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How to Hire & Train the Best ISAs for Your Team

by Sherri Johnson

Top producers eventually discover that talent—not time—is the true growth lever. If you want to scale without sacrificing service, hiring and training the right Inside Sales Agent (ISA) is one of the most important decisions you will make. An ISA is more than someone who makes calls. The right ISA is a relationship builder, a protector of your time, and a driver of predictable growth. But success begins with hiring the right behavioral fit.

Hire for Wiring, Not Experience

The most common hiring mistake is prioritizing real estate experience over mindset and behavioral wiring. Scripts and systems can be taught. Work ethic, resilience, and curiosity cannot.

This is why I rely on the Predictive Index® (PI). It removes guesswork and helps leaders hire with clarity. Strong ISA candidates typically demonstrate:

- **High Dominance** – comfortable initiating conversations
- **High Extraversion** – energized by people and communication
- **Moderate to High Patience** – consistent and steady follow-up
- **Low to Moderate Formality** – flexible and conversational

In interviews, go beyond the résumé. Role-play real scenarios. Listen for confidence, connection, and coachability—not perfection.

Train for Confidence and Consistency

Once hired, clarity is everything. Confusion kills confidence. Effective ISA training includes:

- **Clear daily activity expectations**
- **Proven follow-up and conversion scripts**
- **Defined handoff processes**
- **CRM and communication system training**

Practice scripts daily. Role-play often. Review calls together. Confidence comes from preparation.

Coach, Don't Micromanage

Top ISAs are coached, not managed. Consistent check-ins focused on activity, conversations, and mindset keep performance high. Inside sales is a mental game—your leadership sets the tone.

Create a Path for Growth

The best ISAs stay when they see a future. Provide opportunity, recognition, and a clear path forward. When people feel invested in, they perform at a higher level.

Call to Action

If you are considering hiring your first ISA—or want better results from your current one—be intentional. Strategy, role design, and behavioral fit matter.

Schedule a consultation with me to identify the right ISA profile for your business, interpret Predictive Index results, and build a hiring and training plan designed for growth—not guesswork.

HOW TO HIRE & TRAIN THE BEST ISAS FOR YOUR TEAM

Scan the QR code for a FREE Strategy Call with Sherri Johnson.

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PUTTING PREPARATION IN MOTION

BY COACH FINO

March is when things start to feel real again.

The calls pick up. The conversations get more specific. And all the quiet work from January and February starts turning into forward motion. Around here, that's always been the rhythm — and the agents who handle it best are the ones who prepared long before the pace changed.

In South Central Pennsylvania, momentum isn't about jumping at every opportunity. It's about being ready when the right ones show up. The strongest agents I know use the slower months to sharpen skills, tighten systems, and make sure they're walking into spring confident in their process, not scrambling to catch up.

That's exactly why we shared last month's column on continuing education. For top producers, CE isn't something to survive at the end of a renewal cycle. It's part of preparation. It's where you strengthen the parts of your business that don't always show up on social media — risk management, negotiation, communication, systems — the things that quietly separate good agents from great ones.

Now's the moment to put that preparation into motion.

If you haven't already, take a look at the CE resources we're offering through Real Producers and The CE Shop. The QR code on this page will take you straight there. Whether you're focused on protecting your business, improving your client experience, or tightening up your operations before the spring rush, this is one of the easiest ways to invest in yourself while the year is still unfolding.



Spring always brings opportunity. But the agents who win it are the ones who did the work early and now get to move with purpose.



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Coach Fino
 Publisher
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CE Is Mandatory. Using It Well Is Optional.

Top producers don't treat continuing education as a box to check.

They use it to sharpen skills, reduce risk, and strengthen their business *before* the market speeds up.

Here's what they do differently:

- Choose courses that solve real business problems
- Use CE to protect their reputation and income
- Modernize systems and workflows while they learn
- Focus on one learning theme per cycle
- Complete CE early — while it can still be applied

CE gives you the time anyway. The best agents make sure it gives them something back.

Discounted CE is now available through Real Producers of South Central PA and The CE Shop.

Scan the QR code to get started.



