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HEART-LED HUSTLE

Agent Spotlight  
**IZAMAR "IZZY"  
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Partner Spotlight  
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COVER STORY

Shannon  
Murray



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MEET THE REST OF  
THE KB TEAM!



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# HELLO DECEMBER, the Season of Celebration!

As the year draws to a close, December invites us to pause and reflect on all that we've accomplished together. It's a time to celebrate progress, honor meaningful connections, and look forward to the exciting possibilities that the new year will bring.

This season reminds us of the joy found in community—the power of giving, sharing, and gathering with those who make life brighter. We're so grateful for the partnerships and friendships that define Real Producers and the incredible network that continues to grow stronger every year.

We're already looking ahead with excitement to 2026, where even more opportunities for collaboration and connection await. The new event schedule is on the horizon, and we can't wait to bring everyone together for another year of inspiration and impact.

We're also thrilled to welcome our newest preferred partner, **Trivium Residential Inspection** and **Rest Easy Inspections**.

We're delighted to have them in the Real Producers community and look forward to many great collaborations ahead.

Here's a thought to carry with us: *"It's not what's under the tree that matters, but who's gathered around it."*

Wishing you a December filled with warmth, joy, and celebration—and a new year full of promise and possibility.



**Kristin Brindley**  
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# 5 STEPS to Manifest a 2026 Fire Horse Year

BY DREW DEMAREE



December isn’t the time to slow down — it’s the time to set the pace for the year ahead. As real estate professionals, the way you close out December directly impacts your first quarter. Instead of drifting into 2026, you can create clarity and momentum with a simple, repeatable framework: a **90-Day Sprint Plan**.

The Fire Horse AgentWith 2026 being the **Year of the Fire Horse** in the Chinese Zodiac, the timing couldn’t be more symbolic. The Fire Horse is a rare and powerful sign (born only once every 60 years), representing energy, intensity, and the drive to achieve big goals.

But here’s the catch: the same fiery energy that propels you forward can also lead to burnout or chaos if not channeled.

That’s why a focused 90-Day Sprint Plan is essential. It allows you to harness the Fire Horse’s drive and direct it into steady, productive growth instead of scattered effort. Agents who thrive in 2026 won’t just “work harder” — **they’ll channel intensity with intention**.

**Why 90 Days, Not 12 Months?**  
Too often, agents set year-long goals that sound great on paper but lose steam by March. The market shifts, motivation dips, and suddenly December rolls around again with unmet targets.

By contrast, **90-day cycles** are short enough to create urgency but long enough to see meaningful results. They allow you to adjust, course-correct, and build momentum quarter by quarter. Think of each sprint as a gallop — a focused run that builds toward your annual vision.

**This approach is the foundation of my Gallop Goals Framework:**

- **Gallop** — 90-day sprints, not marathons.
- **Goals** — fewer, sharper, and measurable.
- **Framework** — structure that keeps you accountable.
- 

## Step 1: Set 3 Measurable Priorities

The key to your sprint is clarity. Instead of setting 12 goals for 12 months, start with **three priorities for the next 90 days**.

Ask yourself: *What three things, if accomplished by March 31, would make the biggest difference in my business?*

## Examples for agents might include:

1. **Pipeline Growth** — Add 30 new nurtures to your database.
2. **Listing Conversion** — Secure and market 5 new listings.
3. **Consistency in Prospecting** — Complete 45 face-to-face conversations each month.

The magic of limiting yourself to three is focus. Too many goals dilute your energy. Three goals give you firepower without overwhelm.

## Step 2: Define 3 Strategies for Each Priority

Once you have your priorities, break them down into strategies — the “how” behind the “what.”

### For example:

#### Priority: Add 30 new nurtures to the database

- Strategy 1: Host two community events in January and February.
- Strategy 2: Launch a local vendor spotlight video series.
- Strategy 3: Connect weekly with past clients through “holiday haze” follow-ups.

#### Priority: Secure 5 new listings

- Strategy 1: Schedule 10 listing appointments through direct mail and circle prospecting.
- Strategy 2: Offer complimentary home value reports to your top 50 past clients.
- Strategy 3: Run a targeted Facebook ad campaign highlighting low-inventory opportunities.

#### Priority: 45 face-to-face conversations per month

- Strategy 1: Attend one networking event weekly.
- Strategy 2: Block 2 afternoons a week for pop-bys.
- Strategy 3: Organize one client coffee or lunch per week.

## Step 3: Commit to 3 Daily Actions

This is where the sprint plan shifts from theory to execution. Daily actions are the small, repeatable steps that keep your Fire Horse energy moving forward.Examples:

- Write 5 handwritten notes per day.
- Add 2 new contacts to your CRM daily.
- Make 10 prospecting calls before noon.

