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**Partner Spotlight**

Chris Iula

*Chris the Home Inspector LLC*

**Do You Have A Big BUT?**

Coach's Corner with Lisa Giruzzi

**On the Rise**

Patrick Dunn

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**OCTOBER 2022**



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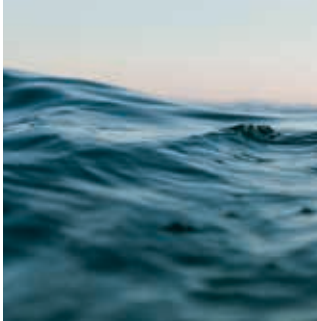




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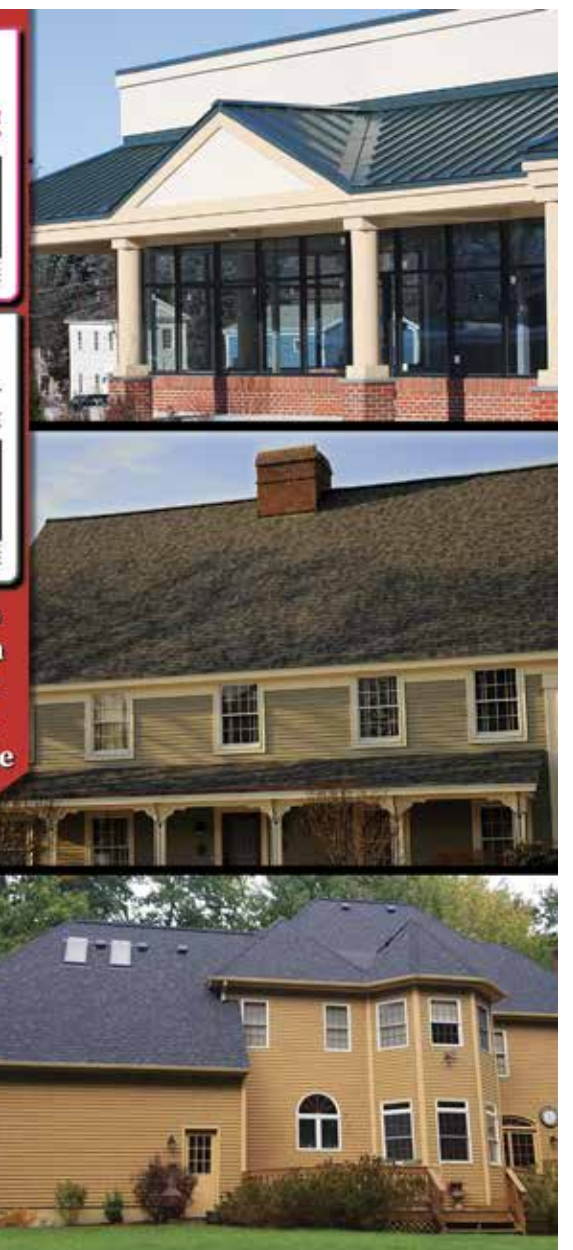
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# FEAR OF WATER HAS ALWAYS PERPLEXED ME.

Growing up, I spent summers at the YMCA camps in Glenville, NY. It was great to get out, play, and socialize with the other kids, but my favorite time of the day was pool time.

I was fortunate enough to be offered the opportunity to take swimming lessons at an early age and took to water very quickly. I lived in the deep end by age eight or nine, diving after pennies and nickels for fun.

Over the years, I learned to dive to the bottom, swim underwater, float on my back without effort, and hold my breath for over 2 minutes. I was one with the water.

In my later years, I unsurprisingly became a lifeguard and spent my summers watching children learn in the same pools that raised me.

Though I was aware some people didn't know how to swim, it wasn't until I was an adult and in the Marine Corps that I discovered swimming wasn't a universal skill. I was shocked to learn such a large percentage of people didn't have a positive relationship with swimming.

I noticed that the adults who never learned to swim as young children were often terrified of water in their later years.

Don't get me wrong. I think their fear is rational and by no means do I think any less of someone afraid of water. We fear the unknown and the things that can hurt us. Water is both unfamiliar and can drown someone in minutes.

