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EVENT RECAP:

Launch Party

RISING STAR:

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PARTNER SPOTLIGHT:

Great Harvest Bakery Company

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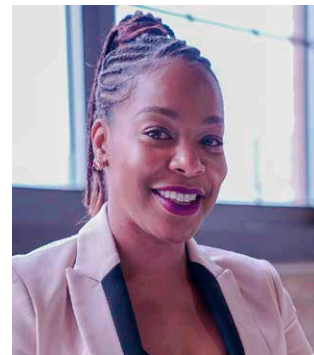
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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

WELCOME TO THE OCTOBER ISSUE OF NORTHWEST INDIANA REAL PRODUCERS!

As the leaves change and the crisp fall air settles in, we're excited to bring you a fresh dose of inspiration and connection. This month, we have some incredible stories lined up that highlight the heart, hustle, and passion of our local real estate community.

We are thrilled to welcome our newest Preferred Partner, The Hage Insurance Agency. Their commitment to excellence and personalized service aligns perfectly with our mission to elevate the real estate industry. Be sure to connect with them and see how they can support your business and clients.

This month's features start with a story that's as warm and comforting as a fresh loaf of bread: our Partner Spotlight highlights the Smith family, proud owners of the Great Harvest Bread Company in Crown Point. Kodiak, Elise, and Katie Smith have combined their unique talents and passion for community to create a bakery that not only serves delicious, hand-made bread but also gives back to the local area.

October's Rising Star is Dr. Jeremy Williams, a new realtor who has brought his global



COLT CONTRERAS
PUBLISHER

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experiences back to Northwest Indiana. From classrooms in Abu Dhabi to tech startups, Jeremy's diverse background and genuine approach have quickly made him a standout in the real estate world. His story is a reminder that success is built on authenticity, service, and the courage to follow your passions—no matter where they lead you.

Our cover story features Jessica Kish, who came from humble beginnings to open her own brokerage, New Chapter Real Estate; she is a powerful example of resilience, integrity, and the importance of community. Jessica's leadership extends beyond her business; she's a mentor, a community advocate, and a shining example of what it means to lead with heart. Her story will motivate you to not only achieve your own goals but to lift others as you climb.

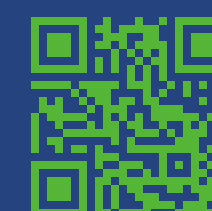
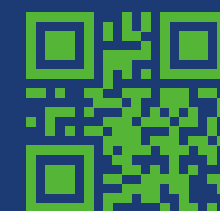
As always, we're here to celebrate the incredible people who make Northwest Indiana's real estate industry thrive. This issue is packed with stories of dedication, hard work, and the connections that drive our community forward. Here's to another great month of growth, collaboration, and success!

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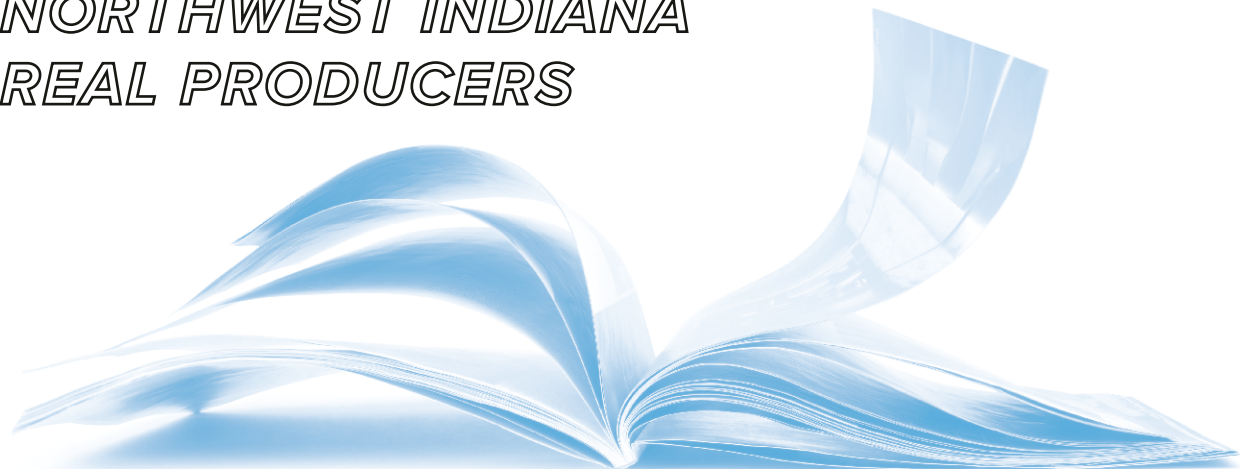
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FAQ

