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TOP-PRODUCING TEAM

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Thank you for joining us at our Toast to the Top! and FIRST Wayne County event of 2025 at Kudos Taproom & Fieldhouse in Taylor, MI.

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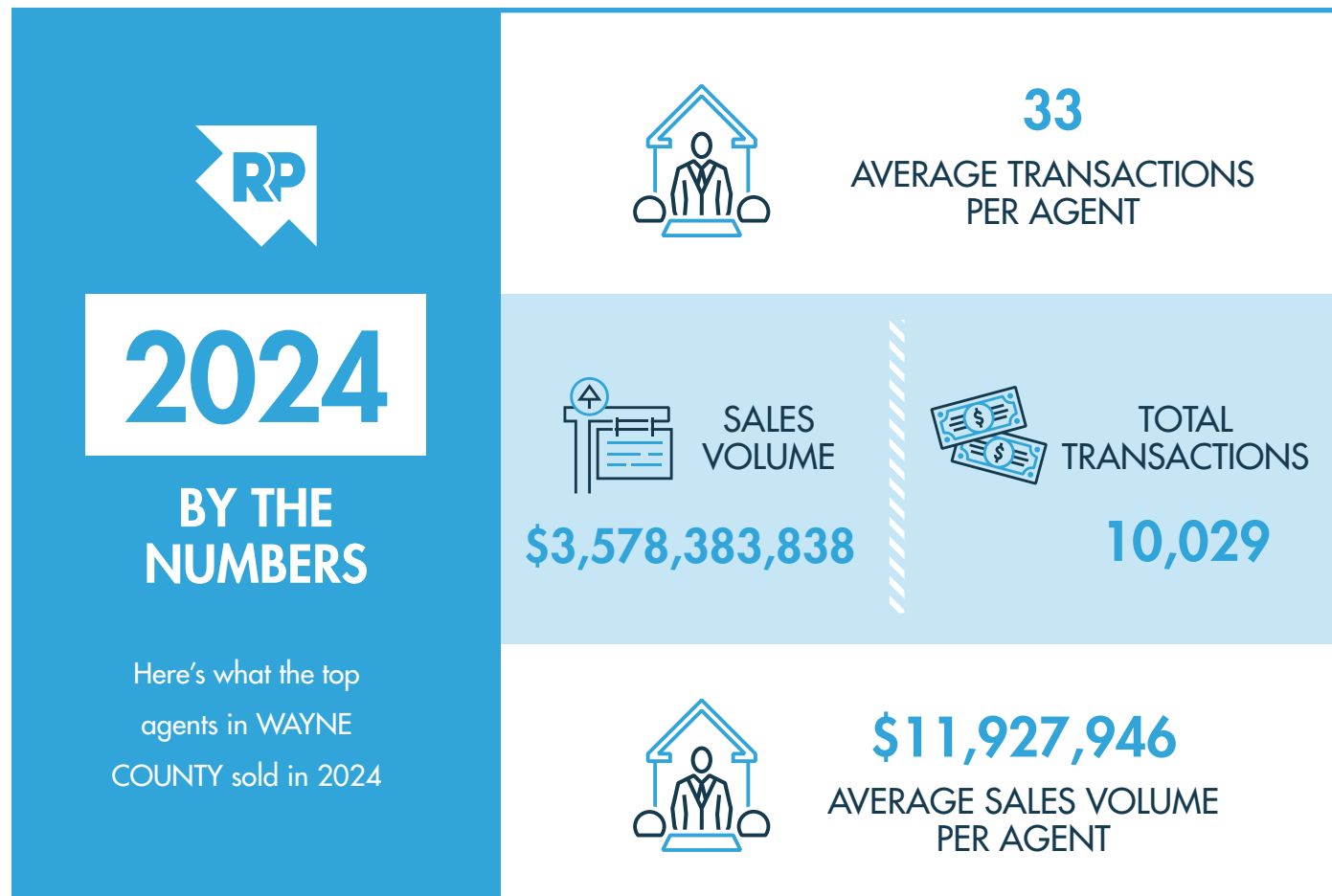
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FAQ

All about Wayne County Real Producers

RP Real Producers magazine started in Indianapolis in 2015 and is now in more than 130 markets across the nation.

Q: WHO RECEIVES THE MAGAZINE?

A: The top 300 real estate agents in Wayne County. We update our mailing list annually to ensure Real Producers reaches our area's top-producing agents.

Q: WHAT IS REAL PRODUCERS ALL ABOUT?

