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Agent Features:

Chicky Johnson
Debbie Hymen

Partner Spotlight:

Floss Law, LLC

Making a Difference:

TrueNorth Foundation

FALL EVENT

28 Mile Distilling Co.
Thursday, October 27th
1PM-4PM
Details on page 56

JANET BORDEN

Starting a
New Team with
Allison Silver

**TOP 150
STANDINGS**

OCTOBER 2022



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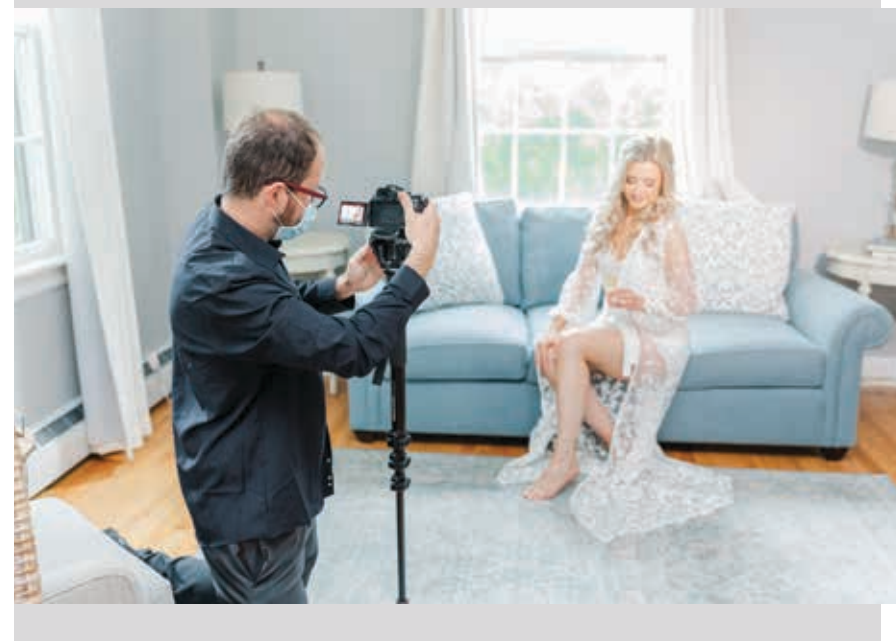
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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

We just celebrated half of a decade in print for our Chicago publication (five years sounds much longer when you say it like that). If I could go back and talk to myself in 2017, knowing what I know now, I would have taken less time to bring the Real Producers platform to Illinois.

Some of you may not know my journey, but I came from the vendor/service provider world and catered to REALTORS® (see page 24 for our brand, just a little plug if you're ever in need of closing gifts). I was always intrigued at the lengths that businesses would go to reach successful REALTORS®. Then I realized that one single real estate transaction is like a micro-economy. There are so many industries that benefit from connecting with REALTORS®. Well, actually, scratch that—there are so many industries that benefit from building relationships with the RIGHT types of REALTORS®.

It takes an average Real Producers publisher four and a half months to start a publication and go to print. Meaning if someone ends their training in January, they will generally launch their publication in the middle of May. So any guesses on how long it took me to launch CRP from the time I ended training? Anyone? Bueller? Thirteen months. I completed training in September 2016, and our first issue was in October of 2017.

I'm sharing this simply because it's my story and that there is value in perseverance. Yes, there are things I would have changed and done differently (like hiring Melissa Lopez from day one). However, I think it's cool sometimes to take a moment and be proud of our accomplishments. Not in an arrogant or self-serving way, but to look back and admire the traction we have made. Looking forward to seeing you at our fall event on



Thursday, October 27th, at 28 Mile Distilling Co. (details on page 56)!

Andy Burton
Publisher

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cover story
By Chris Hennessy
Photos by Elliot Powell

Janet BORDEN

Starting a New Team with Allison Silver

With over thirty years' experience as a top performing real estate agent in North Shore, Janet Borden has firmly established the moniker, "Jan Can." Among her many prestigious achievements, she has cemented her position as the number one agent in Highland Park for the past three years in a row, and made HW Media's Real Trends "America's Best" list for 2021. But even more exciting than her decorated past are the plans she has for the future, having recently partnered with Allison Silver to form Arrow Home Advisors.

With the creation of their new team, Janet and Allison are looking for agents who share their passion, can-do attitude, work ethic, and commitment to client service, education, and uncovering insight—values Janet has exemplified from a young age.

Janet, who went to seven different schools growing up, was an average in the moving process and learned how to quickly adjust to new environments. She graduated early from high school, and immediately started her real estate career. She worked two jobs—driving an auto parts truck and serving

others as a cocktail waitress—to support herself from the age of 16.

Although Janet started a family at the age of twenty-one and spent time as a stay-at-home mom, she still wanted to make her own money and have her own sense of independence. She became excited by the idea of starting a career in real estate once her children started school. She was still very young when she started her career, and often found it challenging to get people to take her seriously. She went to work for her clients' needs and committed to excellence in everything she did, overcoming people's prejudice and creating

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BOB FLOSS II

with Floss Law, LLC

MADE FOR THIS

When it comes to real estate law, there are few in the area who can match the knowledge, experience, and passion of Bob Floss. With nearly fifteen years' experience as a real estate attorney and a lifetime's worth of experience growing up in the real estate industry—even working as a broker at one point—Bob has seen the difference between an attorney who knows their stuff and one that doesn't.



“I see closings where the other attorney either doesn't know real estate and is doing their client a disservice, or doesn't have the time to dedicate to the file and misses important items,” he explains. “When we receive a contract, we get to work immediately and give it our full attention. I've been closing real estate for thirteen years and I still review my checklists for every file. I feel we owe it to the client and the real estate agents to show up to closings prepared and ready to tackle any problem.”

Bob is a big believer in having scripts and checklists for his business. Not only do they keep him on track, but on those days when he needs a little extra push, he can pull out a checklist of things he can do, whether he's checking his files, following up with clients, or researching an issue. And once he gets moving and finds the problems that need solving, he gets into a groove.

Tackling problems is what Bob does best. He was made for it. He grew up in an environment of negotiations and real estate closings at his parents' real estate office, and he had a natural love for puzzles. He could spend hours with a good jigsaw puzzle. It's the problem-solving aspect of it that he loves so much. There's nothing better than the satisfaction he gets from finding that perfect piece to a puzzle that makes everything whole and functional.

“I have fun solving-problem,” he explains. “And I've been through enough closings that I can generally find a solution to almost any issue. It's fun to walk into a situation that the other parties think is horrible and be able to problem-solve and get the closing completed. It's also fun to take a file an agent thinks will be incredibly difficult and then put in the prep work so the closing goes smoothly. I can always tell when an agent has had a bad experience [with another attorney] when they walk into the closing looking scared,” he says, laughing. “I want them to know some attorneys are different.”

