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**PUBLISHERS NOTE** - BRETT GETTMAN

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>05</b> Meet The Scottsdale Area Real Producers Team		<b>06</b> Preferred Partners		<b>09</b> PUBLISHERS NOTE: Brett Gettman
	<b>12</b> COVER STORY: Jennifer Marsh		<b>18</b> SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT: Jared Thom - Nova Home Loans		<b>24</b> RISING STAR'S: Shannon West & Lindsey Merrell

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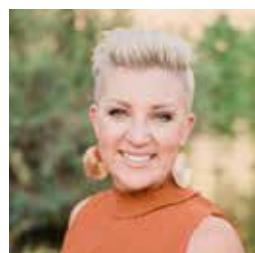
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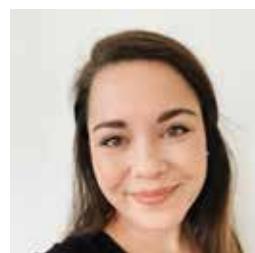
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► publishers note



# BRETT GETTMAN

## CHEERS TO THE 24TH ISSUE

Hello everyone!

It is so hard to believe that exactly two years ago I was submitting the details for the very first issue of *Scottsdale Area Real Producers* which launched into print June of 2021. My deadline was May 5th which is probably right about the time you'll be reading this. So this may issue is the 24th issue hitting your hands. 24 cover features, 24 Rising stars, 24 featured sponsor spotlights and over a dozen teams featured. It's safe to say that close to over 100 agents have been featured in some capacity. We've raised over \$5,000 for local charities through our events.



Photo by Red Hog Media

When I started this magazine it wasn't uncommon that I was meeting people who were sitting at opposite ends of a 10-foot conference table wearing masks as we walked into the room. What a difference a couple of years can make.

24 issues later and we now host monthly social mixers where people can meet each other in person. What I have taken so much pride in more than anything else is the connections I've been able to facilitate as well as the relationships I've been able to make personally.

A special thanks to all the Realtors that have shared their stories with the community and a huge thanks to the amazing business partners that sponsor everything and ensure our Realtors NEVER pay a dime to be featured.

