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DECEMBER 2025

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Amy
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A Case for Optimism

HELLO, DREAMMAKERS!

I'm **Sharla Jolley Ellis**—Producing Branch Manager at Fairway Home Mortgage, a fellow top producer in the mortgage industry, and someone who's loved working alongside many of you over the years.

Congratulations on being part of **Utah's Top 500!** Over the past three decades, I've been privileged to help more than 10,000 families achieve their dreams of homeownership—funding over \$3 billion in home loans as a Top 1% Mortgage Originator—so I know what it takes to get there. Like you, I deeply value the relationships and connections built along the way.

For at least the next 18 months, I'm thrilled to share this space with you—bringing insights, strategies, stories, and inspiration from my journey as a top-producing loan officer, coach, keynote speaker, and TV host. **My mission with Unstoppable You is simple**— to share the insights that have kept me energized, grateful, and thriving, no matter the market.

As we wrap up 2025 and look toward a new year, consider one powerful shift for 2026: **CHEER UP—because optimism really does outperform!**

How do I know? My maiden name is **Jolley**—so yes, positivity is literally in my DNA! It's also the single most powerful **competitive advantage** I've found in business and in life. That mindset has become the key to my longevity, leadership, and lasting client success.

Because positivity isn't fluff—**it's fuel**. It builds trust faster, diffuses tension, and draws people in. When you bring light into your work and your life, everything and everyone around you **GROWS STRONGER!**

And the best part? **It's contagious**. Your optimism can lift clients, calm chaos, and transform challenges into opportunities. As my mentor Todd Duncan once taught me:

- Positivity wins the day.
- Positivity backed by skill wins the market.
- Positivity backed by skill, with perseverance, changes your life!

Keep believing. Keep shining. Keep leading with purpose! —SE



From one go-getter to another

If you're looking for a trusted partner—or just a cheerful second opinion—I'd love to connect.

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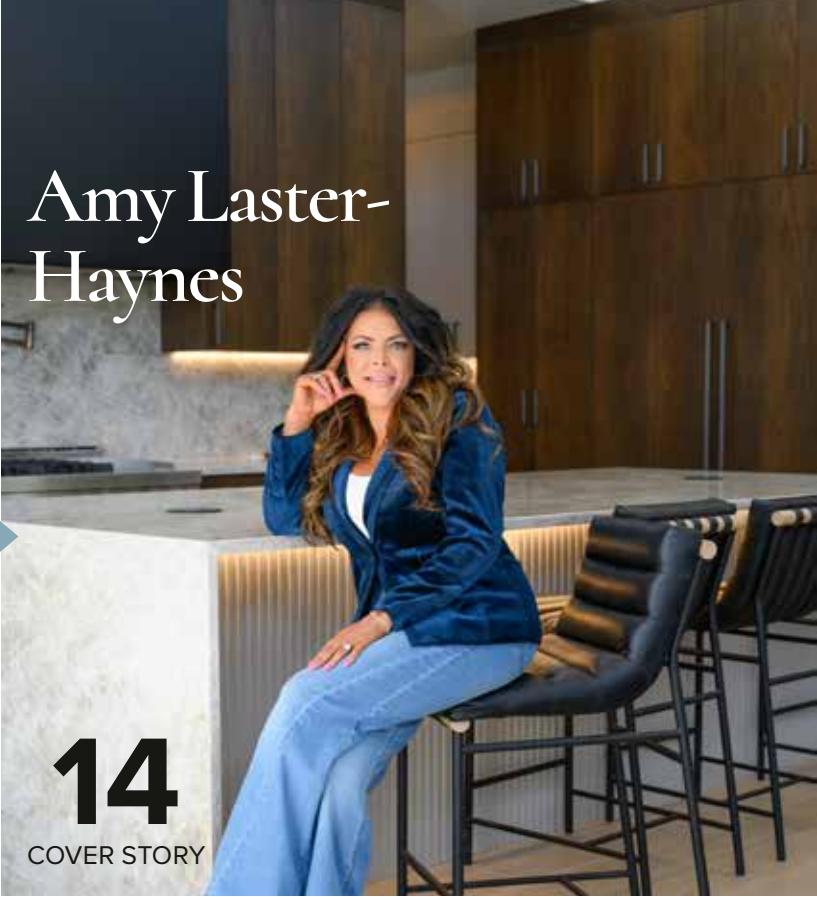
Pictured: David Weekley Homeowners Wesley & Ashley Morissette

