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TABLE OF CONTENTS



08
Meet the Team



12
Publisher's Note



14
Nominate your Favorite Agents



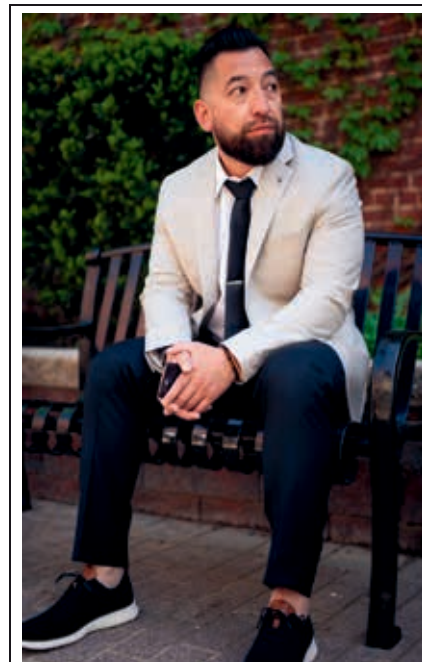
16
Partner Spotlight: Fred's Contracting



22
Rising Star: Vanessa Daley



26
Cover Story: Shawn Spaw



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If you are interested in contributing or nominating REALTORS® for certain stories, please email us at colt.contreras@n2co.com.

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

**HELLO AND
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COMMUNITY!**

As the year winds down, it's a great time to reflect on how far we've come and get excited for what's next. In this issue, we're thrilled to welcome three new Preferred Partners to the Real Producers family: Coppolillo's Italian Steakhouse, Junkluggers of Greater NW Indiana, and Area Wide Waterproofing. These fantastic partners bring their expertise to our community, offering valuable support and solutions to our real estate network.

We extend a warm thank you to all who joined us at our Fall Event: Connections at Coppolillo's on November 21! It was a fantastic afternoon of networking, delicious food, and lively conversation. It was a pleasure to witness the connections being made in the room amongst top agents and our Preferred Partners. The ambiance of Coppolillo's Italian Steakhouse in Crown Point set the perfect stage, and Chef Steve Coppolillo's thoughtfully curated appetizers, along with live music, giveaways, and exceptional videography by Eagle Eye Media and photography by T-23 Productions, added unforgettable touches to the day. We are grateful to The Amanda McKenzie Team of First Community Mortgage for co-hosting and to each of you for bringing such great energy and enthusiasm to the event. Your support and camaraderie continue to inspire us, and we look forward to many more moments like this in the future!

This month, we're diving into stories that celebrate hard work, resilience, and vision. First, our Partner Spotlight shines on Fred's Contracting Inc., a



COLT CONTRERAS
PUBLISHER

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family-owned painting business with roots reaching back to 1978. From classrooms and coaching fields to job sites, the Mooney family has built a legacy of trust and craftsmanship, carrying forward their commitment to integrity and faith. With a focus on excellence, they deliver outstanding quality in residential and commercial painting, as well as decorative concrete installations.

In our Rising Star feature, Vanessa Daley shares her path to success, flipping homes and managing projects while balancing life as a mother and community member. Her journey shows that the Season of Joy is year-round when you love what you do and find strength in family and community.

On the cover, we're proud to feature Shawn Spaw, a broker who found his calling in real estate after an unexpected career pivot. Shawn's journey from Rookie of the Year to broker-owner of Stray Dog Properties is truly inspiring. His dedication reminds us all that "There's No Place Like Home for the Holidays," as he balances a big vision with a down-to-earth commitment to his team, clients, and community.