ALL ABOUT NORTHWEST INDIANA REAL PRODUCERS



Q: WHO RECEIVES THIS MAGAZINE?

A: The top 300 agents in Northwest Indiana based on volume for the previous year and our Preferred Partners. There are thousands of agents in NWI, and you, in this elite group, are the cream of the crop. Just to be included in this group is an accomplishment that testifies to your hard work, dedication, and proficiency.

Q: DO REAL ESTATE AGENTS HAVE TO PAY FOR MAGAZINES OR EVENTS?

A: NO! The magazine and events are FREE to agents and funded by the partners who advertise.

Q: WHAT KIND OF CONTENT WILL BE FEATURED?

A: This is all about you. We'll do personal and unique stories on members in the community, providing you with a platform to inspire others. As we grow, we'll add fresh content focused

entirely on you. It costs absolutely nothing for a REALTOR® to be featured. We are not a pay to play model; we write real stories, about Real Producers, and we're always accepting nominations. We will consider anyone brought to our attention-- we don't know everyone's story so we need your help to learn about them!

Q: WHO ARE OUR PARTNERS?

A: Anyone listed as a "Preferred Partner" in the front of the magazine is funding and fueling this community and is an essential part of it. They are the top professionals in their industry. They will have an ad in every issue of the magazine and attend our events. One or many of you have recommended every single Preferred Partner you see in this publication. Our goal is to create a powerhouse network, not only for the best REALTORS® in the area, but the best affiliates as well, so we can grow stronger together.

Q: DOES Real Producers HAVE EVENTS?

A: Yes! Along with the magazine, we will host quarterly events exclusive to this community, where you —the best of the best— get together at local venues to socialize, mastermind, deepen our connections, and better our businesses. We will communicate about events through the magazine, via email, and on social media.

Q: HOW CAN I RECOMMEND A BUSINESS OR FEATURE STORY?

A: If you are interested in contributing, nominating REALTORS® to be featured, know of top-notch affiliate partners who you believe should be a part of our community, or would simply like to network; email or call us. I look forward to hearing from you!

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NORTHWEST INDIANA REAL PRODUCERS LAUNCH PARTY

Our launch party on August 20th at the beautiful Innsbrook Country Club in Merrillville was an unforgettable afternoon filled with energy and excitement! We had a tremendous turnout and guests enjoyed delicious appetizers and delightful desserts from Great Harvest Bakery, while mingling and making connections that will last well beyond the day. It was an absolute pleasure to network with so many of you and witness the connections being made in the room. Our photo-booth captured the fun, and the room buzzed with anticipation as we raffled off fantastic prizes generously donated by our Preferred Partners. It was a perfect kickoff to this new chapter, and we couldn't be more grateful for the incredible support from our community!

We thank all of you, Realtors and Partners, for coming out to help us celebrate our first three issues of *Northwest Indiana Real Producers*. Special thank you to event sponsor Wendy Kriskchke of CrossCountry Mortgage for making this event possible, Tyler Schilling of T-23 Productions for the event photography, Eagle Eye Media for the fantastic recap video, and Great Harvest Bakery for desserts.

Your enthusiasm and support made the event a stunning success, and we look forward to many more opportunities to come together as a community!

▶ event recap

Photography by
Tyler Schilling



Check out the
event recap video!







YOUR ENTHUSIASM & SUPPORT MADE THE EVENT A STUNNING SUCCESS.



