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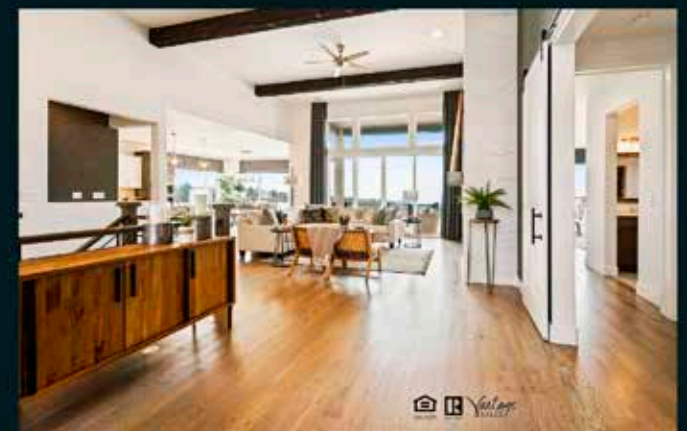
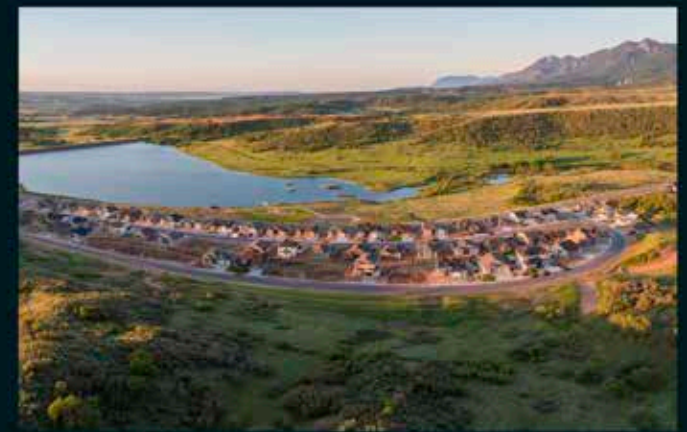
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We are proud to announce that Sandi Greenfield has joined our Chicago Title team! Sandi joins us with 9+ years of experience in the industry and we are very lucky and excited to have her on board! She loves to snowboard and is an avid reader. You will be sure to recognize her at the closing table with her adventurous hair!

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Dakota & **JENNY** **SHAFFER**

► celebrating leaders

Written by Tabby Halsrud
Photography courtesy of Heidi Mossman
of Capture Life Photography

Dakota and Jenny Shafer may own two businesses, but there is one priority that runs through both: to care for their clients' experience. "That's the most important piece. If you take really good care of your clients, everything else falls into place," said Dakota.

As owners of G.J. Gardner Colorado Springs and Structure Real Estate Group, this couple brings a strong family focus to their businesses. Structure Real Estate Group is a boutique brokerage with several long-term agents, some of whom sell for them at G.J. Gardner too. Jenny explained, "We have close relationships and a lot of our agents spend time together outside of the work environment. We don't feel any sense of competition among our agents; they are there to support each other and celebrate each other's successes. Our agents know we are just a text or a phone call away and that we are there when they need us. Dakota has built a trusted advisor role with all of them. He's been in the building and real estate industry since 2001 and he's always there to help with questions and the unique things that can come up in building or buying and selling."

Originally from Nebraska, Dakota and Jenny have lived in Colorado since 2001. Dakota was recruited out of college to be a superintendent for Pulte Homes and eventually became their area sales

manager. His transition into a sales role was at the prompting of his mentors, one of whom told Dakota he was in the wrong field. "He told me I was wonderful with the clients and I should consider going into sales," Dakota recalled. "I declined at first, but eventually I made the transition when I realized that sales is just helping people realize their dreams in the most efficient manner possible. The best salespeople are the best listeners who get to the bottom of their clients' needs and meet those needs as best they can. I found myself really enjoying that whole process." After working in sales for six years, Dakota got his license, went independent, and then started Structure Real Estate Group. In 2010 he started working with G.J. Gardner in a sales role.



operation running smoothly." Meanwhile, Dakota handles the sales, leads the home design collaboration, and oversees part of the construction process in partnership with Bill Anner at G.J. Gardner. Dakota's experience with design, construction, and sales has grown him to be able to take over G.J. Gardner Homes and give their clients a great experience. Jenny added, "Dakota is really strong at the placement of the house - he knows the optimal way to get the most out of their land. He's really got an eye for that. His expertise helps our company quite a bit."

The franchise has been a good fit for them. Dakota exclaimed, "We love building homes! It's been in my blood since I was young. I started in the trades in high school and worked my way through college. I have a degree in construction management and a minor in architecture. I was always the construction guy and added the sales side later. What makes home building wonderful is that home is where people raise their kids, spend their holidays, and have special moments. Our focus is to create a home tailored exactly to what they want and something that works for their family and their lifestyle. It's pretty wonderful to walk through the home with them when they know they picked everything out and had their heart in putting it together. To be a part of that process is amazing."

Jenny taught theater at Doherty High School from 2006 to 2016 and loved it but had to work a lot of nights and weekends, which was taking away time from her family. "When Kaden was in kindergarten, he blew out the candles on his birthday cake and wished he was a high school theater kid so he could see his mom more." That tugged at Jenny's heart and she decided to leave teaching and support Dakota in his sales role. The couple then purchased the G.J. Gardner franchise in November of 2020.

Dakota and Jenny have been working together for seven years. "The experiment of whether or not we would work well together has been going okay," they joked. Dakota and Jenny know how to best complement each other's strengths to create a successful working relationship. Jenny proclaimed that Dakota is outstanding with sales and is great with people. "He's a trusted advisor. When I came on, I wanted to take as much off his plate as possible so he could be in front of people more. I took on the marketing and business administrative tasks and the role of staying in touch with clients." Dakota responded, "Jenny wears a lot of hats. She's our office manager, runs our marketing dept, and does anything that needs to be picked up to keep the

Dakota continued, "The other thing I like about doing custom homes is that it's a longer process than just helping them buy or sell, so we build a longer-term relationship with the clients. We have the opportunity to really get to know them, their family, what they do for work, their hobbies, and their likes and dislikes." One thing that sets G.J. Gardner apart from other custom builders is that they do up-front price quoting and free plan design, as opposed to price per square foot. "With custom, it's a constant rebalancing of budget, plan, and selections. We help them put together a design and



Pictured here with Kaden (14), Claire (11), and Hobbes

modify it to their liking before it goes to an architect for engineering, which saves the client money.”

