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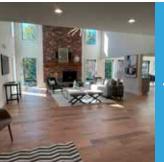




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THE HOME STAGING PROCESS



Since the 1970s, professional home staging has been an essential part of the marketing process for REALTORS® on the West Coast and in larger metropolitan areas such as Dallas, Chicago, Miami and New York City. In Pennsylvania, home staging is a relative latecomer to the real-estate landscape.

For savvy, successful REALTORS® in our region, however, that has changed. Why? Because staged properties are seeing, on average nationwide, a return of 3-6 percent OVER listing price.

Anecdotally, my REALTOR® partners tell me that having a home staging consultation as part of their listing package sets them apart and gets them listings. So, if you haven't used a home staging professional before, what's it all about, how does it work, how much does it cost, and who pays for it?

While every stager works a bit differently, here's a general description of the process professional home stagers employ:

OCCUPIED LISTINGS:

1. You call an Accredited Home Staging
Professional (preferably me!) to schedule
a one-time consultation with your sellers. We tour your listing and advise sellers on what they should do to prep their
properties for amazing MLS photos and
successful showings. Unless REALTORS®
have told us otherwise, we always assume
your sellers plan to use what they already
have to prepare their houses. This is a

one-time cost, and almost all of my current REALTOR® clients include this consultation in their listing packages. Professional, accredited home stagers in our area generally charge between \$275-500 for this one-time service.

- 2. Most home stagers own inventory we can rent to your sellers to refresh/update their spaces, including furniture, art/decor, and lighting. The cost of this starts at a few hundred dollars and depends on how much inventory is installed and how long it takes, as well as the length of the contract. It's a mixed bag on who pays for a refresh like this-some REALTORS® pay, and some pay a portion or expect the seller to pay (for example, you might tell your sellers that you'll pay up to \$X amount for professional staging services beyond the consultation).
- 3. The staging contract specifies the maximum length of time the inventory will remain on the property. Generally,

we write contracts for 60 days, and furnishings stay in the property until a home-sale contract is signed and all contingencies have been met or waived. Then, the staging team will destage the house and collect the inventory between the time the contingencies are met/waived and the expiration of the staging contract. We're always prepared to extend contracts if requested, and we need anywhere from between 3-7 days' advance notice to schedule a destage prior to settlement.

VACANT LISTINGS:

- 1. The home stager gets your call and will either preview the property or look at photos/floor plans you provide to provide an estimate to furnish the key living spaces in the property. In this market, we rarely recommend that every room in a house be furnished; usually the main living spaces of the house and the primary suite are the important areas to stage.
- 2. You and the seller agree in advance on who pays for the home staging. We stagers then issue a contract to the payor that specifies the price to stage, the length of the contract, the rooms to be staged, and other factors. Home staging is an up-front, 100 percent payment. Because our goal is to help your sellers get an offer as quickly as possible, we don't prorate

- our service for fast sales. After all, if you get an immediate offer, then we've done what you paid us to do!
- 3. The home stager, REALTOR®, and seller choose a mutually agreed-on staging day, and your seller ensures the house is spotless and all interior work is finished.
- 4. We stage the property. For liability reasons, home stagers want no one except our team on the property during staging, especially children and pets. We also ask you to schedule MLS photography for the day after the scheduled staging day to take into account issues that may arise during staging.
- 5. Once all property sale contract issues have been satisfied, we return to the property and collect our inventory. We tell you when we've finished and report whether any of our inventory has been damaged, stolen, etc. (a rarity, thank goodness).

You can see it's a straightforward, easy tool for you to use in marketing your listings, and the payoffs can be enormous. StagingCraft has helped Realtors garner upwards of 11-23 percent over ask this spring for our REALTOR® clients' listings. Your listings look amazing and elevate your own brand, and sellers love what staging does for the bottom line!