A: Real Producers is a platform that brings together the most elite individuals and affiliates in Wayne County real estate. Every month we share stories of some of the area's most recognizable names in real estate, as well as the rising stars in the industry and the preferred partners that are highly recommended by top agents. Beyond the magazine, we host exclusive events that bring titans of real estate together.

Q: HOW DO YOU GET FEATURED IN THIS MAGAZINE?

A: You have to be on the top 500 list to be a featured agent. We welcome nominations for other real estate agents, businesses, brokers, owners, or yourself. Office leaders can also nominate real estate agents. Though we can't guarantee a feature, we strongly encourage you to meet our team and attend our private events so we can get to know your story.

Q: HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO BE FEATURED AGENT?

A: Absolutely nothing! Real Producers is not a pay-to-play model. We share real stories of Real Producers – no price tag attached.

Q: WHO ARE THE PREFERRED PARTNERS SHOWN IN THE MAGAZINE AND AT EVENTS?

A: The businesses that sponsor the magazine and attend our events are some of the best vendors in Wayne County in their category. Find them listed in our index. We partner with businesses that top agents have recommended to us, so every single business you see in this publication has earned its "stamp of approval." Our team also vets every business to make sure they are a good fit and bring value to our powerhouse network.

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A Legacy of Faith, Family & Service

Dave Rukkila may have started his career behind a desk in the corporate tax department at Borders bookstore headquarters, but today, he's a residential real estate agent with an impressive \$130 million in career volume. With over two decades of experience, Dave has found his niche at Moving The Mitten Real Estate Group, where he has built a thriving business and has nearly 1,000 closings to his name. His journey is one of unexpected twists and family-driven decisions, and a deep commitment to his faith and community.

Dave's path to real estate wasn't the traditional one. After earning a Bachelor of Business Administration from Eastern Michigan University in 1988 and a Master of Science in Taxation from Walsh College in 1996, he spent years working in corporate tax — first at Borders, then in tax software development, and then as a division financial analyst. "I was tired of the corporate grind and doing spreadsheets, budgeting, and tax research," he said.

The lure of building something for himself began to take shape, but it was a chance encounter that changed everything for Dave. "I wanted to start my own business, but I wasn't sure what to do," he recalled. "Then, I went to a real estate career night." That fateful evening set the stage for a major career pivot, and in June of 2002, Dave embarked on a new adventure with Edward Surovell, REALTORS® in Ann Arbor.

It wasn't long before Dave discovered that he had a knack for the real estate business. In 2023, he sold an impressive \$6.7 million in sales, and in 2022, he was honored as the Top Producing REALTOR® for

Moving The Mitten Real Estate Group and earned the prestigious President's Club Honor for top sales from past work at Edward Surovell, REALTORS®. For Dave, finding success in the industry is more than just the financial rewards, however. "The most rewarding part is seeing the smile on a client's face when they buy or sell a home," he said.

Today, Dave works as part of a corporate team at Moving The Mitten Real Estate Group, with five agents in total. The company is a tight-knit group, and for Dave, the sense of camaraderie is a key reason why they've been so successful. "Our broker, Therese Antonelli, makes this company special. Plus, everyone who works here is like family to me," he said. "We all pitch in and help each other when needed. Therese is the best broker I have worked for. She's kind and giving, and one of the smartest people I have had the privilege of working with."

The team spirit at Moving the Mitten is what keeps Dave motivated to face the daily

challenges of acquiring new business and navigating the unpredictable nature of real estate transactions. "There are landmines that can pop up in real estate deals, but it's also what makes it exciting," he said with a smile.

For Dave, real estate hasn't always been smooth sailing. Like many seasoned professionals in the industry, he weathered the storm of the 2008-2010 housing crisis. "The housing crisis was extremely tough," he recalled. "We were selling nothing but foreclosure and short sale homes." Conversations with struggling homeowners became a regular part of his job, and trying to help them through tough situations was, at times, heartbreaking.

Those challenges, however, only reinforced Dave's belief in the importance of excellent customer service and genuine care for his clients. "It's important to remember that our clients are real people, not just someone to use toward collecting a commission check,"



Dave said. “They have goals and aspirations for their families, and it’s important to help them achieve those goals.”

Dave’s real estate career may be flourishing, but his heart is firmly rooted in his family. He has been married to his wife, Patti, for 36 years, and together, they have raised three daughters — Emily, Samantha, and Hannah. “My wife and kids are a huge influence,” Dave said. “They remind me daily of why I’m in this business.”