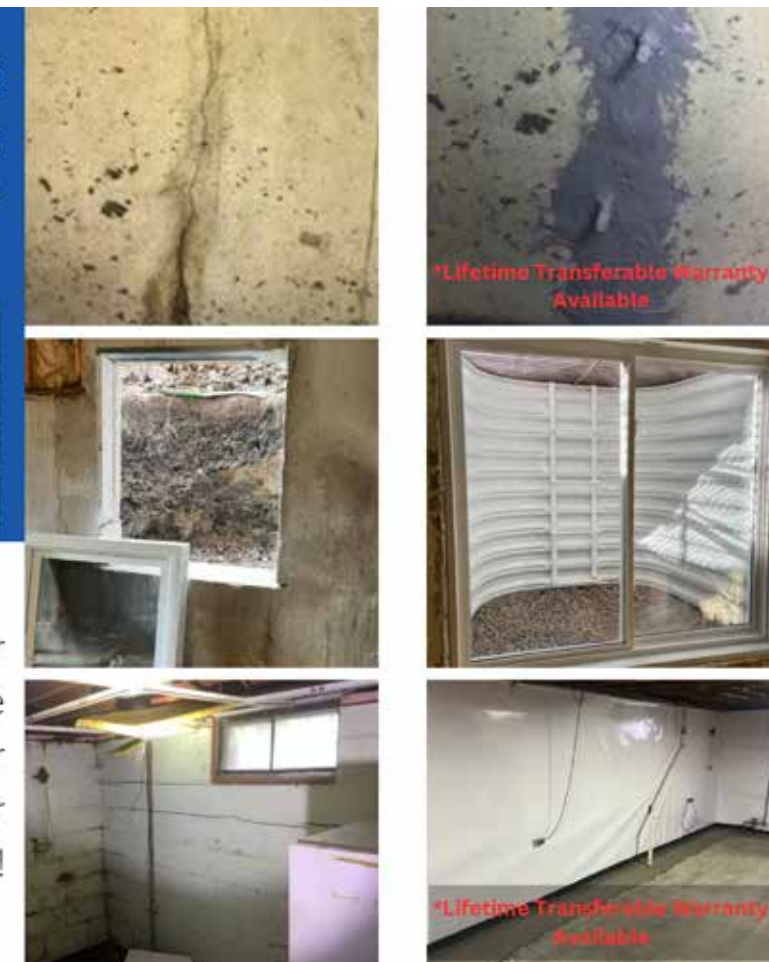
As we enter the holiday season, let's embrace the "Most Wonderful Time of the Year" spirit and celebrate all the meaningful connections we've made and the goals we've reached together. Here's to a joyful December, a happy holiday season, and a bright start to 2025. Thank you for being the heart and soul of our Northwest Indiana real estate community. We look forward to another year of growth, connection, and success with all of you!

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NOMINATE YOUR FAVORITE TOP AGENTS!

People often ask me, “How do you decide who you feature each month in Real Producers?” My answer: “Through our nomination system.” Top real estate agents and the preferred partners who invest in this publication through advertising and sponsoring our events decide who we feature each month through their nominations. Additionally, we have multiple events throughout the year, and top agents with top numbers are present at these events; we receive many nominations here among those who attend. Please contact Colt Contreras at (219) 309-7142 or colt.contreras@n2co.com to nominate top agents.

Of those nominated, our team meets with and gets to know each nominee in person or via Zoom. In this meeting, we collect all the cool facts about the agent and gather nominations for other top agents and businesses we should consider for our vetted preferred partners’ list.

Our selection team decides who gets into each issue. We use the “5 C” criteria below as a guide. An agent must meet the first three — the fourth and fifth items are not required; however, we love celebrating successes of a giving or victorious nature.

Collaboration: The number of nominations usually indicates that nominees are respected by their peers and work well with other agents and our preferred partners.

Competition production numbers: Let’s face it — the name of the publication is

Real Producers, so folks need to be top producers to get into the magazine

Character: While most in the industry have great character and integrity, we will not feature anyone — agent or business — who has not been recommended or nominated by top agents as a person or business operating with integrity.

Contribution: We adore inspiring stories about agents who give back to the real estate and local/global community.

Compelling story/ Conquering a life challenge: Who doesn’t love an against-the-odds success story?

Remember, real estate agents do not pay anything to be featured in our publication. While other programs may look similar, we are not a pay-to-play model. We select articles months in advance and notify folks one to two months before their feature appears that we have selected them. Keep those nominations coming.

With so many wonderful nominated agents, the decision each month is difficult — so make sure we know who you are! We would love your feedback on how we are doing and what, if anything, we can do better to help everyone in the industry **Collaborate, Elevate and Inspire** each other. Please email, text, or privately message all suggestions and feedback directly to me.

