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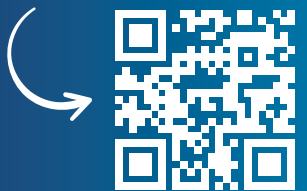
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Reflection

Brian Gowdy and friends, Dan and Faith, on Halloween Night at Albuquerque Tango Festival.



As we step into a new year, I've been reflecting on how easy it is to underestimate our own progress.

If you're anything like me, your mind naturally gravitates toward the goals you *didn't* reach—the ideas still sitting on the shelf, the to-do list that never seems to shrink, the steps you thought you'd take but haven't yet. Those missed moments tend to look so big in the rearview mirror, while the actual progress we've made often feels small or insignificant in comparison.

But here's the truth: if you were to measure yourself not against perfection, but against where you were a year ago, I bet you'd be surprised. I know I was.

When I look back on this past year, my biggest area of growth came from something that didn't feel monumental at first—learning to integrate AI into my business. I started using AI transcription tools in meetings so I could stop scribbling notes and instead stay fully present in the conversation. I began using AI to streamline my writing process, my organization, and my efficiency. It wasn't glamorous. It didn't happen overnight. But over time, it changed the way I work and helped me capture more meaning from the moments that matter most.

That's the thing about growth—it rarely feels dramatic while it's happening. It's often hidden in the slow accumulation of small

decisions, small improvements, small changes in mindset. But those small steps add up, and when you finally stop and look back, you realize just how far you've come.

So as you plan your goals for the new year, I encourage you to pause and acknowledge your growth from the year behind you. Give yourself credit. Celebrate the

ways you've evolved, adapted, or simply endured. You've done more than you realize.

Here's to continuing that growth in 2026—one small, significant step at a time.

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Reflections from the Editor

Resilience and adaptability. Each of this month's featured stories highlight personal and professional challenges that shaped careers...from health crises and family responsibilities to unexpected life shifts. These stories reflect the importance of persistence, self-reinvention, and navigating work and life in a way that feels personally aligned, emphasizing that success in real estate is as much about personal growth as professional achievement.

These agents credit mentors, peers, and supportive networks for guiding their development, whether through formal teams, brokerages, or informal guidance. Each story underscores the human-centered nature of real estate: building trust, helping clients navigate major life transitions, and creating lasting connections that extend beyond transactions.

This month's Partner Spotlight highlights the broader ecosystem supporting real estate. Cheryl leverages her expertise to streamline the home-selling process for both homeowners and agents. Her focus on operational excellence,

trust, and compassion mirrors the values seen in the agents' stories, showing that the real estate community thrives not only through sales but also through thoughtful support services that address client needs holistically.

Happy Reading!



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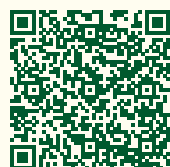
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Brittany Winn

FROM STAY-AT-HOME MOM TO
REFERRAL-BASED REALTOR

CASA BAY PHOTOGRAPHY

For Colorado Springs native Brittany Winn, real estate wasn't part of the plan. After graduating from Widefield High School, she worked in a call center while earning her associate degree online. When her husband, Josh, joined the Air Force, Brittany was pregnant with their first daughter. She briefly worked at a bank before deciding to stay home full-time to raise her two young girls.

Everything changed when the family bought their first home. Their agent, Vicki Maloney of Keller Williams, made such a lasting impression that Brittany began to imagine a new career. "We had such a great experience with her," Brittany recalled. "I loved what she did for us, and I wanted to make something of myself—not only as a stay-at-home mom—but also to show my girls that they could be successful and independent."

Brittany earned her real estate license in 2015. Like many new agents, she began solo but soon realized the

importance of mentorship. "When you first get your license, I think everyone should join a team for at least a year—the experience you gain is priceless," she said. That decision led her to The Kibler Group under Stacy Kibler, where she learned the business fundamentals and how to create seamless client experiences. Later, she co-founded Property Mommies, a recognizable brand built on a year-long commitment

to produce weekly videos. "It was an amazing chapter of my life," she said.

