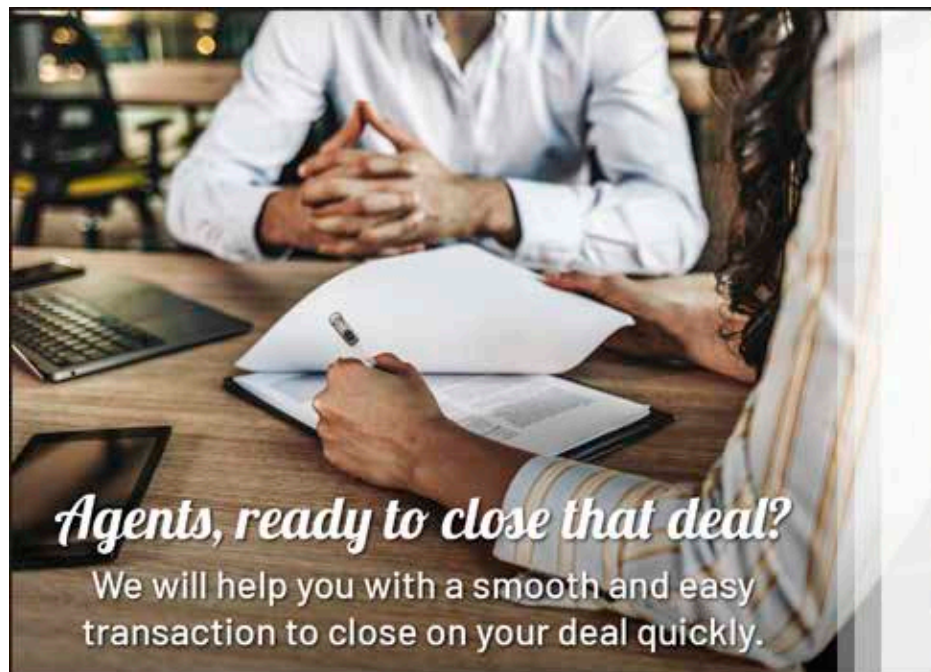
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▶▶ cover story

By **Laura Zickert**
Photos by **Annette Patko**

Annika Valdiserri

Success around the Globe

Annika Valdiserri has made an imprint in her community, home, and around the globe. She sees the world as holding incredible opportunities and has done an excellent job at taking large strides in life to make a difference. Her career has been filled simultaneously with adventure and success.

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I want to make sure all my clients feel SEEN and HEARD; working hard to ensure they find *the house they love* is as important to me as it was the day I started.



Born and raised in Sweden, Annika met her husband, Kenny, and moved to Chicago in 1991. Annika and Kenny have been married for almost thirty years and have two children, Niklas (twenty-six) and Emma (twenty-two). “They are both wonderful adults now. We are lucky to have Emma in Chicago just a few blocks away, while Niklas works at Vanderbilt University in Nashville,” says Annika. Their family recently returned from Telluride, skiing and enjoying a vacation together. Family is an integral part of Annika’s life. She says, “I am very close with my family and have always admired my parents. They are the kindest, helpful, and down-to-earth people you will ever know.”

Back in Sweden, she studied economics while also experiencing a study abroad trip in Germany and Italy to learn languages. Exploring the world comes naturally for Annika, but it has not been without its challenges. “Moving to a new country and continent meant I had to start from scratch with no legacy. I started my career in Chicago in the sports event business, then ended up selling Swedish fashion before selling real estate,” said Annika. “We lived

overseas for three years in Sweden. My friend had just become a REALTOR® in Sweden, and seeing the process on this side of the pond and learning from that experience made me want to be the person helping people moving in from other areas.”

When Annika transitioned to real estate in 2007, she said, “It was very much about who you knew, and I did not know many. However, I always wanted to grow slowly and make sure I learned along the way. By having my fellow international friend group, my real estate world opened to where it is today.” For Annika, real estate is all about the people. As her business continues to grow, she says, “I want to make sure all my clients feel seen and heard; working hard to ensure they find the house they love is as important to me as it was the day I started.” Getting to experience life with her clients, learn their stories, and help them transition to new chapters is an honor in Annika’s eyes.

