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Let’s Chat About Who We Are At Real Producers!

BY NICK STEVENS

It’s my honor to bring Real Producers to the north and northeast Georgia area and to celebrate everything that makes you all an outstanding part of the Mountains, Lakes & Athens Real Estate Community. I look forward to highlighting your accomplishments, encouraging your dreams and recognizing you for your continued excellence in serving your clients.

Real Producers is now 10 years old, having started as a simple idea in 2015 in Indianapolis and has spread across the nation like wildfire. The Real Producers community is now available in over 140 locations and is changing the way the real estate community interacts across America. As we embark on this journey together, I promise to create platforms to connect this community and forums to recognize and celebrate what makes each one of you iconic. In years to come, I hope to interview every one of you so that I can share your success stories in future issues. I also look forward to celebrating you at our events, providing tools and connections to help you grow your business, and representing your passion for this industry that we all share.

Here are some quick facts about Real Producers:

DISTRIBUTION: This magazine will arrive in the mailboxes of the TOP 300 agents in the Mountains, Lakes & Athens communities of north and northeast Georgia each month. These 300 agents are determined through compiled MLS data from 2024. If you are receiving a hard copy of the publication, it is because you belong to an elite group and represent the best of the best in our industry!

CONTENT: This publication is all about YOU, the Mountains, Lakes & Athens real estate community. We will be writing personal and unique stories about members of this community, giving you a platform to inspire greatness in others. As we grow, we will continue to add fresh content focused entirely on the top agents and our Preferred Partners. We have NOTHING to sell to real estate agents as it is absolutely FREE to be featured in this publication. To be featured, the agents must be nominated by a peer, leader, or influencer in the local real estate market. We always encourage nominations and love to hear about agents who are making a huge impact in our market.

PREFERRED PARTNERS: Anyone listed as a “Preferred Partner” in the index of this publication will also be a part of this exclusive community. You will see them advertised in every issue, attending our private events, and being a part of our online community. We do not cold call businesses off the street to join us, nor do we allow any business that approaches us to be a part. One or many of you have recommended every single one of these Preferred Partners that you see in this publication. Our goal is to give you as many resources as possible to add to your arsenal so that you always remain that trusted referral source to your clients and customers.

EVENTS: Along with our monthly publication, we will be hosting various social and educational events throughout the year. Our goal is to bring the best of the best together while supporting our local communities. And we fully intend to have a good time doing it! We will be communicating information on upcoming events through the publication, monthly emailed newsletter and social media.

CONTRIBUTION: If you are interested in contributing, nominating REALTORS® for certain features, know of additional top-notch affiliate partners who would be a great fit for our community, or would simply like to learn more, please reach out to me anytime. I look forward to meeting with every one of you in the future. I would also like to give a HUGE THANK YOU to the Preferred Partners who jumped on board with us so that we could bring Mountains, Lakes & Athens Real Producers to life. Also, a huge shout-out to my team that pulled this together without much guidance. You all are incredible and this first issue is dedicated to you!

I appreciate you all and I look forward to seeing you all at our launch party coming soon!



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WRITTEN BY ELIZABETH MCCABE
PHOTOS BY ALLIE SANTOS

MELISSA FITZGERALD

Melissa Fitzgerald has never been afraid to reinvent herself. Before becoming one of Lake Oconee's top REALTORS®, she spent years solving complex problems as an engineer and traveling the country as a flight attendant. On paper, her careers couldn't look more different. Yet each chapter gave her exactly the skills she would eventually use to build a thriving real estate business.

"I enjoy helping people find a place to live out their dreams."

This driven and determined go-getter has spent her life solving problems, serving people, and building relationships. Whether she was working in government programs that required security clearances, flying as a flight attendant, or helping families navigate one of the biggest financial decisions of their lives, Melissa has always been drawn to work that centers on people. That's exactly what she loves most about real estate.

"I enjoy helping people find a place to live out their dreams," she says.

That passion is easy to understand when you hear her story.

Road to Real Estate

Melissa earned a degree in Computer Engineering from the University of Alabama in Huntsville and spent years commuting long hours

to work in highly secure government environments. The work was rewarding, but as her family grew and life evolved, the long daily commute into the office became harder to justify.

"I needed to be home more," she explains.