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AMY

Lastet-Haynes

THE POWER OF A GOOD BACKUP PLAN

WRITTEN BY KENDRA WOODWARD • PHOTOGRAPHY BY PURPLE MOSS PHOTOGRAPHY



Growing up on a tiny farm in Deadwood, Oregon—a town so small it didn’t even have a hospital—Amy Laster-Haynes was raised with one simple motto: “Be a good person and the world will treat you the same.” It’s a phrase her parents often said to her. But despite their kind souls, Amy also watched them struggle financially, and that reality prompted her toward a much different career path. “They were barely skating by, and I didn’t want to live like that,” she recalls.

Starting work as a 14-year-old, Amy’s options were limited, and she took the first gig she landed...handing out samples at grocery stores. When she was old enough, she picked up a job at McDonald’s and eventually transitioned into a career with Lady Footlocker, where within eight months, she was promoted to assistant manager and realized her natural talent for sales.

In fact, she was on the verge of opening her own store in Portland when life threw her a slight curveball...she became pregnant with her first child. Looking for a career that allowed her to have a more flexible schedule and be more self-reliant, Amy turned towards real estate soon after relocating to Utah.

What had begun as a career path that would allow her to be more present in her children’s lives, turned out to be her greatest venture yet. “It ended up being so amazing, and I have such a passion for what I do,” Amy says. “A negative experience with a real estate agent inspired me to change the perception of the industry today. I treat clients like family and put responsiveness above all else. I put people above commissions, and that is why they trust me. This is why my business has evolved into repeat and referrals.” But her journey wasn’t without challenges, admitting, “Real estate showed me I can do hard things.” As her career blossomed, so did her self-respect and confidence, prompting her to gain the courage and stability to leave a bad relationship. Once she was established and in charge of her future, she began building a career she was proud of.

Despite the hurdles her past has placed in her way, Amy sees them as opportunities and utilizes the skills and lessons she learned now in her everyday endeavors. The biggest lesson

of them all was to always have a backup plan...or two. Not only does it keep her transactions moving smoothly, anticipating whatever might lay ahead, it also eases her clients’ minds knowing she has a plan. “I always have a plan, A, B, and C, for every transaction, but I never plan past that. I don’t stress beyond the A, B, and C.” Admittedly, she adds that this job has taught her not to stress the small stuff, and instead focus on what lies ahead. Each year, Amy re-evaluates her business practices, throwing out what doesn’t work and building on best practices. She is always looking at how she can improve the client experience.

Her two daughters, now in their late twenties, are living proof of the work ethic Amy has put forth and she beams seeing how they have modeled that same work ethic in their daily lives now as well. “They saw me trying everything I could do to make their lives good,” Amy explains with pride.

Almost three decades later, Amy is still maintaining that strong-minded sense of self, while guiding her clients with compassion and a familial hand. “I love that I don’t have the same job every single day and I love that I get to watch the work I get to do with people completely change the financial trajectory of their lives,” she says. Amy’s clients come to her not only for real estate advice but for personal guidance as well, understanding that she takes care in giving honest recommendations based on what’s best for their families...not what’s best for her business or numbers. “People trust me to help them go through significant life events, whether it be a divorce, an expanding family, or other change of circumstances; I have reframed my mindset and know I’m helping people and that feels so good.”

