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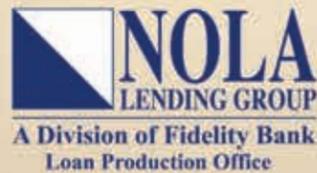


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Lizzie
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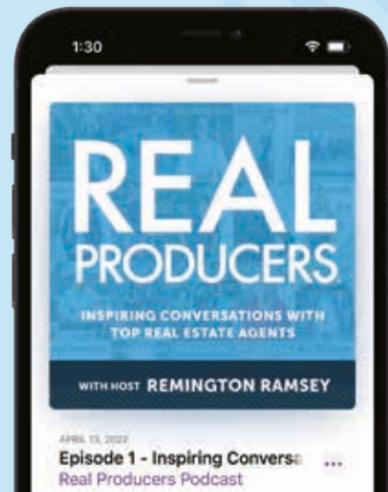
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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

HEY Mama



BY GINA MILLER

This month's features are filled with strength, grace, hustle, heart, and a whole lot of love.

This issue is a tribute to the moms we are, the moms we know, and the moms we remember. We honor the new moms navigating sleepless nights and tender firsts. The adoptive moms whose love knows no bounds. The single moms doing it all with quiet strength. The working moms chasing dreams while raising babies. The volunteering moms our hands never seem to stop giving. And to the empty-nest moms like me, learning to love from a little further away...whose prayers have gotten louder and longer...we get the privilege to champion our own children as they build their own legacies.

Mother's Day held an even deeper meaning for me this year after having said goodbye to my mom in December.

Grief has a way of reshaping everything...especially holidays where voids are felt and memories surface. My mother loved getting this magazine each month. She was not one to say much, but she made me feel seen at the same time. That was the Dorothy way. A quiet presence. I see pieces of her in so many of my decisions and especially as I watch my own three daughters, now mothers themselves, step fully into their own roles as nurturers, protectors and providers. It's a full-circle moment, both beautiful and bittersweet.

If you spend any time with me, you'll hear about my daughters. I'm one proud mom. I dare you to invite me to coffee and ask me about my babies. *I can go on and on and on...*

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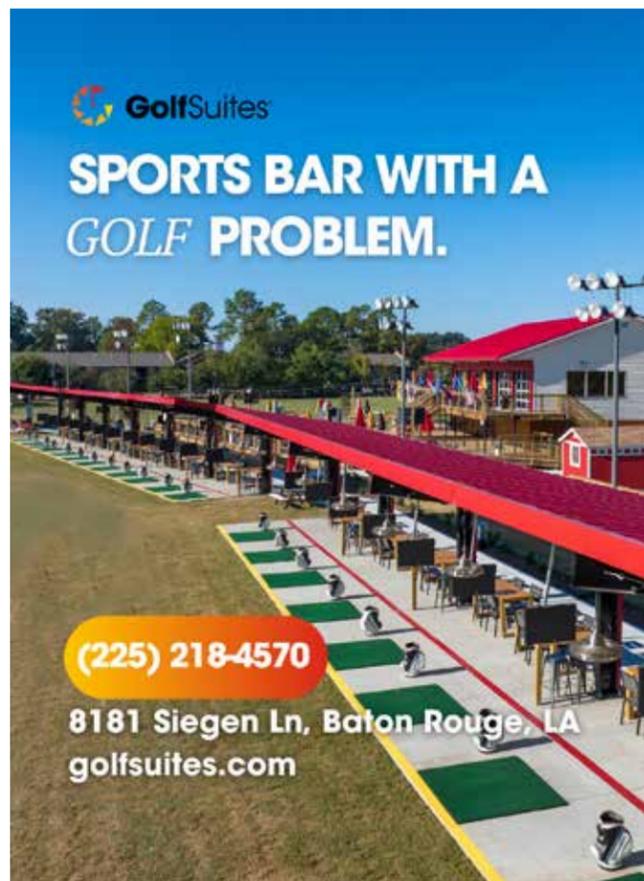
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Sheridan Fay

Making Home Happen

BY BREANNA PIZZOLATO | PHOTOS BY ACE SYLVESTER

During dinner one evening, picnic-style on the floor of their small apartment, Sheridan Fay made a promise to her young daughter, Ivy. “I told her if I could buy a home of our own one day, we would paint the door hot pink,” Sheridan recalls. She had entered treatment just before Ivy’s first birthday with the hope that her daughter would never have to witness her mother struggle with alcoholism. Having recently graduated from a sober living program, she was proud of getting into an apartment, but knew she wanted more. That promise became a vision that would shape Sheridan’s future and her daughter’s childhood. Today, Ivy is 10 years old and beams with pride when she tells people about Red Stick Financial, the company her mother co-founded and continues to build alongside Ryan Mott.