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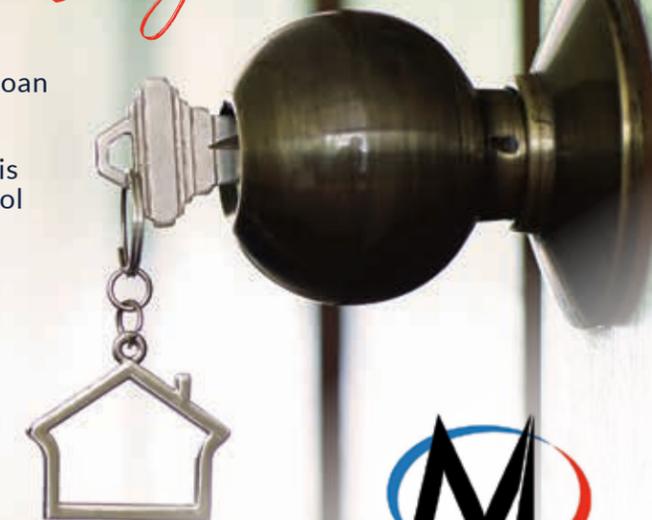
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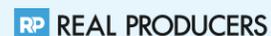
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BUILT TO LAST

FRED LYNN TEAM, IRON VALLEY REAL ESTATE OF CENTRAL PA

PHOTOS BY NEXT DOOR PHOTOS | MIRIAM SMITH



With a passion for people, mentorship, and legacy, Fred Lynn has transformed from solo agent to leader of a uniquely collaborative team making waves across Central PA.

Fred Lynn never set out to build a real estate team—much less one with such generational range and synergy.

Originally from Allentown, Fred spent years in the hospitality industry, running restaurants and catering businesses before a longtime REALTOR® friend finally convinced him to give real estate a shot. Once his sons were grown and a steady paycheck wasn't as crucial, Fred took the leap.

That was 21 years ago. "And I've loved it ever since," he says.

Fred's move to Central Pennsylvania came by way of a food service job transfer, but it quickly became home. A single father at the time, Fred not only raised his biological son here but also took guardianship of a 15-year-old exchange student from Mexico. "He couldn't attend school here without a guardian," Fred says. "So we made it official. He came at 15, and now he's 46. He's family."

In fact, Fred hosted a total of four exchange students over the years—from Mexico, Italy, and Romania. The cultural exchange made a lasting impact. "You

learn so much," he says. "And you learn to cook their food. Romanian cabbage rolls? My favorite."

That same openness to people and relationships defines Fred's approach to real estate today—and it's part of what makes the Fred Lynn Team so special.

A New Chapter, A New Team

In 2020, Fred thought he might be winding down. Instead, he ended up mentoring a 20-year-old named **Nate Smarsh** and unknowingly launching a new phase of his career.

"Nate's mom is my accountant," Fred explains. "He wanted to get into real estate, so we met for a few hours. The next day, he called and said he signed up for his classes."

Nate's energy, preparation, and work ethic reignited something in Fred. From the start, they structured the team differently. Instead of operating as independent agents under a team name,

they worked in sync—sharing clients, systems, and support. That model quickly proved successful, and over time, the team expanded.

Enter **Nicole Straub**, a veteran REALTOR® with a teaching background, sharp communication skills, and over 20 years of experience in the real estate industry. When her prior partner retired, she joined Fred and Nate, finding in them a strong support system and a shared dedication to client education and experience. With Nicole's experience joining the team, there are almost no questions that go unanswered.

Most recently, **Thomas Lee**, a Middletown High School and Penn State graduate—moved back to the area after stints in D.C. and Philadelphia in property management and insurance. He called Fred for help finding a rental and left with a lease *and* a spot on the team. "I don't know how I would've done it without a mentor," Thomas says. "It was the perfect fit."

Mentorship as Mission

While the Fred Lynn Team covers all aspects of residential real estate—and dabbles in small commercial and investment properties—what sets them apart isn't just what they do. It's how they do it: as a true unit.

"There's no buyer's agent or listing agent here," Fred explains. "We all share the business. If one of us isn't available, another steps in. And because we all have different personalities, there's always someone a client connects with."

That diversity is intentional. Nate, now five years into the business and recently engaged, excels in systems, follow-through, and client care. Thomas handles the team's social media and is active in local sports coaching. Fred, ever the extrovert, continues to plug into the community through associations and long-standing relationships.