Both businesses have grown from referrals. At G.J. Gardner, they receive a lot of agent and client referrals, have done repeat builds, and partner with real estate agents on land listings. Structure Real Estate Group has also grown through referrals and receives a lot of five-star reviews because their team chooses to do the right thing for the client, even if it costs them money ... “and it usually does,” Dakota declared.

In addition to referrals, Dakota is certified to teach a Construction 101 continuing education class for agents, which is soon to be followed with a more in-depth Construction 201. This class helps the agents learn more about the process and the factors to consider when helping a client purchase land. Dakota enjoys collaborating with agents on land and building considerations, too. “Agents can call us when they are helping a client purchase raw land. We know the land requirements and zoning and utilities considerations, we help them work through soil and septic samples, we know what to look for in a land contract, and we help them get the additional provisions verbiage right. We want to be the local experts helping real estate agents with land and builds and we want to be their first stop when they are looking at land, even if we don’t get the build. We just want to help the agents better serve their clients.” This sounds like the true meaning of collaboration - working together to meet the needs of the client.

When not working, Dakota loves to play golf and both he and Jenny are avid readers and love spending time with their kids: Kaden, 14 and Claire, 11. Kaden plays guitar at church and in a jazz band at school and plays

baseball in summer. Claire is very artsy and has participated in theater and dance. Dakota and Jenny enjoy watching their kids grow and get involved in their own activities and feel blessed that owning their businesses offers them the flexibility to be there.

The Shafers believe in giving back and are involved in the Fostering Hope Foundation and volunteer at their church. Jenny serves in a variety of capacities, teaching Sunday School at church and has won Volunteer of the Year twice for her involvement at their kids’ schools. She runs several school programs, has been the spirit wear coordinator and served on the PTO for many years. Dakota proudly shared, “Jenny gives back constantly and over the years, has inspired me to do so as well. As our business strives to help others, our volunteer endeavors strive to serve others. Colorado Springs is a wonderful community to do both.”



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▶▶ partner spotlight

Written by Barbara Gart | Casa Bay Photography

Mark and Lori Baxley are owners of Brick and Mortar Home Inspections, a business that has grown and flourished in the front range area over the past 19 years. While there have been many factors that have contributed to their success, their partnership with the REALTOR® community has been invaluable. Lori and Mark are both extremely appreciative of the agents they've partnered with over the years. "We would like to say thank you, because their support has enabled us to provide careers for our team members whom we consider family, as well as enabled us to give back to the Colorado Springs community that we love and call home."

Brick and Mortar Home Inspections is a veteran-owned company providing home inspection services for buyers and sellers along the front range. To date, the company has grown to 8 employees, and Mark and his team have completed more than 16,000 inspections. Their services include residential and commercial inspections, sewer scopes, radon testing, mold testing, thermal imaging, and water potability testing.

The company's core value is "We believe we have a duty to help others." This value is lived out in all aspects of their

business. In the spirit of helping others, the company offers warranties and guarantees with every inspection at no cost to the client. In addition, they provide free thermal imaging with each inspection. They also take pride in being extremely thorough on every inspection. The industry "call back rate," which is when a client thinks an inspector missed an issue with the home, is 4-5%. Brick and Mortar's rate is 1.2%.

The inspection industry is ever-changing, and Brick and Mortar Home Inspections is committed to keeping up to date with those changes. Mark shares "We are constantly growing and evolving as a company, and always looking for ways to improve our systems and services. We moved to a new software for reports using innovative, state-of-the-art technology. We also migrated to a more advanced and user-friendly scheduling system, making the process easier for our real estate partners and clients." Brick and Mortar offers convenient, 24-hour scheduling, and if their office staff is on another line, the call is forwarded to a dedicated member of our team who can schedule the inspection. Clients and realtors can also go online at www.BandMHomeInspections.com to check inspector availability and schedule the inspection. Brick and Mortar Home Inspections is dedicated to providing an unparalleled client and realtor experience.

"Recent changes to Colorado law now require persons testing for radon to be licensed. There are two types of licenses. Licensed radon measurement technicians can only administer a test. In contrast, licensed radon measurement specialists can administer a test, analyze test data, and issue the report. They can also calibrate machines." When scheduling a radon test, Mark recommends realtors ensure the radon inspector has the correct license for the task they are performing.

Since the state of Colorado does not require home inspectors to be licensed, Mark indicates it is vitally important for realtors to direct their clients to the best inspection companies by considering such factors as ease of scheduling, clear and understandable reports, inspector certifications, longevity of company, and affiliations with professional organizations. It is also critically important for inspection companies to be adequately insured with errors and omissions, general liability, and workers' compensation insurance.

Inspectors with Brick and Mortar Home Inspections are trained and certified by one or more of the following professional organizations: the American Home Inspection Training Institute (AHIT), the Inspection Training Associates (ITA), the American Society of Home Inspectors (ASHI), and the International Association of Certified Inspectors (INTERNACHI).

In addition to giving 100% to their clients and realtors, the company gives back to the community. "It means a great deal to us to give back in a wide variety of charities and causes. We have sponsored events for the National Mill Dog Rescue and have participated in home construction with Habitat for Humanity. We have also offered financial support to Suicide Prevention and NAMI mental health services, Alzheimer's Association, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, National Alliance to End Veteran Suicide, Autism Speaks, and National Cancer Society's TAP Cancer Out. In addition, Mark and Lori believe in giving back to their employees as well. "We are always looking for ways to improve employee satisfaction through company events". They recently enjoyed events at Topgolf and played "Banding" at the Patty Jewett Club House.

To learn more about Brick and Mortar Home Inspections or schedule one of their many services, please visit BandMHomeInspections.com or call (719) 648-2835.

MEET MARK BAXLEY:

It's a pleasure to meet you! My name is Mark Baxley. I am co-owner and operations manager for Brick and Mortar Home Inspections, Inc. I founded the company in 2004 and have completed more than 12,000 inspections. I am originally from Charleston, SC. I fell in love with Colorado while attending the Air Force Academy. After graduating in 1984, I served as an acquisitions officer on duty assignments in California and Florida. I returned to Colorado in 1994. In my personal time, I enjoy exercising, golfing, traveling, and, most importantly, spending time with family and friends. Our company looks forward to providing you with an exceptional home inspection experience!



MEET LORI BAXLEY:

I understand so much can be at stake when it comes to your home and real estate investments. I am Lori Baxley, co-owner and business manager of Brick and Mortar Home Inspections. As one of four daughters to a highly decorated war veteran, home has been many places. My background includes years of



experience in organizational development, management, and higher education. When time permits, I enjoy walks with our dog (Tripp), golf, and cooking with family recipes. Most of all, I cherish any time spent with family and friends. Since 2004, it has been an honor to serve the real estate community in Colorado. It is our pleasure to ensure you receive critical support during and beyond your real estate transactions.