Opportunity Knocks

The opportunity that changed everything came from a friend in Sheridan’s sober living community who mentioned a position with a local mortgage lender — an industry she thought Sheridan might like. That nudge introduced Sheridan

to Ryan, who hired her as his assistant. What started as an entry-level position soon became a launching pad. Sheridan soaked up every bit of knowledge she could, quickly becoming a standout in the industry. In time, she and Ryan began dreaming of a business of their own. “It had always been on our hearts to do something that was ours, something we could build for our daughters,” Sheridan says. That vision became Red Stick Financial, a name inspired by their combined initials and the community that gave them their start — the same one they proudly serve today.

Their commitment to Baton Rouge runs deep, with supporting local at the heart of their business. Whether picking up baked goods for closings from Counter Space, allocating marketing dollars, or sourcing swag, they make a conscious effort to shop small. Their #GeauxLocal mindset isn’t just a strategy or hashtag — it’s a way of life. Even Ivy has embraced the value of uplifting their community through thoughtful, intentional choices. During Mardi Gras season, that commitment turns

delicious, with the family sampling as many locally made King Cakes as they can, with last year’s total topping 100.

For Sheridan, supporting fellow small businesses isn’t just good business, it’s a family value she’s passing down by showing her daughter how collective support can strengthen the entire community.

By My Side

Sheridan is a woman who wears many hats. Among them are business owner, community volunteer and passionate advocate for self-care and empowerment. She is a champion of Flower Fest, a fundraiser benefitting St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, having served as an honoree and corporate sponsorship chair. She’s also deeply committed to uplifting other women, serving as a moderator for a local women’s group that has over 47,000 members. Encouraging women, especially moms and single moms, to prioritize themselves and pour into their own cups is what inspires her to share her personal health and weight loss journey and to serve as a brand ambassador for local aesthetics and wellness businesses. Whether she’s volunteering at Ivy’s school, supporting fellow small businesses or modeling confidence and care at home, Sheridan leads by example. “As working moms, it’s not the work-life balance that gets you. What we’re really trying to balance is our own identity, our own exercise, healthy eating and taking care of ourselves. And that’s the part that always goes by the wayside when we’re caring for everybody else,” she says. “Actively choosing you is really, really hard, but it’s also really, really important.”

That lesson — the importance of showing up for yourself — is one she’s passing on to Ivy in meaningful, everyday ways. As much as Sheridan leads by example, she also invites Ivy into the journey.

“She’s the brand invigorator for Red Stick Financial,” Sheridan says. “She wears her branded gear, comes to BNI meetings with me and makes my clear to close calls, which is the most fun. She’s just so proud of what we’ve built. And I can’t even describe what it’s like to hear her say, ‘That’s my mom’s company’.”

Whether it’s brainstorming marketing ideas or sitting beside her at events, Ivy has been an active participant in her mom’s journey. “She’s been right next to me every step,” she says. “She wasn’t born into this. She’s been alongside me through every struggle.”

That closeness has made the wins even sweeter, but it’s also added weight to the sacrifices. “I hope she has a better work-life balance than I do one day. I hope she appreciates the reason I’m working so much now, which is to be able to provide for her,” Sheridan says. “It’s hard, but I’m grateful she gets to see me do it.”

Open Doors

Sheridan believes deeply in invisible strings — the quiet ways life pulls you toward where you’re meant to be. Her own story is filled with them. When her father passed away in 1987, Sheridan was only two and a half. She grew up knowing

he worked at a bank, but it wasn’t until adulthood that she learned he originated mortgages, a full-circle detail she treasures as she leads a company doing exactly that.

Those invisible threads of purpose, resilience and legacy also connect her personal journey to the heart of her business. Sheridan’s recovery journey is not just a chapter in her life — it’s an integral part of the foundation of their business philosophy. Red Stick Financial isn’t just about home loans. It’s about hope, second chances and meeting people where they are. This mission of compassion and resilience is shared by her business partner, Ryan, who has been a steadfast believer in their shared vision from the beginning. Together, they’ve created a company that values long-term relationships over quick wins and sees financial milestones as deeply personal triumphs.

For Sheridan, helping someone buy a home means something different. It’s not just a transaction — it’s a transformation. She knows what it’s like to yearn for safety, stability and something all your own. She knows how monumental a front door can be.

“A home is more than just a place to be, it’s a safe space, something to call your own, and everyone deserves to have that,” she says. “The first time I told someone to leave *my* house if they were going to talk like that was a feeling I’ll never forget. And it’s an honor to help others achieve that same feeling.”

