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If you are interested in contributing or nominating real estate agents, affiliates, brokers, owners or even yourself for stories, please email us at [joni@realproducersmag.com](mailto:joni@realproducersmag.com).

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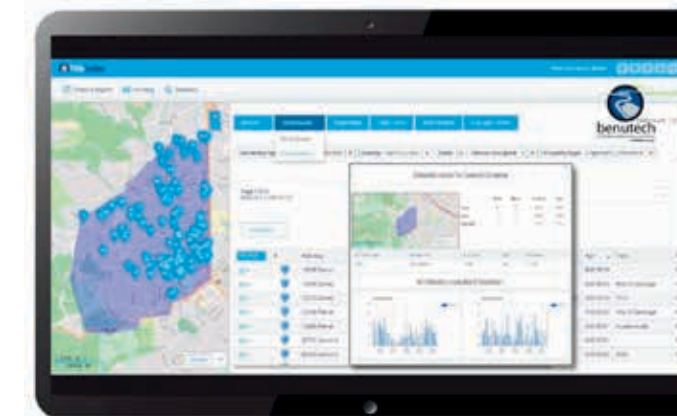
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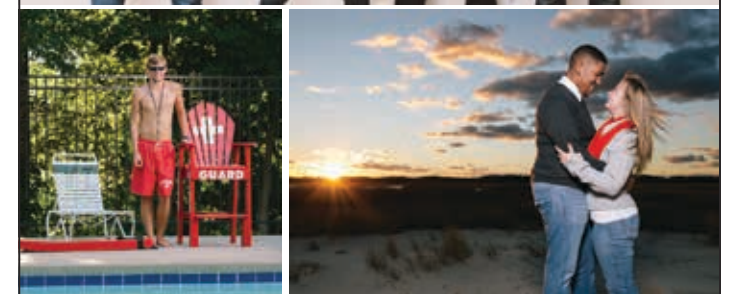
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# Kandy FISK

**ABBITT REALTY COMPANY**

▶▶ cover story

Story by Maddie Podish  
Photos by Susan Fowler, Fowler Studios

Early in the morning, you can find Kandy Fisk strolling down Gloucester Main Street, in a town she’s called home for most of her life, reflecting on her 2024 mantra: “Every day is a new opportunity to become the best version of yourself.” Born and raised in Newport News, Kandy grew up in the charming Hilton Village with her mom, grandparents and two sisters. She was fortunate to be surrounded by so much love and support. Watching her mom raise three girls while putting herself through nursing school and working instilled a strong work ethic in Kandy and her sisters. “It takes a village to raise a family,” Kandy reflects, expressing gratitude for her family’s sacrifices and the invaluable lessons they imparted.

After marrying her husband, Michael, and starting their family, the couple moved to Gloucester for more space, inspired by Michael’s roots in the open expanses of Northern Michigan. With a diverse background in healthcare as a nursing assistant and an activity director, Kandy navigated her career around her husband’s military schedule to ensure she was always present for their children. “I’ve always had to think to myself whenever taking a new job due to my husband being in the military, ‘Is this something I can do while taking care of my family?’” she remarks. This mindset paved the way for her transition into real estate, a field that had always fascinated her, even before HGTV made it popular. The pivotal moment that gave Kandy the push she needed to get her license was buying a home in Virginia after being stationed in Hawaii. During this time, Kandy witnessed Leigh Barefoot balancing working full-time in real estate while caring for her children.

Real estate perfectly aligns with Kandy’s love for meeting new people and helping them achieve their goals. Since starting in 2011, she has stood firm in the importance of agents finding their niche to connect easily with others. “In real estate, you don’t sell things; you offer a service,” she explains. She loves that each transaction is unique and brings the opportunity to form new relationships. Whether working with first-generation homeowners, military families buying homes sight unseen or families dealing with loss, Kandy’s diverse knowledge and compassionate approach make her a trusted advisor. “For every client I take on, their goals become my goals,” she says, emphasizing her drive to understand and meet their needs.



