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AGENT FEATURES: STEPHANIE PELLEGRINO

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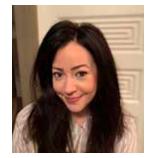


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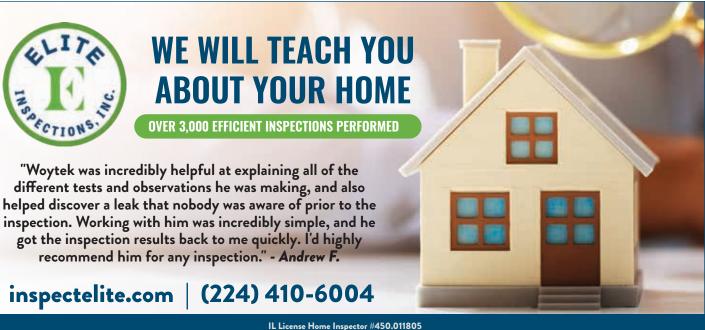
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For the first time in over two years, I feel like we are finally hitting our stride as an organization. Events are happening consistently, and based on my experience, the comfort levels of people and their willingness to interact in person are back to normal. As a result, we are adding more value to our REALTOR<sup>®</sup> community and our Preferred Partner network.

I was having a conversation with an individual from our community last month who explained to me that the value Real Producers provides is evident, but it is extremely immeasurable. We had a good laugh, because I jokingly replied, "Yeah, we are kind of like the wind. You can feel the effects of the wind, but you can't actually see the wind." I'm sure we can all agree that you definitely want the wind at your back when you are running a race.







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## Houses Are This English Girl's Best Friend

SHAH

Lina Shah, REALTOR<sup>®</sup> at Coldwell Banker in Oak Brook, had a childhood that many Americans might find romantic. Growing up in the London suburb of Wimbledon, home of the famous tennis tournament of the same name, Lina spent her time playing and watching tennis, riding horses, and traveling. However idyllic that may seem, her upbringing was filled with lessons of effort, perseverance, and humility from her hard-working parents.

"My father was the bravest man I knew and worked hard to support his family, sacrificing so much himself; he worked several jobs and put himself through night school to become the head of engineering at the London Borough of Merton," she says. "My mother is my hero. She has been through so much to support the family and be the caregiver first to my sister and me, then to both of my grandmothers, and then she was a 24/7 caregiver to my father who was bedridden after suffering a major stroke. I grew up watching and learning from my parents' dedication and incredible work ethic."

Following their example, Lina devoted many years to earning advanced degrees. After receiving her bachelor's in law and French from
Middlesex University, she began a program at the Chartered Institute for Legal Executives and also became a GIA® Graduate Gemologist.

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Lina pursued careers at a national wholesale diamond business — in sales, marketing, and public relations — and as a legal executive specializing in land law. She also spent time in sales and marketing at London's renowned Harrods department store. (She was there when a car bomb exploded outside the building in 1983.) These diverse experiences and her cosmopolitan background gave her the skills needed to meet the unique demands of a job in real estate.

Notes Lina, "My family and friends live in London, New Zealand, India, Singapore, Europe, and Africa. My multicultural background allows me to communicate with and understand people from all walks of life, which has been valuable in all my jobs." Lina moved to the United States after she and her husband, Hiren, married in 1987. Initially, she thought she would practice law after passing the bar exam. But it would be that she and Hiren would work together to develop a first-generation, family-run diamond business before she decided to do something on her own.

That something was real estate. It was Hiren who recognized early on that she could build an impactful career in the field.

"Hiren's family was in real estate and development overseas for many years, and he has his license, too. He thought

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I was meant for it," she explains. "And I fell in love with the idea of building something of my own that has a direct and positive impact on one of the most important decisions of a person's life."

In 2008, Lina earned her license and began to build her career as a full-time REALTOR®. Her first year paralleled the ups and downs in the nation's economic and housing market: "I have the resolve to work through complex and difficult situations," Lina says, confidently. "Those first years were tough, but I worked seven-day, and often 80-hour, weeks. I still do. Most people who know me will say that I'm the hardest-working REALTOR® they have ever met, and I take pride in that reputation."

