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Juliana
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REALTOR® Q&A
SEAN DOUGHERTY

Partner Spotlight
THAT 1 PAINTER
FORT COLLINS

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Q&A

WITH INSPECTOR CLARK HEMKER →



Q What brought you to this field?

I served in the Army for over 12 years. After my service, I spent several years searching for a career that I truly loved and felt excited about. After trying a few office jobs, I realized I needed something different. Being a home inspector had been on my mind for several years, so I finally decided to jump in and make it a reality.

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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!

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2026

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CONGRATULATIONS TO THE NEW TOP 300!

A new year has arrived, which means the time has come to announce the Top 300 agents for 2026! Congratulations on being a part of the exclusive community of the top 10% in NoCo real estate. As we close out the second month of 2026, we will continue to roll out exciting initiatives and events for our Top 300 community!

Show Off Your 2026 Top 300 Badge

We've released the 2026 Top 300 badges, and this year brought some exciting changes. Of the Top 300 REALTORS® in the market, 98 fell off the list (though not far), and 98 new or alumni agents earned their place. We can't wait to celebrate you in person at our first big event of the year!

Raise a Glass at the "Toast to the Top 300" Charity Event

We're starting the first quarter strong with our popular Charity of Choice event, centered around celebrating your success while also paying it forward and raising much-needed funds to support our local charities. Watch your emails and texts for your exclusive invite coming soon. This event will take place the first week of March.

Explore the Website for Exclusive Resources

Our website, nocorealproducers.com, continues to improve, and we

couldn't be happier with how it's evolving. We included links to the Agent-Only and Partners-Only sections of the site in the 2026 Badge email we sent out. On the website, you'll find:

- Every magazine from the past several months
- Event recap photos
- Your 2026 badge to download
- Detailed profiles of our vetted preferred partners

We have carefully vetted our preferred partners to be part of our community and to have their own badge. Recommended by your peers in the Top 300, they are among NoCo's most respected businesses and help us to do what we do for you at no cost. Look for this badge to know you're working with one of the best. Please support them with your referrals.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to me at mary.burrell@realproducersmag.com or call me directly at 970-732-0469.

I look forward to seeing you around town, and here's to 2026 being everyone's best year yet.



Cheers,
Mary

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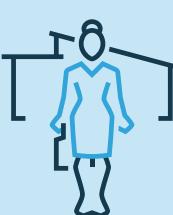
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DREW YODER

THAT 1 PAINTER FORT COLLINS

Painting Homes, Earning Trust

STORY BY DANNY DONALDSON • PHOTOS BY AUDREY ROYBAL, BLUE PHOTOGRAPHY

After two decades working in telecom, Drew Yoder suddenly found himself laid off and looking at an uncertain future with a family depending on him. His job had paid the bills, but automation and offshoring had always hovered in the background, and that risk had become real. Faced with the moment, Drew paused, assessed, and decided to build something that could not disappear overnight. “I decided to do something to support my family that I could build to scale, that I had full control of, and that couldn’t be automated or off-shored like a telecom job often is,” he says.

Drew knew he wanted ownership, longevity, and something that aligned with his values. A franchise model stood out because it shortened the path to scale and reduced the odds of failure. He and his wife, Alison, looked for a company known for good, honest work that operated with integrity and made room for giving back to the community. That search led them to Austin, Texas, and a company called That 1 Painter.



Drew and Alison Yoder



Drew describes falling in love with the company's impeccable morals, solid track record, and repeatable processes. He signed the franchise agreement in the fall of 2024. On April 7, 2025, That 1 Painter Fort Collins officially opened its doors. Within months, the team completed almost 90 jobs and earned over 50 five-star reviews. Drew does not hesitate when he looks ahead. "There's no looking back," he states. "2026 is going to be a GREAT year!"

Drew centered his new business around a clear idea. "At That 1 Painter Fort Collins, our baseline mantra is always that we'll be your best houseguest ever," he explains. The phrase may sound lighthearted, but it sets a serious standard. It means listening carefully, wearing booties in homes, cleaning up daily, communicating clearly, and delivering professional-grade work. It also means refusing to quit until the customer feels confident leaving a five-star review. That approach reflects how Drew believes service businesses should operate, with respect for people and their homes.