One of the most rewarding aspects of her career has been the opportunity to educate others, and helping people make informed decisions that help them in the long run is extremely fulfilling,” Kandy asserts. This passion for educating and mentoring led her to start her team, Kandy & Co., focusing on offering concierge service, excellent communication and exceptional customer care. “I wouldn’t be where I am now without those who mentored me, including Yvonne Johnson and Tracy Foster,” she smiles. Her realism runs deep as she explains that the REALTOR® role involves helping people through what can be difficult real-life situations.

Kandy’s integrity and dedication to her clients do not go unnoticed. She

has received multiple Coastal Virginia Best of Reader’s Choice awards, the prestigious 2021 Code of Ethics award and several recognitions from her brokerage, including the Abbitt Ace and Abbitt REALTOR® of the Year. Her commitment extends beyond individual achievements; she has served on multiple boards, including as Chair of the Affiliates Committee, President of Property Services at Chesapeake Bay & Rivers Association of REALTORS® (CBRAR) and member of the Community Outreach Committee. Additionally, she is the 2024 President of the CBRAR, a role that has allowed her to meet wonderful people and grow through new experiences. “It’s been extremely rewarding,” she reflects. “I always go back to you don’t know what you don’t know, and by being involved, I’ve gotten to meet



**I NEVER KNEW MY REAL ESTATE CAREER WOULD GET AS BIG AS IT HAS. IT JUST GOES TO SHOW IF IT’S SOMETHING YOU REALLY WANT, YOU JUST MAKE IT WORK. THERE’S NO OTHER OPTION BUT TO MAKE IT WORK.**



some really great people and dive deeper into learning new things." Initially, stepping into a leadership role was uncomfortable for Kandy, but she quickly realized that when you're uncomfortable, you're growing.

As an empty-nester with her and Michael's two children, Kylie and Michael (Bubba), who are following their career paths, Kandy has entered a new chapter. The home isn't completely quiet, though, with their two dogs, Maze and Bailey, still romping around. In

town, you can find Kandy having fun while singing karaoke with her friends. In the last couple of years, she's fallen in love with kayaking, a hobby she picked up while creating cherished memories at the family's lake house in Michigan.

Honestly, Kandy shares, "I never knew my real estate career would get as big as it has. It just goes to show if it's something you really want, you just make it work. There's no other option but to make it work."



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# NOMINATE YOUR FAVORITE TOP AGENTS!

By Publisher Joni Giordano-Bowling

People often ask me, “How do you decide who you feature each month in Real Producers?” My answer: “Through our nomination system.” Top real estate agents and the preferred partners who invest in this publication through advertising and sponsoring our events decide who we feature each month through their nominations. Additionally, we have multiple events throughout the year, and top agents with top numbers are present at these events; we receive many nominations here among those who attend. **Please contact Joni Giordano-Bowling at 757-348-7809 or joni@realproducersmag.com to nominate top agents.**

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

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

- 1. Collaboration:** The number of nominations usually indicates that nominees are respected by their peers and work well with other agents and our preferred partners.
- 2. Competition production numbers:** Let’s face it; the name of the publication is Real Producers, so folks need to be top producers to get into the magazine
- 3. Character:** While most in the industry have great character and integrity, we will not feature anyone—agent or business—who has not been recommended or nominated by top agents as a person or business operating with integrity.
- 4. Contribution:** We adore inspiring stories about agents who give back to the real estate and local/global community.
- 5. Compelling story/ Conquering a life challenge:** Who doesn’t love an against-the-odds success story?

We also get to know the agents engaging in our private Facebook group for top REALTORS® and partners. Please contact me if you would like an invitation to that page, as membership is limited to agents on our past and present Real Producers list, real estate brokers and current preferred business partners.