MEET ZACK BAXLEY:

Hello! I'm Zack Baxley. I have been a home inspector with Brick and Mortar for over 6 years. With more than 2,500 home inspections completed, I'm dedicated to providing you with knowledge, protection, and confidence for your new investment. I am a United States Navy veteran. My naval service brought me to over 18 countries worldwide. In my free time, I enjoy being in the gym, outdoors on my mountain bike, or with my dog, Maverick. I look forward to providing you with a detailed and thorough home inspection.



MEET KEVIN MCENTEE:

Hello! My name is Kevin McEntee. I have been a home inspector and FAA Certified drone pilot with Brick and Mortar Home Inspections since early 2023. Prior to joining Brick and Mortar, I work in the insurance industry performing comprehensive inspections of Louisiana properties impacted by 2021's Hurricane Ida and Florida properties impacted by 2022's Hurricane Ian. I am a U.S. Navy veteran where I maintained various aircraft including the F/A-18F Super Hornet and the P-3B Orion. I deployed to the Persian Gulf in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom aboard the U.S.S. Harry S. Truman. I moved to Colorado with my wife Natalie in 2010 and attended University of Colorado Denver where I



graduated in 2012. In my personal time, I like to stay active hiking, swimming, camping, and target shooting. I also enjoy spending quality time with my family and tackling home improvement projects.

MEET HEIDI WRIGHT:

Hello, my name is Heidi Wright and I am the client care coordinator for Brick and Mortar Home Inspections. I've had the opportunity to work in the real estate world in a support role since 2011. When not working, I regularly edit the-ology content and explore the beautiful area around us. I'll be in the background taking your calls, available to help schedule inspections, or make any changes to already scheduled inspections. Whether you are a buyer or a real estate agent, I look forward to helping make the inspection part of transactions as smooth as possible.



MEET DAN MCMENAMIN:

My name is Dan McMEnamin and I am the Growth Manager for Brick and Mortar. Someone once told me if you love what you do, it's not work! My role includes introducing our home inspection services to agents in the Pikes Peak Region and surrounding areas that may not be familiar with our company. In addition to new business acquisition, I call on new and existing agents and introduce our agent training program. I have over 30 years of leadership training, marketing, management, and customer service achieved while working for Ford Motor Credit and Hilton. My passion is following the local real estate market and helping others achieve their goals through education. When I am not working, I enjoy all things outdoors with my wife Kathy that includes exploring hiking trails, snowshoeing and biking the incredible Colorado trails!



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▶▶ power couple

Written by Tabby Halsrud

Photography courtesy of Heidi Mossman of Capture Life Photography

Kevin & Heather CONOLTY

Kevin Conolty has been in the real estate industry for 19 years. Prior to that, he worked in the building materials industry and managed multiple lumber yards for fifteen years. Kevin developed his leadership and people skills through this career, managing numerous stores and large markets with Payless Cashways, Brookharts/Foxworth-Galbraith and BMC West Building Materials. At one point, he oversaw 3000 people. When he hit the wall in that business, he decided real estate might be a good fit with his experience and his personality and got his license in 2004. He met his wife and current partner in real estate four years ago; Heather was working in insurance in the same office building as The Cutting Edge, Realtors. Kevin convinced her to leave insurance and get into real estate about two years ago and the couple was married last year.

When asked about her transition from insurance to real estate, Heather reflected, "Real estate is very different from insurance. But in all my careers, I've just always focused on taking care of people, providing them with a service, and taking exceptional care of what they need." Heather enjoys touring people around town, showing them houses, reassuring them, helping them feel confident, and experiencing their excitement with them.

This is a couple that loves working together. Kevin said, "It's great having a partner. When we have conflicting appointments between showing homes or inspections, we can divide the work." While they both do showings and interact

with clients, Heather does a lot of the technical aspects. Kevin admitted, "I'm not very tech savvy, but Heather is. In addition to showings, she handles our back end, social media, and everything else technical." Heather added, "I just moved Kevin to a digital calendar last year and that was a huge deal!" They both laughed. Being partners in life and partners in business works for this couple and they are happy they get to be together pretty much 24x7.

Kevin and Heather work residential only and have fallen into the military niche. Kevin considers himself an expert in the VA process. "Seventy-five percent of our business is young military first-time home buyers who don't understand the process." Kevin learned a lot about how to relate to first-time homebuyers from his own experience. He recalled, "I was scared to death when I bought my first home - the process seemed so daunting. The agent I worked with walked me through the steps and the out-of-pocket expenses and that was so helpful. Now, I try to show my first-time buyers that it's not really that complicated once you know the pathway."

This couple receives most of their business through relationships, referrals and word of mouth. Kevin's son, Cannon, was his real estate partner until he decided to join the army. "My son is stationed at Fort Carson as a medic. He met his wife in basic training and she's a black hawk helicopter mechanic. I've picked up a lot of business from them being on base." Heather added, "Kevin is a relationship person. He's still



very good friends with people from 20-30 years ago. Our clients become lasting relationships and friends, too.”