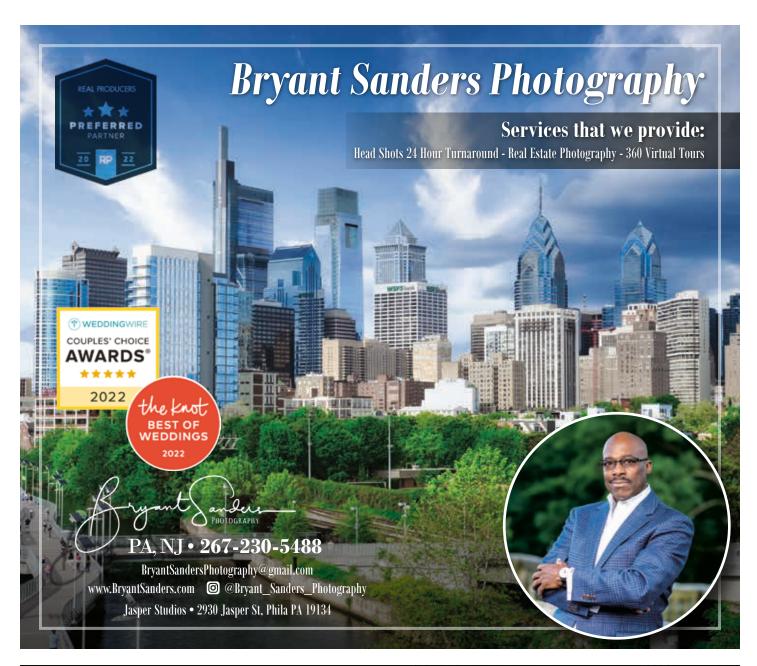
Nancy Vander Zwan is an Accredited Staging
Professional Master (ASPM) and owner and CEO of
StagingCraft home staging services. She and her team
love partnering with Bucks REALTORS® to help their
sellers maximize profits. She also loves answering
your questions, so call her at 215-262-7306





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By Brittany Brown | @brittaroundtown

EXPLORE BUCKS COUNTY



Not only is Bucks County blessed with breathtaking landscapes and historic towns, but it is also home to six magnificent state parks: Nockamixon, Ralph Stover, Delaware Canal,

Neshaminy, Tyler, and Washington Crossing. These parks offer visitors a diverse range of natural wonders, recreational activities, and historical significance. However, these six parks are just a fraction of the impressive park system that the state of Pennsylvania boasts. With a total of 124 state parks spread across the state, covering over 300,000 acres, the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)'s Bureau of State Parks ensures the preservation and management of these invaluable resources.

From the serene beauty of Nockamixon State Park, with its expansive lake and verdant woodlands, to the rugged cliffs and picturesque trails of Ralph Stover State Park, Bucks County's state parks offer something for everyone.

Join us on a remarkable journey as we explore the natural wonders, recreational opportunities, and historical treasures the that state parks of Bucks County embrace. Whether you're seeking outdoor adventure, a peaceful escape, or a glimpse into the past, these parks will captivate your senses and leave you with unforgettable memories. So, lace up your hiking boots, pack your picnic basket, and get ready to discover the extraordinary beauty of Bucks County's state parks.

Delaware Canal State Park

Delaware Canal State Park is situated along the picturesque Delaware River between Easton and Bristol and offers visitors a captivating journey through American history. Spanning 58.89 miles, this park is an integral section of the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor, a historic pathway that played a pivotal role in fueling America's Industrial Revolution, transporting coal and iron, and is now a 165-mile multi-use trail from Wilkes-Barre to Bristol. As you explore the towpath of Delaware Canal State Park, you will be treated to a diverse tapestry of natural beauty and rich cultural heritage. From the serene riverside vistas to the sprawling farm fields and charming historic towns, the ever-changing scenery along the park's corridor will leave a lasting impression. Open every day of the year from sunrise to sunset, Delaware Canal State Park provides numerous access points along its 60-mile length, allowing visitors to embark on their own personalized exploration of its wonders. While the park itself does not offer overnight facilities, nearby state, county, and private campgrounds provide camping and cabin options for those seeking an extended stay. Whether you are an avid nature enthusiast, a history buff, or simply seeking an idyllic outdoor escape, Delaware Canal State Park offers a captivating experience that seamlessly blends natural beauty, cultural significance, and recreational opportunities. Embark on a journey through time as you stroll along its towpath and immerse yourself in the wonders of this remarkable park.



