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TABLE OF CONTENTS







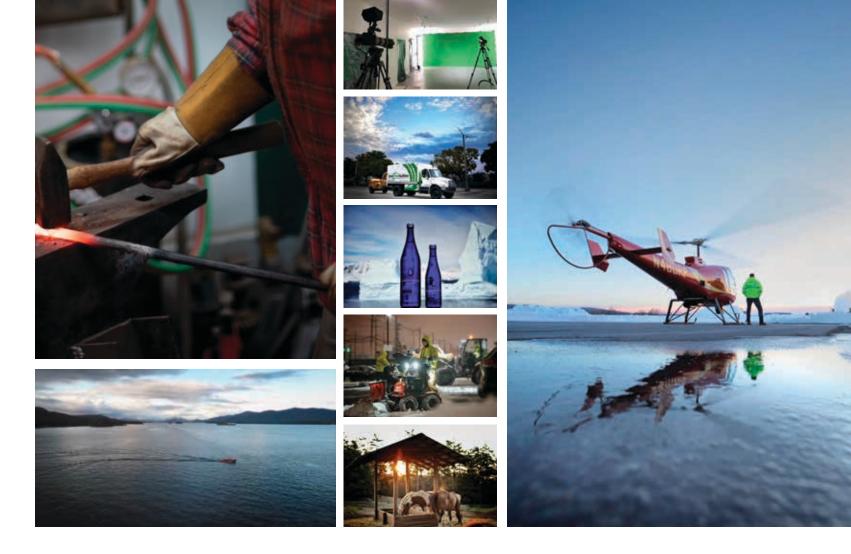




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> publisher's note

I would like to wish my beautiful wife, Shari, a Happy Mother's Day. Your love, kindness, and patience made me fall in love with you. I see those same qualities in our children every day.

Your strength never ceases to amaze me. I am blessed to have you as my wife and mother to our four amazing children. I can not forget about my mother, Colleen Baker. You are the one I look up to, and I appreciate all of the sacrifices you've made and all of the energy and

effort you've put into making your four children turn out to be decent people. I love you, miss you, and wish we were there.

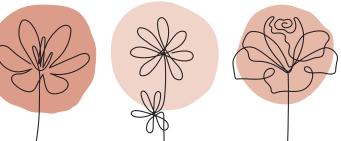
To all of the moms in real estate, both REALTORS® and our preferred partners, Happy Mother's Day! You are the real superheroes of the world, and you are genuinely appreciated.

Thanks again for everything. Stay well, and enjoy the spring!

Warmly,

MIKE BAKER

Publisher Capital Region Real Producers mike.baker@realproducersmag.com





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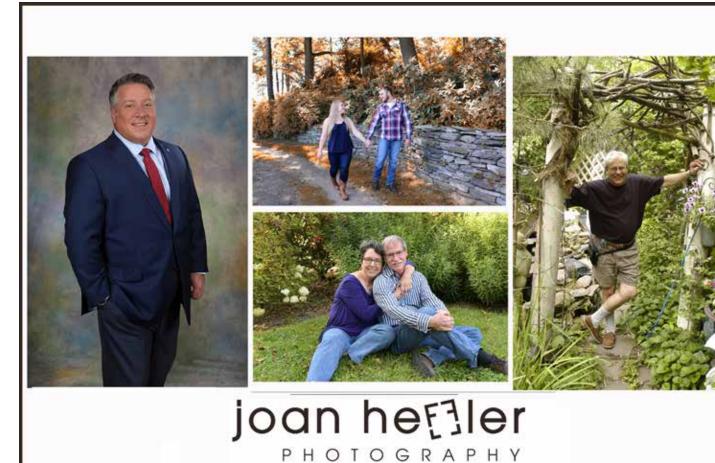
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Live Like You Mean It

Lisa Giruzzi, TRANSFORMATIONAL CONVERSATIONS

"TOO MUCH TO DO, TOO LITTLE TIME." "OVERWHELMED." "NOT ENOUGH HOURS IN THE DAY."

These are all common phrases I hear from people who come to me for coaching. These are intelligent people, high performers, producing great results. They have usually tried numerous approaches to solve their problem, from time blocking to atomic habits and everything in between.

