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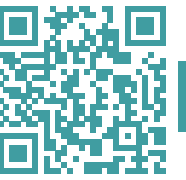
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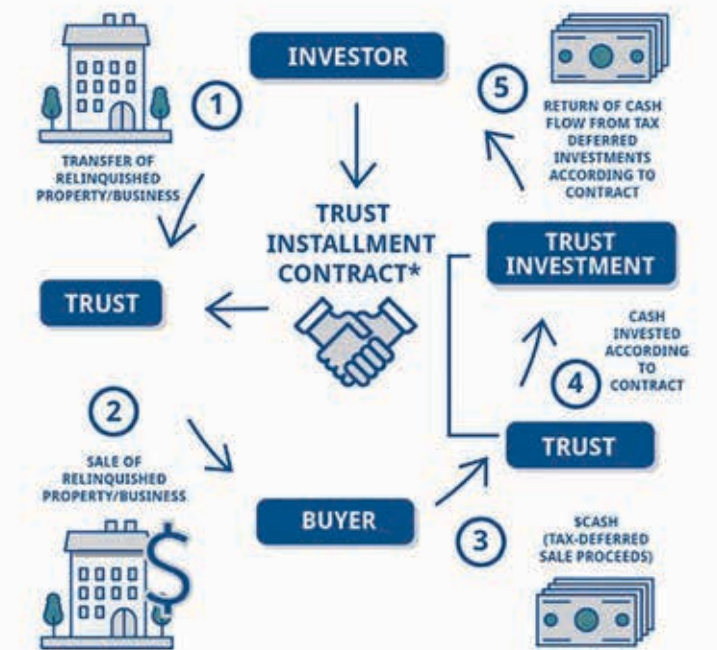
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► publisher's note

# CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE

## AN EVENING OF RECOGNITION

*"Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize." (1 Corinthians 9:24, NIV)*

Dear Real Producers of South OC,

As Thanksgiving approaches — a season for reflecting on gratitude — I'd like to take a moment to reflect on the celebration of the incredible outstanding real estate professionals in our *Real Producers* community who were honored at our first-ever awards gala on October 7th at Marbella Country Club. This event allowed us to express our heartfelt appreciation for their dedication and hard work. Be sure to check out this issue's spotlight on the well-deserved award winners, along with all the photos of the spectacular evening!

The gala was truly our most spectacular event to date. We brought together top

agents and preferred partners for an unforgettable evening. While we've had many remarkable events, this one held special meaning for me. What made it unique was the opportunity to honor professionals nominated by their peers — an acknowledgment of excellence that came from within our own community.

At *South OC Real Producers*, our mission is to connect, elevate, and inspire the local real estate industry. As we celebrated five successful years this September, I'm proud of the strides we've made toward that mission. I am deeply grateful to the exceptional agents who have shared their inspiring stories with us and filled the pages of this publication. I also want to extend a heartfelt thank-you

to our preferred industry partners, whose unwavering support makes our exciting events possible and whose services enrich our community.

This gala wasn't just about celebrating individual achievements — it was about coming together as a community to recognize our shared success. I truly admire and appreciate each of you. Thank you for your continued support of our publication.

Here's to more success for all of us!

Warm regards,



**Michele Kader**  
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# KAYLA Cardona



## FROM REAL ESTATE TO REALITY TV AND BEYOND

Before making waves in real estate, Kayla Cardona, a REALTOR® with The Oppenheim Group, spent 10 years in the beauty industry. Her high-end clientele were the ones who suggested she would excel as a real estate agent. Although the idea seemed far-fetched to Kayla at the time, she took a leap of faith and pursued it.

“I was also still working at night as a bartender,” she recalls, “and was tired of being on my feet all the time. I just remember thinking, this can’t be it for me. I knew that I wanted something more in life.”

Kayla passed her real estate exam on her first attempt, marking the beginning of her journey in the industry as she started working as an assistant

for a top producer. Just six months after becoming a solo agent, Kayla’s career took another leap when Netflix found her on Instagram and approached her for a reality TV show about the glamorous world of real estate in Southern California.