Delaware Canal State Park



Ralph Stover State Park

Ralph Stover State Park

Ralph Stover State Park, situated in eastern Bucks County, is a captivating natural haven spanning 45 acres along the scenic Tohickon Creek. The park offers a serene picnic area, with the soothing sound of the creek flowing through it, creating a picturesque setting for visitors to enjoy. One of the park's notable attractions is the nearby High Rocks section, which provides a stunning vantage point overlooking the magnificent Tohickon Creek. The High Rocks offer a breathtaking view of a horseshoe bend in the Tohickon Creek Gorge, encompassed by the surrounding forest. This area is frequently known as the "Grand Canyon of Bucks County". Although the 150-foot sheer rock face entices experienced rock climbers, it is essential to note that the cliffs pose inherent dangers. For safety purposes, visitors are advised to remain behind the designated safety rail. Accessible year-round, from sunrise to sunset, Ralph Stover State Park welcomes visitors to immerse themselves in its tranquil beauty. Located just two miles north of Point Pleasant, the park is easily reached via State Park Road and Stump Road. The park is an exceptional opportunity to appreciate nature's grandeur and serenity. Whether seeking a scenic picnic spot or marveling at the awe-inspiring vistas from High Rocks, visitors can indulge in the park's natural wonders while adhering to safety guidelines.



Tyler State Park

Tyler State Park

Tyler State Park in Bucks County is a vast natural sanctuary spanning 1,711 acres. It seamlessly blends park roads, trails, and facilities with

the surrounding farmland and woodlands. The park features a renowned 36-hole disc golf course for enthusiasts of the sport. Kayaking along the Neshaminy Creek is a popular activity, offering a peaceful experience amidst the park's natural beauty while equestrians can explore the park's horse trails on horseback. The park also houses the historic Schoefield Ford Covered Bridge, a well-preserved landmark showcasing the region's heritage. Diverse hiking trails cater to all levels of hikers, providing stunning vistas and wildlife encounters. Conveniently located near the Newtown/Yardley exit of I-95, the park's main entrance can be accessed at the intersection of Swamp Road and PA 413. Tyler State Park offers a serene and captivating escape for visitors.

Washington Crossing Historic Park

Washington Crossing Historic Park is a revered National Historic Landmark that preserves the site where George Washington famously crossed the Delaware River during the Revolutionary War. Divided into Upper and Lower Sections, the park offers a range of attractions such as historic buildings, walking paths, picnic areas, and fishing spots. The Upper Section also features the impressive Bowman's Hill Tower, providing breathtaking views of the Delaware River Valley. Nearby, the Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve showcases Pennsylvania's native plant diversity. Operated by the Friends of Washington Crossing, some parts of the park require a fee, while others are free and open from sunrise to sunset. Visitors can engage in guided tours, bike along the Delaware Canal State Park towpath, witness the Christmas Day re-enactment, fish in the Delaware River, explore the exhibit area, attend educational programs and history lectures, participate in races, and pay respects at the Soldiers' Graves. A visit to the nearby wildflower preserve completes the experience. Washington Crossing Historic Park offers a captivating blend of history, natural beauty, and diverse activities for all to enjoy.

Neshaminy State Park

Nestled along the picturesque Delaware River in the serene landscape of lower Bucks County, is Neshaminy State Park - a captivating destination for nature enthusiasts and outdoor enthusiasts alike. Derived from its surrounding Neshaminy Creek, which gracefully converges with the majestic Delaware River at this very location, the park's 339 acres offer a multitude of recreational opportunities and serene natural beauty. Within its expansive grounds, visitors can find picnic areas that provide the perfect backdrop for a delightful outdoor gathering, creating lasting memories with friends and family. For those seeking respite from the summer heat, the park boasts a refreshing swimming pool, offering a cool escape and a chance to bask in the joys of the season. Additionally, Neshaminy State Park caters to the needs of its younger visitors with a separate children's spray park, providing endless hours of exhilarating water play and boundless laughter. Water enthusiasts will also find themselves delighted by the marina, which grants convenient boating access to the Delaware River, inviting exploration and discovery along its scenic waters.