That mindset also shapes the company's reach. Drew built That 1 Painter Fort Collins with an unusually expansive footprint across Northern Colorado. The territory stretches from Mead to the south, the Wyoming border to the north, and from Estes Park to Sterling east to west. While much of the work happens in Fort

Collins, Greeley, Loveland, and surrounding communities, the team regularly paints mountain homes in places like Livermore and Red Feather Lakes. One of their strongest crews operates out of Fort Morgan. They go where others will not. When a property feels too far for someone else, his team shows up ready to go.

The values driving those decisions remain consistent. Drew believes in leaving things better than he found them and treating people the right way every time. Customers, painters, coworkers, and fellow tradespeople all receive the same respect. Listening comes first. Getting it right matters more than rushing. That philosophy extends through That 1 Painter's national "Paint it Forward" initiative. Each year, every franchise completes at least one painting project for a homeowner, business owner, or nonprofit in need at no cost. Drew shares that the Fort Collins team is already identifying candidates for 2026 and actively welcomes nominations.

For real estate professionals, Drew's approach offers a familiar parallel. Success follows systems, clarity, and trust. His business mirrors the same principles top producers rely on: showing up prepared, communicating often, and standing behind the work long after the job ends. He understands that service businesses thrive when relationships matter as much as results.

When Drew reflects on advice he would offer someone starting out, his answer balances realism with optimism. "When it all seems like too much, when the future seems too opaque to know what's really held in store for you, follow this simple, two-step process for best results: (1) Fake it till you make it, and (2) When in doubt, take a deep breath, and in the words of the great Ted Lasso, BELIEVE!"

Believing has carried Drew through a career reset and into ownership. It guided decisions about scale, culture, and community impact. It continues to shape how his team shows up in homes across Northern Colorado.

Looking back, Drew sees that pivotal moment clearly. The uncertainty forced him to choose ownership over comfort and values over convenience. Today, That 1 Painter Fort Collins stands as proof that thoughtful decisions, paired with consistent execution, can turn disruption into opportunity.

For more information, contact Drew Yoder at drew.yoder@that1painter.com, call 970-230-3924, or visit that1painter.com.



THAT 1 PAINTER

“

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BLAS ESTRADA

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Blas Estrada clearly recalls the day he interviewed for a position at a local nonprofit that aligned with the work he was already doing in social work. Near the end of the conversation, the interviewer mentioned she might get into real estate someday. Blas shares, with a chuckle, "After her comment, I thought, 'I've seen *House Hunters* on HGTV. I could probably do that, too.'" The moment passed without ceremony. Little did Blas know that he would, in fact, become a real estate agent. He would even have his own episode on *House Hunters*. The title: "Mayor of Loveland."

Loveland is home in the most profound sense for Blas. He was raised there, which he admits is rare now. He remembers when much of Eastern Loveland was still farmland, long before rooftops and subdivisions filled the view. That memory gives him an uncommon perspective on growth, cycles, and community.

Blas graduated from Mountain View High School, spent a year at the University of Northern Colorado, and completed his degree in psychology at Colorado State University. His first professional chapter unfolded at The Matthews House, a nonprofit serving youth and families through life's most challenging moments. He advanced in the field; however, each promotion pulled him deeper into clinical roles. The work became increasingly triggering, touching parts of his own upbringing that he had spent years learning to manage.

THE
PSYCHOLOGY
OF HOME

STORY BY JACKI DONALDSON
PHOTOS BY ERIN WAYNICK,
ERIN WAYNICK PHOTOGRAPHY



“

I JOKE THAT I AM
STILL IN SOCIAL
WORK, BUT I
EXPECT TO SEE
SMILES ON CLIENT
FACES IN 30 DAYS.

”



In the early years, Blas and his wife, Kelli, a local CPA, relied on her income while he invested heavily into building his business. The first year surpassed what he earned in social work, and momentum followed. Being a local helped, but it did not guarantee a built-in network, so he intentionally built his sphere. He does

not buy leads. His business centers on relationships, repeat clients, and referrals. He works with buyers and sellers, owns rental properties, and applies the Ninja Selling model in a way that fits his personality. Psychology remains central to his approach, especially in a market where many buyers and sellers feel pressure

rather than excitement. Job changes, financial strain, and life transitions now drive many decisions, and Blas meets those moments with patience and clarity.

