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MEET THE CHATTANOOGA REAL PRODUCERS TEAM

Thanks For All You Do!



Jeff White
Owner
(901) 509-5566



Ashley Streight
Content Coordinator



Anders Clarke
Lead Writer
(423) 902-0103
360 Business Growth



Emily Daniel
Writer



Molly Cobane
Writer/Client Relations Specialist



Carson Andrew
Lead Photographer
(423) 693-4470
Carson Andrew Photography



Ryan Dugger
Photographer
(615) 275-7739
Creative Revolver Photography & Video Production



Hayley Kiser
Photographer
Hayley Ownbey Photography

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▶ publisher's note

COLLABORATION ABOVE COMPETITION

“

(ORIGINALLY PRINTED MAY, 2022)

I had someone say to me recently, “Why would REALTORS® be interested in getting to know one another better? Aren't they competitors?”

Wow. I have to admit the shortsightedness of this question was a bit shocking. Anyone involved in any business knows that relationships are key. In real estate, they are everything.

The industry of real estate is based on symbiotic relationships. There are countless people involved in a single transaction of a home: Mortgage Lenders, Home inspectors, Contractors, Insurance, Title Companies... not to mention Co-op Agents. All working together to get to the closing table. Our success is largely impacted by the success of those around us. How many times have you struggled to get to the closing table because the co-op agent on the other side was not as collaborative as one would hope? How many deals have been held up because a lender didn't follow through or a contractor wasn't on task?

On the flip side, how many times have you entered a co-op transaction fully at ease because you have a good relationship with the other agent and you are absolutely CONFIDENT that no matter what obstacle arises, they will work with you to get to the closing table? Think of how confident you are when you are working alongside your go-to lender, title company or contractor. These things matter in our industry.

Let's take it one step further. Not only should we build good relationships with our co-agents, but we should also CELEBRATE them!

I love the phrase, “A rising tide lifts all boats.” When we lift others up, it lifts us all. Let's strive to have an ABUNDANCE MENTALITY and raise the tide!



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▶▶ partner spotlight

MEET iTrip VACATIONS Top-Tier Experiences

By Anders Clarke

During the last 20 years, Donna Morgan and Stephanie Smith have enjoyed a growing friendship. Working and traveling together, they have been steadfast partners in business and loyal friends. Over time, they developed a desire to create a business in Chattanooga that could benefit the community while using their skills to have a real impact. When they found iTrip®, a short-term rental property management franchise, they knew this was their opportunity and launched in July of 2022.

iTrip was established in 2008 as a better way to manage vacation rentals and has since grown to more than 4,000 short-term rental properties in 110 locations across the country. With an emphasis on local-level ownership, iTrip Chattanooga offers service and support above the industry standard, allowing for a superior property management experience.

As small business owners, Donna and Stephanie bring energy, enthusiasm, and top-tier service and communication. Donna and her husband, Toby, who were born and raised in Chattanooga, began renovating homes several years ago and managing long-term rentals. With the growing number of guests coming to Chattanooga, they expanded into short-term rentals. The Tennessee Delight brand was started and now includes seven rental properties in the Lookout Valley community.



Starting a business is a daunting task, but Donna and Stephanie bring energy, enthusiasm, and top-tier service and communication.



**WITH WELL OVER 50 YEARS
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and Stephanie work to create the most return on investment (ROI) for each client. Those interested in investing in short-term rentals also have a dedicated partner committed to success. By helping investors and second homeowners determine price points, amenities, third-party services, maintenance, and improvements and repairs, they can be relied upon as experts in the community.

While iTrip's brand has worldwide marketing strategies, award-winning software and industry insight, iTrip Chattanooga works with local service providers and businesses to serve homeowner clients and guests. They seek out and qualify partnerships that offer great opportunities to guests and solutions for their owners.

Donna and Stephanie are driven by their love of the Chattanooga area and desire to provide visitors with an exceptional experience. They always look for points of interest that portray the strengths of the community and local culture. A big part of building their affiliate network is finding others who feel passionate about sharing Chattanooga with visitors, many of whom may relocate to the area. By helping drive the local tourism market, the iTrip team can improve the real estate market as well.

iTrip Chattanooga has quickly established a great reputation and commits to treating clients and guests with five-star service, operating with honesty and integrity, and providing value to their owners. As they continue to grow, Donna and Stephanie expect to expand their team by creating a referral network for real estate agents. This offers a reliable source for anyone who wants to get started in short-term rentals or advance their current investment portfolio and work with a team they can trust to build a strong partnership.

