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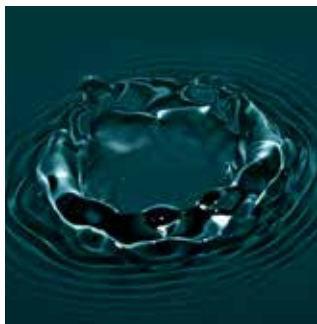
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# *publisher's* note

*Hello November, the Season of Gratitude!*

As we welcome November, there's a crisp chill in the air and a sense of anticipation as the holidays approach. This is the month of gratitude, a time to reflect on all the blessings we've received throughout the year and to express our appreciation for the people and moments that have enriched our lives.

November is also a time for gathering, for cozing up with loved ones, and for savoring the warmth of home and hearth. It's the month of Thanksgiving, a perfect opportunity to come together, share stories, and create new memories.

We're thrilled to announce our 2025 event schedule will be released

soon! Stay tuned for more details—there will be fantastic opportunities to connect, learn, and grow together.

As we move through November, let's keep this quote in mind: "Gratitude turns what we have into enough." Here's to embracing thankfulness and cherishing the abundance in our lives.

Wishing you all a November filled with warmth, gratitude, and joyful gatherings.  
Happy November, everyone!



**Kristin Brindley**  
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# MARY BETH + DEEPTI FRANCISCO NAYYAR AVENUES STAGE + DESIGN

## EXPERTLY STAGING THE CAROLINAS

Mary Beth Francisco and Deepti Nayyar are more than just co-owners of AVENUES Stage + Design; they are a dynamic duo whose complementary strengths have redefined the staging landscape in the Carolinas. With a shared commitment to excellence and innovation, they embody the essence of partnership, proving that two driven women can create something extraordinary when they unite their passions and expertise. Their journey together is marked by resilience, creativity, and a steadfast belief in their mission to transform homes and elevate the selling experience.

### » partner spotlight

By George Paul Thomas  
Photos by Don Elrod



### A Unique Partnership

The inception of AVENUES Stage + Design was not born from friendship but from the shared vision of two confident women. Mary Beth, an Accredited Staging Professional Master (ASPM), and Deepti, an Accredited Staging Professional (ASP), met through their local professional organization, both proudly accredited by the International Association of Home Staging Professionals (IAHSP). Their initial connection stemmed from mutual respect for professional capabilities and aspirations.

Deepti has lived in Charlotte since middle school, earning her identity as a proud Tarheel. Before transitioning to staging, she enjoyed a successful investment banking and real estate career. While staging her own investment properties, she recognized the vast potential of home staging as a business opportunity. "I realized how impactful staging could be, not just for my properties but for the real estate market as a whole," Deepti explains.

On the other hand, Mary Beth is a Virginia Tech Hokie who moved to Charlotte in 1993 from Lynchburg, Virginia. With a background in elementary education, she always possessed a creative and entrepreneurial spirit. Her decision to leave her teaching career and venture into staging was fueled by her desire to explore her creativity and build something of her own. "I've always loved being innovative and taking risks," Mary Beth shares. "Starting AVENUES was the perfect way to combine my love for design with my entrepreneurial ambitions."

### Navigating Challenges

Together, they co-founded AVENUES Stage + Design in the



summer of 2019, just months before the COVID-19 pandemic reshaped the real estate market. "The challenges of the pandemic revealed our true resilience," Deepti recalls. "We not only survived; we thrived by thinking outside the box." Mary Beth adds, "Our growth during that time was a testament to our adaptability and commitment to our clients. We learned to pivot and adjust our strategies to meet the market's evolving needs."

The first year in business they were proved to be a defining moment for both women. The pandemic posed significant challenges, especially during the spring market, typically the busiest time for real estate. Rather than succumbing to adversity, Mary Beth and Deepti embraced the situation, focusing on creative solutions. "We made great lemonade out of those lemons," Deepti quips. They fostered strong relationships with clients and realtors, prioritizing open communication and collaboration to navigate the uncertainties.

“  
Starting AVENUES was the perfect way to combine my love for design with my entrepreneurial ambitions.



### Defining Roles and Responsibilities

Deepti oversees fulfillment, inventory, and procurement in their respective roles, ensuring that AVENUES Stage + Design is always equipped with diverse staging options. "I take pride in curating our inventory to meet our clients' varying tastes and preferences," Deepti explains. Meanwhile, Mary Beth focuses on sales and marketing, cultivating relationships with clients and real estate partners. "Building trust with our partners is essential," she asserts. "It's not just about staging homes; it's about creating lasting partnerships that benefit everyone involved."



Together, they curate diverse styles for their staging projects, ensuring that every home is presented in a way that reflects its unique character and appeal. “We believe that every home deserves to be marketed to its fullest potential,” emphasizes Mary Beth. “Our approach is not ‘one style fits all’—we pride ourselves on our adaptability.” This commitment to personalization has become a hallmark of their service, allowing them to connect deeply with clients and showcase each property’s best features.

**Commitment to Community**

AVENUES Stage + Design operates with a philosophy of partnership and community involvement. Their tagline, “Expertly Staging the Carolinas since 2019,” reflects their dedication to delivering exceptional service. “Our realtor partners know that when they reach out, the answer is always ‘yes,’” Deepti states, emphasizing their dedication to going above and beyond



for their clients. This commitment extends beyond business; both women are actively engaged in philanthropic efforts, supporting the same four non-profits over the past five years, including Foster Village Charlotte and the American Heart Association.

Community involvement is not just a responsibility for Mary Beth and Deepti; it’s a core belief that shapes their business ethos. They contribute to various local organizations, believing in the importance of giving back. “We’ve made it a point to donate a percentage of our staging income to causes we believe in,” Mary Beth notes. Their engagement in community service helps build connections while making a positive impact on those around them.

**Personal Insights**

Outside of their professional lives, Mary Beth and Deepti cherish time with their families. Mary Beth resides in South Charlotte with her partner, Carlos, and their two rescue dogs, Corbin and Callie. After raising four children, she has learned to be an empty nester. She enjoys cheering on her favorite sports teams, attending live concerts, and volunteering for various causes. “I cherish my quiet time and try to balance recharging and connecting. I love spending quality time with my adult children and finding new adventures, whether a weekend get-away or working on home improvement projects,” Mary Beth shares.

Deepti lives in Waxhaw with her husband, Vineet, and their two daughters, Sysha and Saiena. Family traditions

are significant, and she values hosting weekly dinners with her extended family. “Family is everything to me. Every Tuesday night, we gather for dinner, a tradition that keeps us connected,” Deepti emphasizes. She also enjoys traveling and creating lasting memories with her loved ones. Recently, she celebrated her birthday by taking her family on a memorable trip to Anguilla, highlighting her commitment to cherishing family experiences.

Mary Beth and Deepti are motivated by the quote, “I didn’t come this far only to come this far.” Looking to the future, they aim to expand their

warehouse, team, and truck fleet, ensuring AVENUES Stage + Design continues to lead the industry. “We’re excited about what’s next and committed to growing our business while maintaining the quality and service our clients expect,” Deepti states.