### A STAR IS BORN

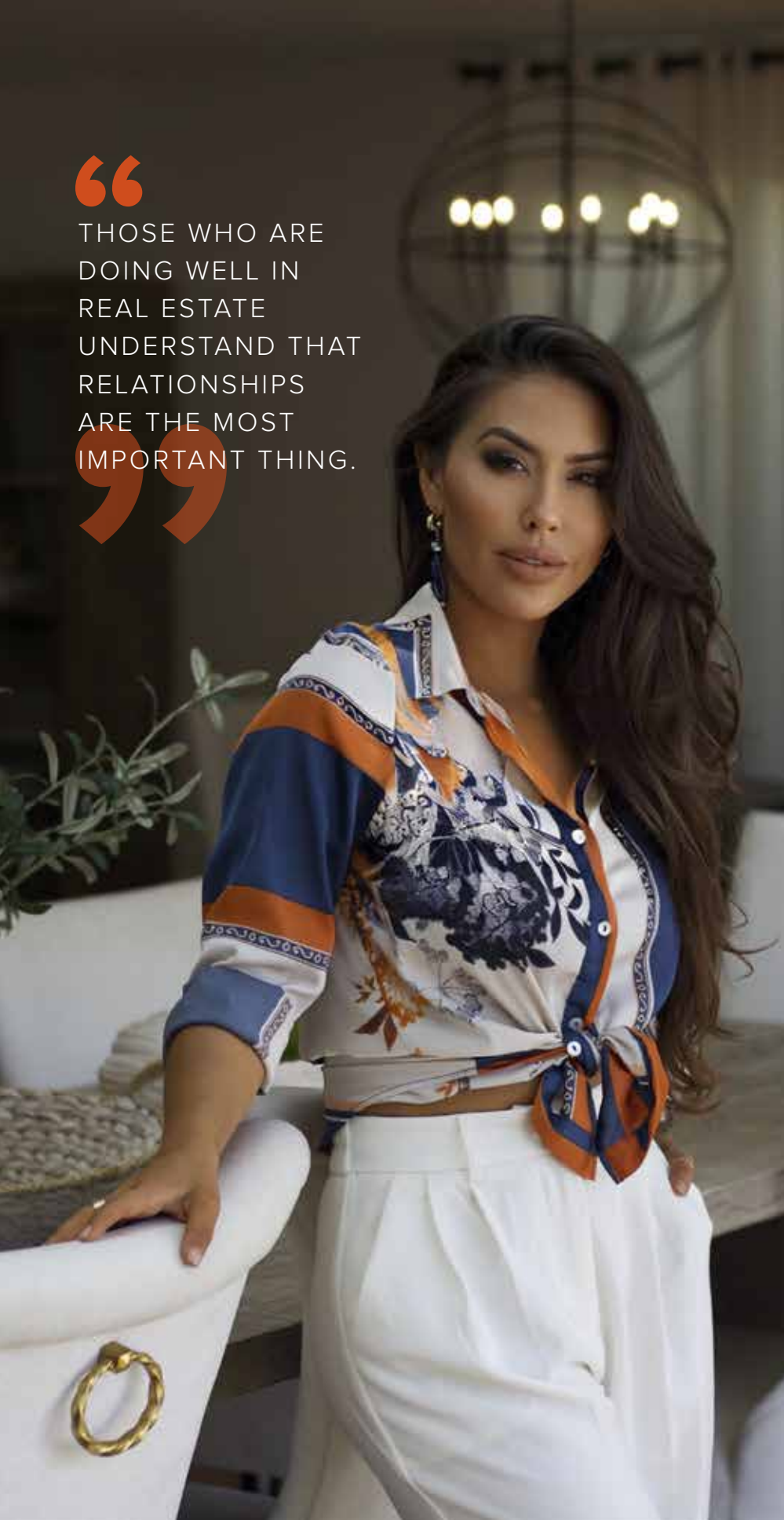
Kayla became recognizable after joining Netflix’s *Selling the OC* and

the exposure has connected her with clients nationwide, further expanding her professional network. However, she was already making her mark in the competitive Orange County market before the cameras started rolling.

Since entering real estate in 2019, Kayla has achieved notable recognition, including an Executive Award, being named a Top 1 Percent agent on



“  
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DOING WELL IN  
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UNDERSTAND THAT  
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ARE THE MOST  
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”



Kayla Cardona is a Realtor with The Oppenheim Group.

Zillow, and receiving a 40 Under 40 award by *South Orange County Real Producers* magazine for 2024. Last year alone, she sold an impressive \$26 million in real estate and, at the time of this writing, has \$9 million in active listings.

#### RELATIONSHIPS AND INNOVATION

For Kayla, success in real estate isn't just about closing deals; it's about building long-term relationships. "Those who are doing well in real estate understand that relationships are the most important thing," she offers.