Their dynamic has allowed Fred to ease into semi-retirement with full confidence. "I've planned a transatlantic cruise this year," he says. "I can go away for a month and not worry."

But Fred says don't mistake the transition for an exit. He's still actively mentoring, building, and expanding. Together with Nate and Thomas, he's also investing—buying, flipping, and managing properties with a hands-on approach that includes utility trailers and toolboxes.

Fred's commitment to mentorship is as personal as it is professional.

"I was never formally coached, but I had great mentors. Now, I want to be that for others," he says. "It's not just about training agents. It's about building something that lasts."

A Future Built on Relationships

Fred credits much of his real estate success to relationships, especially through his long-time involvement with the Harrisburg Chamber. "I wasn't on the board, but I was active on committees," he says. "And I met a lot of people that way."

That focus on community continues through the team's personal ties to Central PA. Nate has deep local roots and real estate investments here. Thomas returned to be closer to family, friends and to coach youth soccer.

"There's no reason to leave the area," he says. "The Team, Clients, Friends and Family-We're all here."

For Fred Lynn and his team, the future is about more than volume or production. It's about creating a sustainable, collaborative business that serves people well and keeps growing.



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HOMEstretch

REMOVING THE STRESS FROM HOME PREPARATION

PHOTOS BY KARA CLOUSER OF CONTE PHOTOGRAPHY

When Michael and Melissa Fenske met at Elizabethtown College as freshmen, they never imagined that years later, they'd be transforming homes—and lives—together across South Central PA.

“We’ve been working side-by-side since day one,” Melissa says. “Group projects in college, study abroad, marriage, raising kids, and now HOMEstretch.”

Their shared vision and entrepreneurial spirit are the foundation of HOMEstretch, a local home services company that specializes in prepping properties for sale. After years in the corporate world—Melissa in e-commerce leadership, Michael in sales and small business—the couple realized they wanted something more local, more fulfilling, and more hands-on.

Rooted in Lancaster, Grown with Intention

Originally from Bucks County and Massachusetts respectively, Melissa and Michael both fell in love with Central Pennsylvania as college students. “I walked onto the E-Town campus on a mixture day—when you smell either chocolate from the factory or cows from the farms—and I knew this was home,” Michael laughs.

For Melissa, it was the people. “I had never experienced a sense of community like this before. There’s something special about Lancaster County. It’s why we’re raising our daughters here. It just feels right.”

That local love is what led them to purchase a HOMEstretch franchise after a long, intentional business search.

“I said I’d never own a franchise,” Melissa says, “but this felt different. It checked all our boxes: community-focused, flexible, service-based. And the support has been phenomenal without the red tape.”

A One-Call Solution for REALTORS®

HOMEstretch is designed specifically with REALTORS® in mind. “Our whole model is built to support the agent,” Michael says. “We reduce stress, increase value, and help homes sell faster. And we do it all with one call.”

From home clear-outs and landscape cleanup to painting, flooring installation, and move-out cleaning, HOMEstretch streamlines the prep process. “We’re not just a vendor, we’re a partner,” Michael adds. “We coordinate everything so the REALTOR® or homeowner doesn’t have to juggle five different contractors.”

The approach works. In one standout case, a \$7,000 investment into a dated kitchen and master bath led to a \$65,000 increase in the sale price and a contract in just three days. “That’s the kind of result that sticks with you,” says Melissa. “We want REALTORS® to think of us as an extension of their team.”

But the Fenskes are also honest with clients. “Not everything is worth doing,” Michael said. “If a seller wants to paint an unfinished basement, I’ll tell them to put that money into the kitchen instead. We’re not just trying to upsell. We’re trying to get results.”

One message they often emphasize to REALTORS® is simple and impactful. “I wish you called us before you dropped the price by \$20,000,” Michael says. “That money could’ve gone into the

kitchen or bath. Small changes can make a huge difference.”



Family-Focused, Community-Minded

Outside of HOMEstretch, the Fenskes are deeply invested in their local community and their family. Their side passion project, *My Daughter’s Flower Patch*, started as a way to share joy with their kids and neighbors. “Our daughter loved picking flowers with us, so we planted more,” says Melissa. “Now we have a 3,000-square-foot flower farm and a stand at the end of our driveway.”