In planning each issue, we try to make sure we don’t feature agents from the same brokerage or firm in the same issue. We also try to cover the territory geographically so that agents from each area we cover are featured proportionately. With so many wonderful nominated agents, our monthly decisions are difficult, so make sure we know who you are!

Remember, real estate agents and brokers do not pay anything for feature stories; everything we do for them is free. While other programs may look similar, we are not a pay-to-play model. We select most articles six to 12 months in advance (sometimes years in advance for cover agents) and notify folks one to two months before their feature appears that we have selected them. Please don’t be discouraged if you have met with us and have not received the call to be featured. Keep those nominations coming.

We would love your feedback about how we are doing and what, if anything, we can do better to help everyone in the industry **Collaborate, Elevate and Inspire** each other. Please email, text or privately message all suggestions and feedback directly to me.

**Joni Giordano-Bowling**  
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▶ on the rise

Story by Maddie Podish  
Photos by Susan Fowler, Fowler Studios

# Heather Bashlor

HOWARD HANNA



**Originally from Alabama, Heather chose not to follow her family to Williamsburg in 2004, opting to stay in her hometown to continue her college education. When her life wasn't on a path to success, she decided she needed a fresh start. Moving to Williamsburg 11 years ago, she set new goals that would lead to her current success.**

Heather started working as a bartender in various establishments, where she connected with inspiring individuals who encouraged her to pursue her goals. At the same time, her mom was continually reminding her of her capabilities, urging her to reach for the stars. Through her work, she began networking with professionals from different fields, building valuable relationships and gaining insights about becoming a REALTOR®—one of Heather's long-term goals. Fascinated with late-night commercials showing homes for sale in her area and spending her teen years watching her father flip homes, real estate has always been in Heather's blood.

COVID-19 provided Heather with a pivotal moment to change her career path. She decided to take charge of her life and shared her new ambitions with her regulars. "When I finally got licensed, I walked into my brokerage with a couple of clients," Heather recalls.

The foundation of confidence she built over the years quickly felt small when she first joined the industry. "Building confidence was the hardest part," she explains. "This business can be really fast-paced, so it was intimidating when I first started. Finding the balance of fitting in while also sharing what makes me unique was hard." By consistently learning and seeking help, she built the tenacity to thrive in the industry. Her biggest advice to new agents is, "Dive in head first. In this business, you can't learn it until you're doing things, so don't be afraid to hit the ground running. Get comfortable with being uncomfortable. Clients aren't going to come to you; you must go out and create yourself as a brand that they will trust and believe in."

Besides empowering her clients to make informed decisions, Heather also follows a unique approach to her business involving a strong presence on social media, where engaging with her audience is a priority. "Every time I post real estate content, I move toward deeper conversations with new people," she notes. This strategy makes her a valuable resource and establishes open lines of communication with potential clients. One memorable client

story involved a woman who needed guidance on selling her home. With Heather's help, the client sold her home above the asking price and then referred her four other clients, all closing within 30 days. "If you do everything you can to make a client's journey less stressful and the outcome successful, your efforts will lead you to other great clients," Heather advises.

Heather's favorite title is "mom," which she gained five years ago after having her daughter Harper Leigh, who is affectionately nicknamed "chicken lady" due to her love for chickens. Heather shares a close bond with her husband, whom she met while bartending. After their first date, they have been inseparable, and he is one of her biggest supporters and cheerleaders. When not home surrounded by their variety of pets, the family enjoys off-shore and Cobia fishing or spending time at the water.





With a deep love for animals that her daughter has inherited, Heather loves supporting her local SPCA. Her journey to sobriety inspired her to give back to the community. Over the years, she has developed a network of people she can call upon to help addicts get clean and assist with food and housing. "I think sometimes people get into bad spots, and they just need someone to reach out and help," she comments.

Heather considers being a REALTOR® her success story. She says feeling accomplished and knowing she made a difference in someone's life is extremely rewarding. Heather says, "I love my community, and I believe you can't just do what is expected of you. You have to ask yourself what you can do to exceed your clients' expectations. You can make a difference in your clients' experiences and in your community as a whole."