With her fifteen years of experience under her belt, she sold a total volume of \$45M last year alone. She says, “I loved the thought of helping



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 navigate moves for experts like myself and to be my own boss.” Annika has done an incredible job taking care of her career, family, and self. She is very active and enjoys activities like hot yoga and long walks around the lake. She says, “The energy from the city relaxes me...I love the hustle and bustle of the city!” A famous author named Dag Hammarskjöld once said, “The longest journey is the journey inward.” Annika has taken this journey seriously, and she has found that by knowing who she is, she is better able to serve those around her.

Additionally, she cares for her community immensely. She supports Lakeview Food Pantry and everything Swedish. “I am a member at the Swedish American Museum, Swedish Women’s Educational Association (SWEA), and Swedish American Chamber of Commerce (SACC). I try to help keep our culture alive and well.”

Annika continues to not only impress those around her but uses her experience to help those in her path. She says, “I love what I do; it’s part of my life and who I am. I am hoping to keep growing and working hard for as long as I can!” You can find Annika loving her clients well and supporting other upcoming REALTORS® on their journey toward success. She is thankful for all the people who have taken the time to invest in her. She has found that the most important thing is, “To always be learning something new. Every deal is different, and there is always change and new opportunities.”



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CAROLYN Cerf

► on the rise

By Laura Zickert



Photo credit: Ewa Pasek Riley Photography

The North Shore NETWORKER

Some people attend networking meetings and hope someone picks up their business card. For Carolyn Cerf, also known as the “North Shore Networker,” making connections is simply ingrained in her persona and real estate career. Her expertise, market knowledge, and relationship perspective have brought her clients and career forward.

Named “Best of the North Shore Real Estate Rising Star” by *NS Modern Luxury* magazine, Carolyn approaches the North Shore with experience and determination. Carolyn currently sits on the Illinois REALTORS® Government & Political Issues Committee and belongs to RPAC, the REALTORS® Political Action Committee. These roles come naturally for her as she previously worked in government relations as a lobbyist. “I honed shrewd negotiation skills and my knack for persuasion. I am comfortable asking some of the world’s most powerful people to vote for or against legislation. I’m not afraid of the word ‘no.’ I’m more afraid of never asking in the first place. It was fantastic sales training,” said Carolyn.

Carolyn pursued her real estate license in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic and pregnancy. “I found myself leveraging my network to connect friends and family with houses and apartments often, then helping them negotiate rents and lease terms. My loved ones were like, ‘Why don’t you put that network to good use? You’d be great at this!’ What can I say? A lightbulb went off,” said Carolyn. For her, lockdown was a pivotal time to focus on launching her brand and executing a robust marketing strategy.

Carolyn’s natural networking abilities stem from her number one rule: “Just show up.” She suggests, “Show up for everything in the community. Be of service to people in your community. Find out what makes them tick. The bonds you build will be incredibly powerful.” As a result, Carolyn has organically grown an extensive network in the North Shore.

It helps that the North Shore is where Carolyn was born and raised. “After traveling far and wide in my early twenties, I came back to amazing Lake Michigan beaches, not-cookie-cutter

...

I'm not afraid of the word 'no.' I'm more afraid of never asking in the first place.

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homes with character, genuine walkable downtown business districts, and world-class schools," said Carolyn. "I got involved in the community starting in my twenties, volunteering everywhere I could make a difference, so I was able to build strong connections with thousands of North Shore people over the years. I have admired the many other volunteers and philanthropists who have made the North Shore a better place than they found it."



Carolyn with her daughter at Rosewood Beach in Ravinia.



Photo credit: Ewa Pasek Riley Photography

Carolyn is passionate about connecting the dots among her North Shore network. She says, "I love to play 'matchmaker' for my clients. It's amazing how much serendipity there is. If you are part of multiple circles, you can connect buyers and sellers, renters and landlords, and make things happen." Carolyn spans both residential and commercial real estate. Due to her connections among local businesses and developers, Carolyn has received quite a few calls about commercial space.

...

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Working on a fixer-upper in Highwood.

Building a vast network doesn't happen overnight, but it will start happening TODAY if you are willing to show up, especially when it shows you care about other people.

...

With a BA in international relations and global affairs, Carolyn has found many benefits, including her valuable cultural awareness and the ability to communicate with just about anybody. She says, "It's ironic because I have zoomed in on the North Shore, becoming an expert in all things hyper-local. However, my clientele is some of the most widely-traveled people."