**A Partnership for Success**

As they reflect on their journey, both women agree that their partnership mentality and solution-based approach set them apart in the staging industry. “We’re here to support our realtor partners and their clients through every step of the staging process,” Mary Beth emphasizes. “If you need

it, we’ll find a way to make it happen.” Their ability to adapt and innovate in an ever-changing market has established them as trusted partners in the real estate community.

**Ready to elevate your property with expert staging?** Reach out to Mary Beth and Deepti at AVENUES Stage + Design at 704-800-5650, and follow them on Instagram @avenuesstage for inspiration and updates on their latest projects.



“  
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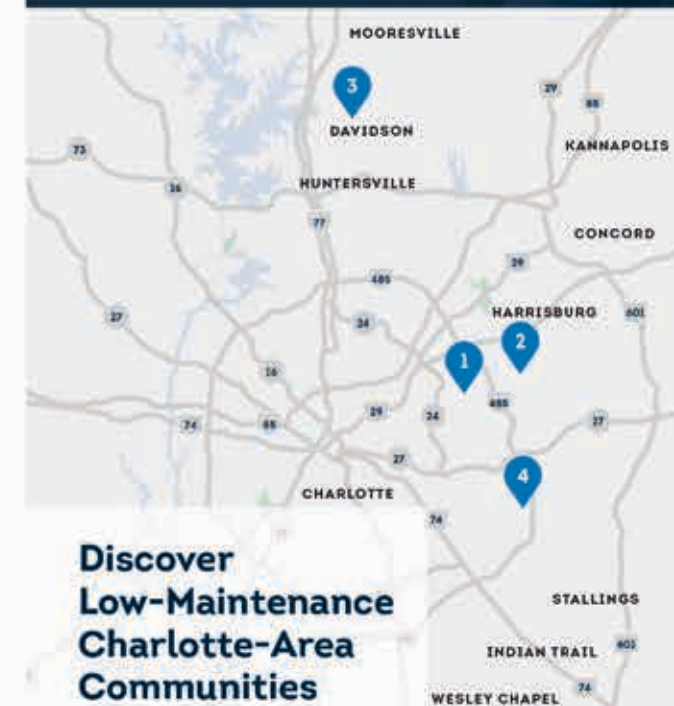


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# SIERRA

» rising star

By George Paul Thomas  
Photos by Don Elrod

# GARREN

## EMPOWERING GENERATIONS

In the ever-evolving world of real estate, certain individuals stand out not just for their sales figures but for their stories, passion, and the values they bring to the table. Sierra Garren, a solo agent with Keller Williams Connected, is a rising star. Sierra's journey into real estate is as compelling as the homes she helps her clients discover.

### Creating a Firm Ground

Sierra's journey is one of resilience and determination. Born and raised in Clover, South Carolina, she was one of five children in a single-parent household. With her father incarcerated and her mother struggling to find stable work, Sierra learned the value of hard work early. At 13, she began working at a local movie store, and by 16, she was balancing high school with a 30-hour workweek, paying for her own clothes, car, and braces.

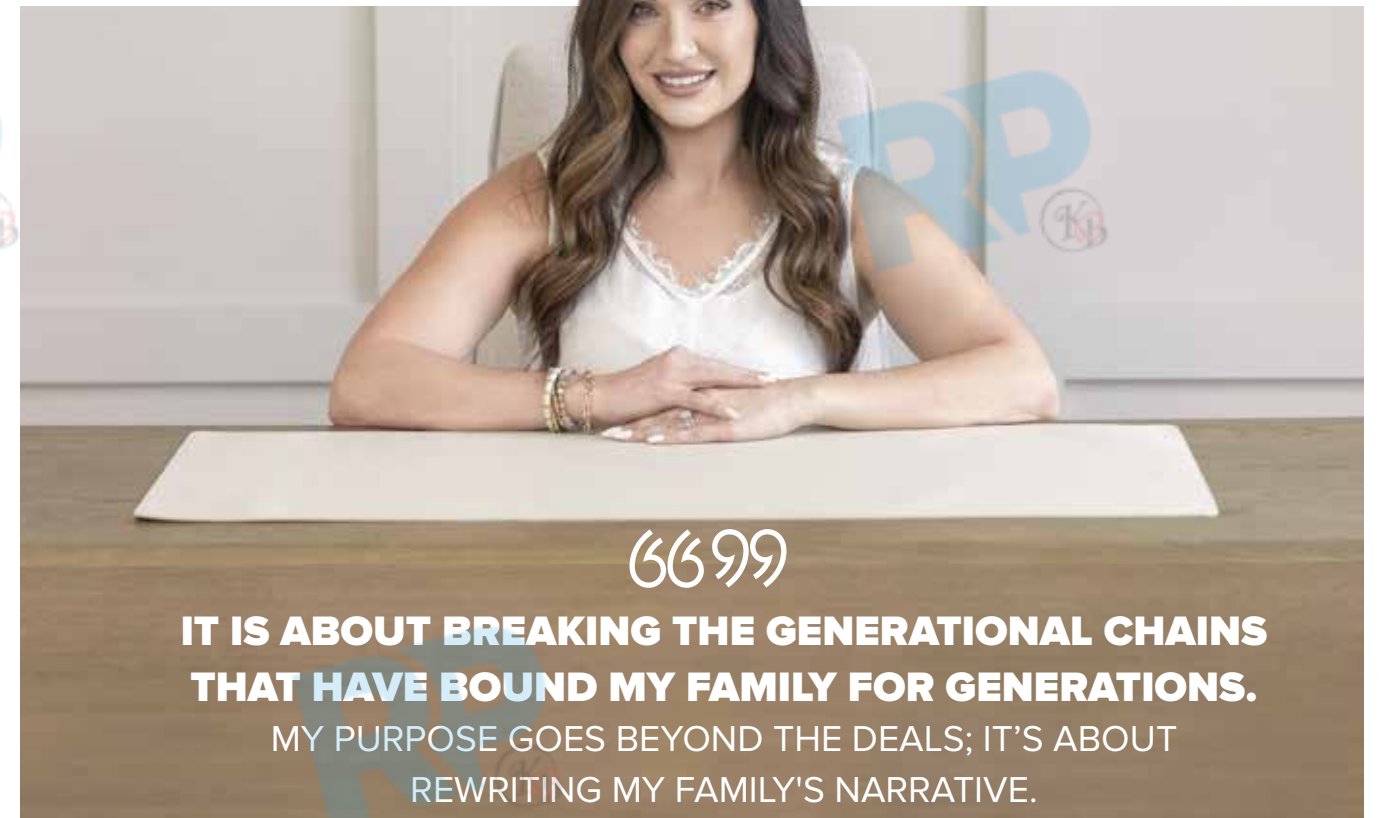
Her drive led her to become the youngest store manager at a nationwide retail company at just 17, achieving the highest sales on the East Coast. After high school, she continued working while pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Business Management with a minor in Accounting. A job at Dillard's led her to meet her husband, a United States Marine, sparking life changes, including marriage and a growing interest in real estate when they purchased their first home.

Sierra's real estate career began in March 2022 after years of working part-time and being encouraged by her real estate agent. Her passion for real estate is deeply personal, rooted in her desire

to break the generational chains of poverty that marked her upbringing. "As I began my journey into real estate, my 'why' became crystal clear: it is about breaking the generational chains that have bound my family for generations," she says. "My purpose goes beyond the deals; it's about rewriting my family's narrative," Sierra explains. "I want my children to look at me and see a role model who dared to defy the odds. Real estate is my tool to provide my family a stable and secure environment and help other families do the same."

