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JUNE 2026

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Cynthia Baer

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Couple on Fire
**SANDY &
ANTHONY
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Partner Spotlight
**ALL AROUND
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SOLUTIONS**

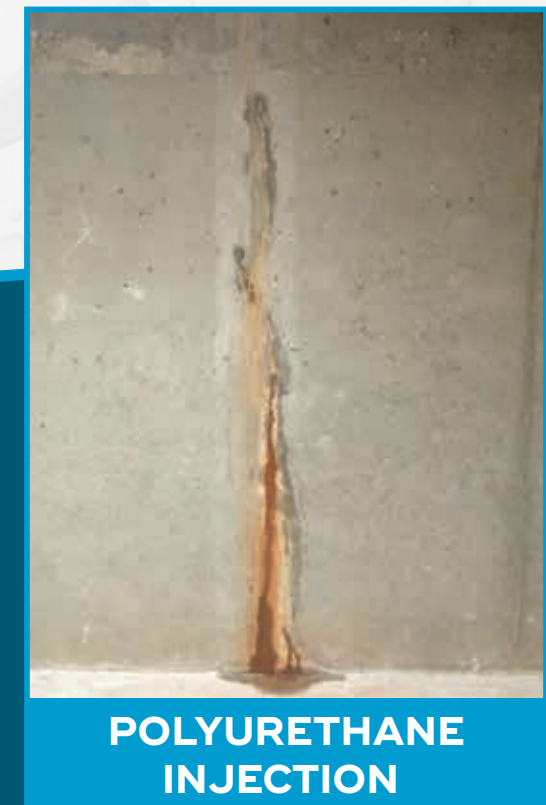
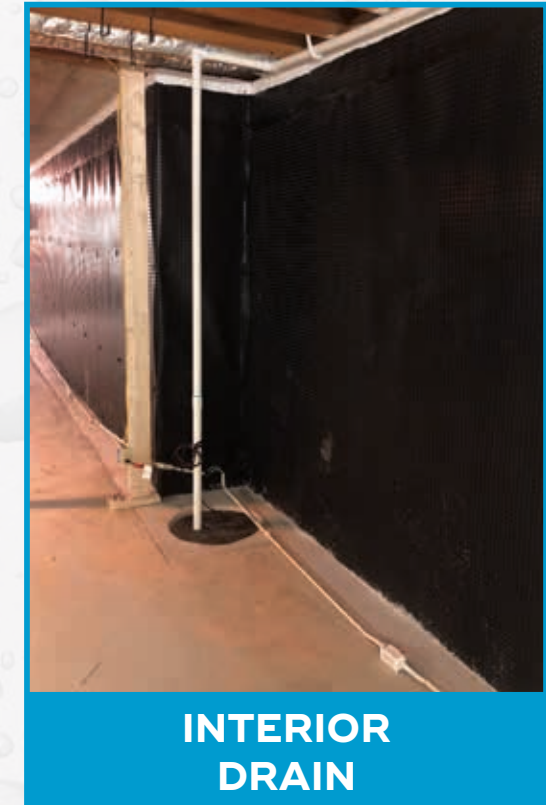
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Contents



Cynthia Baer **14**
COVER STORY

PROFILES



20 Sandy & Anthony Hippeli



26 All Around Home Solutions

IN THIS ISSUE

- 8 Preferred Partners**
- 10 Meet the Team**
- 12 Save the Date:** Toast to the Top
- 14 Cover Story:** Cynthia Baer
- 20 Couple on Fire:** Sandy & Anthony Hippeli
- 26 Partner Spotlight:** All Around Home Solutions
- 30 Cover Rewind:** Mona ElGomayel
- 32 By the Numbers**



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aaron.hutchison@n2co.com



Ashley Streight
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Ad Strategist



Shy Espinosa
Virtual Assistant



Alexandra Santos
Photographer



Regis Lawson
Photographer



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Cynthia Baer

BY ELIZABETH MCCABE
PHOTOS BY ALLIE SANTOS

Driven by Community.
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Most people run from a crashing market. Cynthia Baer ran straight into it.