At home, Amy laughs, describing her family as “the Brady Bunch.” Together with her husband, Michael, of 19 years, they’ve built a blended family of six with Amy’s daughters, Marisa, who just got married in July and is expecting a baby, and Priscilla, who is the mom of a seven-year-old daughter and is studying to be a psychotherapist at UVU, and Michael’s sons, Rome, who is studying computer programming at UVU, and Anthony, who is a West Point graduate and holds a master’s from Carnegie Mellon. He is also currently attending flight school with the US Army. Add in their Chihuahua-pug mix, Maximus, and it’s clear to see where the reference comes from.

When they’re not focused on work, the family enjoys exploring the outdoors by hiking, traveling, or chasing their love of music. They make a point to attend at least one concert or festival a month, and recently hiked the 20-mile round trip to Havasu Falls together.

Amy also makes a point to give back, supporting women who are struggling to get back on their feet by donating clothing, including work clothes, to the women’s shelter knowing that will help them get back into the workplace. Having come from an abusive relationship, she knows firsthand how critical those resources can be. In addition, Amy donates to the RPack Fund, which allows real estate agents to have a say in housing legislation.

After 25 years in the industry, Amy has created much more than a career; she’s created a life defined by resilience, family, and joy. From humble beginnings to helping clients transform their futures, she’s proof that a great work ethic, a passion to do more, and a little bit of hippie wisdom can go a long way.



“

I love that I don't have the same job every single day and I love that I get to watch the work I get to do with people completely change the financial trajectory of their live.”





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ACCESS TITLE Company, Inc

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WRITTEN BY KENDRA WOODWARD
PHOTOGRAPHY BY TIFFANY BURKE PHOTOGRAPHY



MEET OUR PARTNER

If you’ve ever bought or sold a home, you know closings can feel like juggling flaming torches - stressful, inconvenient, and always happening at the worst possible time. But for the team at Access Title Company, Inc., the solution is simple...they bring the closing to you!

Vice President Paul Gehring explains their philosophy best: “We close anytime, anywhere for our clients. We realize that not everyone can take time off work or get babysitters for kids so we close wherever, whenever we are needed to make it convenient for our clients.”

And that commitment isn’t just a marketing line - *We Close Anytime, Anywhere* - it’s a way of life at Access Title, where nearly 60% of their closings happen outside the office. They happen at kitchen islands, coffee shops, and even hospital waiting rooms if that’s where life takes their clients.

The Origins of Access Title

The company was originally founded by Wayne Tanner, a man with more than three decades of title experience and a reputation for professionalism and grace. Wayne instilled a culture of client care and integrity that still defines ATC today and was a profound influence on Paul, citing, “Wayne taught me, from day one working here, the importance of taking care of our clients with professionalism and grace. I have tried every day to implement the skills Wayne taught me from the day I started.”

Dan Hall, President of Access Title, echoes Paul’s sentiment, admitting, “I learned from that mentorship the importance of accuracy and integrity in every transaction. That culture of excellence has raised my own standards and helped me grow into a more detail-oriented and client-focused professional. Honesty and integrity is something that I cherish the most about my service in our industry.”

Paul’s Journey

Born in Provo and raised in Orem, Paul picked up his strong work ethic from his parents. Then, in high school, he extended their teachings when he landed a job with a neighbor’s scrapbooking magazine. As the company grew, so did Paul’s workload and title, eventually becoming warehouse manager. Six years later, he realized he had hit a ceiling with the company and was ready to start looking for his next step. That’s when a friend connected him to Access Title.

Initially starting out as a title searcher, Paul worked hard to obtain his title license and escrow officer license before the opportunity to purchase the company alongside Dan came to fruition. For Paul, the opportunity felt like a culmination of every lesson he’d learned up to that point - combining his perseverance, relationship skills, and commitment to showing up for people no matter what.

Dan’s Journey

Dan, also a Utah-native, was born and raised in Provo before he spent two years in Japan prior to studying business at Utah

Valley University. The four years following, he worked selling life insurance before pivoting and heading back to school to study computer networking administration. With a new passion and degree under his belt, Dan was comfortable in his career for several years until his father-in-law nudged him to interview with his friend who owned a title company.