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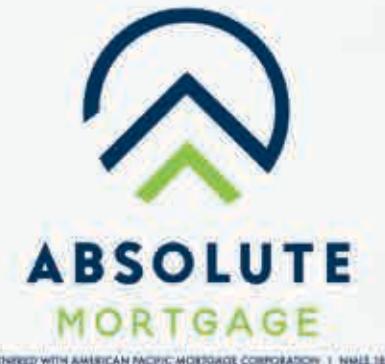
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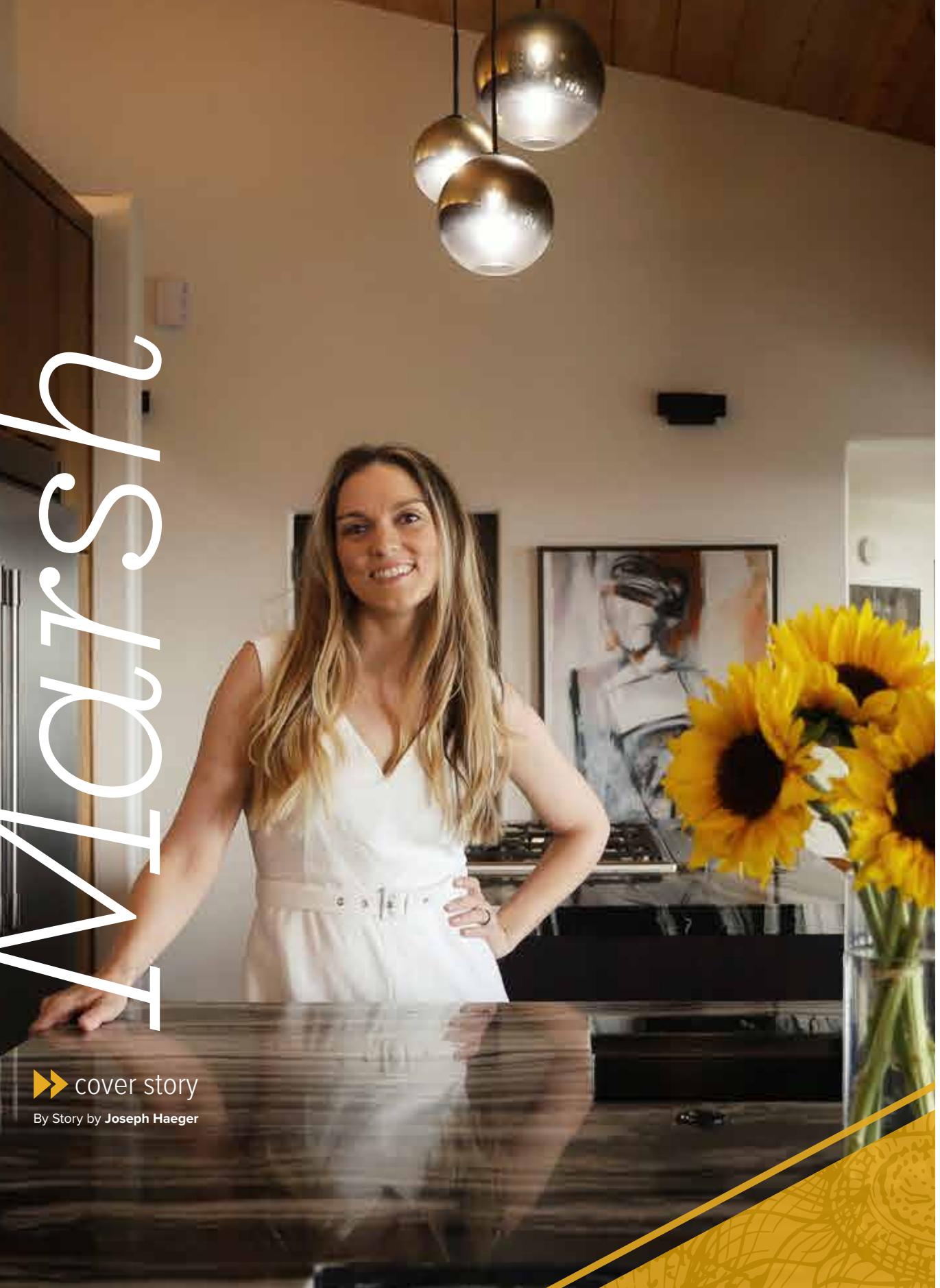
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# Jenni n g W or k Sh ?

► cover story

By Story by Joseph Haeger

Photo by Desert Roots Photography



**Jennifer Marsh - On the inside track of the Arizona landscape**

**A WORKER FROM THE START**

- Even from a young age, Jenn Marsh knew she wanted to work.

"It sounds weird, but as a child I would mow the lawn and wash my dad's truck," she explains.

"I'd put on shows where I'd charge my family admission to come into my bedroom."

From there, Jenn basically counted down the days until she could get a real job. Months before her sixteenth birthday she put in applications all over town, writing her start date as her actual birthday.

This is how Jenn found herself at her very first job: In-N-Out Burger. Not only was it her first job, but this was also the one she held through high school and college, eventually climbing into a management position.

"Some people might look down on the whole fast-food industry, but I think it really did teach me a lot of hard work and ethics," she says. "They demand a lot out of you. If you're standing still, you're doing something wrong." The lessons she learned



here have instilled a sense of drive and self-sustainability that she continues to carry with her to this day.

While going to college, she started to wonder why she was in a classroom, spending money on something she probably didn't want to do when she could be out making money. She left college and In-N-Out Burger, getting hired on as a project manager at a commercial furniture company. This job pushed her to look for a more permanent career and acted as a steppingstone to real estate. Jenn started as a transaction coordinator, then moved to an assistant gig for a high producing team.

#### IN PLAIN SIGHT

Looking at her life's trajectory, it makes sense Jenn ended up in sales. She bought her first house at 21, and after she met her now-husband and they moved in together, she opted to turn that property into a rental rather than sell it. The third realtor she worked with during this first purchase was amazing, truly listening to what Jenn wanted out of a house. Their relationship showed Jenn what it meant to do the work of being a present agent. This whole experience also showed her that she had a natural capacity for the industry and recognized its inherent ebb and flow.