Leftover bouquets are donated to local schools, retirement homes, and nonprofits. “We love dropping off flowers at our daughter’s



school,” Michael says. “The teachers light up. It’s something small, but it brings joy.”

At the end of the day, the Fenskes measure success by more than business growth.

“It’s about building relationships,” Michael says. “With REALTORS®, with clients, with our community. When I’m working on a project, I’m not just thinking about this job—I’m thinking about the 20th project I want to do with that same REALTOR®. That’s the kind of trust we’re building.”

“It all comes back to helping people and making a difference right here, where we live. This is home and we’re in it for the long haul.”



“That’s the kind of result that sticks with you. We want REALTORS® to think of us as an extension of their team.”



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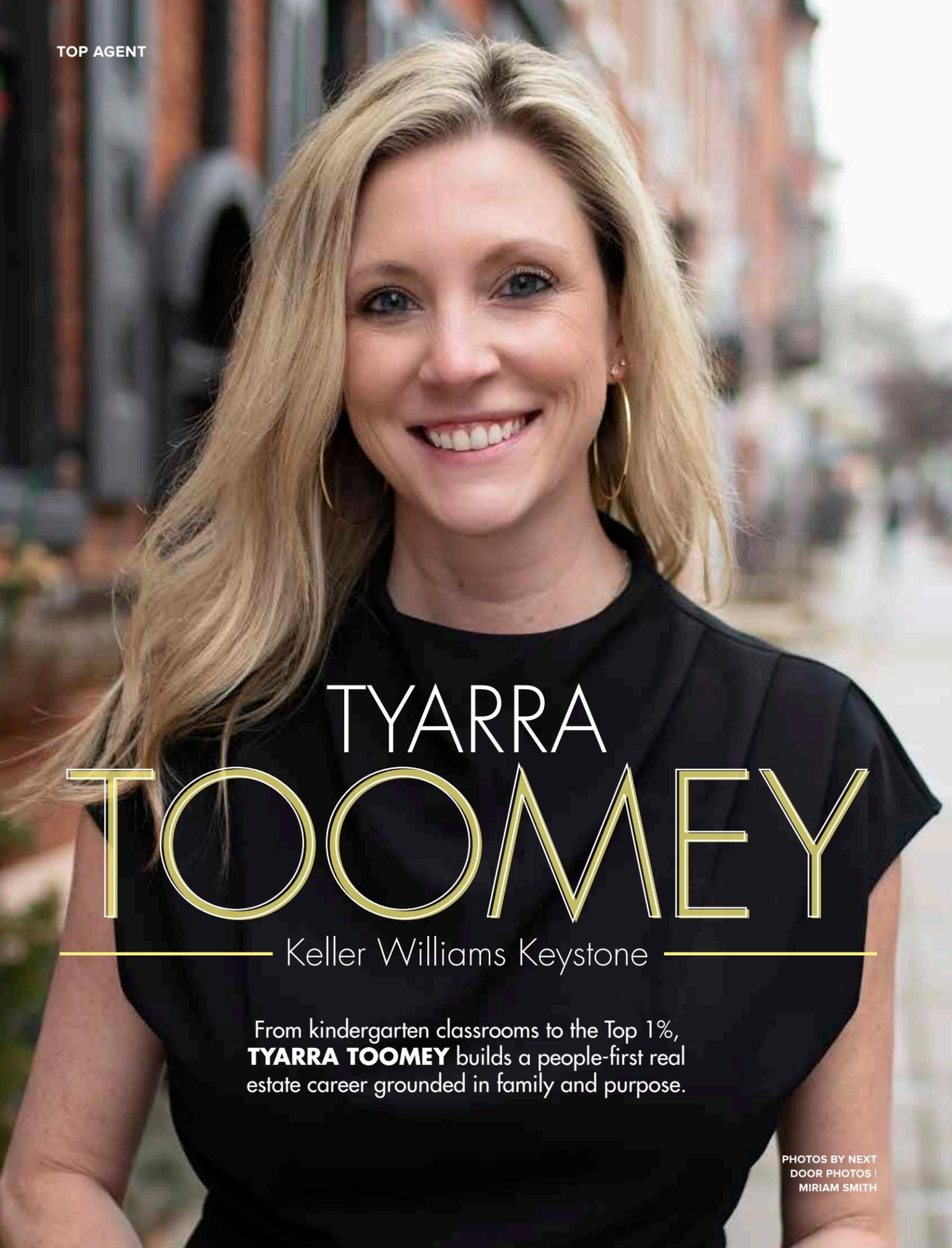