“I initially told my father-in-law that I was not interested and that I liked my job,” Dan laughs. But that interview changed his mind - realizing the stability, opportunity, and, to his surprise, excitement he had for the new field. That was 23 years ago, Dan admitting proudly, “I love working in the title industry and many of my closest friends have come from this job.”

Building a Business with Heart

While ATC has faced many challenges and market cycles over the years, the skills they put to use whilst weathering the rocky 2008 housing market have since become their signature and the foundation to everything they do - closing anywhere, anytime. “We don’t charge any extra fees for this and do it as a courtesy to our clients,” Paul explains, admitting that nearly 60% of their closings are now held outside of the office.

And the faces behind that effort include Sara Johnson (Funder/ Escrow Assistant) and McKenzie Martines (Escrow Assistant/ Officer) in addition to Paul and Dan. Together, they provide title and escrow services for real estate agents and lenders alike, while keeping the process seamless and as stress-free as possible. Or as Paul puts it, “We pride ourselves on offering the best customer service we can, and making what can be a very stressful experience for buying or selling a home as painless and seamless as possible.”


For both Paul and Dan however, success in the title industry has always been about people. “The thing I most enjoy about working in this industry is the opportunity to meet with new people each and every day,” Paul prides. “The process is very similar from transaction to transaction, but the people make it new and exciting each time. I especially enjoy working with first time homebuyers and seeing the excitement as they purchase their very first home.”

Dan adds, “Over my career, I’ve learned how important adaptability is. Whether that’s navigating regulatory changes or calming clients during stressful transactions. Those experiences have not only developed my technical skills but also built my confidence as a leader in my field.”

Life Imitating Work

Together, both Dan and Paul carry with them their own personal philosophies shaped by challenges they’ve faced outside of work - implementing a more personal touch with their clients. Because they themselves know how hectic life can get, and they aim to alleviate some of that chaos as best they can for their clients.

With each and every day, Paul’s perspective continues to be shaped by the unexpected, ongoing health struggles his wife

A man and a woman are standing in a park with a fountain. The man is on the left, wearing a light blue button-down shirt and dark trousers. The woman is on the right, wearing a black jumpsuit. They are both smiling and looking towards the camera. The fountain is in the background, with water spraying upwards. There are trees and a building in the distance.

“We pride ourselves on offering the best customer service we can, and making what can be a very stressful experience for buying or selling a home as painless and seamless as possible.”

faces on a daily occurrence. “She is still with us today and I am so thankful for that,” Paul shares. “She has taught me so much about persevering through her trials. She is my role model and someone I look up to daily.”

For Dan, he leans on his own guiding mantra: “Every challenge is an opportunity in disguise; persistence turns obstacles into stepping stones, and that’s why I believe you should never give up.” Because for him, every twist throughout his life and career have only reinforced his value of precision, adaptability, and trust - principles that guide both his work and his home life.

Life Outside the Office

It’s clear when speaking with both Paul and Dan that family is their anchor in life. Paul and his wife, Shantel, are thankful for the joy their four children bring into their lives. They are thankful for each new day as they battle the effects that three open heart surgeries, a stroke, and brain damage has had on Shantel’s daily life. Yet, through everything, Paul admits he is always stunned by her positive attitude towards life. “I have realized that life is a series of trials and challenges, and the more we can face them and move through them, the easier life gets,” Paul admits.

Dan and his wife, Lisa, spend their free time going on adventures with their three kids, often exploring Utah’s mountains on their side-by-side. While two out of the three children have a surprisingly large age gap, it’s no secret that Lisa and daughter, Amber, enjoy accompanying Dan on his travels across the county while competing in Professional Senior Tour Pickleball tournaments.