What's most gratifying for Kayla is being part of one of the biggest investments and transitions in her clients' lives. "Handing over the keys is my favorite part," she says. "It's the most fulfilling — being a matchmaker for homes and helping people invest their money wisely. It's those personal stories and connections that stay with me forever, like helping someone start over or guiding a first-time buyer. When you're part of a person's life forever, knowing their story and being able to change it for the better — that's what's truly rewarding."

Beyond relationships, Kayla believes that innovation and adaptability are crucial to thriving in today's market. "Get creative. Stay innovative. Use your social media platforms because that's just where our world is going," she advises.

Networking, both online and in person, is another tool Kayla employs to grow her business. She attends community and networking

events to connect with potential clients and reinforce her brand. "People really love meeting you in person," she notes. "People work with who they know, like, and trust, so gaining that trust is incredibly important."

"I get so personal with my clients, being there for them as a friend, bending over backwards and genuinely caring," Kayla says. "I truly care about the people, the families, the kids, the pets... You can learn the technical stuff, but you can't teach people how to genuinely care."

#### ROOTED IN FAITH AND SERVICE

Born and raised in South Orange County, Kayla is a dedicated single mother. Outside of real estate and reality TV, her life revolves around her faith and her 17-year-old son, Jordan, who is a track and field star at his high school. Kayla also shares her home with their Bengal cat, Luna. In their leisure time, both Kayla and Jordan enjoy everything Orange County has to offer. "I love going to the beach, hiking, and just being in nature," Kayla shares. "We love going to movies and going out

to eat at nice restaurants — enjoying the simple things in life that fulfill us."

Kayla is also deeply involved in philanthropy, especially in the Philippines, where she is a missionary who helps provide essential resources to local communities. Recently, her team distributed 1,000 school supplies and offered free events for healing and worship.

Kayla also travels all over the country as a motivational speaker and



“ I TRULY CARE ABOUT THE PEOPLE, THE FAMILIES, THE KIDS, THE PETS... YOU CAN LEARN THE TECHNICAL STUFF, BUT YOU CAN'T TEACH PEOPLE HOW TO GENUINELY CARE. ”



Kayla Cardona is a cast member of Netflix's reality TV real estate show *Selling the OC*.

organizes events to raise funds for education, focusing on women and children. "I throw events, galas, and raise money to give back as much as I can," she explains.

**A FUTURE OF GROWTH AND SERVICE**

Kayla's faith remains her guiding light. She draws strength from her

favorite Bible verse, Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." This affirmation inspires her as she navigates the highs and lows of her career and personal life, and it continues to inspire her as she looks toward the future.

Kayla shares that she plans to focus more on real estate investment and

flipping while mentoring select individuals. Personally, she aims to continue her missionary work overseas and has a long-term goal to open orphanages and women's shelters worldwide.

"I've got my heart on the U.S. and on Mexico, so we'll see what the future holds," she says. "It's exciting."

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Honoring the Best of the Best in South OC Real Estate

# THE 2024 RP AWARDS GALA

What an unforgettable evening we had at our inaugural RP Awards Gala, held at Marbella Country Club on October 7th! It was a delight to see everyone dressed to the nines, ready to honor the remarkable agents who make up our *South OC Real Producers* community.

The night was dedicated to celebrating excellence in our industry. We proudly recognized top-producing agents who were nominated by and voted for by their peers, acknowledging not only their impressive achievements but also their outstanding contributions to clients and the community. Our honorees also included our 2024 Top 40 Under 40 agents and those who have been unwavering supporters of our *Real Producers* platform.

We were pleased to recognize and celebrate our preferred partners, who have been integral to the success of our monthly magazine and events. Their dedication and top-tier

services play a crucial role in supporting our REALTOR® community, and we are grateful to have them as part of this exceptional network.

Special thanks to our wonderful sponsors who helped make this event possible: our platinum sponsors, **The Smith Group at MortgageOne, Inc.**, and **Escrow Options Group**; our gold sponsor, **Complete Care Medical Spa**; and our silver sponsor, **U.S. Bank**. A huge thank-you to **Marbella Country Club** for providing a fantastic venue and excellent food, to **WASIO faces** for beautifully capturing the magic of the evening, to **Easy Tiger** for their lively music, and to **Jason Crane of Arial Media** for the captivating videography.

Congratulations, once again, to all the honorees named on the following pages — you truly earned the recognition. A big thank-you to everyone who attended and made the night so memorable. We look forward to seeing all that you'll accomplish in the coming year!



