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*Event
Recap
Inside*

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RISING STAR: Nicholas McAnallen

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▶▶ top-producing team

Photos by Jacob Harr with harr Creative LLC

Major Homes



A POWERHOUSE OF TALENT

As the associate broker and owner of Major Homes — located at Keller Williams Rivertown — Rachel Major has carved a remarkable path in the industry over the years. She received her salesperson license in February of 2014 and began working part time as an agent while working full time at a financial institution. It wasn't long, however, before Rachel realized that her true calling was in real estate. "After three years of growing my business part time, I decided to jump into real estate full time in March of 2017," she explained.

Rachel's transition to full-time real estate was nothing short of transformative. With each passing year, her career gained momentum, which was marked by impressive sales figures and a string of accolades. "My business doubled after leaving my full-time job, and I knew I needed help," she said. "As the saying goes, 'If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.' So my next goal was to grow a team."

Rachel started expanding her team with the help of her husband, Denny, who got his real estate license to show homes to clients on nights and weekends. They held off on starting a family until they had established a strong real estate team to help clients so that Rachel could take a "true maternity leave." "Throughout 2020 and 2021, the team formed into what it is today, and I am so grateful to have Shannon, Lacey and Julie on the Major Homes team," Rachel shared. "As a team, we support each other in both our personal and professional lives."

Today, Rachel leads a dynamic team that comprises two full-time agents and a licensed executive assistant/operations manager. Together, they are a compelling force of talent and expertise, driven by a shared commitment for excellence and client satisfaction.

Shannon Hazzard has been in real estate for six years. She began her career as an administrative assistant in 2018 and shifted into a team atmosphere, quickly falling in love with the industry. Shannon is passionate about ensuring seamless transitions for clients — from working with their agent on the front end to working with her on the back end. She attributes her team's productivity and uniqueness to their close-knit dynamic, emphasizing their ability to find creative solutions for clients.

Shannon has been married to her husband, Ryan, for six years, and they have a son named Jayce. They love to camp, go to the Silver Lake Sand Dunes, and spend time with family and friends. In their own journey in real estate, the couple spent five years renovating their first home, which is now rented, and they have started the process of renovating their new home. Shannon loves going trail riding in their side by side in the summer, and in the winter and spring, she taps trees to make her own maple syrup so that they can share it with their family and friends.

“**A**s the saying goes, 'If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.' So my next goal was to grow a team.”



Lacey Bereza is a seasoned agent with 10 years of experience. She transitioned from her previous role as a bookkeeper after experiencing a short-sale and legal battle with a lender, which inspired her to emulate the supportive guidance she received from Agent Rick Voorhies. She finds fulfillment in collaboration and troubleshooting within her team, and cherishes moments of success that leave clients feeling confident.

Lacey is married to John, and together, they have three boys — Lucas, Will and Henry. They love traveling together to ski, golf, hike, and visit family and friends. Lacey enjoys baking double chocolate chunk cookies and sourdough bread, doing her yoga practice, hiking, and engaging in uncoordinated line dancing.

Julie Woltil, an agent of four years, recently attained her associate broker's license and serves on the Board of Directors for the GreenHome Institute. Originally from Montreal, Quebec, Canada, Julie has a background in psychology and academia. Her passion for research and statistics fueled her transition into real estate. Her dedication to excellence and commitment to community service define her professional ethos, and she aims to be remembered for her integrity, expertise, and compassion in serving others.

When Julie is not working with families in finding their perfect home, she loves going to pub trivia with her husband, Derek, and joining in for family board game night with her four children — Addie, Lucas, Jacob and Brielle. Julie loves hiking, horseback riding, reading, traveling the world, and drinking a good cabernet.

Despite Major Homes' numerous achievements, Rachel remains grounded, acknowledging the challenges that come with the territory. "One of the largest challenges in the past couple of years is finding suitable and affordable housing for clients," she admitted. However, her team's proactive approach and strategies have enabled them to overcome obstacles and find creative solutions for their clients.



For newer agents, Shannon added, "Stay humble and be consistent. This is a hard industry to break into, but if you are consistent in staying top of mind with your sphere and clients, the business will follow."

Major Homes' dedication to their clients goes beyond the transaction as they build meaningful relationships and give back to the community. "We would rather support and love on our current and past clients on a local level than chase cold leads," Rachel shared.