Seventeen years ago, at the lowest point in real estate, when agents were leaving in droves and confidence was nowhere to be found, Cynthia jumped into the business. No perfect timing. No guarantees. Just instinct, grit, and a willingness to bet on herself. “I didn’t know any better,” she thoughtfully reflects. “I built a small business that grew market share as the market grew.”

A go-getter, Cynthia refused to give up during the Great Recession. She was strong in sales, especially given her background. “Before real estate, I was in promotional product sales,” she explains. By working with large companies and creatively sourcing products, she learned the importance of service and communication. “I also worked for Kinko’s as a major account manager,” she adds. Her talent stood out. She was ranked in the top 25 in the country, which was no easy feat. “I enjoyed listening to issues, creating business solutions, and the company culture.”

Why Real Estate?

The call to enter real estate began when she was a little girl. “We moved around a lot,” says Cynthia. “When we would go into a new town, I would look at houses with my mom.” Sometimes they were renting. Other times, they were buying. “It was almost a game,” she recalls. It was also a whole lot of fun. “We would drive around for entertainment, look at new houses, tour open houses, drive through new neighborhoods, and wander through properties. I loved it.”

Returning to her roots by entering real estate was a dream come true for Cynthia. It also paired well with her degree in Psychology. “It parallels nicely because so much of what we do involves listening closely and helping create solutions that work for people, whatever their needs are at that particular time,” she comments. She notes people often make moves when they have major life changes. Sometimes they are exciting and sometimes challenging times. Her clients notice her care and compassion, no matter the season of life.

When Cynthia started, her goals were modest. “If I could just sell a couple of houses a year, that would be great,” she says. “But that’s not really how I work. I jump all in when it’s something I care about.”

“
I want to do things that matter.”

“I’m focused.” She specializes in neighborhoods where she lives and shows up daily: Candler Park, Lake Claire, Decatur, and surrounding neighborhoods. “That’s where I run into people. That’s where I invest my time.”

She sponsors schools, events, preschools, and neighborhood traditions. She also hosts her own events that have grown in popularity. Little ones look forward to her gingerbread decorating with 150 children each year, now going strong for over a decade. She organizes pie giveaways, blanket drives, toy drives, and movie nights in the park, often adding fun extras like popcorn machines and giveaways.

“I enjoy building community and I want to invest my marketing dollars there, not online leads or billboards,” she explains. “I want to do things that matter.” That’s why she supports local groups and events and finds ways to help wherever she can. It’s these thoughtful things that make an impact.

Putting Down Roots

Her tagline says it all: Putting Down Roots. Growing up, Cynthia moved a lot. There wasn’t that steady sense of home or staying put. That all changed later in life when she got married and stepped into a full house, becoming an instant mom to three kids and eventually raising four. “It was fascinating,” she says.

More than two decades later, they’re still there. Same street. Same neighborhood. Twenty-three years and counting. “That kind of stability... it matters,” she says. “In our area, people aren’t just looking for a house. They’re looking for community. The house is just the structure. The heart of it is the people, the environment, how it really feels to live there.”

Every intown neighborhood has its own personality, she explains. Finding the

She also wanted to make a difference. From the beginning, she focused on building her business through community involvement. “That’s something that’s very important to me,” she says.

Secrets to Success: Community

“It’s really community,” Cynthia says. “I’m not an agent who goes everywhere.”



one that speaks to you is what is most important. "It's less about the size of your bedroom or your yard, and more about what you want your day-to-day life to actually look like."

Outside of work, her life is fulfilling. Between time with friends, book club, wine club, and local festivals, there's always something on her calendar. Another cause close to her heart? Scouting. Her sons earned their Eagle Scout rank, and her daughter followed right behind them when the program opened to girls. Now, as she steps into the empty-nester phase with her youngest off at college, she looks back on those years with a lot of gratitude.

And at home? Cynthia enjoys porch time with her husband and biggest supporter, Michael, while Bella and Ginger, her two poodles, run the show with their playful antics. There's never a dull moment.

A Business Built on Care

"If you do good things, good things happen," Cynthia says. That mindset shows up in how she runs her business. She pours into her community, and it's supported her right back. "I take great care of my clients," she says. "I'm responsive, I'm available, and I've built a strong network of people to help make things happen."