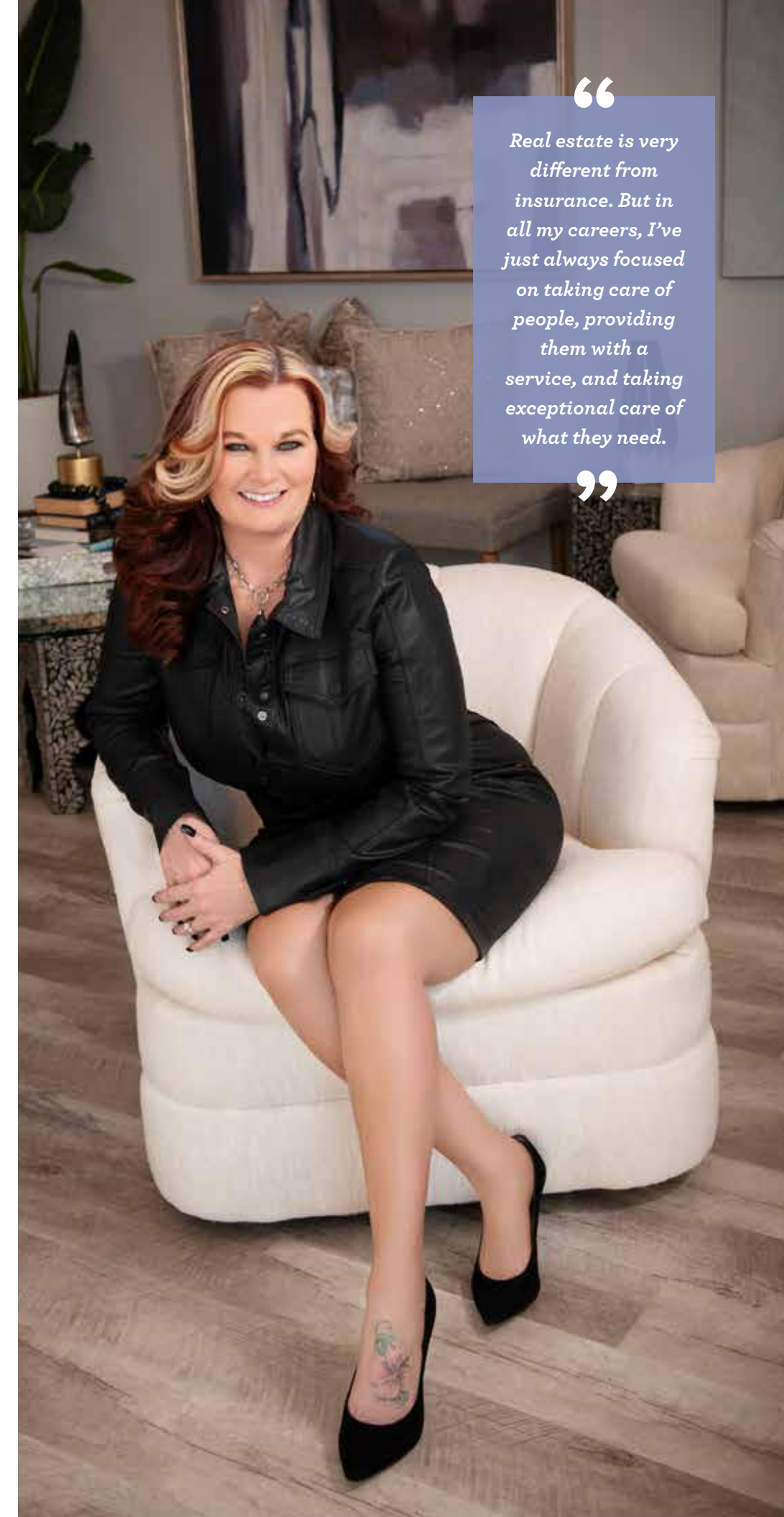
Reflecting on 2023, Kevin is proud that he was recently elected to the board of directors for the Pikes Peak Association of REALTORS®. “I’m so honored and happy to serve the membership. So many people mentored me when I was coming up and now I have a chance to serve and improve things for our 4000+ members.” Kevin humbly shared that he has been in the top 10% of all agents in the Pike’s Peak Association of Realtors for the past seven or eight years. Kevin has served in other capacities, too. He was a member of Kiwanis for several years and has served on the Ute Pass Kiwanis board of directors. He’s also served on the board of directors for both the Teller County Home Builders Association and the Colorado Association of Homebuilders. Kevin is in the ReMax Hall of Fame as he worked at ReMax Advantage for nearly fifteen years. At their brokerage, Kevin was instrumental in starting a monthly volunteer effort for The Cutting Edge, Realtors in the soup kitchen at the Marion House. Heather was proud to share, “Kevin has a heart of gold.” Kevin cut in, “I’ve got her fooled, don’t I?” to which they both laughed. Heather continued, “He’s a giver. Turning to Kevin, she said, that’s something special and unique about you.”

When asked what she is most proud of from the last

year, Heather said it’s that they have made it through a challenging year and are still here, getting deals going. Kevin interjected, “We’re still staying busy because of the efforts that Heather has brought to my business. She’s exceptional at staying in touch with the client by organizing client events and giveaways, pop bys, and our social media. Her efforts are what’s keeping the phone ringing in this market.” Heather added, “In the past, Kevin had lost contact with the clients, so I stay in front of them and keep his name out there.”

Kevin attended Harding University and in 1983 graduated with a BBA in Business Administration. One of his hobbies and outlets is playing in Texas Hold ‘Em tournaments. He has won multiple tournaments and placed first in a Colorado Poker Championship event. When the economy crashed in 2008-2009 he supplemented his real estate income by dealing Blackjack in Cripple Creek and ended up meeting a few clients that way, too. As a fun fact, Kevin shared that he was born and raised just six blocks from the Indianapolis Motor Speedway in Indiana and has attended 47 Indy 500s in his life.

Heather moved here from a small Kansas town in 1986 when her dad, who was a flight for life pilot for Goodland Regional Medical Center, received an opportunity to be a corporate pilot for Colorado Interstate Gas.



“
Real estate is very different from insurance. But in all my careers, I’ve just always focused on taking care of people, providing them with a service, and taking exceptional care of what they need.
”



Photography by Ariana Joelle Photography

She attended Liberty High School where she was a cheerleader. She also attended CSU and UCCS and graduated with a BS in Organization Management. Before real estate, Heather played an integral part in running the local family printing business, Snappy Print for over 22 years before she changed gears and moved into the insurance industry where she worked at Edgin Insurance and Financial. She marvels at how much Colorado Springs has changed over the years.



Heather and Kevin enjoy hiking, going to concerts, taking day trips, and traveling. One of their most unique trips was a 14-day excursion to Egypt, which was a Bucket List trip for Kevin. They love the beach and got married in St. Lucia. In addition to Kevin's son, their blended family includes his

daughter Kristyn and her husband Aaron who live in Castle Rock, and Heather's two boys Austin and Tanner who live with Heather and Kevin. They both expressed feeling blessed that their blended family gets along so well. This is a couple modeling partnership in every aspect of the word.



"I work with Ryan on the purchase of my 8th home and his presentation of loan options was the best I've ever experienced! He is incredibly knowledgeable of the industry and helped me navigate through the rates to get a great option. He's very responsive and proactive which kept everything smooth all the way to closing. I definitely recommend Ryan!"

- Jeremy H.



"Ryan was great to work with and made the process so easy. He was always available even helping us late due to different time zones. He was very transparent through the whole process so we didn't have any surprises at closing!"

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PineBreeze Radon Mitigation

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In 2015, Tyler established PineBreeze Inspections & Radon Mitigation; in 2023, Tyler shifted the business's focus entirely to radon mitigation. Rooted in a personal health experience that ignited a passion for home health and safety, Tyler was inspired to create a lasting impact on homeowners' lives by mitigating radon exposure risks.

"Radon is a cancer-causing, radioactive gas that you cannot see, smell or taste. PineBreeze is professionally certified to test your home or business for this deadly gas so that you can eliminate the danger," Shull says.

Tyler's vision for PineBreeze Radon Mitigation is to grow in education, training, and personnel to effectively provide the best-possible radon reduction services to home and commercial property owners in southern Colorado.