Most of the time, folks are frustrated because they want more out of life than a feeling of being behind the eight ball all the time. No matter how successful they are, there is always something left undone, which makes them feel dissatisfied.

They come to me hoping for better tips, tactics, or strategies to help them navigate their overload more effectively. In my experience of over 25 years of coaching, time problems are not solved by tips and strategies. Time isn't the problem. Issues involving time are the result of something else.

It would be like trying to solve the problem of exhaust from a car without considering the engine which produces the exhaust.

Exhaust is a naturally occurring result of a carbon engine. It is a perfect result. Time problems are the same; they are naturally occurring effects of an underlying way of thinking based on a misunderstanding.

To solve a "time" problem, you need to go upstream and understand the thinking system that produces that result. This is not personal. Look around. Practically everyone is experiencing some time crunch or another. Sometimes it is talked about as work-life balance or being stressed or burnt out, but it all boils down to too much to do and not enough time.

It is common for people to be speeding through life, worrying about the next thing, squeezing in another task in an already overfull schedule, trying to do more and more, barely conscious of what they are doing basically going through the motions.

If you've ever driven somewhere and couldn't remember how you got there or eaten a meal and not even tasted it, you know what I am talking about.

This unconscious living is highly dissatisfying and leads to trying harder, doing more, and constantly seeking fulfillment, creating a never-ending vicious cycle.

The solution to this hamster-wheel living is to slow down. Although counter to what our grind culture tells us, slowing down is a game-changer. It's like putting a stick in the hamster wheel, so it stops spinning.

Slowing down allows us to be present in whatever we are doing, enabling us to experience it truly. Slowing down is another way of saying becoming grounded in the present. By being present, you perform at higher levels. You're not in your head thinking about life; you are in life *living* it – like you mean it.

Imagine you needed neurosurgery, and you had to choose between two equally qualified surgeons to perform the task. Would you choose the one who seems hurried and stressed or the one who is present and calm? When you slow down, you become more mindful of your actions and less likely to miss something or make an error.

Slowing down and being present allows your thinking to slow down, which interrupts habitual thought patterns. In this space, you can discover that you already have peace and well-being underneath all the thinking, so there is no need to seek fulfillment anywhere else.

There's no need to do more or get anywhere or try harder. There's just living life, consciously, like you mean it.

coach's corner

Lisa Giruzzi is a peak performance coach, best-selling author, and accomplished speaker with over 25 years of experience helping people to discover their true nature and live life powerfully – free from stress, regrets, judgments, and fear.

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JUNK KING ALBANY

partner spotlight _____

LEARNING FROM THE PAST, LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

By **Isabella Browne Lorcher** Photos by **Michael Gallitelli,** Metroland Photo

or Carl Breitenstein, owner of Junk King Albany, the connection between where he came from and where he is now is clear. From his approach to working to his definition of success, Carl can always point to something or someone in his past, which has helped mold his outlook on life.



Carl believes his "can do" philosophy started with his grandparents.

As Carl put it, "they had to bite, scratch, and claw" for the money to buy a home for their family in Duanesburg. Carl still lives in that house today. His father had that same grit when it came to setting and achieving his goals in life; he worked on farms during the summer to put himself through veterinary school at Cornell University. Even after becoming a veterinarian and

owning his practice, Carl's father still found time for activities such as bailing hay each summer.

"He loved to work and be out and do projects, "Carl remembered of his father, who died in 2020. "He continued to do hay until the summer before he died when he was 81."

Carl joked that in being a competitive person, he had to reach the top just as his father did. Fortunately, Carl inherited his father's energy. When Carl was younger, he channeled his energy into wrestling. He was a New York State high school wrestling champion, which led him to become an NCAA Scholar All American at Williams College.

After graduating, Carl began a career in medical device sales but eventually decided it wasn't for him.

"I always felt I wanted to eventually follow my own path like my father did. When he passed, it was tough," Carl shared. "But I found a lot of





strength in the experience as well. I realized life is short. It led me to start Junk King."

From there, Carl dabbled in commercial real estate before transitioning into a career in medical device sales. However, it turned out that sales were not for him, but by that point, Carl felt as if he had hit a roadblock.

