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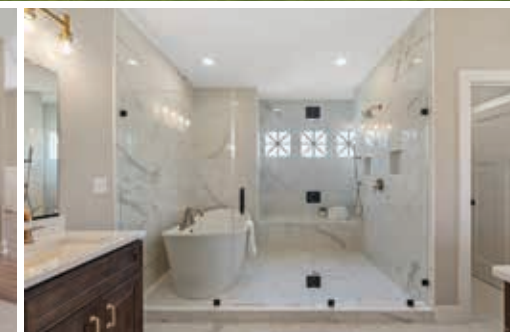
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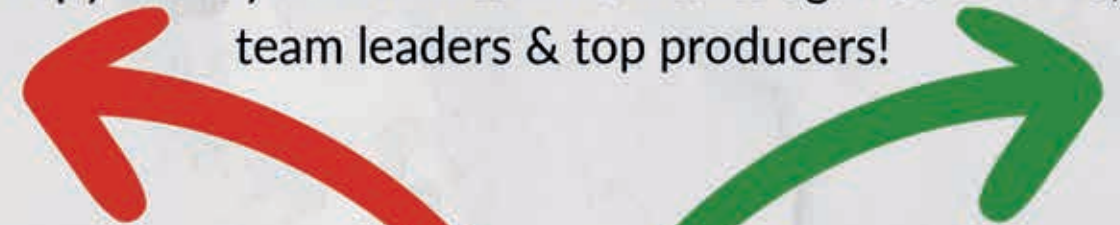


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cover story

Story by Dan Steele
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JOSHUA BRITT

PRODIGY REALTY

Many people look at his numbers and, noting that Joshua did \$26.6 million in sales during 2023, are quick to disbelieve that many of those clients were initially under the impression they would never be able to purchase a house, but he is always quick to point out that it was because he closed 83 transactions that year. “If you break that down, my average sale is around \$325,000, so it’s not like I’m working with million-dollar buyers every day to get that number,” he laughs. “It just goes back to wanting to help people. They had been told “no” multiple times by different loan officers and agents, and those agents and officers would never contact them again. I just worked with them through the process and got them to where they could buy.”

Roman poet Ovid once said, “Let your hook be always cast; in the pool where you least expect it, there will be a fish.” Joshua Britt of Prodigy Realty has taken this lesson to heart, allowing it to lead him to success where others failed to see potential. “I pride myself on working with people who are going to need some nurturing and guidance along the way,” Joshua elaborates. “Maybe they don’t have perfect credit, or the credit they need to attain a home loan, but they do need someone to cheer them on so eventually they can become a qualified buyer. A ‘no’ right now is not a ‘no’ forever; we’re going to get to the finish line.”

When others give up on these potential clients, Joshua believes in working with them to achieve their dreams. “It’s determination,” he laughs. “That and curiosity. The loan officers I work with will attest that if they tell me, ‘No, we can’t do something,’ then I want to know *why* we can’t do it. They’re not qualified right now, but what do we have to do to get them qualified? That’s how my mind thinks. And then, we lay out a strategic path to get them qualified and work on that.” He says his process is entirely about problem-solving and

the willingness to embrace it as a core value. “There are a lot of problems, and if you want to be successful in anything in life, then be a problem-solver. Once you do that, everything else will fall in line.”

Joshua attributes the skills and qualities that led to his success to his Navy career, specifically to his stint as a recruiter. Enlisting on 9/11, he participated in the invasion of Iraq and did sea duty aboard two ships before graduating from Naval Recruiter School in 2008. “I quickly took hold of recruiting and was very successful at it because the biggest thing about it was helping people,” Joshua remembers. “I realized the way to be successful as a recruiter was just to try and help as many people as I could who needed assistance. It was the Great Recession, and a lot of people needed help; at times, there were more people than I could help—people who needed waivers for various things, and a lot of recruiters would not work with them because they weren’t easy recruits. You couldn’t just write an application and put them right in. I used to have a drawer of people who

needed waivers, and I would work on them over time and eventually get those people in.” Although he proved so effective that he was promoted to Chief Petty Officer, he was regrettably denied career recruiter status by the Navy due to his specialized skillsets. Upon returning to the Hampton Roads area in 2012, he found himself immediately deployed.

However, the Navy’s loss is a gain for the real estate world, and that denial led him directly to his current success. “I started looking for a house in March 2014 after coming off an 11-month deployment,” Joshua recalls. “My real estate agent was military and asked me where I was coming from. I explained I just got back off deployment, but before that, I was in recruiting. She asked how I liked it, and I said I wanted to do it forever. She’d never heard anyone say that.” When Joshua explained that he had made Chief as a recruiter, she was fascinated. “She asked why I was so good at recruiting, and I said it’s the simplest thing: I was helping people,” Joshua chuckles.

His agent asked if he had ever

thought about real estate, based on his skills, but at the time, he couldn’t see a connection and declined. Two months after he and his family closed on their house, the REALTOR® called him and offered to pay for the fees, training and licensing—everything he needed to start a real estate career—if he worked at her company for two years. “I said OK, and she said I would start school the next evening at 6:30,” Joshua laughs. “I had just come off deployment, bought a house and was doing my MBA in leadership. The ship was in the yards, so we were working shipyard hours, and then, I am thrown into real estate school.”