## 2024 RP AWARDS HONOREES

### Realtor of the Year Awards

HELENA NOONAN  
Compass

DAVE ARCHULETTA  
First Team Real Estate

### Leadership in Real Estate Award

MELODY SMITH  
Anvil Real Estate

### Lifetime Achievement Award

PHIL IMMEL  
Pacific Sotheby's International Real Estate

### Rising Star Award

BRANDON HALPERIN  
Anvil Real Estate

### Ultimate Connector Award

BRYAN GERLACH  
Engel & Völkers

### Social Media Influencer Award

JACKIE GUTHRIE  
Douglas Elliman Real Estate

### Most Congenial REALTOR® Award

SIMON GUY  
Keller Williams Realty

### Most Philanthropic REALTOR® Award

STACY FELTMAN  
Century 21 Affiliated

### Most Inspirational Story Award

AMY SIMS  
Coldwell Banker Realty

### Best Magazine Cover Award

KAYLYN FLORYAN  
Legacy 15 Real Estate Brokers



**40 UNDER 40 CLASS OF 2024**

NICK AHRENS  
Compass

SEAN ALLEN  
Anvil Real Estate

ERIC BABCOCK  
Real Broker

ANDREW BAKER  
Arbor Real Estate

JORDAN BENNETT  
Regency Real Estate Brokers

MITCHEL BOHI  
Compass

TYLER BOWMAN  
Compass

TYLER BROWN  
Compass

PAUL BRUTOLO  
Engel & Völkers

KAYLA CARDONA  
The Oppenheim Group

MAXWELL CARR  
First Team Real Estate

LAURA CLINTON  
Bullock Russell Real Estate

HUNTER CRANE  
Coldwell Banker Realty

MARK ELMASRY  
Douglas Elliman Real Estate

KAYLYN FLORYAN  
Legacy 15 Real Estate Brokers



SIMON GUY  
Keller Williams Realty

DANA HALDEN  
Compass

BRANDON HALPERIN  
Anvil Real Estate

ERIC HUDES  
Keller Williams Realty

KRISTINA HUDES  
Keller Williams Realty

SAMIRA HURD  
eXp Realty

STEVEN HURD  
eXp Realty

RYAN IMMEL  
Pacific Sotheby's

BRITTANY LEIGHTON  
X Real Estate

JOEY LEISZ  
Century 21 Affiliated

THOMAS MORLEY  
Keller Williams OC Coastal Realty

NURA MOTAL  
Compass

CHRISTIAN PACE  
Harcourts Signature Properties

WYATT PARKER  
Anvil Real Estate

STEPHANIE PETERSON  
Arbor Real Estate

CRYSTAL SCHANTZEN  
Anvil Real Estate

NICOLE SCHATZ  
Compass

JEREMY SCHULTHEISS  
Coldwell Banker Realty

DARREN SHEPHERD  
Compass

CHRIS SIDLOW  
eXp Realty

BRITTANY SOROUDI  
Keller Williams OC Coastal Realty

BRYAN SUAREZ  
Anvil Real Estate

CINDY VU  
HomeSmart Evergreen Realty

STEPHANIA WEISZ  
Anvil Real Estate

CASEY WOOTAN  
Century 21 Award



**RP SUPPORT SQUAD AWARDS**

HIRAM AVILES  
Coldwell Banker Realty

CORA BERKERY  
Coldwell Banker Realty

CANDICE BLAIR  
Coldwell Banker

BRANDON BROWN  
BayBrook Realty

RINO CATURANO  
Keller Williams Realty

SAHAR CYRUS  
Keller Williams Realty

HEATHER HILL  
Compass

PARISA HOUSHANGI  
Keller Williams Realty

SAMIRA HURD  
eXp Realty

CYRUS MOHSENI  
First Team Real Estate

DAN SMITH  
Anvil Real Estate



**MVP PARTNER AWARDS**

BERNADETTE KERKES  
Escrow Options Group

CHRISTOPHER SMITH  
MortgageOne, Inc.

**LEGACY PARTNER AWARDS**

KATIE DICAPRIO  
Corner Escrow

BERNADETTE KERKES  
Escrow Options Group

JJ MAZZO  
CrossCountry Mortgage

MICHELLE RAHE  
The Escrow Source, Inc.

CHRISTOPHER SMITH  
MortgageOne, Inc.

JERRY STONGER  
Preferred Inspection Services

ANDREW WALSH  
WFG National Title

DAVID WILKES  
Costa Mesa Moving Company

YANECK WASIEK  
WASIO Faces







# A THANK-YOU FROM OUR EVENT SPONSOR



## BERNADETTE KERKES | Escrow Options Group

Dear South OC Real Producers,  
  
On behalf of Escrow Options Group, we are deeply honored to have served as a Platinum Sponsor for the inaugural South OC Real Producers Awards Gala on October 7th.

