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JULY 2022

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honolulu real producers HAPPY HOUR at maile's thai

What an incredible event! It was great to gather with members of the *Honolulu Real Producers* community! As always, we love to bring together some of the top agents on the island and our amazing Preferred Partners to mix, mingle, build relationships, and have a ton of fun. Mahalo to everyone who made it out; we are excited for the next one!





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CHAD SHIMABUKURO

» celebrating leaders

Written by **Chris Menezes**
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Leading With COMPASSION

Chad Shimabukuro's passion for not only helping people find homes but helping agents find success in real estate is in many ways connected to growing up between two divorced households and the feeling of not having a place to call home. While he was born and raised on Oahu, he spent a lot of time going between Southern California and Hawaii and even spent some time homeless as a young adult.

While Chad had to overcome many hardships in life, those hardships led him to become the person he is today. For one, his ability to quickly make friends and get comfortable with people was a byproduct of having to move around so much growing up. In a way, it was his survival tactic to adjust quickly to new places. He believes that the one talent that has helped him throughout his life and career is being able to connect and build relationships.

"Growing up, I had to be able to fit in quickly. Be liked quickly. Be heard quickly ... That really taught me resilience, humor, and timing," he said.

Chad's ability to make friends was further bolstered as he pursued professional dancing throughout intermediate, high school, and college, in addition to playing basketball. This instilled a sense of confidence in him, allowing him to feel calm even when all eyes were on him.

"Music was and is everything to me, really," he said. "It's motivation, it's



an escape, and it's the feelings you have but can't put into words. Dance helped me feel more comfortable being the center of attention, or on a stage, with everyone staring at me. Being on the court is similar: while being a team sport, you feel the focus is on you, which puts added pressure on yourself."

While Chad's extracurricular activities had a major impact on his development, his biggest influences growing up were his father and

his grandparents. "The Japanese/Okinawan side has such an unbelievable work ethic. That work ethic is in my blood for sure," he said. "They're simple people but rich in character, integrity, and values."

While Chad wanted to be a physician and went as far as pre-med, life had different plans for him. He had moved to Southern California for med school and to help take care of his mom, whom he later found out was not sick at all. Chad eventually found himself



without a place to live. He slept wherever he could while going to school full-time and working full-time.

“I ended up renting from a close friend, who still lived at home with his parents,” explained Chad. “I slept out on his patio – no walls, just screens – in between piles of boxes of old childhood clothes and toys, furniture that their family didn’t want to use but couldn’t throw away, and makeshift walls of old newspapers that they swore would be recycled.”

“This was during the ‘El Nino’ rain season,” he continued. “The ceiling was corrugated plastic, and I remember crying myself to sleep having the ice-cold rain drip through the roof and soaking through my blanket. I would often sleep under the futon on the floor, which was often flooded. It was a ‘pick your battle’ kind of thing — water falling on your face and body or damp patio carpet? Long story to say, I couldn’t sustain and ended up dropping out of school. I couldn’t afford it; I couldn’t study and work full time. I was living one day at a time, and it was a horrible feeling. All the while, I didn’t tell my dad ‘all’ of what was going on. He was always supportive and suggested I come back home. But I wanted to make the family proud and didn’t want to leave Southern California without accomplishing anything.”

About two years after dropping out of med school, Chad joined law school. However, he quickly realized that was not his path either. After leaving Law school, he started his own consulting business. By that time, he had no vision or inclination toward getting into real estate. However, he recognized his potential as a businessperson rather quickly.

“I realized I was really good at business. I loved the creative nature of it. The understanding people part of it. And really creating something out of nothing part of it.”

Chad started working in a small boutique firm that dealt with real estate and mortgages, introducing him to the industry. As 2000 rolled over, Chad was drawn to the real estate market, and he began his journey as an independent agent.

Although he started out as an independent agent, Chad later joined a group, seeking mentorship, guidance, and coaching, and formed a “ragtag cohort of sorts” with a few other agents. It did not take long for him to understand that he was a born leader – others in the group would always turn to him for solutions.

