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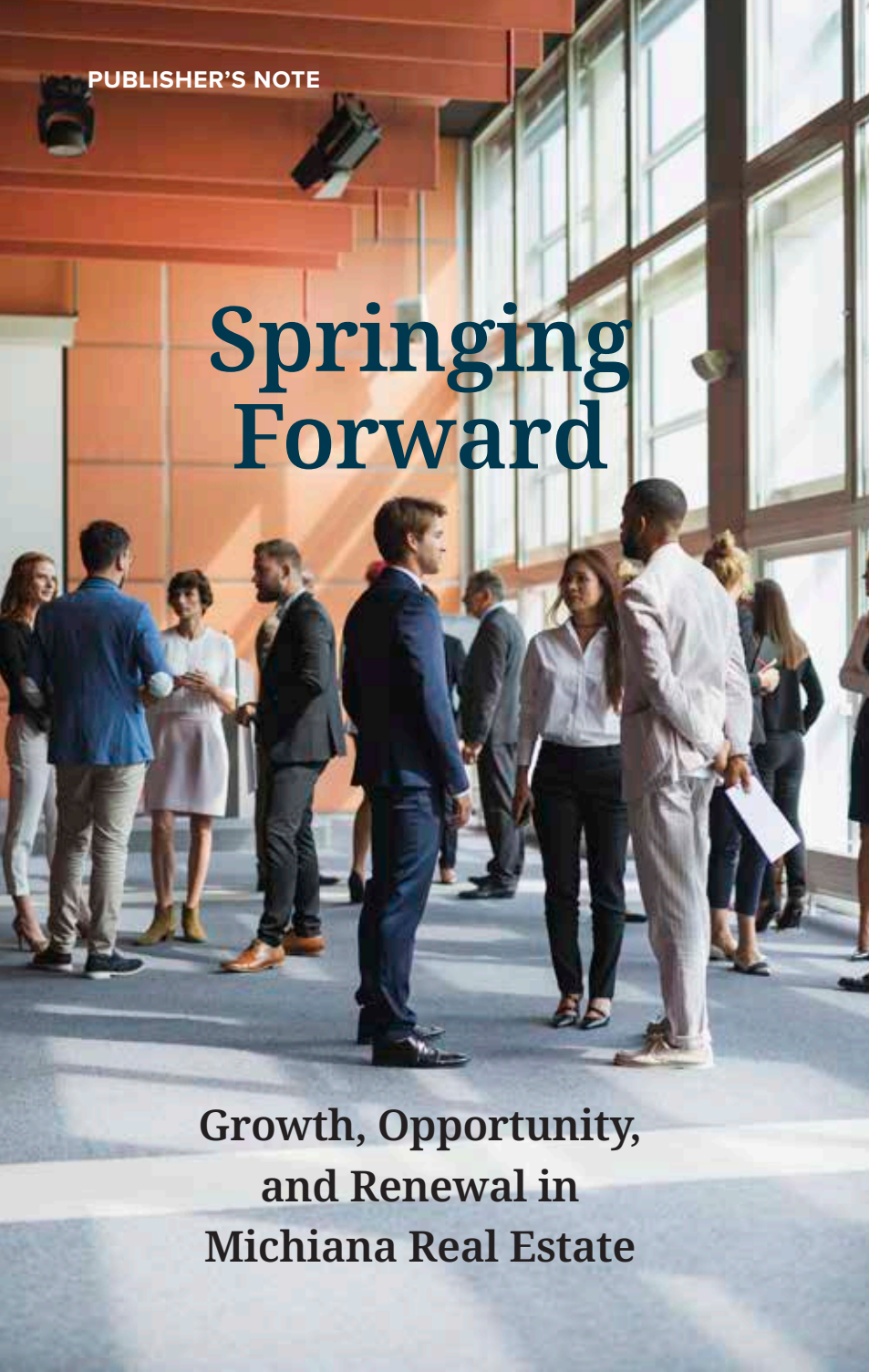
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Springing Forward



Growth, Opportunity,
and Renewal in
Michiana Real Estate

Dear Michiana Real Producers Family,

As we welcome the promise of spring this March, we are reminded of the growth and renewal that the season brings—both in nature and within our local real estate community. It's an exciting time in Michiana, with new opportunities emerging and fresh challenges to overcome. The past few months have been a period of reflection and adaptation, but the strength and resilience of our local real estate professionals continue to shine through.