I recently had an eye-opening experience that elevated my understanding of that fear.

Over the summer, my family and I went on a trip to Wildwood, NJ. The hotel we stayed at had a pool, and the kids wanted to swim 24/7. It wouldn't have been an issue, except that Sophia (2) and Julia (1) don't know how to swim and are constantly trying to go in the water to be like their big brother and sister.

Luckily we bought Sophia a life vest because as soon as we got to the pool, she wanted to jump in

immediately. What I witnessed was something I'll never forget.

She walked up to the pool's edge and seemed a little nervous. I looked at her and said, "It's OK, you can jump. I promise I'll catch you."

Immediately, without hesitation, she jumped into my hands. I stood there holding her above the water, shocked she'd taken the leap, her little feet dangling in the water.

I lowered her into the pool, and she immediately demanded, "Again! I want to go again!"

For the next few hours Sophia jumped in and got out of the pool non-stop, and what I witnessed was amazing to me.

She started small, jumping in a little bit more at a time, until eventually, she was jumping in, completely submerging herself, resurfacing, and swimming to the stairs all by herself. After four days, she could jump in alone and paddle her way completely across the pool unassisted.

Granted, if she didn't have her life-jacket, she would sink like a rock, but

her eagerness, bravery, excitement, and most of all, progress, were astonishing.

In less than five hours, she accomplished what many aspiring Marines can't learn in three months: how to move around in the water.

What was her advantage? Ignorance.

When Sophia walked over to me, wanting to jump in for the first time, she was fearful because the experience was unknown to her. She was ignorant of how dangerous water could be.

She trusted me enough to leap, and because she was happy and comfortable, she enabled herself to learn through trial, error, and expert guidance.

As we get older and become wiser, we learn more about the world and what's harmful to us. As a result, we become more knowledgeable and, in turn, more fearful. Sometimes, we let that fear control us, preventing us from trying.

Sophia didn't have that problem. She didn't fear the water because no one told her it was dangerous. Because she didn't know the danger of water, she had nothing holding her back except inexperience.

As I watched Sophia jump in for the gazillionth time, I looked over to the deep end and my "lifeguard alarms" started going off. My wife, Shari, was in the pool's deep end, shoulder deep and holding on to the side.

What most people don't know is that my wife, Shari, cannot swim. She never learned as a

kid. She doesn't like water, has never liked water, and for the last six years, she has refused to go into swimming pools. It wasn't until the last two years she would even step into the shallow end of a pool.

Seeing my wife cling to the edge of a pool in 7-foot deep water was frightening.

I swam over to make sure Shari was OK. She told me she was fine and walked around the whole pool, holding on to the edge. I knew this was a HUGE step for her, but it wasn't until later that she told me why she chose to conquer her fear.

Shari watched our 2-year-old daughter, who has never swam alone in her life, go from jumping into my hands to swimming on her own. She could swim, too, if she didn't let her fear stop her.

So Shari made a decision, took action, and by emulating the curiosity and ignorance of a toddler, she chose to face her fear and did something she had refused to do her whole adult life...

Shari went swimming.

I hope you'll take a chance this month and be inspired to face your fears in the way Shari was brave enough to do.

With admiration for our community,



**MIKE BAKER**

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By Caitlin Gurtner  
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# CHRIS IULA

## Chris the Home Inspector LLC

EDUCATING AND ELEVATING



“I take a careful look at my client’s houses, from the roof to the foundation and every system in between,” said certified home inspector and mold assessor Chris Iula. “My number one goal is to help them by better educating them about the building and placing them in a better position for a successful real estate transaction.”

When it comes to home inspections, Chris’s years of experience lead to the knowledge that home inspection is much more than simply examining a house.

“I’m honest to the home first,” Chris explained. “I perform my inspections how I was trained to accomplish it, obtaining a clear picture of a building’s state and communicating well with potential buyers. Real Estate agents want honesty and also deserve a reasonable perspective.”

Chris explained that viewing every home from the client’s perspective is essential, which means seeing the good in it. The importance is to educate the client about what exactly is happening in that space.