"Every home should be tested for radon by a certified inspector during the inspection process. Further, it is highly recommended to continue conducting radon testing every 2 years." As an alternative, PineBreeze can install an in-home continuous monitoring system that will alert homeowners of any evolving radon threats."

"The EPA recommends that you take action to reduce your home's indoor radon levels if your radon test result is 4 pCi/L or higher."

Tyler Shull cares about keeping homes safe. Fighting a life-long battle with his lungs, Tyler suspects that he was exposed to dangerous levels of radon growing up. Today, he owns and operates PineBreeze Radon Mitigation in an effort to safeguard others from what he has to live with every day.

Tyler grew up on a horse and cattle ranch near Keota a ghost town in the Pawnee Natural Grasslands in Northern Colorado. Naturally, he grew up working hands-on in the family business, though his first "real" job was penning cattle at cattle auctions.

Carving his own path, Tyler went on to serve in the US Navy as an Assault Boat Operator. His later career endeavors had him working as a Route Salesman for both Pepsi and Coca-Cola, as a Deputy Sheriff and Detective, and a home inspector.

What distinguishes PineBreeze Radon Mitigation is not just its dedication to quality, but the Shull family's hands-on involvement. Tyler, along with his son JT, ensures that the company remains true to its roots. Their personalized approach and family-operated ethos offer clients an exceptional service experience.

"Each radon mitigation service we conduct meets and exceeds industry standards," Shull says. PineBreeze Radon Mitigation provides an unprecedented 10-year fan warranty, a testament to their commitment to excellence.

Tyler's dedication extends beyond our local market as he sponsors a young girl in Nicaragua through World Vision, ensuring she has access to clean drinking water.



As Tyler reflects on the life events that shaped him, he credits his upbringing on a horse and cattle ranch, his service in the US Navy, and his time as a Deputy Sheriff/Detective for molding his character. The support of his wife Lynn, their daughters Violet and Crystal, their son JT, and their growing number of grandchildren adds further layers to his story, underscoring the importance of family.



“

EACH RADON MITIGATION SERVICE WE CONDUCT MEETS AND EXCEEDS INDUSTRY STANDARDS.

”

Outside of his business pursuits, Tyler’s interests range from playing 50+ baseball to indulging in good food, cooking with his kids, hitting the movie theater (as long as there’s popcorn), and immersing himself in history. He has also reconnected with his ranching roots, serving as an elk-hunting outfitter with Mule Creek Outfitters and the M Lazy C Ranch Lake George.

PineBreeze Radon Mitigation stands as a beacon of commitment to health and safety in the home. Tyler is passionate about his craft, knowing that every homeowner deserves a sanctuary that is free from radon’s invisible grip.



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MATTY

Meriam & Adam



▶▶ rising stars

Written by Tabby Halsrud | By Casa Bay Photography

Meriam and Adam Matty originally started real estate as a way to help them navigate their own investment deals. Meriam recalled, “It was hard; it was during COVID, so all three kids were doing online learning in the mornings and I went to school at night after they went to bed.”

Meriam powered through her classes in four weeks and passed her test on the first try. Even though she pursued real estate so the couple could find their own investments, it didn’t take long before family and friends reached out for real estate help. “I enjoyed helping them with their real estate needs, too, and soon I was helping them more than doing our personal stuff.”

Adam, whose parents were both in the housing industry, was working in construction at the time. His mom had her real estate license and was a property manager and his dad, an Army veteran, owned a construction company. Adam helped with his dad’s business when he was a kid and started his own construction business at the age of 20 renovating, building custom homes, and general contracting. “I helped my dad manage around 50 properties in South Carolina. I built houses and did general contractor work for 16 years. When COVID hit, there were more projects, massive supply chain shortages, and unhappy people. I was working 80+ hours weekly doing physical labor. One day, I had a humbling moment when I realized my wife - who had been a stay-at-home mom of three kids for several years - had not only out-earned me, but was super happy in her career. I just had this moment where I asked, ‘How can I share in that?’ I was unhappy, exhausted, burnt out, having back problems and needed an exit. She gave me that opportunity and I’m very thankful for her.”

Meriam elaborated, “I invited him to join me. His knowledge and construction background go hand in hand with real estate.” The Mattys sold one of their rental properties to help with the financial transition. Adam recalled, “Once we decided I would get my license too, it took me longer than it took Meriam - five months. We love to push each other and are competitive, so I made it a goal to pass on my first try, and I did.” They both laughed before Meriam added, “I was just happy I passed the first time.”

Once they decided to move beyond solely doing their personal investments to helping fulfill others’ real estate needs, Meriam and Adam found success pretty quickly. They knew with Adam’s construction background and their combined leadership experience,

they could offer incredible value. Meriam recalled, “We knew we made a good team, and eventually we want to grow our team and provide good mentorship for others. We want better for our clients and anyone who joins our team. We don’t want them to have to learn the hard way like we did.”

Meriam and Adam are often asked what it’s like to work with a spouse. Meriam explained, “Most people say they could never do that. We know many couples who work in different brokerages for that reason. But I really like working with Adam. We are very different so we complement each other well. We know our strengths and weaknesses.” Adam continued, “I love working with my wife. We’re still working on defining our roles in the business, but my strong suit is negotiating.” Meriam added, “I like building relationships, I care about people and want to give everyone everything and make everyone happy. I love doing contracts and I’m more organized.” Adam added, “I am not organized. I need direction and she directs me.” Adam is very data-driven and enjoys examining what the housing market and the rates are doing. The couple feels their combined traits enable them to give extra care to their clients.

“

Most people say they could never do that. We know many couples who work in different brokerages for that reason. But I really like working with Adam. We are very different so we complement each other well. We know our strengths and weaknesses.

”



The Mattys work together on every transaction and their clients appreciate the attributes that each brings to the table. When they get a new client, they decide in the beginning who will be the lead point of contact as every client's needs are different. Meriam said that their clients appreciate Adam's construction background and experience. When he walks through a property, he can point out major defects and give an idea of what repairs will cost - right on the spot. Adam reasoned, "But there are times when I am too much and they need a more delicate touch; my wife excels at this."

Meriam proclaimed, "Real estate can be lonely, so it's nice to have somebody to share it with in all aspects. We understand each other's long hours and late phone calls. It helps us better balance things with our kids, too." Adam added, "Doing this together is the reason we've been so successful."

Meriam was born in the Philippines and moved to the United States when she was four years old. Her dad was in the military, serving 26 years and five tours in Vietnam. Although English is technically her second language, it's the only language she knows. She shared that she is learning to speak Tagalog again. Meriam serves as the Director of Training and Development for the Filipino Chamber of Commerce and is very passionate about what this organization does, sharing: "The Chamber brings people in



to help them learn business skills and get their business out there.”