The work feels personal because it is. He talks about helping friends he grew up with buy their first home, including his best

friend and his girlfriend at the time. They are now married, raising an 8-month-old baby boy in that same house. He helped a woman he knew from high school, a single mother who had endured deep family trauma, purchase her first home.

Those moments connect directly to his history. Blas grew up without a stable father figure. After his mother separated from his stepfather when Blas was 8 years old, housing became uncertain. He moved from apartment to apartment, then lived with his grandmother. When tensions rose, his mother moved to Greeley with his younger brother, and Blas stayed behind. His grandmother died during his senior year of high school, and the community stepped in. He lived with a youth pastor, attended college, and later struggled to find a place to rent. A childhood friend's parents offered him a place to stay temporarily. That stay lasted five years. During that time, his mother died. That family supported him through grief, engagement, and marriage. Today, they are grandparents to his daughters, and a few years ago, Blas helped them move from the house where they raised their children into a patio home where they are now thriving.

Blas's grandmother rented for 37 years. His mother owned two homes but never understood how real estate could build long-term stability. He learned that lesson through experience and mentorship at The Group, which shapes how he serves clients and measures



success. “I joke that I am still in social work, but I expect to see smiles on client faces in 30 days.” He adds, “I get so much joy from helping my clients get what matches their desires.”

Blas runs a solo practice, yet his impact reaches beyond his own business. He serves on nonprofit and city boards and plays an active role in NoCo Unify, a men's group that raises funds for children's charities through large-scale events. Three events each year raise between

\$300,000 and \$400,000. He also gives significant time to the Children's Museum of Northern Colorado, helping advance a tactile, interactive museum designed for young children.

Marketing is an outlet for creativity. Blas studies platforms like TikTok, watches what works across the industry, and produces video content that reflects lifestyle and humor. Clients remember him for it. He films in gardens, kitchens, and even bathtubs, blending real estate with personality.

Nearly 12 years into his career, Blas, who is raising two daughters with Kelli (Amelia is 7, and Clara is 5), shares his advice for new agents: “Don't give up too early,” he encourages. “Don't be afraid to put yourself out there. Challenge yourself. Have a sense of humor.” He adds, “Real estate is the best self-improvement course you can ever take. You are constantly looking at yourself as a person and how you are improving your practices.”

For Blas, improving himself and serving others

are inseparable. Every lesson shapes the way he approaches clients, the community, and the opportunities in front of him. Growth, reflection, and action drive every decision, every listing, every interaction. His focus, discipline, and drive ensure that every client benefits from his best effort, every single time.

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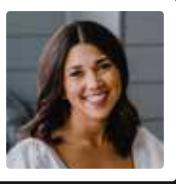
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CURATING YOUR SPHERE LIST

BY MAYAN ROHRER,
THE LOCAL LETTERPRESS



I was recently talking with a real estate agent who is new to the business. She's been building her sphere list over the last couple of years. She commented that she needed to clean up the list because a few people weren't responding to her emails. She said she only wants people on her list who are responsive.

I can understand the sentiment, but her comment gave me pause.

Responsiveness is not the same as value. Silence does not always mean disinterest. More often, the issue is about timing.

Is she removing people who may work with her in the future but just aren't in a place to talk about real estate? How frequently is she in touch with these people and with what kind of content? Her comment made me think about how differently agents build their spheres of influence and how thoughtfully or hastily they curate them.

In the Northern Colorado real estate market, most real estate agents are building relationship businesses rather than marketing to anybody and everybody with a public address, email, or phone number. More often than not, we fill our CRMs with neighbors, former colleagues, people we meet at open houses and through friends and community events, which means we should be thoughtful about who we add to the list and who we remove from it.

I always advocate for a small and mighty list. A strong sphere of influence at 100-200 A-list people who refer you to friends and family is far more valuable than a list of 500 people you barely know or interact with.

However, when you are still in the first few years of the business and actively building that list, you will want to be very thoughtful about whom you remove.

Someone who is receiving a monthly email newsletter, a real estate review, an annual pop-by, and a holiday card may not respond but is seeing your name and valuable content consistently, which helps keep you top of mind when the time is right.

Real estate is a long-game business.

A year or two down the road, that unresponsive person could refer an aunt to you or finally be ready to make a move. Is a lack of replies today worth the potential loss of \$18,000 tomorrow?

