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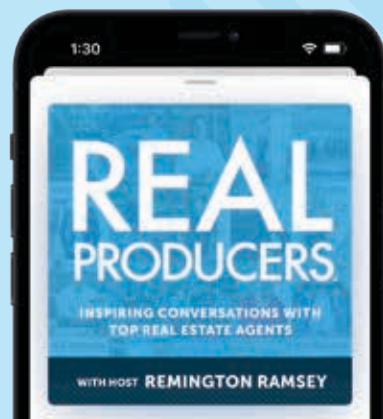
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**Nick Stevens**  
Owner/Publisher



**Dan Steele**  
Writer



**Dan Allsup**  
Ad and Content Manager



**Zach Constant**  
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THE NORTH GEORGIA GROUP

CHRIS VAN OLPHEN

& MARK MIDYETTE



▶▶ featured agent

By Dan Steele



The real estate industry is ever evolving with the changes of the market. Once a rarity, real estate teams have seen a sudden rise in recent years, and Chris van Olphen and Mark Midyette of the North Georgia Group at Keller Williams are amongst those leading the way forward in this novel route to success for real estate professionals both old and new.

They are simply keeping up with the times, Mark explains. “For example, back before the 1990s, buyer’s agents weren’t a thing; there was only the seller’s agent, and they did it all. For a very long time, people haven’t thought teams were valid, but that has completely changed.” Part of the appeal and rise of the success of teams can be attributed to the difficulties many agents face in the industry, be it seasoned veterans or first-year rookies. “This business is lonely sometimes,” Chris notes, citing how many agents struggle without support and leave real estate. “75% of real estate agents quit within their first year, and nearly 90% within 5 years,” he says. “A lot of people get into this business because it seems like the easy thing to do but struggle because they don’t have the support to learn, grow, and improve. It’s a big void in the industry.”

Being on a team gives agents a sense of purpose, hold themselves accountable, and be accountable to each other. With support from a team, Mark clarifies, new agents are able to more easily

establish a foothold in the industry, learning the basics of the process start-to-finish, creating relationships with clients, scripting, contracts, and many other vital elements. “We offer a productive, structured, relaxing and safe environment for everyone to become as successful as they desire while also creating a family environment where everyone feels welcome and at home,” he explains.

“I don’t think anyone should start without a support system. There isn’t any downside to being on a team for at least the first two to three years in real estate,” Chris expounds. “On our team we have 32 agents that can give feedback, share knowledge, and support you when it’s needed. It is a great launching pad and foundation builder where one can grow at a faster and more even pace.”

Although it has proved a success for them, neither Chris nor Mark originally envisioned themselves as part of a team, let alone in a real estate career, as both had successfully

established themselves in other fields, but found themselves drawn to the industry. “I became interested when I bought my first home,” Chris recalls about what led him to obtain his license in 2004. “I had interactions with an agent at a new home neighborhood and didn’t have a great experience.” Intrigued by the real estate process, he was inspired to do it better and decided to bring the 10 years of customer service experience he had obtained with Marriott Hotels to the business. “By bringing a customer service focus into it, we were able to make the process better for the clients,” Chris continues. “Our team was up 30% last year while others were down 30%. It means we’re negotiating better, interpreting the market better, providing better service, and getting our clients into the best homes for them.”

Likewise, Mark also decided to jump into real estate after a decade in another field. “I got my license in 2004 after ten years at an IT company,” he recollects. “My stepfather



“

IF I CAN STEP BACK AND SEE

WHERE WE'VE CREATED A BUSINESS

THAT HELPS FAMILIES, THEIR

FUTURES AND EDUCATES AGENTS

ON THE REAL ESTATE MARKET

THEN I'LL BE SATISFIED.

”



was a builder and built four to five homes a year. Before I got into IT, I worked with him on weekends and during the summers.” Wanting to build his own business and be in front of the people he was working with, Mark decided real estate was the ideal career to achieve both goals as his familiarity with the construction process gave him an edge. “It’s definitely an advantage when you’re explaining houses to clients,” he concedes.