“I always focused on two things: the client I was serving and being a servant leader to those on my team,” he said.

While there were many obstacles on Chad’s road to success, he explained how his battle with depression was a major struggle. However, by becoming a champion for others in the industry who also suffer from depression, he was able to turn it into a strength.

Looking into the future, Chad plans to branch out into different sectors of the industry, such as title, mortgage, property management, and even starting a free real estate school. He is also working on a holding company to help agents invest in “buy and hold” and “buy and flip” models, as well as other ancillary models.

“This industry has given me so much: homes, income, success, awards, Top 100 in multiple states, that I OWE it to this amazing industry to give back,” Chad emphasized. “I consider it a mission to be an ambassador to our industry, help raise great agents, and create a path and a model for success so that agents who may not possess the same grit and tenacity that my younger self did won’t fall by the wayside. Because I know how tough it is out there.”



“I always focused on two things: **the client I was serving and being a servant leader to those on my team.**”

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► meet the partner

Written By **Chris Menezes**
Photography by **Slava Slavik**



Daniel Arita

with American Floor & Home

A New Generation of Builder

Being the president of American Floor and Home, Daniel Arita has to juggle a lot of responsibilities. From interacting with customers to managing the business to ensuring that the company is profitable, he has his hands full.

Yet, he loves every minute of it.

Being a business owner runs in his blood. Growing up in Aiea, Hawaii, Daniel was exposed to the world of business through his father, the founder of American Floor and Home. He went on to study business at Hawaii Baptist Academy and then Point Loma Nazarene University in San Diego, where he earned a degree in Business Administration.

Daniel didn't go straight into the family business after graduation, however. He worked as a boatman/surf guide at Salani Surf Resort in Samoa for three months.

It was his father's success in the home remodeling industry that really inspired him to pursue the same path. Daniel joined the family business with his father's encouragement. Although he grew up around the business and earned a degree in business, his first day on the job was a bit of a shock.

"On my first day on the sales floor, the customer asked me to get another salesperson who knew what they were doing since I wasn't confident about what I was doing and couldn't answer her questions," Daniel recalls.

Despite this rocky start, Daniel quickly developed a passion for the home remodeling

industry. And he realized that it was his responsibility to ensure that customers were receiving the best possible service.

"House remodeling is a huge and sometimes overwhelming task. It requires not only creative vision but also the ability to execute that vision in a way that is both efficient and effective," Daniel explains.



For many people, the thought of remodeling their homes is daunting. But for Daniel and his team at American Floor and Home, it's just something they love to do. The company offers a full range of services, from design to installation, and they work with their customers every step of the way to ensure that the result is exactly what they envisioned.

"We help the customer from concept to reality. Their dreams are our blueprints," he says.

What sets American Floor and Home apart from other remodeling companies is that they are employee-owned. This means that the customers work with the owners of the business



...

throughout the entire process, rather than just as an employee.

“The biggest key factor that changed my role and the way our company is moving forward is when my dad sold the business to the employees, making our company an employee-owned company,” he says.

This change has had a profound effect on the company, as Daniel explains: “Our company doesn’t get taxed on our profits which allows us to grow quicker than other companies. Also, our employees now act and think like owners of the business, which gives our customers a better experience, and we are more efficient.”

But Daniel didn’t always have such a clear path ahead of him. In fact, one of the biggest obstacles he’s had to overcome was the pressure of being the son of the previous owner.

“As the previous owner’s son, you have all eyes watching you. The expectations for an owner’s child are extremely high and sometimes unreasonable,” he explains.



Daniel has had to learn how to be his own person and not compare himself to his father to overcome this challenge. It’s a lesson that has served him well, both in his personal life and

in his professional career. And it’s one that he hopes to instill in his own children as well.

Today, Daniel is proud to be leading American Floor and Home into the future. With his father’s guidance, he has helped grow the company from a small retailer in Hawaii to one of the most respected home remodeling companies in the country.

“I love seeing our employee-owners succeed in the roles of the company. Success to me is when all 140 of our employees see success in their jobs,” Daniel says.