Thanks to her instilled grit, Lina quickly built name recognition and became a top-selling agent. Now, over a decade later, she's still as excited about real estate as she was in her first days. Although Hiren has a real estate license, he occasionally assists Lina as he continues to run their thriving family diamond business.

The hard work and teamwork have paid off: last year alone, Lina's sales volume topped \$51 million. Lina has also been named Best of Best Top Agents from 2018-2022 by *Chicago Magazine* as well as being named in the top 1% in both the NRT nationally and in Coldwell Banker's network globally, which are among other accolades.

"[To me,] it is not about the number of listings or buyers I have, but about how I can best help them and meet their needs. I make sure I'm personally available and accessible at all times, even if I am in London visiting family," says Lina. "I actually never know how much volume of sales I have done until I'm told at the start of a new year," she adds.



#### . . .

"I rarely take days off. My husband says I do not know the difference between work and leisure. Because I love helping my clients find their dream home, it doesn't feel like a job." she says.

On the rare occasion that she's not closing deals, Lina focuses on giving back to her community. She is a past president, vice president, and a current member of the Oak Brook Women's Club. She supports several infant welfare programs and is on various committees with the Village of Oak Brook. Lina has been involved in local schools as an active member of the PTO — first at Oak Brook Butler school District 53 and then at Hinsdale Central High School. She also supports the nonprofit Akshaya Patra Foundation and is part of a large expat network/community.

In her rare free time, Lina enjoys going to the theater, playing tennis, walking outdoors, reading, catching up with friends, and, naturally, the perfect British afternoon tea. She is especially proud of her two sons. The oldest, Davis, was married in March 2022 and is now active in the diamond business after leaving his position at a hedge fund company. Her younger son, Kevin, is in California, working at a private equity firm.

Were she given the opportunity to visit her 25-year-old self, Lina says she would tell her to be confident in her beliefs and learn from her mistakes. She would also advise her to become a REALTOR® immediately.

"Why didn't I begin this life in real estate sooner?" reflects Lina. "Seeing the growth of the families I help move is very rewarding. It is gratifying that in this profession we get to connect with so many people, and assist in one of the most important decisions of their lives."



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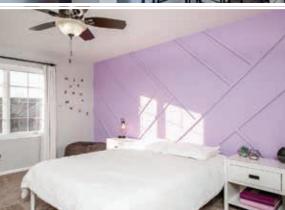
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# Stephanie Pellegrino FROM BROADCAST DREAMS TO REAL ESTATE TEAMS

>> agent feature By Lauren Young Photos by KDE Photography

Before becoming a full-time REALTOR<sup>®</sup>. **Stephanie Pellegrino** worked in and around real estate for many years in various roles. As a high schooler at **Glenbard East High** School, Stephanie got a taste for real estate while working for Pulte Homes as a hostess, assisting sales associates at various area subdivisions.

"Paul taught me everything he knew about the business," Stephanie reflects. "He never cut corners and treated every client the same, no matter how big or small the deal. He frequently told me that a renter could one day become a million-dollar buyer, and that came to fruition on more than one occasion. In my first year in the business, we closed 99 deals!" . . .

"I fell in love with real estate back then and continue to love it today," Stephanie says. "I especially love meeting people from all different backgrounds and walks of life."

After high school, Stephanie attended Valparaiso University with dreams of a career in broadcast media. She graduated at the top of her class while active on the dance team and working multiple jobs — even earning internships across television and film. Sadly, during this time she lost her only sibling in a car accident. She made the decision to stay local to be closer to her parents and witnessed them persevere through those difficult days.

"Even after losing a child, my parents found a way to carry on," she says. "They taught me to embrace life and find joy, hope, and purpose in all situations, no matter what the circumstance."

When Stephanie graduated from college, she was recruited to work for utility giant NiSource, where she managed internal communications for over 7,500 employees. Next, she was recruited by the owner of Winthrop Properties, a luxury builder, to work as a sales associate. While there, she earned her real estate license and frequently referred clients to her future mentor, REALTOR® Paul Baker.