"I couldn't see another route," he said. But, when the pandemic hit, Carl, like many people, felt galvanized to make a change. "In this day and age, I can do anything new, anything."



After trying his hand at a few different things, Carl started Junk King Albany while still operating the family's hay farm.

But business has never been about money for Carl.

To him, success has always been unrelated to money; instead, success is related to freedom.

"It's about designing a lifestyle that makes you happy," Carl explained. His father always said, "I have enough money where I don't have to worry about money. Anything more than that is just about counting, and I don't like counting."

Another part of being successful to Carl is taking pride in a job well done.

"I am competitive," he admitted, "so I want to be the biggest, best junk removal company in the capital district. I'm not doing this to be in third place."

That being said, Carl knows it is difficult to distinguish yourself in this field. He pointed out, "No one cares who gets rid of their junk as long as it's gone."

However, Carl has found many ways to set himself and his team apart from other junk removal services in the area.

"As an operator and owner of heavy machinery, I can differentiate myself," Carl explained. "We can handle the biggest jobs, including demolition and industrial clean-ups. We do site work, excavation, grading, and drainage."

He also believes it is related to the small things.

"We sweep," he said simply. "By that, I mean we pay attention to detail, take pride in our work, and do a great job every time. If ever a customer is not satisfied or maybe we damaged something or made some ruts by mistake, we are there the very next day to fix it like new."

Performing a thorough job goes well beyond providing high-quality service to customers during the removal process. The other end of the equation is what to do with the junk once it has been removed. Carl and his team strive to do that part with just as much care and intentionality.

"Doing this job will make you sick at how much garbage goes into our landfills," Carl said. He and his team take the extra time to separate recyclable or reusable items from the junk they haul away. "We want to do our part to keep the environment healthy," he explained.

As part of diverting unnecessary waste from landfills,





Carl sets aside anything that is reusable. Those items are then donated if they are in good enough condition. Carl sells them and donates the proceeds to local charities, including St. Jude's Children's Hospital, Steve Caporizzo's Pet Connections, and local shelters. These are just a few ways Carl utilizes his business to make his community and its future a little bit better.

Carl works hard to create a happy workplace for people who need a job. He takes great pride in creating opportunities for those who need to get back on their feet.

"I always tell my guys, trust and reliability are number one, and I will go as hard for you as you go for me. I am never above getting on the trucks and working side by side with them.'

Carl said, "I'm building a brand around giving back to the community," he means it in more ways than one. Carl Breitenstein is truly the king of junk, turning trash into treasures while supporting our community, creating connections, and delivering solutions.

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KELLER WILLIAMS REALTY CAPITAL DISTRICT

MOVING FORWARD

The statistics for success during the first year in real estate can be discouraging for new agents. However, in 2016, Andrew Barber came into the industry ready to achieve and surpass expectations. Five years later, Andrew is not only thriving as a rising agent in the Capital Region but is also leading the training of new agents at Keller Williams Capital District.

As the director of education and a full-time agent, Andrew combines his passions for construction, house flipping, selling, and instruction. He values helping clients as much as he does helping new agents. As soon as Andrew talks about his five years as a REALTOR®, his face lights up with excitement, passion, and gratitude. Before starting his real estate career, Andrew worked in several other industries, such as insurance and body shop management, where he developed skills that translated to his new career. His interest in selling homes began when he bought and flipped several properties. He then realized that his love for construction and the market could lead to a fulfilling career in real estate, ideally suited for his skills and interests.

on the rise

Photos by Joan Heffler,

Joan Heffler Photography

By Erin Anderson

After living in different parts of the country, Andrew and his wife, Amber, moved back to his hometown in the Capital Region.

Andrew spoke about how fulfilling it is to sell homes in his hometown.

"One of my first listings was from one of my computer teachers from high school," he shared. "I could have sold real estate anywhere in the



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country, but it made sense to do it here, where I'm from. This is where people know me. This is where I was born and raised, and my family still lives in this area."

Andrew reflected on one of the more exciting moments when he first began as an agent.

He recalled, "When you build momentum, people start to really see your advertising. And then you start getting phone calls versus being the one making phone calls."

While hustling to get his name out there, Andrew built his client base through his passion for the business. Having a strong interest in the industry is an asset when interacting with clients.