**THEY CAN PROVIDE DATA AND SUPPORT FOR
THEIR OWNERS TO MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS
AND DEVELOP FOOLPROOF PLANS.**



iTrip Chattanooga now serves property owners and homeowners across the Chattanooga area who want to increase guest bookings and monthly revenue while working with an experienced team. Donna and Stephanie have blended their career expertise in financial services and relationship-building into an industry that has boomed in recent years and projecting continued growth.

Communication is one of the most important aspects of managing vacation homes and short-term rentals. The iTrip team strives for transparency and frequent communication to ensure property owners stay informed of developments and opportunities. For iTrip guests, the team delivers a comfortable and enjoyable visit, working hard to make each stay smooth from start to finish. In addition, they provide accurate, relevant information to all parties involved and navigate the vacation rental management process.

Using iTrip's business tools, iTrip Chattanooga provides data and support for property owners, so they make informed decisions and develop plans for rental investments. By using real-time data and current trends in travel and real estate, Donna



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Meet THE SIBOLD GROUP

► featured agent

By Anders Clarke
Photos by Carson Andrew

Reaching New Heights

Most of us have had a memorable coach or teacher in our lives, for better or worse. For those of us who have had good coaches, the difference it can make is tremendous. The influence and lessons learned tend to stick with us and can change the way we think forever. For Ward and The Sibold Group, coaching and teaching go hand in hand with real estate as they always seek to add value and leave their clients more capable than when they found them.

Having spent some years in medical services for several regional hospitals, Ward finally decided to try his hand at real estate, going full-time in 2007. He spent the next 12 years as a part of a team or solo agent learning the business at his own pace. He did spend much of this time working part-time while he maintained his previous career, but it all changed when his sister, Lara, moved into the industry in 2016. He wanted to give her the best shot at doing well, and he went all in and focused on taking his business to the next level by starting The Sibold Group.

Over the last six years, The Sibold Group has steadily grown to include



seven agents and helped hundreds of families. While Ward leads the group, each member does their own business and provides excellent service to their clients. Their goal is to “keep getting better each year”, he says. The Sibold Group focuses on serving clients to the best of their abilities and lets the cards fall as they may. “I want to be a REALTOR® that focuses on how to help people”, Ward states. By focusing on their clients and not volume

or transactions, they have generated a loyal client base that respects their culture and the value they provide as REALTORS®.

Speaking of value, Ward started the team partly to offer other agents a place to learn the business. Having spent over a decade in real estate by the time he founded The Sibold Group, Lara and another agent both needed support in their early months. He afforded them

...



•••

the opportunity to learn from him as a seasoned REALTOR® and professional. As the years went on, opportunities for education improved, and his group became even more knowledgeable. However, Ward was a coach well before he started his team.

Throughout his life, Ward has been a coach in many different settings. He has coached numerous little league and middle school teams in several sports, even ones he was unfamiliar with. He loves the challenge of teaching and the reward that comes with the eventual mastery from his efforts. His sister, Lara, is the same and was a long-time coach at GPS and then Baylor School for 30 years. Because of their mutual love for coaching, they find themselves enjoying the process of teaching first-time buyers the ins and outs of homeownership, and adding value beyond the transaction.

Ward's expertise and passion intersect perfectly when it comes to helping people learn during the home buying process. For many people, getting their first home is a daunting experience. There is much to learn outside the task of qualifying for a loan, making offers, and closing on a home. Ward loves the opportunity to teach and have that 'a-ha!' moment, proof that his coaching has hit home. The Sibold Group shares that sentiment, offering support and guidance beyond the transaction as local real estate experts to their clients.

A guiding value of The Sibold Group is seeking understanding during the home buying process. Each client brings in new expectations, levels of experience, and challenges. Ward and his team take time to listen and learn before guiding their clients,

guaranteeing they tackle the issues that need to be done and prevent problems or miscommunication later on. "Understanding each other is key," Ward says. Clients don't always say what they mean, and often times listening carefully can help Ward dig deeper into the real issue, making sure his clients feel heard and understood. This helps his team to build fantastic rapport with clients.

