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**COVER STORY:** Adam Cuffaro,  
Michael Saunders Realty

**RISING STAR:** Lisa Tarjanyi

**PARTNER PROFILE:** Theresa  
Guest & Robert Seth-Ward,  
Hope Home Inspections

**FROM THE DESK OF THE  
PRESIDENT:** Gia Arvin 2024  
Legislative Priorities

MARCH 2024



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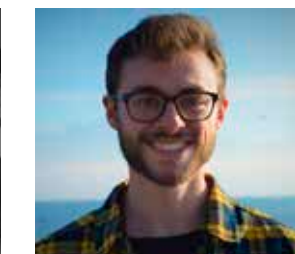
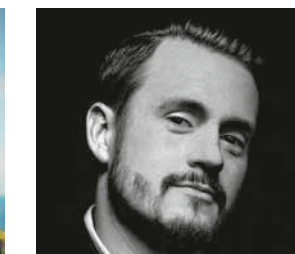
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# MEET THE SARASOTA & MANATEE

## REAL PRODUCERS TEAM

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 <p><b>Katie Cremean</b> Ad Strategist</p>	 <p><b>Nick Ingrisani</b> Writer</p>	 <p><b>Rob Cox</b> Videographer</p>



If you are interested in contributing or nominating REALTORS® for certain stories, please email us at [mary.lobdell@realproducersmag.com](mailto:mary.lobdell@realproducersmag.com).

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TARRAJANYI

Lisa



» rising star

Written by Nick Ingrisani  
Photography by Allie Serrano

## NURTURING COMMUNITIES THROUGH REAL ESTATE & GENEROSITY

“What I love most is seeing people have that place where they can feel secure, come home, close the door, and know that it’s theirs. To have that special place. Not enough people know what the process is in purchasing a home and I try to make it less intimidating for them.”

Lisa was born and raised in Maryland. Later becoming a hairdresser and eventually, a platform artist for Sebastian International, where she honed her interpersonal skills and eye for detail – both of which served her well in real estate.

After a large snowstorm shut down her hair salon for a week, she decided to venture south to Florida. Swapping the gray, cold winters of Maryland for the perennial bloom of Florida was like stepping into a paradise that she now helps others call home.

### TRANSITIONING TO A CAREER IN REAL ESTATE

While real estate wasn’t a path that Lisa always considered the seeds were sown during her days as a hairdresser, where she found herself engrossed in the home-buying stories of her clients.

“As I was working as a platform artist and traveling, I met a lot of very nice people. I was always interested when people were purchasing a home and I’d go with them when they were looking and help them choose a home, even as a hairdresser. Looking back, I think I should have always been a realtor.”

The real turning point came when she realized she was already playing the part of a realtor by giving leads and staging advice to a client who was in real estate. “At a certain moment, a lightbulb went off and I thought ‘I need to start working in real estate for myself.’”

Lisa got her real estate license less than five years ago and achieved rapid success in the industry. She joined EXP Realty and has appreciated the brokerage’s cloud-based and supportive environment right from the start. This support system, complemented by her already extensive network and trustworthiness gained from her work as a hairdresser, gave her a fantastic foundation to build up her business.

Lisa’s passion for educating and guiding her clients through the intimidating home-buying process is a cornerstone of her success. Her approach is centered on trust, honesty, and transparency.



“  
**I’m very open with the process. I give people clear expectations of what’s going to happen.**  
”

“I’m very open with the process. I give people clear expectations of what’s going to happen.”

She’s also committed to continuous learning to ensure that she remains at the top of her game, a trait that has enabled her to achieve impressive feats, including a \$6 million sales milestone last year.

### A HEART FOR HEROES: GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY



“  
**Giving away 30% of my commission to someone is a gift for me to be able to do. The more people that know, the more money I can give away to people who deserve it.**  
”



Beyond the numbers, what truly sets Lisa apart is her deep commitment to her community. As the first vice president of the Women’s Council of Realtors Manatee and a dedicated Homes for Heroes Realtor, she doesn’t just facilitate home purchases; she enriches lives. This unique program, born out of the tragedy of 9/11, allows her to give back to the community’s heroes – firefighters, police, first responders, military personnel, and teachers – by donating a significant portion of her commission to them.