What sets Sierra apart is her genuine care for her clients. She goes above and beyond to provide a personal experience, building trust and lasting relationships. "My clients truly become family to me," she shares. For Sierra, real estate is not just about transactions; it's about making a difference in people's lives while building a stable future for her family.

In her first full year as a solo agent with Keller Williams, Sierra closed 23 transactions totaling \$6.8 million, earning recognition as one of the top 25 agents in her brokerage. Her 2024 goal is to reach \$15 million in production with 40 transactions, a target she is on track to achieve.



““””

**IT IS ABOUT BREAKING THE GENERATIONAL CHAINS  
THAT HAVE BOUND MY FAMILY FOR GENERATIONS.**

MY PURPOSE GOES BEYOND THE DEALS; IT'S ABOUT  
REWRITING MY FAMILY'S NARRATIVE.



Bonding and Belonging

Sierra has been married to her husband, Raymond Garren, for 12 years, a journey that began when they met in December 2011 while he was recruiting for the Marine Corps. Six months later, they were married, and Sierra left her hometown behind to begin life as a Marine wife at Cherry Point Air Station. They have two daughters, Zoey (10) and Lily (5). Their family life is often centered around the softball and soccer fields, but they also cherish traveling and camping adventures with friends and loved ones.

The Garren family is rounded out by three dogs: Copper, a rescue they’ve had since they got married, and Ella and Finley, two Labradoodles they adopted after losing their family Lab, Daisy. Although Sierra and Raymond once fostered dogs through Lucky Labs in Charlotte, they decided to focus on their growing family and now enjoy the companionship of their three furry friends.

When Sierra isn’t working, which her friends might joke is her main hobby, she loves spending time with her family and friends and exploring food and coffee spots around the



Charlotte area. Mornings often find her at the gym, where she kicks off her day with a workout. She also enjoys pampering days that involve facials, coffee, and relaxing at home with movies and her loved ones.

Sierra’s commitment to her community is evident in her involvement with local charities. She enjoys giving back, mainly through back-to-school events where she collects and donates supplies to local schools, bringing the community together to help kids in need.

Looking Into the Future

As Sierra reflects on her journey, she is guided by the belief, “You define your own life. Don’t let other people write your script.” This mindset has fueled both her personal and professional success. To her, success means more than just building a thriving real estate business; it’s about creating a stable, nurturing environment for her family and empowering others to achieve their dreams through homeownership.

Looking ahead, Sierra hopes to be a positive role model for her daughters, Zoey and Lily. She wants to show them that anything is possible with hard work and authenticity. Professionally, Sierra aims to build a recognizable brand in real estate that her daughters could one day take over, allowing her to retire debt-free by 50. She also envisions creating more affordable housing developments, a goal that reflects her commitment to making a difference in her community.

In her advice to aspiring top producers, Sierra emphasizes the importance of authenticity and perseverance. “Remember, real estate is a people business. Focus on building genuine relationships, and the business will follow. Success doesn’t come overnight, so be prepared to put in the work and stay committed to your goals.”

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# Giving Back Special Issue: THE RIPPLE EFFECT OF KINDNESS

Charlotte Real Producers is proud to highlight the inspiring stories of agents who are not only leaders in real estate but also in their communities. These individuals have gone above and beyond in their charitable efforts, dedicating their time, resources, and hearts to causes that make a real difference. From supporting local organizations to creating lasting change, they exemplify what it means to give back. We are honored to share their journeys and celebrate their commitment to making the world a better place, one act of kindness at a time.

Thank you for your dedication and for showing that real impact comes from caring for others!

## Ripples of Change: Stephen Gift

*6 Years of Giving Back*

**Inspiration to Give Back:** Stephen Gift's commitment to charitable activities was profoundly shaped by a family illness. "My sister's battle with leukemia over seven years pushed me to get involved in charity work," he shares.

**A Personal Connection:** Stephen's first experience with charity work is a deeply personal story. His sister's fight against leukemia and her eventual passing motivated him to contribute to causes that focus on finding a cure. "It's a long story, but watching her struggle and knowing there was more that could be done sparked my drive to make a difference."

**Current Charitable Involvement:** Stephen is actively involved with several organizations, including the *Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS)*, the *MS Society*, and the *Alzheimer's Association*.

**Memorable Moments:** One of Stephen's proudest moments came when he was able to dedicate a research project in honor of his sister, Lauren Gift. "Being able to contribute in her name is incredibly rewarding."

**Balancing Career with Charity:** Balancing his real estate career and charitable commitments is no easy feat for Stephen. "You have to overlap them and sometimes overextend yourself," he admits, but the cause makes it all worthwhile.

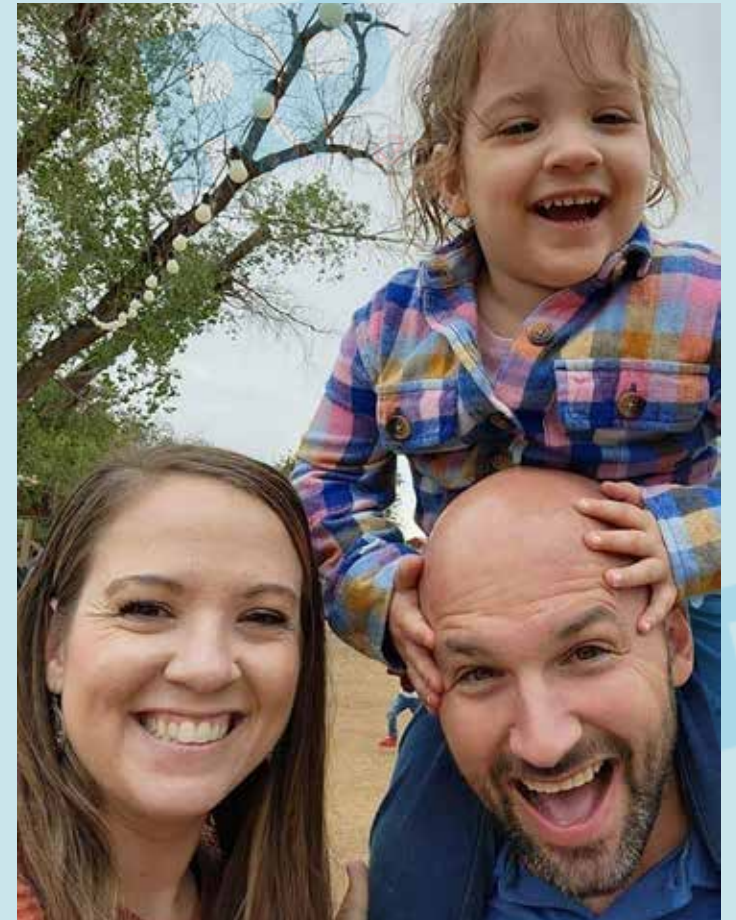
**Most Rewarding Aspect:** For Stephen, the most gratifying part of his charity work is seeing the tangible impact it has. "Raising funds for research and knowing it's in Lauren's name—it's a small way to keep her memory alive and contribute to something bigger."