Nockamixon State Park

Nockamixon State Park, spanning over 5,286 acres, is an ideal staycation destination for a day trip, while offering a peaceful retreat for those seeking a longer getaway. The park's centerpiece is the magnificent 1,450-acre Lake Nockamixon, nourished by Tohickon Creek, Three Mile Run, and Haycock Run. This pristine lake not only serves as a sanctuary for migrating waterfowl but also beckons boating enthusiasts and anglers alike. Fishing and boating are permitted round-the-clock in designated areas, ensuring ample opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts to indulge in their favorite pastimes. Picnicking amidst the breathtaking scenery, taking a refreshing dip in the swimming pool, hiking through the park's enchanting trails, or engaging in a thrilling game of disc

golf are just a few of the popular options available. For those who relish the thrill of the hunt, hunting is also permitted within the park's designated areas. Operating year-round, the park welcomes visitors from sunrise to sunset, while day-use areas close at dusk. It is important to note that certain sections of the park are closed to vehicles during winter. Nockamixon State Park also goes beyond recreation, offering a wealth of environmental education programs to foster appreciation and understanding of its natural and cultural resources. Through guided walks, interactive educational activities, tailored children's programs, and engaging evening programs, visitors have



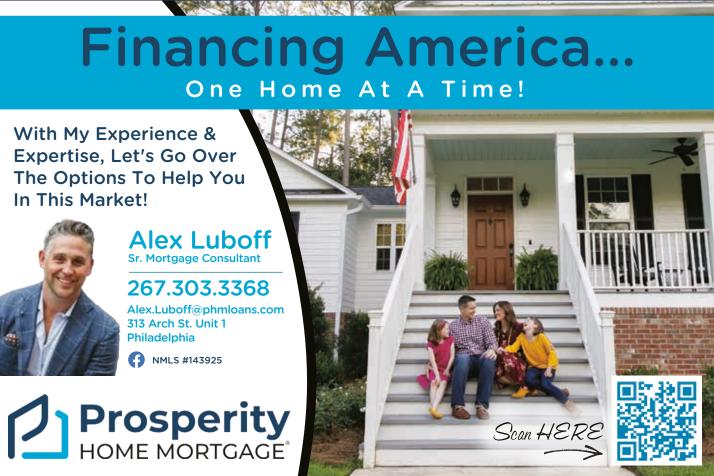
Neshaminy State Park



Nockamixon State Park

the opportunity to develop a sense of stewardship towards the environment. These programs are typically available from late spring through fall, and the park's Environmental Education Center is exclusively open for these educational initiatives. Conveniently located along PA 563, just off PA 313, the main entrances to Nockamixon State Park are easily accessible from various directions, including PA 309, PA 313, PA 611, and PA 412. Plan a visit to this captivating park and discover the natural wonders and recreational opportunities that await.











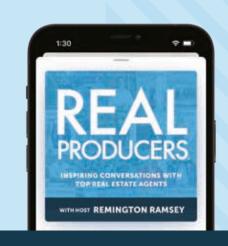
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Janine Allan-DeCarlo

MESSINA REAL ESTATE

Messina Real Estate

Winning Face-to-Face

There is no shortage of technology and remote options that are making real estate transactions, faster, more efficient and ... oh wait ... less personal.

Yet, in the face of the techno juggernaut, there are those who realize that even the greatest AI algorithms can't do what people can do with each other.

That's where leaders like Janine Allan-DeCarlo make a real impact.

Getting to the Goal

As Broker/Owner of Messina Real Estate, Janine is helping people win their dreams and realize their goals face-toface in Bristol Borough, Pennsylvania.

"In addition to helping people buy and sell real estate, we do property management," Janine says.

"Being in a small town what differentiates us is having face-to-face interaction on a monthly basis. We have a lot of our tenants who come in and pay their rent in person because they want to talk with us. I have a unique opportunity to learn about people and spend time with them one on one."

Legacy of Excellence

Janine continues a legacy of excellence that her grandfather started 75 years ago.

"He built an office attached to his house. He worked with Levitt building Levittown Homes," Janine explains. "My father, Fred Allan, joined him 45 years ago and he was a real estate agent working alongside my grandfather and my grandmother was the secretary."

Janine's father passed in March 2012 after a bought with prostate cancer during her senior year of college. She dropped what she was doing and started to work full-time in the business, getting her real estate license three months later in June 2012.