Andrew shared, "Having the passion is more beneficial to my clients because they can feel my passion. They recognize it's a lifestyle, not just a career.

...

There's a big difference between the two. There's a big difference in enthusiasm."

Andrew's love for the industry helps him to remain competitive and focused.

"As a full-time agent, when the market is challenging, I don't see it as something negative. If anything, it's awesome because it makes me work a lot harder."

Andrew's hard work was a considerable part of his early-career success. In addition, he enjoys advising agents while working with the Keller Williams' Agent Leadership Council (ALC).

"Anybody can be successful in this business if they're willing to put in the hard work and the effort to succeed with it."



He shares his educational philosophy with new agents while remaining realistic about expectations for new agents.

"We want our new hire agents to succeed," Andrew shared. "We are also extremely transparent by telling them the statistics."

Andrew and his training team coach new employees on steps to avoid the high drop-out rate commonplace in the first 12 to 18 months. He noted that the first few years of a new career are difficult for everyone, especially in real estate. However, he recognizes not everyone thrives under stress and aims to meet new agents at their pace with tools to help them thrive.



AS A FULL-TIME AGENT, WHEN THE MARKET IS CHALLENGING, I DON'T SEE IT AS SOMETHING NEGATIVE. IF ANYTHING, IT'S AWESOME BECAUSE IT MAKES ME WORK A LOT HARDER.

When it comes to his own work, Andrew is motivated and "propelled to keep moving forward" when times get tough.

Andrew's theme for the lessons he teaches to new agents is to "keep moving forward."

"It's about not dwelling on the losses but celebrating your wins and constantly moving," he shared.

Triathlon training activities help maintain Andrew's work/ life balance and help him to keep up with his young son.



"He's cute as a button, and he knows it," the proud dad shared.

Andrew's completed seven 70.3 distance triathlons and countless sprint triathlons. He also pursues adventurous hobbies such as riding dirt bikes, ATVs, BMX, snowboarding, and golf.

After only five years in the industry, Andrew is already a top producing agent and a passionate educator for new agents.

The daily adventures of real estate tie into Andrew's love for new challenges.

"I can't imagine doing anything different," Andrew shared. "I will always be in this business in some capacity. It's just a part of who I am."

Climbing to new heights and helping others up along the way is Andrew's purpose. He's found his calling in real estate and will forever be moving forward toward his next adventure.



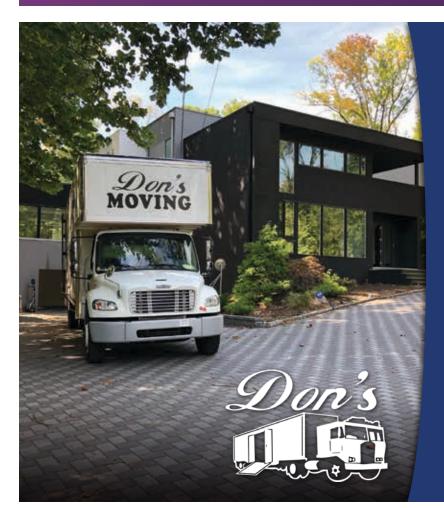




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PROBLEMS SOLVED AND COUNTING

When Dan Babinov started Philan Electric, he had one idea: to over-promise and over-deliver. Philan is the abbreviation for philanthropy: the desire to promote the welfare of others located in Albany County. He is doing just that by providing safe, fair, and reputable electrical work.

Dan was born in Ukraine, and he's trilingual.

"I came here with my family when I was a toddler, just two years after the Soviet Union fell apart," he shared. "We moved to Florida for a short while, then ended up in Massachusetts.

Though Dan moved a few times in his life, he recognizes that most people live in a house for a prolonged period.

"If you want to refer a reliable professional, give Philan Electric a shot," he said, "and be confident knowing your client won't get any handyman 'bandages' sparking inside your wall."

Dan is aware that homeowners, renovators, and

real estate agents have many choices when hiring an electrician. Philan Electric can service both commercial and residential settings. In residential buildings, their work runs "Often, you might refer someone to the handyman the gamut, including attic fans, kitchen, and bathroom neighbor next door, but they may not be as reliable exhaust fans, circuit breaker panels, electric heat, garage or knowledgeable as you need them to be," Dan door openers, grounding, hot tubs and jacuzzis, lights, said. "If you're referring to a certified, licensed conceiling fans, main service cables, meter boxes, outlets, tractor, you shouldn't have to worry. It's not enough pools, intelligent home automation, switches, troubleto get the job done; you want it done right." shooting, and whole-house wiring.