"Right after [I moved in with my husband], I bought my second rental property," she says. "This was when I got into transaction management." In the beginning, she was perfectly happy working behind the scenes. "I wanted to do the backend because I had a bad perception of what a realtor is." This was based on her experience when she bought her first house. It felt like the first two realtors she worked with were pushing houses she wasn't comfortable buying. They approached her like stereotypical used car salesmen, so she didn't think she fit into that position.



That changed when her husband saw something she didn't. "[He's] the one who really encouraged me to try [selling]," she says. "He thought I had the right personality for it because I'm pretty outgoing." But Jenn wasn't sold on the idea, citing she didn't think she fit the mold. "He's like, 'The fact that you are different than a lot of the typical realtors is what's going to make it better.'"

Jenn was already getting her license so she could be a licensed transaction manager, and the stars began to align. Her husband continued boosting her confidence and that was when she got some first-hand experience.

"When I worked for the RE/MAX team they had me help every now and then with shows," she explains. "That's when I got my first taste for meeting with clients and helping them find their dream home."

The pull for her to jump to sales got stronger and stronger.

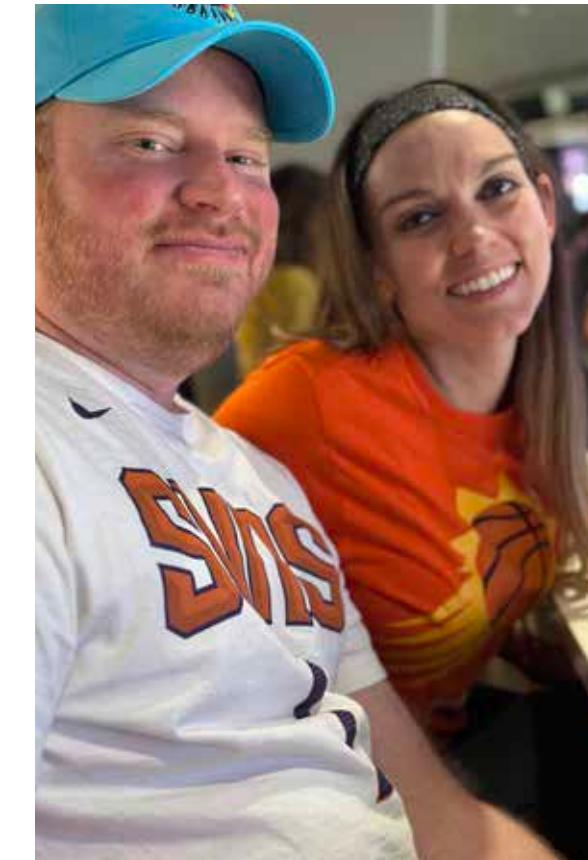
**A BORN ARIZONA SALESMAN**  
"I was born and raised in Arizona," she tells me. "I know the area and I knew that was valuable. I'm really looking for the right place for [my clients]."

Growing up, Jenn and her family only moved once and it was a mile, from Chandler to Tempe. "I was in third grade, and I totally thought I was being uprooted," she says with a laugh. "Then I lived there until I purchased my own home and moved to Gilbert."

On top of living all over the greater Phoenix Metro area, her stint at the furniture company sent her all over town. This intimate knowledge of Phoenix gives her a unique perspective, allowing her to listen to people on a whole other level. "I'm able to ask people what kind of lifestyle they're looking for and what's important to them," and then she delivers a tailored list of homes that they'd fit into.

At the end of the day, this is more than a job or a career for her. Jenn wants to know she's making a positive impact on her clients' lives, helping them achieve greater happiness.

"It's not just a paycheck for me," she says. "It's not just a house — it's a home you're selling or buying. You're dealing with somebody's life." And it's that care and consideration that puts her in the spotlight for Scottsdale real estate.



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# Jared Thom

## NOVA HOME LOANS

### A HOME LOAN OFFICER IN YOUR CORNER

Jared Thom was born and raised on a family farm in rural Michigan. Now, after living in Arizona for 20 years, he is a Senior Loan Officer for Nova Home Loans. He focuses on work ethic, with an emphasis on communication, dependability, and providing superior service. His ultimate mission is to help as many people as possible achieve the American Dream of home ownership.