Later, an unexpected opportunity landed in her lap. Melissa became a flight attendant, a career she enjoyed for nearly a decade. The flexible schedule allowed her to be present for her family while also satisfying her love of travel and customer service.

"I was able to travel and see a lot of amazing places," she says with a smile.

Then the aviation industry came to a sudden standstill. For Melissa, it became the catalyst she needed. She had already begun pursuing her real estate license and was working part-time in the business. When aviation slowed, she decided it was time to commit fully.

The decision changed everything.

Today, Melissa combines the best skills from every chapter of her career.

"My background in engineering taught me to solve problems," she says. "There are always problems to solve in real estate. Working with numbers has made me a strong negotiator and excellent when looking at home comps. My engineering background also built a foundation to look at things from a non-emotional standpoint when it comes to numbers. This can become the voice of reason in emotional situations."

Her years in the friendly skies taught her a different skill.

"You learn a lot of patience when you are flying," she points out. "That's one of the things that has made me a strong REALTOR®." That patience allows her to stay calm in the midst of challenges and guide clients through transactions that can often feel overwhelming.

"Every transaction has challenges," she says. "Being able to look at situations logically and find solutions helps tremendously."

Clients have certainly noticed. Melissa's business continues to grow year after year. Following a successful 2025 in which she played a

key role in more than \$14 million in real estate sales, she is on track to surpass that benchmark while continuing to provide exceptional service to her clients.

Melissa has earned recognition as a Lake Country Board of REALTORS® Top Producer in both 2024 and 2025, a Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Luxury Collection Specialist, a Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices President's Circle (Top 5% in Sales) recipient, and Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Chairman's Circle Gold Award winner (Top 3% in Sales), placing her among the top-performing agents nationwide.



"I love first-time homebuyers. Sometimes they have the most questions, but that's what we're here for."





Rooted in Relationships

Even though Melissa is an award-winning agent primarily selling luxury homes over \$800,000, what excites her most are the relationships she builds along the way. She enjoys staying connected with clients after closing day, watching families grow, celebrating milestones, and seeing dreams become reality. Some of her favorite transactions involve helping clients buy or sell one home so they can build the next chapter of their lives.

“I love first-time homebuyers,” she says. “Sometimes they have the most questions, but that’s what we’re here for.”



Melissa has helped her own children navigate the homebuying/selling process along with purchasing commercial property for her family. Having experienced those milestones alongside her family, Melissa understands the excitement, questions, and uncertainty many first-time buyers and seasoned buyers or sellers face. She takes pride in being a steady voice of guidance every step of the way.

Outside of real estate, family remains at the center of Melissa’s world. She and her husband, Keith, have lived in the Lake Oconee area since 2007 and have called Cuscowilla home since 2016. Together, they enjoy spending time with their three daughters and their families, especially their two grandsons, ages 3 and 1. Whether they’re out on the boat, gathering

around the dinner table, entertaining friends, or traveling to a favorite beach destination, family time is what matters most.

Her approach is simple: listen first.

“Clients want to know you’re looking out for their best interests,” she says. “That’s where trust begins.”

She adds, “I believe real estate should be very relationship focused, and my clients deserve and appreciate genuine attention.”

Looking ahead, Melissa sees tremendous growth on the horizon for Lake Country and plans to continue growing right alongside it. Fortunately for buyers and sellers, she has no plans of slowing down. After all, helping people find the right home may just be her superpower. 🦹‍♀️