Daniel is also a dedicated family man, and he draws his motivation and inspiration from the loved ones in his life, including his wife, Torey, and son, Ezekiel. He is passionate about providing them with all of the opportunities that life has to offer and strives every day to set an example for them.

Whatever lies ahead, we do not doubt that Daniel will continue to lead American Floor and Home to even greater success and help countless homeowners realize their dream homes. And with his drive and dedication, it’s sure to succeed for many years to come.

To contact Daniel and American Floor and Home, or for more information, visit www.americanfloorandhome.com.



Meet Randi Lau

“ As a Client Advisor and a business owner, I am passionate about supporting customers in their decision-making process, whether the project is an entire home remodel or a simple change in flooring. With American Floor and Home, your dreams are our blueprints.”



Richard and his team are THE VERY BEST movers we've ever worked with. Clients love them because they have great attitudes, are diligent, careful, and just a joy to work with. We would not hesitate to recommend them to any of our clients and have used them personally to move our offices as well as our personal residences. We cannot say enough great things about all the guys that work for 2 Guys & A Truck. We should be lucky to have more vendors that are this phenomenal!

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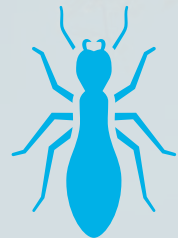
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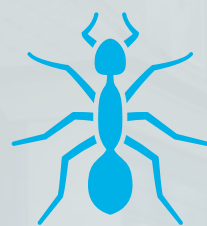


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▶▶ agent on the rise

Written by **Chris Menezes**
Photography by **Paula LLC**

Erica YOON

ALL
IN

When Erica Yoon takes an interest in something, she goes all-in. She is a hustler. It is how she has gone from starting as a new agent in Hawaii in 2020 to reaching ICON level status at eXp Realty in just two years.

Erica's ability to give 100% focus and energy into accomplishing her goals comes from her family. Born and raised in Korea, Erica recalls her mother, who was the founder of a music academy, worked hard every day. "I remember she made lots of money, sometimes more than my Dad," Erica says, laughing. "She was super busy all the time, so I was left

alone to do a lot of things independently. But she taught me the value of consistency, resiliency, patience, and diligence."

"My dad, like most of the Korean salary-men at that time, came home very late at night almost every day," she continues. "Although he was busy, he was still the counselor that I could depend on when I ran into issues. He was always generous and helped others in need. Watching him find joy in helping others imprinted on me the value of the lifestyle of generosity."

Erica saw the rewards of giving 100% focus to follow passion from her own brother, Ilsang Yoon, who is one of the most popular singer-songwriters in Korea. "He never chased for money, and he told me that the wealth and money just follow when you follow your dream, do what you love, and work hard," she says.

...





“He was once one of the top agents in Austin, so I was flattered,” explains Erica. “But I loved my teaching position at the UT Austin, so I didn’t take immediate action. In the meantime, what he said always stayed in the back of my mind. When I became pregnant with my third baby and quit my job for bedrest, having had four miscarriages in the past, I decided to take online courses in real estate.”

Erica got her Texas real estate salesperson’s license in 2018 and worked as a “social agent,” connecting clients with agents through-

out the country. Then in 2019 her husband, a chaplain in the Army, got stationed in Hawaii. “We moved here while I was very pregnant with baby #3 in the third trimester,” Erica recalls. “I studied for the real estate exam for Hawaii and completed courses while I was pregnant. After I had my baby, I went ahead and got my Hawaii license and joined eXp Realty in August 2020 – one of the best decisions I’ve ever made!”

Erica joined a real estate team in Hawaii, where she was able to get the training she needed to grow and become more successful. After about seven months, she went out on her own as a solo agent and met a few agents who wanted to join her at eXp. Although she never thought about forming a team before, she felt it was the right time with the right people, and in October of 2021, formed Ace Team Hawaii.

Erica combines her passion for education, real estate and helping others by being “a real estate counselor and advisor that people can

trust.” “Helping my clients, friends, other agents, and people in need, and seeing the change in their lives gives me the utmost pleasure,” she says.