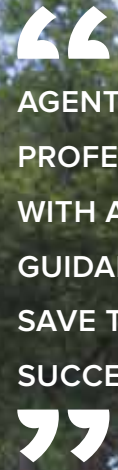
The struggle, as they say, was real. “I would go in at 5:00 a.m. for the Navy, get off work late, go to real estate school from 6:30 to 10:30 p.m., then come home and work on my master’s degree until 2:00 a.m., so I was always running on three hours of sleep,” Joshua says, recounting his brutal schedule. “But I made it through and got my license in August 2014.”

Now that he has established himself in real estate, Joshua sees the parallel his agent had brought to his attention, as well as some advantages real estate has over recruiting duty. “As a recruiter, you’re selling the dream of the Navy: good pay, retirement, medical benefits,” Joshua explains, “but people can’t exactly see, touch and feel that. With a house, they can. A lot of people want homeownership but don’t know how to attain it, and the same way recruiters avoid people needing a waiver, a lot of agents are looking for the clean-cut buyer who doesn’t need any extra effort.”

Joshua’s passion for serving



“
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TO DEVELOP AND BUILD THE
TEAM, BRINGING MORE AGENTS
ON TO TRAIN THEM AND SHOW
THEM DIFFERENT WAYS TO BE
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AGENTS ARE GIVING UP THEIR PROFESSION EVERY DAY, AND WITH A LITTLE MORE HELP AND GUIDANCE, SOME OF THEM CAN SAVE THEIR DREAM OF BEING A SUCCESSFUL REAL ESTATE AGENT.



others extends beyond his clients, and he is dedicated to guiding the 14 agents and support personnel on his team to become successful. "I'm not just passionate about helping home buyers, but also about helping people in general," he reveals. "I'm a team leader, so I also train and coach the real estate agents on my team, and since 2018, I've trained two of the Rookies of the Year and one top producer. Right now, I'm continuing to develop and build the team, bringing more agents on to train them and show them different ways to be successful and make real estate a sustainable career." He has found much of the same motivation helping agents as he has with clients, as stories about real estate agents leaving the industry continue to proliferate. "Agents are giving up their profession every day, and with a little more help and guidance, some of them can save their dream of being a successful real estate agent."

Outside of real estate, Joshua continues to give back by coaching youth baseball. "I've been coaching my son in tee ball since he was 3, and now, I coach in the 6-8-year-old age group," he says. "I grew up on the baseball field and had a great passion for it as a kid, so coaching is a way for me to give to the next generation of baseball players, another way to help people in general."

While he might define his success by how many people he helps, Joshua affirms that the root of all his successes is his wife, Theresa. High school sweethearts from Johnstown, PA, they married in 2002, shortly after Joshua graduated from his specialty school after boot camp. "She's been believing in me since our high school days," Joshua shares gratefully. "She supported my decision to join the Navy in the days following 9/11, knowing I would be going into harm's way. She believed in me when I became a real estate agent and was investing our small savings into Zillow leads hoping to turn a profit. She's been with me during the best and worst of times, and she is what I'm most grateful for in this world."

When he is not practicing real estate, Joshua enjoys spending time with his family, watching his son play baseball and his daughter play softball, golfing and going to Sandbridge for time at the beach.



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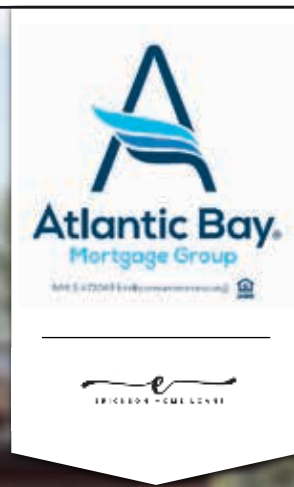
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BEN CANTY

Ben Canty has always had a knack for bringing people together. Growing up in the DC area before moving to Virginia Beach, he was the kind of kid who gathered friends for games and ensured no one was left out. His upbringing instilled a profound respect for everyone, regardless of background or lifestyle. “Everyone deserves kindness,” his parents would say. These words have shaped his life and career.

Before diving into real estate, Ben built a strong foundation in customer service. He worked in retail, even styling at Nordstrom, where he learned the art of listening to clients and understanding their needs. This experience, combined with Ben’s natural inclination for coaching and mentoring others, set him up perfectly for a real estate career.

The suggestion to become a REALTOR® came from his father, a seasoned broker who saw Ben’s potential. “You’d be really good at it,” his dad told him. After Ben got licensed, his dad acted as his biggest mentor and was present at every turn despite working at a different brokerage.

Ben admires his parents, who have always led by example, showing him that he could successfully run his own business after witnessing their accomplishments. He fell in love with real estate, a career that has fueled his need for creativity and uplifting others. “There’s a lot of creativity in real estate, not just in marketing, but also in how you work with people and

handle transactions,” he explains. “All transactions are unique, and you can be creative while navigating them.” As he’s continued to grow, Ben struggles to find the words to describe the meaningful relationships he’s built in the past nine years.

However, Ben’s journey wasn’t without its challenges. Growing up as a bi-racial queer kid, he faced interactions that made him question his identity. He often felt pressured to fit into a box. But these experiences strengthened his resolve. “Now I have the opportunity to influence folks and help them make life choices with confidence,” he says. “Everybody deserves to go home.”