“Buyers trust the inspector to tell them if the home is worth the efforts required,” Chris explained. “I attempt to place myself in my client’s position when I review a home. I try to take a step back from my point of view and carefully consider what my customers need.”

The ability to educate necessitates good communication, a skill Chris picked up from his days in publishing.

“I thought being a property manager would lend to being a good inspector,” he said, “and it did, but I feel my communication skills helped me more.”

Being able to talk to people in layman’s terms and give clear and well-written

reports makes a world of difference, both to the clients and to attorneys. In addition, the simple truth of being a well-rounded person has helped him immensely.

“I’m a student of life,” he shared, and it’s evident through his work history that he means it.

In his younger years, Chris could be seen sweeping floors in a printing agency while at the same time attending college and studying communication, marketing, and graphic design.

After graduating, he did a little bit of everything, including working for a small publishing company.

...



...

“We had a four-person team, but we all wore different hats,” he shared.

Chris came out the other side with writing and communication skills, lending to an essential quality he utilizes as a home inspector.

So what led a man with education and experience in the humanities to take on a home inspection career? His interest started early with his dad, a man who was a “build anything, do anything type of guy,” including Chris’ childhood home.

“Since childhood, I have had an affinity for construction and real estate. As a kid, I was a helping hand in more than a few home improvement projects with my pop,” Chris shared. “I have vivid memories of enjoying every moment of these projects. I also worked in and on home improvements and repairs throughout my life.”

It’s an honor for Chris to provide this service to homeowners in the Capital Region, considering his appreciation for the area.



“We have clients thrilled with our services, who recommend us to friends, co-workers, or family members. Most of the referrals I get come from the same groups of people. That’s what makes me feel successful.”



shared. “Most of the referrals I get come from the same groups of people. That’s what makes me feel successful.”

While there are plenty of opportunities to hire a home inspector, each experience won’t be equal. Crafting a home inspection tailored to clients, with a primary focus on honesty of actual house conditions, is what clients receive when hiring Chris.

“I can catch the smallest details and pay careful attention to the important building practices throughout the homes or buildings I’m reviewing,” he explained.

A life-long learner, Chris undergoes continuous schooling to benefit his clients.

“Staying up-to-date on the latest real estate and home inspection topics and trends has allowed me to service my clients more effectively,” Chris explained. “Continuing education and professional development are doors to opportunities you can utilize to expand your real estate business options and stay at the forefront of the real estate industry.”

Chris believes education is a powerful tool that can also assist clients. He feels the best way to combat uncertainty during the home buying process is through explanation.

“I enjoy educating my clients, and I love the look on their faces when they know they have found their dream home,” Chris shared. “The entire process can be overwhelming and stressful for them. However, the smile on customer’s face when they have their path clear after the inspection period makes everything worth it.”

These days, Chris is focused on balancing his professional growth with personal time.

“Whenever I think about work-life balance, I recall listening to a podcast produced by a good friend, Willie Miranda. I highly recommend his education material, especially regarding time management,” Chris stated.

Time management is essential since Chris and his wife, Starr, have a son, Zachary, a daughter-in-law, Meredith, a granddaughter, Veda, and an endearing feline, Sebastian Jaxx, who “keeps us at full attention when he requires treats.”

“My wife and I both enjoy going for walks or a nature hike,” Chris said. “We try to minimize screen time outside work, to give our eyes, minds, and bodies the rest they deserve. We enjoy being outside and moving when we are not working.”

Chris will continue to balance family time and the work he loves.

“My true passion is being a home inspector,” Chris shared. When you’re doing what you really want to do, it’s a wonderful career.



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# DO YOU HAVE A BIG BUT?



## TRANSFORMATIONAL CONVERSATIONS

» coach's corner By Lisa Giruzzi

Here's what a big BUT looks like...

I would accomplish that, BUT...

I really want to, BUT...

I was going to, BUT...

BUTs are another way of saying, "I have identified a barrier or roadblock on the pathway to achieving my goal, and I don't *know how* to overcome it (or I don't think I *can* overcome it)."