▶▶ partner spotlight

By Giovanni Downing
Photography by Melinda
Nicole Photography



GREAT HARVEST BREAD COMPANY

BAKING BREAD AND SERVING THE COMMUNITY

Great Harvest Bread Company is a family-owned business dedicated to baking from scratch and serving the community. When Kodiak Smith, his wife Elise Smith, and his sister Katie came together to open a Great Harvest franchise, they knew it would take a team effort to make their vision a

reality. Their shared passion for baking and community service brought them together on this entrepreneurial journey, and they were eager to turn their dream into a thriving business.

For years, the trio had dreamed of working together, but the right

opportunity hadn't come along until the summer of 2022. As they explored the Great Harvest franchise, they asked themselves, "What if we did this together?"

Katie, with a background in mission-driven nonprofit work, saw this



venture as a natural fit. Great Harvest's values and focus on community service aligned perfectly with her passions, making the transition to franchise owner seamless.



Elise, a former teacher and stay-at-home mom of five, also found the bakery to be a perfect fit for her skills. "I baked a lot of bread at home, so this was a logical shift," she says. Her hands-on baking experience and design sense helped create the warm, welcoming atmosphere at their Crown Point location, where the comfort of home is felt in every detail.



The team opened their doors in the fall of 2023, and bread is truly the heart of their operation. Every day, their team arrives at 4 a.m. to begin mixing simple ingredients— yeast, water, honey, salt, and flour—baking the bread for six to eight hours. Every loaf is kneaded and shaped by hand, showcasing their commitment to quality.



"The relationships we've built with our customers have been one of the most rewarding aspects of this journey," Elise says. "It's amazing to see how bread can bring people together."

Originally from Utah, Katie and Kodiak, along with Elise, who is originally from Virginia, are now proud to call Northwest Indiana home. The Smiths have embraced their role as community partners, regularly donating bread to local charities and working with organizations like the Community Help Network and the Diocese of Gary. Their passion for fighting



Great Harvest is very selective with their ingredients, using nothing but the best. They purchase wheat directly from Montana—the golden triangle for wheat crops—and mill it fresh in house. Their Dakota bread is a variety of grains and seeds: wheat, pumpkin, millet, sunflower, and sesame.



food insecurity is at the heart of their charitable efforts, and they're even exploring creative partnerships with local real estate agents, offering fresh bread and baked goods to welcome new homeowners.

Running the business requires the Smiths to be on call 24/7, a reality that Katie and Elise understand well. As Katie points out, their connection to real estate is fitting: while real estate agents help clients find homes, Great Harvest provides the fresh, handmade bread that brings warmth and comfort to those homes.

Looking ahead, the Smith family envisions expanding their business, with plans to open 3-5 additional locations over the next decade. Despite their growth ambitions, they remain focused on maintaining their high standards. "Quality should be accessible to everyone," Katie emphasizes. "We're committed to using the best ingredients and keeping our products free from preservatives."



For the Smith family, baking bread is more than just a business—it's a way to bring people together, share their passion, and make a positive impact on the community.

Family has been a source of strength throughout their journey, with each member bringing their unique skills and perspectives. Elise and Kodiak, married for 19 years, are expecting another addition to their family in the fall of 2024.

Outside of baking and "mom mode," Elise enjoys crafting and sewing, while Katie enjoys reading, spending quality time with friends and hosting game nights.

As they look to the future, the Smiths are focused on growing their business while staying true to the values that define Great Harvest - authenticity, quality, and community care.





JEREMY WILLIAMS

OF TRUEBLOOD REAL ESTATE

A GLOBAL JOURNEY TO REAL ESTATE SUCCESS

JEREMY WILLIAMS, A NEWLY MINTED TOP REALTOR, BRINGS A WEALTH OF DIVERSE EXPERIENCE TO HIS ROLE IN THE REAL ESTATE INDUSTRY. WITH A CAREER THAT SPANS CONTINENTS AND INDUSTRIES, JEREMY'S JOURNEY TO REAL ESTATE IS A TESTAMENT TO THE POWER OF AUTHENTICITY AND SERVICE.