Beyond leading his clients, Ben also manages his brokerage’s mentorship programs, teaching new agents a range of skills and helping seasoned agents grow their businesses. Reflecting on his achievements,

Ben gets teary-eyed. “I’m so grateful for all the opportunities I’ve been given in my lifetime, and I am so happy I can give that back now,” he expresses.

Ben’s best advice is twofold: “Just because you have the ability doesn’t mean you have the capacity, so always be mindful of your headspace,” he emphasizes. Additionally, he imparts, “Master your craft, study and go to every training available. Be the smartest one about real estate in the room but with the humility to ask questions because you can always learn something new.”





Ben's family plays a significant role in his life. His mom, a well-established optician, and his dad, a decorated hero with a V for Valor, have been his pillars of strength. His sister, a politician in Illinois, also reflects the family's leadership qualities. A leader himself, Ben founded the Stonewall Sports chapter in Norfolk in 2018, an LGBTQI+ amateur sports league raising funds for local charities. His first year saw nearly \$30,000 donated, and the league has grown since. Two other charities that are very dear to him are the LGBT Life Center and Hampton Roads Pride, where he actively donates and volunteers, including hosting first-time buyers' workshops.

Outside of work, Ben loves to travel, a passion he discovered as an adult. "With my dad being one of the first black helicopter pilots for the Navy, we always took road trips because if he wasn't flying, it wasn't happening," he chuckles. Ben's travels have taken him around the world. In July, he had the incredible opportunity to travel to Puerto Rico to visit the house his parents called home while stationed there and where he was born.

Joining OWN Real Estate in March 2022 was a pivotal moment for Ben. "I've never seen a group of people so smart and good at what they do while also caring so deeply," he beams. Within nine months, he received the Newcomer Award for his contributions to the company and its culture, a moment that became even more special when his parents surprised him at the award ceremony.

Ben's heart will continue guiding him to make a positive difference for whom-ever he encounters. "If you're going to ask your community to support you, you should also be supporting your community," he believes, a principle that guides him in his professional and personal life. Born with a genuine love for others and raised by two wonderful parents, Ben's journey is far from over, and his impact has just begun.

"If you ever get the pleasure of meeting Ben Canty, you will understand his passion for life that bleeds over to his work as a REALTOR®. A stickler on details, his compassion for others and drive for excellence is evident in most everything he does. His passion is educating others, evident in the OWN mentorship program he took over in the last 12 months with a noticeable increase in success. OWN is a better place to work because of Ben Canty."
—Sean Rooney, President/Founder, OWN Real Estate

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Real Producers Photographer Captures



at Breast Cancer Retreats

If you've ever stepped in front of Rachel Saddlemire's camera for a Real Producers photo shoot, experienced the magic of her process and then viewed a stunning gallery of images that blend technical skill with creative vision, then you know that she commits to her craft with every ounce of her being. Her depth of service extends to individuals, families, wedding parties, musicians, business owners and more. A champion of giving back to the community, Rachel also donates her time and talent to capturing the beauty of breast cancer patients and their families.

Rachel was scrolling Facebook last year looking for job opportunities when she landed on a post asking for someone to photograph couples for Little Pink Houses of Hope, a local non-profit that offers participants and their loved ones respite from the burden of treatment and empowers them to live each day to the fullest through free, week-long vacation retreats. "I had been wanting to get more involved in philanthropies," Rachel shares.

"Little Pink Houses really spoke to me, as I have had family and friends in my life who have suffered from cancer, so I reached out to volunteer."

During the Carova Beach retreat in October 2023, after an afternoon of laughter, smiles and photos on the beach, Rachel met and connected with Jeanine Patten-Coble during the house dinner. Jeanine, a breast cancer survivor who started Little Pink Houses in 2009, explained everything the organization does and stands for. Rachel knew then that she was all in.

Rachel worked with Jeanine and her team to capture the couples' photos and headshots during the retreat, using her camera to honor and empower the triumphs and courage of attendees. Then, in April 2024, Jeanine asked Rachel to attend the Carolina Beach family retreat to take marketing and family photos for the organization. "I was so overwhelmed with emotion during the





Jeanine Patten-Coble, Founder and President, Little Pink Houses of Hope



Rachel Saddlemire, Rachel Saddlemire Photography

week,” she remarks, recalling the powerful photographs she took of a woman and her husband walking together on the sand. The woman would go on to share about her battle at the participant dinner that evening and how she had been talking to hospice. When a volunteer relayed the story to Rachel the next morning, tears filled her eyes as she realized the photographs could be the last ones of the woman and her husband together. Now, more than ever, a job turned into a calling.

Rachel also describes capturing an image of a woman on the beach ripping her wig off her head, showing the slow growth of hair that had fallen out from chemotherapy. “The look on her face was so freeing,” Rachel smiles. “She embraced life and everything in it despite her diagnosis.” At the retreat’s closing dinner, after everyone shared what they loved about their experience, Rachel snapped a group shot and then received a hug from another volunteer. “You didn’t expect all this emotion, did you?” the

“ I FEEL LIKE GOD IS LEADING ME DOWN A PATH TO DO SOMETHING AND BE PART OF SOMETHING GREATER THAN MYSELF. - RACHEL

volunteer asked Rachel, who started crying. “That week changed me more than I ever imagined,” Rachel reveals. “It was incredible.”