Emily, 33, is a traveling respiratory therapist, while twin daughters Samantha and Hannah, 27, are equally impressive. Samantha works in radiology at the University of Michigan Health hospital and is engaged to be married, all while balancing life as a young mom to her 15-month-old daughter. Hannah, on the other hand, holds a doctorate in occupational therapy.

Being a husband and father has not only shaped Dave’s personal life but also his business philosophy. “Going through a lot of success and failure in life has taught me to keep calm in most any situation I encounter today,” he explained. “Being a husband and dad has taught me to be a more giving person and to not focus so much on myself.”

In addition to real estate, Dave has a passion for day trading and enjoys classic rock and country music. He’s an active supporter of the American Cancer Society — motivated by a personal cancer scare his daughter Emily experienced at age 18 — and the Tunnel to Towers Foundation, which supports veterans.

As Dave reflects on his career and looks toward the future, real estate remains a core part of his life’s dreams and goals. “Real estate has given me the opportunity to earn a nice



“THERE ARE **LANDMINES** THAT CAN POP UP IN REAL ESTATE DEALS, BUT IT’S ALSO WHAT MAKES IT EXCITING.”

living, retire in a few years, and spend more time with my wife and family,” he said.

When it comes to how he hopes to be remembered, Dave wants

his legacy to be one of faith, family, and service. “I want to be remembered as a follower of Christ, as someone who enjoyed helping others, and as a good dad and husband,” he shared.

As for his definition of success, Dave mentioned that it’s “accomplishing the goals I set out to achieve and seeing my daughters and their life partners being successful in their career fields.”

In Dave’s world, success is about more than just closing deals — it’s about making a meaningful difference in the lives of others.

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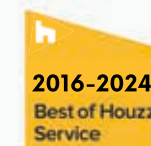
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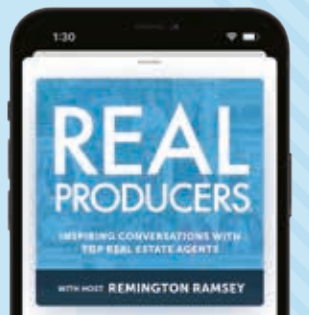
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A Real Estate Agent
With a Heart for
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In the fast-paced world of real estate, Jill Bugeja stands out with her 19 years of expertise as an agent at Elite Realty. With a passion for animal rescue, she has found a way to merge her professional life with her dedication to making a difference in her community, particularly in the lives of dogs in need. “I believe every animal deserves a home where they can be loved and cared for throughout their lives,” Jill said. Her commitment to that belief is evident in her work with two local dog rescues — Haven of Love Dog Rescue and P.O.E.T. Animal Rescue.

Jill’s involvement with these dog rescues isn’t simply a side project: It’s an integral part of her life. For the past six years, she has volunteered and supported the organizations financially and through active community engagement. “I help collect donations, organize fundraisers, and offer monetary support for medical care,” she explained. Her efforts go a long way — particularly in helping to get dogs ready for adoption after they’ve been rescued from shelters, surrendered by owners, or pulled from dangerous situations. “The look in a rescue dog’s eyes when they know they’re safe warms your heart,” Jill shared.

Jill
BUGEJA

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"I WANT TO BE REMEMBERED FOR HELPING
PEOPLE AND ANIMALS. FOR BEING A CARING
PERSON WHO MAKES EVERYONE *smile.*"

horse rescue. We coordinate efforts to help as many animals as possible through donations and volunteer work," Jill explained. This community of like-minded professionals has allowed Jill to amplify her impact, from collecting bottles to offset rescue costs to hosting fundraising events like drag queen bingo — one of her most successful efforts to date. "It was a great fun show, and we made a lot of money through a basket raffle," she said with a smile.

Through it all, Jill has found a way to weave her love for rescue dogs into her real estate career. Clients often connect with her over their shared love for animals, and she has created a program where she donates a portion of her commission to the rescue after a client closes on a property. "It has become common ground between me and my clients who are dog lovers and appreciate the rescue efforts," she said. Her charitable work also helps her build stronger relationships with her clients and the community she serves. A Wayne County Top 300 agent, Jill not only is a hard-working and successful agent but also continues to work tirelessly for animal rescue.

Jill is focused on continuing her efforts to support the rescues, raise awareness, and help as many dogs as possible find forever homes. "I want to help more people understand the need for spaying and neutering their pets and to choose adoption over pet stores or breeders," she explained.