In 2018, life took an unexpected turn when Brittany's mother was diagnosed with breast cancer. Genetic testing revealed Brittany carried the BRCA1 mutation, leading her to undergo a preventative double mastectomy in November 2022. Four reconstructive surgeries followed, testing

her strength and perspective. "That completely changed my outlook on life," she said. "It was difficult, but I feel blessed to have known about the gene so I could prevent cancer before it started."

This period marked a personal and professional reset. Property Mommies came to an end, and after a brief time with eXp, Brittany returned to Keller Williams Falcon and rejoined Stacy Kibler. "I needed to be

around positive, like-minded people," she shared. "After everything, I just needed that environment."

As a military spouse since 2012, Brittany has faced long separations—Josh's service has taken him away for nearly seven years in total through deployments and training. "It hasn't always been easy," she admitted. "Raising kids, managing a home, and building a business while your spouse



“IT HASN’T ALWAYS BEEN EASY.

RAISING KIDS, MANAGING A HOME,
AND BUILDING A BUSINESS WHILE
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STRENGTH. BUT IT’S TAUGHT ME
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is gone takes strength. But
it’s taught me resilience
and independence.”

Today, 98% of Brittany’s
business comes from
referrals and repeat clients,
reflecting the trust she’s
built over the years. Looking
ahead, she values balance
more than anything. “I
feel like I missed a lot of
my daughters’ childhood
because I was always
working,” she said. “My
goal is to sell 25 to 30
homes a year. I only have
six years left with my girls,
and I want to enjoy that
time. We’ll see where life
takes me after that.”

Outside of real estate,
Brittany finds joy in her
daughters, Amaya (13)
and Kylana (11), chickens,
paddle boarding, hiking,
reading, and tending to
her plants—a passion she’s
happily rediscovered after
years of hustle. She strives
to give back to her clients
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Kristin SCALVA

REINVENTING HERSELF
THROUGH REAL ESTATE

CASA BAY PHOTOGRAPHY



For Kristin Scalva, real estate has been both a constant thread and a place of renewal throughout her life. Originally from Northern California, she earned her Real Estate license there in 2004. “I was always fascinated with real estate and the investment piece of it, as well as how to grow your portfolio,” she recalled. At the time, she was a young waitress working her way through college and training for her pilot’s license. One of her flight instructors talked about real estate, and the seed was planted.

Kristin became the first female pilot out of Placerville Airport, near Lake Tahoe. Flying was an adventure, and she often took day trips into Tahoe for lunch before returning. Though her plan to join the Air Force didn’t work out due to medical disqualification, real estate offered her another career path that blended independence and excitement. “Having my Pilot’s License allowed me to access several different markets easily so I could do a listing presentation in Lake Tahoe then be in Sacramento with a buyer just an hour later,” Scalva said.

Her life took a turn when she began visiting family in Colorado—relatives who own Patsy’s Candies in Colorado Springs. Childhood memories of the candy shop—“very much like I Love Lucy, where you’re shoving chocolates in your pockets and eating as much as you can,” she laughed—made the area feel familiar. After some self reflection, Kristin decided to make Colorado her home. She bought a house in Manitou Springs, where the quirky community quickly won her over. “My neighbor used to walk his llama down the street, and I loved that,” she said.

After moving, Kristin stepped away from real estate and co-founded a clinical research company with her mother, inspired by her grandmother’s battle with cancer. The company focused on psychiatric trials and grew rapidly. But as COVID hit, she found herself working 50-60-hour weeks while also raising three children. “It was too much for me. I couldn’t do that and teach the kids,” she explained. The



emotional toll of the work also weighed heavily, leading her to bow out of the company and reevaluate her future.

That turning point led her back to real estate. In 2020, Kristin earned her Colorado license, only to discover that working here was nothing like working in California. “I really thought going back to real estate was going to be very natural and quite easy. But California and Colorado operate differently—it really was starting from scratch again,” she admitted.

Kristin built her business through grassroots efforts—hosting open houses, building relationships, and focusing on authenticity rather than cold calls or door knocking. Over time, her client base naturally took shape around the worlds she knew well: medical professionals and pilots.

Today, Kristin is a solo agent with RE/MAX PROPERTIES, a brokerage she describes as “a very family feel” despite its recent merger into a larger RE/MAX group. “They believed in me more than

I believed in myself at first,” she said of her colleagues. That support helped her regain confidence and establish a career path that fit her values.