Little Pink Houses operates because of people like Rachel, who donate everything from meals and events (one arcade owner closed his business to the public and offered an afternoon of free games for retreat guests) to other services and housing — one of the biggest expenses. The Little Pink Houses team is grateful for property owners who share their vacation houses for guests to create wonderful, and sometimes final, memories together, and they welcome the opportunity to talk with anyone interested in donating their coastal spaces. Folks can also donate financially or volunteer for retreat weeks, which take place in several locations across the United States, several of them nearby. Please visit littlepinkhouses.org to learn more or email Jeanine at jeanine@littlepink.org.

Rachel is thankful she happened upon The Little Pink Houses’ Facebook post when she did. “I feel like God is leading me down a path to do something and be part of something greater than myself,” she remarks. Hoping to be remembered for making people stop and take a breath to witness the extraordinary, she imparts valuable wisdom for everyone: “Be the good you want to see in this world and put forth the energy and love you want to receive,” she recommends. Thank you, Rachel, for the joy you are giving to the world.



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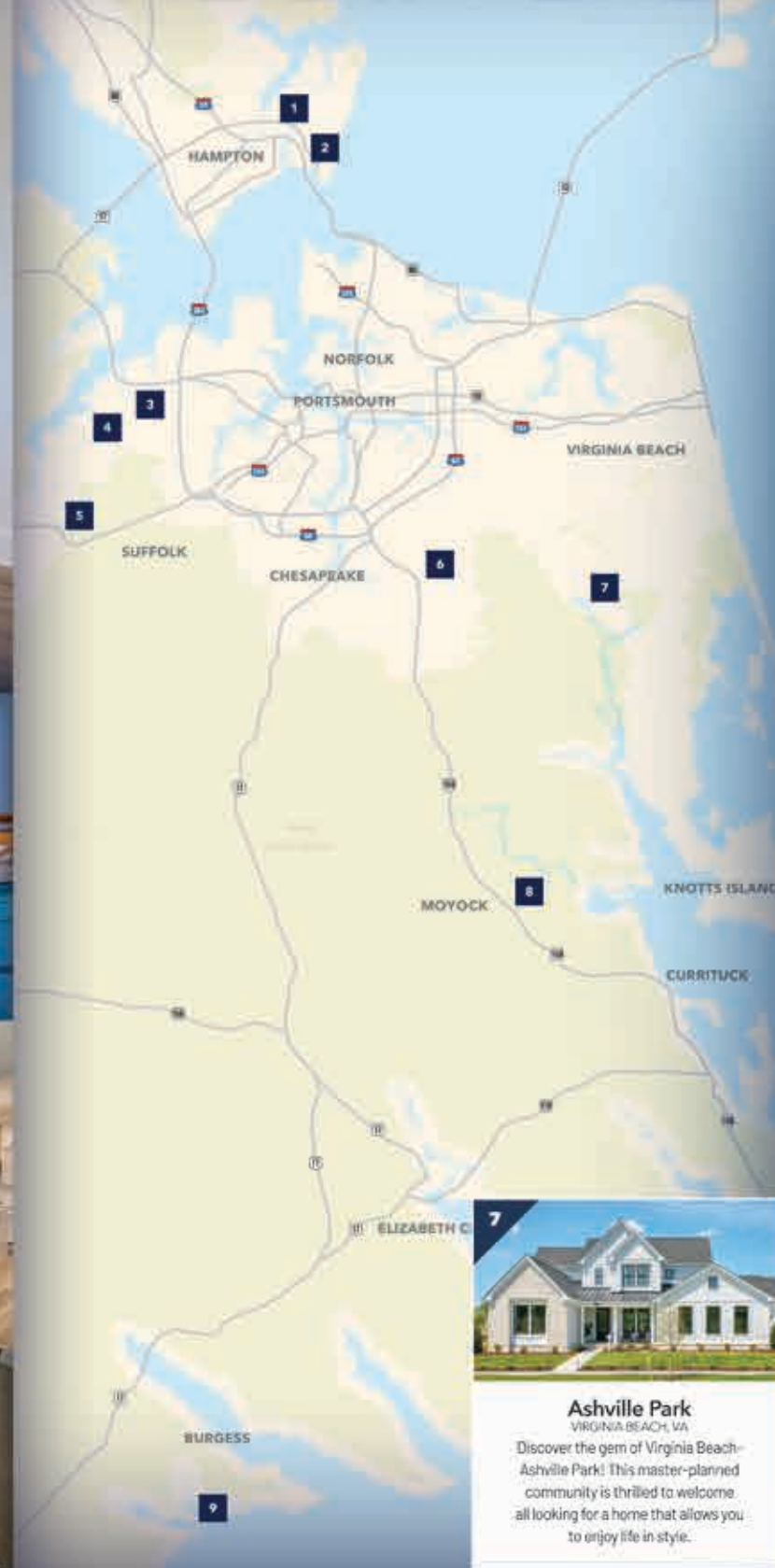