As the housing market began to melt down in 2008, Stephanie left to work as the marketing director for a technology company. She remained there until she had her twin daughters a few years later. In 2012, after learning Stephanie had left her corporate career, Paul Baker approached her about joining his real estate team at Platinum Partners REALTORS<sup>®</sup>. She had been referring business to Paul for years, but now it was time to do the deals herself.

...

Now, more than a decade into her real estate career, Stephanie credits her pre-REALTOR® experiences for powering her real estate career.

"The marketing skills I acquired while working in Corporate America have helped me become a successful agent," Stephanie says. "Communication is key in this business, and my education and experience have taught me how to effectively connect with people."

"Buying or selling a home can be stressful," she adds. "I really care about my clients and work hard to get to know them as individuals. I have sold homes for clients who have lost children and spouses or who are too sick to remain in their current house. Sharing my own story and challenges helps them realize that they are not alone and that they can lean on me throughout the process." When Stephanie is not spending time managing her real estate business, she loves to garden and do home-improvement projects. Her husband, Vince, works in the professional golf industry and has passed on that passion to their daughters, Jessica (12), Madelyn (10), and Gabriella (10). Together, they support area charities like Feed My Starving Children and the Evans Scholar Foundation.

"The Evans Scholar Foundation sends deserving golf caddies to college on a full tuition and housing scholarship," she says. "My husband was a recipient of this scholarship, and he would not be where he is today without it."

**6661REALLY CARE ABOUT MY CLIENTS AND WORK HARD TO GET TO KNOW THEM AS INDIVIDUALS.**"



Stephanie with her husband, Vince, and their daughters: Jessica (12), Madelyn (10), and Gabriella (10).



••• When Stephanie's husband retires, they would like to head west, where she hopes to continue working in the real estate industry. "Real estate is one of those occupations you can do forever. You can do as much or as little as you want to and never really retire."





As Stephanie reflects on why she loves what she does, she thinks about her list of happy clients and the supportive agents in her office, including her partner, Andrea Quinones. "I am able to accomplish so much more with an amazing partner like Andrea by my side," she affirms. For up-and-coming top producers, Stephanie encourages them to get to know fellow REALTORS® and pick their brains when the opportunity presents itself. Just like she was able to do with Paul Baker and does regularly with the over one hundred agents in her office.

"Surrounding yourself with good people is critical to success," she says. "We are each other's cheerleaders, so these relationships are just as important to me as my client relationships."

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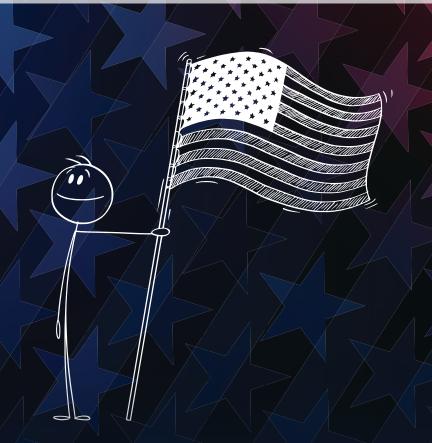
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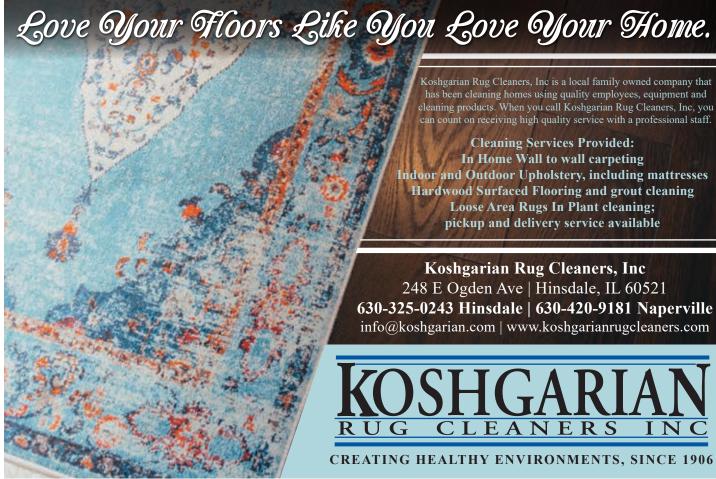


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# AN EXAMPLE OF STRENGTH GRIT, COMPASSION, AND COMMUNITY Π 30 • July 2022



> agent feature By Lauren Young Photos by KDE Photography

Jennifer grew up in Darien, IL, with support from these two resilient women, and went on to graduate from the University of Illinois Chicago with a bachelor's degree in communication.