Adam was born in Ohio but his family moved to Colorado when he was a baby so Colorado Springs is the only home he knows. Adam attributes some of their business success to their deep roots here. “We are very relational and that has served us well.” Adam owns and enjoys working on vintage Japanese market cars.

Adam and Meriam have been married 13 years and shared that although they went to the same high school, they didn’t meet until after they graduated at a mutual friend’s get-together. They dated long distance for a while before Adam moved back and proposed to Meriam. The Mattys have three kids: Adam Jr is 11 and loves baseball and chess; Adalynn is 9 and enjoys cheer and dance and proclaims that her favorite color is glitter; and Asher, their daredevil and “sour patch kid,” is 5 and very athletic, playing soccer. The family enjoys traveling and spending time together. Adam and Meriam’s retirement goal reflects their passions: “We want to travel the world, pretend we are food critics, and try all the different foods.”

“

Real estate can be lonely, so it’s nice to have somebody to share it with in all aspects. We understand each other’s long hours and late phone calls. It helps us better balance things with our kids, too.

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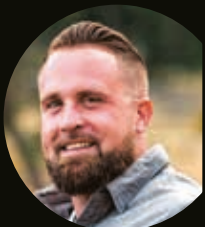
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» agents making a difference

We Fortify & Working Fusion at Mill Street

PIVOTING YOUNG ADULTS OUT OF POVERTY & HOMELESSNESS

Written by Tabby Halsrud

“When I first met with Shelley Jensen and heard her say, ‘Our mission is to help young adults pivot out of poverty,’ it immediately struck a chord in me that still reverberates to this day,” said Mary Biga, Managing Broker/President of Davidson Biga Realty, Inc. Mary’s passions include taking care of children and helping others find housing and she has found an exceptional way to blend these passions through her support of the non-profit We Fortify. Mary shared, “The We Fortify tiny

home village Working Fusion is an amazing group of people making a difference in the lives of kids/adults who through no fault of their own have found themselves in situations that many of us can not imagine. Can you imagine being in the foster care system your entire life and then at 18 years of age being told that you’ve aged out of the system? Can you imagine having to live on the streets because at the age of 17, your parent decided to move in with their significant other and you were not invited into

the home? There are so many more instances that have led to these young adults needing a home.... Can you imagine...?”

The Mission of We Fortify, a 501c3 nonprofit, whose first development is Working Fusion at Mill Street, is to pivot young adults out of poverty and homelessness into a state of economic and emotional stability and social connectedness. The organization provides these youth with a safe place to live, a sense of belonging and community, valuable life skills, increased confidence, and tools and support to help them pivot out of poverty. We Fortify was founded by Shelley Jensen who was inspired to make a real difference after witnessing poverty’s effects directly. She researched what it would

take to shift people away from homelessness and pivot out of poverty and learned that in addition to a place to call home, people need a supportive community, access to health care, life skills, and a job that pays a living wage.

According to the Working Fusion website, “This village and program is a first-of-its-kind housing initiative in Colorado Springs dedicated to breaking the cycle of generational poverty and homelessness.” Working Fusion provides dignified housing to El Paso county youth through affordable 240 square-foot homes furnished with a bed, a couch, a washer and dryer, and pots and pans. The organization also provides individualized trauma-informed therapies, life skills education, and living wage

career placement to help the youth create a foundation of self-sufficiency and independence.

Residents develop Empowerment Plans which invite them to envision their future and create short- and long-term goals. The team at Working Fusion meets with the residents weekly and through quarterly assessments, which provide regular check-ins on how residents are doing overall and progressing toward their goals. Residents are also encouraged to attend the community's social events, which may include activities like scavenger hunts, movie nights, downtown coffee tours, and opportunities to meet the mayor.

Residents are referred to the two-year program by human services care providers or other referring agencies. The youth may be exiting foster care and have no permanent home to go to, living in their car, or sleeping on the couches of friends or family. There is a defined application window and a lengthy interview process to determine who will be a good fit for the program. Once the residents are selected, they make a commitment by signing a two-year lease and a "good neighbor" agreement, which covers rules such as noise, trash, and smoking. Residents are required to have jobs so they can pay rent and utilities and are expected to participate in the programs offered by We Fortify.

Participating in the program empowers these youth to create a better life for themselves. The first residents, between 18 and 25 years of age, moved into their homes in January of 2022. Claire Franco, We Fortify's Volunteer Relations Specialist, shared that two of the first residents graduated from the program early, after only one and a half years of vacancy. "One transitioned into a full-time job with a 401k plan, health insurance, and paid time off while the other transferred to UCCS to complete her undergraduate degree in Psychology."

Claire continued, "Since we began our programming in early 2022, residents have learned life skills such as how to create healthy relationships, how to communicate effectively, auto repair, and nutrition through our curriculum, which is provided by our local partners and volunteers. The residents have empowerment plans and receive support from our team in achieving their short-term goals such as obtaining a driver's license, completing a GED, or going to community college. Residents are connected with volunteers to widen their network and support circle and provide an opportunity for valuable mentorship. One of our mentorship pairs meets weekly to cook together, which supports the resident's goal of learning how to cook nutritious meals."

When the residents graduate from the program, they're invited to stay connected with the community via an alumni channel in Slack, continuing to attend village events and life



skills classes, and if desired, staying connected to volunteers for guidance, references, and mentorship.

These tiny homes replaced several damaged and dilapidated homes in the community and in the end, the goal is to have 18 of these tiny homes available. Working Fusion is close to achieving this goal with 16 homes on site and a strong desire to have the last two complete by the time this article is printed.

When asked what We Fortify and Working Fusion needs from the community, Claire said, "We already have an incredible bunch of nearly 30 volunteers, so what we really need right now is financial support. We are seeking monthly donors to help us get financially stable so we can build more villages and programs. We also appreciate it when people help us spread the word about who we are and what we are doing here, and attend our fundraising events such as our annual galas and luncheons. Our Benefit Luncheon is coming up on March 14th, 2024."

Claire added that additional male mentors are needed to spend time with the residents and support them in various capacities. Mentors need to participate in training and be available to help residents with their empowerment plans and goals. "We're continuing to grow our community partnerships and hope to connect with people who are passionate about our cause and want to support our residents," Claire said.

We Fortify is making a difference by helping pivot young adults out of poverty and homelessness and giving them a leg up toward becoming a homeowner in the future. To learn more about the program or to offer your support, visit www.workingfusion.com.

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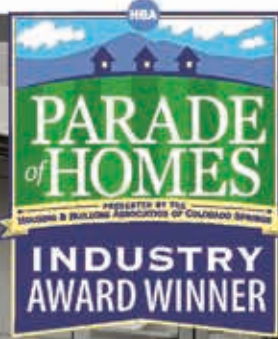


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30 Days to move out after *Writ of Restitution* is issued.