Jill is proud to be making a difference — not only in the world of real estate but also in the lives of countless dogs that have found love and safety through her efforts. She hopes her work inspires others to do the same. "I want to be remembered for helping people and animals. For being a caring person who makes everyone smile," she said. With each dog that finds its way to a forever home, Jill is doing just that.

Both Haven of Love and P.O.E.T. Animal Rescue focus on educating the community about responsible pet care and providing critical supplies — such as food, hay, and housing — to pet owners who may not have the resources to properly care for their animals. Jill's work with these rescues has also allowed her to become a trusted advocate for adoption and care, ensuring that many dogs find their way to safe and loving homes. "You can't change the world for every dog, but for that one dog, you've changed the world," she said. Jill recalled a female mastiff that came into P.O.E.T. Animal Rescue, scared and mistrustful after years of abuse. "Through slow introductions and soft talking, she finally came out of her shell," Jill shared. Moments like these drive her to continue her efforts, even when balancing her busy real estate career.

Jill's passion for animal welfare is deeply personal. In December of 2020, she adopted her dog, Jasmine, from P.O.E.T. Animal Rescue, cementing her bond with the organization. "Rescue dogs give the best love," she said. Jill's personal experience with adoption has only strengthened her resolve to help other dogs in need. Her social media posts often feature rescue dogs waiting for homes, and her community engagement has helped countless dogs get adopted. "When I became an adult and wanted to get dogs of my own, I made sure that rescue dogs were my choice," she added.

Jill's charitable work extends beyond her personal involvement. Her real estate office, Elite Realty, runs a program called Elite Cares, which helps various organizations, including local dog rescues. "My friend and office mate, Rachel Blue, is also involved in dog and



EVENT ANNOUNCEMENT

Summer Mixer in the D

June 4th
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Detroit Shipping Company
474 Peterboro St, Detroit, MI



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Erick Monzo

with THE MONZO GROUP

PHOTOS BY GINA DINVERNO PHOTOGRAPHY

Erick Monzo has built a thriving career driven by his passion and commitment to real estate. As the owner and team leader of The Monzo Group at Keller Williams, he has cultivated a team known for its dynamic agents, collaborative spirit, and consistent success. From his early days as an investor to becoming a respected leader, Erick remains dedicated to his team, clients, and the real estate profession.

For Erick, his affinity for real estate was nurtured at a young age. “Both of my grandparents were agents at one time, so when I was younger, I always knew I

wanted to do some type of real estate,” he said. When Erick was just 19 years old — and after a nudge from his father — he invested his savings into his first rental

property in 1999. This early venture laid the groundwork for a flourishing career.

Before his real estate career, Erick thrived in the IT sector,



FROM INVESTOR TO
INDUSTRY LEADER





where he sold hardware, software, and services to major companies in Metro Detroit. In the late '90s, the IT margins dwindled, and he began to consider other career options. "CompUSA, the company I worked at, wanted me to move to Texas," Erick explained. "I asked myself, 'why am I making 7% of \$20,000- and \$30,000-computer purchases when I could be making 3% and 6% of a much higher transaction size?'" This realization, combined with his desire for passive income and true freedom, propelled him into the real estate arena.

Erick obtained his real estate license in 2004, and ever since then, his trajectory has been meteoric. He has achieved a staggering career volume of \$1.2 billion after over two decades in the industry, with \$170 million in the past year alone. His accolades are also numerous, which include being the #1 Keller Williams group for sold homes in the country and the #1 group in Michigan for actual sold homes by the Wall Street Journal and RealTrends for five years in a row.

As the owner and team leaders of The Monzo

Group, Erick has cultivated a formidable team of over 100 agents that sells more than 1,000 units annually. "Our team protects, motivates, and feeds together," he said proudly. "They are ferociously loyal and quick-witted, and help each other in a time of need."

Erick is deeply committed to educating both his agents and investors. "Our mission statement is, 'Investing knowledge in people as they invest their future in real estate,'" he shared. This dedication is evident in the myriad of events he organizes — from

annual boat days and wine tastings to monthly investor meetings and community outreach programs.

Erick also has a philanthropic spirit. The Monzo Group has supported many charities — such as YMCA, Habitat for Humanity, and Reunite The Fight — through their monthly investor meetings in Mount Clemens. In addition, Erick founded the "Miracle on Monzo Street" charity, which provides assistance to families in need during the holiday season. "If you don't give, you don't deserve to receive," he said.