These are small wins, repeated consistently. The compounding effect is what fuels results. As James Clear, author of *Atomic Habits*, reminds us: “*You do not rise to the level of your goals, you fall to the level of your systems.*”

## Step 4: Review and Reset Every 30 Days

Even in a 90-day sprint, it’s crucial to pause and review monthly. Ask:

- Am I on track with my 3 priorities?
- Which strategies are producing results?
- What needs to be adjusted or doubled down?

Think of it as steering the Fire Horse. You don’t just let it run wild for 90 days — you guide it, check its course, and make sure the energy is moving toward the right finish line.

## Step 5: Align with Your Yearly Vision

Your sprint isn’t meant to replace your annual goals. Instead, it’s the bridge between December planning and December results. Four 90-day sprints = one powerful year.This is where the Fire Horse symbolism ties in beautifully:

- **The Fire:** passion, energy, visibility — how will you ignite excitement in your business?
- **The Horse:** stamina, movement, progress — what habits will keep you consistent?

## Your Next Step

As you close out 2025, don’t just reflect — *plan your gallop*. Set 3 measurable priorities, outline 3 strategies for each, and commit to 3 daily actions.Harness the energy of the Fire Horse year, and let your 90-day sprint carry you into 2026 not just with goals, but with a proven path to achieve them.

If you need help building your 90-Day Sprint Plan, connect with us at The Freedom Companies.



Drew DeMaree was born and raised in the Midwest and graduated from Johnson & Wales University. He has been a licensed REALTOR® since 2005 and a business coach since 2015. Drew has been recognized as a Top 20 MAPS coach for Keller Williams Realty offices throughout the country. He has also operated a brokerage that rose to number 1 in closed sales volume in the area for three consecutive years, and founded The Freedom Companies, an independent coaching, training and events business, in 2020.

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# NOVEMBER MAGAZINE PARTY

NOVEMBER 6, 2025



PHOTOS BY  
PHILIP ANDREWS

The recent *Richmond Real Producers* gathering was an unforgettable

celebration of connection and collaboration! Hosted at Classic Granite & Marble in Powhatan, this event was the perfect blend of networking, community, and appreciation. We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who attended — your presence made the event truly special!

A special acknowledgment goes to our event sponsors — **Classic Granite & Marble**, **SS Electrical Solutions**, and **Hardesty Homes Staging** — whose generous support helped bring this celebration to life.

Capturing every memorable moment, **Philip Andrews** delivered stunning photography, ensuring the energy and excitement of the event will be remembered for years to come.

Bringing together top-producing agents, industry leaders, and professionals in an inviting setting is what these events are all about. Networking in a relaxed, intimate atmosphere fosters relationships that drive success, and we're thrilled to continue providing these opportunities for our community.

Thank you to all our partners, attendees, and contributors for making this event such a success. We can't wait for the next one!



For information on all Richmond Real Producers' events, email [info@richmondrealproducers.com](mailto:info@richmondrealproducers.com).







# Evan Rutherford

ARBOR HOME LOANS



## ROOTED IN TRUST. GROWING YOUR FUTURE

BY AMELIA ROSEWOOD • PHOTO BY PHILIP ANDREWS

For Evan Rutherford, lending is more than numbers and contracts. It is about people, relationships, and helping families plant their roots in a home of their own. A former consultant turned mortgage professional, Evan brings confidence, clarity, and a calm precision to one of life's biggest financial moments.

### From Consulting to Closings

Evan grew up in Newport News, Virginia, surrounded by a strong sense of community and drive. After graduating from the College of William and Mary, he headed to Washington, D.C., to begin his professional journey with Deloitte's Federal Consulting division. The pace was fast, the standards high, and Evan quickly proved himself in the corporate world. Still, something was missing. "My mom has been a top-producing lender in Hampton Roads for years," Evan shares. "I always admired how she helped people achieve their dreams, and I realized I wanted to do something that felt more personal and meaningful."

That realization marked a major turning point for Evan. He entered the mortgage industry in 2018 and, by 2020, was working with the same trusted group of professionals who would later become the foundation of his future team. When their previous organization shifted operations to call centers in 2024, Evan and his mom took a leap of faith and help launch Arbor Home Loans—a company built on personal connection and client care. By October 2025, they officially joined forces to create The Rutherford Mortgage Team, combining experience, heart, and a shared vision for helping families achieve homeownership.