Both joined Keller Williams, finding it to be precisely the environment needed to set them up for success. “Keller Williams is 100% focused on training and development. I think they do a stellar job at doing that. They try to build people up, as did Marriott, so it was a neat transition. Even the shirts were still red,” laughs Chris. “Mark agrees: “I believe Keller Williams has a great foundation of agents who are willing to

share in a community and family-oriented culture, and it’s been great.” Initially, working independently, they began informally teaming up after the market crash of 2008. “Chris was working a lot of foreclosures, and I had investors and buyers, so we decided to work together since it provided a solution for both of us,” Mark remembers. “So, I put my info on all his signs, and if I got a buyer off his signs, I’d pay the referral fee. My phone started blowing up like crazy, so we hired an admin to field the calls, and it grew from there.” Formalizing the team in 2019, the pair has found their endeavor has paid off in spades and has delivered on their goal to support and build up the careers of the team members. Miles Ramsell, who joined about the time the team formed, happily verifies that joining the North Georgia Group helped him find success when he was first starting out. “Without Chris and Mark, I simply would not be here. I owe them much of what I have to this day,” he affirms. “Joining them 4 years ago got me a fantastic foot in the door. From knowing nothing about real estate



“

**WE ARE BIG ON TRYING TO SUPPORT EACH OTHER, TAKE A BREAK, DO SOMETHING FOR THE AGENTS AND STAFF.**

and knowing very few people in my area, I managed to develop my career and become successful in helping clients full-time.”

In addition to providing professional support and development, Chris and Mark also strive to foster a sense of community on the team. “We are big on trying to support each other, take a break, do something for the agents and staff,” declares Mark. “We took the top agents on a cruise to Bahamas last year, and every year we do a spring, summer, and fall outing of some sort, whether it be an event at our local Legends brewery with live music or a lake party for Independence Day. About every quarter we bring everyone together to have some fun and celebrate

our successes. It’s a way to get to know your staff, agents, and their families to create relationships between them so they know each other as more than just someone at work.”

It has been a rewarding journey, and the pair are looking forward to the new challenges and victories ahead. “The most fulfilling part of this job has been watching agents find their success. Agents who have never shown a home before becoming rookie of the year with 30 transactions is the best part,” says

Chris. “Continuing to build a team that provides industry knowledge and exceptional service is our main focus right now. The attention is always on the agents and for the agents to be focused on the clients. Whether we have 50 or 150 agents on the team, we’re still a family together in an environment that they want to be a part of and to provide a higher level of care to our clients.” The connections we make with our clients, after all, is the reason we do what we do. “In this business there’s always a connection that never goes away, you always have family, friends, and repeat clients that trust in you and the knowledge you provide,” Mark muses. “If I can step back and see where we’ve created a business that helps families, their futures and educates agents on the real estate market then I’ll be satisfied.”

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# FAQ

## ALL ABOUT MOUNTAINS, LAKES & ATHENS REAL PRODUCERS



Real Producers magazine started in Indianapolis in 2015 and is now in over 130 markets across the nation and continues to spread rapidly.

**Q: WHO RECEIVES Real Producers MAGAZINES?**

**A:** The top 300+ real estate agents across north and northeast Georgia.

**Q: WHAT IS THE GOAL OF THIS MAGAZINE?**

**A:** We believe that we are better together. When we surround ourselves with other successful, like-minded people, we grow to new heights. Real Producers is a platform that brings together the most elite individuals in the North Georgia real estate industry.

We take the top 300 real estate agents and RP-vetted businesses in every market, and we build an exclusive community around that group. We share their stories, successes, market trends, and upcoming events — really, anything that will connect, inform and inspire, we put in our monthly publication.