Bob's positive attitude comes from his experience working as a new attorney at the start of the Great Recession. He was immediately thrown into chaotic and difficult closings: he had to learn on his feet and fast. He cut his teeth on short sales, foreclosures, and auctions, which led to his becoming an expert in the field.” The exposure also allowed him to work directly with investors and learn how to help them. Even today, a large portion of Bob's business is done outside of the normal residential real estate closing.

“We close commercial real estate, foreclosure, auctions, and short sales,” he explains. “Our repeat clients are typically investors that need to create an LLC or joint venture to purchase an investment and also craft an agreement with their investors or private lender. Given the volatility of the stock market, we've seen increased interest in becoming a private lender for real estate investments. It requires setting up extensive protections for the investor so we can minimize their risk of loss.”





Staying up on market trends and current practices is what keeps Floss Law, LLC at the forefront of industry. For example, with the shift in how people view closings these past two years, with sellers not having to attend closings and the like, Bob has made it a point to stay two steps ahead of all parties.

“We aim to have the seller documents ready a week ahead of closing so clients can come into the office and pre-sign when they have time,” he says. “It’s forced us to be more prepared for closings so we can be prepared for the clients. By the time the closing starts, the seller side has been finished for several days

and we are just waiting on the buyer to sign their mortgage.”

“We understand the amount of work agents put into their business and getting a property under contract,” he continues. “When they hand that contract off to us, they can rest assured it will be processed by our team immediately, that we will begin reaching out to the client, and we will take the file the rest of the way.”

On most weekends, between work, you can usually find Bob with his

wife, Sarah, and five-year-old son, Carter, taking a road trip to Lake Geneva, Galena, or Door County. That is, if he isn’t fishing in Michigan: Bob loves chasing brown trout. It’s the only thing that can keep him away from a Bears game. In addition to being an avid Bears fan, Bob was a big comics kid growing up and enjoys all the Marvel movies today.

“If I get around other comic book people, it can be painful for my wife,” he says, laughing. “Or if someone asks me about property auctions, I will not stop talking. It’s corny to say, but I really love what I do. I like getting up and coming to work every day. My biggest issue is leaving the office at a normal hour. I’m usually staying late, trying to do one more thing, or call a client to discuss their property.”

To partake in Bob’s everyday enjoyment of real estate with him, or to learn more about Floss Law, LLC, visit www.flosslaw.com.

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Sept 17 Craft Beer Fest Elmhurst - History Museum Grounds

Sept 17 Brew at the Bridge Oswego - Hudson Crossing Park

Sept 24 Tunes & Brews Joliet - 102 N. Chicago St.

Oct 1 Brew Fest Villa Park - Cortesi Park

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Sept 9 - 11 German-American Oktoberfest Chicago - Lincoln Square

Sept 9 - 11 Platzkonzert Germanfest Hoffman Estates - Village Green

Sept 15 - 25 Oktoberfest Glenside Hts. - Camera Park

Sept 16 - 17 Oktoberfest Elk Grove Village - Lions Dr. next to Lions Park

Sept 16 - 18 Oktoberfest Palatine - Downtown

Sept 23 - 25 St. Alphonsus Oktoberfest Chicago - St. Alphonsus Church

Sept 30 - Oct 1 Oktoberfest Naperville - Napier Settlement

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» agent feature

CHICKY JOHNSON

An Unstoppable Force

By Chris Menezes | Photos By Elliot Powell

Chicky Johnson is an unstoppable force. And at thirty-five years in real estate, her career has come full circle, working with people she sold homes to back in 1987, when they were in their twenties. She now helps their kids—who are in their twenties—as well as their parents and grandparents, who are all entering new chapters of life. Her impact goes three generations deep, and she’s still rolling.

Of course, it hasn’t been easy for Chicky, getting to where she is today. She started her career when she was twenty-one years old. She had been working as a secretary for a top-producing agent and wanted to commit to a career of her own. She’d been working in the industry and investing in it since she was teenager. She had also been working at her parents’ restaurant from the time was nine, taking the bus directly from elementary school to the restaurant every day, to do homework in the backroom before having to work after.

The youngest of nine in a strict, Catholic, Italian family, Chicky was born in Lake Villa, Illinois. Her father immigrated to the United States from Italy when he was a child, and later bought a restaurant to keep his own kids out of trouble.

“I look up to my late father,” Chicky says. “Despite his humble beginnings, he was





educated, disciplined, tough, hardworking, confident, and loved his family. Working nights and weekends at my dad's restaurant from ages nine to twenty-one, I waited tables, washed dishes, cooked, you name it. We did not get to play or go home and watch TV. We couldn't sit around, ever. There was always something needing your attention and you had to multitask."

That strong work ethic served Chicky well, it helped her when starting her career in real estate, and became essential as life took its turns throughout the years. The first sudden turn for Chicky occurred just four years after starting her career, when her father suddenly passed away and the strong family dynamic she once relied on crumbled in his absence.

The family-shaped hole that was left in Chicky's life after her father died widened even more just a few years later when, after trying to have kids for six years—having married at age twenty-two—she was told she wouldn't be able to. However, when she was twenty-eight, a miracle happened: she got pregnant and delivered her only birth-child, Jimmy.

Chicky continued building her real estate business over the years and did well; by age thirty-six she was inducted into the RE/MAX Hall of Fame. The life that she had built for herself and family, however, suddenly changed when, after twenty-one years of marriage, she found herself as a single parent. Determined to do it all and make it work, she took on four side hustles, and at one point, was working six jobs at once.

"I lost everything I had except my son, my drive, and willingness to overcome adversity," she explains. "During that time, I lost one of my brothers to cancer, followed by the sudden loss on Christmas Eve morning of my mother, and then another brother after that. I had to completely rebuild my life, career, self, and family. I will always be humbled because of that time in my life, and I have learned to value everything I have," she says.

Through hard work, perseverance and discipline, Chicky got back everything she lost and then some. She had reconnected with a long-time past client, Bill Trusk, who she ended up

dating for eight years and married in 2019, exchanging vows on beautiful Trunk Bay on St. John Island in the Virgin Islands, and inheriting two bonus kids: Emily and Joey. While all her kids are grown now, she cherishes the time they get to spend together as a family, along with her puppy, Sparkle, who is five years old.

Unfortunately, in 2020, while out on a walk with Sparkle, just before Thanksgiving, Chicky and Sparkle were attacked by a neighbor's Doberman. "We survived but deal with PTSD on a daily basis," Chicky explains. "I encourage people to seek help for their mental well-being when they need to. There is no shame in it. The incident has left physical and emotional scars for me. It also has affected how I deal with my business where dogs are involved."