### A Modern Approach to Mortgage Lending

Evan describes his role as "the air traffic controller" of the real estate process, ensuring every detail aligns perfectly from start to finish. "Our goal is to bring all parties together for a smooth closing, on time, every time," he says. With more than 75 employees across Virginia Beach, Hampton Roads, the Outer Banks,

Charleston, and Richmond, Arbor Home Loans is built on trust, transparency, and collaboration.

Locally, Evan and The Rutherford Mortgage Team operate out of their Libbie and Grove office in Richmond,







representing Arbor Home Loans, whose tagline is “Rooted in Trust, Growing Your Future.” Their own team motto, “Two Generations. One Goal. Your Home,” reflects the partnership between Evan and his mother, Teresa Rutherford.

Evan’s team includes Melissa Slusser, his right hand in the office, Mallory Wigley, head of marketing, and Alyson Heidenthal, Teresa’s right hand in

Hampton Roads. Together, they’re known for their proactive, relationship-driven approach — partnering with top Realtors, crafting creative loan solutions, and offering quick, flexible closings that help clients stand out.

#### What Sets the Rutherford Team Apart

The Rutherford Team lives by a simple, powerful philosophy: Two Generations. One Goal. Your Home. That shared family mindset, paired with a culture of accountability and authenticity, defines the way they do business. “We’re not just trying to get deals done,” Evan says. “We’re building relationships that last. The goal is to be our clients’ lender for life.”

Evan’s direct and relatable personality has helped him quickly earn the trust of agents and clients alike. His milestones include making the President’s Club early in his career and helping lead Arbor’s continued growth throughout the region. The team’s ability to combine expertise with heart has made them one of the most respected lending groups on the East Coast.

#### Life Beyond the Office

When he steps away from work, Evan’s life centers around his wife, Kellie, and their two children, Deacon (2) and Palmer (4 months). Their home is filled with laughter, movement, and the happy chaos that comes with raising little ones. “We spend a lot of time at home, just enjoying the simple things,” Evan says. “Whether that’s cooking dinner together, playing outside, or just watching Deacon discover something new every day, those are the moments that matter most.”

A former Division I swimmer, Evan loves watching his son’s growing interest in the water. “Deacon already loves the pool, which makes me proud,” he says. “It’s fun to share that part of my past with him.” The family often spends their summers at the beach in Duck, North Carolina, where they were married, and where many of their

**“OUR GOAL IS TO BRING ALL PARTIES TOGETHER FOR A SMOOTH CLOSING, ON TIME, EVERY TIME.”**

favorite memories are made. “It’s our happy place,” he adds. “The sound of the waves, the slower pace, and being surrounded by family and friends—it’s where we all reset.”

At home in Richmond, the Rutherfords are equally social. Evan describes himself as a connector who loves bringing people together. “We’re always hosting something,” he says with a grin. “It might be a backyard barbecue, a day of sports, or just friends hanging out on the weekend. I enjoy seeing people laugh, relax, and enjoy good company.”

And then there’s Dixie, the family’s loyal rescue dog, a Boxer mix who’s been part of their story since 2019.

#### Looking Ahead

The future for Evan and the Rutherford Team is all about growth—both professional and personal. They plan to continue expanding their footprint across the East Coast while deepening community involvement through initiatives like covering adoption fees for local animal shelters. “We want to help everyone find their forever home,” Evan says, “including the animals in our community.”

Evan’s long-term goal is to keep growing his business organically, nurturing authentic partnerships, and maintaining the trust that has fueled his success. “I don’t have to be the perfect fit for everyone,” he reflects. “I

just want to work with those who value professionalism, expertise, and integrity.”



**CONTACT US!**

Ready to connect? Call Evan directly at (757) 773-3826 or visit [arborhl.com/contact/erutherford](https://arborhl.com/contact/erutherford). He’s always happy to chat—whether it’s about your next client’s financing strategy or how to make your next deal smoother than ever.



# A Legacy of Empowerment

BY GEORGE PAUL THOMAS  
PHOTOS BY BETTY JACKYL PHOTOGRAPHY

## "IZZY" IZAMAR MARTINEZ BRUNO



When Izamar "Izzy" Martinez Bruno talks about her journey, her energy is electric. She radiates confidence, warmth, and purpose—a proud Latina who turned hardship into motivation and vision into reality. For Izzy, real estate isn't just a career. It's proof that belief, hard work, and perseverance can change the trajectory of an entire family's future.

### From Honduras to Home

Izzy was born in Honduras, but her story of resilience began when her mother migrated to Belize in search of a better life. When Izzy was nine, her family relocated once more, this time to the United States. Her mother had come ahead in 1999 to pave the way, returning to bring her children to Richmond, Virginia—a city Izzy has now proudly called home for 24 years.