**Q: DOES Real Producers HAVE EVENTS?**

**A:** Yes! We will have specific networking events throughout the year.

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

**A:** It's really simple. You have to be on the top 300 list, and we take nominations seriously. You can nominate other real estate agents, businesses, brokers, owners or even yourself! Office leaders can also nominate real estate agents. We will consider anyone brought to our attention who is in the top 300 because we don't know everyone's story, so we need your help to learn about them. We cannot guarantee a feature, but we encourage you to meet with one of our team members, support Real Producers and attend our private events to increase your chances.

To submit a nomination, please email: Nick.Stevens@RealProducersMag.com

**Q: WHAT DOES IT COST A REAL ESTATE AGENT/TEAM TO BE FEATURED?**

**A:** Zero, zilch, zippo, nada, nil. It costs nothing to agents, so nominate away! We are not a pay-to-play model. We share **REAL** stories of **Real Producers**.

**Q: WHO ARE THE RP-VETTED BUSINESSES?**

**A:** They are one of the best businesses in north and northeast Georgia in their category, and you can find them listed in our index! We don't just find these businesses off the street, nor do we work with all businesses that approach us. Many of the top agents have recommended every single business you see in this publication. We will not even meet with a business that has not been vetted by one of you and "stamped for approval," in a sense. Our team will further vet every business to make sure they are a good fit and bring value to our community. Our goal is to create a powerhouse network, not only for the best real estate agents in the area but the best businesses so we can grow stronger together.

**Q: HOW CAN I RECOMMEND A BUSINESS?**

**A:** If you want to recommend a business that works with top real estate agents, please email or message us!  
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# BRE

## STEPHENS

SIMPLY STEPHENS REAL ESTATE

Written By Dan Steele • Photos By Allie Santos

Few people get the chance to not only work in the career they dreamed of doing as a child, but also work with the role model who inspired that dream. As the co-owner of Simply Stephens Real Estate, Bre Stephens has managed to do both, working with her mother, Anita Stephens, to help make their clients' dreams a reality.

"When I was growing up, my mom was a Realtor, and I always dreamed I'd be one too," Bre recounts. Like many of us, she didn't initially follow that dream but, finding herself at a crossroads in life, she realized what real estate could do for her. "After graduating high school and dropping out of college, I knew I needed to find a path,

a direction," she says. "[My mother] had left the real estate world for about a decade and was just starting her business back up when I called and asked, 'What's it really like to be an agent?'. We got brunch, talked, and I started as her executive assistant just a couple of months later. I never looked back."

Now, as a licensed agent consistently in the top 5% of her Keller Williams market center and a partner in the business, Bre has found her niche in life helping buyers find their next new home. "I couldn't imagine doing anything that brings me more fulfillment than being a part of the journey our clients are on," she declares. "Whether it's



their first home, fifth home, or the vacation home they always dreamed about, it is always bigger than just houses. It's where life unfolds and memories are made, so being a small part of making it all come true, fills me with immense joy."

A family-run team, Bre and her mother are proud that Simply Stephens Real Estate is part of the Keller Williams family. "The core values and culture of Keller Williams are aligned with my own and their drive to always be growing, improving, and learning," she elaborates. "We care more about our clients than selling houses. I got into real estate because it was a way to serve and



“

I'M A SELF-TAUGHT MUSICIAN,  
PLAYING OVER 6 INSTRUMENTS,  
& I WRITE MUSIC, MAINLY RAP.

interact with people; selling houses is secondary to the true goals and needs of the client.” Her focus on service has not gone unrecognized, and in 2022, Bre received the Kellar Williams Culture Award for her market center.

Bre credits the passion for kindness and service she brings to her clients to her late grandfather and what he taught her growing up, and that continued influence is part of the success she has found in real estate. “My grandfather had passed the year before, and I was leaving a closing with Ted and Mary, long-time friends of my grandfathers, when Ted said to me, “We can’t thank you enough for taking such good care of us. You’ve definitely found your calling and your Papa would be so proud of what you and the team have become”.