"My dream was to be a television producer and work for Oprah," says Jennifer. "In the meantime, I needed to pay rent, so I tended bar and started working for an attorney doing their accounts receivable. That's how I discovered I had a knack for finance."



Jennifer with her family (from left to right: Danielle (daughter), Pat (mom), Alexander (son), Wendy (son's girlfriend), and Mateo (grandson).

#### "I was raised by a single mother and my grandparents," says Jennifer Anteliz, REALTOR® at Baird & Warner in Naperville. "My mom always had many jobs, and my grandmother beat cancer twice in her lifetime. I look up to both of them because of the strong women they are."

With her natural aptitude for crunching numbers, Jennifer was promoted to managerial roles quickly. She landed a corporate finance role at BP (formally British Petroleum) and worked there for 13 years. In 2015, a series of stressful circumstances converged to test her resolve, but the examples her mom and grandmother set allowed her to persevere. . . .

#### . . .

"I went through a divorce, and we sold our home," she remembers. "After my kids and I moved into a new home, I learned that my role at BP was being eliminated. Now that I was single, I was more dependent on my job to keep the house, benefits, and support myself."

Acting quickly, Jennifer applied, interviewed, and transitioned to a new role in BP's downtown office. Two weeks in, she was diagnosed with uterine cancer. Next began two years of chemotherapy and radiation.

"I continued to work every day, but it was taking a toll on me," says Jennifer. "Eventually, I learned BP was downsizing and my role was eliminated again. At this point, I could no longer physically and mentally take on the stress of the commute, the daily grind of a new corporate role, and the effects of the chemo."

It wasn't a difficult decision for Jennifer to take BP's severance package and move on to a different challenge. When brainstorming possible career moves she remembered Carol Guist from Baird & Warner, the real estate agent who helped her during the divorce and relocation.

"The compassion and professionalism she showed made a big impact on me," she says. "It stayed with me. I thought maybe I could help people through times of transition, too."

That evening, Jennifer signed up for real estate classes. She attended classes at night and worked during the day. Once she received her license, she interviewed with and considered joining various agencies, but then she met Bill Gill at Baird & Warner Naperville.

"That was it for me," says Jennifer. "I only wanted to be part of this group of amazing people who were intelligent and compassionate. They were about putting others first the whole reason I wanted to be a REALTOR® - and that is why I chose them."

Since then, Jennifer has focused on finding ways to serve her clients and local community in everyday ways. This includes helping out in the aftermath of an EF3 tornado that ripped through Naperville, Woodridge, and Darien last year.

"I live in Woodridge, and just one block away from the path that tornado took in our area," says Jennifer. "The next morning, my daughter and I went outside to see the damage and could not believe the destruction we saw. Hundred-year-old trees were thrown right through someone's living room. Roofs were gone. Homes were wiped out. We had to do something." . . .



Jennifer with her two children.

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Real estate has allowed me to be independent and it has given me the freedom to volunteer my time to my favorite causes.

Jennifer and her daughter ran to the store, stocked up, and handed out water to their neighbors. They went to every home that had been hit on one side of the road, and then every home on the other side the next day. Jennifer also distributed food, water, and clothing donations dropped off at St. Scholastica School and parish, and she created a mini pantry with the goods from other donors. Today, this effort continues as the Neighbors Helping Neighbors group, with support from Woodridge's mayor, Gina Cunningham.

"After a few months, I realized I had not worked in my business that whole time," she says. "I was too compelled to help. There's still so much work to be done."

Jennifer joined the Board of Fire Commissioners last August and has participated in the hiring of new emergency personnel. She also serves within other organizations to help families find housing during times of difficulty, and she uses her finance experience to coach them on effective budgeting and better spending habits.