BUTs are a very interesting phenomenon. Left unexamined, they have lots of power. BUTs can stop an otherwise successful person in their tracks. It's as if whatever comes after the BUT is *reality* rather than a reason made of thought.

In other words, you have discovered why you can't have what you want, so no more thinking is required; nothing is left to do but go without what you want.

Here are typical examples I hear all the time:

I want to be more successful, BUT I .  
I want to take care of myself, BUT .

I want my team to have better results, BUT they are so \_\_\_\_\_.

When you deconstruct the BUT, it becomes clear that whatever follows it is a belief, not *the truth*. It's whatever reason looks true to you. Having a big BUT is a way to avoid responsibility for getting whatever you want. It is a valid excuse that lets you off the hook for going for it and dealing with the possibility of failing.

Do you ever wonder why sometimes you look at roadblocks, barriers, and BUTs as the end of the line and sometimes you don't?

Years ago, I had a coach who said, "You either have the results you want or the reasons why not. Choose!"

When genuinely committed to something, you won't let anything stand in your way. So, if BUTs are stopping you, you must ask yourself, "Am I truly committed to this thing I say I want?"

If the answer is yes, replace the BUT with an AND (e.g., I want to exercise *AND* I don't have time). This lets you see the two things do not have a causal relationship. They are merely two thoughts connected by a BUT.

All that needs to happen is to question the truth of whatever follows your big BUT and recognize it as thought. There have been plenty of times in your life when you shifted your perspective and took action to achieve the goal you wanted.

When you let go of your big BUT, your natural creativity and innovation will take over. You will discover new ways of accomplishing what you previously thought you couldn't.

**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.

MORE INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE AT [WWW.TRANSFORMATIONALCONVERSATIONS.COM](http://WWW.TRANSFORMATIONALCONVERSATIONS.COM).



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By **Caitlin Gurtner**  
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# Patrick DUNN

RE/MAX Platinum

## LEARNING CONSISTENCY

Patrick Dunn was working in the service industry at the Saratoga Race Track, often rubbing elbows with billionaires, when a family friend convinced him to take his skills to a different sector that would allow him more freedom and opportunity.

Having the confidence to build relationships with an affluent crew fit perfectly into starting a REALTOR® career.

“I figured if I could do it with them, then I could do it with anybody,” Patrick shared.

Patrick attributes his success to a continued desire to be of service and opportunities to learn from strong leaders. And so, with the help of his mentor, Paul Friello, Patrick took his first steps into the real estate field.

, At the start of his new endeavor, Patrick struggled with the varied open schedule.

“I just wouldn’t do the things I needed to day by day,” he explained, describing his first couple of years as an agent. “It’s about making sure every day counts, and that’s not an easy thing to achieve.”

It wasn’t until he started setting goals for himself—daily, weekly, and monthly—and forcing himself to meet them that he began to settle into his

role. Once he found some consistency, things became much more manageable.

“I started implementing more structure,” he shared, “and, you know, just taking it day by day.”

Fortunately for Patrick, he wasn’t trying to figure this out alone. Others in the industry helped him find his rhythm, teaching him more “old-fashioned” ways to go about his business.

Patrick talked about how so few people in the field use the same methods he was taught, namely prospecting and cold-calling. Many other agents see it as an outdated and tedious business model. But the task was less daunting than worthwhile for Patrick, a man who became very accustomed to speaking with influential strangers.

“It’s still effective, and it still works,” he said in support of the practice. “I’m living proof. I do the hard work, and there are results.”

He continues to bring attention back to his support through this journey. He talked about his mentor Paul, whom he met when he was five or six.

“He was the one that sold my parents their house. That’s when I first even knew the job existed.”

Patrick’s father was an HVAC technician, and he would sometimes accompany him to work as a kid. This would someday help to make him aware of the relationship various vendors have with the real estate world.

Patrick didn’t have much interest at the time, describing how he usually spent those days thinking about basketball instead. Now, he realizes that much of the exposure to the ins and outs of homes led to his career success.

A few years ago, just before Patrick began getting into the swing of things, his father passed.