Today, she and Ivy live in a home with a hot pink door. And every time she pulls into the driveway, it’s a reminder of how far they’ve come — and of the lives she and Ryan hope to touch through Red Stick Financial: one home, one family, one dream at a time.



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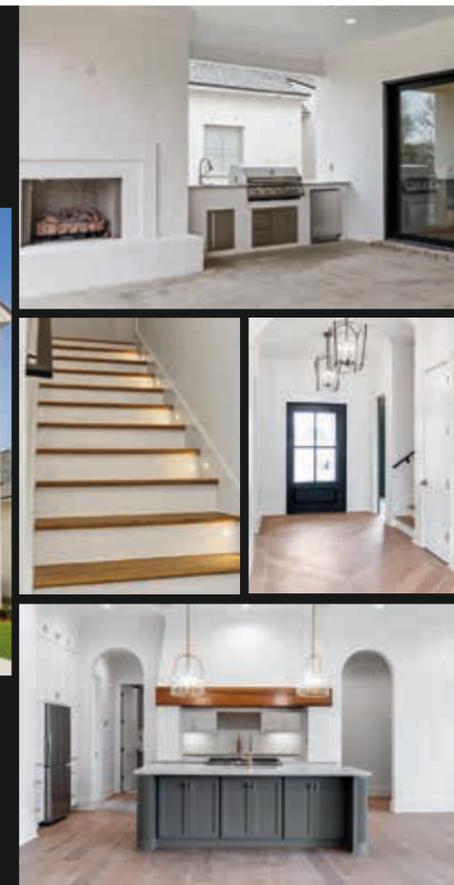
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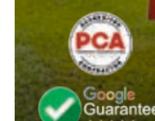
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Never Too Late

Collins

BY LAKEN FOISIE
PHOTOS BY SHELBY ST GERMAIN NUNNERY

Dione Collins, better known as “Dione Gets It Done,” didn’t start her professional journey in real estate, but she’s made it her purpose. After seven years in the business, she has carved out a reputation rooted in passion and a willingness to bet on herself.

Before launching her real estate career, Collins worked as an administrative assistant with the East Baton Rouge Parish School System. But a turning point came when her daughter needed surgery, and she was asked to pay \$3,500 upfront. “My heart sank. I didn’t have it,” she recalled. “In that moment, I felt helpless. As a mother, nothing is more painful than not being able to provide when it matters most.” That call became the catalyst for change. “I made a promise to myself that I would never be in that position again,” she said. “I needed more than just a paycheck. I needed a path to freedom, flexibility, and financial stability.” Real estate became that path.

Taking that leap was far from easy. The greatest challenge she faced was leaving her comfort zone and going all in as a full-time agent. “I had a steady paycheck, benefits, and the so-called ‘security’ that came with my 9-to-5,” she explained. “But deep down, I knew I was playing small.” She made the difficult decision to “fire EBR and hire me.” She added. “Don’t let fear keep you from your next level.”

Collins attributes her entrepreneurial spirit to her father, a business owner who, at 91, still inspires her drive. “Watching him build, hustle, and lead his own way left a lasting impression,” she said. “It taught me that ownership, freedom, and legacy are possible when you’re willing to bet on yourself.”

Her real estate toolbox includes motivational books like *Relentless*, *The Millionaire Real Estate Agent*, and *Atomic Habits*, as well as tools like Audible, a Google calendar, and a trusty

paper planner. “There’s something powerful about putting paper to pen,” she said. “Writing things down on a paper calendar isn’t just about staying organized; it’s about making a commitment to yourself.”

When asked about the biggest life lesson she’s learned, Collins does not hesitate. “Nothing is wasted... not the pain, mistakes, or moments I thought would break me,” she said. “Through it all, God never left me. I now understand everything I went through was preparing me to walk boldly in my purpose with grace and grit.”

That lesson has become central to how she inspires others, particularly women looking to reinvent themselves later in life. “It was not until I was 47 that I found my purpose and passion,” she shared. “It’s never too late to chase your dreams.”

Collins describes herself as a woman of resilience,





purpose, and passion; traits that also define her approach to real estate. “Integrity is key. My word is my bond,” she said. “In this business, trust is everything.” Resilience also plays a major role: “Real estate is not always easy. I can’t fold under pressure.” Confidence, she added, has come with time: “I walk in a room like I belong there...because I do.”

If she could add a fourth trait, it would be passion. “This is not just a job for me. It’s my calling. I’m deeply

invested in helping others build a legacy through real estate, while also building one for my three beautiful daughters and my smart and sassy granddaughter.”