Full Circle

Looking back, it’s clear from their journeys that neither Paul nor Dan had initially set out to land careers in the title world. Yet through great mentorship, high company standards, the ever-evolving demands of the title industry, and a passion for helping others, they’ve not only built fulfilling careers but also nurtured a company that lives up to its promise of making closings as painless as possible.

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Submitted by Krystin Pipkin, Marketing Specialist, Meritage Homes

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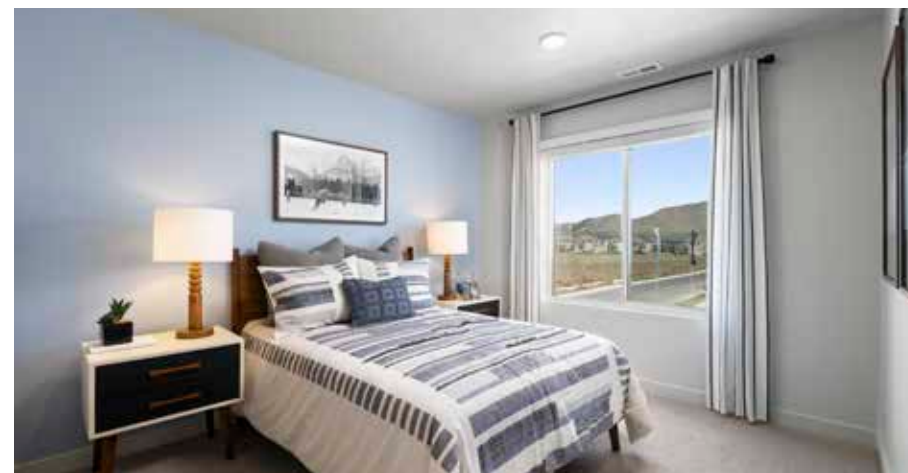
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Full Circle

WRITTEN BY KENDRA WOODWARD
PHOTOGRAPHY BY TIFFANY BURKE PHOTOGRAPHY

JENNA
Gianneschi

Spend five minutes with Jenna Gianneschi and you'll immediately notice her high energy, quick wit, and fast-talking style. Drawing strength from her past missteps, she has turned old weaknesses into her greatest superpowers. Her story proves that with grit, reflection, and heart, transformation is possible. Today, she channels that resilience into real estate—helping people find life again.

Born in Itasca, Illinois, Jenna is the eldest of five in a big Irish-Italian Chicago family, where deep-dish pizza was king and, as she jokes, “The F-word is a term of endearment.” Her fascination with homes began early. On rare visits to friends’ houses, she noticed how every household felt distinct, as if the walls themselves whispered the story of its family.

At just 17, Jenna landed a weekend job as a receptionist at Trump Tower in Chicago. She quickly worked her way up to executive coordinator and, as the project neared completion, joined one of the grande dames of the Gold Coast market. There, she cut her teeth assisting on luxury listings along East Lake Shore Drive, Oprah’s Indiana estate, and properties owned by Chicago Bulls players. It was an impressive start, though Jenna admits the industry then looked very different from today.

A few years later, she earned her real estate license while balancing a packed schedule—working full-time during the week, another job on weekends, and attending night classes at DePaul University, where she graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Finance. At the time, agents were still expected to personally drive clients from listing to listing, which made it challenging to juggle everything. Still, the experience gave her a foundation and sharpened the discipline and tenacity she carries today.

After finishing her degree, Jenna took her ambition abroad. She pursued a TEFL certificate and spent several months touring Shanghai and smaller Chinese cities. Soon after, she traveled to Rio de Janeiro, earned a CELTA degree from the

University of Cambridge, and accepted a teaching position in a small coastal county in China. “It was an absolutely amazing experience,” she beams. But the isolation of such a rural setting—where her only English-speaking contacts were her students—pushed her toward drinking as an escape.