...





...

“I need him now more than ever, and he’s not here,” Patrick shared. “I’m just trying to be the best person I could be, and he’s a motivating factor for that.”

The rest of Patrick’s family are long-term residents of Schenectady, a factor that sparked Patrick’s appreciation of the capital region. Although the last name Dunn is Irish, Patrick also grew up with an Italian maternal side of his family. He talks about them, along with his parents and little sister, with much love and gratitude.

“They’re so supportive,” he explained. “They’ve been with me at any decision I’ve ever made. They’ve always just been there. I feel incredibly blessed to have such great people in my corner.”

Patrick has great loyalty and love for his family and his hometown. Patrick does his best to support Schenectady, whether referring people to other commercial realtors, helping his friend’s restaurant, or just making an effort to shop locally. He also revels in the gorgeous capital region summers and being so close to the racetrack.

“People travel from all over the world to be here,” he said.

Patrick looks forward to continuing his growth within the capital region over the next few years.

He finds the real estate work fulfilling and is excited to see how far his potential can take him. One of Patrick’s goals is to hit the \$10 million benchmark by the end of this year and reach \$15 million by the end of next.

Patrick hopes to start a team to help manage his growth. However, more than anything, he’s excited to continue helping people into the next stage of their lives.

“Seeing people’s reactions makes me feel like we have the best job in the world,” he explained. “For the first time, I feel I have a purpose of making this world a better place.”



Patrick frequents his favorite Capital Region hangout, Liza's of Troy, owned and operated by a close friend!





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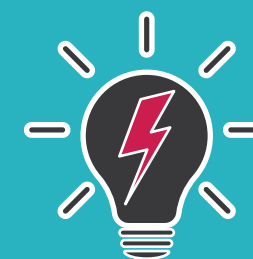


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# LISA OSTRANDER

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## THE SKY IS THE LIMIT

By Megan Taylor • Photos by Michael Gallitelli, Metroland Photo



REAL Producer, Lisa Ostrander, is passionate about life.

“The world is always exciting to me. I’m like a 10-year-old in a Wonka factory,” she laughed.

While she is devoted to family and career, she’s always ready to learn and try something new. With an incredible array and variety of interests, storytelling, gardening, law, the environment, reading, music and art, flipping houses, and gardening are just some of the ways Lisa demonstrates appreciation for new experiences.

Lisa’s desire for exploration might come from her family’s riveting background. Her grandparents immigrated from Italy and settled in the Bronx. Her father ran away from home at 17 and tried to join the military to fight in WWII.

“He hitchhiked from New York City to Texas with a couple of chocolate bars in his pocket,” Lisa shared. “When he got there, the mounted horse police arrested him. They called his father, who said, ‘If he wants to fight in the war that much, we’ll sign him up.’”

From there, her father went to California and joined the Navy. However, he couldn’t swim and, as a result, became a Corpsman stationed in Okinawa.

When he returned to America, he had to finish high school and college. The GI bill helped him attend medical school. There, he met Lisa’s mother. She sang at a party when Lisa’s father said he fell in love. They had kids soon after.

“She was an opera singer,” Lisa shared, “and she can still sing like you wouldn’t believe.”

Lisa’s dad was one of her most significant role models. It’s been three years since he passed away at almost 93.

“There isn’t a day that goes by when I don’t think about him,” she shared. “A person leaves behind a legacy. You try to emulate them. My dad taught me honesty, and integrity, to work hard, and to do right by others, which affects all aspects of my life. My dad was an incredible gardener, and my mom was an incredible cook. I can do all kinds of things as an adult because they taught me.”

Lisa learned so much from her father.

“My dad encouraged us to chop wood, mow the lawn, put together a rock wall,” she said. “One summer, he made my brother, and I take these metal brushes and scrub out all the moss in the blacktop driveway at our summer home. We played and had a great life, but my dad always made us work. At the age of 12, my mother and two older brothers opened an authentic Italian restaurant. I spent 22 years on and off working in various kitchen rolls, starting as a dishwasher at age 12 and finishing as the general manager at age 30.”