**Influence on Real Estate Career:** Stephen acknowledges that while his charitable work hasn't directly influenced his real estate career, it has deepened his perspective on life and purpose.

**Proud Achievements:** One standout charitable project for Stephen was a recent *LLS* fundraiser, where he and his team raised over \$50,000. "That was a major milestone," he reflects.

**Motivation to Give Back:** Stephen's greatest motivation to continue giving back is the memory of his sister Lauren. "It's all for her," he says simply.

**Legacy and Motivation:** When it comes to legacy, Stephen hopes that his work will ensure that



his sister is remembered. "I want people to remember Lauren Gift, not just for her battle with leukemia, but for the strength she showed."

**A Motto to Live By:** Stephen holds close a verse that his late sister connected with during her life: *Proverbs 31:25* — "She is clothed with strength and dignity, and she laughs without fear of the future." It serves as a guiding light for his charitable endeavors.

**How You Can Help:** To support the *Leukemia & Lymphoma Society*, visit [LLS.org](https://lls.org) for more information on how to contribute to the fight against blood cancer.



## Ripples of Change: Greg Macaluso

10 Years of Giving Back

**Inspiration to Give Back:** Greg Macaluso's journey into charitable work was deeply personal, sparked by his daughter Penelope's cancer diagnosis. "To know you are part of making a difference in lives and helping build a brighter future is truly what it's all about," he shares.

**A Personal Connection:** Greg's charitable work is driven by his family's experience with blood cancers. Penelope was diagnosed with leukemia on June 17, 2020, and after two years of treatments, her fight continues with monthly blood draws and monitoring. "Watching her go through this was so hard for our family, especially during COVID with such uncertainty. But my little girl is pure inspiration," Greg says. His involvement with the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (LLS) is a deeply personal mission to advance life-saving research and improve treatments for others battling similar diseases.

**Memorable Moments:** In 2023, Greg was honored as a Visionary of the Year for LLS, earning the '23 National Patient Education & Support VOY Mission Pillar award. "Seeing how our efforts are having a direct impact on advancements in cancer treatments keeps us humble and grateful," he reflects. These accomplishments remind Greg of the importance of his ongoing work, not just for his family but for all those affected by cancer.

**Balancing Charity with Career:** Greg finds it challenging but rewarding to balance

his real estate career with his charitable work. "It's like working two jobs," he jokes but credits his supportive community for making it easier to merge his professional and charitable commitments through event planning and community gatherings.

**Proud Achievements:** Running for Visionary of the Year in 2023 is one of Greg's proudest charitable accomplishments. His involvement brought together different groups from his life and community, uniting them under a common cause—making a lasting impact on cancer research and support.

**A Message to Others:** Greg encourages fellow real estate professionals to participate in charitable activities. "We (realtors) are the voices of our community. If not us, then who?" he asks. His advice is simple: just ask. "People are more willing to help than you might think."

**Legacy and Motivation:** Greg's ultimate goal is to help find a cure for cancer and reduce treatment side effects, so it's not just about survival—it's about thriving. His daughter Penelope and his family continue to be his greatest source of motivation.

**How You Can Help:** To support Macaluso Family mission with the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, visit [www.thepowerofpills.com](http://www.thepowerofpills.com).



## Ripples of Change: Zach Ligon

15 Years of Giving Back

**Inspiration to Give Back:** Zach Ligon's passion for giving back is rooted in his love for helping others. However, it was the moment he became a father that truly solidified his dedication to charitable work. "Our family loves to help other families and children in need," he shares.

**A Personal Connection:** Zach's first impactful experience with charity work was attending Claire's Army Gala. Hearing the heartfelt stories of families facing childhood cancer opened his eyes to the profound impact the organization was making. "The work they do is incredible, and we knew we had to be a part of it."

**Current Charitable Involvement:** Zach actively supports both Claire's Army and *Go Jen Go*, dedicating his time and efforts to these organizations that provide aid to families in critical situations.

**Balancing Career with Charity:** Balancing his professional career with his charitable commitments is essential for Zach. "Our community is at the core of everything we do, and we make it a priority to give back to those who support us."

**Proud Achievements:** One of Zach's proudest moments came from organizing the first annual *Community Heroes Festival*, a family-friendly event that raised over \$30,000 for Claire's Army. "It was a great event that we plan to continue every year," he says.

**Rewarding Experiences:** The most rewarding aspect of Zach's involvement in charity



work is seeing families overcome their battles with cancer and knowing that he played a small part in that fight. "There's nothing more fulfilling than being a part of their journey."

**Impact on Real Estate Career:** Charity work is deeply intertwined with Zach's real estate career. "It's integrated into our daily routine—getting out in the community and volunteering is just part of who we are."

**Advice to Others:** Zach encourages real estate professionals to find a cause they are passionate about. "Make it a part of

your business and daily life. The rewards go far beyond what you might expect."

**Legacy and Motivation:** Zach hopes to see the *Community Heroes Festival* continue to grow and thrive long after his involvement. "It's a fun event for a great cause, and I want it to become something that lives on beyond me."

**A Quote to Live By:** "Control the Controllables."

**How You Can Help:** To support Claire's Army and its mission to help families facing childhood cancer, visit [www.claresarmy.org](http://www.claresarmy.org) to make a donation or get involved.





## Ripples of Change: Aubrey Grier

23 Years of Giving Back

**Inspiration to Give Back:** Aubrey Grier's commitment to charitable work stems from a deep need to give back to her community. "It's not just about success in business," she explains, "it's about using that success to uplift others."

**A Personal Connection:** One of Aubrey's most impactful experiences was co-founding *Hope for Holt*, a 501(c)(3) organization aimed at raising funds for research on Cystinosis, a rare disease her nephew was diagnosed with. "We raised close to \$1 million in just seven years through an annual gala," she recalls. The funds went directly to the *Cystinosis Research Foundation*, which is now in the final stages of finding a cure. "It showed me that when people come together with passion, they can make a real difference."

**Current Charitable Involvement:** Aubrey is actively involved with the *Homeowners Impact Fund* (HIF), an organization focused on collective giving within the real estate industry



to support Charlotte's homeless population. "We want to give back to those who need homes but can't access our services."

### Balancing Career with Charity:

As a board member of the *Homeowners Impact Fund*, Aubrey integrates charity into her professional life. "This year, we're hosting our first annual benefit to bring the real estate community together to support our homeless neighbors. It's about creating change as an industry."

**Most Rewarding Aspect:** Aubrey's most fulfilling part of her charity work is seeing what can be accomplished when people unite. "Working towards a shared goal can truly change lives."

**Influence on Real Estate Career:** Aubrey's charitable work has given her a broader perspective on the housing industry. "The real estate market is tough for buyers right now, but an entire population isn't even able to participate in the market. We have to remember those who are struggling."

**Integrating Business with Charity:** The *Homeowners Impact Fund* is specifically designed to connect the success of the real estate industry with charitable giving. "If everyone who benefits from this industry contributes a little—whether it's realtors, builders, lenders, or attorneys—we can give a lot."

**Proud Achievements:** Aubrey is incredibly proud of *Hope for Holt* and its impact on Cystinosis research, and she's excited about the upcoming *Homeowners Impact Fund* benefit in November.