Off the clock, Collins can be found enjoying live music, a good steak, and a lemon drop martini. But wherever she is, her mindset remains steady: “Every step I take in this industry is intentional. I’m here to inspire, empower, and create generational change, not just for my family, but for

“ Through it all, God never left me. I now understand everything I went through was preparing me to walk boldly in my purpose with grace and grit. ”

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How Inventory and Affordability Are Shaping Our Market



BY BRANDON RICHOUX

As Greater Baton Rouge agents, we know that price trends don't move in isolation—they follow the story of supply and demand. Lately, the plot has been shifting.

Listing inventory is up across our market, which is no surprise to any of you. And thanks to some well-qualified move-up buyers, median home prices are still holding. But it would be shortsighted not to acknowledge what's happening beneath the surface, particularly in the first-time buyer segment.

According to ShowingTime data from March and April of 2025, showings per listing decreased year over year for homes priced under \$261,990. In contrast, listings over \$270,000 saw a 7.1% increase in showings. That tells us something: affordability challenges are sidelining the buyers who typically drive entry-level inventory. And that's a concern. While second and third-time buyers can often leverage equity gained since 2020 to offset high rates or fund rate buydowns, first-time buyers face a much tougher choice—renting feels safer than buying in a market where mortgage payments outpace perceived value.

► **It's simple math:**

if a large portion of buyers can't or won't enter the market, sellers in those segments will have to reduce asking prices. We're already seeing it happen, and I think there's more to come. That doesn't mean a market-wide crash is imminent. In fact, our appreciation was moderate enough during the COVID years that Baton Rouge is relatively insulated compared to other metros. And the Housing Affordability Index backs that up—in March, we scored 110, meaning the median household income is still 110% of what's needed to purchase the median-priced home. But compare that to 170 in January 2021, and the drop in affordability is significant.

► **Here's the bottom line:**

to sustain price appreciation, we need more buyers. And unless interest rates drop in a meaningful and consistent way, the only remaining variable that can change is sales price. Now more than ever, we need to be the voice of clarity for our clients. The headlines may generalize, but we know that every price bracket, every zip code, and every client's situation is different. *Baton Rouge Real Producers* will be the ones who help their clients navigate those nuances with confidence.

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REGAN

BY BREANNA PIZZOLATO
PHOTOS BY STEVIE LEJEUNE

JACOB

HIGHEST PRIORITY

Long before Regan Jacob became a mom, she knew she'd be a working one—driven, present, and all in. Now raising two boys, she meets life's twists with humor, heart, and undeniable hustle. Whether at a closing table or up late rocking her little ones, Regan shows up with full force for her clients, her family and herself.

Roll With It

After eleven years together, Regan and her now-husband Eric were ready to say “I do.” She had planned their wedding down to the final detail—date set, venue booked, invitations sent. But the pandemic hit just one week before they were set to tie the knot, forcing them to cancel everything.

Still, the couple was determined to move forward. They exchanged vows in a small ceremony, and loved ones watched it via Facebook Live. Later, they tried to host a rescheduled celebration, but they faced a second wave of cancellations as COVID restrictions ramped up again. The back-to-back wedding hurdles became just another example of Regan's adaptability—a trait that would prove invaluable in the years to come. Those early challenges marked the beginning of a season defined by resilience and transformation, both personally and professionally.

After facing years of infertility and heartbreaking miscarriages, Regan and Eric welcomed their rainbow baby, Rafe, in 2023. “Rafe started coming to work with me very early,” she says. “He was





four weeks old at his first inspection and six weeks old at his first closing.”

While the idea of a newborn at a house inspection might sound like a scene

from a movie, the reality was much more raw and real. Four weeks simply was not enough time, and Regan found herself wishing moments away. “I kept thinking, well when he’s sleeping

through the night it will be easier, or walking, or whatever the next thing would be,” she recalls. Then came a twist she didn’t see coming. After a few days of feeling off, she laid Rafe down for the night and took a pregnancy test, expecting reassurance—not a positive result.

“The pregnancy test seemed broken, so when it popped up positive right away, I thought it was a dud. I ended up taking seven more. I called my sister, who’s a nurse, and said, ‘Kayla, I think I’m pregnant.’ I showed her all the tests, and we got scared—because with an IUD, there’s a risk of ectopic pregnancy,” she recalls. “The whole beginning of my pregnancy felt scary. I’d already had multiple miscarriages, and this added another layer. I couldn’t even enjoy the beginning—I just kept expecting bad news. But the baby was healthy and born at 38 weeks and two days.”

That baby, Rhys, is now six months old. With her second maternity leave, Regan experienced what she describes as her most peaceful and restorative break yet, thanks to the team at Magnolia Roots Realty. “How amazing is it that 99%, if not 100%, of us are parents,” she says. “It’s so refreshing to be walking this path with so many people who relate to the season I’m in.”