She ended up graduating from West Chester University, and she went on to earn her master's degree from LaSalle University in Business Administration.

Moving Forward

Seven years ago, her grandfather passed. Janine bought the business, made it an LLC under the same name and earned her Broker's license over a year ago.

Today, Janine works with one of her sisters, Jacquelyn Keegan, in operating the business.

Her passionate pursuit of excellence in the business is easy to see.

"My drive comes from two areas. One is the passion to help people find their home whether it's a rental short term or purchasing their





first home or upgrading to their next home... wanting to keep the family business alive and strong," Janine says.

"Also my grandfather built a great reputation, and it's my goal to uphold that."

Signs of Success

In the time since she bought the business, their property management volume has skyrocketed ... from 13 units being managed ... to 250 rental units.

Family enriches life for Janine. She treasures time with her husband, Benjamin. She continues to live with the examples given to her by her grandparents (Anthony and Pauline Messina), and her parents

(Fred and Fran Allan). She also cherishes her sisters
— Jennifer and Jacquelyn, as well as Jacquelyn's
6-year-old son, Trey.

In her free time, she is very engaged in the community ... on the Historical Board in Bristol Borough, as well the Christine McCaffrey Fund.

She also looks forward to time spent at the beach.

Janine offers helpful tips to those who are trying to move forward in their lives in the business.

"One of the biggest things that helped me was being involved with 6677

I LOVE THIS COMMUNITY AND I WOULDN'T GIVE UP WHAT I DO FOR ANYTHING.

the Bucks County Association of REALTORS® ... you can get involved, educate yourself and get to know others," Janine says.

"My grandparents instilled in me the need to get a great education and that's very important with things changing so much."

Always Leading

With kindness, patience and a deep willingness to serve the best interests of others, Janine has







moved forward with humility and a hunger to continually learn.

When she just started in the business, Janine was very young. In fact, she was the youngest member ever elected to be on the Board of Directors of the Bucks County Association of REALTORS®.

"Being this young and owning my own business required a lot of sacrifices along the way, but I have no regrets," Janine says. "I love this community and I wouldn't give up what I do for anything."











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HARNESSING THE POWER OF SHORT-FORM VIDEOS:

The 4 Videos Every REALTOR® Should Be Making

Imagine reaching hundreds, even thousands, of potential clients with the click of a button. Welcome to the powerful world of short-form social media videos! This burgeoning trend is not just altering the face of real estate marketing; it's creating an entirely new platform for REALTORS® to showcase their offerings, build rapport, and educate their audiences. Amidst the clutter of real estate listings, how does one make a lasting impression? The answer lies in the engaging power of social media videos. This article will delve into four compelling types of videos that every forward-thinking REALTOR® should be crafting: Home Tours, Behind-The-Scenes, Market Updates, and Informative videos. Buckle up as we navigate this game-changing landscape together.



1. Home Tours

One of the most engaging types of short-form videos REALTORS® can create is a home tour. These tours offer a dynamic, interactive way to showcase properties and allow viewers to get a sense of a home's layout, design, and unique features. By focusing on highlighting the best attributes of each room, this can make a property more appealing to potential buyers. Videos could also be used to tell a story about the property, adding an emotional appeal to prospective clients. Home tours are a virtual open house and provide an opportunity for REALTORS® to reach a broader audience beyond their locality. If you have a more outgoing personality, don't be afraid to think outside the box and take a more non-traditional approach to home tours by infusing some humor or some of your personality into the video. Whichever approach you take, make sure to keep it professional, and remember, these types of videos are for social media use, not the MLS. The MLS has specific guidelines for videos.

2. Behind-The-Scenes

Creating behind-the-scenes videos can be a powerful way for REALTORS® to build trust and authenticity with their audience. These videos could include a day in the life of a REALTOR®, the process of staging a home for sale, a quick post open house video talking about the process, or even the negotiation of a deal (keep the confidential details out of this one). They offer an opportunity for REALTORS® to demonstrate their expertise, work ethic, and dedication to their clients.

Behind-the-scenes videos can humanize REALTORS®, making them more approachable and relatable. They also help clients understand what goes into buying and selling a property, increasing appreciation for the profession.