A key part of Kristin’s approach is balance. She caps herself at five clients at a time to ensure she can give her full attention to each transaction. “If they choose me, I want to be there the whole time,” she explained. While she has a trusted transaction coordinator and peers who provide backup, Kristin prefers to keep her business personal and manageable.

Flying remains a lifelong passion, though she admits it’s an expensive hobby. Recently, she’s enjoyed taking her kids up in the plane—while her husband, not fond of heights, sometimes “screams his way through” the ride. Hiking, family time, and raising her three children round out her life outside of real estate.

Looking back, Kristin sees her journey as one of resilience and reinvention. “In 2020, we all sort of took a look at our lives and reevaluated where we



go now. For 14 years, it was all about my patients, and I realized that I needed to start looking inward. What do I do to better myself, to still have a career in something I love, but also be a mother? Unfortunately, I think a lot of people don’t think they can do both, but it’s an important balance.”

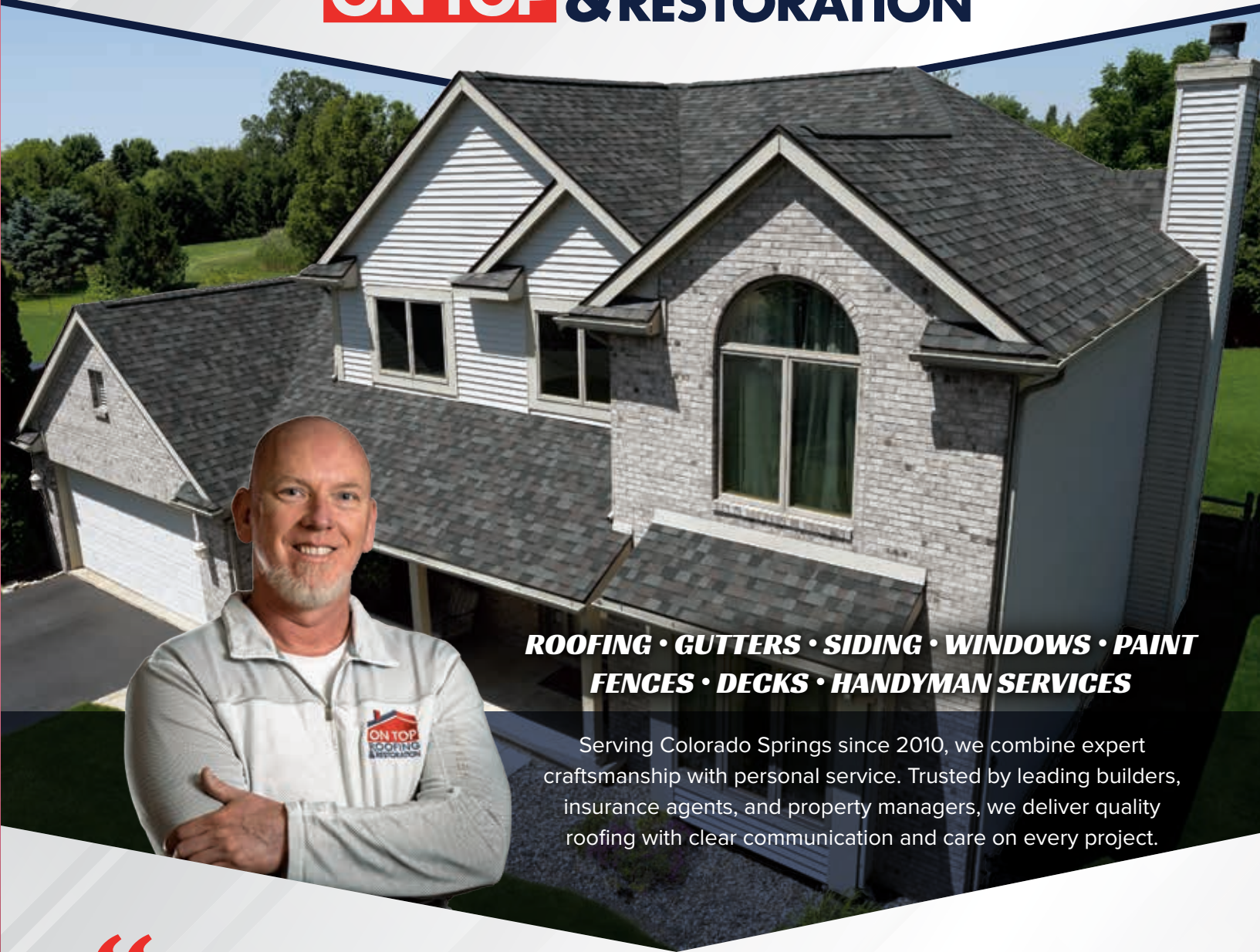
For Kristin Scalva, real estate isn’t just a career comeback. It’s a way to blend her love of homes and investment with a life that gives her room to thrive as both an agent and a mother.