Starting his career in education, Jeremy's journey took him from the classrooms of Northwest Indiana to the international schools of Abu Dhabi and Dubai. With a PhD in Leadership and Business and background as a teacher, principal, and superintendent, Jeremy's commitment to education was deeply ingrained. Reflecting on his

experiences, he shares, "One of the big things is that I would have conversations with kids, you know, when it was around career counseling...I started to learn that it was never about what you were doing. It was about the things that you felt while doing it."

His global experiences during COVID led him to explore new



By Giavonni Downing
Photography by Agreene
Photography

interests in technology and crypto, and he joined a tech startup focused on the music industry. Despite the startup's challenges, Jeremy's passion for music and helping others remained a constant. "We created this technology that would allow people to scan a QR, pay with Apple Pay, get the merch drop shipped to them... and allow artists to afford to be creative."

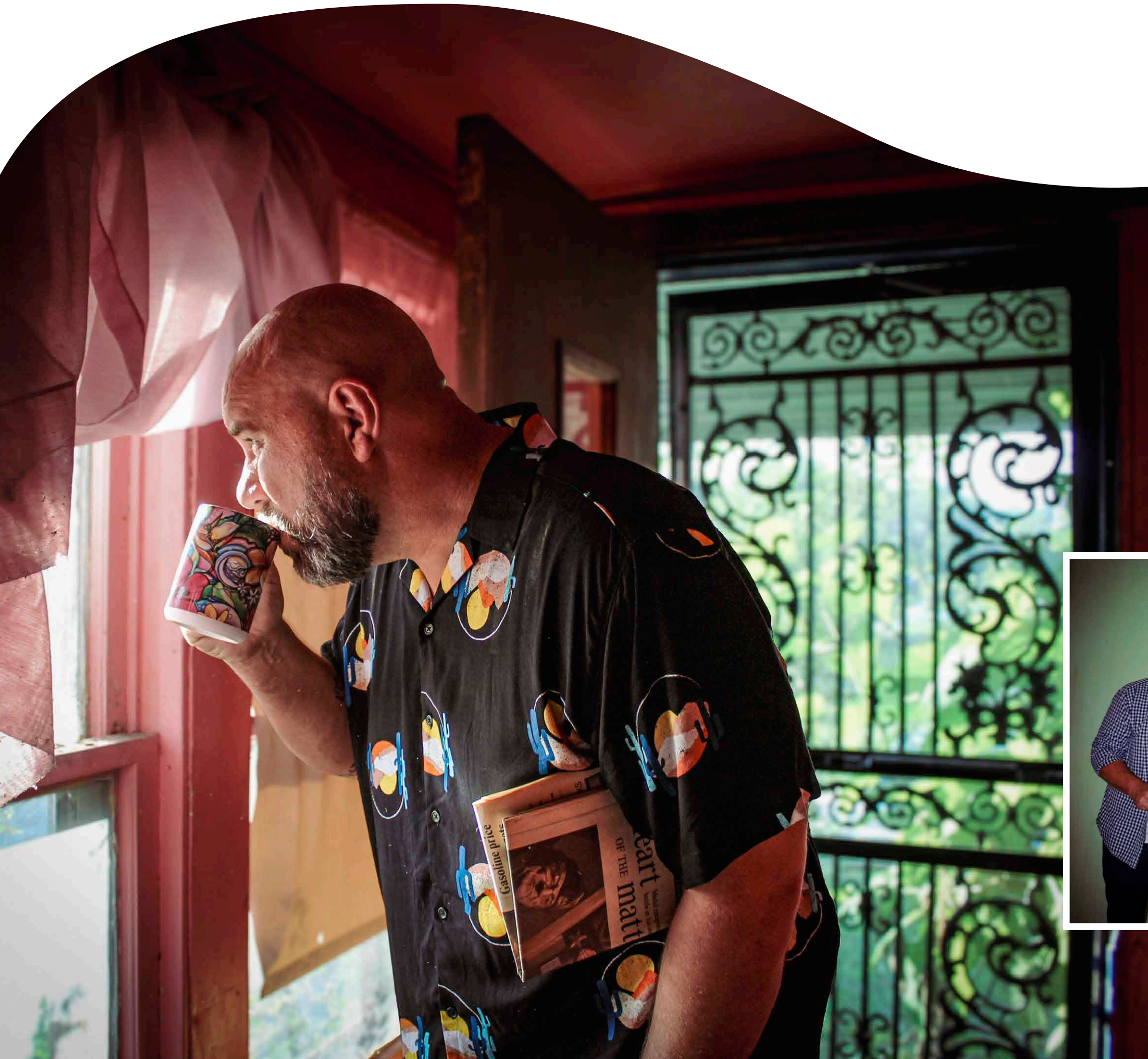


Returning to his roots, Jeremy transitioned into real estate, a field he had long considered. Encouraged by his former real estate agent, Jason Moon, Jeremy saw a chance to blend his skills with his passion for service. "The things that resonated about Jason to me were that he was very polished, professional, and authentic," Jeremy recalls. His admiration for Jason's authentic approach led him to join Trueblood Real Estate in March 2024.

In his first year, Jeremy's dedication to his clients and his genuine approach have already made a significant impact. He was named the top volume producer in both May and June. This early success can be attributed to his focus on making clients feel valued and supported. "I started to realize it's really about how you make people feel and how you take care of them," Jeremy explains.