3. Market Updates

Market updates are essential to keep clients informed about current trends and changes in the real estate market. These videos could cover changes in home prices, the availability of properties, shifts in mortgage rates, or any other factors that could impact a client's decision to buy or sell a home. The frequency of these videos could be weekly, monthly, or quarterly, depending on market volatility and audience interest. Don't be afraid to put your own spin on these. Talk about what you are personally seeing in the market rather than just talking numbers. Market update videos position REALTORS® as trusted experts and are a fantastic way to provide value to clients, potential clients, and the wider community, when done correctly.

4. Informative Videos

Informative videos are an excellent tool for educating clients and helping them make informed decisions. These could include videos on the process of buying or selling a home, the importance of home inspections, or tips for firsttime homebuyers. Real estate is a complex field with many nuances, and these videos can help simplify these complexities for viewers. They can also be used to address common questions or misconcep tions about real estate, reducing confusion and uncertainty for clients. Be creative with your take on these. Don't be afraid to be humorous or show your personality. Providing informative content can help REALTORS® build their reputation as a valuable resource and guide in the real estate journey. Remember, trust is a key factor when someone is choosing a REALTOR®.

Short-form social media videos present an incredible opportunity for REALTORS® to connect with their clients in a dynamic and engaging way. These types of videos—home tours, behind-the-scenes looks, market updates, and informative content—can help REALTORS® stand out in a competitive market, showcase their expertise, and build lasting relationships with their clients. By harnessing the power of video content, REALTORS® can not only elevate their professional standing but also enhance the real estate experience for their clients. It's time to embrace this trend and start telling your unique real estate story through the compelling medium of short-form videos.

Amy Berridge is the owner of Buxmont Social Media & Marketing, a full service digital marketing agency specializing in social media strategy, and has 15 years experience in the field of social media.





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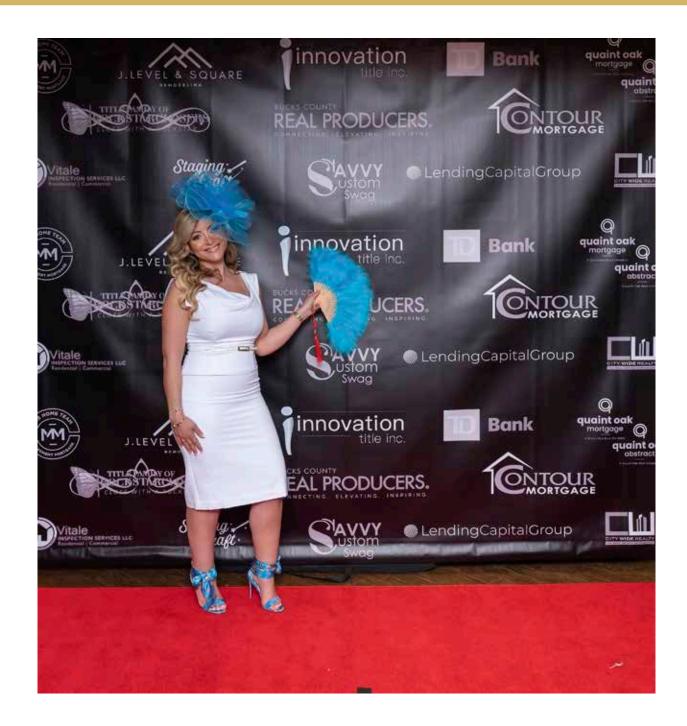






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After graduating college with a dual major in business management and marketing, Laurie started her career in the pharmaceutical sales field before shifting gears to form her own graphic design and marketing agency. The company boasted an impressive 18-year run, but when her youngest child set off for college, Laurie says it felt like the right moment for a professional reinvention. "I jumped into my real estate career and never turned back."

Though her new venture was exciting, it was also marked with a big challenge in the beginning. "I started in real estate in 2010, and the market was going through a very difficult period after the 2008 collapse. While this was a very difficult time to launch my business, it also taught me how to hone my skills and get very intentional about separating myself from the average agent. I spent hours on training videos and courses to become educated in all aspects of real estate, and, in my first year, I was named Rookie of the Year in a large office of experienced agents. That's when I knew I could create something special," she recalls.