In this month's issue, we celebrate the dynamic agents, brokers, and industry partners who make Michiana such a thriving real estate market. We'll dive into the latest market trends, spotlight success stories, and offer expert insights that can help propel your business to new heights as we navigate the year ahead.

We're also thrilled to feature a number of individuals who embody the spirit of collaboration and excellence within our community. Their dedication to service, innovation, and integrity sets the bar for all of us in this ever-evolving industry.

As always, our mission at *Michiana Real Producers* is to connect, empower, and inspire the people who are shaping the future of real estate in our region. Together, we can build not only stronger businesses but a stronger, more connected community.

Here's to new beginnings, exciting ventures, and the continued success of all those who make Michiana a great place to live and work.



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Jen ARIZMENDI

Delivering Value
With Vision

BY JESS WELLAR
PHOTOS BY MEGAN WILLIAMSON
PHOTOGRAPHY



later in her real estate career while her siblings went on to work in the trades themselves.

After high school, Jen attended Indiana University South Bend, where she pursued a degree in English. However, life took a different turn when her father became ill, and Jen, motivated by her desire to support herself, began working full-time. She took on a role as an office manager and HR coordinator for a well-known supermarket chain, a position she held for about a decade.

Starting as a managing broker's assistant for one year, she quickly dove into the world of foreclosures and investment properties and obtained her real estate license in 2010.

"The broker I worked for specialized in foreclosure and at the time had the HUD and Fannie Mae contracts, so much of the work I was doing pertained to investment properties," Jen explains.

With the market in turmoil following the crash of 2008, many saw it as a difficult time to break into real estate. For Jen, it was the perfect time to soak up as much knowledge as possible from a well-seasoned broker who had investment savvy. The experience ignited her passion for transforming distressed properties into homes that could create wealth for investors while providing beauty and value to the community.

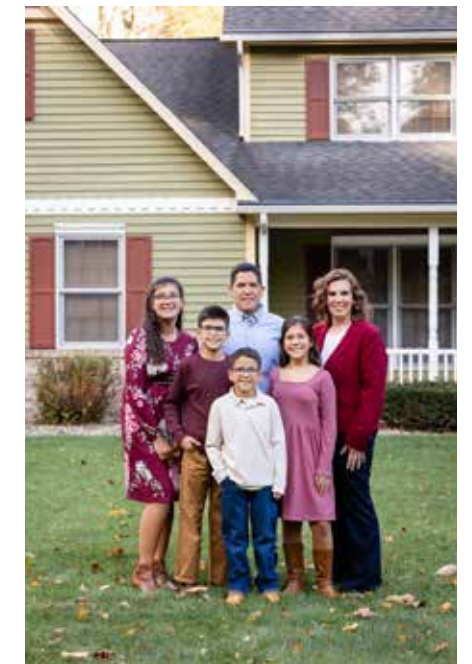


"I was hungry and willing to learn," Jen affirms. "I loved the idea of resurfacing a house many had written off as the 'ugly duckling' and creating a beautiful new space for someone to call home."

Boots On The Ground

Jen's fascination with the entire renovation process led her to form close relationships with contractors, learning the ins and outs of construction and remodeling.

"I really wanted to understand the process from all angles and tried to align myself with people who were successful;



Since 2010, Jen Arizmendi has built an impressive business focused on investment real estate. With \$9.8 million in volume and 55 transactions in 2023 alone, Jen's impact is undeniable.

But what sets her apart isn't just her consistent numbers — it's her hands-on approach with investor clients and her passion for her role in the local Realtor Association, which has earned her a seat at the table and a voice in shaping the entire industry.

"I often tell people I 'fell into real estate,' but the truth is, an opportunity presented itself for me to learn more about an industry I had always had a lot of respect for," Jen shares.

Strong Family Roots

Originally from South Bend, Jen grew up in a family that valued hard work. Her father, an electrician, and her mother, who worked in her elementary school as a librarian and grant writer, both played significant roles in shaping her character.

Jen recalls how her father's hands-on skills, particularly in the trades, left a lasting impression on her and her younger brothers — sparking her passion for transforming homes years

that's really why I became a real estate agent — I fell in love with the hunt for a great project," she smiles.

In her role, Jen often acts as more than just a Realtor — she's a liaison between her investor clients and teams of contractors who execute the renovation work.

"Most of my clients are not here locally, so I'm their set of eyes. I am often the one choosing the colors, finishes, and even layout changes we might make during the renovation process," she points out.

"I don't know that there are too many other agents who work so closely with a team of contractors to help get a project ready for resale."