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TYARRA TOOMEY

Keller Williams Keystone

From kindergarten classrooms to the Top 1%,
TYARRA TOOMEY builds a people-first real estate career grounded in family and purpose.

PHOTOS BY NEXT
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MIRIAM SMITH

Raised just minutes from where she now lives and works, Tyarra Toomey's story is rooted in York

County. Her career began in education, where she spent over a decade as a kindergarten teacher. It's an experience that now informs her calm, instructional approach to guiding clients through real estate.

"I'm really good at talking somebody through a process that's scary or confusing," she says. "Sometimes you have to dial it back to basics, and I'm used to doing that."

While teaching full-time, Tyarra also supported the growth of a part-time business she co-ran with her husband, an entrepreneurial venture that handled estate transitions, clean-outs, and real estate through auctions. By 2017, her husband retired from teaching to run their company full-time. But when the market heated up during COVID, many families chose to list their properties instead of selling at auction, and the couple saw a need to expand their offerings.

While quarantined with COVID — caring for a toddler and infant at home — Tyarra used 10 unexpected days off to complete her real estate licensing coursework. She had been pregnant and still teaching when the couple first began planning her transition into real estate. By March 2022, she was licensed. By May, she had left teaching for good.

"My goal at first was to be more of a stay-at-home mom who could make up my



teaching salary," she says. "But the business took off."

Building Momentum— Without Losing Balance

In her first two full years as a REALTOR®, Tyarra closed over 140 transactions, landing in the top 1% of agents in York County by 2024. But her early success came at a cost: time.

"Producing at that level is a huge commitment," she explains. "I missed a lot of time with my family."

This year, a conversation with top-producing agent Adam Flinchbaugh changed that. She joined his team in March 2025, gaining a listing coordinator, a closing coordinator, and—most importantly—more time with her children, now ages 4 and 6. "It gave me back a lot of hours," she says. "I could just focus on selling."

Still, Tyarra doesn't measure success only by closings and commissions. "I got caught up in the numbers for a

while, especially coming from teaching, where you don't make a ton of money. But being a top producer doesn't mean you're living a good life. It's not fair to my kids or husband to work at all hours of the day, especially when I should be present at home. That was my biggest lesson."

A Niche That Makes a Difference

Together, Tyarra and her husband have built a unique model that goes beyond traditional real estate. Their business specializes in transitions—often emotional ones—helping families downsize, handle estates, and move forward during major life changes.

"We make it really easy for the clients who come to us," she says. "They're not calling an auctioneer, a cleaner, and a REALTOR®. We do it all."

From clean-outs and junk removals to firearm sales and full-service listings, the duo has positioned

“I just want to work with clients who want to work with me—and do really well for them. At the end of the day, living a good life is more important than being number one.**”**



school districts—she in Dover, he in Spring Grove. Their roots run deep, and so does their commitment to staying local.

“Our families are here, our kids’ grandparents are here,” she says. “We’ve talked about moving one day, maybe Montana. But for now, this is home.”

They enjoy outdoor life, family cabin trips, sports with the kids, and quiet days close to home. Tyarra volunteers in their children’s school as a room mom and makes time for what matters. “I’m very much a homebody,” she laughs. “We love the beach, boating, fishing. My husband takes

the kids hunting. It’s busy, but it’s ours.”

Looking ahead, she sees even more opportunity in the space they’ve carved out. As baby boomers downsize and younger generations embrace minimalism, the demand for seamless estate transitions will only grow. And while in-person auctions may fade, she believes their modern model is just hitting its stride.

“People are always going to get married, have babies, and pass away,” she says. “Those are the constants. We’ve focused our business on helping during those transitions—and I think we got in at just the right time.”



“I’m good at the emotional side,” she says. “I understand that Grandma’s chest is more than just a piece of furniture.”