All County: Experience with these Mediations

Senate Bill 23-184 Security Deposit Protection

Security Deposit CAP: Landlord cannot collect any more than 2 times the monthly rent.

Landlord MUST accept housing assistance, including but not limited to *Section 8 Vouchers*.

All County: Implemented in our Leasing Process

House Bill 23 – 1099 Tenant's Portable Screening Report

Landlord MUST accept tenant's *Portable Screening Report* if it is less than 30 days old.

All County: Updated Applications and Procedures

House Bill 23 – 1068 Pet Ownership in Housing

CAPS pet security deposit to \$300.

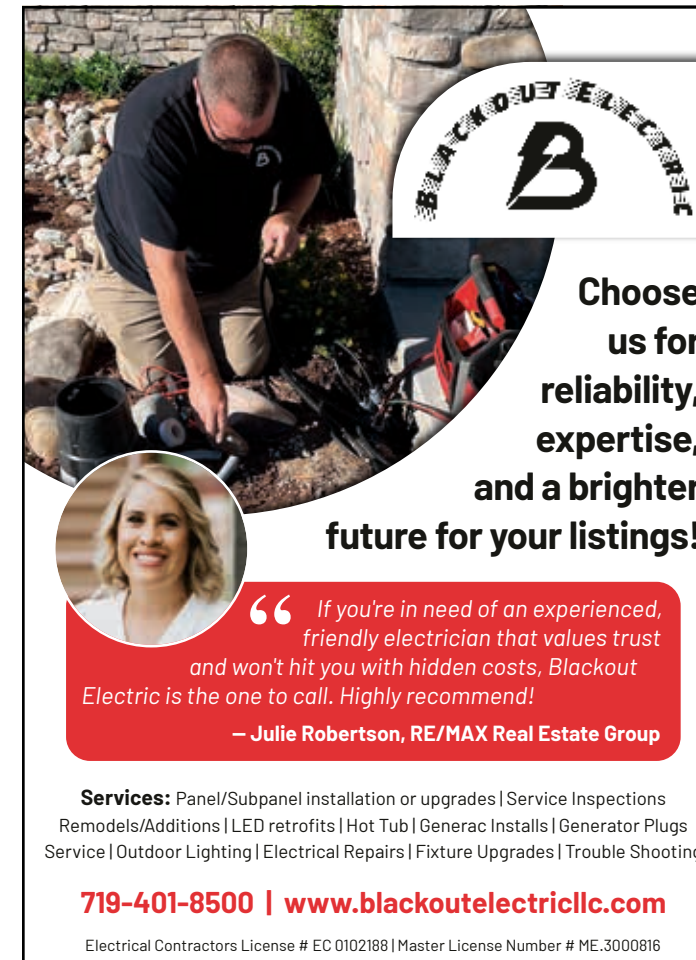
CAPS pet rent to \$35 or 1% per month of the tenant's monthly rent, whichever is greater.

All County: Integrated into our lease

Federal CARES Act

Colorado Supreme Court recently affirmed that the *Federal CARES Act 30-Day Notice to Vacate* requirement for covered properties will remain in effect.

All County: Working case by case with owners who fall under the CARES Act



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Lisa & Nathan Fisk

▶▶ real producers

Written by Tabby Halsrud | Casa Bay Photography

After many years of having worked for other people, Lisa and Nathan Fisk decided about ten years ago to combine Lisa's real estate expertise with Nathan's knowledge of running a business and start their own team. "We realized we weren't getting any younger and decided to start a family and launch our team at the same time. We really wanted to create our own thing," Nathan said before he added, "Instead of working 30 or 40 hours per week, we decided we could work 60 or 80. That just sounded like more fun." He laughed. Nathan shared that it was just the right time for them to make the change. "We had the right level of experience and felt confident about launching a new adventure, so we did."

The Fisks were already operating as a team before they officially launched their team. Nathan's prior experience in leadership positions and consulting roles in small to mid-size companies ran parallel to Lisa's first 10+ years in real estate. Lisa was already a seasoned agent, but had always been on a team with a more senior producer. About ten years ago, Lisa and Nathan decided it was time to combine Nathan's business acumen and Lisa's exceptional real estate and relationship-building expertise to launch their team.

After a long stint with RE/MAX Properties ("We love the people there! Amazing and lifelong personal and professional relationships.") the powerhouse duo have been with eXp

Realty for about three years. They are continuing to grow their business, while still working hard to maintain a reputation as a boutique firm with a strong emphasis on exceptional "premium" services. "While we do a lot of work in the luxury market segment and have a strong portfolio in new home construction, some of our favorite clients are actually first-time home buyers on tight budgets. With Lisa's family history (her Dad is a Retired Air Force Colonel) we spend a lot of time helping military folks as they come and go," said Nathan; "We really appreciate what the military community represents and try to give back however we can."

As their business has continued to grow and as they have passed through various life phases, they have alternated taking more of a lead in the business. Nathan added, "Today, Lisa and I and our whole team are constructed a little differently than most real estate teams. When we brought on our current business partners, Logan Anderson and Nathan Rains, we wanted them to be full-fledged agents, taking on listings and buyers and growing their own book of business that they can take with them if they were to leave someday. It's been a good approach and gives us great longevity with them."

Generally there is one agent who plays the primary lead for any given client, but they tag-team all of their

clients. This team-based collaboration offers flexibility to cover for each other during vacations and family commitments. Nathan stated that the client experience is truly the most important thing. "We do whatever we have to do to make the client experience special and friction-free. It's that lack of friction that makes it a great experience for the client. We also create great relationships with our clients."

Their approach seems to be working; Nathan shared that they've grown from an average level of production to running in the top 2% in the city and the top 5% in the country. Additionally, in the last couple of years, they have branched out into some land development projects. "We are taking what we know about business, construction, and residential real estate and applying that to Land Development projects," they shared. "It's a very satisfying experience and we're excited to see what 2024 holds."

Lisa and Nathan offered some insight into another important piece that contributed to their success. "A lot of people comment about how much time we spend working. And we do work hard. Sometimes we are working at 10 o'clock after the kids are in bed. But we balance it. We carve out specific time with our children, our family, our friends and for doing things outside of work. The only way that happens when you're selling





\$40 million of real estate is through a great level of intentionality.” Both Nathan and Lisa are intentional and disciplined when it comes to their physical health. Lisa’s day starts early, around 4 or 4:30, with a workout most days. Their children practice jiu-jitsu, and Nathan helps teach his kid’s classes. Nathan loves jiu-jitsu too and trains 4-5 days a week; earlier this year he won Bronze at the international “Worlds” tournament.