Christian values are a guiding force for Ward and his team. He always wants to do the right thing, and be a positive, compassionate, and guiding presence for each and every client based on their specific needs. He states, "The biggest value is putting ourselves in their shoes, being honest and following our code of ethics". In any business, it can be tempting to forego the right thing for the easy thing, especially when it can make you money. For The Sibold Group, integrity is non-negotiable, and while they strive to grow and increase their success, it will never be at the cost of their integrity. "I want to do it in a way that is right", Ward says.

As they have worked their way into the top 20%, they have set their sights on top 5%. By committing to doing right by each and every client, and seeking to understand and help others before themselves, they are sure to achieve it. With the success they have seen in the last few years, Ward, Lara, and the rest of their team are on a path to reach new heights. They have built a stellar reputation, earning the respect of REALTORS®, affiliates, and clients alike. By doing the right thing, coaching and adding value in each transaction, and always making sure they understand and manage their client's hopes and fears, they have a perfect trajectory to reach any goal they set.

“

The biggest value is putting ourselves in their shoes, being honest and following our code of ethics.



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Many real estate agents know the importance of giving back, and we celebrate that! Our "Making a Difference" column spreads awareness for great nonprofit organizations and good causes. If you are involved with a nonprofit or philanthropic cause (volunteer, founders, etc.), share yours today!

MENTAL HEALTH MINUTE

REALTORS® face a unique set of challenges from month to month, day to day and even minute to minute! A lot rides on your shoulders, so it's important to take your mental health seriously. Press pause with us for a moment and maybe even learn something about yourself you didn't realize before. If there is a specific struggle, topic or trigger you'd like to see discussed in an upcoming article, please reach out!

FUNNY STORIES

Everyone knows there are some funny, bizarre and/or downright crazy situations that happen in your life as a real estate professional! This column is your chance to share those funny stories with other agents so we can all be in on the joke. Email a brief story to see it in a future issue!

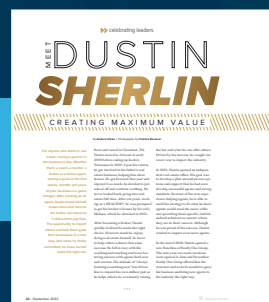
AND MORE!

As we grow, we will be able to do more types of content, so we are *always* open to input and feedback from you! Please do not hesitate to speak up!

REALTORS®, please note there is NO COST for you to participate in Real Producers in any way. This publication, as well as the community we build together, is 100% for your benefit!

To share your stories, photos and nominations, please reach out via email or social media!

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WHO WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE FEATURED?



▶ nominations and recommendations!



NOMINATE YOUR FAVORITE AGENT:

We are always accepting nominations for feature stories! If you know a colleague who is absolutely on fire and deserving of celebration, we would love to feature them in an upcoming edition of *Chattanooga Real Producers* magazine! Categories may include Top Producer, Rising Star, Team Leader, Broker, Making a Difference, REALTOR® on Fire, etc. To nominate a fellow REALTOR®, simply scan this QR code and follow the prompts. We look forward to receiving your nominations!

RECOMMEND YOUR FAVORITE VENDOR:

What makes our preferred partners different than any other “vendors list” is that we only partner with businesses that have been vetted and recommended by top agents. In other words, our preferred partners are trusted businesses that can be considered the best in their particular industry. Don't see your favorite on our list? We would love your recommendations! Scan this QR code and recommend your favorite affiliate business and be sure to state what you love about them! We look forward to receiving your recommendations!



MEET MIKE ROBERTSON FROM LOOKOUT AERIALS



▶▶ top producer

By Emily Daniel
Photos by Lookout Aerials

A PASSION FOR SERVING OTHERS



When Mike Robertson, Nu Vision Realty, discusses his real estate career his passion for serving others shines brightly through everything he says. Real estate is so much more than a career to Mike – it’s a calling. Helping a person or a family navigate the challenges of a real estate transaction brings Mike joy and fulfillment because he’s by his client’s side at every turn of the process and every bump along the way offers him an opportunity to serve his clients.

If numbers mattered to Mike, he’d be thrilled with his place solidly in the top 50 agents in the Greater Chattanooga area. But the place on the leaderboard isn’t what Mike focuses on. He counts his wins by the number of families and individuals he’s able to serve. The most astounding part of how Mike runs his business is that he does it all on his own. There’s no team, administrative assistant or contract to close person. From start to finish, his clients are working directly with him, and that’s exactly the way he’s designed it.