Beyond his professional accomplishments, Jeremy values his family time and real estate flexibility. As a father of three, he treasures the opportunity to create lasting memories with his children. "The ability to be flexible with them is very valuable. The experiences and the memories trump the material things," he says.

Jeremy's commitment to service extends beyond his real estate career.



“

THE ABILITY TO BE FLEXIBLE

WITH THEM IS VERY VALUABLE.

THE EXPERIENCES AND THE MEMORIES

TRUMP THE MATERIAL THINGS.

His mother's dedication to teaching left a lasting impression on him, and his experiences in education and music have shaped his approach to helping others. "Service is at the heart of what I do," he emphasizes. Whether helping a family find a home or supporting an artist's career, Jeremy's motivation is rooted in making a positive impact.



When he's not working, Jeremy enjoys attending Bears games and concerts, reflecting his passion for music and sports. His approach to real estate is deeply personal and rooted in his belief that true success comes from serving others authentically. He does not work in the classic suit and tie, and he often connects with his clients when he shows up casually styled in jeans and a shirt. For Jeremy, real estate is a space where he can be himself and forge organic connections with his clients. He understands the why behind his work, and his mission is to serve others.

As Jeremy continues to build his career in real estate, his blend of global experience, service, and genuine approach will undoubtedly make a lasting impact in the industry.

LEVERAGING CONNECTIONS AND LEADING WITH INTEGRITY

By Giavonni Downing • Photography by Melinda Nicole Photography

Jessica Kish leverages the power of connections through her expertise, vibrant personality, and boundless energy. Her strong ethics and positive impact on people have paved the way for her success in real estate.