"Real estate has allowed me to be independent, and it has given me the freedom to volunteer my time to my favorite causes," she says. "It will allow me to continue to help others while building a future for my children, too."

Looking back on all the obstacles, challenges, and steadfast determination needed to launch her real estate career, Jennifer says the opportunities she's been given have made it all worth it.

"The most rewarding part of being a REALTOR® is handing a first-time homebuyer their keys at closing," she adds. "The look on their faces is absolutely amazing. It reminds me of the day I purchased my first home, and I feel blessed to participate in that moment every time."





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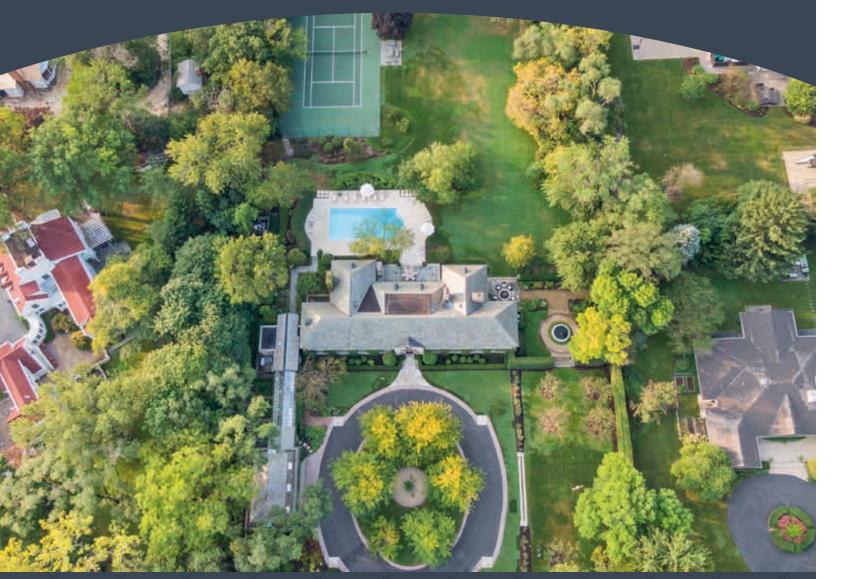


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## 175 Years of Education and Enjoyment

Two key passions of the DuPage County team at Chicago Title stan out amongst other title companies The first is education, especially since the desire to teach partners and clients about homebuying helps to earn trust and alleviate anxiety. The second is fun: The team insists on injecting fun into their workdays, every day (an uncommon focus, for sure).

Chicago Title has offices throughout the suburbs and city. But the team that is Ryan Horvath, Nancy Kroll, and Molly Manzella (along with the dependable staff) serves the DuPage County are with over 50 years of combined experience.

"One of the biggest blessings I have received in this career is working with Nancy and Molly, our executive account managers," says Ryan, Chicago In addition to these events, each team member prior-Title's key account manager. "I have known them itizes giving back through local organizations. In fact, for a few years, but recently have had the privbefore Ryan met and partnered with Nancy, he would ilege to work with them. They've taught me so see her at various real estate events in Naperville, much about the industry." Downers Grove, and other locations. . . .



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"Molly, our assistant vice president and executive account manager, has been with the company for over a decade and has the largest account base in DuPage County," adds Ryan. "Together, we reach a broad network," he explains. "And we all just happen to be proud dog parents."

The main way they inject fun into their days (aside from sharing dog photos on social media) and give valuable instruction to their clients, is by hosting engaging events. At these events, they connect with potential partners and share their wealth of knowledge with aspiring homeowners. At a recent educational event for REALTORS®, Chicago Title at Village Links of Glen Ellyn, the team shared ways their agent friends can increase their business and better understand the title process.

eir	"Now that people are getting together again, we've
ea	ramped up our in-person events for $\operatorname{REALTORS}^{\circledast}$ and
	customers," says Ryan. "We take pride in involving
	different communities from the area and doing so in
	unique ways."

#### •••

"The three of us live in different parts of the area," Ryan says. "But together we can make a bigger impact on our whole community."

Nancy has served with Mainstreet Organization of REALTORS® for several years in their community efforts. Molly started the Women in Real Estate DuPage WIRED group and has served on the Glen Ellyn Economic Development Committee. Ryan's favorite organization, H.O.M.E. DuPage, helps first-time homebuyers reach their ownership dreams with useful resources.