Growing up, Izzy learned early that life would not hand her opportunities—she would have to create them. After finishing high school, she worked in customer service for an apartment complex's maintenance department. That experience became an unexpected classroom, teaching her patience, communication, and the power of problem-solving. "Every challenge taught me something," she says. "Every mistake was an opportunity to grow."

Those lessons would later become the foundation of a career that blends heart and hustle in equal measure.

### Finding Purpose Through Real Estate

In June 2021, Izzy took a leap of faith into real estate, determined to rewrite her story. As a single mother at 20, she had promised herself that her daughter would be proud of the life she built. That promise became her driving force. "I became a Realtor to transform my life financially while making a meaningful impact in the Hispanic community," she says. "I wanted to be the person who helps others see what's possible—especially for those who might feel like I once did, unsure but full of potential."



For Izzy, real estate offered both purpose and possibility. It became her platform to educate, advocate, and inspire.

### A Leader in Every Sense

Today, Izzy is a Team Lead and co-founder of Emerald Realty Group, a growing team within eXp Realty. Her adaptability allows her to serve clients across every niche of the industry—from first-time homebuyers to seasoned investors and builders. "What sets me apart is how I tailor my approach to each client," she says. "I've helped families find their dream homes, investors build wealth, and even guided clients through their first flips or construction projects. My goal is always

the same—to make the process seamless and empowering."

Her results speak for themselves. In 2024, Izzy closed over \$8 million in volume, and this year, she is on track to surpass \$13 million. She has been recognized as a Top 1,000 Producer, but to her, the true reward is the trust of her clients. "Numbers are nice," she says, "but the best feeling is when a client tells me they felt cared for every step of the way."

### Family, Faith, and Fulfillment

At the heart of Izzy's story is her deep love for family. She is the proud mother of two daughters—Jenesis (13) and Victoria (5)—who inspire her every



single day. “They are my reason for everything,” she says. “Every late night, every early morning, every sacrifice is for them.”

Izzy’s motherhood journey has shaped her both personally and professionally. “Being a mom taught me how to multitask, lead with compassion, and stay grounded,” she says. “It reminds me that success means nothing if it doesn’t also create peace and joy for my family.”

She and her girls are inseparable, whether they’re dancing in the kitchen, watching movies on the couch, or taking spontaneous road trips. Fall brings apple and pumpkin picking adventures, while summer means days at the beach and laughter-filled travels. “We love creating new memories together,” she says. “I want my girls to see that even when life gets hard, love and togetherness make everything worthwhile.”

Their home is full of life—including Hunter, the family’s six-year-old

Siberian Husky, who’s as much a part of the family as anyone else. “He keeps us on our toes,” Izzy laughs.

Faith also anchors Izzy’s path. “I truly believe everything happens for a reason,” she shares. “When I look back at my life—from the struggles to the victories—I can see how God’s hand was guiding me through it all. Nothing was wasted.” That belief gives her strength when challenges arise and gratitude when blessings arrive. “Faith is what helps me stay patient when things don’t happen on my timeline,” she adds. “It reminds me that I’m exactly where I’m meant to be.”

**A Vision for the Future**

Looking ahead, Izzy’s goals reach beyond financial milestones. “Over the next ten years, I want to continue building not just financial wealth but generational wealth,” she says. “I want my daughters to understand that success is built through knowledge, effort, and consistency. Even if they don’t become



“I want my girls to see that even when life gets hard, love and togetherness make everything worthwhile.”

Realtors, they’ll know how to invest and create opportunity.”

She also hopes to expand her reach in real estate education, mentoring more agents, and empowering other women in her community to rise.

For Izzy, success is more than numbers or recognition—it’s about growth, giving, and gratitude.

Her advice for aspiring Realtors is simple but powerful. “The sun shines for everyone,” she says. “There’s enough success to go around. Stop comparing, stop competing, and start collaborating. If you stay humble, consistent, and lead with heart, success will follow.”



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# Shannon Murray Morris

## HEART-LED HUSTLE

BY AMELIA ROSEWOOD

PHOTO COURTESY OF JAMES LEE WITH JOURNEY SEVEN

Shannon Murray Morris, founding partner of The Murray Morris Group at Keller Williams Richmond West, isn't your average real estate powerhouse. She's equal parts strategist, service professional, and systems thinker. Quietly tenacious and deeply intentional, Shannon has carved out a space where clarity, efficiency, and connection reign. "I lead with intention and integrity," she says. "And I care deeply about doing right by the people we work with."