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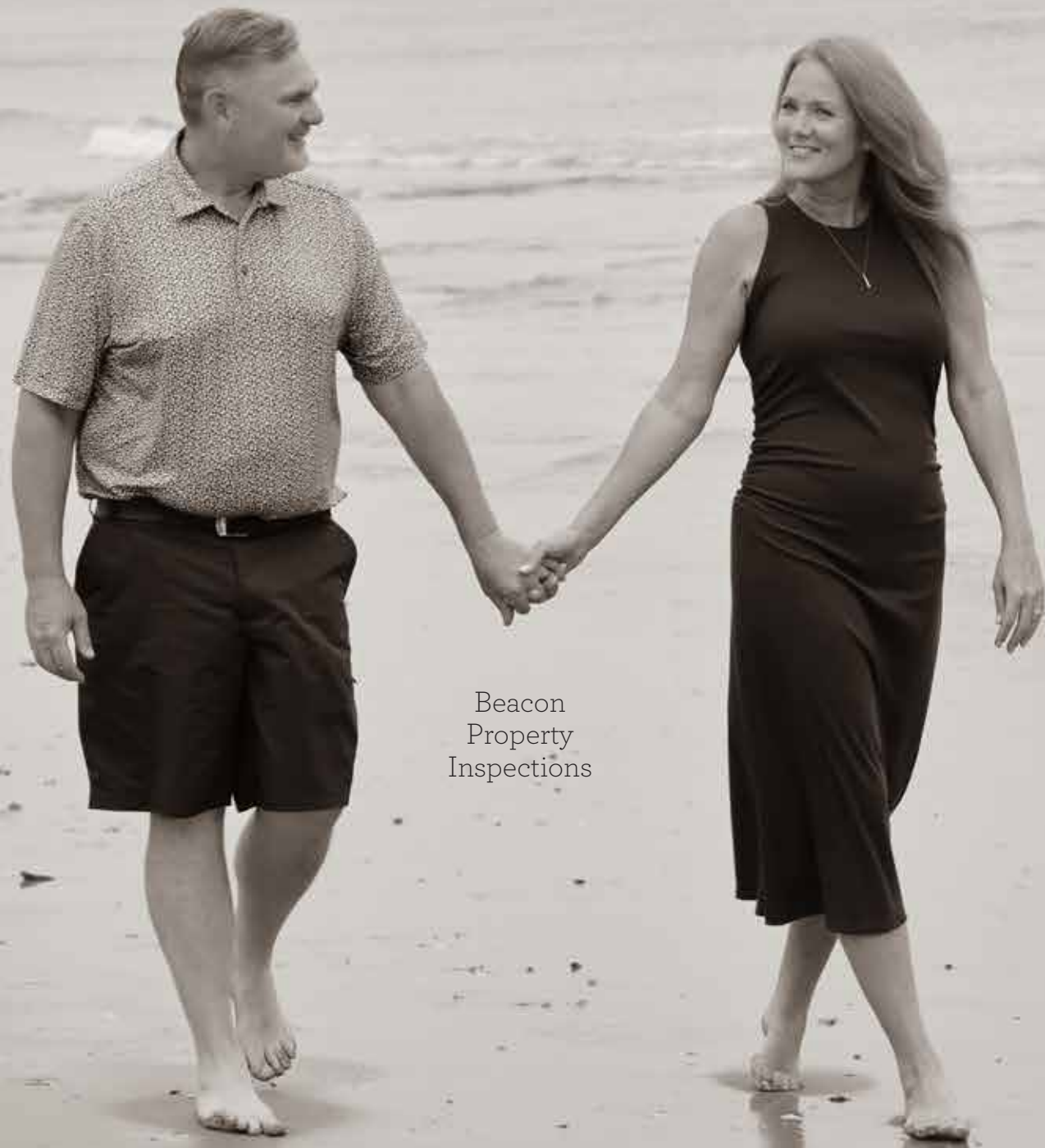
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John & Michelle BURKE



Beacon
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Inspections

▶ partner spotlight

Story by Maddie
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Born with an insatiable curiosity and entrepreneurial spirit, John Burke became a home inspector after learning how important attention to detail and knowing how things work are to the real estate industry. In 2003, he purchased a home inspection franchise that relocated him to Virginia, where he met and fell in love with Michelle. As John's business grew, he knew he needed help expanding his reach through marketing. Michelle was ready for a change after teaching for 17 years in Virginia Beach, so the engaged couple joined forces to elevate the business.

In 2021, the married couple took a leap of faith and ventured out on their own, launching Beacon Property Inspections. The company name stems from Michelle's desire to infuse a coastal identity into their business, symbolizing their Coastal Virginia and Northeast North Carolina service areas. "John actually came up with the name and designed the logo," Michelle beams. For John, the name was not just a geographical marker, but also a beacon of hope, a guiding light for homeowners embarking on their property journey.

As a home inspector, John speaks passionately about how the job is more than finding defects; it gives clients the big picture about their future homes. "Real estate transactions

are a delicate dance for all involved," John shares. "People are emotional and under a lot of stress, which is understandable because it is the biggest financial transaction of their lives. Home inspectors can play a big role in a buyer's decision by how they deliver and explain things."

The big picture is where John excels—after some gentle coaching from Michelle about explaining things to clients in a way they'll understand. In addition to the extensive reports they review to answer their clients' questions, the team goes above and beyond by bringing snacks and chairs to ensure agents and clients are comfortable during the home inspection.