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FRED'S

CONTRACTING

FROM COACHING TO CONTRACTING:

THE MOONEY FAMILY'S JOURNEY IN QUALITY AND INTEGRITY

By Giavonni Downing • Photography by Melinda Nicole Photography

Fred's Contracting is more than a business; it's a family legacy that has stood the test of time since its founding in 1978. Fred Mooney started the contracting company to supplement his teaching income, but the venture quickly took on a life of its own. "It didn't stay a one-man show very long," Fred shared. "Word-of-mouth kept bringing in jobs, and soon, I was managing a growing team while teaching and coaching." Fred coached both football and basketball for nearly 40 years.

Over the years, the business has expanded to meet changing demands while maintaining its core principles. Fred attributes the company's growth to an unyielding focus on quality, quoting a guiding philosophy: "Quality is remembered long after price is forgotten." This dedication has led Fred's Contracting to complete a wide array of projects, including over 180 Starbucks locations nationwide. "We're not just any painters. We know the coatings industry—chemistry, application, and everything in between," Fred emphasized.

Today, the business includes Fred, his wife Vicki, and their two sons, Tim and Ty, and a fully trained service crew. Together, they've built a company known for quality, reliability, and a commitment to the community. Tim said that growing up he always wanted to be a part of the family business.

Every family member brings a unique skill set that keeps the company thriving. Fred oversees general management, while Vicki manages the finances. Tim handles sales, marketing, and technology, and Ty heads up field operations. "We've learned to work efficiently together, maximizing



WE ARE DOING HONEST WORK, & GOD GETS THE GLORY

quality and keeping the business sustainable through every season,” Tim explained. This teamwork has allowed Fred’s Contracting to handle large and small projects, from massive commercial spaces to personal homes.

“We have a crew working on a 400,000-square-foot building in Tinley Park,” Tim said. “Then we have other teams working on residential and commercial projects in Lake Village, St. John, and Schererville.” Although the company has taken on contracts across the U.S., Tim noted that they aim to stay closer to home. “A lot of our guys have families... we want them home at night,” he added, highlighting the company’s commitment to work-life balance.

The company’s dedication to quality and integrity has established them as a reliable partner in the industry, known for completing projects and fostering lasting relationships with clients. Fred’s Contracting has become a multigenerational choice for clients. “We’ve been working for some of the same people we helped 35 years ago,” Fred shared. He compared their approach to his coaching years: “When you’re coaching, you’re teaching values that last a lifetime. It’s not just about winning but building character.”

Their long-standing relationships with clients are built on reliability and respect. “Trust is everything,” Fred shared.



“People give us keys to their homes because they know we’ll respect their space and do right by them.”

Fred’s Contracting also collaborates with realtors and homeowners to increase property appeal and market value. The team provides expert advice on strategic updates that can improve a home’s value.

The Mooneys are deeply rooted in faith, family values, and community ties. Fred attributes their success to both hard work and God’s blessings. He leads with integrity and faith first. “We are here for the long haul. “We are doing honest work, and God gets the glory,” Fred said regarding his core values.

The Mooneys aim not only to maintain but also to grow the family legacy. “We want to build something bigger than ourselves and hand it down,” one of the owners said, expressing their vision of a business that will support future generations.

Their dedication to their community extends beyond their work. The company supports local charities, their church, and organizations like Samaritan’s Purse and the Women’s Center. “We want to give back to the community that raised us,” they shared. This sense of responsibility to their community is an essential part of their mission, reflecting their desire to be more than just a business—they aim to be a positive force in the lives of those around them. As they envision the future, the Mooneys hope to continue growing their business while remaining true to the values that have brought them this far.



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Vanessa ►► rising star

OF THE ELLSBURY GROUP Daley

By Giovanni Downing • Photography by Melinda Nicole Photography

Vanessa Daley is a force in the real estate industry, breaking glass ceilings and making waves with a unique blend of resilience, creativity, and an unyielding drive to deliver value to her clients. Over the past two years, Vanessa has achieved impressive results, listing and selling 60 homes and completing 13 property flips with her investor partners. These milestones speak to her vision, hard work, and commitment to continuous learning.