“  
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▶ partner spotlight

Story by Dan Steele

Photo by Leah Wallace, Leah Ariel Photography



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**Briar Baughman,**  
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**From the overwhelming stress of packing up one's belongings to the fear of everything being broken and beaten up when it arrives, many people would rather have teeth pulled with no anesthesia than deal with moving. When faced with the strain moving can bring, who better to trust with your belongings than a company whose founder moved more times during his childhood than most people will their entire lives?**

"I moved 18 times in the first 19 years of my life," explains Briar Baughman, founder and owner of Off-Load Moving. "My parents weren't even military. I moved from Northern Virginia to North Carolina four times, and when we moved here my freshman year of high school, I moved seven times within my four years of high school, even though I stayed at First Colonial."

With such an intimate knowledge of the perils and pressure involved with relocating, the moving industry was a logical career choice for Briar. "It was something I knew I was good at," he laughs. "Once I got into the Army National Guard, I was doing construction and concrete, and I said to myself, 'I just can't break my back doing this for the next 20 years.' So, my wife, Casey, and I sat down one January evening and started thinking of ideas we could start as a side hustle." They considered landscaping and pool cleaning, and while Briar concedes that those ideas made sense, they lacked that intangible appeal that made them feel right. Suddenly, his wife exclaimed, "Moving!" and they knew they'd hit the mark. "I said, you know what? That's actually a great idea," Briar recalls. Off-Load Moving started with Briar and a friend utilizing a single U-Haul truck, and the venture has grown exponentially. This September marks the fourth anniversary of the company's founding, and Briar notes that they now have five trucks, 20 movers, five in-house staff and two locations.

Off-Loads's runaway success results from dedication to professionalism, courtesy and ensuring the company defies customer expectations about moving companies. "All you hear about from people about moving are the horror stories and the nightmares, which is something I want to start changing," Briar says. "We want to mitigate that reputation moving companies can have."

Every Off-Load mover completes a month of thorough training before setting foot into a client's house, with a month of probation afterwards. "The same with the packers," Briar states. "They complete two weeks of training before they even pack a single box for a client." Compounding this attention to building the professional ability of their movers is Off-Loads's philosophy about hiring. "We train customer service reps to be movers; we don't train movers to be customer service reps," clarifies Briar. "It sounds strange, but we've had guys come in with 15-20 years of moving experience who couldn't be professional or courteous. You can have the best movers come to your house, but if they're unprofessional or don't have that customer service aspect to them, no matter how good the move goes, you're still going say, 'Well, they still could have been a lot nicer.'"

With 90% or more of the company's business being referral-based, Peninsula Branch Manager Chris Valianos emphasizes how critical making the best impression is. "First impressions are key," he elaborates. Our slogan is 'We take pride in serving you,' and we strive to provide the best possible experience for every client. We are here to educate and help clients with every step of the moving experience. The last thing we want your clients to worry about is moving," Briar adds, "Whether a phone call or an in-person estimate or even someone coming on site to do the move, we want to leave an enduring, overwhelmingly positive impression at the end of the move."

Unlike corporate moving companies that place numbers and quotas above service, Off-Load prioritizes service with every move. Service is such a priority that Briar admits to fielding questions from clients and real estate agents who are moving themselves and need advice. "At the end of the day, I'm not in the business for the monetary value; I'm in the business to ensure that everyone has a smooth move with or without us and make sure they're not being taken advantage of," he remarks. It may seem counterintuitive for his business, but it is a moral deeply rooted in his experiences.





Briar Baughman with his wife, Casey / Photo by Leah Wallace, Leah Ariel Photographer



Chris Valianos with his wife, Cortne

"I've seen my parents get the short end of the stick when we've used moving companies, and then I've seen it when my wife and I moved," he reveals. "It's an unfortunate reality of the industry. I am trying to change that day by day, and the only way I can do so is by meeting people and ensuring that we give their clients the best service possible."