But it was a quick rise that came at a cost. "Early on, as a single agent, I worked 7 days a week, nights and weekends, sacrificing a lot of personal and family time," Laurie explains. She eventually took steps to create more work/life equilibrium, and, in the long run, that decision propelled her career further. "I knew the long hours were not sustainable, so I turned to coaching to learn how to hire and train an admin who could eventually take a large load off my plate, allowing me to focus on my clients' needs. Fast forward to today, and I am now the branch manager at the Doylestown Borough eXp Realty office, and I run one of the most successful teams in the Bucks County area."

Successful indeed, so says the gaggle of industry awards that Laurie and her team have won...accolades that reflect their commitment to their craft and their colleagues. "Even with our decades of experience, we never stop learning. We participate in weekly trainings to stay sharp and be the best agents we can be. We are also there for each other. When one person needs help for a showing or open house, there is always an eager agent to hop in and provide support. I love



my team members and very much care about their well-being, happiness and financial success in life. I try to lead by example and not ask them to do anything I wouldn't do," Laurie says, adding that her administrative squad also plays a key role in keeping things running smoothly.

Being at the top of their game allows Laurie and team to offer their clients five-star service that transcends the closing table. "Our client relationships don't stop at the end of a transaction - that's actually just the beginning. We want to be there for our clients for all their future real estate needs and as a support in other ways. If they need recommendations for painters or house cleaners, we are there for them. We also look forward to reconnecting with our clients' families yearly, at our Memorial Day Porch Party, our Fall Fun Fest and photos with Santa events. These are all great ways to catch up with them, see how the kids have grown, and stay connected."

Having nurtured her business to welloiled machine status, Laurie has been able to focus her free time on a new business angle - mentoring. Through her work with Lars Hedenborg and Real Estate B School, she has an avenue to share her experience and insights and build up her contemporaries. "I am committed to helping other agents exit the 24-7 hamster wheel of real estate, gain leverage, and grow profitable businesses that will help them create a life they never dreamed possible," she says, adding that she regularly holds mastermind sessions for agents around the country and in the local market.

Laurie's career has proved very profitable, and it has allowed for the purchase of an income-generating rental property and a second home in Florida. The Florida digs provides a wonderful vacation destination for





Laurie's family, which consists of her college sweetheart-turned- husband (of 35 years), Michael, her two children, and her pup Henry, who Laurie says will make friends with anyone who will have him. A new family member will soon be joining the Dau ranks, with an anticipated arrival in September, and Laurie and Michael are thrilled about their upcoming roles as first-time grandparents. (If you thought Laurie was impressive as a five-star realtor, just wait until she sets her sights on a five-star grandma ranking.)

In addition to time spent with her people, Laurie also loves being outdoors, taking daily walks, and going on bike rides along the Delaware and in Florida (bike riding aside, she can also hold her own on a horse. Ask her about her days in equestrian sports). Additionally, she enjoys volunteering her time to worthy causes, and many of her philanthropic efforts are focused on nonprofits that tackle homelessness, food insecurities, and cancer research. She and Michael are consistent supporters of the Bucks County Housing Group, The Coalition to Shelter and Support the Homeless in Bucks County, St. Jude's Children Hospital, and Feed My Starving

Children. She and her real estate team have also raised funds for The Breathing Room Foundation, which provides resources for families experiencing cancer, and Café of Life, a food bank in Bonita Springs, Florida. "As a real estate professional, I know how important proper shelter is to create a sense of security and well-being for people. When I see individuals in vulnerable situations where they are lacking basic needs, I want to help them. Donating time and financial gifts to these organizations is something my husband and I have done during our entire marriage. We love to supply gifts and food to the Bucks County Housing Group during the holiday season so that families living in the shelter can experience happiness and good food during this time of year," she says.

Who had heart of gold on their REALTOR® Bingo card? With her philanthropic spirit, can-do attitude, and team-player vibes, Laurie is checking all the boxes. There is no doubt that she is well equipped to tackle any future opportunities (or obstacles) life may throw her way, and her arsenal of skills places her in the best position of all – right in that end zone, ready for the touchdown.

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