Reflecting on her journey, Vanessa notes, “It’s about letting go of limitations and self-doubt...always finding a way to provide value has been my secret to success.” This mindset has allowed her to thrive in a competitive and often challenging market, where resilience and adaptability are critical.

Vanessa is flipping homes and making her mark at The Ellsbury Group.

Vanessa’s passion for flipping homes was sparked by her admiration for Joanna Gaines, a renowned real estate icon whose approach she found inspiring. “I knew I wanted to do flips. It was about finding the right systems and people,” she shares, emphasizing that her niche expertise comes from a combination of passion, focus, and community support.

In her role, Vanessa doesn’t just focus on transactions; she sees real estate as a holistic venture that involves every aspect of project management. “I have three or four different crews...we add value for our

FLIPPING FOR SUCCESS:

VANESSA DALEY’S RESILIENT

PATH IN REAL ESTATE





clients,” she explains, showcasing her hands-on approach and the extensive network of contractors and workers she manages. This approach has enabled her to tackle complex projects and offer added value to her clients, setting her apart.

While her professional success is a priority, Vanessa places equal importance on family involvement and work-life balance. She frequently brings her two sons Levi and Brody into her flipping projects, giving them firsthand experience with the ins and outs of real estate. “They’re learning to open doors, take pictures, and evaluate good buys. Bringing family into this passion has made work-life balance smoother,” she says. This integration of family into her business not only allows her to spend more time with her children; it also instills valuable life skills in them. Her approach emphasizes her belief in the importance of family support, which she describes as the backbone of her resilience. Vanessa and her husband Adam have been married for 10 years. She credits his support as a critical part of her journey in real estate.

Even with her focus on family and real estate, Vanessa remains grounded in

her community. Outside of work, she enjoys activities like four-wheeling, hiking, and connecting with youth sports, which align with her values of wellness, connection, and giving back. As a former youth mentor in her church, she has deep roots in



community service and looks forward to dedicating more time to such initiatives as she expands her business. Vanessa’s future goals include not only achieving greater financial independence but also actively contributing to the welfare of her community. She envisions a future where her success in real estate allows her to dedicate more time to youth outreach and community involvement. “Once I have a few more business systems in place, I’d love to reconnect with these meaningful contributions,” she says, even considering rejoining the local PTO to further her engagement with families and children.

Professionally, Vanessa’s ambitions are set high. She aims to continue expanding her rental portfolio with a bold goal of acquiring 100 rental doors. Through her hard work and commitment, Vanessa hopes to build a legacy not just for her family but also for her community—a testament to

her belief in the power of real estate as a vehicle for both personal growth and societal impact.

Central to her journey is a commitment to lifelong learning and mastery in her field. Vanessa believes that “to be an expert, you need to focus on learning,” a principle she applies diligently as she branches into commercial real estate. By dedicating herself to building new skills and constantly improving, she has positioned herself as an adaptable agent that can help retail and commercial clients.

Vanessa is a resilient problem solver grounded in positive energy and affirmations.

Her advice to new realtors reflects her journey: “Find a supportive team, embrace continuous growth, and never give up.” Through her example, Vanessa Daley inspires others to view real estate not just as a job but as a



calling—one that, when pursued with passion and resilience, can leave a lasting impact. With her tenacity and vision, Vanessa is well on her way to creating a lasting legacy in real estate and beyond.

» cover story

Shawn Spaw

OF STRAY DOG PROPERTIES

A HOME FOR ALL: SHAWN SPAW'S REAL ESTATE MISSION

By Giovanni Downing • Photography by Melinda Nicole Photography

Shawn Spaw's career in real estate began unexpectedly, setting him on a transformative journey filled with adaptability, meaningful connections, and a passion for helping others.

In 2006, Shawn found himself at a crossroads when his previous employer closed its doors, leaving him to support his family with limited options. "I had just lost my job, and with a new baby and bills to pay, I thought, 'Why not give real estate a shot?'" he recalls. This step into real estate was born out of necessity, but it quickly became a true calling. Within his first year, his dedication paid off as he was awarded "Rookie of the Year" with Coldwell Banker in 2007. This achievement marked the beginning of a beautiful career.