### BREAKING INTO THE BUSINESS

As Jared finished up his college experience, earning a degree in Business, his brothers called in a favor. “[They] were wanting to go to college,” he says, “but our dad didn’t have the bandwidth to [run the farm] on his own if somebody didn’t stay to help. They asked me if I’d come back for a couple of years to work with dad.”

It was a big decision that delayed his own career dreams, but he moved home and again adopted the farmer role. “It was a cash crop operation: corn, soybeans, wheat, and alfalfa mainly,” he says.

After his brother came back, Jared moved to Arizona to be near his older sister and for the beautiful weather. His sister knew he was looking for work and introduced him to an acquaintance who was looking for a loan processor. At that point, Jared wasn’t even fully aware of what a mortgage was because his parents built their farmhouse with cash before he was born.

During the interview, they asked what he knew about the mortgage industry. “I told them I knew nothing, but I grew up on a farm, I work hard, and I’m willing to learn. And, I’ll put in whatever time is needed to succeed.”

Jared was hired as a loan processor, occasionally originating loans as he learned, but mostly stuck to the behind-the-scenes work. He had an aptitude for the business and felt content in that position.

### THE JUMP TO OFFICER

Although he got his MLO license in 2010, Jared only transitioned to a full-time loan officer at the beginning of 2015.

While his wife was nearing the end of maternity leave in December 2014, they decided to go on a trip to see family in the Black Hills of South Dakota for Christmas. Snow conditions were perfect and with a ski resort close by, they decided to go skiing one morning. Toward the end of their day, Jared’s wife was struck from behind by another skier without warning.

“It broke five vertebrae in her back,” he says. “It was one of those things where she was a registered nurse, but a nurse with a broken back can’t really be a nurse anymore.”

Thankfully, she survived, and it was the best-case outcome considering the circumstances, but the writing was on the wall: her job and income wasn’t going to continue. The added responsibility to overcome the financial loss fell on Jared.

A realtor buddy of his introduced him to the branch managers for Nova Home Loans. “They were like, ‘We know your situation; we’ve got you covered. You come in and all we want you to do is originate.’”

The support Jared received was astounding. “They’ve been very good to me,” he says. “I’ve stuck with them, and they’ve allowed me to scale my business and grow in ways I never imagined.”





#### FARMING THE MARKET

A big part of growth for a loan officer is being willing and available to work when the work is there.

It's a lot like farming.

"If there were cows having calves at two in the morning, we were up and out there," Jared explains. "Or, if corn had to be harvested, it didn't matter if it was midnight — you kept harvesting corn because it was ready to harvest."

He grew up with this kind of work ethic drilled into him.

"There was no five-day work week," he goes on. "It was always seven days because cows have to be fed every day and hay doesn't always bale on a Monday thru Friday schedule. You work until the work is done. As a loan officer — having that mindset — it doesn't matter if someone calls me at 9 p.m. or they call me at 6 a.m. Whatever works for them, I'll make the time to do it."

#### TRUSTING JARED

Do honest business. This is Jared's approach.

"I work hard for people, I give them all the time necessary to talk with me to ask questions and feel comfortable, and most importantly I treat them like they're family. I do the best job I can for them every time," he says. "People will work with you once if they like you," he continues, "but they will work with you forever if they know they can trust you."

This sense of integrity was instilled in Jared at a young age, and it's never gone away.

He's 20 years into the mortgage business with no sign of missing a beat, and that's the kind of consistency we can be happy to revisit time and time again.

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# Shannon West & Lindsey Merrell

By Joseph Haeger

*Shannon West and Lindsay Merrell — meet the mastermind duo behind EST. Home Collective.*

## A NATURAL PARTNERSHIP

Shannon West and Lindsay Merrell met at a mentor program for new agents that was put on by the brokerage they both initially worked for. It wasn't long before they saw an ally in the other.

"Why struggle trying to figure this all out by myself when there's a person I totally connect with?" Shannon says. "Let's figure this out together."

After only two months, they decided this was a partnership worth pursuing in a more official capacity.

"We both identified strengths in the other person," Lindsay explains. "I'm very introverted and she's very extroverted."

Both women have kids and live outside of real estate, and knowing — and more importantly, trusting — that there was a counterpart who could cover the work when they weren't available was incredibly valuable. To ensure a high level of quality, they spent time up front chiseling out a solid process.