Better Together

Motherhood has transformed Regan in powerful, unexpected ways—just not the ones most people predict. Rather than slowing her down, it sharpened her edge. “What used to take me a full day before kids, I can get done in two hours,” she says with a laugh. She’s more efficient, more focused, and even more strategic in how she approaches work. “People think becoming a mom will make you take a step back and only give it part time,” she says. “But I’ve only perfected my craft since becoming a mom.”

Regan attributes this growth to the necessity of time management and her more profound commitment to her clients, rooted in her desire to protect and serve families like her own. Because



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family is her highest priority, clients know she’ll advocate fiercely for theirs. “I work smarter, not less,” she says. “My family fuels my motivation to give every client my best.”

Outside of work, she and Eric stay busy with home projects and a healthy dose of fun.

“We love a good project,” she says. “We’re constantly doing them at home. Be on the lookout for the next Chip & Joanna here!” And when house projects, appointments and life begin to make the days feel especially long, she remembers: “The days are long, but the years are short.”

At her core, Regan is driven by a desire to create meaningful experiences for her children and space for personal growth in her own life. She firmly believes in the power of therapy, self-reflection and asking her trusted tribe for help. Her ability to adapt and lean into support systems—whether through her brokerage, her family or her own internal compass—has shaped a professional journey marked by grace and grit.

More than just balancing motherhood and business, Regan embodies a life of full integration. She doesn’t compartmentalize who she is—she lets every part of her inform the other. As she continues growing her business, raising her boys and embracing life’s curveballs with confidence, one thing is clear: Regan Jacob isn’t just surviving—she’s thriving.



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LIZZIE BENZER

MEANT TO BE

BY BREANNA PIZZOLATO • PHOTOS BY SHELBY ST GERMAIN NUNNERY

Some of the most defining moments in Lizzie Benzer's life have unfolded not by careful planning, but by what she says is simply God's grace and will for her life.

As a young 19-year-old, Lizzie realized college wasn't the right fit, but knew she had to present a plan to her parents. So she turned to Google in search of a new path—specifically, certificates she could earn in just a few weeks. After an evening of scrolling around, she landed on real estate. Nearly twenty years later, that spontaneous decision has become the cornerstone of a thriving career. Today, Lizzie is a top-producing broker, a mother of five and a devoted community advocate in Zachary—the place she's proudly called home since she was 15. With grace, humor and a support system she calls her greatest gift, Lizzie makes it all look effortless. But if you ask her, the secret is simple: Don't sweat the small stuff, do your best every day and put people first.

Family Built on Faith

After welcoming their two oldest daughters, Scout, now 11, and Mills, now 9, Lizzie and her husband Dustin, who goes by Benzer to just about everyone, paused on building their family to focus on their two little girls

and budding careers. When they decided to add to their family, they didn't anticipate where the journey would lead them.

After trying to conceive for a while, they reached a crossroads. "The doctor said it was time to either start fertility treatment or begin the adoption process." Lizzie had always felt drawn to adoption, saying, "I think a part of me always knew adoption would be a part of my family's story and we felt led to adopt for years before it came on our radar."

That last appointment was on December 10th—an important date they now celebrate every year. They decided to adopt and began working through the process. "It's a lot of steps, a lot of paperwork. If you think getting a mortgage is a lot of paperwork, adopting is 10 times more," she laughs. After about 5 months of providing information on every aspect of their life, they could legally adopt.

The twins' arrival was unexpected and quick. Lizzie's attorney, Todd



Gaudin, called on a Friday afternoon as she drove down her regular stretch of I-10 back toward Zachary after a day in Baton Rouge. There was a set of twins, Ben and Birdie, born on December 10, and their legal guardians had selected Lizzie and Benzer from their profile book. “In my heart, right at that moment, I just knew they were my babies,” she recalls. “And they were with us that Wednesday.” Lizzie remembers lying in bed at her sister’s that Friday evening, taking a brief reprieve from turning their house upside down to prepare for their newest additions and saying, “I can’t believe this is happening.”

Then, about a year after welcoming the twins home, after she had felt closure in not carrying any more babies, two lines appeared. Now approaching two years old, their youngest, Beck—named after Lizzie’s sister—is the fifth, supposedly final, Benzer. “I wasn’t expecting it at all,” she says. “I’d already moved on mentally, thinking our family was complete.”

As she reflects on the winding path, Lizzie simply says, “God gives you what he wants you to have. I never thought I’d have a big family. It just has all worked out, and we’re truly blessed.”