His global experiences have deeply influenced Shawn's approach to real estate. Having lived in Costa Rica, Thailand, and Honduras, he developed a unique worldview that colors his client interactions. "Living in diverse countries taught me that happiness isn't tied to material wealth," he explains. "It's about connection and perspective." This

understanding has enabled Shawn to relate to clients from all walks of life, establishing a rapport rooted in empathy and respect. His exposure to diverse cultures gave him an insight into people's motivations and lifestyles, which helped him serve a wide variety of clients with a genuine, human-centered approach.

As a former teacher, Shawn considers himself a lifelong student. He believes his teaching experience aids his mentorship within real estate, where he sees every interaction as an opportunity to learn and grow.

In 2023, Shawn achieved a major milestone by founding his own brokerage, Stray Dog Properties. The company name has ties to his childhood. Growing up, Shawn recalls the countless times he and his family brought home and nurtured stray dogs with the belief that they all deserved a home.



His drive to become a business owner was also sparked in childhood. Reflecting on his entrepreneurial spirit, he recalls, "I had my first business when I was eight. My sister and I started a company called Kids for Kids Recycling, where we'd buy and resell aluminum cans by the truckload. That

early experience shaped my approach to business. I grew up with a strong work ethic; my dad instilled that in me early," says Shawn about his hands-on approach to life and business.

With a focused vision for the company, he aims to expand into Illinois and



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WE’RE
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WITH
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”



Michigan while maintaining a tight-knit team that values quality over quantity. Shawn’s team, which has been together since 2019, shares a strong bond built on trust and shared challenges. Reflecting on their experiences through the pandemic, Shawn said, “I would not have made it without my team.”

Shawn’s management style reflects his belief in authentic relationships. As for business goals, he’s thoughtful about growth: “I don’t believe in just recruiting as many agents as possible. I’d rather have a smaller team where everyone thrives,” he explains, rejecting the traditional real estate model that prioritizes numbers over quality. “We’re doing more with fewer people and are happier for it.”

This focused, human-centered approach defines his business vision and daily life. “Real estate is more than transactions,” he says, capturing the heart of what keeps him passionate: “Everyone deserves a place to call home.”

One of the aspects of real estate that Shawn values most is the freedom it affords. “It’s nice knowing you have it,” he says, reflecting on the flexibility of his career. This freedom allows him to prioritize family and personal interests without sacrificing his dedication to his clients. However, he acknowledges that with this freedom

comes responsibility. “Being 100% commission can be scary, but if you have the right attitude, you can make it,” he explains. “Sometimes I’m up at 4 a.m. responding to clients. If they need me, I’m there.”

This dedication to his clients and team members is a hallmark of Shawn’s work ethic, but he’s also aware of the need for balance. Real estate has given him a lifestyle many dream of, yet he’s conscious of the effort required to sustain it. Shawn cherishes the freedom to travel or spend time with his family, but he’s equally committed to showing up for his clients and colleagues whenever needed.

Shawn recognizes the importance of staying adaptable. “Everything’s changing so quickly,” he notes, referencing the rapid evolution of technology within the industry. While some might feel overwhelmed by these changes, Shawn views them as an opportunity to continue learning and growing. He emphasizes the importance of staying informed and never becoming complacent, especially in a field where trends and tools constantly shift. He says, “In real estate, you’re never truly finished. There’s always something to learn.”

Alongside his professional ambitions, Shawn values a time with his wife and daughter. Shawn is also passionate about giving back to his community, especially



in areas that align with his values. He actively supports local animal shelters and community initiatives, including the Valparaiso Police K9 Fund.

Shawn offers invaluable advice based on his years of experience for those entering the real estate industry. He encourages newcomers to “Join a supportive team, stay adaptable, and pursue continuous education.” According to Shawn, the keys to long-term success in real estate lie in hard work, adaptability, and a supportive network. “If you don’t have it, find it, try cultivating it,” he advises. His insights serve as a

reminder that real estate is as much about personal growth and relationships as it is about financial success.

Reflecting on his personal growth, he shares, “I’m learning to be a better husband, father, business person, and boss.” This dedication to self-improvement fuels his passion for helping others, and he believes that success is ultimately defined by the relationships forged and the lives touched. As Shawn continues navigating the complexities of real estate, his story reminds him that the journey is as important as the destination.



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