The collaborative spirit within Major Homes — bolstered by the invaluable contributions of Shannon, Lacey and Julie — has created a powerhouse of talent that not only excels in the realm of real estate but also values the importance of personal connections and community engagement. Despite the challenges posed by the ever-evolving real estate landscape, Rachel and her team have consistently demonstrated resilience and ingenuity.

As Major Homes continues to thrive, the dedication to building meaningful relationships and giving back to the community remains at the forefront of their mission. With a focus on expertise and compassion, the team at Major Homes looks forward to their continued success and the fulfillment of their clients' real estate goals.

“ Stay humble and be consistent. This is a hard industry to break into, but if you are consistent in staying top of mind with your sphere and clients, the business will follow. ”



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James

Building Dreams & Community Success

NEWHOUSE III

James Newhouse III, an associate broker at Ensley Real Estate, has carved his path from the kitchen to become a top-performing agent with a career volume of over \$120 million.

“I have always had a passion for serving people and have also always loved homes,” James said. “I became an agent to be a part of people’s journey, and I strive to be honest and open, and give them the best help as possible to help achieve their dreams.”

Before delving into real estate, James spent two decades honing his skills as a chef, contributing to the success of The Red Anchor in Newaygo, Michigan. However, life events — such as starting a family and desiring more time with his children — led him to seek a new professional path.

In 2017, James was a full-time chef when he wanted a career change and decided to begin working in the real estate industry. “I jumped right in and worked 50 to 65 hours a week as a chef and 40 to 50 hours a week as an agent,” he explained. “The first two years, I worked about 100 hours a week. I was determined to be successful.”

James’ journey is deeply rooted in his Michigan upbringing. Born in Grand Rapids, he moved to Newaygo in elementary school and has remained a Newaygo/Hardy Dam native ever since. As for his professional identity, James has been shaped by the influence of his mentors Patrick and Laura Ensley, founders of Ensley Real Estate. “They have shown me that if you put your mind to something and give it your all, the sky’s the limit,” he said.

While navigating through challenges, including the transition from a weekly salary to a commission-based income, James underscores the importance of hard work and faith.



Photo by Sean Newhouse

“With God on my side, how can I lose? Faith in him has given me courage and strength, and for sure has had an impact on shaping me,” he shared.

James’ love of helping others is evident in his focus on first-time homebuyers. “I am passionate about helping first-time buyers reach their goals of owning a home!” he said. “What an amazing feeling to see them succeed in what they are trying to achieve.”

Although not part of a formal team, James highlights the collaborative spirit at Ensley Real Estate, where approximately 14 agents, two transaction coordinators, and one main admin work together. “What makes our group great is that we always push each other to do better,” he explained. “We never cut each other down and always pick each other up. Everyone in our brokerage will step in and try to help.”

For James, the most rewarding part of his business is being at the closing table with clients, witnessing the joy



“
ALWAYS DO THE
RIGHT THING, EVEN
IF IT'S THE HARDEST
THING TO DO.”

they experience. “It also is being able to do so much more with my family and spending time with them,” he added.

As for James’ aspirations, real estate seamlessly fits into them. “My dreams and goals are to become larger in Ensley Real Estate or start my own brokerage someday,” he shared. “My dream is to have my son work with me one day and to leave him a thriving business to take the reins of.”

As a person who defines success as living comfortably, achieving personal goals, and helping others succeed, James emphasizes the importance of integrity. “Build relationships, not numbers,” he said. “About 80% of my business is referral now.”

Away from the world of real estate, James finds joy in spending time with his partner, Angel Nunez, and their two children — Evelyn and Nolan.

Their favorite activities as a family are boating on Hardy Pond, taking day trips, camping, and attending car shows. A car enthusiast, James has a passion for classic rock and Bible study, and supports charities like the Wounded Warriors Project.

James’ story is not just about real estate success but about a journey that is fueled by determination, faith, and a commitment to making a positive impact in the lives of others. He encourages everyone to “always do the right thing, even if it’s the hardest thing to do.”