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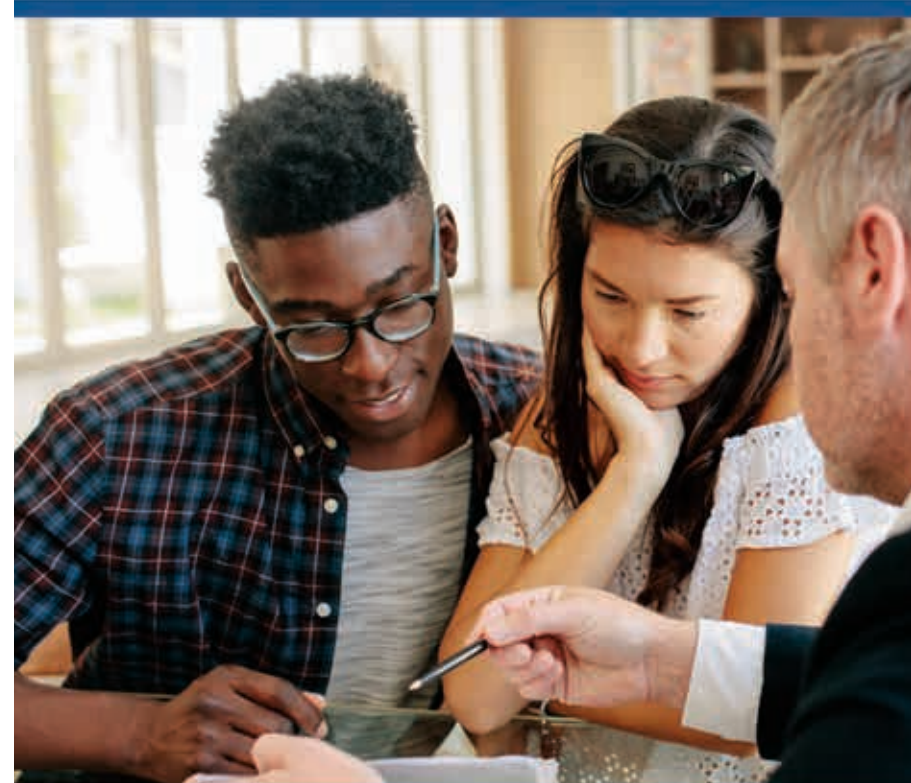
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Jennifer Vaughan

Taking It Personally

PHOTOS BY ALLIE SANTOS
BY JESS WELLAR

“This place changed our family. The lake, the schools, the people — we found something real here,” Jennifer Vaughan begins. “Getting to be the person who helps other families find it too is the best part of real estate.”

That close connection to Lake Oconee has become one of the driving forces behind Jennifer’s rapid rise in real estate since entering the business in 2020. The associate broker with Dwell Real Estate closed \$44 million across 25 transactions in last year alone, while ranking among the top 10 agents in the area and earning recognition on the national RealTrends Top 1000 list.

Specializing in luxury lakefront and golf community properties, Jennifer has built a business fueled largely by a deep-rooted understanding of the lifestyle she sells every day herself — and a background in tech sales hasn’t hurt either.

All In

Originally from Dearborn, Michigan, Jennifer graduated from the University of Michigan as an English major with initial plans to pursue law school. But after working as a paralegal during college, she quickly realized she didn’t love it.

“I was good at building rapport quickly though with clients, so I decided to go into software and hardware sales,” Jennifer recalls.

Over the next 15 years, she built a highly successful career in tech sales throughout Michigan and Chicago, sharpening her negotiation skills, marketing instincts, and professionalism that would later translate naturally into her second act.

The family’s relationship with Lake Oconee actually began long before Jennifer ever considered getting licensed. She and her husband Larry purchased their first lake property in 2001 before eventually relocating full-time in 2010 to raise their three boys in the community they had grown to love. As her kids grew older though, the transition into real estate began to feel inevitable as Jennifer eyed returning to work and dreaded the thought of commuting to Atlanta.

“After a few years of living the lake life, helping friends and family find their way into this community started to feel like the natural next chapter, so I made real estate official,” she grins.

“I have always loved looking at houses, decorating and design, and it was an easy transition to go back into sales,” she continues. “And now I work with a builder of spec homes and get to advise on maximizing profits and do high-level consulting, which I also really enjoy.”

Ironically, Jennifer was scheduled to take her real estate licensing exam the day COVID shut the testing center down. The moment testing resumed in May 2020, she earned her license and jumped fully into the business during one of the most frenzied markets the industry had ever seen.

“I went all in, it was the only way,” Jennifer shares. “It was make or break and it was great! The business ebbs and flows of course, but I came out of the gate swinging.”



Embracing The Lifestyle

Jennifer's business philosophy is simple: clients deserve direct access, honest guidance, and someone who genuinely understands the lifestyle they are investing in. In a market as nuanced as Lake Oconee — where lakefront, golf, gated communities, and second homes all operate differently — she believes firsthand experience matters.

"I live here. I'm not commuting in from Atlanta or pretending to know the lake," Jennifer points out. "I've been a Reynolds Lake Oconee resident since 2010 and a Cuscowilla member, which means I know the communities, the

boards, the docks, the dirt, etc. at a level that takes years of living it."