Philan Electric makes sure the job is done right by finding out the best way to serve the client.

"All clients are different," Dan remarked. "But they all expect consistent service, and they get that with us. We're a small team of guys, and we're consistent. We know what we're doing."

...

MANY CLIENTS **ASK FOR SERVICES CLOSELY RELATED** TO MY TRADE.



WE TRY TO BE A **ONE-STOP-SHOP** FOR THEM."









...

Dan and his team also provide HVAC assistance. "Many clients ask for services closely related to my trade," he said. "We try to be a one-stop-shop for them."

Recently, Dan has focused on heating and cooling systems called minisplits, which is the most economical way to get rid of window air conditioner units and baseboards. Dan and his team can perform roof de-icing and even install home camera security systems.

"But a security system should be left to a security company," Dan added.



offer them.

He hopes to become certified in solar installation next.

Dan never stops learning to provide the most sought-after products and services for his customers.

The Philan Electric team is also trained in snow melting (heated driveways) and floor warming (in bathrooms, for example). Recently, those projects have been in high demand, and very few businesses

"I discovered the demand for heat pumps and radiant snow melting, and I became an expert in those niches," Dan shared.

"As a teenager, I explored a handful of trades hands-on. I chose electrical because I liked the challenge, but I didn't know if I wanted to run my own electrical shop or be an electrical engineer," Dan remembered. "After several years of engineering and electrician experience, I chose to stick to being an electrician because of the room to grow and pivot to become a business owner."

According to Philan's website, they have completed 9,740 hours of work and have 974 satisfied customers. Philan Electric has solved 438 problems, and they are ready to solve yours next.



▶ featured real producer

FORTUNE REALTY GROUP, LLC

By **Megan Taylor-DiCenzo** Photos by **Martyn Gallina-Jones**, Gallina-Jones Photography

Jennifer Fortune started her company, Fortune Realty Group, LLC, in the summer of 2020. Before that, she worked at Howard Hanna in the Clifton Park office, earning several accolades, including Branch Top Producer, President's Council, and the National Sales Excellence Award

> Jennifer has an optimistic attitude, and her basis for success and the key to her many accomplishments is love for her family, friends, community, and fellow realtors. "That's one key element to my staying successful," she shared. "I don't let anything bother me for more than a few minutes. If I lose a listing, I need to move on. So you have to stay positive and brush it off."

Jennifer credits her optimistic attitude to her colleagues at her job with Veronica W. Lynch Realty. "Whenever something happened, my colleague, Chuck Poe, told me to go to the balcony in your mind and take five minutes before you react," she shared. "It prevented me from making rash decisions."

Jennifer's willingness to help others, especially her fellow realtors, is the second crucial aspect of her success. "In my business, being friends with and working closely with so many other brokers and agents is important," she said. "In the last year, so many of us have congratulated each other. It's fantastic. There is enough business for everyone. I'll drive by and see someone's sign down and stop to fix it. We do what we can to help each other."

...

TWO KEYS TO SUCCESS & A WHOLE LOT OF LOVE

Jennifer doesn't stop there; her willingness to help extends far and wide.

work with me at Fortune Realty Group," she remarked." I have always helped new agents no matter what firm I was part of. I always see something in them and love to help them grow in their Real Estate career. I remember when I first started and thinking about all that I needed to know to succeed."

Jennifer also knows the importance of maintaining relationships and enjoys helping her clients, both past and present. "It is a stressful, emotional time for some people going through buying and selling," she said. "I have always felt we wear so many hats as a realtor. We are therapists, cleaners, stagers, organizers, movers, project managers for contractors, mediators to family members, and more! We do all of these extra things to help



"My daughters, Chloe (14) and Michaela (1). We love going up to be with family in Lake George whenever we have time."

people achieve their real estate goals, and it builds a long-lasting relationship with the client."

Jennifer has always felt compelled to give her clients more than expected.