At the same time, she's incredibly dialed in on the numbers. She watches the market closely and makes sure her clients understand exactly what's happening and how to position themselves for success. "Pricing strategy and preparation make all the difference."

The results speak for themselves. Cynthia is the #1 producer for the DeKalb Board of REALTORS®, the top agent in her Keller Williams office, ranks among the top 100 individual agents company-wide, and is part of the Gary Keller Mastermind group. "Success builds on itself," she says. And for Cynthia, it all comes back to showing up, giving back, and putting down roots in the places that matter most. ▀



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Success
builds on itself.”



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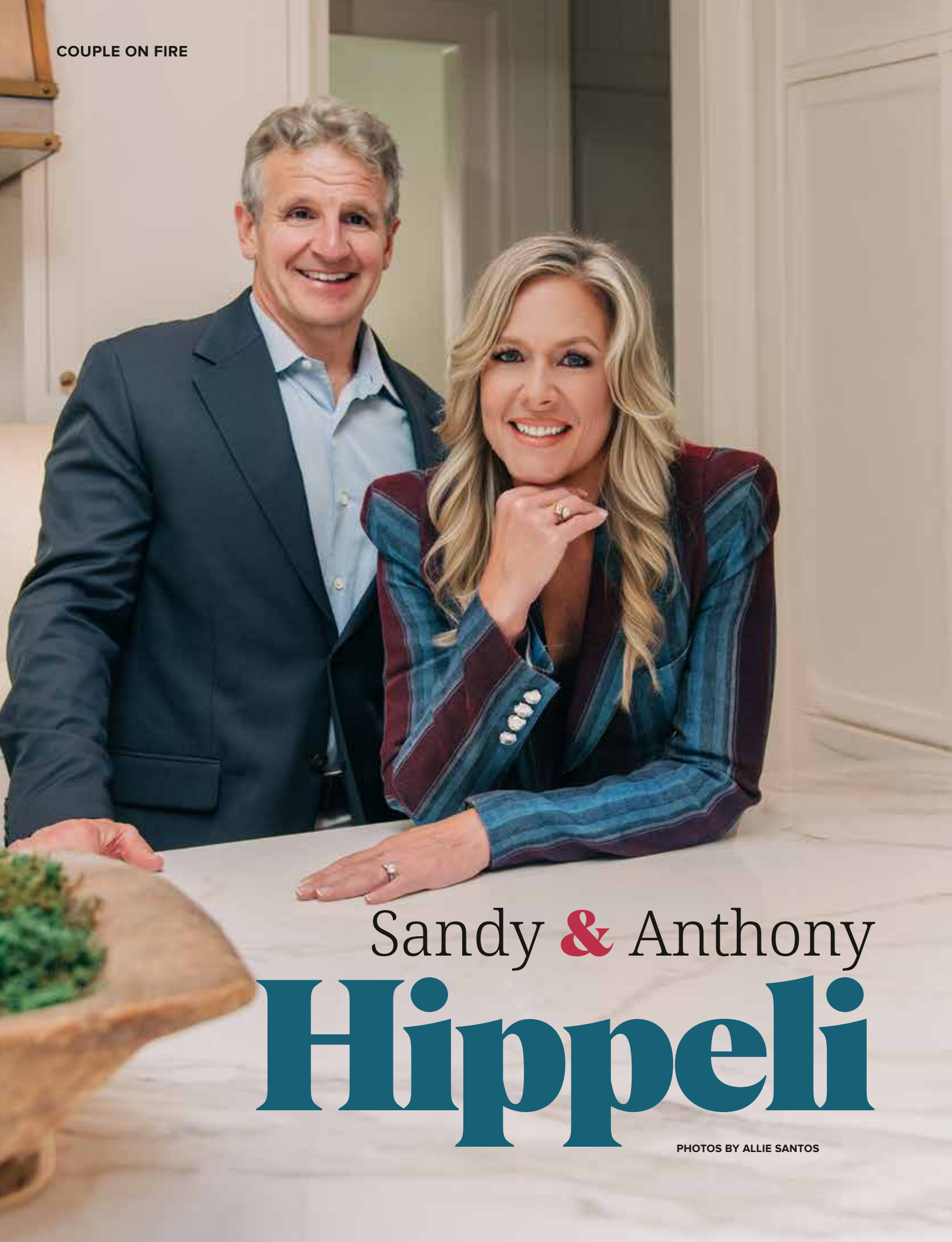
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Sandy & Anthony Hippeli

PHOTOS BY ALLIE SANTOS

Keys, Clarity & a Concierge Mindset

After decades of combined experience and a shared commitment to excellence, Sandy and Anthony Hippeli have built a real estate business that reflects both precision and purpose. Their journey is not just about transactions. It is about intention, growth and a deep understanding of what home truly means.