Despite her terrifying encounter, Chicky still loves dogs and has always been a huge supporter of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA). Her two favorite things to talk about are sports and dogs. "I love watching SEC and NFL football. I wanted to be a professional cheerleader at one time," she says. "I also love watching reels on Instagram of all the crazy things dogs do. I



Photo credit: Mango Works on the Island
realproducersmag.com





Chicky with her family.



Chicky and her son, Jimmy.

grew up on a farm with many animals, and wish I could do more to save all animals.”

With such a long, successful career as an agent, Chicky has seen it all. Perhaps the biggest lesson she has learned is the importance of preparation—preparing for market shifts, preparing a budget for finances, and preparing to meet a wide spectrum of people with varying interests, all of which has to do with safety and protecting yourself. The way she learned the scariest part of this lesson was while on a listing appointment in the 1990s:

“I used to send over 15K pieces of direct mail a month in the 1990s, and during that time, someone became obsessed with me and started to stalk me,” she explains. “Then one day, unbeknownst to me, I walked into a listing appointment at his home. He had wallpapered his rooms with my postcards. Instincts kicked in and I was able to get out without harm. It was very creepy. Safety is always a concern.”

Now that Chicky’s career has come full circle and she is helping three generations of clients and friends, she says she has no plans to retire or slow down any time soon.

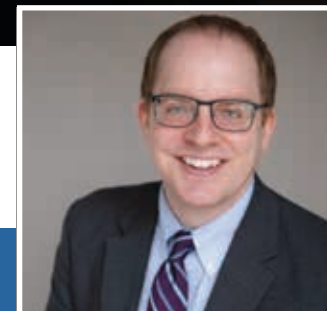
“Real estate is a wild, exciting, exhausting, rewarding career, and I love the challenge,” she says. “I want to continue to spoil my kids, let my husband retire, and stay in my field doing what I love, even when it is exhausting and challenging. I dedicated and sacrificed so much for it, so, as long as the rewards still come, I will happily keep rolling along.”

“REAL ESTATE IS A WILD, EXCITING, EXHAUSTING, REWARDING CAREER, AND I LOVE THE CHALLENGE...”



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Janet BORDEN

Starting a New Team with Allison Silver

With over thirty years' experience as a top-performing real estate agent on the North Shore, Janet Borden has firmly established the moniker, "Jan Can." Among her many prodigious achievements, she has cemented her position as the number one agent in Highland Park for the past three years in a row for number of homes sold, and made HW Media's Real Trends "America's Best" list for 2021. But even more exciting than her decorated past are the plans she has for the future, having recently partnered with Allison Silver to form Arrow Home Advisors.

With the creation of their new team, Janet and Allison are looking for agents who share their positive, can-do attitude, work ethic, and commitment to client service, education, and unwavering integrity—values Janet has exemplified from a young age.

Janet, who went to seven different schools growing up, was no stranger to the moving process and learned how to quickly adjust to new environments. She graduated early from high school, and immediately entered the workforce. She worked two jobs—driving an auto-parts truck and serving

tables as a cocktail waitress—to support herself from the age of seventeen.

Although Janet started a family at the age of twenty-one and spent time as a stay-at-home mom, she still wanted to make her own money and have her own sense of independence. She became excited by the idea of starting a career in real estate once her children started school. She was still very young when she started her career, and often found it challenging to get people to take her seriously. She went to work for her clients nonetheless and committed to excellence in everything she did, overcoming people's prejudice and creating

...



•••

raving fans in the process, something she is still passionate about today.

“I am passionate about creating the very best experience that I can for my clients, while holding myself to extremely high ethics and standards on behalf of my clients and my colleagues in the real estate community,” Janet says. “I am also incredibly passionate right now about growing a productive, exciting team so that my colleagues and I can enjoy a better quality of life by supporting each other. I’m looking forward to cultivating and encouraging new talent, improving systems, and increasing our professionalism as a team.”

After thirty years of working as a solo agent, Janet is excited to start this new chapter in her career with Allison Silver. Allison brings over twenty years’ experience as a top producer in the North Shore. Together, she and Janet have over fifty years of combined experience. Allison has sold multiple development and new construction projects and has helped investors navigate their projects from start to finish with impressive ROI. She has extensive first-hand knowledge of the green



“ I AM ALSO INCREDIBLY PASSIONATE RIGHT NOW ABOUT GROWING A PRODUCTIVE, EXCITING TEAM SO THAT MY COLLEAGUES AND I CAN ENJOY A BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE BY SUPPORTING EACH OTHER. ”



building and living market, and she welcomes the opportunity to work with clients who share that vision. She also has a wonderful eye for staging a property and presenting it in its best light.

Given her experience and expertise in the industry, Janet offers the following advice to up-and-coming agents, “Get organized early on and stay on top of your database. Do things right from the very beginning so you don’t have to undo previous mistakes. Be confident, believe in yourself, and know that you can do it!”

In addition to building a team and helping to grow more successful agents in the industry, Janet and Allison share a deep passion for

•••



Janet with her husband in Peru.

the North Shore community, having raised their families here and personally invested in its development over the years. Janet has been a long-time supporter of the Southern Poverty Law Center and an active volunteer with the Ronald McDonald House and Habitat for Humanity. Allison is a founding member of Gratitude Generation, which aims to build a growth mindset in local kids and families to help foster an attitude of gratitude and the wish to give back, through a myriad of charitable programs.

While Janet thoroughly appreciates her community—walking the lakefront, attending all the festivals and restaurants in Highland Park, Highwood, and along the North Shore—she is a big-time traveler and adventurer. Two of her greatest adventures? Hiking the Inca Trail and rafting down the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon. She once owned a motorcycle, too, and still has a motorcycle license.

A lover of music, Janet sings jazz, plays guitar, and enjoys taking classes at the Old Town School of Folk Music. She even married a drummer, which she says made the first ten years of her marriage both fun and challenging because of the crazy hours his work demanded. She and her husband, Lou, have two grandkids and two daughters who are successful entrepreneurs as well: they own Milk Handmade and Honey Bridal in Chicago. Allison and her husband also have two kids and a puppy that they love to take around Lake Michigan, to enjoy the beautiful landscape, dynamic towns, restaurants, and people.

As Janet and Allison embark on this new chapter in their careers, it will be exciting to see the team they build and everything they will accomplish together. Because if there were two people who could build a team unlike any other in the North Shore, Allison and Janet can.

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DEBBIE HYMEN

Following Her Conscience and the Call to Serve

▶ agent feature

By Laura Zickert
Photos By Annette Patko

REALTOR® Debbie Hymen, a Highland Park resident since 1983, has always prioritized honesty, family, community, and serving others. “The most rewarding part of my business is when I am able to show someone who believed they would not be able to afford a home that they can, in fact, be a homeowner,” she says.