A Voice For Others

Jen's zeal for real estate doesn't stop at her clients. She has also become deeply involved in the South Bend Area Realtors (SBAR) Association, especially over the past few years.

"I have really leaned into our Association — I accepted a seat on the Board of Directors three years ago to continue with the committee work I had been involved in," she elaborates. "I wanted to give agents in the real estate investment niche a voice on topics and give another perspective that I felt sometimes was inadvertently overlooked."

Jen's dedication has led to her election as the Secretary and Treasurer for SBAR for 2024, a joint leadership role with a tremendous amount of responsibility. She readily encourages other agents to get involved in their associations, noting that committee work is essential for those hoping to make an impact.

"I felt it was critical to put in the committee work before I ran for the board," she advises. "I'm a self-described 'Association junkie' and it's time-consuming, but it really does help your business grow as you meet more agents."

Family First

Jen's biggest investment is her role as a devoted wife and mother. Married 15 yrs to her husband Tom, an accountant, the couple have four active children: Isabella (13), Anthony (12), Olivia (10), and Nicolas (7).

"All of my children are soccer fans and players. This year we found ourselves on six soccer teams, so we are busy!" she laughs.

The family also enjoys spending time at their favorite vacation spot — the Outer Banks of North Carolina — every summer. As a member of her children's school and church community at St. Matthew Cathedral School and Parish, Jen plays an active role in HASA. She enjoys volunteering in her children's classrooms and staying engaged with their school activities.

In 2023, Jen also served as the Outreach Committee Chair, a position that allowed her to raise funds and provide support for a variety of local charities. Organizations she has supported include Ronald McDonald House, Hello, Gorgeous, the Center for the Homeless, Youth Service Bureau, Robert R. Miller Veteran Center, and the Northern Indiana Food Bank.

Looking toward the future, Jen hopes to continue making memories with her children while they are still at home. Long-term, she dreams of flipping properties herself and possibly coaching others. Ultimately though, her focus on leaving a lasting difference — whether through her work or the example she sets for her children — is what defines her success.

"If I learned anything from losing my dad at 60, it's that life is short and you can't take it for granted," she concludes. "I hope to continue on my leadership journey within SBAR, to keep learning, and hopefully make a positive impact for our association, as well as my clients."



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KIM MURRELL-BRALL

Working Smarter – Not Harder – To Thrive

BY JESS WELLAR • PHOTOS BY MEGAN WILLIAMSON PHOTOGRAPHY

“Yes, we all need to make a living. But I want to make an impact.”

For seasoned Realtor Kim Murrell-Brall, that declaration rings more true than ever. A respected top producer at McKinnies Realty in Mishawaka, Kim has carved a niche for herself in the industry by pairing her business acumen with a genuine desire to connect and uplift others.

A Solid Foundation in Professional Care

Real estate wasn't initially on Kim's radar, but her life experiences prepared her for success in the industry. Growing up in a humble home in Granger, Indiana, Kim was deeply influenced by her family's values of faith, ministry, and community.

“Church was a staple in our family,” she shares. With a love for music that led her to take piano and voice lessons, she envisioned a future in ministry, traveling to teach others about Jesus while eventually becoming a pastor's wife.

After a decade working as an optical assistant at Eye Care Associates of Michiana, Kim took a break to raise her children. Then life took a major detour; Kim's marriage dissolved and she was left reeling while trying to figure out her next steps. Moreover, she lost several loved ones during this difficult time.

In 2010, with her youngest child about to start kindergarten, a conversation at Vineyard church set the real estate wheels in motion. A friend connected Kim with renowned Realtor David



“

David saw something in me I didn't see in myself. He even paid for my real estate school. I wouldn't be here today without his generosity and belief in me.”



Perry, who hired her as an assistant and became her mentor.

“David saw something in me I didn't see in myself. He even paid for my real estate school,” Kim recalls gratefully. “I wouldn't be here today without his generosity and belief in me. “The professionalism and hospitality I learned during my days in eye care carried over as well,” she continues. “We were trained to roll out the red carpet for every patient. That same care translates to real estate.”

Reevaluating Success

Kim quickly built a thriving business, once closing an astonishing 84 homes in a single year. But the stressful pace came with a cost. “Burnout is real,” Kim admits.

Now, with nearly 15 years in the industry, Kim has shifted her focus to balance. For 2024, she projects closing 30 homes for \$8 million in sales. “I've had better years in terms of volume, but at what expense?” It's about setting proper boundaries and focusing on my family, my faith, and

my clients. That's what makes me a better Realtor,” she emphasizes.