When she is not providing clients with a superior home-buying experience, Bre loves to spend time with her family, with friends over drinks and board games, as well as with her partner traveling and going to concerts and festivals, something doubly close to her heart as a musician. “I’m a self-taught musician, playing over 6 instruments, and I write music, mainly rap,” she laughs. She also loves spending time with and doting over her two nieces, Ivy, age four, and Eden, age two. “I love getting all three of us matching shoes; Nikes, Vans, anything really,” she gushes. “Getting to go out and about matching with their “Auntie B”: the girls love it!”

Being surrounded by loving, supportive family and friends, Bre says, is what she is most grateful for, and they are a major part in achieving her dreams. “I have amazing friends and family that always lift me up and push me further,” she happily relates.



# BROADVIEW

## HOME INSPECTIONS

Written by Elizabeth McCabe • Photos By North Georgia Photography

When it comes to home inspections, experience and expertise are paramount. Scott Prillaman, the owner of Broadview Home Inspections, excels in both, offering a comprehensive client-focused approach that sets him apart in the industry.

“I enjoy helping people,” Scott shares. “I have a good intuition

about people. I ask questions to understand their needs and tailor my reports accordingly.”

### A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

A self-proclaimed “big science nerd,” Scott is passionate about his work. “There are all sorts of gadgets that I get to use and showcase,” he

says with a smile. “I use infrared in various areas, including electrical, plumbing, and foundation inspections.”

Scott employs an array of high-tech tools, including infrared cameras, drones, radon detectors, mold detectors, and sewer scopes. Drones provide aerial views of roofs, including hard-to-reach areas. Radon and mold

▶ partner spotlight

## EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS FROM START TO FINISH!

detectors ensure the home is safe from these hazardous elements. Sewer scopes allow him to assess the condition of underground pipes, offering a thorough evaluation of the property’s health.

Scott customizes his reports to address clients’ specific concerns, conducting conference calls to ensure everyone understands the findings. His ability to empathize with clients to understand their concerns makes him a trusted partner in the home-buying process.

### EFFICIENCY & EMPATHY

Scott’s dedication to efficiency and effective partnerships has earned him a reputation as a top vendor in Atlanta. He values seamless processes, striving to make the inspection process as smooth as possible for all involved. By putting himself in his clients’ shoes, Scott ensures he meets and exceeds their expectations.