Debbie was born in Chicago, but shortly thereafter, her family moved to Morton Grove, then, one week before her tenth birthday, they moved to Glencoe. Debbie’s parents valued education and her mother was set on having her children attend New Trier High School. After high school, Debbie attended the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and graduated with a bachelor of science in human relationships and family studies. “Basically, child development,” Debbie explains.

Because she entered through the university’s college of agriculture, her coursework required rigorous science classes as well as time working in preschool classrooms. She struggled at first, but with the support of a wonderful social worker and her father, she found better balance with her schoolwork and social life and the change even improved her grades. Having loaded her first two years with required courses, the balance left time for long-distance bike rides, ice skating and ballroom dance classes, and participating in dance contests and marathons with her sorority sisters. “I was a disco queen, by the way,” notes Debbie.

Debbie first worked as a child-life therapist at La Rabida Children’s Hospital in Jackson Park. With the goal of starting a child-life program at Saint Joseph Hospital at Diversey and Sheridan, she became an administrative assistant to the head administrator there and eventually worked in the Pediatrics Department for the then vice-chairman of the department and head of pediatric medical education. However, when they hired someone else to begin the program, Debbie moved her career in a different direction.

She became a marketing support representative for electronic mail provider ITT Dialcom. She provided training for staff and members of client organizations like the American Library Association and American Bar Association on the ABA/net, which ITT developed. But when her oldest child, David, was two, she left to stay home and focus on him and his sister and brother to be, Alexis and Michael.

During this time, her husband, Joel, opened his law firm and Debbie became his paralegal.





She worked part-time for him for two years, and saw again how wonderful her husband is. “People love him because of how ethical he is, how much time he takes with them, and how much he cares about them—reasons why I fell in love with him all over again, as I have said so many times,” says Debbie.

But Debbie saw how, when you’re the one answering the phone, people are often not respectful to you. Though she was proud for how well she was able to assist attorneys and others, when her husband’s business started to grow and they were able to hire someone full-time, she was glad to “retire to the life of [being the] referee between my three children, getting them to their after-school religious classes and other activities, and maintaining the household on a full-time basis.”

In 1996, Debbie was ready to re-enter the workforce. That year, she won a seat on the K-8 school board and, following her interest in sales and fondness for real estate, she obtained her license. In 1997, she earned her managing broker’s license.



Debbie with her husband, Joel.



Debbie started at Prudential Preferred, which ultimately became Coldwell Banker. In 2007, she chose to become the managing broker at the reformed Highland Park Prudential office. Then, after seeing changes happening in her office, making a return to the sales force, and a then brief time again with Coldwell Banker, she moved to Berkshire Hathaway in 2016. Two years later, Debbie struck out on her own and started Real Deb Realty as a sole proprietor. As her company grew and became more successful than she ever imagined, she was courted by a number of big names but held on. However, when she saw that Century 21 Affiliated would meet her requirements, she accepted their offer.

Debbie affirms that her “defining path” has always been about telling the truth and

being true to herself. “I make it a point to give my clients all the information they need to make any decision and to guide them without making the decision for them,” she says. Honest communication is vital to Debbie and has shaped how she works with her clients and supports her family.

Her passion for giving back includes her community, the many charities she supports, and her colleagues. For most of her real estate career, Debbie has served on NSBAR’s Grievance Committee, twice as chairman. She has also served as an Illinois REALTOR® Ombudsman since 2013, a mediator since 2005, and currently serves on the Illinois REALTORS® Grievance Committee. Since 2018 she has served on NSBAR’s Diversity and Inclusion Committee as well as their Contracts and Forms Committee. “The committee work makes me a better professional,” states Debbie. “Never

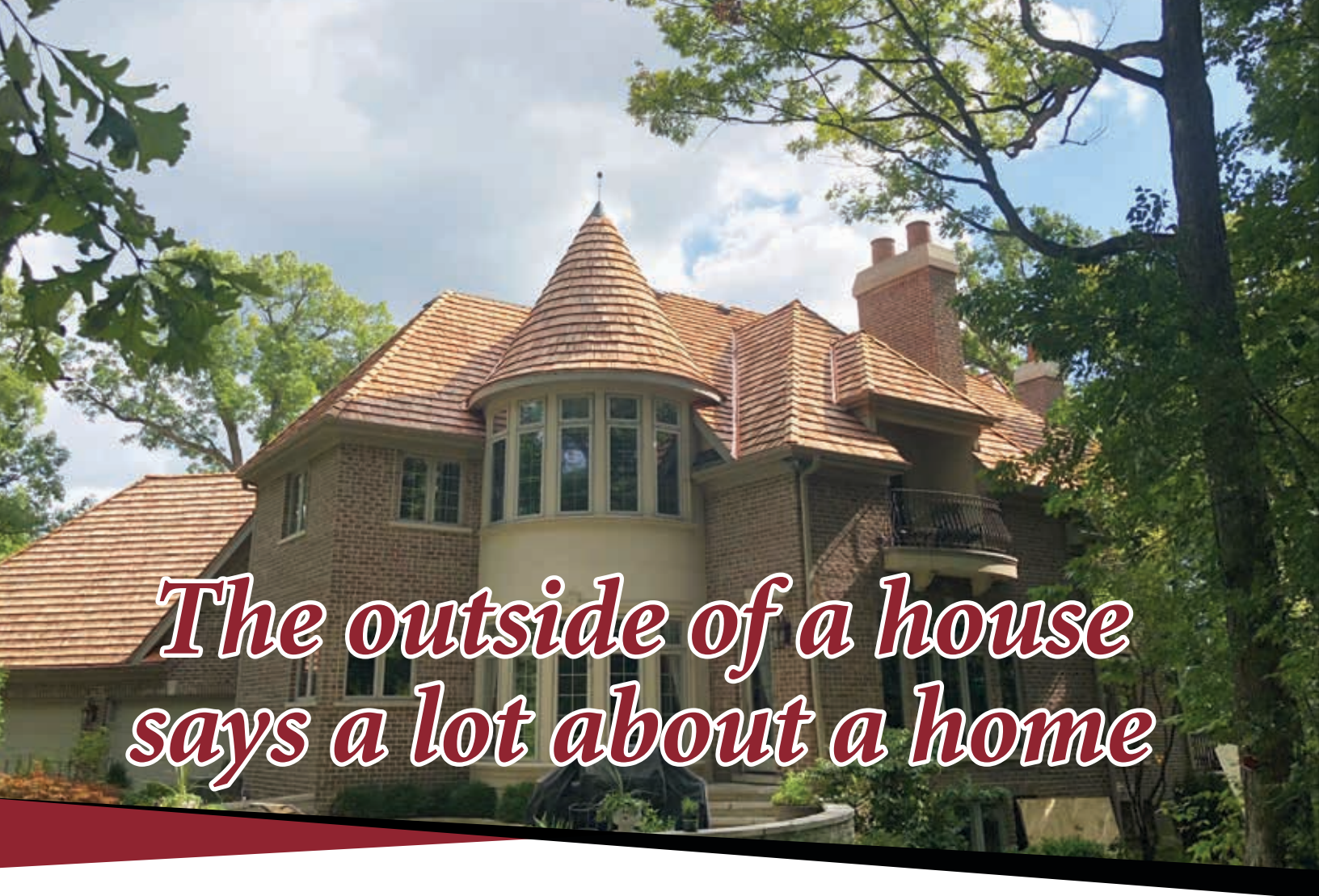
become too big to help others. On July 4th, my community endured a senseless act of gun violence,” she adds. “I am, of course, supporting my community to combat these atrocities.”

