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OCTOBER 2026

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Agent Spotlight
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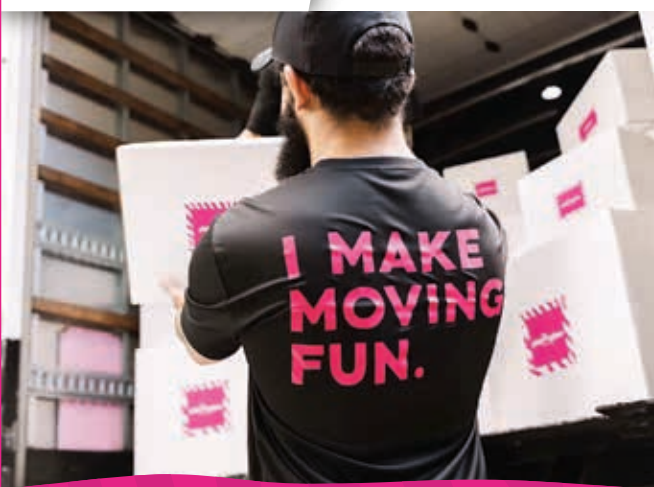
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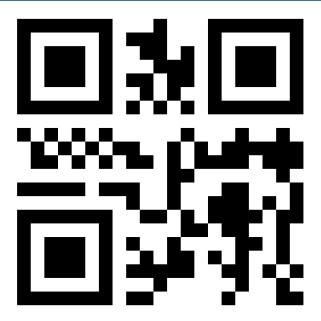
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Linda Fetterhoff

TURNING NEIGHBORHOOD KNOWLEDGE INTO CLIENT CONFIDENCE

PHOTOS TAKEN BY JACOB HARR WITH PHOTOREAL

Linda Fetterhoff has spent nearly 14 years learning what it means to truly know a market — not just the streets and the price points, but the history, the transitions, and the quiet potential hiding in a poorly lit basement or a galley kitchen with a movable wall. Based out of a boutique brokerage in downtown Ada, she has built a referral-driven business that spans Grand Rapids and its surrounding communities, fueled by a business mind she has had since before she ever held a real estate license.

Linda grew up on the northwest side of Grand Rapids, raised by hardworking parents who instilled in her a clear sense of direction and ambition. She attended school on the west side and spent much of her early adult life watching the city evolve — from the quiet downtown filled with department stores to a city that later felt like a ghost town, and eventually to the investment-driven boom that has defined Grand Rapids in recent years. She watched that transformation unfold in real time, which is exactly what makes her counsel so valuable to clients today. She knows what each neighborhood offers, what its history has been, and where it is likely to go.

Before real estate, Linda built a career in aerospace. She began as a part-time clerk while still in college, but she quickly realized that she wanted to do the work rather than just support it. She then shifted her focus to business, moved into contracts, and eventually managed commercial and government accounts for spares and repairs across three major

aerospace companies. When she was expecting her second child, Linda made a deliberate choice to step away and raise her kids at home for about 12 years. Upon returning to the workforce, she realized that she truly wanted to run her own business.

For Linda, real estate came naturally. She had been fascinated by the housing market since the cycles of 2008 to 2013, and her family eventually encouraged her to take the jump. Linda earned her license around 2013, started with Keller Williams, and went through the KW BOLD training to learn even more in-depth fundamentals.

After two to three years, Linda was looking to grow her business in a different direction. She wanted a storefront, a boutique feel, and an environment where she could work independently, which she found at JH Realty Partners. The office sits in the oldest building on the main strip in downtown Ada — a converted house with a front porch and rocking chairs — and is home to 28 agents.



Linda's first years in the industry were a lesson in grinding through the early stages of building a book. She worked open houses, collected names, followed up consistently, and converted strangers into clients one by one. "I had to somehow transition them into my buyers," she explained. Her sphere came first, then came referrals. As her four kids — now ages 22 to 30 — have moved into adulthood, their friends have begun reaching out, too, and parents who knew Linda are sending her their children.