As you are in the business for longer and longer, your referral base will naturally strengthen. You will more easily know who belongs on your list and where to best spend your time and energy. You can remove those people, or you can move them to a B or C client list that doesn't get as much attention.

Curating your sphere of influence, especially in the first few years of your career, can be hard. You see experienced agents talk about how repeat and referral business almost exclusively fuel their businesses. It's easy to start getting quick to delete and curate, but those lists took years to build.

So take a deep breath.

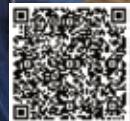
Think about how you want to interact with your sphere throughout the year and stick to it. If people don't want to hear from you, they'll tell you, and that's not something to take personally. Before you know it, you'll have a list full of people who see you as a trusted advisor.



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Can my client submit a “love letter” with our offer?

“Love letters” are not illegal in the state of Colorado, but if your clients want to write one, I’d offer them advice about what they should *not* say and ideas for what they *can* say. I would give them your tips in writing and keep a copy. Oh, and check with your broker to ensure you don’t have any office policies in place prohibiting you from helping your clients with the love letter.

The biggest concern with a poorly written love letter is if the seller decides to choose your client’s offer over another offer based on a fair housing protected class. Protected classes include race, religion, sex, disability, and familial status (e.g., children, spouse). Buyers will want to avoid sharing details about their jobs or life story that could sway the seller based on identity rather than the merits of the offer. Buyers also should not include photos of themselves or their family. Avoiding these topics will help prevent a bias-based decision from the seller.

What can buyers talk about in their letter?

Specific features of the home that they love, how they’ll take care of the home with the same love and care that the sellers have shown, and how they plan to enjoy the yard or other spaces in the home. These items likely won’t be misunderstood as anything more than appealing attributes of the home.

Why does it matter if the seller chooses your client’s offer over another based on race or gender (or the other protected classes)?

If the seller chooses one offer over another because of one of these biases, the buyer who missed out could sue the seller for the decision, which could create a host of problems best addressed by an attorney.

One last piece for listing agents:

Have a conversation with your sellers about love letters before listing their home. Maybe suggest that sellers

not accept them for inclusion in the listing to lower the chance that buyers would make a decision that violates fair housing laws. Or, if your sellers they choose to accept letters, make sure that when the sellers accept an offer in a multiple-offer situation, you document all offers you receive and why your sellers objectively accepted the one they chose. This practice may keep you and your sellers out of court if buyers who missed out later allege a fair housing violation.

Please note that I am not an attorney, nor have I ever been one. This information should not be considered legal advice. If you have a specific situation, you should call your broker or an attorney immediately.



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DAN & JULIANA BLONDER

The Blonder Group, eXp Realty



Life, *by Design*

STORY BY
KATE SHELTON
PHOTOS
BY AUDREY
ROYBAL, BLUE
PHOTOGRAPHY

“Our goal will never be to close 100 deals a year,” says Juliana Blonder, co-CEO of The Blonder Group at eXp Realty. “Our quality of life is extremely important to us. We want to create a sustainable business and give our clients the attention they deserve. We want to have time to give back to the community. We’re designing the life we want, and our goal is to help other agents do the same.”

Dan and Juliana Blonder are partners in both life and work, a dynamic that boldly shapes the way they approach real estate in Northern Colorado. Their collaboration is built on complementary strengths, shared values, and a deep trust that comes from years of working side by side. They each bring unique sets of skills to the table to deliver the highest level of service to their clients.

Juliana grew up in Massachusetts and was convinced her path in life was to become a veterinarian. In 2012, she moved to Fort Collins to attend the Biomedical

Sciences Master of Science program at Colorado State University (CSU), a feeder program for vet school. Upon graduating, she realized she was living this goal for others and not being true to herself. “I did something that didn’t make sense on paper,” she states. “I decided to jump headlong into real estate. The idea of developing a real estate business from the ground up was exciting to me.” Juliana was licensed in 2018 and began building her business in earnest.

Dan was raised in the Chicago area. He decided to attend CSU in 2000, primarily because of its proximity to the mountains. Dan earned a degree in hospitality management. He then spent the next 11 years snowboarding and working in Whistler, Vail, and Jackson Hole.

While Dan was living out his dreams, his brother, Ben Blonder, was building a real estate business in Fort Collins. “In 2002, I talked Ben and his wife into moving to Fort Collins,” Dan shares. “Watching him grow his business over the years was impressive. The ski life was incredible, but Ben inspired me, and I knew I was meant for more.”