Anthony Hippeli's story begins far from Georgia. He spent much of his childhood on the Island of Malta before moving to Atlanta in 1984. Sandy Hippeli, on the other hand, was born and raised in Dunwoody, Georgia. Despite their different beginnings, both followed similar academic paths, graduating from Georgia State University with business-focused degrees.

Work ethic came early for both. Anthony began working at just 14 years old, shaping a mindset that would define his career. "By the time I graduated college in 1992, work was already part of who I was," he said. His early professional years included a role with Coleco Industries, helping introduce NordicTrack equipment into health clubs. That experience launched a successful career in the fitness industry, where he developed a concierge-level approach to client service.

"That concierge mindset is exactly what Sandy and I bring to our real estate business today," Anthony said. "Creating a seamless, high-touch experience for every client we serve." Sandy's foundation was equally service-driven. She started working at 15 in a yogurt shop and later spent years as a server and bartender. "Those roles gave me an unexpected advantage," she said. "They taught me how to anticipate clients' needs, stay organized under pressure, and handle curveballs with confidence."

That skill set carried into her mortgage career, which began in 1998. By 2002, she was originating loans and working alongside top home builders. Under the mentorship of industry leader Kim Nelson, Sandy consistently ranked among the top loan officers in Georgia. "We worked together for nearly 20 years," she said. "Her leadership helped shape my career in a significant way."

Anthony entered real estate in 2004, inspired in part by Sandy's early success. "Watching her success pushed me to elevate my path," he said. "I entered real estate with a clear intention to build a business rooted in excellence."

Sandy officially joined him years later. In 2015, she earned her license while still working full-time in the mortgage industry. "It gave me a unique perspective on both sides of the transaction," she said. By 2018, she made the leap into real estate full-time. "Looking back, it was one of the best decisions I've made."

Together, Sandy and Anthony operate with a shared philosophy that goes far beyond buying and selling homes. "Buying and selling real estate is deeply personal," they said. "No two clients approach it with the same priorities." Their business is built on discretion



“

It's never just about the transaction.

It's about how you make people feel.”



and precision, offering a concierge-style experience tailored to each client. “We operate with a high level of awareness because we understand that what matters most to our clients isn’t always visible on paper,” they said.

One guiding principle shapes their approach. “Most buyers don’t overpay because of price. They overpay because they bought the wrong house,” they said. “Our role is to ensure that doesn’t happen.” That level of intentionality is especially important in today’s market. According to Sandy and Anthony, turnkey living is the dominant trend. “Most buyers want a home that feels move-in ready from day one,” they said. Updated interiors, modern finishes and curated outdoor spaces are no longer bonuses. They are expectations.

“Buyers today are much more informed and discerning,” they said. “They can clearly see the difference between a home that has been thoughtfully updated and one that has simply been given a surface-level refresh.” For homes that are not turnkey, pricing becomes critical. “There has to be a substantial incentive

for a buyer to take on the time, cost and uncertainty of renovations,” they said.

Despite market shifts, what excites them most remains constant. “Almost every home has something that makes it special,” they said. “The key is identifying those defining features and connecting them with the right buyer.” That connection is where the real magic happens. “It creates a transaction that feels less like

a negotiation and more like a perfect match,” they said.

Outside of work, Sandy and Anthony prioritize balance. Fitness is a daily habit, helping them stay energized and focused. Family is their foundation. They have four children, Slade, Morgan, Cooper and Maxx, each pursuing their own paths with ambition and independence. “No matter how busy life gets, we make time to stay connected,” they said.

Their family stories run deep. Anthony’s father, a master chef who overcame significant challenges early in life, and Sandy’s parents, who combined creativity with financial discipline, both played key roles in shaping their values.