Debbie and Joel enjoy going out to dinner together, traveling, spending time with family at White Sox games, and taking walks in their neighborhood. “I do not relax very well, but when I do, I love to watch old movies,” says Debbie.

“I have always been passionate about two things: that everyone who needs a place to live be able to have a place to live, and that every real estate professional put their clients first and treat them with the utmost care within the guidelines of the license law, code of ethics, and the Fair Housing Act,” states Debbie. “I have always loved helping others do this job well. Top producers are always learning.”



I have always been passionate about two things: that everyone who needs a place to live be able to have a place to live, and that every real estate professional put their clients first...



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▶▶ behind-the-scenes all-star feature

HEATHER M. JOHNSTON

NOMINATED BY: KATI SPANIAK

Photos by **Holly Lynn Siebeck** of **Hollynn Photography**

Name: Heather M. Johnston

Position/Title: Chief Operating Officer

Office/Company: The Spaniak Team - eXp Realty LLC



How long have you been working for/with the person who nominated you?

Almost three and a half years

How long have you been working in the real estate industry?

Seven years

What did you do before you began working in your current position?

I was the VP of Sales for the highest-producing RE/MAX Team in Northern IL, RE/MAX Top Performers - The Jane Lee Team. I coached, trained, and led an office of forty people which was comprised of eighteen agents and twenty-two admin staff. I have interviewed hundreds of candidates for a variety of positions, and I have hired upwards of seventy-five people in my career.

What does your typical workday look like?

As COO of the Spaniak Team, I oversee daily operations, including training and management of staff, listing input and management, customer service, events and outreach, marketing, and business development. I am also a licensed agent, however, sales are not my primary focus. Honestly, I don't really have a "typical" workday because every day is a little different, which I enjoy! I strive each day to write down my goals and to-dos for the day to help me keep on track, but as we know in real estate, we often have to pivot and change direction when incoming issues and situations arise.

How would you describe your job in one word? Eclectic

Why do you think you excel at your job?

My work ethic. I am responsible, conscientious, and loyal. I

take pride in my work and it is important to me to do the right thing even if it is more difficult or unpleasant for me, personally.

What is the most rewarding aspect of your job?

Celebrating the successes with our clients, appreciation for our efforts and knowledge, receiving positive feedback from our clients, our real estate colleagues and partners, and getting to do what I love—writing articles about a variety of topics!

What is the most challenging aspect of your job?

Dealing with difficult personalities and uncooperative people, which thankfully doesn't happen very often! I want everyone to be happy and get along, and I am definitely a "people pleaser" so it can be difficult for me to have to be blunt and firm when necessary.



What is one thing about you that others might find surprising or interesting?

I am the Director of LakeShore Harley Owners Group based out of Libertyville, IL, and I am the first woman to hold that position since the group's inception over thirty years ago. I ride my own motorcycle, nicknamed "Dolly" (after my idol, Dolly Parton) and I have ridden thousands of miles all over the country with my husband and our friends and family. I am the current chair of NSBAR's

Grievance Committee and the incoming chair of the Education Committee. I am also on IAR's Professional Standards Committee.

When you're not working, what do you like to do for fun?

My husband, Corey, and I love riding motorcycles. It is our hobby and our passion. We enjoy traveling and exploring new places. We also love to entertain friends and family and have become known for throwing some pretty awesome themed parties! I'm a first generation Swedish-American, and keeping alive the traditions of my Swedish heritage along with sharing the cuisine with my loved ones is really important to me.

How do you feel about being nominated as a Behind-the-Scenes All-Star?

“The word to best describe Heather is 'selfless'.
- Kati”

I am so touched! It really means a lot to me. I care very much about the work that I do and the people I work with. It is wonderful to work with people who all are invested in the success of the business and enjoy being part of the team.

Is there anything else you'd like to share about yourself, about your job, or about your relationship with the person who nominated you?

I got to where I am because I took an interest in the work I was doing, learned all aspects of the job so that I could be fully prepared for anything, and demonstrated that I was indispensable to the company. It has been refreshing to be part of a team that values me as a person, and not just the tasks I perform. Being the "glue" of the organization isn't always an easy job, but it is a rewarding one. Kati and I really complement each other when it comes to personality and strengths, which makes a world of difference in successfully managing and running not only a team but the real estate business itself.

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▶ making a difference
By Mary Morgan Ryan

TrueNorth FOUNDATION

Committed to the Possibilities in Every Learner, Every Day

The TrueNorth Educational Cooperative 804 Foundation (TrueNorth Foundation) is a non-profit organization that supports students with disabilities (ages three to twenty-one) who currently reside in the eighteen school districts within the TrueNorth Educational Cooperative 804. The Cooperative is a special education joint agreement in the North Shore suburbs of Chicago serving approximately 40,000 students. The TrueNorth Foundation exists to serve and support the cooperative.



In July of 2021, TrueNorth Educational Cooperative 804 became the new name of the North Suburban Special Education District (NSSD). NSSD was one of the first special education joint agree-

ments in Illinois. Founded in the 1960s, NSSD offered an “economy of scale” in providing certain special education services, particularly in highly specialized areas where districts could not, cost-effectively, provide those services on their own.

Over the years, the mission of the organization has evolved, and so has the brand and the name. The TrueNorth Cooperative’s new vision and mission is to become a national leader in inclusive education and a highly valued partner to students and families. TrueNorth is committed to the possibilities in every learner, every day, and seeks to inspire all to be active participants in our world.

The Foundation exists as a fundraising entity to sponsor programs and innovative ideas that aren’t tied to a line item in the Cooperative’s budget, such as:

- Teacher-initiated projects
- Professional development scholarships for district teaching assistants
- Scholarships for graduating seniors to train the next generation of special educators
- Other innovations



“We want to find ways to be a robust organization that can support the work of the Cooperative,” says Melissa Estes, TrueNorth Foundation’s new board president. “Our purpose is to support programs and services that go beyond what can be budgeted.”