Kim also started her team, the Kim Brall Team, bringing on Amy Scheckler in the summer of 2024. And while she's not actively recruiting, she remains open to the right fit.



“For the first time, life has calmed down enough to have a team,” Kim grins. “It takes a special personality to work together because I'm an extroverted introvert.”

As a top producer year after year, Kim strives for consistency, but adds that she also loves to have fun with her colleagues.

“I even won our Board of Realtors karaoke contest,” she laughs. “I used to lead worship for years, so I guess it's come full circle!”

Relationships First

What sets Kim apart isn't just her results though — it's her big heart.

“I don't see clients as transactions. I want them to feel loved, heard, and well taken care of, as if they were my own family,” she explains. “Whether it's a \$25,000 home or a million-dollar listing, the emotions and stakes are the same for that person.”

Compassion and long-standing relationships are hallmarks of Kim's



a spirited French bulldog puppy; Oliver, her 10-year-old Shih Tzu who brought comfort during difficult times; and two rescued cats, Simba and Lucy.

The couple enjoys quiet mornings on their deck, sipping coffee and brainstorming new projects.

“Chris can build or fix anything,” Kim smiles. They also love traveling, from Alaska cruises to upcoming trips to Disney World. “We’re going without the kids this time,” she jokes.

Kim’s favorite pastime? Birdwatching. “During a hard time in my life, I was reminded of how much God loves us. Watching the birds brings me peace and reminds me He’ll take care of me,” she reflects.

Looking ahead, Kim’s goals for the future are clear: work smarter, not harder, while making a lasting impact by continuing to build solid relationships in all areas of her life.

“I’m on track to sell \$12-\$15 million next year, but none of that matters if everything else falls apart,” Kim points out.

“Ultimately, I want to leave a bigger footprint in this industry,” she concludes. “Not because I outsold anyone, but because I made a difference in how this business is practiced.”



business. Her genuine concern for her clients’ well-being lasts well beyond the closing table. One of her favorite parts of the job is the connections she builds with clients, many of whom become lifelong friends.

“The satisfaction of knowing I worked my best for my clients is fulfilling,” she explains. “It’s never goodbye either — it’s new friendships, being invited to their weddings, baby showers, graduations, and sadly, even funerals.”

Kim also stays true to herself on social media, using the platform to build trust and authenticity.

“I post about my good days and my bad days to show people who I really am, unpolished,” she offers.

On The Homefront

Kim’s faith is the cornerstone of her life and career: “My faith is who I am,” she shares. “I trusted God when it seemed He had forsaken me. During the hardest times — losing family members, starting over — I leaned on Him and found healing.”

In March 2023, Kim married Chris Brall, a man she describes as “kind and incredibly talented.” Together, they have a blended family: her daughter Kalee (Drew) Rademaker (26), her son David Jr. (19), and stepson Josh (25). They also adore their grandchildren, Sadie (4) and Silas (1), and their four pets: Penelope,



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TERRI BARTEK

STYLING HER OWN VERSION OF SUCCESS

BY JESS WELLAR
PHOTOS BY MEGAN WILLIAMSON PHOTOGRAPHY
ON LOCATION AT DEVINE HOMES BY MILLER

It has been said that everyone is connected by six degrees of separation... But in the case of Terri Bartek, she usually only needs two degrees or less to gain a client.

A charismatic Realtor with the Tim Murray Golden Legacy Team at Coldwell Banker Real Estate Group, Terri burst onto the Michiana scene three years ago, turning heads with her rapid rise while still running a successful hair salon and

driving a bus part-time for the local school system.

“The bus driving really does have amazing benefits!” Terri explains with a laugh. “But I re-signed my salon lease last year; I have a huge clientele and it turns out that hair clients became real estate clients. My first client last year was a lady who I had foiled her hair for years; she sat down in my chair and said, ‘Terri, I want you to list my house.’”

A Natural Fit

After two decades as a full-time hairstylist, Terri knew the clock was ticking on the toll the long hours were taking on her body. For her, real estate seemed like a perfect match for her people skills and interests.

“I’ve always been drawn to real estate and architecture,” she explains. “And being a good listener to connect the dots gave me a nice start in real estate.”

Before taking the leap into her new career, Terri had gained invaluable experience in business ownership, running a granite and tiling business with her former partner. She moved from Michiana to Tucson, Arizona, and Nashville, Tennessee, opening salons as she went while building up her client base from scratch.