**Motivation to Give Back:** Aubrey believes that homelessness is often just a result of one life-altering event, such as a lost paycheck or a divorce. "The divide between those with homes and those without is smaller than most people realize. It could happen to anyone."



**Advice to Others:** Aubrey encourages other real estate professionals to give back. "It feels good to use your success to make a difference."

**Encouraging Others to Participate:** Aubrey spreads the word about HIF, noting that everyone can contribute in their own way. "We're not asking anyone to give up their other charitable passions; we just want to remind the people in our industry to think about those who can't access our services the traditional way."

**Legacy and Motivation:** Aubrey hopes to leave behind a legacy of full-circle success, where professional achievements go hand in hand with giving back to the community.

**A Motto to Live By:** While Aubrey doesn't have a specific quote, she believes in making charity work a lifelong commitment. "It's not about doing everything all at once; it's about doing what you can when you can. It's a journey, not a sprint."

**How You Can Help:** To support the *Homeowners Impact Fund* and its mission to help Charlotte's homeless, visit [www.homeownersimpactfund.org](http://www.homeownersimpactfund.org) for donation opportunities and more information.

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## Ripples of Change: Ashley Cameron

10+ Years of Giving Back

**Inspiration to Give Back:** Ashley Cameron's motivation to give back is rooted in her deep desire to help animals. "My passion for animals has always driven me to make a difference," she shares.

**A Personal Connection:** Ashley began volunteering with animal rescue organizations before attending law school, a commitment she has continued ever since. "The experience of helping animals in need stuck with me, and it's something I've integrated into my life."

**Current Charitable Involvement:** Ashley actively supports various animal rescues, dedicating her time and efforts to helping save and rehabilitate animals in need.



**Balancing Charity with Career:** Ashley seamlessly blends her professional real estate career with her charitable work. "I've found a way to combine both passions," she says, emphasizing how interconnected they've become in her life.

**Proud Achievements:** One of Ashley's proudest charitable projects is *Bark in the Park*, an annual event she hosts to raise funds for animal rescues and encourage adoptions. "It's an incredible event that brings people in the real estate industry and the community together to support a great cause."

**Impact on Career:** Hosting *Bark in the Park* has allowed Ashley to engage with fellow real estate professionals while contributing to a cause she cares about. "It's not only a fun event but also a meaningful way to bring people together for a common purpose."

**Legacy and Motivation:** For Ashley, seeing the positive impact her efforts have on both the rescue organizations and the animals they save is deeply rewarding. "It's amazing to see the difference we can make, and knowing that it helps make our community better keeps me motivated."

**A Message to Others:** Ashley encourages fellow real estate professionals to get involved in charitable activities. "Do it. It's a lot of work, but the sense of accomplishment you feel is worth every minute."

**Encouraging Participation:** Each year, Ashley invites her colleagues and clients to participate in *Bark in the Park*, creating an inclusive space for everyone to get involved and support animal rescue efforts.

**How You Can Help:** To support Ashley's charitable work, consider participating in or donating to local animal rescues or attending her *Bark in the Park* event to contribute to the cause.

## Ripples of Change: Tyler Bullock of Motivation Mortgage

3 Years of Giving Back



**Inspiration to Give Back:** Tyler Bullock, founder of Motivation Mortgage, believes that giving back is an integral part of success. "I've always enjoyed giving back. I feel very fortunate to have found the success I have in life, and I want to use that success to help as many people as I can," he says.

**A Personal Connection:** The charitable organizations Tyler supports are deeply personal to him. Motivation Mortgage donates to both ALS research and breast cancer awareness. "Some of my team members lost some close friends to ALS, and supporting research to find a cure is a cause close to our hearts. We also support breast cancer awareness, as we've seen firsthand the impact of this disease."

**Balancing Charity with Career:** Tyler seamlessly integrates charitable work into his business. "I try to incorporate them so that I don't need to balance



it. As a company, we donate to charities and host a major fundraiser every year for ALS research. We also sponsor a breast cancer awareness golf tournament.

**Most Rewarding Aspect:** For Tyler, the most rewarding aspect of being involved in charities is knowing the

impact of their efforts. "Being around people who have first-hand experience with the diseases that the charities we work with support, I know how much the money we're able to raise helps people afflicted with those conditions," he reflects.

**Proud Achievements:** Tyler takes immense pride in Motivation Mortgage's annual ALS Benefit. "Our biggest project is a crawfish boil, which is entirely sponsor-funded so that 100% of donations go directly to ALS research. Knowing we are helping in the fight to find a cure is incredibly rewarding."



**A Message to Others:** For Tyler, giving back is about leaving a positive impact. "I want to leave the world a better place than I found it, and this work is how I can do that," he shares. He encourages other professionals to get involved: "Find something personal to you and go out there and do it. Don't be afraid to start small—every little bit helps!"

**Legacy and Motivation:** Tyler's motivation to continue giving comes from his desire to make a lasting difference. "Knowing people who have experienced the impact of ALS and breast cancer firsthand, I know how important it is to support these causes," he reflects.

**How You Can Help:** To support ALS research, visit <https://donate.als.org>. Your donations help bring hope to those affected by this devastating disease.



## Ripples of Change: Preston Sandlin

28 Years of Giving Back

**Inspiration to Give Back:** For Preston Sandlin, the motivation to get involved in charitable activities stems from a heartfelt desire to leave the world better than he found it. “I want to make a positive impact and inspire others to do the same,” he shares.

**A Personal Connection:** Preston’s first experience with charity work took place during his college years when his fraternity raised money to buy toys for underprivileged children. “I was one of the Santa Clauses who delivered gifts just days before Christmas,” he recalls. “Seeing the joy on those kids’ faces, many of whom were living in dire situations, was unforgettable. In that moment, I realized how powerful a small act of kindness can be.”

**Current Charitable Involvement:** Through Home Inspection Carolina, Preston actively supports numerous organizations,

including The Humane Society, Cindy’s Hope Chest, the Charlotte Food Bank, the American Cancer Society, Susan G. Komen, and Mental Health America, among others. His commitment to giving back is woven into the fabric of his business.

**Balancing Charity with Career:** For Preston, charitable contributions are integral to Home Inspection Carolina’s marketing strategy. Inspired by the model of Toms Shoes, he believes that blending business with philanthropy creates a win-win scenario for everyone involved.

**Proud Achievements:** One of Preston’s proudest moments was when he paid all his inspectors for a day so they could volunteer for Realtor Care Day. “All of our charitable projects matter to me,” he emphasizes. “Every effort counts, and I believe they contribute to a greater good.”



**Legacy and Motivation:** Motivated by a desire to set a good example for his children, Preston hopes to leave behind a legacy of kindness and compassion. “I want my kids to experience the best version of themselves and to understand the importance of giving back,” he states. His mantra, “Leave it better than you found it,” encapsulates his life philosophy.

**A Message to Others:** For real estate professionals looking to get involved in charitable activities, Preston advises, “Just do it. Helping others not only supports those in need, but it can also lift your own spirits.” He believes that acts of kindness can help combat feelings of depression and encourage a more positive outlook on life.

**Encouraging Participation:** To inspire his colleagues and clients to engage in charitable initiatives, Preston leads by example. He believes that demonstrating his commitment to giving back encourages others to follow suit.