Carolyn and her partner, Tom, have a beautiful fourteen-month-old baby girl named Elizabeth. Tom also has a promising eighteen-year-old son named Taytum, who has an exciting road ahead. Both Carolyn and Tom have a passion for real estate and are similar but very different. While Tom focuses on the hands-on building and remodeling of investment properties, Carolyn focuses on the transactions and opportunities. Both Tom and



Carolyn love pursuing their common dream and enjoying life. Together, you can find them grabbing tacos at Ravinia Brewing Company or meeting friends in Highwood.

Carolyn is a huge supporter of the North Shore community. Her excitement, talent, and natural networking abilities have moved her forward in her career and success. If you are on the North Shore trying to connect someone with the right person, think of Carolyn Cerf and say, "I know just the person you need to call."



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Janelle Iaccino

with Rose Pest Solutions

Spider Girl and Her Team of Bug Girls Are Hunting Down Pests

The rumors are true. During her senior year of high school, Janelle Iaccino definitely kept a tarantula in her locker. This self-described goth-girl-turned-bug-girl is changing the game when it comes to women in the pest control industry, and she's creating a lot of, excuse the pun, buzz.

Janelle is the marketing director at Rose Pest Solutions, America's first documented pest control company, which was founded back in 1860. The company protects homes, businesses, food sources, and the environment from pest-related threats. Whether you're dealing with ants, termites, mice, rats, bed bugs, stink bugs, mosquitos, or dozens of other common pests, Janelle and the team at Rose Pest Solutions can help.

"Our customers' health is our number one priority," notes Janelle. "We offer family- and pet-friendly solutions and are very focused on education. We host free seminars on how to overcome any pest problem and pride ourselves on educating, engaging, and empowering people in all walks of life."

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▶▶ partner spotlight

By Jennifer Mitchell
Photos by AbiV Photography

•••

Back in 2005, Janelle was hired to answer the phones and dispatch small teams of technicians. At the time, she anticipated the job wouldn't last longer than the summer, but sixteen years later, she's become the bug girl.

"In a lot of ways, it fits," claims Janelle. "My high school classmates would probably tell you that I was the weird girl with the spider in her locker, so working for a pest control company tracks with that. I love being a part of this team and I've been lucky enough to grow the marketing department into a team of three bug girls!"

Since she first started, the landscape of marketing has changed significantly. Gone are the days of placing an ad in the phonebook and hoping it works. Janelle and her team spend months diving into gobs of data and analytics to really learn about their customers and make smart decisions when it comes to planning marketing tactics. Thanks to their hard work, Rose Pest Solutions has been pandemic-proof over the last two years.

But Janelle and the bug girls are tasked with more than marketing pest control services. The most rewarding work has been instances where Janelle was able to envision an idea for a community outreach program, work with partners and colleagues, and bring those ideas to life. One such idea was a reading program she created with Northwestern University Wildcats men's basketball team called Books for Buckets.

"As a kid, I was in the Book IT! program where you'd get a sticker for every book read," recalls Janelle. "The sticker would go on a holographic button and once you filled up the button, you could trade it in for a personal pan pizza at Pizza Hut. It was so awesome, and it was the inspiration behind the Books for Buckets program. Our partners at Northwestern loved it, and we got



Chick-fil-A and Culver's on board. Books for Buckets is now in its third season and involves more kids than ever before."

However, Janelle didn't stop there. Feeling that the pest control industry could use more girl power, she joined forces with the Girl Scouts of the USA as an official STEM partner. Janelle and her bug girls help troops throughout Chicagoland, Northwest Indiana, and Northern Illinois earn badges for bugs, nature, pollinators, gardening, and citizen science.

It was during her own memorable experience as a Girl Scout that Janelle developed a love for crafts and the arts. When she's not bugging out, she works as a visual artist, a multi-instrument recording artist, and she runs an apothecary business, Lady J Apothecary. In 2004, she performed a live painting of the Chicago skyline in O'Hare Airport's Terminal 5. The piece is six by four-and-a-half feet in size and is currently hanging in Janelle's living room.



A copy of the live painting of the Chicago skyline Janelle did in O'Hare Airport's Terminal 5. The piece is six by four-and-a-half feet in size and is currently hanging in Janelle's living room.



“My high school classmates would probably tell you that I was the weird girl with the spider in her locker, so working for a pest control company tracks with that.”

"The live painting was such a cool experience," states Janelle. "It took me about eight hours to complete, and I was painting with live musical accompaniment. The airport was being renovated at the time and I didn't want the piece to get lost in a storage closet, so I took it home with me. It barely fit through the elevator doors."