That insider knowledge, paired with her background in high-level tech sales, has helped Jennifer carve out a unique niche within the luxury lake market. But more than anything, she says her business remains intentionally personal. Every client works directly with her from the initial conversation through closing, something she believes is increasingly rare in high-volume luxury real estate.

That hands-on approach has naturally generated a strong referral network over time, with much of her business

now coming from past clients and the relationships she has built within the tight-knit community itself.

"I am more concerned about relationships and doing a great job for everyone than I am with the number of transactions," Jennifer emphasizes. "That's the unique value proposition and perspective I bring."

Clients consistently describe the experience of working with her as polished and highly professional without ever feeling transactional.

"I typically hear 'This was the best real estate experience that we've ever had,'" she smiles. "I'm very organized and thorough without letting emotions get in the way."

Roots That Matter

While Jennifer's business continues to grow rapidly, much of her focus these days centers around staying present for this particular season of life at home. She and Larry will celebrate 20 years of marriage this October and are raising sons Matthew (18), Jordan (16), and Brandon (13), alongside two doodles, Elsa and Arya, and an orange tabby cat appropriately named Pikachu.

"The boys are growing up fast!" she marvels. "We moved here when Matthew was 2, now he's a senior; and Jordan was a newborn and he will be driving soon!"

The Vaughans spend most weekends fully immersed in the lifestyle Jennifer now sells: boating, paddleboarding, golf, tennis, pickleball, and cheering on the boys at school sporting events.

"We also love to travel as a family, and I enjoy a full house with friends over, something on the grill, and no one in a hurry to leave," she elaborates.

Larry, a competitive golfer and licensed himself, also helps behind the scenes with Jennifer's books, analytics, and very occasional business support when needed. She readily credits her husband



“I went all in,
it was the only way.”



as “a terrific networker and my favorite person to be around.”

Jennifer also remains deeply involved within her community, serving as Vice Chairman of the Board of Governors at Lake Oconee Academy four years running, while supporting organizations including St. Mary’s Good Samaritan Hospital, Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta, Neighbors Helping Neighbors, and the Pete Nance Boys & Girls Club alongside Larry, who sits on their board.

On the horizon, Jennifer hopes to continue building a business rooted more in integrity and consistency than volume while potentially expanding into spec home development alongside Larry and a local builder. She remains open to eventually forming a small team someday as well — but only if she finds someone capable of matching the level of care and work ethic she expects of herself.

“I want to keep building a business that’s known for doing it right, not just doing it big,” Jennifer concludes. “Deeper roots in Lake Oconee, more of the clients I love working with, and the kind of reputation that outlasts any one good year.” ■



Your AI Advantage

AI News: The Secret Codes Hiding Inside Claude

BY STEVEN NEVILLE

This spring a cheat sheet of Claude “prompt codes” tore through X and Reddit. They are short commands you type at the start of a prompt to change how Claude responds. Not official buttons, just shortcuts power users found and started sharing. A few are genuinely useful for real estate, and one is worth your time today.

This Month’s Tip: Make AI Sound Like You, Not a Robot
Buyers can smell a robot-written listing from a mile away. The code /mirror fixes that.

Here is the move. Open Claude, paste three of your best past listing descriptions, and type:

“/mirror. Write a description for this new listing in my voice.”

Then paste the property details. Claude studies your rhythm and phrasing and writes the new one to match. That is the difference between generic AI copy and something that sounds like you wrote it on a good day in Blue Ridge.

AI Tool Spotlight: Three Codes Worth Stealing
All three work inside Claude (claude.ai, \$20/mo Pro):

/mirror: matches your writing voice from samples you paste in first

PERSONA: sets Claude’s expertise before it answers. Try “PERSONA: senior negotiator with 25 years in luxury markets” before a tough counteroffer email.

/ghost: rewrites stiff, AI-sounding text into something that reads human. Paste any

clunky paragraph and watch it loosen up.

No new subscription, no learning curve. Type the code and go.

Let’s Make This Useful for You
What do you want covered next? Email me your questions at steve@mpowerglobal.ai

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All About Mountains, Lakes & Athens Real Producers

Real Producers magazine started in Indianapolis in 2015 and is now in over 130 markets across the nation and continues to spread rapidly.

Q: WHO RECEIVES REAL PRODUCERS MAGAZINES?

A: The top 300+ real estate agents across north and northeast Georgia.

Q: WHAT IS THE GOAL OF THIS MAGAZINE?