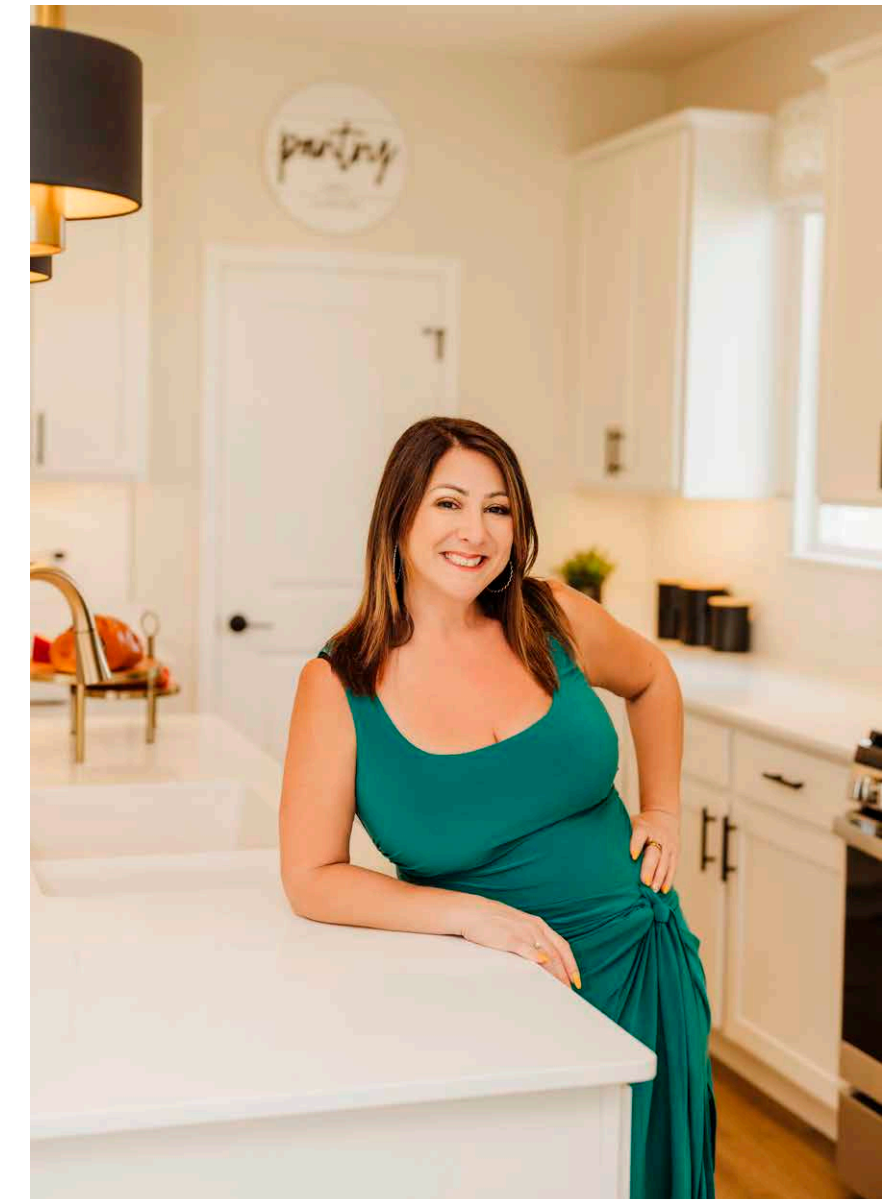
Jessica started from humble beginnings. The loss of her mother during high school thrust her into self-reliance from age 17. With limited income from fast food jobs, landing a bank position felt like a breakthrough. “I was making \$4.75 at Arby’s, and they offered me \$5.50 at the bank. It felt like all the money in the world.”

Opening New Chapter Real Estate in 2022 represents a remarkable blend of dedication and personal growth. “I worked four years for one brokerage, for Berkshire Hathaway, and then in early 2020, before the world went crazy, I decided it was time to move on,” she explains. This decision was not driven by dissatisfaction but by a desire for a natural career

Her banking career spanned two decades and was characterized by a service-oriented approach rather than traditional sales tactics. “I learned the importance of treating each person with the same level of respect,” she reflects. Despite her resistance to conventional sales strategies, this ethos contributed to top branch performance and a loyal client base. Job loss due to a merger forced Jessica to pivot. She became a closer at Fidelity Title.

Later, a significant life change awakened her to her children’s increasing need for her at home. “I had no other choice,” she says of her decision to enter real estate school in 2015. “I passed both tests on the first try,” she proudly notes. She did not have a safety net then and was focused on diving into real estate. She produced just under \$5 million through organic leads in her first year. She hit the ground running and has not looked back.

Nine years into real estate, Jessica’s approach remains steadfast. “It’s not about how many sales you can get,” she emphasizes. “It’s about doing the right thing and helping people.” Her focus is on connections rather than conventional sales methods.