When she has the time to step away, Janelle loves spending time with her brother, his wife, and their kids at their farm in DeKalb, Illinois. There, the family has a massive garden where they grow tomatoes, berries, grapes, and other vegetables, which they use to make homemade sauce, wine, and other foods popular in their Italian heritage. "We make all things Italian, just like Nonno taught us."

And at the end of the day, that's when Janelle is happiest—when she's creating things that can make a positive impact on someone else's life. Well, that and when she's hiding tarantulas in her locker.

To reach Janelle and the bug girls to find out about their next community outreach idea, or to learn more about the services and seminars Rose Pest Solutions provides its clients and the public, visit their website rosepestcontrol.com or call 1-800-GOT-PESTS?



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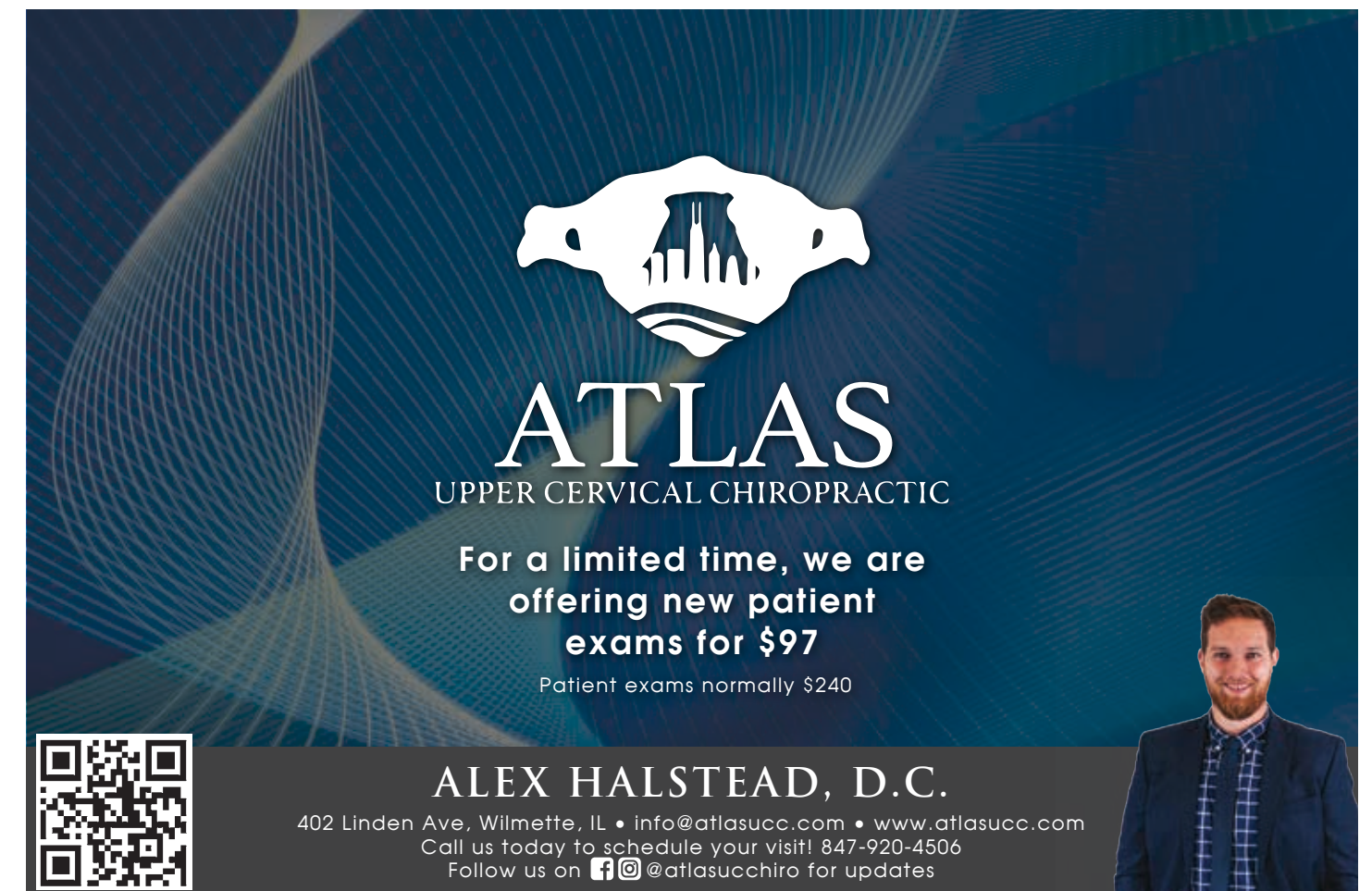