The event, held at the Marbella Country Club, was a remarkable celebration of the real estate community, and we are truly grateful to have been part of it. From the red carpet entrance to the prestigious awards ceremony, live music, and exquisite dining, the evening was filled with both elegance and camaraderie.

It was a joy to witness so many outstanding REALTORS® being recognized for their achievements, and to experience the spirit of collaboration and networking that defines our industry.

At Escrow Options Group, we take great pride in supporting events that bring our community together and celebrate the dedication and hard work of its members. Being part of such a meaningful occasion strengthens our commitment to excellence and growth within the South OC real estate market.

Thank you once again for allowing us the opportunity to contribute to this special night. We look forward to continuing our partnership with South OC Real Producers and to many more successful collaborations in the future.

Warm regards,

**Bernadette Kerkes**  
VP of Marketing & Business Development  
Escrow Options Group  
Bernadette.Kerkes@escrowoptions.com  
714.348.4718  
www.EscrowOptions.com  
www.EOGUniversity.com

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To our South OC Real Producers community,

It was our distinct pleasure at MortgageOne, Inc., to serve as a platinum sponsor for the South OC Real Producers Awards Gala on October 7th at Marbella Country Club. The evening was truly spectacular, and we were honored to be part of such a memorable event celebrating excellence in the real estate community.

From red carpet glamour to the presentation of prestigious REALTOR® awards, the night was filled with moments of recognition and camaraderie that highlighted the best in the industry. The live music, exceptional food, and lively conversations made the event both elegant and enjoyable, and it was an honor to be part of it all!

We're proud to support this vibrant community of professionals, and to have played a role in bringing everyone together for a night of celebration and connection. At MortgageOne, we believe in the power of collaboration and are dedicated to contributing to the continued growth and success of the South OC real estate community.

Thank you again for the opportunity to be involved in such a meaningful way. We look forward to many more opportunities to partner with South OC Real Producers and celebrate the incredible work being done in our field.

Warm regards,

**CHRISTOPHER SMITH**  
TheSmithGroup – MortgageOne, Inc.

# A THANK-YOU FROM OUR EVENT SPONSOR

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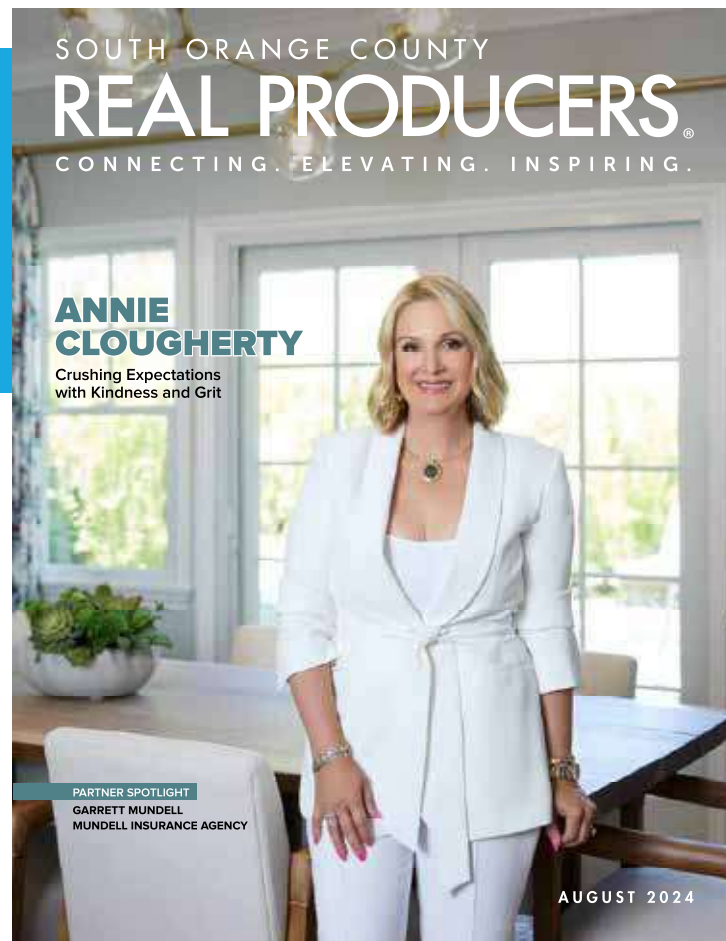
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