Her goal for 2024 is not just a financial target but a mission of gratitude: to give away \$50,000 to these heroes. This act of generosity not only supports the heroes themselves but also contributes to hospitals and other essential services, amplifying her impact on the community.

“Giving away 30% of my commission to someone is a gift for me to be able to do. The more people that know, the more money I can give away to people who deserve it.”

Outside of her busy professional life, Lisa has five boys with her husband and finds joy in travel – particularly in Europe and Hawaii – along with appreciating the beauty within the U.S. But at the core of it all, her dedication to her community and unwavering commitment to making a difference make her story a truly inspiring tale in real estate.

▶▶ partner profile

Written by Nick Ingrisani  
Photography by Allie Serrano



# HOPE

THERESA GUEST &  
ROBERT SETH-WARD

# HOME INSPECTION

**“We want to change the attitude that a home inspection is a necessary evil in buying a home. Our vision is to have a company that realtors look at and say, ‘Heck yeah we’re going to have a home inspection and that’s a great thing.’”**

Theresa grew up in Sarasota and spent the early years of her career in the IT sector, where she climbed the ranks to senior management at several Fortune 500 companies. However, her tenure coincided with the infamous Enron scandal, which profoundly impacted her and her social

network. Witnessing friends lose everything and the prevalent internal politics of large companies, Theresa sought a career that was more honest and less entangled in corporate battles.

#### FOUNDING HOPE HOME INSPECTIONS

It was during this time of introspection that Theresa met Robert, her spouse and future business partner. Together, they embarked on a venture importing high-end furniture, a



“  
**IT’S NOT JUST ABOUT PROVIDING A GOOD  
 INSPECTION, BUT KNOWING HOW TO  
 COMMUNICATE THE ISSUES OUR TEAM  
 FINDS TO THE CUSTOMER WITHOUT OVER-  
 COMMUNICATING. WE’RE NOT HERE TO  
 TELL OUR CLIENTS ABOUT EVERY COMPONENT  
 OF THE HOUSE. WE EDUCATE THEM ON  
 THE CONDITION OF THEIR HOME WITH  
 STRAIGHTFORWARD, SIMPLE TERMINOLOGY.**

”

business that thrived until the economic downturn in 2008-09. With the collapse of their business, Theresa pivoted into real estate and Robert started doing renovation and construction work. While working in real estate, Theresa identified a gap in the home inspection market in Sarasota and an opportunity to offer real value to the industry.

“At one point Robert looked at me wanting to start a crew of construction workers and I told him he should be a home inspector. I thought he’d be great.”

Leveraging their skills and strategic vision, they founded Hope Home Inspections in 2013. Most importantly, they designed Hope Home Inspections directly around the needs of realtors. Their goal was to provide a high-end professional firm with great response times, a highly trained team of inspectors, and professional inspections that realtors and their clients could rely on. Theresa emphasizes the importance of clear communication throughout the process:

“It’s not just about providing a good inspection, but knowing how to communicate the issues our team finds to the customer without over-communicating. We’re not here to tell our clients about



every component of the house. We educate them on the condition of their home with straightforward, simple terminology.”

Hope Home Inspections grew organically, beginning with welcoming in family members, friends, and other acquaintances to create a professional, yet familial atmosphere. They also take training very seriously and require each inspector to complete a rigorous three-month bootcamp to ensure a high standard of knowledge and service.

The company has now grown into a successful staple of the real estate industry in Sarasota with a team of 12 inspectors, professional trucks, and certified support staff to promptly handle all customer inquiries.

“Our customer experience is paramount. From the beginning when you call, you get someone knowledgeable who can help you. Our service manager is always there to deal with customer issues or realtor questions, so you don’t need to wait for an inspector to call you back.”

**A LASTING VISION FOR THE FUTURE**

Looking ahead, Theresa and Robert are committed to revolutionizing the home inspection industry.

Outside of Hope Home Inspections they also own a pest control company and an insurance brokerage to help clients with those needs as well, prioritizing an exceptional level of service throughout.

Their vision is to change the perception of home inspections from a necessary evil to an essential, positive experience. They are also integrating advanced technologies like FAA-certified drones, which all 12 of their inspectors have already been trained and certified to use.