Many years later, Linda's hard work and growth have become reflected in her sales numbers. She closed just under \$9 million in 2024 and almost \$14 million in 2025 — a year in which she was working too many hours to still enjoy life. "My goal is to level it more," she said. To help manage the load, she recently hired support to assist in handling social media, a move Linda hopes will help her stay visible in the market that is moving into the future.

On the listing side, Linda has been known to help prep homes herself, painting and clearing spaces when sellers struggle to see what buyers need to see. She is the first to admit that this approach has limits, and her family has told her more than once to stop; however, Linda is determined to make sure every home has its best chance.

Away from work, Linda likes spending time on the water and going up north. She and her husband take their boat out to Spring Lake and Lake Michigan, and the family recently



made a trip to Boyne Mountain for some rest and relaxation, enjoying the kind of togetherness that gets harder to coordinate with adult children. Linda also loves dining out, entertaining around the pool, and running into people she knows in downtown Ada and catching up on their lives.

In addition to time spent with family, Linda is committed to supporting causes close to her heart. She is a parishioner at St. Robert of Newminster and supports New Growth Project, an organization founded by a friend. New Growth Project operates a working farm in Rockford where adults with similar challenges come each day, tend the crops, make candles in winter, sell produce at local markets, and earn a paycheck. “They have a purpose,” Linda said. “They get to leave home every day, come here, and have a job.” She has watched the organization grow over



Photo submitted by Linda Fetterhoff

the past recent years and hopes to carve out time to volunteer there once her schedule allows.

In the years ahead, Linda is focused on sustainability rather than expansion for her business. Her husband recently retired, which has introduced its own adjustments — she jokes about the temptation to escape to the office more often — but Linda herself

isn't ready to stop. If one of her kids eventually wants a piece of what she has built, she would welcome it, but until then, she's focused on keeping the machine running well.

Linda has built a business defined by consistency and a deep understanding of the communities she serves. As she looks to refine her pace, her focus remains on creating lasting value for her clients. 🏡

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When Leslie Ruppel arrived in Grand Rapids in 2010, she knew almost no one. A few years later, and after a dozen years at home raising her kids, she took a chance on real estate. From the start, she built her business on strong relationships and a commitment to doing nothing halfway. Now with Five Star Real Estate, Leslie has spent the past 13 years becoming the kind of agent clients rely on — not just to buy or sell a home, but to help guide them into their next chapter.

Growing up, Leslie lived on a dairy farm in the thumb of Michigan. Her father, a farmer, also had a part-time real estate practice. Leslie still remembers an Amish family once arriving by horse and buggy to buy a piece of land. In college, Leslie worked her way through school by waiting tables and holding two jobs, then moved into sales, including a stint in finance and insurance at a car dealership. When she and her husband started a family, Leslie stepped away from work. Her plan was to take a few months off but took 12 years instead.

During an ordinary back-to-school shopping trip with her daughters, then 9 and 11 years old, Leslie felt the pull to return to the workforce. When the conversation turned to college, both girls shrugged it off, saying they'd just get married and be moms. Leslie heard herself in that answer and didn't like it. "I worked really hard to put myself through college," she explained. "I need to show that there is another side of me who is a hustler." Leslie

signed up for her real estate licensing class without telling anyone other than her husband, passed her exam, and only then announced what she'd done.

Leslie began her real estate career at Coldwell Banker, where manager Dave Mapes gave her the encouragement she needed with patient guidance. She figured things out as she went, and on days Leslie had nowhere to bring her kids, she brought them with her — her son stapling papers at the office and her daughters working open houses as door greeters and sign holders. Leslie was direct about the arrangement. "If you want straight teeth and you want to go to college, you have to help," she half-joked. "This is kind of a family deal."

For Leslie, the early years meant starting from scratch in a city where she hardly knew anyone. She briefly tried Zillow to get her first few clients, but referrals quickly took over and have driven her business ever since. As her business grew, she set a new

volume goal each year and kept surpassing them. The trust she has built over more than a decade has made her name recognizable across Grand Rapids, with people reaching out simply because they keep seeing her signs around the neighborhood.