“
I really thought going back to real estate was going to be very natural and quite easy. But California and Colorado operate differently—it really was starting from scratch again.

”

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HOMEstretch

C H E R Y L G A R L A N D , O W N E R

**Helping Homeowners
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CASA BAY PHOTOGRAPHY

After years of building a successful career in real estate and IT project management, Cheryl Garland reached a pivotal point. She knew she wanted to own a business—something rooted in community impact, not just corporate gain. That moment of clarity led her to HOMEstretch, a franchise that

perfectly merged her professional strengths and personal values.

Cheryl’s story begins in Des Moines, Iowa, where she grew up and attended college before moving to Minnesota. She first arrived in Colorado Springs in the early 2000s, working in new home sales for Keller Homes (now Toll Brothers). Though she eventually returned to the Midwest to raise her daughters, she and her husband were drawn back by the lifestyle Colorado offers—and the opportunity to do meaningful work in the place they love.

With a background in both real estate and project management, Cheryl was uniquely suited to launch HOMEstretch, which helps homeowners retain the value of their homes through cosmetic updates when preparing to sell. Services include clear-outs, painting, flooring, landscape cleanup, move-out cleaning, and minor handyman repairs. The company serves both Colorado Springs and South Denver Suburbs/Castle Rock areas.

“I was really drawn to the concept,” Cheryl recalls. “When I

“WE’RE A ONE-STOP SHOP. BUT WHAT SETS US APART IS OUR HIGH LEVEL OF COMMUNICATION. REAL ESTATE AGENTS AND HOMEOWNERS ALWAYS KNOW WHAT’S HAPPENING, AND WE GO THE EXTRA MILE—ESPECIALLY WHEN IT COMES TO HANDLING PEOPLE’S BELONGINGS WITH CARE.”



found out it existed, I thought—how is this a thing, and why isn’t everyone doing it?”

The inspiration for HOMEstretch wasn’t just professional. After Cheryl’s grandmother passed away, her family spent nine stressful months trying to prepare the house for sale. Most of the family lived out of state, and coordinating the clear-out, repairs, and updates during a time of grief was overwhelming. That experience made Cheryl realize how valuable a one-stop, full-service partner would be for families navigating transitions.

Today, HOMEstretch provides exactly that. The process is designed for speed, clarity, and convenience: within 24 hours of a

home consultation, clients receive a quote, and upon contract approval work typically begins within 3–5 days. Cheryl and her team manage everything, so real estate agents can focus on pricing and marketing the home instead of juggling multiple contractors.

“We’re a one-stop shop,” Cheryl explains. “But what sets us apart is our high level of communication. Real estate agents and homeowners always know what’s happening, and we go the extra mile—especially when it comes to handling people’s belongings with care.”

HOMEstretch is especially well-suited for clients going through major life changes, including downsizing seniors

and families handling an estate. Cheryl’s team often helps sort, donate, and recycle items, keeping heirlooms and re-usable furniture out of landfills and supporting local charities in the process. In one recent case, they donated items from a clear-out to a local senior living center raising funds for an ADA-accessible park in Monument.

Cheryl believes that trust and follow-through are the most important qualities in her industry. “We show up on time, do what we say we’re going to do, and deliver a high-quality product,” she says. “That’s how we build long-term relationships, not just one-time transactions.”

For Cheryl, the most rewarding part of the job is helping families through life’s transitions. “It’s not just about the physical work,” she says. “It’s about being a partner in a very personal process—and honoring what matters to people.”