Even though they work hard, it’s important to both Lisa and Nathan that they make time to take care of themselves and their kids and participate in their children’s activities. The Fisks are proud of their strong, independent daughters. Their oldest, age 11, does ballet and performs in the Nutcracker. Lisa is one of the key people backstage, making sure the kids are eating and that hair and makeup are done. Their youngest, age 9, is in theater and has been cast in local productions such as Annie and Peter Pan. Additionally, Lisa and Nathan give time to a couple of charities that are important to them and to their church.

As a family, the Fisks enjoy skiing, camping, hiking, and mountain biking. They also enjoy quiet days at home, ordering pizza, watching movies, and playing games. Nathan has been in Colorado since 1991 with his family and Lisa moved here in 1996 to go to college. Lisa says she is a military brat; her dad was in the Air Force for 25 years. Her family was living in Alaska when she graduated high school. After she moved here for college, her family followed her here. This was her Dad’s last assignment before he retired as a full Colonel from the Air Force.

The Fisks love real estate and view their business as an important part of their ministry. “Real estate is a lot of



work, but the rewarding part is getting to help people and be involved in their lives.” Nathan continued, “There have been some really hard times over the last 20 years, but there have been a lot of good times too. If you are persistent and you don’t try to take shortcuts like buying your way into the business, it

works out. A truly successful business is built on people and relationships. Lisa gets all the credit for that. She has twenty years of talking to people and taking care of them, and that’s the only reason we are as successful as we are. And when people think of real estate, we hope they think of us.”



“
 Real estate is a lot
 of work, but the
 rewarding part is
 getting to help people
 and be involved in
 their lives.
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Your boudoir experience isn't about the photos...

There are many misconceptions about what a boudoir photography session really is. While it's true that you will walk away with some really beautiful artwork that will promote a positive self-image, we are convinced that **boudoir isn't really about the photos.... It's about the experience.** A transformation happens when you decide to push yourself out of your comfort zone and rediscover who you are in the process.

A boudoir session may feel like a scary thing to attempt. Our clients are women who are ready to be vulnerable, feel empowered, and are courageous enough to try something new. Every client that walks into our studio is very different. We believe that your boudoir experience should be unique - designed by you, customized to fit your taste and likes, and more importantly, to respect your boundaries. Some women are very daring and want to bare it all, while others are more conservative. **Boudoir is for everyone.**

Whether you want to wear lingerie, a beautiful robe, a gown, or nothing at all, we believe there isn't just one way to be "sexy" and there isn't "one right way" to dress for a boudoir session. We want our clients to discover what beauty and confidence means to them.

Our goal is to make the whole process stress-free and enjoyable. Every client is nervous when they book their session, but we take pride in the fact that we have created an approach designed to make you feel comfortable before, during, and after the session.

Before your session we will discuss your wardrobe preferences, any insecurities you may have, and answer questions about how to prepare. The day of your session our professional hair and makeup artist will focus on accentuating your natural beauty. Your time in front of the camera will be full of laughter and silliness; we pose ourselves to show you exactly how to look your best.

If you have wanted to book a session for some time, we encourage you to take the leap! There is never a better time than now to do this for you. We promise you will leave looking and feeling GREAT - and feeling proud.

"What an incredible experience!! I did a boudoir shoot and was so nervous going into it. By the end I felt like a completely different woman! The team is incredible, they create such a fun environment and Maria will roll around on the floor to show you exactly how to pose. It is such an empowering experience. I highly recommend everyone do at least one boudoir shoot in their life!" -Miss H.

If you are a mom, we bet you dedicate much of your time and energy to your family and/or to your work. There is nothing wrong with doing something for yourself, too. A luxurious boudoir experience is a great way to pamper yourself!

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FUN FACTS ABOUT YOUR FELLOW AGENTS & PARTNERS

▶▶ around town

To read more about real estate agents in Colorado Springs, follow *Colorado Springs Real Producers'* Facebook and Instagram pages.



Ashley Reed admits that she has an obnoxious laugh that can be heard from at least a block away!



Mary Biga is a huge fan of Formula 1 Racing. She is Team Ferrari and her husband is Team Haas.



Becky Martinez was a 911 Dispatcher for the Pueblo Police Department before she became a Realtor!



Heather Wheeler was her high school class president and she is a die-hard University of Michigan Wolverine football fan.



When **Heather Baros** was a little girl, she used to pretend that she was a business owner.



Larissa Kunz didn't see the ocean until 2022! She had always wanted to see it and, after a major life change, she looked up the best beaches in the USA, bought a ticket, and boarded a plane all in the same day!



Lisa Robinson managed a "dude ranch" in southern Colorado and a ski lodge in Winter Park before she became a Realtor!

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Hometown

I have considered Colorado Springs my home for a little over 16 years now. Prior to moving to the Springs, I lived in the Bay Area, California for many years. Even though the majority of my life was spent in California I have always considered myself an Oregonian. I was born in a small town called Medford in the Willamette Valley in Southern Oregon. Those who have visited Oregon will know the beautiful rivers and great fishing in this area of our country. Anyone who knows me well knows that I am a huge University of Oregon Ducks fan and follow any of their sports that I can watch on TV here in Colorado.

How long have you worked in the industry?

I entered the Mortgage industry specifically about six years ago now. The Real Estate Industry has been in my blood pretty much since birth. My father was a Real Estate Developer, and I was looking to follow in his footsteps. I ended up working as a title sales representative a couple of years after graduating college. My Title Career lasted over 25 years leading me to Colorado, eventually being the Division President of Stewart Title in Colorado Springs. After spending that time in title insurance, I decided to make a change to originate mortgages, and that has been the best decision I have ever made.

What is your favorite part of being a lender?

Originating mortgage loans has been such a thrilling experience. When I made the move to this career, I was not sure what to expect. I have had the opportunity to contribute to the process of seeing hundreds of buyers successfully purchase a home for themselves and their families. Being at the closing table and seeing the keys being handed to the new owner never gets old. The thrill and elation of this experience really have no rival. Sometimes this process takes months to years from beginning to end and it is worth every second. Seeing the smiles of the borrowers and their children, if they have them, is more satisfying than most things I have ever been through.

What is one thing you would tell a first-time homebuyer?

Buying a home can be the most significant financial transaction that is experienced in one's life. When I am working with someone who is buying their first home, I definitely want to make sure they are completely understanding what they are doing in the process. Changing your status from a renter to an owner is a huge step and I take that very seriously. The main message which I make sure that new buyers understand is that they are now paying down the principal on their own home as opposed to paying it for someone else. There are very few other investments available that can build wealth and prosperity as much as owning real estate.

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