“I run my real estate business like a business owner, not an employee,” she notes. This mindset, combined with her tireless work ethic, has propelled her to become one of the top agents in her area, with \$12.2 million in sales and 26 transactions in 2024.

There’s little doubt Terri’s rapid rise is also fueled by her innate ability to quickly connect with others.

“My broker, Tim, says it’s my gift,” she explains. “But as someone who handles new construction, I also do a ton of open houses so it’s a great way to meet buyers and sellers.”

The Right Choice

Joining the Tim Murray Team when she started her real estate career in



2022 was a game-changer for Terri. As a renowned broker with 34 years of industry experience, Tim has always been a source of strength by leading with his soothing, optimistic presence.

“Choosing to be with Tim was the best decision I ever made,” Terri acknowledges. “I call him the ‘Real Estate Whisperer.’ He’s been in the business for a long time, and he’s so calm and positive ... definitely a glass-half-full kind of person.”

Now part of the recently merged Tim Murray Golden Legacy Team, Terri looks

forward to collaborating with a group of young, energetic professionals who share her passion for new construction and high-quality development.

“I’m really excited about this recent venture,” she enthuses. “Golden Legacy loves to develop new construction, and as someone who used to own a tiling business, I appreciate good contracting, high standards for quality, and the hustle.”

A Balancing Act

Terri’s life is a masterclass in balancing multiple roles and responsibilities.



In addition to her thriving real estate career, she still styles hair part-time at her salon, which she describes as a hub for new connections.

“My hair clients are loyal and very understanding of my real estate schedule and were very encouraging when I first mentioned I was considering going into the industry,” she recalls.

She also drives a school bus for the local PHM school system, a role she enjoys for its simplicity as well as the benefits. “I love driving the high schoolers for an hour each morning and again in the afternoon,” she grins. “They’re usually on their phones anyway and it feels nice to sit down and take a break!”

But even with her packed schedule, Terri ensures her real estate clients never feel neglected.

“I try very hard not to end my day with unanswered questions for buyers

or sellers,” she emphasizes. Her “get it done” mindset is a hallmark of her work ethic—a trait she credits to her hardworking parents.

On The Horizon

Outside of juggling her various roles, Terri cherishes time with her family, including her two grandsons, ages 13 and 9, and her 88-year-old father, for whom she is a caregiver. Having spent most of her life as a proud South Bend and Mishawaka resident, she loves taking long walks, cooking, and treasures time with her brood at Lake Michigan.

“We go to the beach often in the nicer months,” she shares. “And when it’s cold, I’ll sometimes rent a hotel room just so we can all use the pool and go for a swim.”

As she looks to the future, Terri is eager to find more balance in her life while continuing to maintain her real estate momentum. With her tireless work



ethic, community connections, and devotion to her loyal clients, she has no intention of resting on her laurels.

Terri is also enthused about construction plans to help develop the western part of St. Joseph County, which is seeing amazing growth with the recent arrival of big businesses like Mitsubishi and Amazon.

As she concludes, “Opportunity is in front of you 24 hours a day — you have to take advantage of that!”

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TIM PIERSON

Turning Tragedy Into Transformation

BY JESS WELLAR
PHOTOS BY MEGAN WILLIAMSON PHOTOGRAPHY

A POOL OF BLOOD, DECOMPOSING MATERIAL, OR A HOUSE FILLED TO THE BRIM WITH ITEMS — IT’S NOT EXACTLY THE SCENE MOST PEOPLE FEEL EQUIPPED TO TACKLE. BUT FOR TIM PIERSON, IT’S A CALLING.



As a former firefighter and paramedic, Tim has spent more than two decades walking into scenes of tragedy and chaos, helping those in their most vulnerable moments. Now, as the President and CEO of Bio Clean Experts, Tim uses his vast experience to bring order to disorder, offering services that allow families to grieve or hoarding individuals to reclaim their spaces with dignity.

“Being able to take a large, overwhelming, gross, horrific situation and turn

it into a livable space again — it’s incredibly fulfilling,” Tim explains. “When we help with the cleanup from tragedy, it gives families the chance to find closure and move forward in their grieving journey. With hoarding situations, we’re often transforming homes into healthier environments by eliminating bacteria and fire hazards.”

Rooted In Compassion and Experience

Bio Clean Experts was born out of a need Tim saw repeatedly during his 23

years in the fire service, a dozen of which he served as a paramedic.