"Paying attention to detail and putting in the extra effort is just what I do. Whether it's staging a home to sell, helping to clean a house you are about to list, or helping your buyer come up with a plan to remodel their new home, I'm on it. I can't just pass along a list of names for the client to call and figure out independently. I want to help them from beginning to the end, even if it isn't part of the transaction of buying or selling."

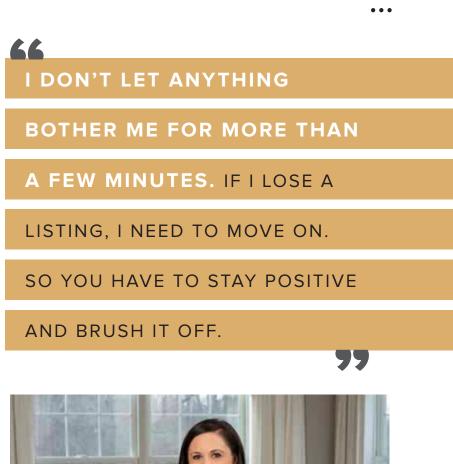
One way Jennifer goes above and beyond is by giving creative and thoughtful closing gifts to her clients along the way. In addition, she loves to celebrate holidays and often goes around and leaves holiday gifts.

"The Dollar Store must hate me and love me at the same time when they see me coming," she joked. "I just bought a bunch of Easter basket stuff. I love to give out little gifts for the kids, and going that extra mile goes a long way for me, personally, and my business."

She and her husband, Michael, live in Ballston Lake, and their daughters, Chloe Gras (14) and Michaela (1). She recalls giving birth to Michaela last year on Valentine's Day, six weeks early in the middle of COVID, which was certainly memorable.

"I did sell a couple of homes from my hospital bed," Jennifer remembered, "Once I was released, I was straight back to work. I remember having to wear slippers for weeks after getting home and apologizing to clients because my feet were still swollen; that's all that would fit!"

Jennifer wasn't much older than her daughter, Chloe when she started her real estate career at just 18 years old. Her jobs before real estate included a local boutique gift shop/cafe, a gym, and a tanning salon.



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THERE IS **ENOUGH BUSINESS** FOR EVERYONE. I'LL DRIVE BY AND SEE SOMEONE'S SIGN DOWN AND STOP TO FIX IT. WE DO WHAT WE CAN TO **HELP EACH** OTHER.

77







"I do real estate now in the same town that I grew up in, and I have known so many people through these years. This has definitely played a role in my success as an agent, broker, and now owner of my own company."

"I had a crazy summer that first year," she recalls. "It was 2003, and the market was good. There was no social media back then, but I had a Blackberry. There weren't many young agents, so we started the Young Realtors (group) and had mixers with older agents."

Since that time, Jennifer's 19 years in business have had highs and lows. "There were times when the market was slower, or there would be a large gap of time for closings, and I was a single mom," she remembered. "But I would never let myself think that I couldn't keep doing this career; it wasn't even part of my thought process. So I would always stay calm and keep moving along, looking for new business. Then the phone would ring, and there would be a new house to sell."

Through the years, Jennifer has come to understand that the more time you have in the real estate business, the more successful you will be. She also recommends taking the time to volunteer as she has throughout the years. Two of the many organizations she has volunteered for are the MLS Board and the Women's Council of Realtors.

"At a time in my career when I could do so, I spent years volunteering on boards and committees," she shared. "That was a huge help for me and my learning experience on the local and national real estate levels."

From selling real estate, managing Fortune Realty Group, volunteering, to raising her girls, Jennifer firmly believes in being kind and helping others.

"It truly pays off to be nice, and it makes the process of future dealings with these people even better because of it," she said. "I can truly say many of my clients are good friends now, and I love to stay in touch with them and their families. The best part of this job is meeting new people and the long-lasting relationships that can develop."



- **1.** Jen with her husband, Mike, and daughter, Michaela, visiting the Saratoga Race course.
- 2. The Fortune Realty Group team Christmas dinner
- "Our annual Christmas photo we like to take each year. This was Michaela's first Christmas!"
- 4. Jen and her two younger brothers Philip and Brandon. Jen loves to visit Saratoga Race Track every weekend during the race season, spending time with family and friends!





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