Erick attributes much of his drive to his upbringing. He was raised in Michigan and had brief stints in Tennessee, but he remains rooted in strong family values. "Being disrupted my senior year in high school gave me the strength to stand on my own two feet," he said.

Erick's deep connection to family is evident not only in his personal life but also in his professional one. He relies heavily on his close-knit family, including his three brothers — Aaron, Regan, and Adam — as well as his aunt Carol and sister-in-law Sarah, all of whom work at The Monzo Group.

Today, Erick cherishes time with his wife, Michelle — a school teacher at Immanuel Lutheran — and their two children, Madison and Mason. Weekends are often spent at the rink, supporting their kids' passion for travel hockey.

While many view retirement as the ultimate goal, Erick



Photo submitted by Erick Monzo

has his sights on setting a legacy. "Some people look forward to retiring," he explained. "I will use my skills to help our team until they put me in the ground." His dream is to pass the business to the next generation, envisioning his children working alongside the children of his current team members.

For those entering the real estate industry, Erick recommends that they find their passion and niche within the field. His journey, marked by a deep commitment to others, exemplifies how dedication and the right support system — like the one found at The Monzo Group — can lead to unparalleled success.

“OUR TEAM PROTECTS, MOTIVATES, AND FEEDS TOGETHER. THEY ARE FEROCIOUSLY LOYAL AND QUICK-WITTED, AND **HELP EACH OTHER** IN A TIME OF NEED.”

Darla Rowley



Photo by Dawn Townsend Photography

You will be remembered

“Darla was one of the first people I met when I embarked on real estate investing. She was there for my first flip, the day I received the keys. She pointed out things that only an expert would notice. With her invaluable design direction and staging support, the house sold quickly and for the asking price. I was instantly hooked. Since then, I’ve used her company numerous times and also recommend her company to my clients.” - Brenda Loveday

“One of my favorite memories was lunching with Darla and talking about the ‘what’s next.’ She was open, bold and very sure of herself. Loved having our conversations!” - Johnna Struck

“I met Darla about 10 years ago when I had a client who wanted to do a quick flip of a Bloomfield property. Darla was such a valuable resource and helped us with contractors and gave wonderful advice about what needed to be done and what to avoid. She was so passionate and knowledgeable about her business. As we worked through the project, I learned what a wonderful, kind, and smart individual Darla was. I have a deep respect and admiration for her.” - Rob H.

“Darla is a truly gifted artist when it comes to staging. Her tastes are reflective of the times, and often



Darla with Tina Stratton from Impact Home Staging Experts. They have been a Preferred Partner in Oakland, Wayne and Macomb for seven years now.



The Impact Home Staging Experts team



Darla was featured in our publication for writing a book about home staging.

times, buyers want to buy her stuff because it is so great. She is always there to help, too.” - Gwen Schultz

“I will miss her smiling face, and she really had the knack for making you feel like you were her most important client. I love that we connected through Women Build as well — all the great memories will not be forgotten.” - Jennifer Zardus

“I loved that she got into boating. We met a couple of times on Lake St. Clair, rafting our boats together. She really enjoyed being on the water.” - Melinda Nagler

“We are heartbroken to learn of the passing of Darla Hunter Rowley. Darla was not only a valued Preferred Partner of the Women’s Council but also a true advocate for women in real estate and

a generous supporter of our mission. She once received our Partner of the Year award — just one reflection of the impact she made on our board and members over the years. Darla’s passion, warmth, and leadership left a mark on all of us. Her legacy lives on through the incredible team at Impact Home Staging Experts, and she will be deeply missed. Our thoughts are with her family, friends, and everyone at Impact during this time.” - Women’s Council of REALTORS® Birmingham-Bloomfield

“I had the privilege of working closely with Darla for many years, where she served as my mentor. For the better part of two years (2021-2023), she was my constant guide, shaping me into the person I am today. That time being by her side — learning, growing, getting on each other’s nerves, drinking too much at the airport, and simply being present

— are deeply etched into my heart forever. She saw potential in me that I couldn’t see in myself and nurtured it with infectious energy. Even in her hardest hours and difficult moments, I was honored to be there to offer a hand and to share those times together. What a privilege it was to offer support. The gratitude I feel is immeasurable that words can barely touch.” - Tina Stratton

“From the very beginning, Darla believed in Real Producers when we launched our publication seven years ago. It was truly a joy to be in her presence — her confidence, determination, and strength were incredibly inspiring. She will be deeply missed by so many. Our thoughts are with the entire Impact Home Staging team and her family during this time.” - Chris & Terra Csotty

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