**Favorite Quote:** Preston’s guiding principle is simple yet profound: “Leave it better than you found it.” This motto serves as a constant reminder of his mission to make a difference.

**Artistic Contributions:** In addition to his charitable efforts, Preston is also an artist and has generously donated many of his paintings for charitable auctions. His creativity extends beyond the canvas as he seeks to support those in need through various avenues.

**How You Can Help:** To join Preston in making a difference, consider supporting your local charities or initiatives that resonate with you. Every small effort contributes to the greater good.

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## Ripples of Change: Holly LaMonica, Head of Charities at The Burris Group

4 Years of Giving Back

**Inspiration to Give Back:** Holly LaMonica's journey into charitable work began with a call for help from the Mayor of Tega Cay, the husband of Linda O'Neal (ReMax Executive Agent). "He asked if I could lead an event to raise Christmas gifts for local families, and I was honored to take on the challenge. I was scared to fail, but it has since grown into a staple event for the community," she shares.

**A Personal Connection:** Holly's first major experience with charity work was taking over a dormant event. "It had been let go before I came on board, and reviving it was a challenge. But seeing the impact it made motivated me to push even harder."

**Current Charitable Work:** Holly now organizes two annual events through The Burris Group. One is *Pack The Back*, which raises school supplies for local children and also for the teachers' needs and supplies for the years. Her pride and joy is *Toys for Happiness*, an event dedicated to collecting unwrapped Christmas gifts for local families in need.



**Memorable Moments:** One particularly touching memory for Holly was during the 7th year of organizing *Pack The Back* Poker Run, where the community came together more for the cause than the fun. "We raised more money and items than ever before. People are attending for the right reasons! One year for *Toys for Happiness*, we set out to collect bikes. We managed to raise nearly 20 bikes on top of our regular toy donations. After all, what's Christmas without a bike under the tree?"

**Balancing Charity and Career:** Holly has found ways to integrate her charitable work with her career in real estate. "The Burris Group by Cherie Burris sponsors all of my events. We have other agents in our office who donate their time and resources to help make these events successful. I've even partnered with local businesses, like The Frick Firm, to sponsor many of our initiatives."

**The Most Rewarding Aspect:** "Watching people from all walks of life come together for a common good is incredibly rewarding. We're not just helping those in need—we're strengthening our community in the process."

**Impact on Her Real Estate Career:** Holly's charitable work has influenced her approach to real estate. "It's taught me the importance of helping everyone, whether it's a big listing or something smaller. Everyone deserves help."



**Proud Achievements:** One of Holly's proudest projects is *Toys for Happiness*. "It's not just about collecting toys. With the money raised from raffle tickets, I get to take my children shopping to fulfill Christmas wish lists for other kids. Recently, we partnered with a local school to support families in our district. Knowing we're making a difference close to home is incredibly touching."

**Motivation to Give Back:** Holly's motivation comes from her children. "They learn so much from these events. Many of the kids we help will eventually attend school with mine. If I can teach my kids to give and love while helping their future peers, I feel complete."

**A Message to Others:** Holly encourages other real estate professionals to get involved. "Donations are great, but giving your time is just as valuable, if not more. Every little bit helps."

**Inspiring Participation:** Holly leads by example, and her colleagues and clients naturally follow. "Haha, they all help me! I couldn't do it without their time and energy."

**Legacy and Values:** Holly hopes to leave behind a legacy of community values. "It's all about teaching our children the true value of giving."

**A Guiding Quote:** Holly's favorite motto is: "What might seem small to you could be someone else's everything!"

**How You Can Help:** Join The Burris Group at the *Toy for Happiness* Golf Cart Poker Run, which will be held on December 9th. For more information, you can email Holly at HDLaMonica@gmail.com.

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## Ripples of Change: Perry Silver

10 Years of Giving Back

**Inspiration to Give Back:** Perry Silver's commitment to charitable activities stems from the lessons instilled by his parents. "My parents ensured that my sister and I understood how *lucky we had* it growing up. Having a strong empathetic core helps me when dealing with clients and their inevitable ups and downs," he shares.

**A Personal Connection:** Perry's first experience with charity work occurred at 13 when he volunteered with the NYC charity Midnight Run. "We left our church at 11 PM on a Friday and spent four hours driving across Manhattan, hand-delivering food and clothes directly to the unhoused. My perspective was immediately altered; I had passed these tent cities for years, never thinking about the people calling them home."

**Current Involvement:** Perry's philanthropic efforts are extensive. He recently returned from Asheville, where he helped Samaritan's Purse with disaster relief. He actively works with local charities, such as Youth Villages, Family Forward Charlotte, and Roof Above. Perry and his brokerage, Dickens Mitchener Real Estate, are heavily involved with The Homeowner's Impact Fund, providing urgent needs



to Charlotte's unhoused population. Additionally, he is the 2024 Main Sponsor for Charlotte City Tennis (Charlotte's leader in public tennis instruction) and just purchased benches for all the courts in Freedom Park. As the Alumni Liaison for UNC-Chapel Hill's Department of Dramatic Arts, Perry raises awareness for the department's needs, including scholarships and

fundraising projects. He also hopes to support his old summer camp, Falling Creek Camp, with its scholarship program. Furthermore, he chairs Canopy's Marketing Group, promoting CANOPY's Housing Foundation and its impactful work.

**Memorable Moments:** One of Perry's recent impactful experiences involved spending a day volunteering to help those affected by Hurricane Helene. "At the end of the day, I was dirty, exhausted, and starving. But I also knew I was returning to my warm home in Charlotte, NC. It's always good to gain extra perspective on how fortunate I am."

**Balancing Charity with Career:** Perry finds that his charitable commitments enhance his professional relationships. "I think my clients appreciate that I care about my community. If I can care passionately about helping strangers, my clients can assume I'll also care passionately about helping them."

**Proud Achievements:** One of Perry's proudest moments was working with my 2023 CANOPY Leadership Academy classmates to convince our Board of Directors to donate \$30,000 towards Families Forward Charlotte. That organization does so much with so little. It was thrilling to see their faces when we presented that check!

**Legacy and Motivation:** Perry's legacy goal is simple yet profound: "I just want my son to be proud of me. I hope he understands the incredible joy of helping someone else."

**A Guiding Quote:** "Once in a while, you can get shown the light, in the strangest of places if you look at it right," Perry reflects, highlighting the power of perspective in giving back.

**How You Can Help:** To support these charitable initiatives, visit: Youth Villages ([youthvillages.org/](https://youthvillages.org/)) Families Forward Charlotte ([familiesforwardcharlotte.org](https://familiesforwardcharlotte.org)) Roof Above ([roofabove.org](https://roofabove.org)) Homeowner's Impact Fund ([homeownersimpactfund.org](https://homeownersimpactfund.org)) Falling Creek Camp ([fallingcreek.com/giving](https://fallingcreek.com/giving)) Canopy Housing Foundation ([canopyhousingfoundation.org/](https://canopyhousingfoundation.org/))



## Ripples of Change: Magda Esola

22+ Years of Giving Back

**Inspiration to Give Back:** For Magda Esola, giving back is part of the price we pay for living in this world. "It fills my heart and soul," she says, explaining her motivation to contribute to various causes that impact housing and education, as well as the fight against hunger.