By 2016, Jenna had moved to Salt Lake City to fight for her life in alcohol treatment. The journey wasn’t easy: Her first facility was shut down over insurance fraud, the second was overwhelmed and couldn’t help, but a friend advocated for her to enter a third, where she finally found the tools she needed to get sober. “I had been desperate to get sober for a long

time,” she admits. “I wanted to stop, but I couldn’t. Alcohol was on a loop in my head.”

Graduating treatment with nothing but a bag of belongings scavenged from lost-and-found bins, Jenna rebuilt her life in a city she didn’t know: unfamiliar with the culture, the LDS influence, or even Utah’s alcohol laws. In hindsight, she calls it the best thing that ever happened.

After treatment, she worked at CirclePIX, a tech company serving real estate agents, while also holding a nursing home job to stay busy. Promoted into sales before CirclePIX was acquired, she traveled often and found herself running an impromptu sober-living program on



the side. “That was a balancing act,” she laughs, “but it taught me how to stay sober while relying on myself.”

When corporate America lost its shine, Jenna pivoted back to real estate—joining a boutique brokerage introduced to her by a friend from treatment. Today, she’s still a solo agent but is in the early stages of building a team and launching a coaching company to help other agents sharpen their skills, think strategically, and work more effectively. Her focus has shifted from chasing leads to building collaborative networks and systems that foster long-term success. “At the heart of it,” she says, “my job is much more personal now.”

She knows it’s how you treat people that leaves the biggest impact. To her, a home is never just a property—it’s meals at the table, holidays, birthdays, and kids climbing into their parents’ bed after a nightmare. Just as she once noticed how the walls of a house seemed to whisper a family’s story, she now helps her clients create the next chapter of their own.

That people-first approach defines her business. Jenna helps clients with poor credit, fights off predatory lenders, and organizes messy contracts. “Sometimes nice doesn’t get the job done,” she quips. “Sometimes, I gotta deliver a little Chicago their way.” Her drive is legendary—she once pulled off 23 showings in a single day. She routinely pays out of pocket for staging, photography, and even cleaning. “That reminds me, I need to go ‘Erin Brockovich’ on an HOA,” she jokes.

Her reputation speaks for itself. One lender called her a bulldog: “She’ll bite down and never let go.” Jenna wears the title proudly. From babysitting clients’ kids to serving as an emergency contact

for out-of-state buyers, she is all-in. “I don’t ever want anyone to feel pressured into buying a house,” she says.

Outside of real estate, Jenna is just as passionate about family and connection. “Family is everything to me, and I’m beyond grateful for my amazing, supportive husband who makes every adventure, big or small, even more meaningful.” Together with her husband Nick, her “bonus” son Gavin, and their Yorkie, Fitz, Jenna dreams of one day building a family-run real estate venture.

She’s also a dancer at heart, a foodie, and a natural connector of people. Laughing through tears, she admits she’ll need to make more money just to afford a wedding big enough for the friends and family she’s gained in sobriety. She also misses her family back home deeply—her dad, two sisters and their families, and her brother and his family—and treasures every chance she gets to reconnect with them. Her journey hasn’t been easy—she’s lost her mom, brother, grandmother, and uncle in quick succession—but she remains grateful. “It really is a miracle that I’m still here,” she says, her voice catching. “When you go through big stuff in life and come out the other end, it’s a true gift.”

Now dual-licensed in Utah and Illinois, **Jenna is celebrating 9 years, 3 months, and 8 days sober as of her birthday on October 1st.** She’s in the early stages of collaborating on a treatment facility in Mexico, bringing her story full circle. And at the heart of it all, her mission remains simple: to help others find stability, joy, and a place to truly call home. “Halfway almost cost me everything—I learned that the hard way. Now passion fuels me, grit sustains me, and hopefully, my clients feel that fire in every deal.”

“It really is a
Miracle
that I’m still here.”