Adoption has become a meaningful part of their story—and a message they feel called to share. “We wanted people to know that adoption really is achievable,” she says. If you feel led, this is absolutely something that you can do too.

Lifted by Love

Lizzie credits her family and community for being able to juggle her career and family with grace. “We didn’t buy diapers for the twins for nearly two years,” she says. “Our people are good. Everyone rallied around us and supported us. I truly cannot emphasize enough how much I love and appreciate our village.”

Still, she doesn’t pretend it’s always picture-perfect. She quickly points out that the elusive daily work-life balance doesn’t exist. “There’s no such thing as a true balance,” she says. “People are always searching for that. I just don’t think that exists.” Some days, she’s out of the house before the kids are up and home long after they’re asleep. Other days, she’s chaperoning a field trip or grabbing snowballs after school. “I hope I’m teaching my kids the value of working hard and that you can have a good business, be a good mom

and be involved in your community. We’re showing them it’s possible.” That kind of mindset grounds Lizzie in her day-to-day. “I don’t let myself get worked up when things go sideways and just focus on moving forward every day”

Powerhouse partnerships

Behind the scenes, Benzer, an entrepreneur, left a longtime position at ExxonMobil to pursue his dreams and build a career that prioritizes their family’s lifestyle. “He’s so good,” Lizzie says with a smile. “His business, Parish Dumpsters, is thriving, and I’m so thankful he took that leap of faith a few years ago. We make a great team—his strengths are my weaknesses, and vice versa.”

That team mentality extends to Lizzie’s business, too. Today, her mom, sister and sister-in-law are all independent agents with The Red Door Group, the real estate group Lizzie co-founded in 2015. “I am so grateful to work with my family and truly just love every member on our team,” she says. But, her real estate business goes beyond family. With a team of 9 agents and a full-time administrative professional, she’s built an organization that thrives on collaboration and runs



“
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MORE.
”

efficiently, thanks to her masterful delegation and careful coordination.

Her confidence, radiant personality and unwavering focus make her a natural leader. Lizzie is a go-getter in every sense, yet firmly grounded in caring for others. She's known for bringing energy and warmth into every room, all while making sure her people feel seen, heard and supported. Her professional success stems not just from her drive but from her deep commitment to the people around her.

"My parents were good at making us feel like we could do anything," she says, noting that their belief instilled a solid foundation of confidence in her. "Whatever it is, their expectation was that we do our best and work hard."

In life and business, Lizzie Benzer proves that with faith, community and hard work, even the most unexpected path can lead exactly where you're meant to be.