**A Personal Connection:** Magda recalls a powerful experience from last Christmas when she volunteered at a dinner for the homeless in Charlotte. "There were round tables with white tablecloths and beautiful fancy napkins, a live band, and we served a delicious meal to the homeless." She had meaningful conversations with those in attendance, many of whom shared stories about how they came to be homeless. Some were veterans, others survivors of divorce or abuse. "They told me they were born for greatness," she recalls, moved by their stories. "I believe we change the world one conversation at a time."

**Current Charitable Involvements:** Magda is actively involved with several organizations, including Build On. This year, she will travel to Senegal with her sister and a group of volunteers to build an elementary school in a remote village. "We won't just be impacting kids' lives, but generations to come," she says. She also supports local food banks and organizations that provide housing to those in need.



**Memorable Moments:** One of the projects Magda is particularly proud of is the elementary school she will be helping build in Senegal. "I raised \$4k from generous donors," she shares, excited about the impact this will have on children who otherwise wouldn't have the opportunity to attend school.

**Balancing Career and Charity:** Balancing her real estate career with charitable work is no easy task, but Magda manages by living intentionally and keeping a tight schedule. "I sacrifice personal time, but it's worth it," she says, explaining that she views charity work as a critical part of her life.

**Proud Achievements:** Magda is also proud of her work with the Canopy Realtor Association and its Housing Foundation, which builds homes for veterans and organizes charitable events throughout the year.

**A Message to Others:** Her advice to other real estate professionals who want to get involved in charity work is simple: "Just do it. It will make you feel fulfilled and happier." Magda believes that her involvement in charitable causes has made her a stronger professional and a more empathetic individual.

**Legacy and Motivation:** Magda hopes to be remembered as a role model who brought about positive social change. "We get by giving," she says, summarizing her mantra and belief in the power of service.

**How You Can Help:** To support Magda's efforts in Senegal, visit the Build On fundraiser at [act.buildon.org/fundraiser/5121178](https://act.buildon.org/fundraiser/5121178). Although she has reached her initial fundraising goal, additional donations will benefit the adults in the village as well.



## Ripples of Change: Lisa McCrossan

### 10 Years of Giving Back

**Inspiration to Give Back:** Lisa McCrossan is driven by her love for service and her commitment to giving back. “Nothing makes me feel better than to give back,” she says. Her passion for helping others has been a core part of her life since childhood.

**A Personal Connection:** Lisa’s first foray into charity work came at the age of 9 when she helped care for babies and toddlers with Down syndrome at a swimming pool. That early experience ignited her lifelong dedication to making a difference in the lives of others. Today, she supports several organizations, including Beds Equals Dreams, Turning Point, and The Heartest Yard. Her involvement with Turning Point, a domestic violence shelter, stems from personal experience with emotional abuse in her first marriage, giving her a deep connection to the cause.

**Memorable Moments:** One of Lisa’s most rewarding charitable experiences is with Beds Equals Dreams, where she helps build and deliver beds to children who don’t have one. “The best day is



distributing the beds and seeing how happy the children are,” she beams. Witnessing the joy on the children’s faces when they receive their very first bed is an unforgettable moment.

**Balancing Charity with Career:** Lisa integrates her charity work into her professional life by making it a priority. “If I can’t give back with my time, I make sure to donate monetarily,” she explains. She also hosts charity events like her annual Christmas ornament exchange party, where guests bring much-needed donations for Turning Point.

**Proud Achievements:** Lisa takes pride in the Christmas ornament exchange party, combining fellowship with friends and giving back during the holidays. She’s also started a family-friendly car show at Longview Country Club, with proceeds benefiting Turning Point. “Next year will be our third annual event, and it’s already a beloved tradition,” she shares.



**A Message to Others:** Lisa encourages real estate professionals to find a cause that resonates with them and commit fully. “Pick something near and dear to your heart and go all in!” she advises.

**Legacy and Motivation:** While Lisa humbly believes she is just “a small cog in the wheel,” she is motivated by the inspiring work of people like Greg and Kara Olsen, founders of The Heartest Yard, and Jessie Lindberg at Turning Point. Supporting these causes brings joy and fulfillment to her life.

**How You Can Help:** To support Lisa’s causes, you can donate to Turning Point at [turningpointnc.org/donate](http://turningpointnc.org/donate), The Heartest Yard at [receptionsforresearch.org](http://receptionsforresearch.org), or Beds Equals Dreams at [harrisonchurch.org/missions/beds-equal-dreams](http://harrisonchurch.org/missions/beds-equal-dreams).



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## Ripples of Change: Adam Tennant

2 Years of Giving Back

**Inspiration to Give Back:** For Adam Tennant, focusing on impact over income has always been at the core of his mission. “Before I got into this business, my goal was to prioritize how I could make a difference,” he explains. “God blessed us with the ability to help our neighbors, and we were excited to have the opportunity to make a difference.” His faith and desire to serve have been driving forces behind his charitable work, prompting him to take action whenever possible.

**A Personal Connection:** Adam’s first major charitable effort came through Operation Airdrop, where he played a pivotal role in supporting the Charlotte Metro community during a time of need. “On September 28, we were asked to run the trucking operations while Operation Airdrop was in town helping Western North Carolina (WNC),” he recalls. Over just six days, his team helped transport an astonishing 1.5 million pounds of supplies, flying over 400,000 pounds into WNC to support those affected by the crisis. “Each day was filled with the impossible task of loading donations onto our trucks and delivering them to various drop sites, but it was incredibly rewarding to see how our efforts made a tangible difference.”

**Balancing Charity with Career:** While balancing his professional life with charitable efforts has been challenging, Adam credits his strong management team



for allowing him to focus on his charity work. “Right now, it’s been tricky to make that balance, but thankfully, we have a strong management team,” he shares. “I’ve been able to continue helping the Helene victims while Miracle Movers remains the best moving company in Charlotte.” He emphasizes that it takes dedication and organization to manage both spheres, but the reward of helping others makes it worthwhile.

**Proud Achievements:** Among his many contributions, Adam is particularly proud of his work with Helene victims. “The joy that comes from being the hands and feet of Christ and witnessing the relief on people’s faces when they receive this vital aid has been life-changing,” he reflects. His work with Operation Airdrop has strengthened his belief in the power of community, showing him that collective efforts can lead to incredible outcomes.

**A Message to Others:** Adam encourages other real estate professionals to use their resources and influence for good. “Just



do it,” he advises. “Take care of yourself first so you can care for others. Find a cause that resonates with you and use whatever God has placed in your hands to bring about change.” By sharing his own experiences and the joy that comes from giving back, he hopes to inspire others to get involved in their communities.



**Legacy and Motivation:** Adam’s vision for the future is to equip WNC communities to serve their neighbors independently. “I hope to leave a legacy of resilience and empowerment,” he states. “When we get there, I’ll know we played a role in restoring hope in WNC.” His faith in the resilience of the people he serves motivates him to continue giving back, as he sees the incredible strength and determination of those affected by hardship.

**How You Can Help:** To support Adam’s ongoing efforts, donations can be made through “Brian Ottinger Ministries,” where he continues his work to deliver generators and heaters to communities that will be without power for months. “Every contribution counts,” Adam emphasizes, “and your support can truly make a difference in the lives of those who need it most.”