JESSICA KISH

OF NEW CHAPTER REAL ESTATE





GETTING PEOPLE WHERE

THEY'RE PHYSICALLY OR

EMOTIONALLY SUPPOSED

TO BE IS HUGE FOR ME.

progression. After two years at McColly, it was time to bet on herself and open New Chapter Real Estate.

Jessica's involvement in the industry extends beyond real estate sales. She served as President of the NIRA board in 2022 and is active on the NIRA MLS Board and will be treasurer next year. She is very involved with the state board having completed Indiana Association of Realtors leadership academy in 2023 and serving on the IAR RPAC fundraising committee. Her commitment to leadership is complemented by her acceptance into the National Association of Realtors Leadership Academy, a prestigious program with only 20 participants nationwide.

Launching New Chapter Real Estate was a profoundly personal decision. "I've always said that I have to put my head on my pillow at night and know that everything I do is with integrity," she emphasizes.

This commitment to ethical practices is reflected in the company's operations. "I don't recruit; I want to create a place where people want to be," she explains. This philosophy has led to substantial growth, with the company expanding from seven agents at its inception to now nearly 70 agents and two office locations.

The name New Chapter Real Estate holds significant meaning. "Every time you're buying or selling a house, it's a new chapter in your life," she explains. Inspired by her love for writing, the name and logo symbolize the transformative nature of real estate transactions. She is committed to helping clients transition smoothly, "Getting people where they're physically or emotionally supposed to be is huge for me," she adds.

She also finds deep satisfaction in mentoring her agents. "Not everybody wants to sell \$25 million in a year. Some people want to sell \$5 million in a year because that

feeds their family and gives them work-life balance,” she explains. Her advice to new realtors is to stay true to themselves and leverage existing relationships. She embodies the emotional depth and professional expertise that define her career. Her recent recognition as Northwest Indiana Influential Woman of the Year highlights her impact.

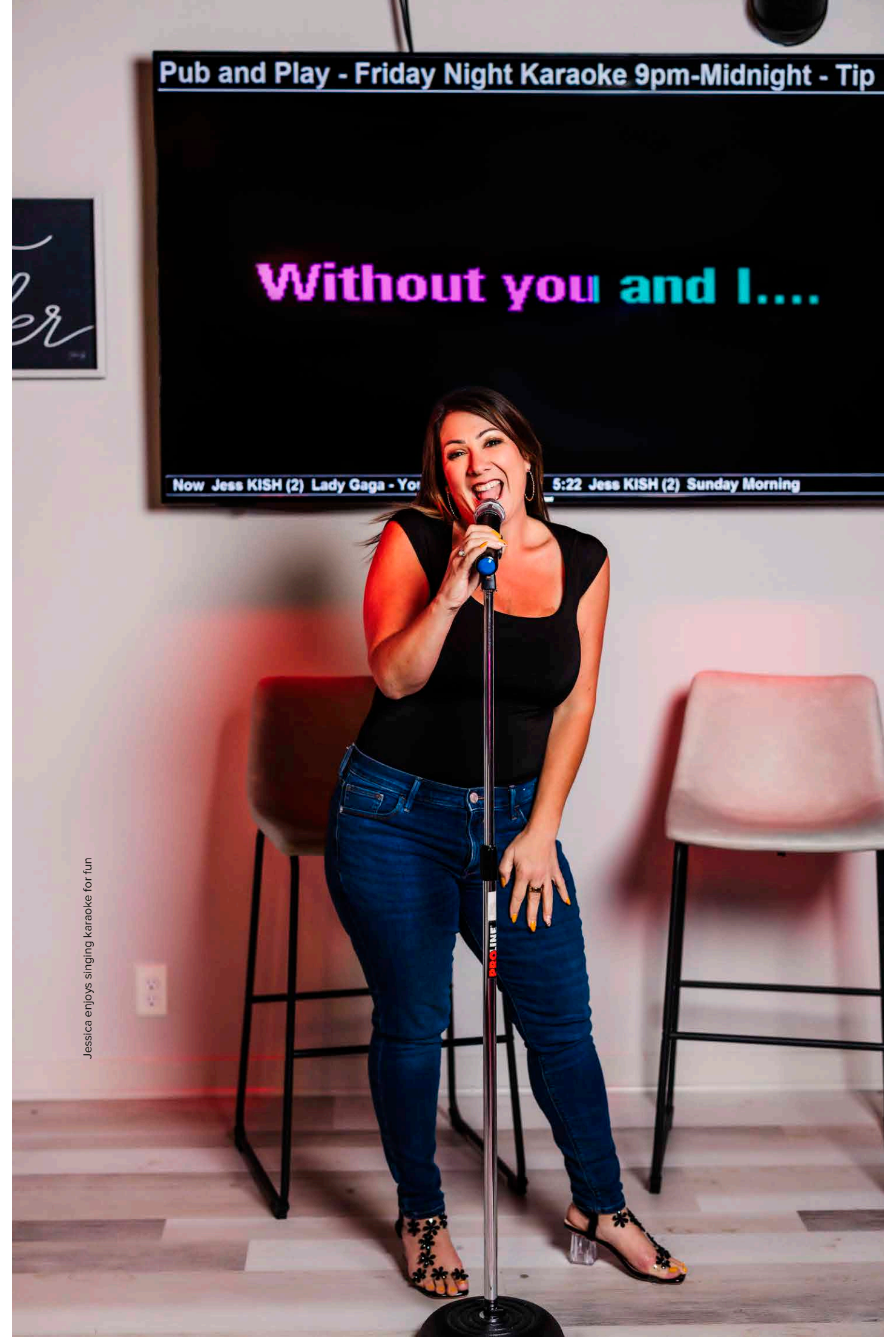
She is actively involved in the community and supports local organizations, such as TradeWinds, St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, and the Boys and Girls Club.