Those values extend into how they give back. Their connection to North Point Community Church has been a meaningful part of their lives. “The consistency of its vision and the impact it’s had on the community is something we deeply respect,” they said.

When it comes to professional growth, they remain committed to learning. Anthony draws inspiration from “Good to Great” by Jim Collins, while both follow podcasts centered on discipline, mindset and growth. “We’re always looking to push beyond what’s working and pursue what’s exceptional,” they said.

If they were not in real estate, their passions would still center around people. Anthony envisions motivational speaking, while Sandy is drawn to becoming a luxury travel advisor. “It’s never just about the transaction,” Sandy said. “It’s about how you make people feel.” That mindset defines everything they do.

For Sandy and Anthony, success is not measured solely by numbers. It is measured by relationships, impact and the ability to guide clients through one of life’s most meaningful decisions with clarity and confidence.

“This isn’t a transactional business for us,” they said. “The relationship begins the day we meet and continues through every stage of homeownership.”



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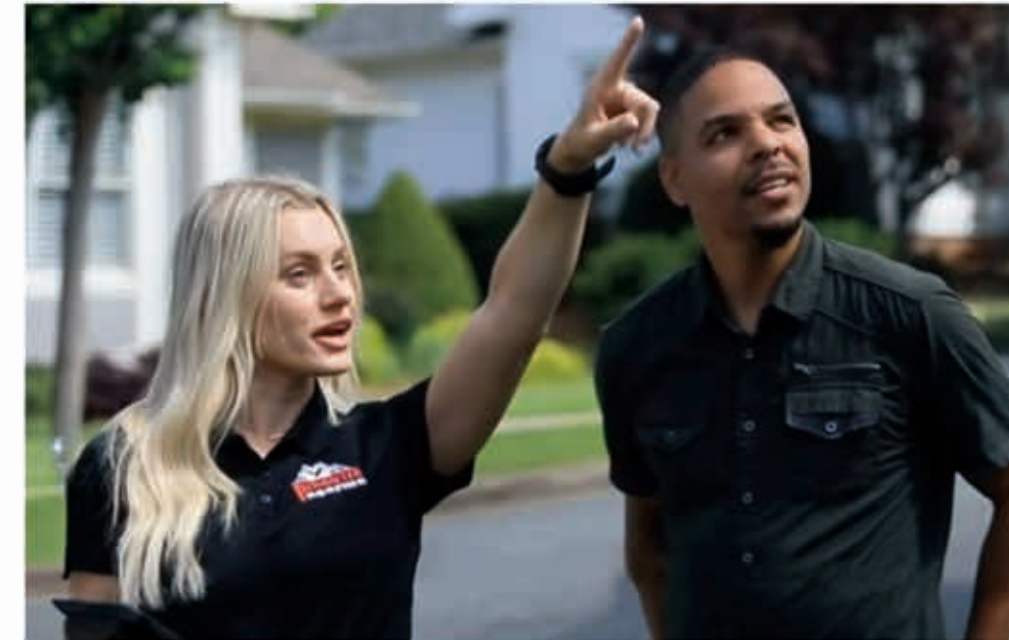
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Bryan DUKE

All Around Home Solutions

Built to Last PHOTOS BY ALLIE SANTOS

When Bryan Duke talks about building a business, he sounds a lot like someone talking about building a home. Every detail matters. Every piece has a purpose. And if the foundation is strong, everything else can grow from there. That mindset has shaped Bryan's career for decades and helped turn All Around Home Solutions into a trusted resource for homeowners throughout the greater Atlanta area. Born in Atlanta and raised in Jonesboro, Bryan learned early on the value of hard work, perseverance and relationships.

After studying at Clayton State University with studies in General Business and Business Administration, he stepped into the workforce with a willingness to learn and an eye for opportunity. Bryan first worked as an intern at the Georgia Department of Corrections Administration Building before joining his father in building an air freight service company. While those early jobs taught him valuable lessons about business and responsibility, his entrepreneurial side was already beginning to emerge.

"A friend and I started a small interior and exterior shutter company," Bryan said. "We worked with mostly local builders and suppliers providing shutters for new construction residential homes." What started as a small operation quickly opened Bryan's eyes to a larger opportunity in the home industry. As he worked installing shutters for other companies, he noticed homeowners and contractors were struggling to find reliable exterior shutter resources. Instead of waiting for someone else to solve the problem, Bryan decided to create the solution himself.