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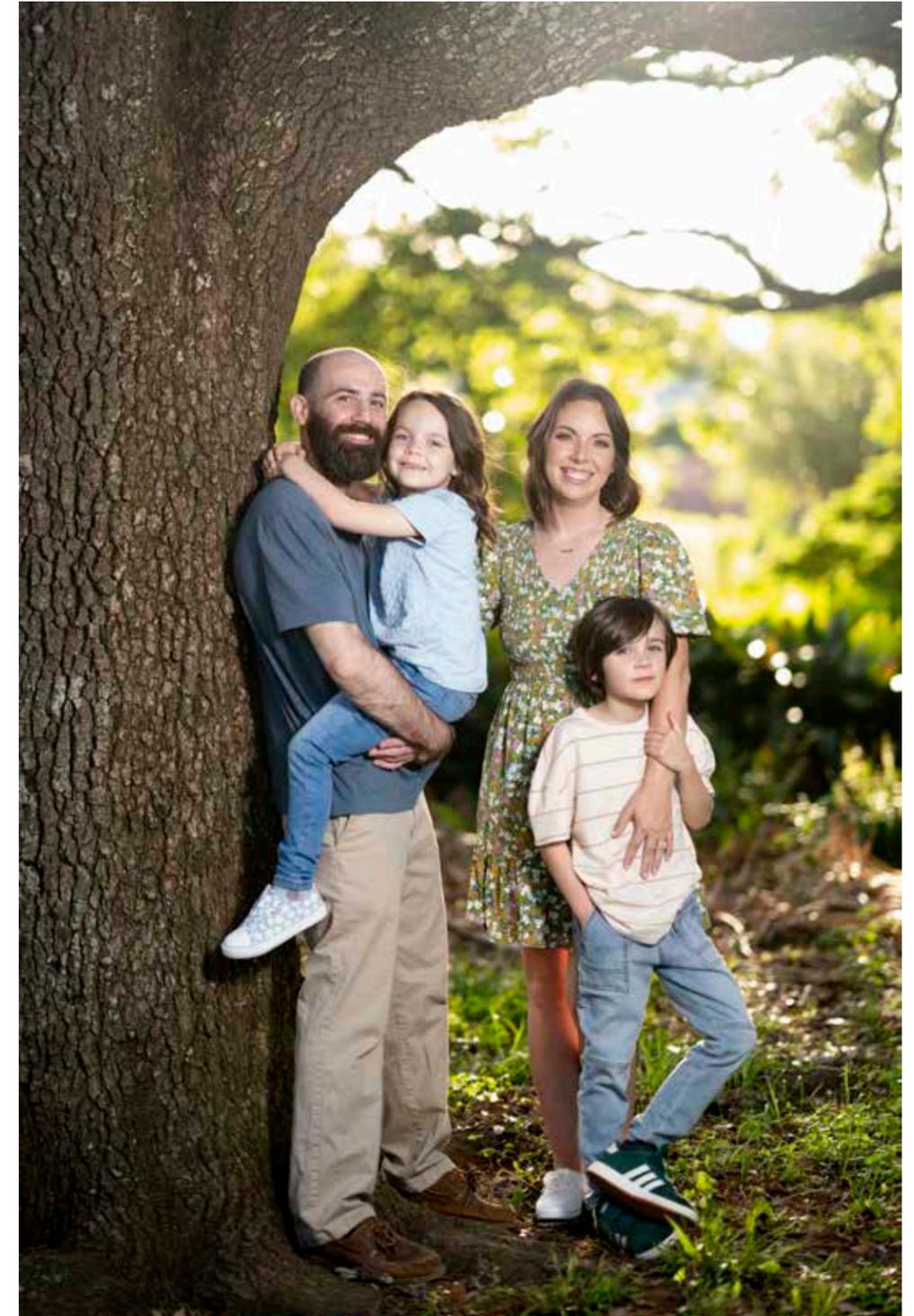
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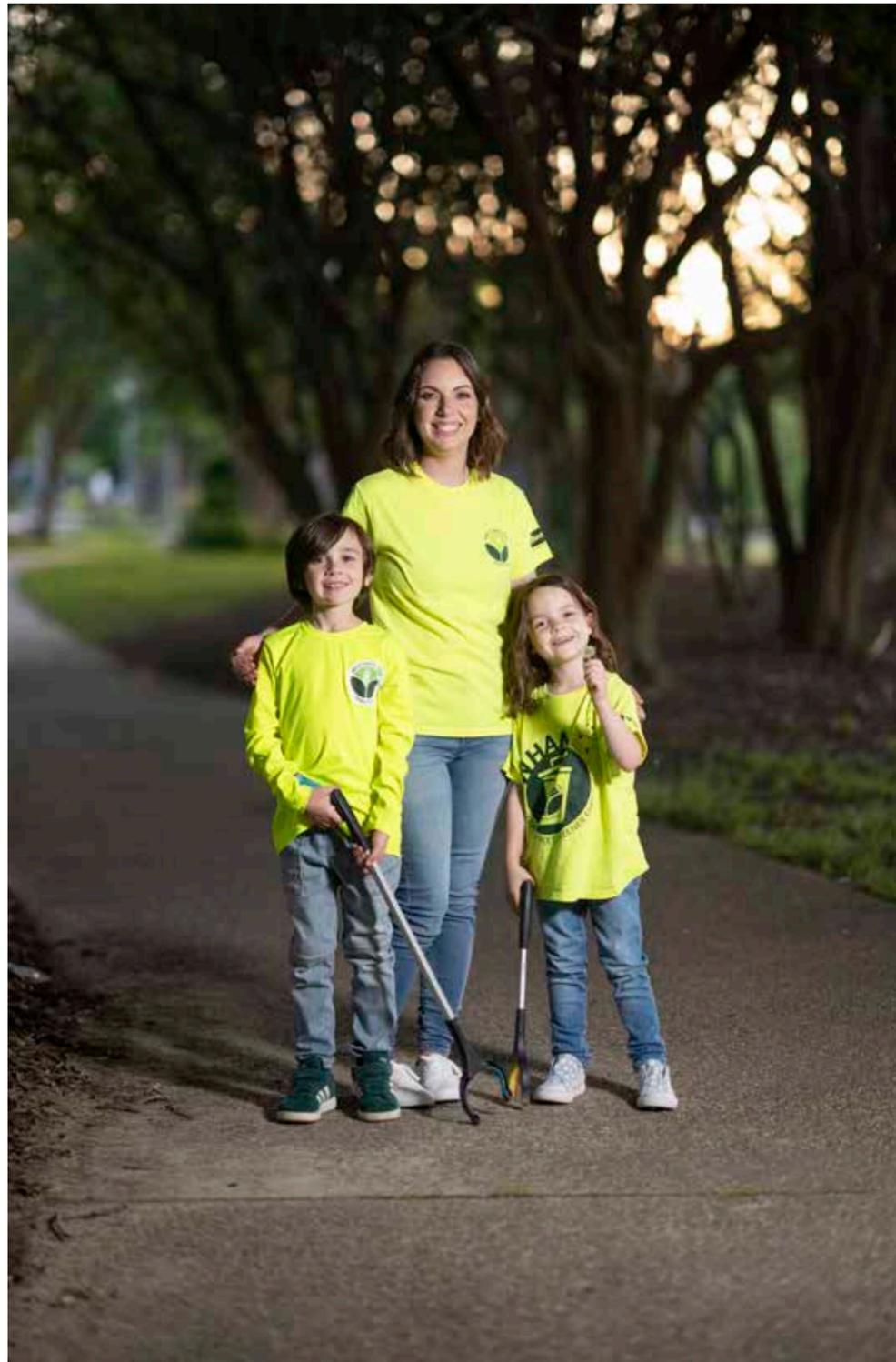
BY JOSEPH COTTLE • PHOTOS BY STEVIE LEJEUNE