“I love sharing what has worked for me and what has not, and I want to help all my agents become ICON agents. I want our agents to be happy and enjoy what they do, and at the same time, I want them to experience the amazing privilege they can obtain by reaching that level of achievement. I’m a very relationship-oriented person. I want to build a lifelong friendship and stay together in this for a long time, and that’s why I made the compensation and incentives at Ace Team Hawaii very generous.”

In addition to Ace Team Hawaii, Erica and her husband started an investment company called Kairos Homes. “Kairos means the perfect timing of God,” explains Erica. “I believe that transforming older homes into a modern, highly functional and economical living space provides a brighter future for our island. It’s very exciting and satisfying to see the transformation of these homes that were left abandoned for many years – it’s like *Art*. I enjoy working with my other investor clients for the same



reason, and I feel blessed to say that I have worked with the best in the industry.”

When Erica is not working, she enjoys spending time with her three kids, John, Joseph, and Eliana. Because it is difficult for her to not be doing something and giving 100% to it, she has to be intentional about giving herself some “lazy” times, where she can spend her free time with her loved ones or do what she loves other than *work*. She enjoys listening to music, playing the piano, reading, and giving back to the community and those in need. She and her husband wanted to be a missionary and went on many mission trips together before having kids, and they have been helping families in need by sending donations. “My husband and I would love to take all three kids to the mission trips when my youngest gets a little older and teach them the most important life lessons by helping others.”



“Success definitely comes from inner satisfaction,” she says. “It’s not about how much money you make, how many transactions you do, or how famous you are. There is a Korean saying that people are truly happy when their heart is ‘rich.’ It emphasizes that what determines our happiness comes from the attitude we have towards our life. I also remind my team, my children, and myself that Happiness is Progress. As long as we make progress and try to make today better than yesterday, we are all entitled to living a happy life.

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If you fail to plan, you plan to fail. This is a motto that Kaimi lives by. As the owner of Aloha Home Inspections, he has overcome many obstacles and hardships to get to where he is today.

Destiny and purpose play an important role in Kaimi's career, as he believes that everyone has a unique purpose and calling in life.

Kaimi was born and raised on the island of Oahu, attending Kapalama Elementary School and Dole Intermediate before eventually graduating from Mililani High School. From there, he joined the US Army as an enlisted soldier, serving tours in Kentucky, Korea, Tacoma, Washington, and Iraq.

After leaving active duty in 2007, Kaimi joined the US Army Reserves and retired from the military in 2020. He also held government jobs at the Pearl Harbor Shipyard and the Air Force's Satellite Tracking Station at Kaena Point.

"Being a soldier in the US Army, I was able to learn the leadership skills, teamwork skills, and problem-solving skills necessary to stand out in any industry," said Kaimi. "My military experience allowed me to excel in college as I worked on my BA in social sciences."

During his time in college, Kaimi began to feel motivated to seek an opportunity for self-employment. He credits his combined experience in the military and college for giving him the skills to start his own business.

With a passion for helping others, Kaimi decided to enter the home inspection industry in order to help

others find their home in Hawaii. And while he loves what he does, Kaimi emphasizes that there is still more work to be done—and that's what motivates him to keep moving forward.

"I believe it was a part of my destiny and purpose to not only become self-employed but also to be a small business owner," said Kaimi. "I do not think I would have pursued a small business if it wasn't for the combined experience of the Military and college."

In addition, having a mentor in the home inspection field was also a pivotal factor for Kaimi. He credits Oscar Libed of Inspect Hawaii LLC for mentoring him early on and helping him to hone his skills as a home inspector.

This drive and determination to succeed, combined with his innate ability to connect with others, has made Kaimi a standout professional in the home inspection field. But this did not come without challenges—namely, finding the right work-life balance as a small business owner.

The importance of professional networking and development is also key for Kaimi. He is a proud member of Business Network International (BNI), Akamai Kala Chapter.

Through these experiences, Kaimi has learned that it is essential to connect with other

**I believe
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professionals in order to grow your business. He has also gained invaluable insight into the real estate industry as a whole.