“We’d go into homes in these situations, and I’d often wonder, ‘What happens next?’” Tim recalls. “How do these families go about cleaning up and getting back to normal? That thought always stayed with me.”

In early 2024, after leaving the fire service and a brief stint in a factory job that left him unfulfilled, Tim decided to take the entrepreneurial leap.

“I wanted to be present for my kids, for their sports and activities. The only way to truly do that was to start my own business,” he shares.

With the full support of his wife, Deana, Tim set out on his new venture. “We talked it through, came up with a plan, and dove in head first. I obtained all the necessary certifications, filled out EPA and OSHA paperwork, and launched Bio Clean Experts,” he recalls.

Tim and Deana run the business as a husband-and-wife team out of Osceola, Indiana, covering a vast 150-mile radius that stretches from Indianapolis to Detroit. Specializing in routine cleanings, deep cleanings, and specialty cleanings like crime and trauma scenes, hoarding, and decomposition cleanups, Bio Clean Experts has quickly established itself as a trusted name in the business.

Tim credits his fire service background and Deana’s nursing experience for their

ability to handle emotionally charged situations with care and professionalism.

“The work doesn’t really bother me because we’re not dealing with the individuals directly anymore. We’re providing a service to help families in their time of need,” he points out. “Deana and I also have the unique ability to vent to each other and process the tough moments.”

A Different Employer

Tim is passionate about treating clients and employees like family. “We focus on the customer in their time of need instead of focusing on profit,” he says. “We treat people as individuals, not commodities, and we make sure our employees feel valued and supported.”

From fair and livable wages to learning about employees’ hobbies and families, Bio





“

BEING ABLE TO TAKE A LARGE, OVERWHELMING, GROSS, HORRIFIC SITUATION AND TURN IT INTO A LIVABLE SPACE AGAIN — IT'S INCREDIBLY FULFILLING.”

Clean Experts has created a workplace culture rooted in respect and appreciation. “We compensate our employees far above market rates, and as a result, we have a waitlist of people wanting to work with us,” Tim adds with pride.

This personal touch extends to their clients as well. “Bad things happen at all hours, so we’re available 24/7/365,” Tim notes. “We handle more than just crime scenes and hoarding situations—we also do estate cleanouts, move-in/move-out cleanings, and even disinfecting services for viruses like COVID or the flu. Realtors can even call us for last-minute cleanings, and while emergencies always take priority, we do our best to accommodate.”

Tim also emphasizes the importance of education in his industry. “Many businesses and property management groups don’t fully understand the legalities of biohazard waste disposal,” he explains. “Going forward, we’d like to offer classes for Realtors and property managers to help them navigate local, state, and federal regulations.”

For Realtors, in particular, Tim wants to be a resource: “Our referral bonus program offers up to \$500 for successful referrals, so there’s an added incentive for partnering with us.”

Family Business

At the heart of Bio Clean Experts is a love of family

— both at home and in the business. Tim and Deana have been married for nearly 11 years and share a blended brood of four children: Peyton, Landon, Dalton, and Leighton.

“Peyton just graduated from Penn High School and is currently taking an online Realtor course. Landon is a sophomore at Marian and is passionate about fishing and the outdoors — he’s even finishing his Eagle Scout project,” Tim shares. “Dalton is a freshman at Marian and loves sports — he’s on the football and basketball teams and plans to try out for baseball. And Leighton is in 7th grade and is involved in volleyball, cheerleading, and basketball.”

Deana, a registered nurse and Navy veteran, plays an integral role in their business, managing web-related operations and supporting Tim in any way she can.

“It’s a learning curve, but I’m glad she decided to tackle the business operations,” Tim gratefully acknowledges.

When they’re not working, the Piersons enjoy taking day trips, going to the movies, and spending time with their three giant dogs — Tilly, Zoey, and Ollie, the largest of the bunch, weighing in as a 225-pound St. Bernard-Newfoundland.

On The Horizon

As Bio Clean Experts enters its second year, Tim is upbeat about the future. For him, it all boils down to continuing to make lives easier while paying it forward.

“We’ve already started giving back to the community by donating to school booster clubs and offering discounts to veterans and first responders,” he offers.

“Going forward, we hope to expand our educational offerings and continue to build meaningful relationships with our clients and partners,” Tim concludes. “The need for these services is growing, and we’re committed to meeting that demand while staying true to our values.”

To learn more about Bio Clean Experts or to schedule their services, visit www.biocleanexperts.com or call (574)-521-5909 today.

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