# Ripples of Change

We proudly highlight real estate professionals and preferred partners who are making waves through their charitable efforts. These individuals go beyond the call of duty, dedicating their time and resources to causes that matter. Their commitment to giving back creates ripples of positive change in our community, and we are excited to share the impact they are making.



"I volunteer primarily through my children's school as the room parent for all of their classrooms, at school events and activities, on lunch duty to give the teachers breaks, and in other ways; and at our church, Good Shepherd. I've also volunteered with Big Brothers Big Sisters, Crisis Assistance Ministry, and the Humane Society - all missions that hold a special place for me."  
— **Stefanie Janky, Allen Tate Realtors**



"One of my biggest dreams is to expand REALTORS® Read into a national program. We donate books to local kindergarten students in Title I schools, partnering with First Book, a literacy nonprofit."  
— **Ken Riel, Compass**



"Every year, our team chooses a charity to support, and this year, we decided to continue our partnership with Change Please. An incredible organization, they help survivors of domestic violence and trafficking by providing training and job placement. We're raising \$25,000 to build an on-site daycare for them. As the leader of an all-female team, I never want my employees to have to choose between work or caring for their kids. I offer maternity leave income and have a pack-and-play in the office to support their transition back. It's not perfect, but it's important to me to support their goals—and I get baby snuggles, too."  
— **Alison Alston, eXp Realty**



"I give monthly to support causes in Ethiopia, and we also support the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society."  
— **Patricia Shropshire, Ivester Jackson Distinctive Properties - Christie's International**



"I have been involved in supporting affordable housing efforts in Charlotte and am a proud supporter of The Homeowners Impact Fund, started by Vicky Mitchener."  
— **Anne Stuart Mitchener, Dickens Mitchener Residential Real Estate**



"I regularly help with Habitat for Humanity and coach with Team Curry, which helps young athletes earn scholarships. I'm proud to have helped around 50 kids secure full-ride scholarships."  
— **David Wishon, Keller Williams Premier**



"Annually, I enjoy cochairing the fundraising gala for Braveworks, an organization that helps women who have been rescued from the sex trade, left abusive situations, were recently released from prison, or immigrants who have moved to our area transform from pain to purpose. I also work with the local chapter of UNC Chapel Hill alumni to set up volunteer activities with the Second Harvest Food Bank, Loaves and Fishes, and Samaritan's Feet."  
— **Suzanne Cowden, Corcoran HM Properties**



"I donate to many local charities, and I have been on the board of Dahlia Grove this year. Giving back to the community is something I prioritize as much as possible."  
— **Nadia Meredith, Helen Adams Realty**



"Each year, I donate to Charlotte Family Housing and support other housing-related causes. I'm also passionate about animal welfare. This year, my donations will be targeted towards support of Western Carolina."  
— **Mary McCloskey, Allen Tate Realtors**



"I support Charlotte Clubhouse, offering a community-based safe space for people with a history of mental illness. I'm also involved with Veterans Bridge Home, connecting veterans and their families to the community."  
— **Denise Hauser, Keller Williams Connected**



"I am involved with The Fellows, a charity mentoring young males in underserved communities. I also contribute to breast cancer research through Susan G. Komen."  
— **Koya Lamar, Coldwell Banker Realty - Ballantyne**



"We support the Susan G. Komen Foundation and Levine Children's Hospital. I also sponsor charity events like school supply drives and toy collections for low-income families in Tega Cay, SC."  
— **Cherie Burris, RE/MAX Executive**



"I serve on the leadership board of Mitchell's Fund, which supports children and families facing terminal diagnoses. I'm proud to help lighten their burden through therapy and resources."  
— **Rachel Cost, David Hoffman Realty**



"I support the American Cancer Society, St. Jude's Children's Hospital, and Operation Christmas Child. I also support missionary work in Peru and Ghana. Additionally, I support Brookstone School (brookstoneschools.org/about/) in Charlotte, a non-profit school partnering with under-resourced families."  
— **Suzette Gray, Coldwell Banker Realty - Ballantyne**





"I participate in charity events for Help Pregnancy Center, which supports people with unplanned pregnancies, and Per Scholas, which provides free tech training and job placement for minority adults."

— **Jeff Ciulla, RE/MAX Executive**



"I support mental health awareness through Movember and helped start a scholarship fund in honor of a friend who passed away."

— **Anthony DiGioia, Century 21 DiGioia Realty**



"I support the Charlotte Youth Coalition (CYC), a nonprofit helping first-generation college students, and I am also active in my daughter's school community, Providence Day School."

— **Tiffany White, Corcoran HM Properties**



"I have served on the board for The Charity League of Charlotte, which works with Title I schools. I'm also involved with Go Jen Go, a breast cancer foundation in Charlotte."

— **Kirstan Hamilton, Coldwell Banker**



"At NextHome Paramount, giving back is at the heart of everything we do. We're passionate about supporting our community through local events that bring people together and make a tangible impact. We believe that building a stronger community starts with caring for those around us. As a board member of the NextHome Disaster Relief Foundation, I help lead efforts across the country. From boots-on-the-ground assistance to organizing supply drives and providing financial aid, we support families and communities in their times of need. This is how we live our 'Humans Over Houses' mentality every day. #NextHomeStrong"

— **Jayme Downey, NextHome Paramount**



"I am passionate about affordable housing and support Rebuilding Together of Greater Charlotte. We repair homes at no cost to help families stay in their generational homes."

— **Andy Dameron, Keller Williams SouthPark**



"I support Hope at The Lake, which benefits charities such as Cool Kids, Kindness Closet, and Rainbow Kidz in the Lake Norman area."

— **Micaela Brewer, Trump International Realty**



"I am involved with local charities such as Families Forward Charlotte and Common Heart."

— **Logan Abrams, Realty ONE Group Revolution**



"I volunteer as a board member for the Slavic Business Association, providing resources and development opportunities to Slavic leaders in Charlotte."

— **Christina Chubachuk, Akin Realty LLC**

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## TOP 200 STANDINGS

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| Rank | Name | Office | List Units | List Volume (Selling \$) | Sold Units | Sell Volume (Buying \$) | Total Units | Total \$ |
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|------|------|--------|------------|--------------------------|------------|-------------------------|-------------|----------|

Disclaimer: Information based on Canopy MLS closed data as of October 7, 2024, for residential sales from January 1, 2024, to Sept 30, 2024, in the Charlotte metropolitan area. Numbers not reported to the MLS by the date the information is retrieved are not included. MLS is not responsible for submitting this data. Some teams may report data under an individual agent's MLS ID.



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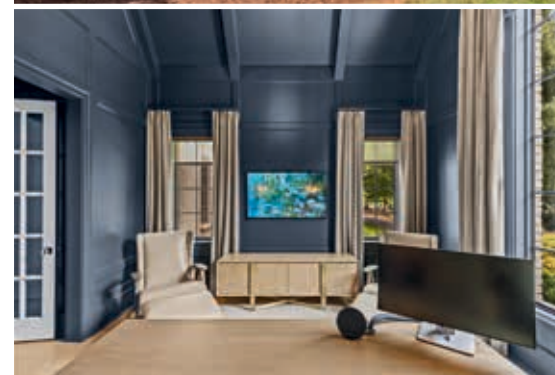
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