“I’ve intentionally created a business where I follow up and help my clients through every part of the transaction,” shares Mike. “Before I got into real estate, I often heard my friends complain about how they were passed off to someone else or they couldn’t get in touch with their agent. I felt the best business model for me was one coming from a servanthood mindset.” This business model has worked well for Mike. All his business comes from his sphere of influence and working as hard as he can for every client. He’s never paid for any kind of lead generation. “I owe all the credit to Jesus Christ which gave me the ability and opportunity to help clients in the buying and selling process,” offers Mike.

Before committing to real estate full-time in 2018, Mike had a variety of jobs in sales and ministry. He sold cars, was the general manager of a high-end music equipment store and was with Prison Prevention Ministries working with high-risk kids in seven counties. All his previous career experience blended perfectly to put him on a path to servanthood leadership in real estate.

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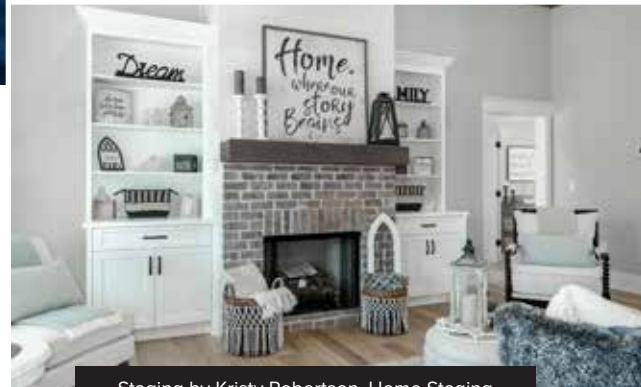
“Originally, my amazing wife, Kristy, was going to work in real estate,” shares Mike. “However, she told me I should be the one to do it. We would joke because we couldn’t go anywhere that I didn’t know someone.” As Mike’s business has grown, the conversation has come full circle, and Kristy has also gotten into real



county and zoning officials, the rezoning was approved. The home then sold in only two weeks. “This is why I do real estate,” offers Mike. “After closing, he told me no one could have done this except you. Every client of mine receives this level of service.”

Mike’s unwavering commitment to selfless service isn’t just to his clients, it’s the way he leads his family. Kristy has two sons Justin and Zachary who Mike loves and relishes getting to be their stepfather. Family and faith are the foundation everything else in Mike’s life is built upon. When he isn’t working, Mike can be found ministering to people in other ways like playing guitar at Crosspointe Church.

“Success to me is serving, helping and loving others unconditionally the way Jesus loves us,” Mike says with conviction. He’s committed to helping buyers and sellers create dreams and memories that can never be lost through homeownership. It’s easy to see how his tireless work for his clients has created much success for Mike. However, he’s always quick to turn to his success into ministry. “Being a top producer isn’t about the numbers. It is about changing lives for good.”



Staging by Kristy Robertson, Home Staging & Interior Decorator (423-933-5713)



•••

estate. With both Mike and Kristy having their licenses, they will be able to serve their clients at an even higher level. “In addition to real estate, Kristy also has her own staging business and is the most gifted stager I’ve ever seen,” Mike says in a way that exudes how much he loves her. “I know without her I wouldn’t be where I am today.” As they look to their future goals, Mike and Kristy will continue to serve people with their selfless mindset and change their

lives through the power of home ownership.

Mike is passionate about serving his clients in ways only he could. He had a seller who had been trying to sell a property for four years and had been unsuccessful. The property needed to be rezoned. “My client told me I was wasting my time trying to rezone it,” shares Mike. “I was committed to doing everything I needed to do to sell his property.” After countless hours of research and many meetings with

“

BEING A TOP PRODUCER ISN’T ABOUT THE NUMBERS. IT IS ABOUT CHANGING LIVES FOR GOOD.

CRAIG BRUMLOW



Get to know Craig Brumlow,
Team Mortgage Banker
on The Gabe Whitmer Team

Q: How long have you been in the mortgage industry?

I'm in my second year in the industry. In that time, I have learned so much from everyone on this team. I have seen so much and been around many different situations – the saying is true that mortgage is never the same for everyone. I am very fortunate to be part of such a dynamic and well-informed team. Everyone is here to help one another in every aspect. My past experience as a realtor has definitely served me well in mortgage lending. I remember making the calls over the weekends needing a pre-approval for clients because their dream house just fell in their laps.