To that end, Off-Load is a one-stop shop for all one's moving needs. They offer the full range of services, including, but not limited to, packing, unpacking, loading, unloading, offering "white-glove" service and providing out-of-state moves. They also partner with local businesses to fully meet clients' needs. "We've teamed up with JDog Junk Removal and

Hauling, another veteran-owned company, and with Peace of Mind Organization, which offers organizing and unpacking services," Briar explains. "When someone moves with us, they don't have to worry about finding anyone outside of us to make the moving process that much simpler."

For real estate agents whose clients face an upcoming move, Briar advises seeking as many quotes as possible and thoroughly researching the companies to avoid being scammed. "Always ensure your clients get at least two to three quotes for moving, especially if they haven't moved before or haven't moved in a few years," he counsels. "Look for online reviews, for their social media presence and if they're active. Do they have an 800-number or a local one? Does the

company just have a Google page?" Although many prefer to communicate only via text and email, Briar recommends placing that phone call to filter out the less trustworthy companies. "There's so many scams and brokers out there nowadays that you want to call them," he asserts. "You don't know who's on the other end of that text or email."

Real estate agents can sleep soundly knowing that their clients are in good hands with Off-Load Moving. "You will not find a better moving company that will offer the same level of service we provide, all while doing it with smiles on our faces," Chris proudly pronounces. "We would love the opportunity to work with you and your clients." He notes that they currently offer a 7.5% discount to any client a real estate agent refers to them and implores agents to consider them the next time their clients need the best moving service available. "Let this local, veteran-owned small business take care of you and your clients," he exclaims.

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# RP FAQs

## WELCOME TO REAL PRODUCERS!

Some of you may be wondering what this publication is about, so we have created this FAQ page to answer the most asked questions regarding our program. My door is always open to discuss anything regarding this community—this publication is 100% designed to be your voice!

## Q: WHO RECEIVES THIS MAGAZINE?

**A:** The top 300 agents on the Peninsula in Hampton Roads, VA. The Peninsula extends from the Hampton Roads Bridge-Tunnel in Hampton to the greater Williamsburg area and everything in between. We pulled the MLS numbers (by volume) from January 1, 2023, through December 31, 2023, in the Peninsula and Williamsburg area. We cut the list off at #300, and the distribution was born. For this year's list, the production level

for our group was between just below \$5 million and \$50 million in 2023. The list will reset at the end of 2024 for next year and will continue to update annually.

## Q: WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR BEING FEATURED IN THIS MAGAZINE?

**A:** The process is simple. Every feature you see has first been nominated. You can nominate REALTORS®, agents, affiliates, brokers, owners or even yourself. Office leaders can also nominate real estate agents. We will consider anyone you bring to our attention because we don't know everyone's story and need your help to learn more. A link to our nomination form is on our Facebook page ([facebook.com/peninsularealproducers](https://facebook.com/peninsularealproducers)).

## Q: WHAT IS THE COST TO FEATURE A REALTOR®, AGENT OR TEAM?

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

## Q: WHO ARE THE PREFERRED PARTNERS?

**A:** Anyone listed as a preferred partner in the front of the magazine is a part of this community and will have an ad in every magazine issue, attend our quarterly events and be a part of our online community. We don't just find these businesses off the street, nor do we work with all businesses that approach us. One or many of you have recommended every preferred partner you see in this publication. In a sense, we won't even meet with a business you have not vetted and stamped for approval. We aim to create a powerhouse network for the REALTORS® and agents in the area and the best affiliates so we can grow stronger together.

## Q: HOW CAN I RECOMMEND A PREFERRED PARTNER?

**A:** Please let us know if you want to recommend a local business that works with top real estate agents. Send an email or text to [joni@realproducersmag.com](mailto:joni@realproducersmag.com) or call 757-348-7809.

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