Estes is a career educator who spent twenty-eight years teaching high school. When TrueNorth Cooperative’s superinten-

dent, Dr. Kurt Schneider, approached her to serve on the board, Estes saw an opportunity to stay involved in education and the fight for inclusivity and equal opportunity for all students by helping the Foundation drive the Cooperative’s new vision and mission.

The New Mission: the TrueNorth Foundation is committed to the possibilities in every learner, every day.

“We want to work with all kids,” says Estes. “When all students get the benefit of inclusive education, everybody wins.”

Studies show that even students without special needs benefit from inclusive interactive learning environments because:¹

- They learn to respect others, accept differences, and acknowledge different abilities, thereby creating new opportunities for friendships to develop.
- They learn about abilities related to helping others participate and learn, to be patient, and to gain satisfaction in helping others learn and behave better.
- They benefit from the cognitive effort required to explain themselves, and from contributions from peers with special education needs from which they can learn.

In order to achieve their aspirational goals, the TrueNorth Foundation seeks to find new and innovative ways to raise funds.

One such initiative is the STAR (Staff, Teacher Appreciation and Recognition) Campaign. This year, the TrueNorth Foundation launched a new fundraiser: it allows individuals to submit applications to recognize TrueNorth staff members with an attached donation to the Foundation. Each selected, honored staff member receives a personalized certificate and letter, delivered to them by the Foundation. A copy is also delivered to their supervisor and to Dr. Schneider.

Estes emphasizes the Foundation’s continued appreciation for all its donors, and that the board sees new opportunities on the horizon.

The TrueNorth Educational Cooperative 804 Foundation is seeking volunteers to serve on its board or otherwise help identify local grant opportunities and create connections with corporate donors.

“We serve eighteen different school districts, which means we’re deeply involved in eighteen different communities,” says Estes. “We would like to network with companies in those communities that do matching grants. We would like to be that worthy cause.”


1. Silvia Molina Roldán, Jesús Marauri, Adriana Aubert, and Ramon Flecha, “How Inclusive Interactive Learning Environments Benefit Students Without Special Needs,” *Frontiers in Psychology* 12: 661427 (Apr 29, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.661427>.

If you can help the TrueNorth Foundation achieve its ambitious goal to serve every learner, every day, by funding innovative, inclusive educational efforts, please contact TrueNorth804Foundation@gmail.com.

About the Author:


Mary Morgan Ryan is the Assistant Superintendent for Technology, Communications, and Data Services for TrueNorth Educational Cooperative 804. She is a former school librarian, classroom teacher, and attorney.








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TOP 150 STANDINGS

Teams and Individuals from January 1, 2022 to August 31, 2022.

#	First Name	Last Name	List #	List \$	Sell #	Sell \$	Total #	Total \$
1	Jena	Radnay	21	\$50,273,600	18	\$56,004,000	39	\$106,277,600
2	Jane	Lee	102	\$63,480,455	79.5	\$42,617,512	181.5	\$106,097,967
3	John	Morrison	66.5	\$62,330,818	35	\$31,944,578	101.5	\$94,275,396
4	Paige	Dooley	20.5	\$37,276,804	25.5	\$47,895,550	46	\$85,172,354
5	Connie	Dornan	39.5	\$30,975,747	27.5	\$24,607,438	67	\$55,583,184
6	Kim	Alden	29.5	\$12,620,501	113	\$42,188,453	142.5	\$54,808,954
7	Holly	Connors	59	\$33,237,500	41.5	\$20,646,764	100.5	\$53,884,264
8	Maria	Delboccio	45.5	\$23,713,250	47	\$28,954,825	92.5	\$52,668,075
9	Sarah	Leonard	74.5	\$27,002,796	69.5	\$22,201,923	144	\$49,204,720
10	Daynae	Gaudio	125	\$46,691,930	0	\$0	125	\$46,691,930
11	Leslie	McDonnell	55.5	\$26,152,149	37.5	\$18,685,782	93	\$44,837,931
12	Dean	Tubekis	32.5	\$29,542,675	19.5	\$13,627,000	52	\$43,169,675
13	Craig	Fallico	46.5	\$23,134,000	35	\$19,555,400	81.5	\$42,689,400
14	Pam	MacPherson	17.5	\$22,418,500	21	\$18,995,715	38.5	\$41,414,215
15	Anne	Dubray	32	\$27,915,000	21	\$12,922,500	53	\$40,837,500
16	Milena	Birov	5.5	\$22,258,000	2	\$17,575,000	7.5	\$39,833,000
17	Ann	Lyon	8	\$29,150,000	8	\$9,932,500	16	\$39,082,500
18	Joanne	Hudson	19	\$32,389,525	5	\$5,363,500	24	\$37,753,025
19	Jacqueline	Lotzof	8.5	\$7,238,500	30	\$27,232,000	38.5	\$34,470,500
20	Susan	Maman	10	\$19,711,921	8.5	\$13,761,500	18.5	\$33,473,421
21	Vaseekaran	Janarthanam	26	\$11,872,700	47	\$20,626,800	73	\$32,499,500
22	Missy	Jerfita	21.5	\$22,991,310	8	\$6,909,000	29.5	\$29,900,310
23	Beth	Wexler	20.5	\$13,854,550	18	\$13,592,850	38.5	\$27,447,400
24	Lisa	Wolf	45	\$19,611,876	22.5	\$7,646,096	67.5	\$27,257,972
25	Ted	Pickus	13.5	\$12,754,250	19.5	\$14,101,134	33	\$26,855,384
26	Megan	Mawicke Bradley	7	\$12,605,936	8	\$12,981,000	15	\$25,586,936
27	Jim	Starwalt	47	\$12,711,699	40.5	\$12,433,100	87.5	\$25,144,799
28	Kati	Spaniak	19	\$13,077,958	13.5	\$11,999,427	32.5	\$25,077,385
29	Andrew	Mrowiec	8.5	\$13,626,710	7	\$11,371,291	15.5	\$24,998,000
30	Abhijit	Leekha	18	\$6,818,900	37	\$18,074,942	55	\$24,893,842
31	Nicholas	Solano	36	\$23,735,895	0	\$0	36	\$23,735,895
32	Mona	Hellinga	7.5	\$12,883,615	3.5	\$10,719,000	11	\$23,602,615
33	Bill	Flemming	33	\$19,182,604	7	\$4,284,513	40	\$23,467,117
34	Kathryn	Mangel	6.5	\$14,617,500	4	\$8,450,000	10.5	\$23,067,500