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**55** THE THREE **OF US LIVE IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE AREA... BUT TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A BIGGER IMPACT ON OUR WHOLE COMMUNITY." - RYAN** 







••• "I've had difficult times in my life, and I wish I'd had people to walk me through things," he explains. "Homeownership can be very confusing, so it really makes a difference when you have assistance with getting your credit ready or if you have to go through a foreclosure. It is awesome to be a part of an organization that can make a difference in those circumstances."

> Ryan originally became involved in the 30-year-old Home DuPage organization when someone invited him to a breakfast meeting. He donated, got involved on the board, and is now on the outreach committee, planning events to get the word out.

> This year, the team has another, very special reason to organize celebrations: Chicago Title is commemorating the 175th anniversary of its founding this year.

"We've been sprinkling in exciting stuff all year to honor this huge milestone," says Ryan. "We put banners on light poles in downtown Chicago, and we've held contests, gatherings, and teamwork exercises for our local office." One competition included office Olympic competitions — emceed by Nancy, Molly, and Ryan, of course. It was a fun, energy boost for all team members and gave everyone a much-deserved break from the strenuous workday. The trio sees inspiring and empowering their coworkers as part of their core leadership responsibilities.

"All three of our jobs include bringing positive energy and excitement to the people we work with," states Ryan. "From our own title agents to our REALTOR® partners, our goal is to make real estate rewarding, meaningful, and fun! Because, at the end of the day, it's all three."

To reach the Chicago Title team and learn more about the services they offer their clients, please email ryan.horvath@ctt.com, or call 224-242-6848, or visit their website at ctic.com.



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events

# SPRING EVENT

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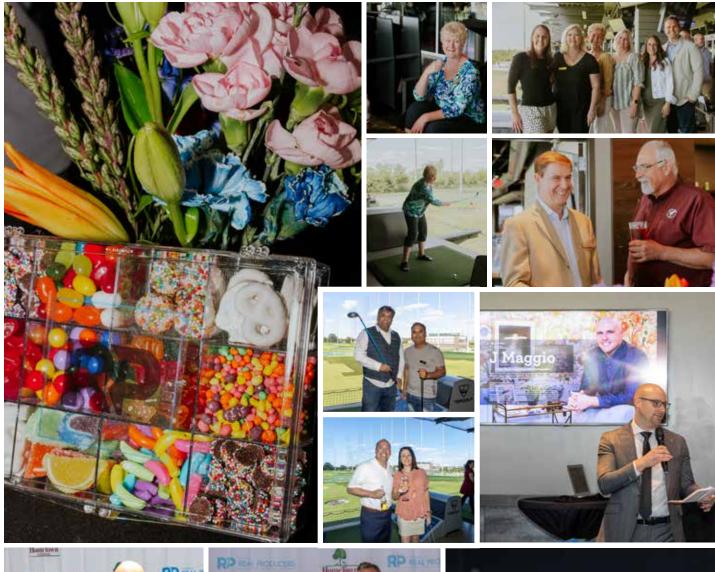
IT WAS GREAT TO RECONNECT WITH THE *DUPAGE REAL PRODUCERS* COMMUNITY AND ENJOY A FANTASTIC SPRING AFTERNOON RACKING UP POINTS FOR THE LEADERBOARD AT TOPGOLF.



A huge shout out to Tony Perri Sr. with HomeTown Lenders and Meghan Russell and Michael Leitner with InfoCard Marketing for helping to make this all happen.



We are grateful to everyone who joined us, provided raffle prizes, and helped make it a fantastic event. We look forward to seeing you again this fall for the next event. Enjoy the photos!





DuPage Real Producers • 47



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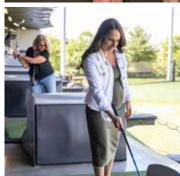
















# SPRING RAFFLEWinners

We are extremely grateful to our Preferred Partners who never disappoint with great raffle prizes at all the events! Check out the winners from our spring event at Topgolf.