Theresa’s emphasis is clear: the story of Hope Home Inspections is not just about its founders but about the team and the enduring impact of their work. With a customer-centric approach and a commitment to professional growth, Theresa and Robert are building a company that leaves a legacy and outlives their direct involvement, reshaping the home inspection industry in Sarasota and beyond.

“Hope Home Inspections isn’t about the owners. It’s about the customer experience and our team – it’s been about our team since the very beginning. We’re building a company that will be around long after Robert and I are no longer involved.”



# 2024

## FLORIDA REALTORS® LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

By Gia Arvin, President of Florida REALTORS

Florida's 238,000 REALTORS® are proud to have helped millions of Floridians achieve the American Dream of homeownership. Our residents contribute greatly to their communities when they own a part of the dream.

During Florida's 2024 Legislative Session, REALTORS® are advocating for additional funds for the highly popular Hometown Heroes Housing Program for first-time home buyers, policies that improve water quality and the environment, relief for escalating property insurance premiums and further reductions to the Business Rent Tax.

### Rising Property Insurance Costs

Over the past several years, the Legislature has passed insurance reforms and accountability measures that are helping to bring property insurers back to Florida and ensure Florida policyholders are treated fairly.

Although we have seen improvements to the property insurance marketplace, the average property insurance premium remains high and presents a significant barrier to achieving and maintaining the dream of homeownership. As such, Florida REALTORS® asks lawmakers to:

Continue to monitor the effectiveness of these reforms to ensure they attract insurance capital back to Florida as quickly as possible.

Explore additional remedies that can speed up this process. Seek additional solutions to provide relief to policyholders.

### Business Rent Tax

Florida REALTORS® appreciates the actions of previous Legislatures that lowered the state sales tax rate on commercial leases, known as the Business Rent Tax. This tax rate currently stands at 4.5% but will drop to 2% in 2024, thanks to legislation passed by the 2021 Legislature.

Small businesses, which comprise almost 99% of all Florida employers, are disproportionately impacted by this tax because they are more likely to rent their location.

Lowering and eventually eliminating the business rent tax will provide Florida businesses capital to expand, hire more employees, improve benefits and raise salaries. Given the positive impact of lowering the Business Rent Tax, Florida REALTORS®

asks lawmakers to support legislation and budget initiatives to further reduce and eliminate this tax so business owners have capital to grow their operations and reinvest in their local communities.

### Condominium Reforms

The tragic June 2021 collapse of the Champlain Towers South building in Surfside, Fla., highlighted the need to comprehensively reform existing condominium laws. Lawmakers answered the call by passing a series of reforms aimed at increasing the safety of these buildings as well as ensuring that prospective purchasers are better informed about the building's physical and financial condition.

Included in these reforms were new statewide "milestone inspection" requirements, structural integrity reserve studies, mandatory reserves and revised seller disclosures.

Florida REALTORS® asks lawmakers to support legislation that increases the transparency of community association governing documents on a street address level, thus allowing prospective purchasers and sellers to make more informed decisions.

### My Safe Florida Home Program

Florida REALTORS® asks lawmakers to support additional funding for the My Safe Florida Home Program, which helps Floridians harden their homes against storms. The home-hardening program is so popular that the money appropriated is nearly gone. More funding for the program will allow Floridians to protect their homes from storms and reduce insurance premiums.

### Hometown Heroes Housing Program

Florida's continued investment in the Hometown Heroes Housing Program, which has helped more than 14,000 hard-working Floridians buy their first home, has been an overwhelming success. Given the fact that Florida continues to experience a difficult home

affordability environment, Florida REALTORS® asks lawmakers to explore additional ways to inject new funds into the program to help more families achieve the dream of homeownership.

Your advocacy matters for housing, for Floridians and our economy. Please visit [floridarealtors.org](http://floridarealtors.org) for ongoing updates throughout the legislative session.



Gia Arvin, the broker-owner with Matchmaker Realty in Gainesville, is the 2024 President of Florida REALTORS®, the state's largest professional trade association. She is active in her residential brokerage as well as a leader in regional, state, and national real estate associations. Arvin was the 2011 President of the Gainesville-Alachua County Association of REALTORS® and the 2017 Florida President of the Women's Council of REALTOR® among multiple other previous leadership positions.