With these family stories, it’s no wonder Lisa has worked to memorialize them. While in college working on her master’s degree, she completed an oral history project. It recorded the



Lisa’s best friend in the world (aka her husband) and Lisa enjoying their favorite spot, Lake George





**I COME FROM AN INCREDIBLE FAMILY. I THINK MY ITALIAN HERITAGE IS WHY I'M SO AFFECTIONATE TOWARD MY CLIENTS.**

history of her mother, whose Italian city was bombed during WWII under Benito Mussolini. Lisa also wrote a story about her eldest brother growing up in the 1960s and her father's beginnings in New York City during the Great Depression.

"I come from an incredible family. I think my Italian heritage is why I'm so affectionate toward my clients," Lisa said. "I give lots of hugs."

Her affection, determination, and hard work make Lisa an excellent REALTOR®.

However, she didn't start out in real estate. In her 20s, Lisa moved from New York to Houston, TX. She worked as a history teacher and professional artist, while learning the craft of restoration while renovating her 1920s city home.

"It cost about \$60K, and I had no idea what I was getting into," Lisa remembered. "I watched WMHT on the television and borrowed books on how to do plumbing and electrical; I taught myself."

When she sold it, she made about \$100K. Lisa knew she enjoyed flipping houses and was interested in real estate, but she felt she couldn't just quit her paying job.



Who doesn't love getting muddy while driving around Lisa's 200-acre property?

"Let's be honest—you don't necessarily make money when you first start real estate," she said. "So, I put it on the back burner. I did another fix-and-flip. I was proud that I knew how to do electrical and plumbing. I was good at dry-wall and taping and painting."

Then, she moved back to upstate New York, where she managed her family's Italian restaurant and owned and operated two art galleries. During

this time, she got together with her high school sweetheart, and ended up marrying the man who had become her "best friend." They bought an old 1800 Farmhouse, and Lisa's interest in real estate was rekindled. She took the plunge into her new career.

"I've always been entrepreneurial. I love homes, sales, and helping people. Still, everyone warned me how hard it was to make money," she said.

Lisa started her real estate career in 2007 when the housing market crashed.

"Two years in, I thought about quitting," she said. "But, my dogs were sick. They both had cancer, and I was doing everything to save their lives. I just woke up and said to myself, *I will be successful at this. I'm not a quitter. I will make money and pay to take care of my dogs.*"

Once she set her mind to it, it was like a switch turned on.

"It was my third year in real estate, and I quadrupled my business," Lisa remembered. "I became a top producer in my office and never looked back."



A shot in front of the Leaning Tower of Pisa while visiting family in 2019. Most of Lisa's family lives in Bologna, Italy.







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Lisa continues to look forward. Her property, part of the Water District in the 1700s, provides a constant source of awe.

“The original farmers were buried in our yard,” Lisa shared. “We kind of know where the grave-stones are, but we think they should rest wherever they may be.”

“My to-do list is the size of an encyclopedia, but I love it,” Lisa said.

Her goal has always been to renovate the 1800s barn on their property.

“We’d like to put a CrossFit gym in the barn,” Lisa shared. “We have a Garden of Eden where our pear, apple, and peach trees grow. We also grow blueberries and raspberries. We have 4.5 acres, which we take care of ourselves.”



Lisa competing in her favorite activity, CrossFit



Enjoying a favorite pastime—riding on tractors!

Lisa loves protecting the environment, working in the garden to create new life, and appreciating it.

“I live a hippie lifestyle,” she laughed.

She also cares for about 40 indoor plants.

“When clients have dying plants in their house, I say, *You can’t throw that out.* So, they give it to me. Soon after, I’ll send them photos and say, *I named your plant! Look how Gertrude is doing!*”

Lisa and her husband have plenty of plant babies and nieces and nephews.

“My youngest brother and I are board game nerds; we try to have a game night once a week,” she said. “My husband and I do date nights with my mom once a week; she’s full of life. So it’s a full and happy life. I’m very thankful. I’ve always been a person who wakes up grateful.”