“The real estate industry is completely reputation-based, meaning integrity and professionalism are the key to a thriving business.”



Beacon Property Inspections’ dedication to customer service speaks volumes via its current 94 five-star Google reviews. “We have the same values as the top agents who use us—to provide exceptional service so clients remember us down the road,” Michelle remarks. “The real estate industry is completely reputation-based, meaning integrity and professionalism are the key to a thriving business.”

For the couple, success is referrals, not because of the extra business but because referrals reflect that they did a phenomenal job. Beyond the real estate transaction, their service remains top of mind as clients frequently send pictures years later if something seems amiss. “We love our clients and want them to look at us as a resource beyond just the home inspection,” smiles Michelle.

Along with uplifting their local real estate communities through new buyer seminars and classes, John strives to elevate the home inspection industry. Devoting numerous hours to online research and participating in national conferences to learn and connect with other home inspection companies, John believes collaboration is the key to excellence. “A good home inspector is always learning,” John comments. “With new standards always being set, our job is to stay up to date on changes to best serve our clients.”

When they’re not meticulously running their business or providing invaluable insights to clients, John and Michelle enjoy indulging in their passions. From John’s love for golfing and snow skiing to their shared joy of traveling (with a recent escapade cruising through the Caribbean) and playing pickleball, the Burkes simply enjoy spending quality time together.

With a dedicated team, including marketing specialist Tiffanie Burke (not related) and seasoned inspector Trevor Woody, John and Michelle are poised to expand their reach and impact. So, as you navigate the complex terrain of real estate, remember the guiding light they and their team offer at Beacon Property Inspections, where clarity meets excellence, and every home inspection is a step toward a brighter future.



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An Interview with a 2024 HRRR Board Member



SEAN ROONEY
2024 BOARD MEMBER

As I enter my 20th year in the real estate profession and my 20th year as a REALTOR®, I recognize more than ever how important it is to be a REALTOR® and how this organization has deeply impacted my career. Yes, we know about all the wonderful things they do, like benefits they provide, business tools, real estate market data, educational opportunities, and discount programs. But what most don’t know, and therefore what makes us more prepared for what is to come, is that NAR annually updates its strategic plan to reflect the challenges and opportunities that the association and the real estate industry expect to confront during the next three to five years. All of that aside, when nobody was prepared for what we faced in 2020 with the onset of covid, NAR lobbied to make real estate agents essential personnel, kept us in business when most were shuttered, and all of the dues I have paid over the last twenty years were paid back tenfold. If you want a more fulfilling career in real estate, do yourself a favor and get involved with HRRR.

That’s Who We R!





▶▶ featured agent

Story by Maddie Podish
Photos by Rachel
Saddlemire, Rachel
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BROCK THOMPSON

ONYX REALTY

For nine years, Brock shaped the young minds of the next generation, leaving an indelible mark on the lives of countless students in Virginia Beach and South Carolina schools. With a graduate degree in educational leadership from Regent University, teaching wasn't just a job for him; it was a calling to impart knowledge and inspire others that they could accomplish anything as long as they worked hard. Outside the classroom, Brock coached various age groups for baseball, a sport he's loved and played since childhood.

As his family began to grow, Brock found himself at a crossroads. His and his wife's desire to create a family-centric lifestyle meant becoming a one-income household as Emily left her job as a commercial interior designer to stay home with their children. Brock pursued a new path that would allow him to continue teaching while providing for his young family.

Real estate emerged as a perfect amalgamation of his passions, where teaching met opportunity and every transaction was a chance to empower others to realize their dreams. Initially interested in

investing, Brock aligned with one of the industry's top investing agents to learn the ropes. He explains, "I believe learning the investing side first helped me in terms of longevity because I now have a different eye for houses to see what could potentially be a big fix and what could be just cosmetic for my clients."

With the decisive goal of providing for his family, Brock knew failure wasn't an option. He approached his new venture with the same meticulous planning he applied to crafting lesson plans for his students, focusing not on the quality of relationships he forged, not the quantity. "I knew from the beginning I wanted people to answer the phone when I called because they know I care about them as an individual and not just for their business," he smiles.

Brock's transition from a guaranteed paycheck to real estate's uncertainty was daunting. Still, with unwavering support from his wife and a white-knuckled trust in God, he turned adversity into triumph. "Emily backed me as I started in real estate by saving money wherever she could," Brock explains. "We





“**THE RELATIONSHIPS I’VE BUILT AND TO BE THERE FOR PEOPLE IS EVERYTHING TO ME.**”

always would pray for the Lord to give us just enough to pay our bills, and after the first year of being in real estate, Emily came out of the room chuckling.” She explained that after completing their books, they had made one cent more than their bills for the year.

Brock’s dedication to quality relationships and support from Emily made his business flourish. Recognizing the need for assistance, he welcomed Emily’s childhood friend, Abby Paul, onto his team, a decision that marked the beginning of a decade-long partnership.

Brock does not measure success by accolades or commissions but by giving back and provide for his family. “It’s a blessing having my wife and Abby for support,” he remarks.” It’s what changed us from having an extra dollar to providing a life for my family I never dreamed of as a teacher.” Growing up in a single-parent household, Brock loves that he can now give back to his mother, who sacrificed everything for him.