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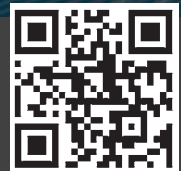

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By **Laura Zickert**
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Lydia & Jane

DELEO O'MALLEY

LIFELONG LEARNERS

While some see education confined to only their years in school, others see life as holding opportunities that bring them to become “lifelong learners.” Lydia DeLeo and Jane O’Malley have used their experiences to help them become better individuals and better real estate partners. They are known as a team dedicated to establishing long-term relationships along their journey. With their business being primarily referral driven, they say, “We pride ourselves on the level of service we provide, attributing our ability to educate and manage expectations as being the cornerstone of our success.”



Lydia DeLeo was born in Tokyo, Japan, where her father was stationed with Citibank in international banking. When she was five, her family moved to Dallas, Texas. “I consider Texas my roots, where I grew up and went to school and still have family and friends there that I visit regularly,” said Lydia. “I attended the University of Texas in Austin, where I have many fond memories, especially during football season cheering on my Texas Longhorns.”

After graduating from UT, Lydia took an entry-level position in the Dallas telemarketing center of Fidelity Investments. She was promoted to join a startup operation of a new facility in Salt Lake City. Lydia said, “Living close to the Wasatch mountains, I embraced the outdoors where I learned to ski and did a lot of hiking. But alas, I was in my early twenties and missed the vibrancy of a larger city.” When the opportunity came for her to move to Chicago with Fidelity’s institutional division in 1988, she knew she was heading in an exciting new direction.

Lydia loved working for Fidelity; the work was challenging and rewarding. Over a fourteen-year career, she worked her way up to vice president in Fidelity’s Tax-Exempt Services division. However, she was putting in long hours and traveling excessively, so she decided the time was right to stay home to focus on family. During that time, she worked part-time in retail at Pottery Barn Kids. While there, she learned the art of staging “because we were constantly changing out the ‘floor displays’ to create

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seasonal vignettes to showcase the new merchandise,” she remembers. In 2009, when her children were in school full time, she decided to pursue a new career where her interests resided—real estate.

Lydia has now been in real estate for thirteen years. She worked independently for many of those years but always preferred a collaborative partnership. “In 2017, Jane O’Malley and I joined forces,” she said. Jane and Lydia became the perfect match. Both their boys attended the same school, and they quickly became friends. “We also are like-minded in that we share similar values regarding the level of professionalism and the commitment we bring to the table. More importantly, we complement one another when it comes to our skills and attributes,” said Lydia.

Jane O’Malley grew up in a large family in Burlington, Iowa, with five brothers—one of them being her twin. “It has truly shaped who I am today,” said Jane. Family is very important to Jane, and she believes much of what she learned growing up, having lived with many personalities, plays a huge role in connecting with people seamlessly. After attending a twelve-year Catholic school, Jane pursued her college degree at Iowa State University. Jane says, “College was definitely a highlight in my life as I loved campus life and all it offered.”

Jane managed executive suites at HQ Business Centers before real estate, leasing space in the exclusive Mag Mile Building on Michigan Avenue. “It was there that I developed the skills of working with people in the throes of moving while managing their needs

and expectations. I enjoyed the strong relationships that I forged with my clients,” said Jane. After being home with her kids for many years, Jane knew she wanted to continue a relationship-oriented business that provided flexibility. She says, “Being a REALTOR® was a perfect fit for me.”

Jane and her husband, Mike, moved to Wilmette in 2000. Together, they have two sons, Charlie (twenty-three) and Miles (twenty-one). “I love walking with my Goldendoodle, Dublin. It gets me outside and helps balance me out. Plus, reading is a way for me to unwind and relax,” said Jane. She has also started taking some Pilates and yoga classes and developing her culinary skills by trying new recipes. Music is also a huge part of Jane’s life. She says, “I love music that brings back memories from growing up.”



Photo credit: Nicole Jones Photography



Photo credit: Nicole Jones Photography

Lydia lives in Wilmette with her husband, Rich, and a large Goldendoodle named Bevo. Together, they have two boys, Matthew (twenty-three) and Christopher (twenty-one). Lydia says, “We live on an amazing cul-de-sac, where many of our neighbors have become our close friends; therefore, during COVID, we have had many impromptu gatherings outside, including happy hours by the fire pit and ‘street’ pickleball.” Lydia and her husband enjoy playing paddle and socializing with friends. Additionally, Lydia enjoys taking long walks with her dog and listening to podcasts. One of her goals this year is to continue

investing more in yoga to become more centered.