Lisa knows being a real estate broker and investor is her final career, “besides when I retire and become a master gardener,” she laughed. “The journey here has been incredible: ups and downs, good and bad. All in all, I have a very happy life. The sky is the limit.”







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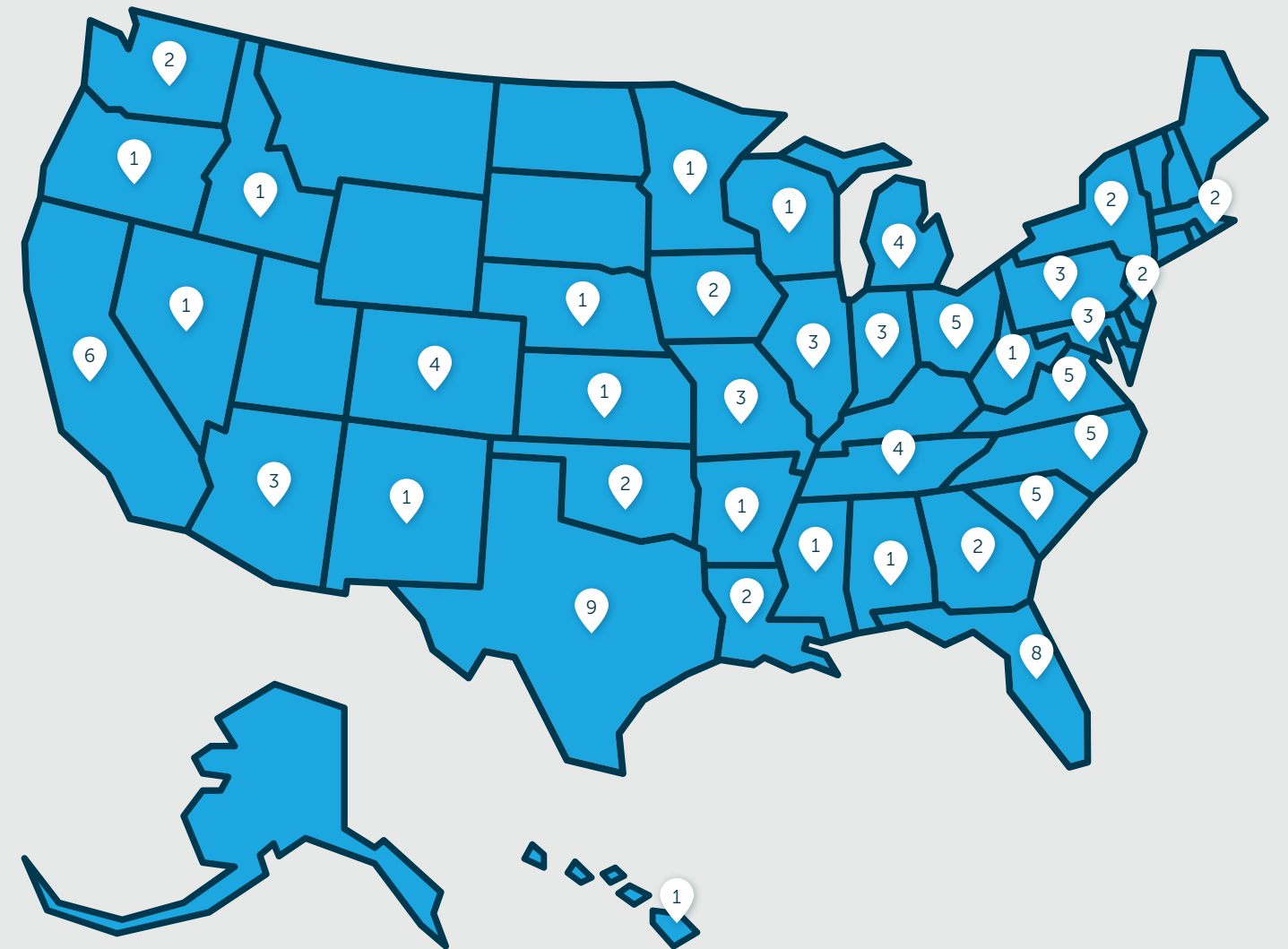
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