Outside of work, Cheryl and her husband enjoy hiking and exploring Colorado’s outdoors with their two rescue dogs. They also have two college-aged daughters, Samantha and Hope, plus a couple of rescue cats and a lizard.

Cheryl credits her husband and daughters for being her biggest supporters, both personally and professionally. “They’ve been amazing,” she says. “I couldn’t do this without them.”

Whether it’s a senior preparing to downsize, a family handling a loved one’s estate, or a seller who simply needs to make updates quickly and efficiently, HOMEstretch is a trusted resource in the Colorado Springs real estate community.

To learn more or schedule a consultation, visit www.home-stretch.com or call Cheryl directly at 719-900-8257.

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Q What do you love about your work?

What I enjoy most about being a home inspector is the opportunity to help people. I've always loved serving and assisting others. I also enjoy being out in the field, exploring both new and old homes, and interacting with clients.

Q What do you like to do outside work?

Outside of work, I love spending time with my wife of 17 years and our 10-year-old twin girls. We have two cats—Millie and Murphy—and a goldendoodle named Ruby. I coach my girls' volleyball team and am usually busy with endless DIY projects around the house. I also enjoy woodworking and have built many pieces of furniture. I grew up in Wisconsin and am a big Packers fan. I'm also into hockey—GO AVS GO!



Angelia

CHINKEEFATT

From Rock Bottom to RE/MAX: How Angelia Chinkeefatt Rebuilt Her Life—and a Real Estate Career

CASA BAY PHOTOGRAPHY

In 2007, Angelia Chinkeefatt and her family arrived in Colorado Springs, stationed at Schriever Air Force Base after years of military relocation. Life seemed to be on a steady course—until a series of events shattered everything she knew. What followed was a decade-long season of loss, physical pain, and emotional upheaval that would ultimately lead her to an unexpected place: a flourishing real estate career fueled by faith, perseverance, and purpose.

Angelia's professional background before real estate was a combination of service and numbers. She had built a career in nursing and finance, working at Wells Fargo and advancing to a personal banker role. "I've always loved people," she says. "I loved helping them heal and helping them succeed financially." But in 2011, everything changed. Angelia was struck in a devastating car accident. The injuries were worse than anyone initially realized. She would go on to endure 14 major surgeries over 10 years.

Her recovery wasn't just physical—it coincided with a series of cascading personal losses. She lost her job due to the accident and was deemed permanently disabled. Just months



later, her mother suddenly passed away in her daughter's arms on New Year's Eve. Not long after, her 22-year marriage ended. "I lost everything—my health, my finances, my family," she says. "All within a short period of time. It felt like blow after blow."

The only thing that carried her through, she says, was her faith. "My friends used to call me Job," she laughs. "But it was Jesus and my faith that got me through all of it. I wouldn't have made it without God and without the community around me."

During her long recovery, Angelia's teenage son stepped in as a caretaker. "He taught me how to walk again," she recalls. "He took on the full responsibility of me and never left my

side." And when her granddaughter, Dynasty, was born, Angelia took on full-time custody. In addition to her son and her granddaughter, Angelia credits her parents and the values they instilled inside her as reasons she was able to keep moving forward. "My parents played a huge role in my life. My mother was compassionate and loved everyone she met; my father worked extremely hard and never quit at any task he had to face. It's because of them that I kept fighting to get my life back on track."

Eventually, a friend enrolled in real estate school encouraged Angelia to join. "I told her, 'Girl, I can't do that. I'm just now walking again, and I don't have the money,'" she remembers. But her friend connected her with a real estate instructor who made her an offer: If she

could bring him one referral that led to a sale, he would pay for her schooling.

Angelia didn't just bring him one deal—she brought him four. "I didn't even know what I was doing," she laughs. "But I knew people, and I loved talking to them." Her instructor kept his word and paid for all her schooling. "I started with \$25 to my name," she says. "And now, just a few years later, my granddaughter, son and I are building our dream home."

Angelia built her business from the ground up using creativity, hustle, and heart. She'd passed out business, visited every contact in her phone, and leveraged inventory photos from builders to spark interest. "I used to text everyone photos and



say, ‘Want to see a new house?’” she says. “I made what I had work.”