Leslie's hardest stretch of her career came during the pandemic years of 2020 and 2021, when buyers were losing out on house after house in a frenzied market. Leslie found it painful to watch clients get their hearts broken repeatedly, especially first-time buyers, some of them still living with their parents who simply wanted a place to call their own. She couldn't bend the rules on occupancy limits or waive the mask requirements, even when parents of young buyers desperately wanted to walk through a home before their young adult signed. Leslie leaned on agent-to-agent relationships to find inventory before it hit the market and kept showing up for her clients until the market finally shifted.

As an associate broker at Five Star Real Estate, Leslie brings a hands-on, unapologetic approach to every listing. She keeps a storage unit stocked with blankets, rugs, lamps, and pillows for staging, and she'll tell sellers exactly what needs to go — politely, but clearly. She once walked into a home with 50 porcelain dolls and had to find a diplomatic way to explain that they had to disappear before the photographer arrived. "People are going to be standing at the front porch while the agent's trying to get in the lock box and they



“
It’s the
people that
keep you.”
”



start judging,” Leslie explained. A good mat, swept cobwebs, and a pot of flowers can change a first impression before anyone walks through the door.

Outside of work, Leslie prioritizes family and community. Her oldest daughter Sheridan, a Michigan State University graduate, is getting married next July. Her middle daughter Addison is studying economics at Grand Valley State University and may be heading to law school. As for her son Kellen, now 18 and headed to the Frostic School of Art and Design at Western Michigan University, he still gets called on to put up riders and retrieve directional signs on his way home from school.

In her free time, Leslie golfs three holes every Tuesday evening throughout the summer with a group of women at Egypt Valley Country Club and plays euchre once a month with another group of friends. She also explores shared hobbies with her husband, Ken — such as taking a bonsai class together, and soon, ballroom dance classes to prepare for Sheridan’s wedding.

In the years ahead, Leslie plans to continue growing what she has already built in her business — more clients and more long-term relationships that make the work meaningful. Her goal has always been to earn the kind of trust that keeps clients returning again and again.

The same motivation that brought Leslie back to work has kept her in the business for over a decade: to show up fully, do meaningful work, and be there for the people who count on her. “It’s the people that keep you,” she concluded. ▀

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Halloween and my birthday!
Terra Csotty — Real Producers



Thanksgiving has always been one of my favorite traditions because it brings family and friends together to reflect, reconnect, and express gratitude. It is a great reminder to slow down a bit and see that success is measured not only by professional achievements but also by the strength of the connections we build with people.
Bryan Foster — Foundation Specialist, LLC



I have a special needs older child, and Halloween is fun for her to dress up and go trick-or-treating around the neighborhood. We usually have about 20-40 people come along.
David Geurink — Five Star Real Estate Leaders



Eating cinnamon sugar donuts from a local cider mill!
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Cherie graduated from Loyola University Chicago with a bachelor’s degree in public relations and advertising. She wasn’t taking it easy during college, though. “I actually had three jobs in college,” Cherie explained. She worked in Loyola Admissions, served at McCormick & Schmick’s Seafood, and was a nurse aide at St. Joseph Hospital. “Yes, at the same time,” she added with a laugh.

After Loyola, Cherie went back to school at Aquinas College for a second degree. At the same time, she worked as a nurse aide, a barista at Starbucks, and a promotions coordinator at 105.3 HOT-FM. “If you’re sensing a trend, there is one,” she joked.

Cherie entered real estate after what she calls a “fateful series of events.” Back in 2013, she was working at the hospital as a health unit coordinator and raising two young children when she

had been approved to buy her first home for \$70,000. The moment should have been exciting, but it quickly became discouraging.

“I had such a hard time finding an agent who was willing to help me,” Cherie said. “I got a lot of, ‘Talk to my lender; they can get your price point up’ or ‘Are you sure that’s your budget?’”