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# Adam CUFFARO

CARVING AN EXCLUSIVE NICHE IN THE  
SARASOTA & BRADENTON REAL ESTATE MARKET

“I think experience and even failure have made me that much better as a realtor.  
I’m 55 and as driven now as I was when I was 25.”

Originally from Huntington, NY, Adam’s path took him from James Madison University in Virginia to a technology sales career in the DC area. However, it was a move to Sarasota, where his parents had built a home, that marked the beginning of his real estate career. He worked in new home sales during his early years in Sarasota, selling various products from golf courses to waterfront communities.

After a considerable career in sales, he sought a change of pace. He was burning the candle at both ends and working hard day in and day out. Adam decided to get into real estate in 2003 at the refreshing suggestion of a custom builder. “He told me to get my license, sit in his brilliant million-dollar homes at 10:00am every morning, and the buyers will come. And they did.”

#### Making a Successful Transition into Real Estate

Coming from a 13-year professional career in sales, the transition to real estate was pretty seamless for Adam. Aside from getting used to a completely different sales cycle, the core principles of good listening, a driven approach, and effective communication all apply.

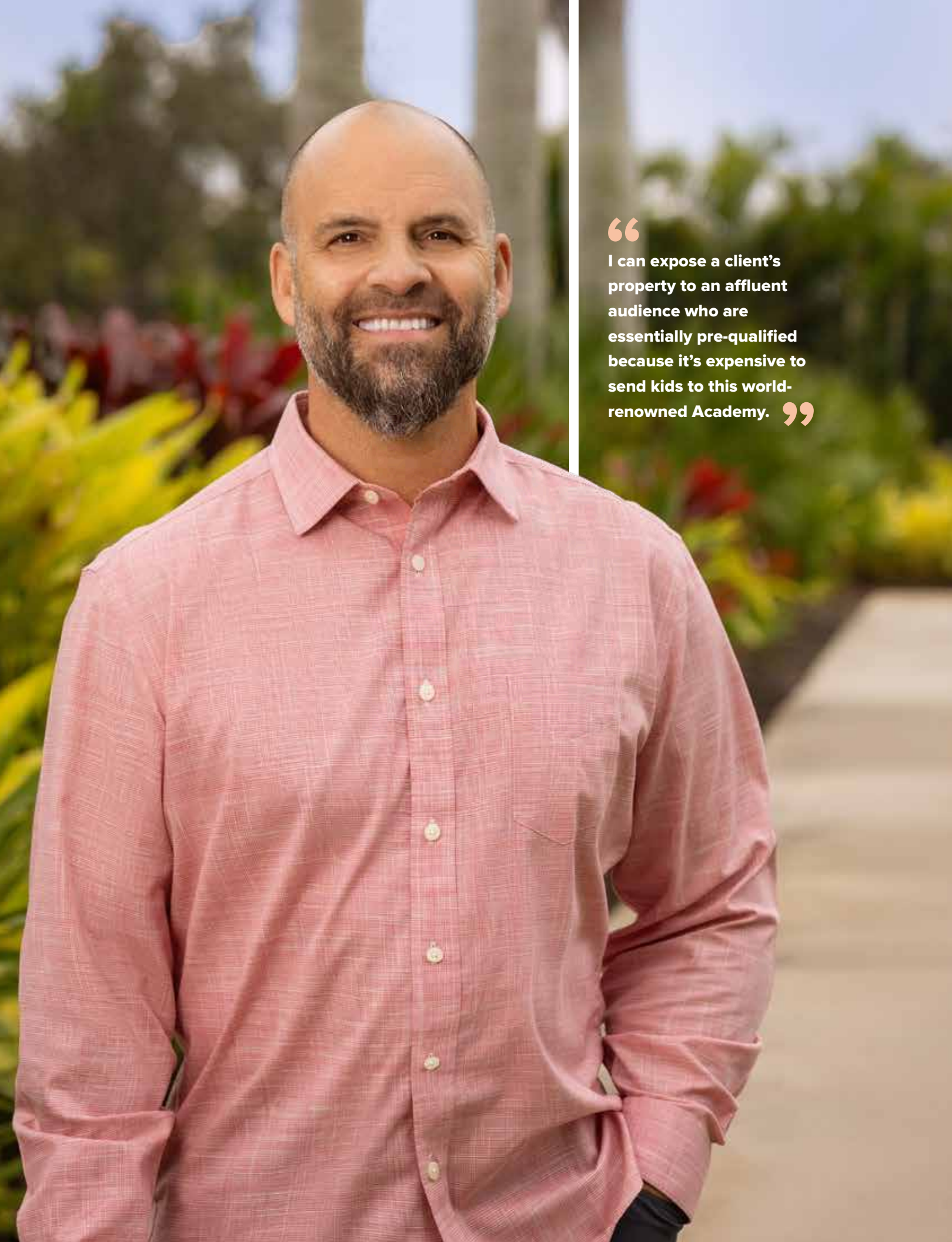
By 2006, Adam had navigated the shifting market by joining IMG Academy, a premier sports training facility in Bradenton, Florida. His role at the Academy Realty Group was pivotal in connecting with IMG families, helping them buy and sell properties in the area. Over time, he emerged as a leading figure in this niche, thanks in part to his robust network and word-of-mouth referrals. In 2022, he was ranked number one in sales volume and units sold at Michael Saunders & Company, a testament to his expertise and reputation.