Despite her remarkable success in the real estate industry, Darbi McGlone finds her ultimate joy in motherhood. Her son, River, and her daughter, Olive, are her primary focus and passion. Counterintuitively, that passion and focus does not detract from her real estate career. Rather, it adds fuel to the fire. Darbi's hands-on, compassionate approach to the home-buying process reflects her mothering nature.

Darbi's real estate career started at an early age when she watched her own mother work as an agent. "I used to just follow her around, carrying a fake briefcase," Darbi remembers. "At three years old, I was telling everyone that I was selling properties with my mom." Darbi ultimately followed in her mother's footsteps, though not without a detour.

After high school, Darbi set her sights on becoming a family counselor, but real estate had a way of pulling her back. In 2006, she became licensed after taking a summer job assisting her mother. Darbi found she loved the work. Not dissimilar from counseling people about their lives, "I was counseling people on their biggest purchase ever," she says, "and I loved it." She quickly realized that the interpersonal





client's home inspections; in nineteen years, I've never missed one. I try to learn something new at each inspection," she explains. "If I understand what's going on, I can reassure my clients that it's going to be okay."

Moreso, her commitment to her clients is evident in the way she builds relationships. "The ones who trusted me, they all closed with me," she shares about her early days working with internet leads. "I built those relationships before we ever met." Trust is a cornerstone of Darbi's practice, and her clients quickly come to see her as more than just their Realtor—they see her as a partner in what is often an emotional, high-stakes journey.

While Darbi's professional life is centered around real estate, her personal life is just as rich. Her family is at the heart of everything she does. "My kids are my driving force," she says, speaking of their shared activities like volunteering and community engagement. Darbi takes great pride in teaching her kids the importance of service, especially when they spend weekends picking up trash around their neighborhood as part of a local initiative, Keep Tigertown Beautiful. "It's important to me to nurture that sense of responsibility in them," she says.

connections she craved as a future counselor translated seamlessly into real estate.

Darbi's style as a Realtor is grounded in her instinct to nurture and educate. "I feel like I'm both a

counselor and a Realtor," she says. "I walk my clients through every step of the process, meeting their goals of homeownership." Her motherly wisdom and genuine care make her a guide through the

complexities of buying a home, and her hands-on approach ensures that her clients never feel alone.

She's serious about showing up for clients. "I've handled every single one of my

Darbi's devotion to community extends beyond her family. In addition to real estate, she volunteers with Junior Achievement, where she helps teach young people financial literacy. She also coaches

and mentors new real estate agents, guiding them with the same patience and encouragement she applies to her clients. "I love helping people grow," she says. "I want to be their biggest cheerleader, and I'm happy to share what I've learned." This nurturing spirit, paired with her experience, makes Darbi an ideal mentor for those entering the real estate industry.

In her spare time, Darbi fishes with her family, volunteers at her children's school, and helps with PTO events. Despite her many roles—Realtor, mother, mentor, volunteer—she has a clear focus on what matters most: building relationships and making a difference. "It all comes back to me wanting to help people," she says.

Darbi's approach to real estate is much like her approach to life: full of care, understanding, and a strong commitment to seeing others succeed. Whether guiding first-time homebuyers or mentoring new agents, she continues to build a legacy of kindness, trust, and success. "I just want people to know that I'm always there for them, doing everything I can to help them reach their goals."

"I JUST WANT PEOPLE TO KNOW THAT I'M ALWAYS THERE FOR THEM, DOING EVERYTHING I CAN TO HELP THEM REACH THEIR GOALS."



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