Cathy Litoborski won a beach bundle bag which included a Bose speaker, a beach towel, a travel table, and other essentials to enjoy this summer season from Christin Luckman with CrossCountry Mortgage.



Eileen Kenah won an iRobot Roomba from Meghan Russell and Michael Leitner with InfoCard Marketing.



Kim Dalaskey won a shopping spree to Nordstrom and gas card from Tony Perri Sr. with HomeTown Lenders.

Tracy Driscoll won a \$200 gas card from Tony Perri Sr. with HomeTown Lenders.





























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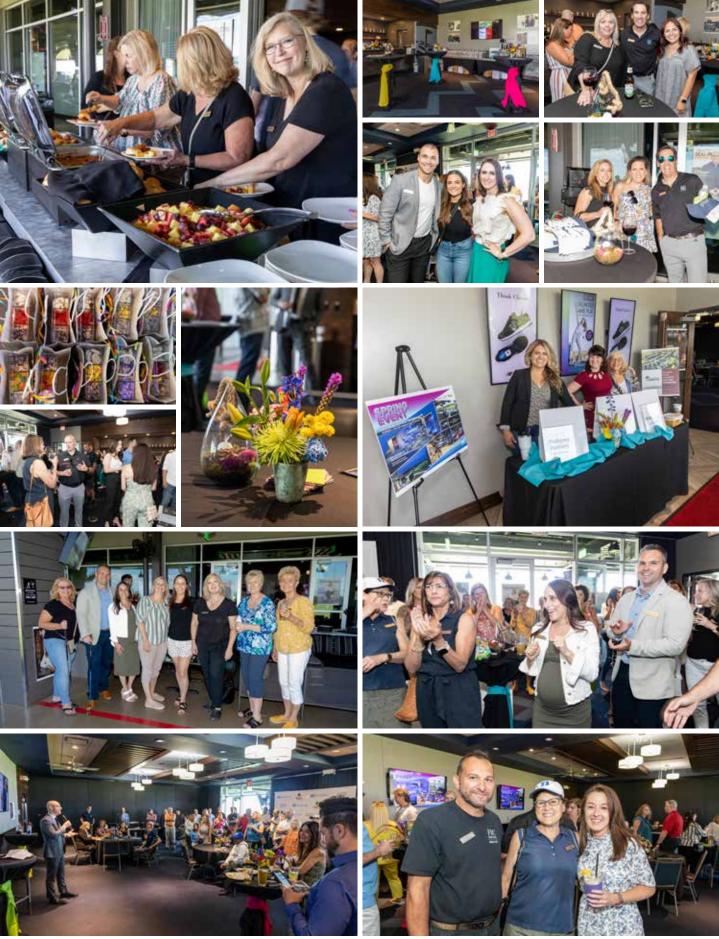










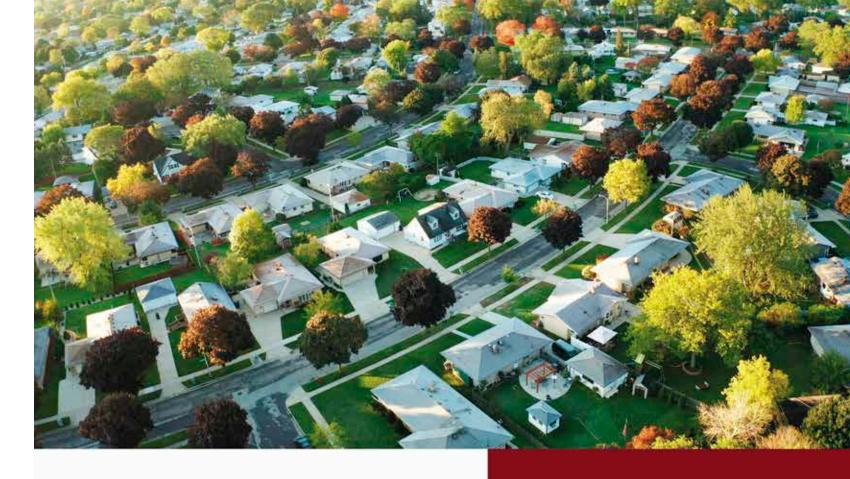


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