Of the 700 realtors operating at the firm, Adam is uniquely positioned as the only one with an office at IMG Academy. This exclusivity gives him unparalleled access to wealthy clientele, particularly the families involved with the Academy.

“I can expose a client’s property to an affluent audience who are essentially pre-qualified because it’s expensive to send kids to this world-renowned Academy.”

His business model is succinct yet powerful – a small, efficient team focusing on high-quality service rather than expansive growth. This approach





“  
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audience who are  
essentially pre-qualified  
because it’s expensive to  
send kids to this world-  
renowned Academy.”

# REAL ESTATE SERVICES



has served him well to this point, and now he’s looking to expand his operations to North Carolina as well.

Adam’s unique selling proposition for clients is his exclusive association with IMG Academy. He offers unparalleled marketing exposure to affluent families – a service that no other realtor in the area can claim. “If you’re selling a \$2M house, the marketing I do is going to be in front of hundreds of affluent families, so the exposure I’m giving your listing is bar none. Because I can take that house and put it right in front of every one of these families.”

This exclusivity, coupled with over two decades of experience, makes him a go-to expert for both buyers and sellers. He understands that preparation is key to reducing stress in real estate transactions, a philosophy that has guided his successful career.

“I’ve seen a lot in my 20 years of experience. If you’ve seen a lot, you know how to prepare, and preparation reduces stress. So why not work with a realtor who’s done it this long with so much experience?”

Adam’s keen attention to detail allows him to anticipate and circumvent potential issues at every step of the process. It’s this top-notch service and experience that has earned him five-star Google



reviews and glowing client testimonials across the board. While he has embraced social media in recent years, recognizing its power as a marketing tool, he remains focused on the personalized service that has been his hallmark throughout his career.

Outside of work, Adam enjoys being active outdoors – hiking, gym workouts, racquetball, pickleball, and biking with his wife. He also values spending quality time with his three children and extended family in the Sarasota area.

Adam’s story is not just about selling properties; it’s about creating a niche in an elite market and leveraging personal strengths to offer unmatched service. His journey from sales to real estate success is a blueprint for aspiring realtors seeking to carve out their unique space in this competitive industry.

“ I’ve seen a lot in my 20 years of experience. If you’ve seen a lot, you know how to prepare, and preparation reduces stress. So why not work with a realtor who’s done it this long with so much experience? ”

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# FAQ

## ALL ABOUT SARASOTA & MANATEE REAL PRODUCERS



Real Producers magazine started in Indianapolis in 2015 and is now in over 120 markets across the nation and continues to spread rapidly.

**Q: WHO RECEIVES REAL PRODUCERS MAGAZINES?**

**A:** The top 500+ real estate agents in Sarasota & Manatee Counties.

**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 Sarasota & Manatee Counties in the real estate industry.

We take the top 500 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 500 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

500 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.

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

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

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

**A:** They are one of the best businesses in Sarasota & Manatee Counties 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 won't 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!

**Email:** [Mary.Lobdell@realproducersmag.com](mailto:Mary.Lobdell@realproducersmag.com)

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Now, you have your own badge! Use it however you'd like to show that you are a part of the exclusive community of the top 1 - 2% in Sarasota and Manatee real estate.



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