### A Career Reinvented

Originally from South Jersey, Shannon pursued a degree in Hospitality Management at Johnson & Wales University in Rhode Island. By 24, she had relocated to Richmond sight-unseen, stepping into a management position at The Cheesecake Factory in Short Pump. Her career quickly took off, but life had other plans.



"When I became pregnant with my first child, I saw firsthand the challenges working mothers face," she recalls. Despite her talent and drive, Shannon was pushed out of the corporate track. That experience lit a fire. "It wasn't just about me anymore. I needed a new path—one that gave me flexibility and purpose."

A natural connector with a service-driven mindset, Shannon shifted gears. With the support of her parents and the encouragement of her real estate mentor Barbara Thomas, she got licensed and launched her career at the height of the Great Recession.

"Everyone told me it was the worst time to start. But I saw it as a clean slate. While others were getting out, I doubled down."

After a few intense years of cold calling, Shannon knew there had to be a better way to build a business. In 2012, she



joined Keller Williams and found a business model that aligned with her belief in relationships and referrals. A year later, she met her future husband, Sidney Morris. "I knew right away he was someone I wanted to build a life—and a business—with," she says.





### Doing Business, The Murray Morris Way

As the Listing Specialist of The Murray Morris Group (MMG), Shannon focuses on the strategy behind the scenes while Scidney leads the charge on the buyer side. Together with the support of their admin team, they've built a client-centered business with a distinct, intentional feel.

In 2024, they closed over \$20 million in volume across 44 units. They were named the #1 Team in their Keller Williams office for both volume and units and ranked #81 out of all agents in Central Virginia.

"I thrive on efficiency and results," Shannon explains. "But more than anything, we focus on delivering a truly personalized experience. We anticipate needs, communicate clearly, and operate with care and integrity."

And the future? It's full of momentum. "We're aiming for \$25 million in 2025, and we're building systems to support that growth sustainably."

### Life at Home

At the heart of the business is family. Shannon and Scidney are raising two children, 16-year-old Alexander and 7-year-old Ivy, in a home filled with love,

laughter, and just the right amount of dog hair. (They also share their home with a Great Dane named Lemon, a young German Shepherd named Halo, and two cats affectionately referred to as Kitty and Kitten.)

Alexander is already showing signs of following in his parents' footsteps.

"He's charismatic and sharp, and he's expressed interest in real estate after high school," says Shannon. "He even works part-time at a fine dining restaurant, which I love since the hospitality world taught me so much."

"Ivy, on the other hand, dreams of becoming a doctor one day, a goal

**"This business IS DEEPLY ROOTED IN SERVICE AND RELATIONSHIPS. WE WANT OUR CLIENTS TO FEEL FULLY SEEN AND SUPPORTED EVERY STEP OF THE WAY."**



that reflects both her compassion and curiosity. She's a natural leader and quick thinker. She also happens to be a dancer, a soccer player, and an academic rock star, so whatever she sets her mind to, I know she'll shine." Shannon shares proudly.

When they aren't working, the family loves exploring new restaurants, spending time outdoors, walking the dogs, and traveling. "I don't sit still well," Shannon admits. "I like making the most out of every day."

### More Than Just Sales

Shannon isn't just building a business. She's building a legacy. With dreams of expanding their investment portfolio, mentoring future agents, and one day opening her own restaurant, she sees real estate as the first chapter in a much bigger story.

"One of the most exciting things is seeing our son take an interest in the business. The idea of building something our family can carry forward is incredibly fulfilling."

She also finds joy in giving back. The Murray Morris Group actively supports HomeAgain Richmond, a nonprofit for the unsheltered community, as well as causes related to shelter, children, and animals. "Whenever we can give back, we do. That's a big part of who we are."

Shannon is grounded by this quote from Helen Keller: "Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering

can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired, and success achieved."

That outlook has carried her from a single mom navigating new terrain to a top producer running one of Richmond's most respected boutique teams.

"This business is deeply rooted in service and relationships. We want our clients to feel fully seen and supported every step of the way."

Her advice to aspiring top producers? "Treat it like a business. Be consistent. Keep learning. Surround yourself with people who challenge you. And always put the client experience first."

Shannon Murray Morris isn't just making sales. She's setting standards, building connections, and crafting a business by design—all while keeping her family and her values at the center of it all.





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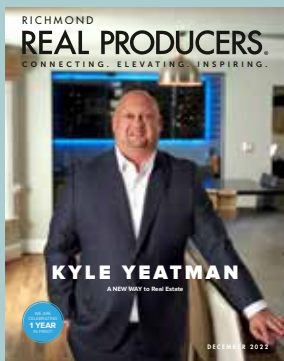
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