Today, she’s known by many as “Miss RE/MAX” at the Chapel Hills Mall. Every Friday and Saturday, Angelia sets up a booth at the mall to meet the public. Balloons, chairs, candy for kids—she creates a space where people feel welcome to ask questions and explore their options. “I’ve had people bring photos of their homes and ask, ‘Should I sell? What should I fix?’” she says. “It’s about building trust and helping people.”

Angelia’s passion isn’t just about selling homes—it’s about serving families. And more specifically, she never forgets the kids. “The kids get left out of the process,” she says. “But they’re giving up their schools, their rooms, their friends. So I bring them in. I ask them to pick their paint colors, name their room, come on showings. They matter.”

Her granddaughter Dynasty is a key part of her business, too. Angelia calls her a “junior broker in training,” and Dynasty joins her for client meetings and open houses. “She saw me when

I couldn’t walk,” Angelia says. “Now she’s watching me build something for both of us. I want her to know that we can overcome anything.”

Faith remains the foundation of Angelia’s approach to real estate. She views each transaction as a chance to minister to someone in need. “It’s not just about closings and commissions,” she says. “It’s about meeting people where they’re at and helping them believe that something better is possible.”

“I didn’t even know what I was doing. But I knew people, and I loved talking to them. I started with \$25 to my name. And now, just a few years later, my granddaughter, son and I are building our dream home.”

One of her proudest moments came when she helped a family of five. “They didn’t think they could buy a house,” she says. “But I knocked on doors, found programs, got donations, secured appliances—and we made it happen. That’s the work I love.”

Her advice to anyone navigating a difficult season? “Don’t give up. Take each day in small pieces. Don’t compare your life to anyone else’s. You are your own measuring stick. Just be teachable. That’s how you grow.”

At a time when many would have given up, Angelia chose to rebuild—not just a career, but a life of purpose. “Real estate gave me a second chance,” she says. “But more than that, it gave me a way to serve others while showing my granddaughter and son what’s possible.”

If you’re ever at Chapel Hills Mall on a weekend, look for the RE/MAX booth with balloons, snacks, and a big heart behind it. Chances are, Angelia’s there—ready to help someone believe again.

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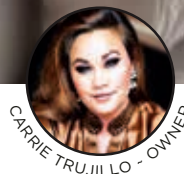
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Candice

Graham

LEADING THROUGH
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CASA BAY PHOTOGRAPHY

When Candice Graham first stepped into a real estate office, she wasn't planning on a career — she was looking for a part-time job. But what began as a simple administrative role quickly evolved into a lifelong passion for helping others succeed. Today, as the Managing Broker and Partner of 8z Real Estate in Colorado Springs, Candice brings more than two decades of experience, a problem-solver's mindset, and a deep appreciation for the power of mentorship to every facet of her work.

Originally from Montrose, Colorado, Candice got her real estate career started in Denver. "I kind of accidentally came into real estate," she recalls with a laugh. "I was going to go to college, but I started working at a RE/MAX office setting up showings and inputting listings for the MLS — back when listings were printed in books."

Before online databases, those books were the industry's lifeline. Candice

helped prepare and organize listings for print, using old-school codes and acronyms to keep the system running. "We'd get the books two weeks later, and that's how you found properties," she says. "It was archaic, but it was right when technology was starting to change everything."

That first job opened the door to something bigger. When the office manager quit, the brokerage — with roughly 80 agents at the time — promoted Candice to the position. "I went from assistant to office manager overnight," she says. "That meant cutting commission checks, auditing files, and helping agents close their deals. And I remember thinking, 'If all these people can do this — and some of them can't even work the copy machine — then I can absolutely do this.'"

That realization sparked a new chapter. Candice earned her real estate license and began assisting agents with their clients, shadowing top producers while attending listing

appointments and buyer consultations. "I learned by doing," she says. "Back then, there wasn't the kind of mentorship or training there is now. You really were just thrown to the wolves and had to figure it out."