While Lydia is more creative and analytical, Jane is more detail-oriented and focused on the day-to-day operations of the business. “Playing to each other’s strengths has proven effective when working with clients and peers, as well as on managing the day-to-day business.” Both Jane and Lydia are very active on social media. They create their own content with the goal that it resonates with their followers.

“I consider myself a lifelong learner, and real estate to me is always

evolving. To remain relevant, you need to be open to learning new skill sets and tools and staying on top of the latest industry trends,” said Lydia. The “can-do spirit” sits close with Lydia and Jane as they continue their time at Compass. They are always open to learning and continue to be teachable, humble, and dedicated to helping others find success. Jane says, “We are very passionate about providing a high-level service, and we do our best to make sure we handle each detail. It is very satisfying when we have a happy client. For me, that fuels the passion.” ●●●

COMPASS

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We are very passionate about providing a high-level service, and we do our best to make sure we handle each detail. It is very satisfying when we have a happy client. For me, that fuels the passion. – Jane O'Malley

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Lydia DeLeo

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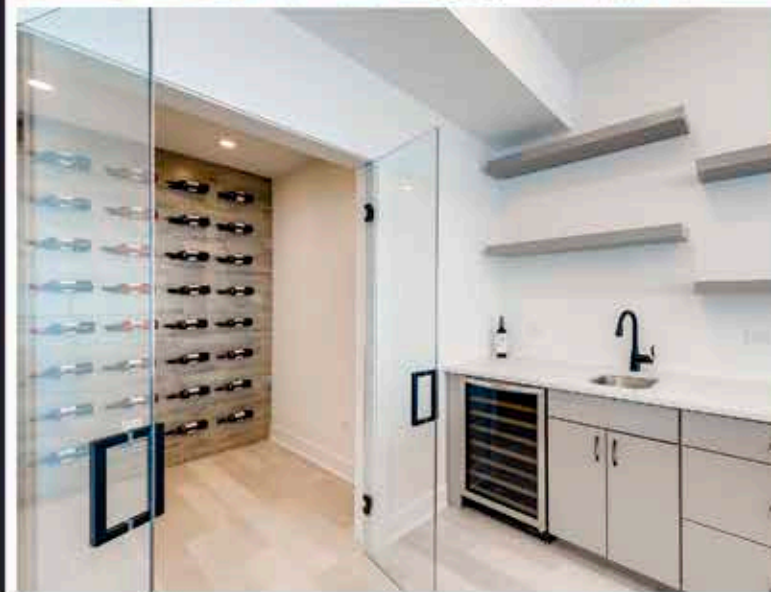
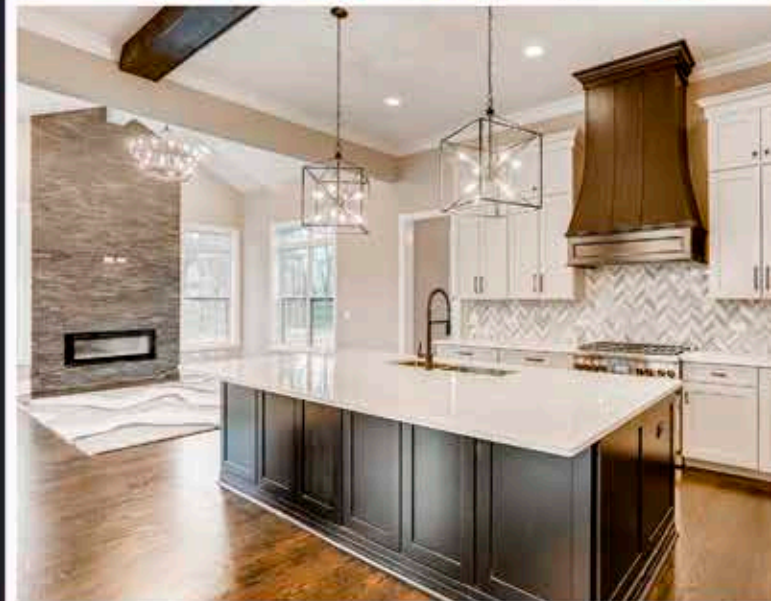
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