That balance—and the ability to offer clients both practical solutions and personal support—is what sets them apart.

“There are a lot of REALTORS®,” Tyarra says. “But we have a very specific niche, and it works because we lead with empathy. We’re focused on the transition, not just the transaction.”

Rooted in Community, Grounded in Family
Tyarra and her husband both grew up in neighboring

themselves as trusted guides during complicated and sensitive times. Tyarra brings empathy and communication skills. Her husband brings logistical expertise.

“This past year hasn’t been my biggest year, but it has been my best life-wise. Production is great, but it doesn’t mean you’re happy.”

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Introducing the Makeover Mortgage process to South Central, PA
“Every Home Deserves A Makeover.”



As South Central, PA region gets ready for the 2026 Real Estate Market, one General Contractor is emerging as the strategic partner Realtors and Lenders have been waiting for.

Established in 2008 and led by owner John Evans, Montgomery Design Build, Inc. has become the newest Makeover Preferred Contractor in the region. Backed by the national Makeover network, exclusive renovation-loan technology, and a streamlined process that helps buyers roll renovation costs into their mortgage, Montgomery Design Build is redefining what’s possible for realtors, buyers, and sellers.

A NEW WAY TO SELL, BUY, AND RENOVATE—ALL ON ONE TEAM

Makeover has built the first fully integrated renovation-mortgage platform combining a regional network of Home Inspectors who are also Certified Renovation Consultants. The proprietary technology to digitize any home, scope of repairs, and build accurate estimates. A streamlined process that unites Lenders, Inspectors, Consultants, Realtors, and Contractors a full suite of solutions for FHA, Conventional, VA, USDA, Buy & Hold investors, and Fix-N-Flip buyers. For Realtors, this means you can now market homes the way consumers dream of them, not just the way they look. For buyers and sellers, it unlocks improvements, repairs, and modernization with zero out-of-pocket renovation costs by rolling everything directly into the mortgage. Montgomery Design Build is bringing this powerful process to South Central, PA market, making renovation loans faster, easier, and more predictable than ever before.

Top Realtors know that most deals fall apart for the same reasons. Montgomery Design Build + Makeover solves them all.

We Solve three main problems For Realtors Empowering them to Provide More Options

1. UGLY OR OUTDATED LISTINGS

Turn “tough” listings into opportunities. Every Realtor has encountered that home—great bones, great location...but outdated, unattractive, or in need of repairs. With Makeover technology, Realtors can now: Digitize the home in minutes, generate an accurate renovation estimate and show buyers What It Can Be instead of just “As Is” and Market the home in two ways:

- As-Is
- Makeover Ready (renovation costs rolled into the mortgage) Provide visualizations and comps based on After-Renovation Value. This dramatically expands the buyer pool and gives sellers more ways to win.

2. INSPECTION REPAIR ISSUE FUNDING

No more deals dying during inspection. When inspection issues arise—roof, structural, HVAC, plumbing, electrical they often create a financial stalemate between buyers and sellers. Makeover solves this by quickly producing verified repair estimates, allowing the buyer to roll repair costs into the mortgage giving Realtors a clean path to renegotiate closing deals that otherwise fall apart. This removes the financial burden from both sides and keeps transactions moving forward.

3. BUYERS WHO WANT TO CREATE THEIR DREAM HOME

“Almost perfect” homes now become perfect. In a tight inventory market, buyers often settle because they can’t afford to renovate out-of-pocket.

The Makeover Mortgage process gives them:

- The ability to buy the right home in the right location.
 - The freedom to customize finishes, layouts, and improvements.
 - The convenience of rolling everything into one affordable mortgage. A clear, guided process with a vetted contractor like Montgomery Design Build.
- Buyers no longer need to walk away from homes they love—now they can make them exactly what they want.



Meet Your Local Makeover Preferred Contractor – Owner John Evans

Owner John Evans is committed to elevating the local real estate landscape by integrating renovation lending and modern design-build construction into one seamless experience. His professionals bring craftsmanship, project clarity, and the professionalism essential for Realtors working with high-value clients. Backed by Makeover’s system and technology, Montgomery Design Build is equipped to deliver dependable timelines, accurate budgets, and exceptional customer service from contract to completion. Whether it’s repairs, full renovations, investment rehabs or pre-listing Makeovers, they are the general contractor to help Realtors win more listings and secure more closings.