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NICHOLAS McAnallen

▶ rising star

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SHAPING THE REAL ESTATE LANDSCAPE

Nick McAnallen has been navigating the intricate world of real estate since October 1, 2018, amassing a career volume of over \$31 million over the past five years. Last year alone, his total volume reached an impressive \$11 million, and his expectations for this year are almost more than he did last year as he remains unwavering in his pursuit of success. “I have been featured in the Grand Rapids Top 100 Producers monthly multiple times,” Nick added proudly. His accomplishments are not just a feather in his cap but a testament to the dedication and expertise he brings to the real estate arena.

Formerly a branch manager at Huntington Bank for five years, Nick took a bold leap into the realm of property dealings. The decision was spurred by a desire for autonomy, a sentiment echoed in his move from banking to real estate. “The banking



world was just not for me,” Nick said. “I sold my house and bought a condo downtown. I was newly single, and I really wanted the opportunity to create my own schedule and spend time with my two dogs.”

“The financial potential in real estate was also appealing,” Nick added. “I’m a very social person, so real estate was the right fit for me.”

Beyond the financial allure of real estate, Nick was captivated by the interior design aspect of the industry. His fondness for exploring different homes, styles, and midcentury aesthetics shaped his professional identity.

Nick hails from Traverse City, Michigan, but his path in life was deeply influenced by his father — a hardworking owner of an auto body shop — and his grandpa — who was the epitome of a family man. Despite barely graduating from high school and skipping college, Nick takes pride in his journey, which was defined by his move to Grand Rapids in 2008, a pivotal moment that marked his transition to independence.

A solo agent at Anchor Realty, Nick emphasizes the rewarding nature of his business, particularly the loyalty of repeat clients and the satisfaction of being self-sufficient. “I am passionate





“

My advice is to focus on building relationships in your network and not just focus on the sale.

”

about working with investors, buying and flipping properties myself, and selling downtown luxury condos,” he said. “I really love selling downtown condos! I do well in the condo market and I have a detailed understanding of HOAs, bylaws, and lending requirements for condos. Other agents can learn about investments and flipping from me.”

For Nick, real estate isn’t just a job: It’s a comprehensive investment strategy.

“I’m constantly acquiring properties in Michigan and Florida for flipping, renting, or retirement,” he shared.

Nick’s interests extend beyond the business realm, however. His hobbies involve collecting art, playing the guitar, and exploring new whiskies. In his philanthropic endeavors, Nick has been supporting World Vision for three years, where he has been sponsoring a child named Innocent from Paicho-Bungatira, Uganda.

For budding agents in the field, Nick recommends that they concentrate on strengthening relationships. “My advice is to focus on building relationships in your network and not just focus on the sale,” he said.

The word “driven” defines Nick. His consistent commitment to client success is evident in his round-the-clock efforts. “Grand Rapids has been my home for years, and I love to watch it grow,” he concluded.

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Thank You for Attending Our MAY MINGLE

Our May Mingle kicked off at Vander Mill in Grand Rapids, where top real estate agents and our Preferred Partners joined together to have some fun mixing and mingling in Vander Mill's beautiful taproom. Attendees enjoyed having food and drinks as well as making connections with colleagues across the real estate industry. Thank you to our partners, without whom these events and this publication would not be possible!

"I genuinely look forward to the GR Real Producers events. These gatherings bring together the top agents I frequently collaborate with, creating a welcoming environment for casual conversations and personal catch-ups," Pete Bruinsma from Grand River Realty shared. "The monthly magazine articles are informative and offer valuable insights, allowing us to learn more about each other in a field where personalization is truly beneficial. I appreciate these aspects and the sense of community they foster."

"I loved the venue. My most favorite thing is meeting those agents whom I talk with on deals in person and catching up with other agents who I already know," said Joni McArthur from eXp Realty.



Special thanks to our Host & Sponsor — Vander Mill — for hosting this event and providing food and drinks! Also, thank you to our Support Sponsors — Agent Concierge Services and CertaPro Painters of Grand Rapids — for helping to make this event possible! Thank you to Jacob Harr with harr Creative LLC and to Brian McDonald with Brian McDonald Photography for capturing photos and video.

We want to thank Emmy Jandernoa and Lauren Marcinek for checking in guests as well as assisting with event set-up.

We are so grateful to all of you who joined us, and we look forward to making more memories with you at our next event on **October 9 at New Holland Brewing.**





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