"From the beginning, we put numerous systems and standards of practice in place," Shannon explains. "It also

allows our clients to seamlessly move back and forth, whether they're talking to Lindsay or me. We both know conversations occurred and what the next steps are."

## THEY CAME FROM THE EAST

One of the first things they noticed about each other, which helped bring them together in the first place was the fact they both grew up on the east coast; Shannon an hour north of Pittsburgh and Lindsay in Baltimore. They have that east coast, no-nonsense approach to business, and I think it's this candor and honesty that draws people into their orbit.

Their personalities developed at an early age, Lindsay the introvert who focused on her studies with perfect attendance and Shannon the class clown. Even though their personalities were as different then as they are today, they could commiserate over a common homelife.

"I think our parents were very similar," Shannon says.

"Very strict," Lindsay adds.

At home, they were taught the importance of school and that being a part of a family meant chipping in, mostly with chores.

"I think it instilled in both of us to be very hard workers, disciplined with work ethic," Shannon expands. "As

different as our childhoods were, we were raised with very similar values."

## THE TEACHER AND THE THERAPIST

Neither woman started their professional career in real estate.

Shannon was an elementary school teacher in Florida and Washington DC before moving to San Francisco and joining a tech company as a project manager. She spent time in Los Angeles before making the move to Scottsdale and settling in as a stay-at-home mom. After her kids got older, she saw an opportunity to do what she always wanted: real estate. In the end, she doesn't see much difference between these jobs.

"You can have all the job titles you want," she says. "But the skillset is the same. It's communication and organization. It's workflow. It's connecting everybody."

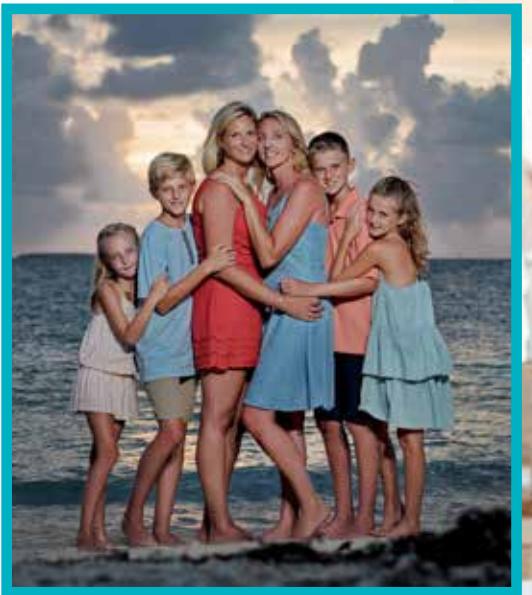
Lindsay's professional journey also took a different route.

"I was a clinical therapist," she tells me.

The emotional toll the job took was extreme and, on top of that, she had a family of her own to care for. Prior to covid, the commute was long and arduous in addition to a sixty-hour workweek. Lindsay didn't think it was conducive to the life she wanted to live, so during the lockdown, she



Photo by Armada Visuals



reassessed what she wanted from her professional life and decided to make the jump to real estate.

These past experiences heavily inform the way Shannon and Lindsay conduct their business today — Shannon with the logical and Lindsay with the emotional.

"It does help a lot with clients because we're educating them on the process," Shannon says. "And then Lindsay's really good about reading [the client's emotions] and talking them through it."

"It's a good blend," Lindsay adds. "We got lucky."

#### MOVING FORWARD

A big part of their business is finding clients with shared values. They've made it a point to work with both the LGBTQ+ community and medical professionals — two groups they love to support.

In fact, they've started an initiative that allows them all to give back.

"When medical employees buy or sell a home with us," Lindsay explains, "we either contribute to their closing costs or provide a commission



Photo by Armada Visuals

reduction. Additionally, we make a donation to Banner Thunderbird's Child Life department for their employees. If the employee works for another hospital, we make a donation of their choosing to one of that hospital's non-profits."

"And we're going to start doing that with the LGBTQ+ community also," Shannon adds. "There are several great organizations here we'd like to contribute back to."

These donations are made in their client's name, and it reinforces a throughline I picked up during our entire conversation. This isn't just about selling or buying houses for either Shannon or Lindsay. It's about delivering opportunities and harboring positive changes for folks.

"We're not just finding you a house," Shannon says. "We're finding you a community that you can grow into."





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