A: We believe that we are better together. When we surround ourselves with other successful, like-minded people, we grow to new heights. Real Producers is a platform that brings together the most elite individuals in the North Georgia real estate industry.

We take the top 300 real estate agents and RP-vetted businesses in every

market, and we build an exclusive community around that group. We share their stories, successes, market trends, and upcoming events — really, anything that will connect, inform and inspire, we put in our monthly publication.

Q: DOES REAL PRODUCERS HAVE EVENTS?

A: Yes! We will have specific networking events throughout the year.

Q: WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR BEING FEATURED IN THIS MAGAZINE?

A: It's really simple. You have to be on the top 300 list, and we take nominations seriously. You can nominate other real

estate agents, businesses, brokers, owners or even yourself! Office leaders can also nominate real estate agents. We will consider anyone brought to our attention who is in the top 300 because we don't know everyone's story, so we need your help to learn about them. We cannot guarantee a feature, but we encourage you to meet with one of our team members, support Real Producers and attend our private events to increase your chances.

To submit a nomination, please email: Nick.Stevens@RealProducersMag.com

Q: WHAT DOES IT COST A REAL ESTATE AGENT/TEAM TO BE FEATURED?

A: Zero, zilch, zippo, nada, nil. It costs nothing to agents, so nominate away! We are not a pay-to-play model. We share **REAL** stories of **Real Producers**.

Q: WHO ARE THE RP-VETTED BUSINESSES?

A: They are one of the best businesses in north and northeast Georgia in their category, and you can find them listed in our index! We don't just find these businesses off the street, nor do we work with all businesses that approach us. Many of the top agents have recommended every single business you see in this publication. We will not even meet with a business that has not been vetted by one of you and "stamped for approval," in a sense. Our team will further vet every business to make sure they are a good fit and bring value to our community. Our goal is to create a powerhouse network, not only for the best real estate agents in the area but the best businesses so we can grow stronger together.

Q: HOW CAN I RECOMMEND A BUSINESS?

A: If you want to recommend a business that works with top real estate agents, please email or message us!

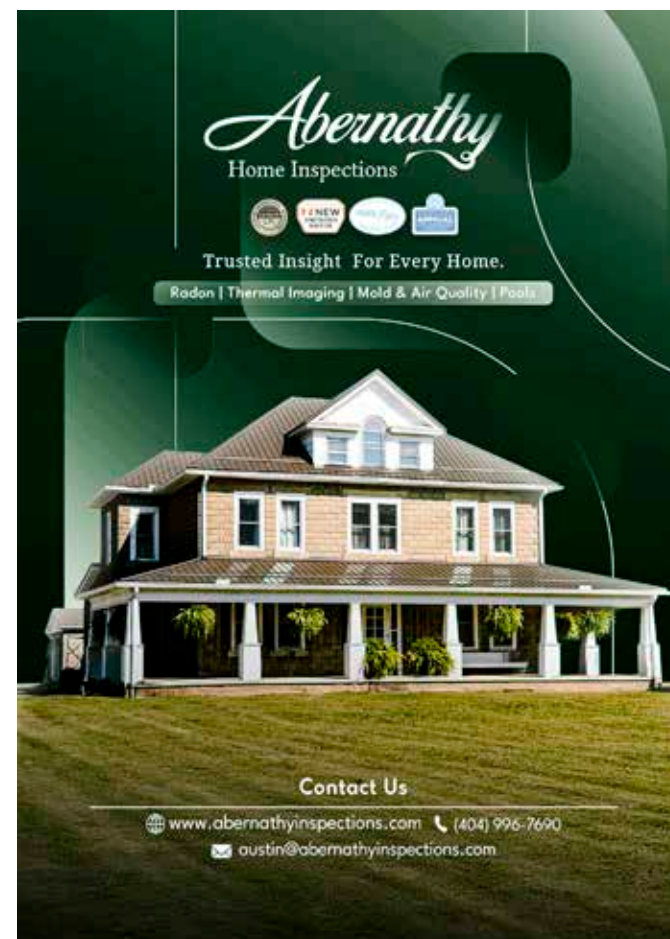
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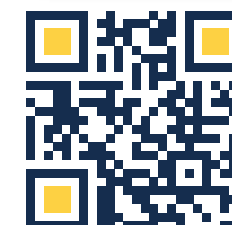
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