Though he traded his classroom for conference rooms, coaching baseball remains a constant. With four children, Jack (14), Lucy (12), Della (10) and Jace (8), Brock loves coaching his kids on and off the field, helping them establish confidence and maintain a positive attitude. The family enjoys being active in their church and serving the community, two passions that led Brock to meet Emily more than 17 years ago after the two were serving spaghetti to the homeless at their church.

Today, with his business flourishing, Brock is excited to align himself with ONYX Realty Professionals LLC alongside Broker/Owner Cavelle Mollineaux. As he envisions the future, Brock hopes to continue expanding his business and impacting the community. Humbly, he states, “The relationships I’ve built and being there for people is everything to me. I hope what people remember me for and what becomes my legacy is the genuine connections I make with others.”



“Congratulations to my dear friend and business partner Brock Thompson. Seeing him be recognized in this way makes me extremely proud because I have seen him grow exponentially over the years in the industry — not only to become an excellent agent, but also a great leader and team player. But most importantly, what I admire the most about Brock is that no matter how busy he has gotten over the years, he always makes time for his family and is present as a husband and father to his four beautiful children.” —Cavelle Mollineaux, BROKER/OWNER | ONYX REALTY PROFESSIONALS

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Top Agents *Shine*

at Hampton Roads Real Producers Celebration

Hampton Roads Real Producers magazine recently hosted an unforgettable release party to honor the exceptional real estate agents we featured in the April and May issues. Held at the brand-new Arbor Home Loans office on Laskin Road, the event celebrated top-tier talent and camaraderie within the local real estate community.

Our spotlight agents were Helen Merjos, Joe Fortuner, Stephanie Battles, Jay Mitchell, Kate Marks, Lexi Church and Richard Calderon and team. We are honored to recognize their outstanding contributions to the industry amidst a vibrant atmosphere filled with networking and celebration. As you know, to be featured in Hampton Roads Real Producers, agents must achieve at very high levels and be nominated by their peers, and we are very proud to feature every one of these amazing real estate professionals.

Our hosts for the evening, the dynamic duo David Burchett and Daniel Caro, CEO and President of Arbor Home Loans operating within the OneTrust Home Loans family of companies, welcomed everyone to their stunning new office space. Their hospitality set the tone for the evening, creating an elegant and inviting environment. Special kudos go to Ashlynn Sawyer, whose meticulous planning and leadership ensured the event was a resounding success. The new Arbor Home Loans office on Laskin Road truly reflects the team's commitment to





excellence, making it a fitting venue for such a distinguished gathering.

The celebration also extended to some of the magazine's vetted preferred business partners. Jay Bennett with Quality Assurance Inspections (QAI) was lauded for his remarkable journey through the Arctic Race, a testament to his endurance and spirit.

Throughout the evening, conversations were lively and insightful as these top-performing real estate professionals exchanged ideas and best practices for navigating the current market. The atmosphere was charged with positivity and collaboration, embodying the spirit of the real estate community in Hampton Roads.

As glasses clinked and laughter filled the room, it was clear that the event was not just about celebrating individual successes, but also about fostering a sense of community and shared purpose. This event was a reminder of the power of collaboration and the importance of recognizing excellence within our ranks.

What a splendid affair celebrating the crème de la crème of Hampton Roads' real estate professionals. The Arbor Home Loans team's gracious hosting, coupled with the recognition of exceptional agents and partners, made the night one to remember. Here's to continued success and more such celebrations in the future. Drop in sometime to check out this amazing workspace.

Arbor Home Loans
324 Laskin Rd., Suite 324
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Nominate your favorite agents, brokers and industry leaders through the link available on our [facebook.com/hrrealproducers](https://www.facebook.com/hrrealproducers) page



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Property Managers

THE UNSUNG HEROES OF REAL ESTATE

By Dawn Kennedy, PhD, CAE, RCE, C2EX,
GREEN Hampton Roads REALTORS®
Association Chief Executive Officer

When we think of REALTORS®, our minds often go to homeownership, but organized real estate encompasses property management, commercial leasing and appraisal. At the Hampton Roads REALTORS® Association (HRRRA), we have a hybrid of sorts, the residential property manager. Property managers have long been an active member segment of the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR), so much so that they formed their own “association” called the Institute of Real Estate Management, better known as IREM.

IREM recently celebrated its 90th anniversary. In 1933, NAR recognized the need for increased specialization in real estate and representation for those specialties, and it launched IREM amid the Great Depression. To give some context, IREM’s website offers, “This was the same year prohibition was repealed and construction began on the Golden Gate Bridge. The chocolate chip cookie was popularized, the first drive-in movie theater opened in New Jersey, and the average cost of a new home was \$5,750” (IREM, 2023).

As an outgrowth of NAR, IREM’s primary focus mirrors that of its parent organization, NAR. Its core mission is promoting a code of ethics, ensuring advanced education and sharing experiences for the betterment of its clients. Typically, IREM is associated with commercial real estate, as many property managers deal with apartment complexes or investors with large-scale residential rental portfolios. However, IREM’s members and its programming include agents managing homes for landlords/investors. One of the first certifications the IREM offered was the Accredited Residential Manager (ARM). The Certified Professional Manager (CPM) was designed for professionals seeking to manage a portfolio of properties, and a specific certification exists for agents who are strictly commercial—Accredited Commercial Manager (AcoM)—to learn advanced skills in commercial property accounting, budgeting and capitalization.