When Jessica is not selling houses or helping agents, you can find her traveling for both work and fun, spending time with friends, watching her beloved Cubs at Wrigley Field, or singing a mean karaoke. Cooking for people is her love language. Jessica is known for her (self proclaimed) award-winning dishes, a skill inherited from her Sicilian mother. Jessica also prioritizes time with her children, Brittany and Joe, striving to provide them with the life she never had. It is incredibly special to her that both of her kids work with her, Brittany as the office executive assistant and Joe an agent himself.

For Jessica, real estate has not only helped her achieve personal goals but also given her countless opportunities to help others achieve their own.



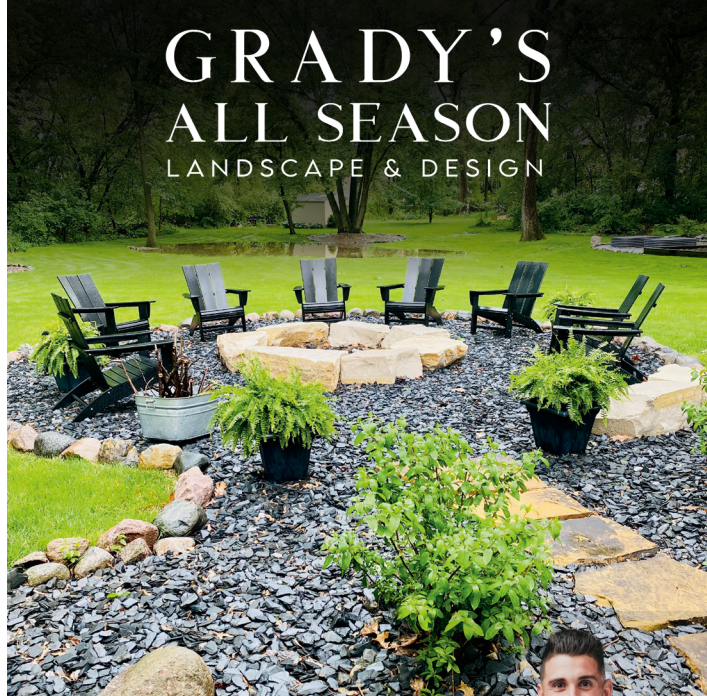
Jessica and her daughter Brittany Kish, New Chapter office executive assistant, and son Joe Kish, a New Chapter Realtor





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