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Celebrating Abilities, Changing Perceptions



“Everyone benefits when we create space for all people to belong. That’s the kind of community I want to help build.”

Sally Copeland



Coldwell Banker’s **Sally Copeland** is helping champion inclusion through **3.21 For Life**, a Hershey-based nonprofit that celebrates individuals with Down syndrome and empowers community change.

For REALTOR® Sally Copeland, community involvement isn’t something she fits in when there’s time—it’s part of who she is. That’s why her work with 3.21 For Life, a Hershey-based nonprofit dedicated to celebrating individuals with Down syndrome and promoting inclusion, feels less like volunteering and more like belonging.

“That organization means a lot to me,” Sally says. “I had an aunt with special needs, and she was more capable than people realized. 3.21 celebrates differences and fosters inclusion, and that’s incredibly important to me.”

The Mission Behind the Movement

3.21 For Life exists to educate, advocate, and celebrate individuals with Down syndrome while connecting families to resources that support lifelong inclusion.

Since 2022, the organization has given more than \$248,500 to 28 local organizations across Central Pennsylvania, funding programs that create opportunities for connection, independence, and joy. Supported programs include Aaron’s Acres, Best Buddies PA, DREAM Partnership, Hershey Twizzles Adaptive Skating, Jack’s Basket, and more, each working

SAVE THE DATE

World Down Syndrome Day Celebration
Saturday, March 21, 2026 | 11 AM – 6 PM
Tröegs Independent Brewing, Hershey, PA

FREE community celebration
• Beach Bash theme
• Family-friendly
Wear your Hawaiian shirts and beach attire and join us for a full day of fun, inclusion, and joy. No RSVP required—stop by anytime!

to ensure individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities are seen, supported, and included.

But for Sally and the team at 3.21 For Life, the true heart of the organization isn’t just the dollars raised—it’s the energy and joy created when the community comes together to celebrate.

“It’s the smiles,” she says. “You can talk about it all you want, but until you experience it in person, you don’t fully understand the impact.”

A One-Day Celebration of a Lifelong Mission

Each year on March 21—World Down Syndrome Day—3.21 For Life brings its mission to life through an unforgettable celebration. The date itself represents the triplication of the



21st chromosome, the genetic marker of Down syndrome.

In 2026, the event returns to Tröegs Independent Brewing in Hershey for a full day of community, joy, and inclusion, and everyone is invited. This year’s theme is **Beach Bash**, and guests are encouraged to show up in Hawaiian shirts, modest beach attire, and their best celebratory spirit.

“It’s free, it’s family-friendly, and it’s truly one of the most uplifting days you’ll experience all year,” says Sally.

From 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., the brewery will be transformed with vendors, music, activities, and entertainment. **Individuals with Down syndrome will be honored as VIPs**, and families can sign up for VIP participation through a form on the organization’s website.

As a member of the Sponsorship Committee, Sally works directly with businesses and individuals who want to support the event

GET INVOLVED

Support 3.21 For Life by:

- Becoming an event sponsor
- Donating to local inclusion programs
- Volunteering at events
- Attending and celebrating on March 21

Learn more: 321forlife.com
Sponsorships: 321forlife.com/sponsors
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Contact: hello@321forlife.com

and the mission. Sponsorships help fund local grants and programs that make inclusion possible year-round, not just on event day.

“Real estate agents understand community,” Sally says. “We build our businesses on relationships and trust. Supporting something like this is an easy way to give back in a meaningful way.”

Beyond attending the event, there are many ways for the real estate community to get involved through sponsorships, donations, volunteering, or simply spreading awareness. The organization also encourages supporters to follow along on **Instagram and Facebook**, where stories, updates, and behind-the-scenes moments highlight the heart of the mission all year long.

For Sally, the work is deeply personal, but it’s also deeply hopeful.

“When you see the joy, the confidence, the pride on people’s faces that day, it stays with you,” she says. “It reminds you what community is supposed to look like.”

And that’s exactly what 3.21 For Life continues to build—one celebration at a time.



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