In Hampton Roads, we have a large contingent of rental homes, partly due to our naval base. As one of our HRRRA instructors says, when they get transferred, “they become accidental landlords.” They do not have the ability or the experience to effectively lease their home if they are not ready to sell (such as not having enough equity, needing time to do repairs, etc.), and, thus, they hire a property manager. The area is also a tourist/vacation spot, and many homes are purchased as investment properties. These factors account for the large contingent of property managers at HRRRA.

At HRRRA, we are committed to bringing value to our property managers. Participation in IREM is highly encouraged. The unique nature of IREM is that as an offshoot of NAR, agents who are members of IREM but not REALTORS® are still members of the association; they are just a different class of membership. They do have access to and enjoy many of the same rights and privileges of membership. At HRRRA, we offer specific education for the property manager with 10 sessions a year. The sessions are planned by a committee of residential property managers and run the gamut from business efficiency to evictions to contracts to recent changes to the Virginia Residential Landlord and Tenant Act (VRLTA). These one-hour training sessions are with attorneys and experienced property managers who are out in the field every day. Once per year, HRRRA facilitates a three-hour CE course on VRLTA.

The property manager’s job is intensely difficult. They are the fulcrum on which rests the needs and wants of the tenant and the needs and wants of the property owner. They also must do some very difficult things, never quite knowing everything they might face when they knock on the tenant’s door or while working with landlords who



Evolution of IREM

can get very frustrated when the courts slow down an eviction. Because HRRRA is dedicated to serving all its members (residential, commercial, property managers, appraisers and affiliates), we strive to offer opportunities for each segment. At HRRRA, we have outstanding property managers who raise the bar for the industry. Each year, we recognize one property manager who exemplifies excellence with the Distinguished Property Manager of the Year award. When HRRRA claims that we are the ultimate support for success in any market, we also mean success for every member.






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REAL PRODUCERS

FAQ



Scan to
nominate
REALTORS®,
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WELCOME TO REAL PRODUCERS!

Some of you may wonder what this publication is about, so we have created this FAQ page. Here, we will answer the most asked questions around the country regarding our program. My door is always open to discuss anything regarding this community—this publication is 100% designed to be your voice.

Q: WHO RECEIVES THIS MAGAZINE?

A: South Hampton Roads Real Producers: The top 500 agents in South Hampton Roads (Smithfield to Sandbridge and into the North Carolina border). We pulled the REIN-MLS numbers (by volume) from January 1, 2023, through December 31, 2023, in the South Hampton Roads area. We cut the list off at #500, and this year's distribution was born. For this year's list, the production level for our group was between \$7.8 million and \$71 million in 2023. The list will reset at the end of 2024 for next year, and we will update it annually.

A: Peninsula Real Producers: Same as above, but we pull out the Peninsula/Williamsburg agents and cut the list off at the top 300. For the 2022 calendar year, Peninsula Real Producers agents sold more than \$6 million.

Note: We identify REALTORS®/agents by where their broker is located in the MLS. Please contact us if you fall into any of these unique scenarios:

1. Your broker address in the MLS is not in the South Hampton Roads region, but you are a commission agent working primarily in South Hampton Roads or the Peninsula area.
2. Your broker address in the MLS is on the Peninsula, but you would prefer to be associated with South Hampton Roads Real Producers instead of the Peninsula.
3. Your broker address in the MLS is Southside, but you prefer to be part of the Peninsula Real Producers magazine instead of South Hampton Roads Real Producers.

Q: WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR BEING FEATURED IN THIS MAGAZINE?

A: The process is simple. Every feature you see has first been nominated multiple times. Top agents, office managers, brokers or industry leaders can nominate top REALTORS®, agents, affiliates, brokers, owners and industry leaders who work in the areas we cover. **Scan the QR code to nominate your favorite Real Producers.**

Once nominated multiple times, the next step is a preliminary interview with us to learn more about you; our article selection committee uses an extensive process to schedule each article, and we usually book up to a year in advance. Once we select and schedule, we put the wheels in motion for our writer to conduct an interview and for our photographer to schedule a photoshoot.

Q: WHAT IS THE COST TO FEATURE A REALTOR®, AGENT OR TEAM?

A: Zero, zilch, zippo, nada, nil. **The feature costs nothing,** my friends, so nominate away. We are not a pay-to-play model. We share real stories of Real Producers.

Q: WHO ARE THE PREFERRED PARTNERS?

A: Anyone listed as a preferred partner in the front of the magazine is part of this community and will have an ad in every magazine issue, attend our social events and be part of our online community. We don't just find these businesses off the street, nor do we work with all businesses that approach us. One or many of you have recommended every preferred partner you see in this publication. In a sense, we won't even meet with a business you have not vetted and stamped for approval. Our mission is to create a powerhouse network for the REALTORS® and agents in the area and the best affiliates so we can grow stronger together.

Q: HOW CAN I RECOMMEND A PREFERRED PARTNER?

A: If you have a recommendation for a local business that works with top real estate agents and their clients, **please email joni@realproducersmag.com.**

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