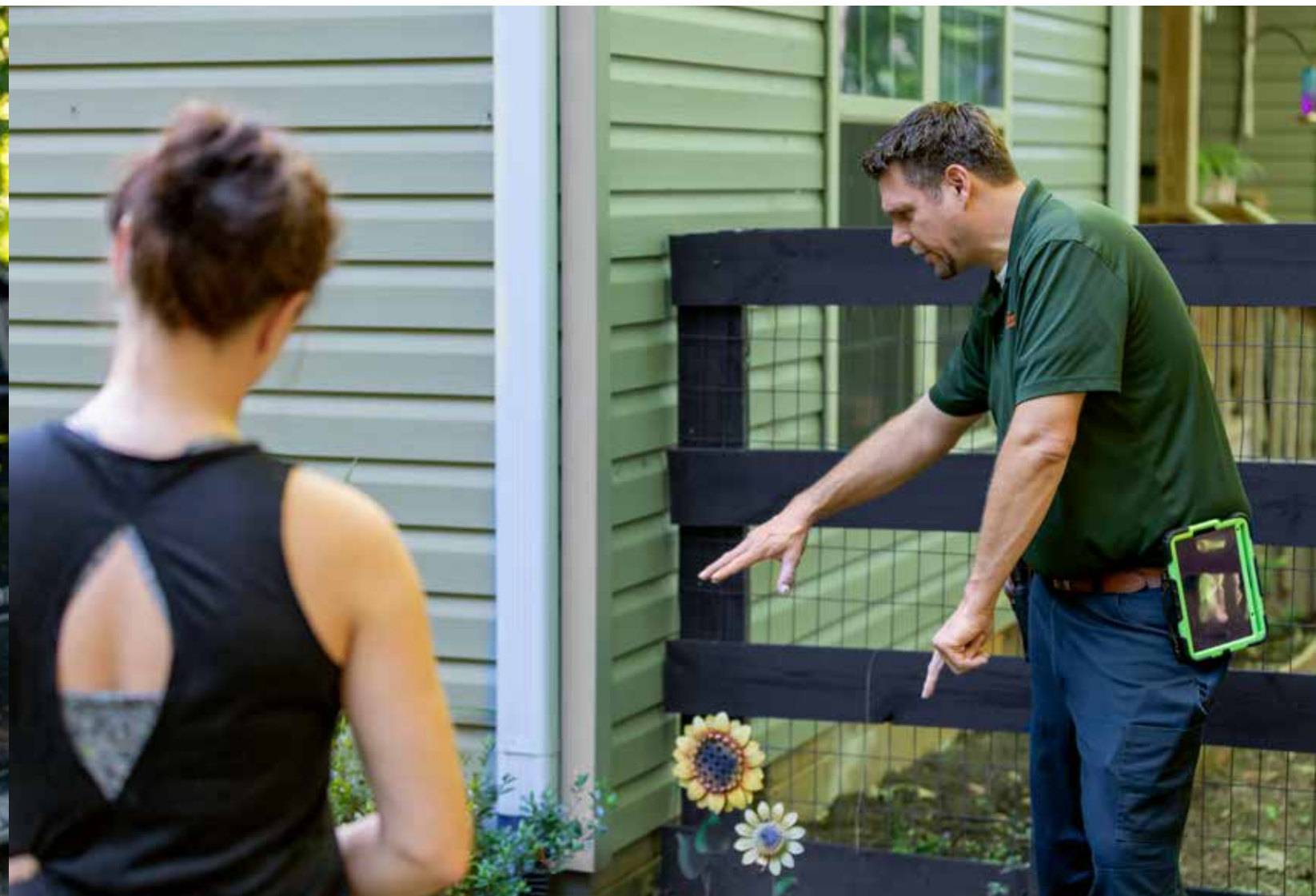
“I appreciate efficient partnerships,” Scott notes. His streamlined communication has made him a favorite

among clients and real estate partners, as evidenced by his rave reviews.

### A VARIED & VALUABLE BACKGROUND

Scott’s journey to becoming a home inspector is as unique as it is diverse. Starting his career in general construction in his early 20s, he gained a wealth of experience across various industries, each contributing to his expertise in home inspections.

His tenure at AT&T taught him valuable lessons about customer service and technical proficiency. From climbing



telephone poles in cow pastures to assisting customers with home technology, Scott learned the importance of reliability and clear communication. Seeking more structure in his day, he transitioned to a sales position at ADT, focusing on alarm systems.

In 2020, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Scott was laid off from his security systems sales and installation job, prompting a career rethink. He discovered home inspections, realizing that his prior skills perfectly prepared him for this new path, enhancing his customer service capabilities.

#### BUILDING BROADVIEW HOME INSPECTIONS

Throughout 2020, Scott dedicated himself to certification classes and training programs, both locally and nationally. He built his online presence and established a professional reputation in the home inspection industry. His background in security, telecommunications, and building supplies gave him a significant edge, with 20 years of experience working in people's homes and understanding their needs.

His business launch was warmly welcomed by the community and real estate professionals alike.

#### FAMILY & FUN

Outside of work, Scott enjoys various hobbies to relax and unwind. "I like tinkering with things and carpentry," he says. He also enjoys metalworking, even creating iron decorations for his wedding to his fiancé Soli in Michigan this past June. "Soli started her own catering business," Scott proudly shares. They look forward to starting their new life together.



Scott is also passionate about guitar making and home theater setups. "I've made a few for relatives," he shares, including hanging an 85-inch television on a deck that rolls out.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Scott's passion for his profession and dedication to his clients make a significant difference in their home-buying experience. At Broadview Home Inspections, he combines extensive experience and technical skills to provide exceptional service, ensuring homes are safe. For a thorough and empathetic home inspection, Broadview Home Inspections is the ideal choice.

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