#	First Name	Last Name	List #	List \$	Sell #	Sell \$	Total #	Total \$
35	Matthew	Messel	37.5	\$13,706,875	21	\$9,175,533	58.5	\$22,882,408
36	Linda	Little	40	\$22,796,506	0	\$0	40	\$22,796,506
37	Cheryl	Bonk	40	\$22,796,506	0	\$0	40	\$22,796,506
38	Kathryn	Moor	1	\$2,899,000	9.5	\$19,827,000	10.5	\$22,726,000
39	Margie	Brooks	7.5	\$8,741,000	13.5	\$13,695,000	21	\$22,436,000
40	Andra	O'Neill	15	\$15,710,000	5	\$6,710,000	20	\$22,420,000
41	Marlene	Rubenstein	7	\$5,982,450	21.5	\$16,186,642	28.5	\$22,169,092
42	Danny	McGovern	22.5	\$15,518,900	9	\$6,399,000	31.5	\$21,917,900
43	Nancy	Gibson	17	\$13,382,369	10	\$8,456,121	27	\$21,838,490
44	Samantha	Kalamaras	22	\$11,238,920	18	\$10,238,649	40	\$21,477,569
45	Caroline	Starr	21.5	\$11,197,961	23.5	\$10,248,800	45	\$21,446,761
46	Mary	Grant	5	\$10,092,750	8.5	\$11,286,000	13.5	\$21,378,750
47	Marina	Carney	9	\$15,376,710	3.5	\$5,969,000	12.5	\$21,345,710
48	Robbie	Morrison	19	\$13,695,583	9	\$7,245,000	28	\$20,940,583
49	Karen	Arenson	6.5	\$14,612,000	4	\$6,325,954	10.5	\$20,937,954
50	Alissa	Mcnicholas	5	\$7,817,000	9.5	\$13,068,750	14.5	\$20,885,750

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TOP 150 STANDINGS

Teams and Individuals from January 1, 2022 to August 31, 2022.

#	First Name	Last Name	List #	List \$	Sell #	Sell \$	Total #	Total \$
51	Laura	Fitzpatrick	3	\$2,230,000	14	\$18,177,400	17	\$20,407,400
52	Robert	Picciariello	49	\$20,377,273	0	\$0	49	\$20,377,273
53	Jody	Dickstein	8.5	\$20,371,500	0	\$0	8.5	\$20,371,500
54	Lori	Rowe	19	\$13,297,700	12	\$6,833,250	31	\$20,130,950
55	Annie	Flanagan	2.5	\$4,144,166	7	\$15,970,657	9.5	\$20,114,823
56	Alan	Berlow	19	\$12,390,438	12	\$7,414,623	31	\$19,805,061
57	Jamie	Hering	26	\$9,312,150	31	\$10,277,650	57	\$19,589,800
58	Honore	Fru mentino	14.5	\$12,544,450	11	\$6,763,650	25.5	\$19,308,100
59	Janet	Borden	17	\$12,752,340	7.5	\$6,526,250	24.5	\$19,278,590
60	Vittoria	Logli	14.5	\$12,389,660	8.5	\$6,660,750	23	\$19,050,410
61	Flor	Hasselbring	7.5	\$12,883,615	2.5	\$5,979,000	10	\$18,862,615
62	Pat	Kalamatas	34	\$17,143,440	5	\$1,706,000	39	\$18,849,440
63	Bonnie	Tripton	7	\$11,069,824	3	\$6,520,000	10	\$17,589,824
64	Jeannie	Kurtzhalts	10	\$11,515,000	7	\$6,065,000	17	\$17,580,000
65	Elizabeth	Jakaitis	6	\$8,383,500	4	\$8,800,000	10	\$17,183,500
66	Nancy	Adelman	10.5	\$11,898,500	6	\$5,278,000	16.5	\$17,176,500
67	Lindsey	Kaplan	12.5	\$5,636,050	17	\$11,409,300	29.5	\$17,045,350
68	Katherine	Hudson	7.5	\$10,258,875	6	\$6,770,000	13.5	\$17,028,875
69	Linda	Levin	11	\$8,349,750	6	\$8,439,000	17	\$16,788,750
70	Stephanie	Andre	13	\$9,110,475	10	\$7,612,400	23	\$16,722,875
71	Susan	Pickard	25	\$8,495,008	20.5	\$8,143,210	45.5	\$16,638,218
72	Kimberly	Shortsle	5	\$6,115,000	9	\$10,480,275	14	\$16,595,275
73	Susan	Teper	12	\$7,038,500	14	\$9,403,400	26	\$16,441,900
74	Roni	Nanini	12	\$9,717,000	6	\$6,697,500	18	\$16,414,500
75	Katharine	Hackett	5.5	\$8,657,500	5	\$7,722,000	10.5	\$16,379,500
76	Maureen	O'Grady-Tuohy	15	\$13,597,600	4	\$2,681,000	19	\$16,278,600
77	Leslie	Maguire	5	\$10,503,000	5	\$5,504,000	10	\$16,007,000
78	Lisa	Trace	5.5	\$7,461,750	5.5	\$8,437,788	11	\$15,899,538
79	Winfield	Cohen	23.5	\$10,393,600	12	\$5,479,500	35.5	\$15,873,100
80	Dinny	Dwyer	6	\$12,907,600	3	\$2,896,000	9	\$15,803,600
81	David	Schwabe	16	\$6,500,400	20.5	\$9,275,450	36.5	\$15,775,850
82	Jodi	Taub	6.5	\$6,309,500	13	\$9,372,900	19.5	\$15,682,400
83	Audra	Casey	14	\$11,129,888	8	\$4,532,527	22	\$15,662,415
84	Sue	Hall	18.5	\$9,457,500	11	\$6,075,900	29.5	\$15,533,400

#	First Name	Last Name	List #	List \$	Sell #	Sell \$	Total #	Total \$
85	Connie	Antoniou	11.5	\$11,267,925	6	\$4,238,055	17.5	\$15,505,980
86	Julia	Alexander	11	\$3,799,900	37	\$11,484,143	48	\$15,284,043
87	Allison	Silver	9.5	\$7,786,018	9.5	\$7,389,500	19	\$15,175,518
88	Lauren	Mitrick Wood	0.5	\$1,375,050	7.5	\$13,500,000	8	\$14,875,050
89	Tamara	O'Connor	26.5	\$9,541,000	17	\$5,256,800	43.5	\$14,797,800
90	Amy	Kite	24.5	\$7,507,055	22	\$7,032,250	46.5	\$14,539,305
91	Cory	Green	4	\$2,620,000	10	\$11,812,000	14	\$14,432,000
92	Heidi	Seagren	13.5	\$7,161,000	9.5	\$7,235,900	23	\$14,396,900
93	Randall	Brush	28	\$8,714,751	17.5	\$5,611,900	45.5	\$14,326,651
94	Corey	Barker	25	\$10,271,800	12	\$4,038,390	37	\$14,310,190
95	Andee	Hausman	15.5	\$6,789,565	16	\$7,516,275	31.5	\$14,305,840
96	Jen	Ortman	12.5	\$5,390,600	18.5	\$8,893,500	31	\$14,284,100
97	Carrie	McCormick	5	\$6,985,000	6	\$7,245,227	11	\$14,230,227
98	Debra	Baker	13	\$6,810,100	15	\$7,357,000	28	\$14,167,100
99	Aaron	Share	8	\$6,705,100	10	\$7,454,100	18	\$14,159,200
100	Elizabeth	Goodchild	18.5	\$7,184,250	18.5	\$6,925,650	37	\$14,109,900

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TOP 150 STANDINGS

Teams and Individuals from January 1, 2022 to August 31, 2022.