Dan moved back and got his real estate license in 2017. “I started working with Ben, learning everything I could,” Dan notes. “He was my first and most impactful mentor, and I’m so grateful for everything he’s taught me.”

Juliana and Dan met at work, first forming a friendship and appreciation for each other’s business. In 2019, they became more than just friends. “Juliana found out I was single and texted me,” Dan says with a big laugh. “That moment changed our lives. We got married in 2022 and formed The Blonder Group. It happened really organically.”

Their partnership just works. “We’re each able to hyper-focus on what we’re good at,” Dan explains. “Juliana focuses on marketing; she has honed our business systems and is continually working to elevate the client experience. I am good at negotiations and tough conversations. We’re stronger together.”

In 2024, The Blonder Group moved to eXp Realty, which has been one of the best things they’ve ever done for their business. “We take our business very seriously for ourselves, our clients, and our outcomes,” Dan comments. “eXp gives us the tools and support to be able to do that. They encourage us to think outside the box. We have access to the best coaches and mentors from all around the country.”

Dan and Juliana are passionate about investing in themselves and their business. “Coaching has revolutionized our business, and we can see the

fruits of that in how we're able to support our clients and provide more for them," they mention. "We want to keep rising and lifting others as we go."

With the TC support of Chris Anderson at Contracts2Close and their executive assistant, Emilia Parola, the Blonders have a solid market share in Northern Colorado. Last year, they closed upwards of 30 transactions and \$16 million in gross sales. "We couldn't do this without our team," Juliana emphasizes. "They provide so much support to not only us, but also our clients."

What sets The Blonder Group apart is its top-tier marketing system. "A for-sale sign and a handful of photos will never be enough," Dan says. "We're not the cheapest agents in town, and we'll never

“

We take our business very seriously for ourselves, our clients, and our outcomes. eXp gives us the tools and support to be able to do that. They encourage us to think outside the box. We have access to the best coaches and mentors from all around the country.”

be discount brokers." Their focus is on creating a high-level client experience through tech-forward marketing that sells both the home and the lifestyle while keeping the process fun and engaging.

Juliana and Dan are giving back by helping other agents see that they, too, can design a life they love. Juliana is digging into Human Design coaching, a system for understanding a person's energy and how to work in alignment with natural strengths. She plans to help other agents understand how to build businesses based on their energies. They also host a weekly mastermind meet-up to help other agents grow and design their own lives.

While the Blonders take their business very seriously, they also love to travel and spend time at their

home in Costa Rica. Food is their love language, and word on the street is that Dan makes the best smashburgers in town. The pair takes their cat, Pickles, for walks around Old Town, and they love being outdoors in every season. They volunteer at the Food Bank and give back to the community.

For Dan and Juliana Blonder, great design isn't limited to homes—it's a way of life. They've intentionally created a partnership grounded in service, community, and supporting both their clients and collaborating with other real estate agents to raise the bar for their profession. The result is a business and a life built on purpose that's true to them.



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Now more than ever, a homebuyer's FICO can either help or hinder his or her ability to receive the best loan terms available. In some cases, it can prevent them from buying at all. Here are some tricks and facts to help homebuyers maximize their FICOs and avoid costly, unintended mis-steps:

- Have your credit report pulled and analyzed by your lender as early as possible. Checking a consumer site or looking at a credit card statement will show an inaccurate "promotional" score that can be up to 50+ points off from the "true" scores.
- Don't open new accounts or close existing accounts, unless absolutely necessary. Paying off loans, consolidating debt, or transferring credit card balances to 0% cards can have a negative impact on one's score.
- Don't rush to pay off collections. While counter-intuitive, paying off an old collection can actually lower FICOs. Additionally, many collection agencies will negotiate to delete accounts in exchange for payment. This leverage may be lost once a balance is paid.

- Make multiple credit card payments per month. Credit card companies only report once per month, when the statement is issued. If you can sneak in extra payments before that date, the bureaus will see a lower balance, generally leading to higher credit scores.

Every report is unique, so other "tricks of the trade" may be usable to boost a buyer's score and improve lending options. Either way, it's important to check and review a buyer's credit report early to ensure they're in the best position possible.



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