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JOSHUA

Growing with Real Estate

WRITTEN BY KENDRA WOODWARD
PHOTOGRAPHY BY LEXI RAE PHOTOGRAPHY

SKOUSEN

As the second youngest of ten kids, Joshua Skousen has never been one to back down from a challenge. Growing up, he watched his family face both triumph and hardship, and learned from those experiences to always be prepared for what the future might bring.

His father, once a newspaper editor, lost everything during the recession after

trusting the wrong person with his life savings, career, and even their family home. That experience left Joshua with a firsthand understanding of what it meant to work hard when life doesn't hand you much, as the large family faced numerous struggles getting back on their feet after the event. Even looking back now, Joshua recalls a moment he faced when a comment was made that suggested he might not have

the proper work ethic to make it in real estate...and his wife laughed, admitting there wasn't a single person she knew with a better work ethic and drive.

It's that same sense of determination which he carried with him throughout his youth, and has only motivated Josh throughout numerous commission-based roles - whether he was selling cars, suits, furniture, medical devices, or solar, Josh admits he's done it all. And though he was consistently a top performer at any task he faced, he admits candidly, "I just never enjoyed it long-term."

Real estate, however, was different! "It's the best type of sales in the whole industry. It's got the variety, the relationships, strong purposeful impact on others' lives, and the financial means so you can enjoy and actually grow - if you can make it...if you can survive that first year," he says, admitting his first look into the industry scared him away. However, despite how much he wishes he would've just jumped in, Josh also realized 2021 wasn't the right time for him either.

Two years later, Josh decided to give real estate consideration once again, but this time he was a bit more prepared...or so he thought. He left his previous employer with many deals still on the table, which he continued to help close out, and was ready to take on real estate full time knowing he had the security of checks still coming his way. However, that wasn't the case. With four kids at home and a family to support, Josh was gutted when his previous employer called and told him they wouldn't be compensating him...at all!



But if Josh's childhood taught him anything, it was that a Skousen never backs down from a challenge. So, he linked up with Century 21 Everest and joined Austin Cales's team. "Austin Cales is a great mentor. I guarantee I would've been like the 90% of other agents that fail had it not been for him," Josh says with gratitude of the mentor that coached him to Rookie of the Year.

Yet, what makes Joshua unique from other agents is that his style and approach are refreshingly low-key. "I think they're really comfortable around me," he shares of his relationship with his clients. He's not repetitive, he customizes his approach for each client, and listens more than he talks. He's also known for his communication skills, whether it's through voice messages, thoughtful gifts, or "a text thread long enough to become a novel," he laughs.

And despite his view that referrals are the greatest compliment he can receive,



"WHAT'S MOST EXCITING IS HELPING PEOPLE ACHIEVE SOMETHING, OR DO SOMETHING, THAT THEY DIDN'T BELIEVE THEY COULD."



Josh admits he's terrible at asking his clients to share his name with friends and family. Because for Josh, trust comes first, and pressure has no place in the process. "What's most exciting is helping people achieve something, or do something, that they didn't believe they could."

Today, real estate provides Josh and his wife, Asha, the life they always dreamed of while raising their four kids, Atlas, Aries, Aero, and Astraea. It's become a life filled with casual afternoons spent playing outdoors, trips to the mountains to ride dirt bikes, theme park ventures, and the everyday joy of kids running around or yelling "Dad!" when he gets home.

When asked about his hobbies, Josh laughs, admitting he doesn't get out much but he also doesn't really mind, because he prefers family time over nights out with friends any day. And when the family is looking for a change of scenery, you can bet they have no problem planning a vacation, usually involving the ocean and white sandy beaches as that is Asha's favorite locale – though Josh laughs that wrangling four little kids onto a plane takes some bravery.

More recently, Josh shares that real estate has provided them with the ability to make their dreams come true much sooner than anticipated as the Skousens are preparing to move into their dream home. "It's a huge leap for us, we did not think this would be possible," he prides. And once they've finally settled in, Josh is excited to retain their current home on his real estate portfolio, turning it into an income property and hopefully the beginning of a generational legacy he can share with his kids.



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