#	First Name	Last Name	List #	List \$	Sell #	Sell \$	Total #	Total \$
101	Judy	Greenberg	15	\$9,983,500	8.5	\$4,104,400	23.5	\$14,087,900
102	Christopher	Paul	38	\$12,689,674	3	\$1,351,000	41	\$14,040,674
103	Van Ann	Kim	12	\$12,982,500	1	\$860,000	13	\$13,842,500
104	Kelly	Dunn Rynes	3.5	\$2,637,500	6	\$10,999,000	9.5	\$13,636,500
105	Jeff	Ohm	12	\$10,239,851	3	\$3,167,309	15	\$13,407,160
106	Deborah	Hepburn	12.5	\$7,655,200	7	\$5,737,000	19.5	\$13,392,200
107	Catherine	King	3	\$7,690,000	4	\$5,649,000	7	\$13,339,000
108	Teresa	Stultz	21.5	\$6,326,038	22.5	\$6,849,800	44	\$13,175,838
109	Cathy	Oberbroeckling	24	\$12,058,117	3	\$950,000	27	\$13,008,117
110	Brandy	Isaac	8	\$6,869,159	8.5	\$6,122,250	16.5	\$12,991,409
111	C Bryce	Fuller	15	\$6,148,400	11	\$6,840,000	26	\$12,988,400
112	Sarah	Lyons	2.5	\$9,470,000	3	\$3,493,500	5.5	\$12,963,500
113	Amy	Diamond	13	\$5,554,400	17.5	\$7,371,290	30.5	\$12,925,690
114	Anna	Klarck	18.5	\$8,694,000	13	\$4,218,400	31.5	\$12,912,400
115	Beth	Repta	21	\$7,896,862	13.5	\$4,898,500	34.5	\$12,795,362
116	Annika	Valdiserri	5	\$8,436,500	4	\$4,237,000	9	\$12,673,500
117	Joseph	Giampa	4.5	\$7,716,587	3	\$4,946,928	7.5	\$12,663,515
118	Tara	Kelleher	15.5	\$8,250,200	10.5	\$4,321,090	26	\$12,571,290
119	Gloria	Matlin	7	\$6,289,000	6	\$6,240,000	13	\$12,529,000
120	Katherine	Koca	24	\$12,526,024	0	\$0	24	\$12,526,024
121	Ryan	Pavey	20	\$6,673,412	11	\$5,848,861	31	\$12,522,273
122	Karen	Mason	4	\$8,501,954	3	\$3,974,000	7	\$12,475,954
123	Vanessa	Carlson	24	\$12,452,099	0	\$0	24	\$12,452,099
124	Beth	Alberts	7	\$8,705,000	2.5	\$3,734,500	9.5	\$12,439,500
125	Kelly	Mangel	5.5	\$12,417,500	0	\$0	5.5	\$12,417,500
126	Tyler	Lewke	19	\$5,677,500	22	\$6,583,176	41	\$12,260,676
127	Kelly	Baysinger	10	\$3,861,725	18	\$8,275,525	28	\$12,137,250
128	Sara	Sogol	30	\$11,329,298	2	\$785,000	32	\$12,114,298
129	Steve	Mcewen	7.5	\$4,859,100	10	\$7,174,071	17.5	\$12,033,171
130	Jamie	Roth	7	\$9,877,000	3	\$2,112,000	10	\$11,989,000
131	Dawn	McKenna	2	\$3,021,100	4	\$8,967,750	6	\$11,988,850
132	Suzanne	Myers	7	\$6,043,000	4	\$5,867,000	11	\$11,910,000
133	Stefanie	Ridolfo	8	\$3,320,300	20	\$8,498,040	28	\$11,818,340
134	Diana	Matichyn	20	\$7,884,700	11.5	\$3,918,900	31.5	\$11,803,600

#	First Name	Last Name	List #	List \$	Sell #	Sell \$	Total #	Total \$
135	Mark	Kloss	14	\$6,909,300	10	\$4,879,000	24	\$11,788,300
136	John	Mawicke	6	\$10,895,936	1	\$826,000	7	\$11,721,936
137	Shelley	Shelly	3	\$9,485,000	1	\$2,165,000	4	\$11,650,000
138	Caroline	Gau	14.5	\$8,300,955	4	\$3,329,000	18.5	\$11,629,955
139	Benjamin	Hickman	15	\$4,299,400	20	\$7,232,900	35	\$11,532,300
140	Izabela	Dianovsky	3.5	\$10,389,000	2	\$1,124,000	5.5	\$11,513,000
141	Anita	Olsen	30	\$11,508,255	0	\$0	30	\$11,508,255
142	Amy	Foote	19.5	\$6,201,936	16	\$5,224,592	35.5	\$11,426,528
143	Harris	Ali	7	\$2,569,250	21	\$8,798,500	28	\$11,367,750
144	Jennifer	Stokes Habetler	22	\$8,200,500	5	\$3,090,990	27	\$11,291,490
145	Maria	Ruiz	27	\$10,051,090	5	\$1,216,900	32	\$11,267,990
146	Marla	Schneider	10	\$5,753,650	11.5	\$5,434,500	21.5	\$11,188,150
147	Venera	Cameron	3	\$794,900	28	\$10,370,260	31	\$11,165,160
148	Sheryl	Graff	8.5	\$6,929,500	5	\$4,224,000	13.5	\$11,153,500
149	Joan	Couris	29.5	\$7,859,662	12.5	\$3,275,768	42	\$11,135,430
150	Brooke	Bakalar Sloane	3.5	\$3,539,000	5	\$7,595,000	8.5	\$11,134,000

Disclaimer: Information is pulled directly from the MLS. New construction, commercial transactions, or numbers not reported to the MLS within the date range listed are not included. The MLS is not responsible for submitting this data. Some teams may report each agent individually, while others may take credit for the entire team. Data is filtered through the North Shore-Barrington Association of REALTORS® (NSBAR) and may not match the agent's exact year-to-date volume. North Shore Real Producers and NSBAR do not alter or compile this data nor claim responsibility for the stats reported to/by the MLS.

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