After speaking with six or seven banks, lenders and brokers, Cherie was repeatedly denied or told they could not help. She then called on a foreclosure and Kirsten Nariy showed up. “She really changed things for me,” Cherie said. A few months later, she closed on her first home for \$69,500.

At the time, Cherie was pregnant with her third child and had interviewed for 11 internal hospital positions without landing one. Frustrated but determined, she decided to take a real

estate pre-licensing course. Shortly after completing it, she found out she was pregnant with her fourth child. “I gave up on the idea for a few months, because how would I start a business and have four kids?” Cherie said. A co-worker encouraged her to take the exam anyway, and she passed.

In her first 12 months, with the support of her hospital co-workers, Cherie closed 26 transactions. That experience shaped the foundation of her business, Boss Lady Realty, which she started in 2015 with Keller Williams Realty. “One of our core values at Boss Lady Realty is that anyone who is willing and able to buy a home should receive a high level of service — no matter the price point or socioeconomic status,” she said.

Cherie has remained with Keller Williams throughout her career, moving offices





and eventually returning to KW Rivertown as team leader. “Out of all the brokerages I interviewed, KW was the only one who said, ‘Yes! You can be Boss Lady Realty, and we’ll show you how to do it.’”

Cherie credits the company’s philosophy for much of her growth. “Your business grows to the extent that you do,” she said. “Keller Williams changed my life tremendously and taught me so much about life and business.”

Through transaction giving, Cherie’s team donates \$100 from every closing to charities such as Treetops Collective and Safe Haven Ministries. “Both of these organizations live out the values of Christ,” she said.

Personally and professionally, Cherie wants readers to know one thing: “You can do it, too.” As a single mom of four, she has built her life intentionally. “My identity is, first, a child of God, second, their mom, and third, a real estate agent,” she said.

In 10 years, Cherie said her life went “from borderline poverty to high net worth and a business that supports not only my family, but also its community.” She is candid about the work it takes. “Hard work is still a thing. You have to show up and work hard, even when you don’t feel like it,” she added.

Cherie is especially passionate about breaking barriers for women who are buying and selling homes on their own. “I



“
Just start!
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overthink it.
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TO FIND
ONE
CLIENT
AND
SERVE
THEM
WELL.
”

own multiple homes, and I enjoy sharing my story with others to show them what is possible,” she said. Cherie also loves educating clients. “Homeownership brings so many benefits — stability, equity potential, investment vehicle, and pride,” she explained.

In today’s market, Cherie sees opportunity. “West Michigan is a unique market,” she said. “We are fairly insulated from the big swings with our diverse economy. Our inventory is still on the lower end, and buyers can still find great opportunities. It’s a great time to buy and sell.”

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When she is not working, Cherie is all in with her kids: Stella, 16, Kingston, 15, Oliver, 12, and Luna, 11 — plus their bernedoodle, Winnie. She coaches basketball, chauffeurs to activities, and spends time boating at their cottage. “Pouring into them so they are resilient, self-aware, and independent adults is my favorite hobby,” Cherie said.

Cherie also reads “Think and Grow Rich” by Napoleon Hill and “The Art of Living” by Thich Nhat Hanh every year. “One for my business mindset and the other for my human mindset,” she shared.

Cherie’s advice to every real estate agent is simple. “Just start! Don’t overthink it. You need to find one client and serve them well,” she explained.

At the heart of it all is her brand’s mission: “To serve anyone who wants to buy or sell real estate at a high level and to have the most fun while doing that.”

“Boss Lady Realty believes that you make the best decisions when you get the best information,” Cherie said. “When you are informed, you have more fun. You’re the boss.”

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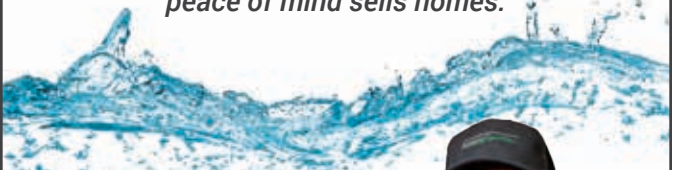
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