"I saw a need for contractors and residential homeowners to have a resource for exterior shutters," he said. In 2005, Bryan launched his own manufacturing company focused on exterior shutters. For nine years, he steadily grew the business through quality craftsmanship and customer relationships. His hard work paid off in 2014 when Louver Shop Shutters purchased his company and awarded him a franchise serving the greater Atlanta area through The Louver Shop of Metro Atlanta.

The recognition kept coming. Bryan earned the Rising Star Award in 2014, followed by President's Club honors in 2015 and 2016, along with the Million Dollar Club award in 2016. Still, Bryan was not finished evolving. In 2020, he launched All Around Home Solutions after recognizing another gap in the market. "I saw a need for clients who needed two things when they moved into a new home; custom window coverings and custom closets," Bryan explained.

"I wanted to provide my customers with an all-in-one solution to turning their new house into a home before they moved in." Today, All Around Home Solutions provides a wide variety of residential products, including shades, shutters,



“

I really get a sense of achievement and pride when we complete a project for a customer and see the excitement from them and their family when we are done.”

blinds, custom closets, pantries, patio screens and awnings. Bryan's mission is simple: make life easier for homeowners while delivering exceptional service. That commitment extends to the people who work alongside him every day. Bryan's team includes Administrative Assistant Cat Scragg along with installers Chris Avededo and DJ Foster. He credits much of the company's success to the culture they have built



together. “Value each other,” Bryan said. “Everyone on my team is extremely valuable.”

We could not do any of this alone. We work together every day to create the best experience for the customer. We stand behind each other, and we stand behind our products.” Bryan knows firsthand that running a small business comes with challenges. Learning when to delegate responsibilities and trust others was one of the hardest lessons he had to master. “Building a small business isn’t for everybody,” Bryan said. “It comes with many challenges.”

Financial decisions, staffing, growth and customer expectations all carry weight when you are responsible for a business and the people connected to it. But Bryan believes perseverance is what separates successful business owners from the rest. “Perseverance grants rewards,” he said. “Never give up. The bad times often lead to the greatest experiences.” Bryan also credits several mentors and business leaders who inspired him along the way, including Dan Goodsell, Billy Merritt, Bill Grant, Joe Stewart, Bill Hardin and Mike Hipps. Their guidance helped shape Bryan’s approach to both business and leadership. What continues to motivate him most is seeing the impact his work has on families

“I really get a sense of achievement and pride when we complete a project for a customer and see the excitement from them and their family when we are done,” Bryan said. As the housing market continues to grow, Bryan sees strong partnerships with real estate agents as a major part of the future for All Around Home Solutions. “I would like to help real estate agents give their clients a resource for our products after handing over the keys to their new homes,” he said. Outside of work, Bryan’s life revolves around family.

He and his wife, Tammy, a seventh-grade Language Arts teacher at Palmer Middle School in Kennesaw, have built a close-knit family with their three children: Gavin, Ella and Bryson. Bryan jokingly refers to Tammy as his “trophy wife,” but it is clear how much he values their partnership and family adventures. Together, they love traveling and creating memories. One unforgettable experience was a Mediterranean cruise where they visited Spain, France, Italy, Croatia and Greece. “That was an unforgettable experience for all of us,” Bryan said. When he is not working, Bryan enjoys playing guitar, participating in pickup basketball games at LA Fitness, playing pickleball with neighbors and tackling home improvement projects.

His latest project involves removing carpet and installing hardwood floors throughout his home. Even with decades of success behind him, Bryan remains focused on growth, relationships and helping others realize their potential. “I want to be remembered for lifting people up,” Bryan said. “Respecting people and showing them what they are capable of.” That philosophy is reflected not only in the homes Bryan helps improve, but also in the people he encourages along the way. For Bryan, success is not just about building a business. It is about building trust, opportunity and lasting impact.



“

Never give up. The bad times often lead to the greatest experiences.”

Mona ElGomayel



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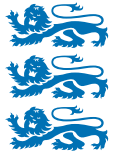
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