She quickly discovered her natural fit in the industry — equal parts analytical and people-oriented. After moving to Colorado Springs, Candice transitioned into new home construction, representing a local builder during the downturn years. The role deepened her understanding of the market, but it also helped her realize what she was missing. "I loved helping people," she says, "but I didn't want to be boxed into one community. I wanted to help clients all across the city. I missed the variety of resale — every home, every client, every story is different."

When the time came to return to resale, Candice didn't just come back — she helped build something new. Alongside her cousin Sumer Liebold, she opened the 8z Real Estate Colorado Springs

office in 2009, initially under a franchise model. "At the time, 8z was like the Zillow of brokerages," she says. "They had a ton of internet leads — more than they could handle — and they needed agents to manage them."

Over time, 8z evolved from an internet-based brokerage into a highly referral-driven, boutique brokerage with robust systems and in-house support. Candice credits that shift to a culture of consistency and collaboration. "Our brokerage pushes the buttons for us," she explains. "We have built-in marketing, systems, and tools that keep us consistent month after month. It allows our agents to focus on being experts instead of being buried in admin work."

That structure — paired with a strong emphasis on mentorship — fits perfectly with Candice's leadership philosophy. "I love helping other brokers," she says. "I'm a big problem solver at heart. I get joy from helping agents find solutions, whether it's fixing a transaction issue or





helping a client through a tough spot. There's almost always a win-win if you're willing to look for it."

As Managing Broker, Candice sets clear goals with her agents and celebrates each milestone alongside them. "Watching them hit their goals is my favorite part of the job," she says. "This business isn't for the faint of heart — it takes grit, determination, and consistency day after day. I'm proud of the path I've built and the clients and colleagues who've made the journey so rewarding."

Alongside her role as Managing Broker, Candice is excited to lead the SellingCO

team alongside Stephanie Hawthorne. "What I love about partnering with Steph is her positive upbeat perspective. She has a lot of experience under her belt and we collaborate well together." Candice and Stephanie are both focused on elevating their clients' experience during and after their real estate transaction. "Our clients are part of our tribe, even well-after they close on their transaction. They believe in building lasting relationships and are excited for the future."

Her passion for the professional community also extends well beyond her office walls. Candice has long been involved

with local REALTOR® organizations and professional networks that foster growth, collaboration, and connection. Early in her career, she participated in Peak Producers and the Young Professionals Network (YPN). "Joining helped me build lifelong friendships," she says. "It gave me a network of peers I could collaborate with, and even now, sitting on the other side of a transaction with someone I met through those organizations makes everything smoother." She continues to stay engaged through the REALTOR® Professional Network (RPN) and by supporting PPAR and local fundraising events whenever possible. Candice

also encourages her agents to stay involved—keeping up with current issues, building connections, and giving back through community events and committees.

For Candice, collaboration is not just a professional value — it's a personal one. "I've been through plenty of hardships and losses throughout my life and each one has taught me more about myself—how to persevere, rebuild, find gratitude, and cherish each and every day. Being surrounded by people who lift you up when you've been knocked down is essential," she says. "That's the kind of team we have. Everyone here is a helper, a giver, and a supporter."

Outside of work, Candice finds her balance in the great outdoors. "I love to golf in the summer and ski in the winter. Anything that gets me outside — hiking, camping, paddleboarding, being with friends and family — that's where I recharge." A proud mom of five boys, Candice laughs, "My sons have taught me a lot about patience! We're all a bit competitive, so game nights are always lively. I cherish every moment I get to spend with them."

When asked who she credits for her success, Candice doesn't hesitate. "My mom," she says with a smile.

"She's the hardest worker I know. She taught me grit — what you can accomplish with determination and work ethic. And funny enough, I recruited her into real estate, too."

From her early days in the MLS book era to leading one of Colorado Springs' most agent-focused brokerages, Candice has built her career on adaptability, service, and persistence. "Real estate has changed a lot over the years but the core of it hasn't. It's still about helping people — and helping each other. That's exactly what keeps me passionate about what I do every day."

"This business isn't for the faint of heart — it takes grit, determination, and consistency day after day. I'm proud of the path I've built and the clients and colleagues who've made the journey so

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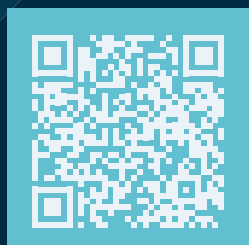




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