Q: What is your favorite part about what you do?

There are many aspects of mortgage lending that I enjoy. What I probably enjoy the most is getting to say "YOU'RE APPROVED" to my clients who weren't sure if getting a mortgage loan was possible for them. It is fun being in mortgage, I get to meet some very fascinating people with fascinating stories. Getting to lend in 47 states truly opens the door up for our team to help many, many people from all over the world. Seeing people grow their real estate investments by utilizing the best plans tailored to them – and not just using the same "box" for everyone – is rewarding.

Q: How long have you lived in the Chattanooga area?

Chattanooga has always been home. I was born and raised

in Soddy Daisy. I spent 4 years in California while I was on Active Duty for the Air Force, but quickly returned back to Chattanooga.

Q: What does your life look like outside of work?

My time outside of work is filled spending time with my wife and our two boys, ages 12 & 8. They all keep me pretty busy. If I get the chance, I try to play some golf and go fishing. As a family we enjoy sports, traveling and game nights. I enjoy spending time with my beautiful wife – buying her gifts and taking her to brunch!

Q: Why should someone choose your team over the competition?

Everyone on The Gabe Whitmer Team truly enjoys being part of the team, and we all treat each other like family. We all want the very best for our clients, and we strive for that to happen. From the start of the process to the end, we are in constant communication with each other. Being part of a large team gives our clients, partners and team members an advantage – we can always get the job done. Need a pre-approval on a Sunday and someone is spending the day with family? We can call our team members to get the pre-approval completed without having to slow down the clients and our partners. We want to build long-lasting relationships and not just one-time transactions.

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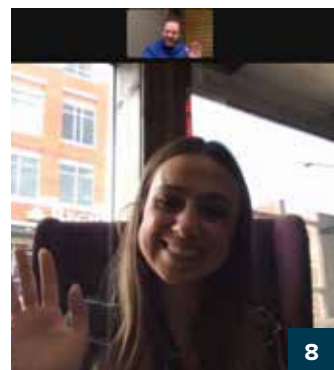
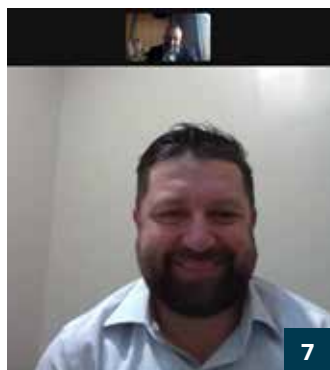
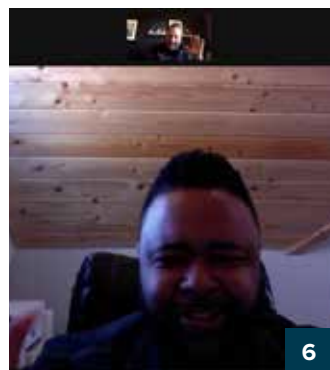
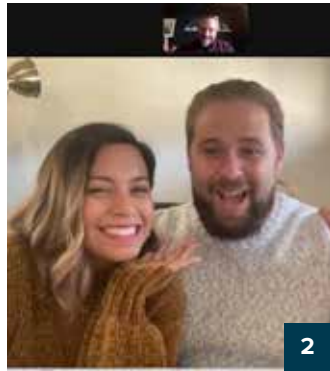
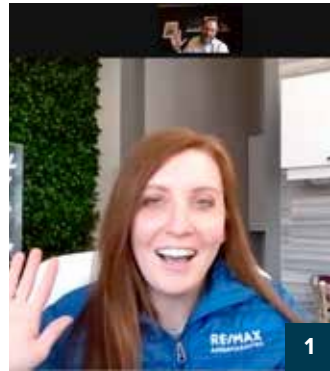
WOLF EXTERIORS
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MEET THE COMMUNITY

CHECK OUT SOME OF CITY'S **TOP 500** PRODUCING REALTORS

1. Heidi Rau
2. Tatiana & Micah Hall
3. Guy Fain
4. Lou Ellen Smith / John Foreman
5. Harley Green / Workergenix
6. Tony Britton
7. Michael Williams
8. Kara Morway

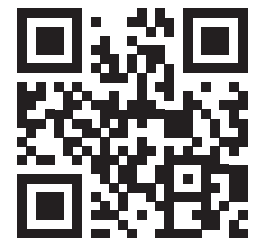


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