What sets Aloha Home Inspections apart from other companies is the focus on customer service and always putting the client first.



“We do not ever compete with other home inspectors,” said Kaimi. “That would be a disservice to agents and our clients.”

The company’s number one priority is the safety of the families they serve.

“Our passion is safety and availability,” said Kaimi. “To be a good home inspector, you have to be available to meet the J1 deadline. Our passion is also the safety of the families we perform inspections for. Our goal is to keep your family safe.”

“Our motto is to keep your family safe and protect your investment. Your family will always be the most valuable thing in your home, so our part



in keeping your family safe is paramount,” he added.

When he is not working, Kaimi enjoys spending time with his young daughter

Hailey. He is also an avid outdoorsman and enjoys hiking, fishing, and camping whenever he gets the chance.

Home inspections is a competitive industry, but Kaimi is confident in his ability to succeed. With a clear goal and passion for what he does, there is no doubt that Kaimi will continue to rise as one of the top home inspectors in Hawaii.

Success, Kaimi believes, is all about taking control of your own destiny and never giving up.

“I believe that success comes from capturing your destiny and your purpose,” said Kaimi. “Your destiny deals with just the individual or self and is so elusive and intangible. Your purpose is something that you work on your whole life until the day you die.”

Kaimi’s story is one of perseverance, dedication, and a strong work ethic. His experience in the military, combined with his drive to help others, has made him a standout professional in the home inspection field.



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Bryn Kaufman

►► top producer

Written by **Chris Menezes**
Photography by **Slava Slavik**

CATCHING THE WIND

Wing Foiling is a treacherous sport and requires the bravest of hearts – to catch the wind under their wing, hit a wave at high velocity, and take flight. While Bryn Kaufman considers himself a surfing daredevil as a wing foiling aficionado, he takes the same approach in business. And since moving to Oahu in 2001 from Pennsylvania, he has been able to partake in a full life of adventure both on land and water.

...



For Bryn, the best way to approach an adventure, especially in business, is to find a niche. This is exactly how he has approached every business he's ever run in his life. From a young age, he was driven by the urge to build a strong business. In High School, he used to sell sodas in the hot summer to the guys lined up dumping trash at the landfill in Philadelphia.

"That was a good business because these guys appreciated me being up there on top of this mountain made of trash," he said. "With the heat, dust from the trucks, and not-so-fresh smells, they really liked a young kid bringing cold sodas right to their truck while they waited in line to dump their trash."

Bryn also worked one summer at the local amusement pier and built a little side business selling bug repellent. "The horse flies were relentless at times," he explained. "They bite you, and it hurts. Plus, they swarm. I was working in the parking lot, and people would get out of their car after a long ride to the shore and immediately be attacked by horseflies. At that point, they needed the bug repellent so bad they had to apply it in order to calm down and stop being bitten so they could pay me for it."

After High School, Bryn started a computer business, building and selling PCs from his Dad's house. Bryn graduated in 1993 with a dual major in marketing and management from the University of Pennsylvania Wharton School with a bachelor's degree. He is personally proud of his awards by the Wharton School, the Theodore Grayson Award for Outstanding Alumni - Wharton Business School, Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year 1999, and the Small Business Administration's Administrator's Award for Excellence.

Bryn's introduction to the real estate industry was initially through web design. He did real estate websites for real estate agents around the country. Out of all the niches he has carved for himself over the years, he said web design was the most challenging,

“

I am always passionate about continually improving my real estate business and offering great services and marketing advantages to our clients.





“Having no formal training in web design or programming, it was a huge learning curve that took many thousands of hours to get through,” he said. “I experimented with a number of different solutions before finding the one I liked best. The good thing is I found I enjoy coding and creating things on the web that people like to use.”

After realizing he could do better having his own website as a real estate agent, Bryn decided to obtain his real estate license in 2004. Bryn started his career with Coldwell Banker in their NATO training office and eventually switched to Hawaii Homes. In order to have more control over the rebates he could provide and to further create a niche for himself in the industry, he decided to open his own brokerage in 2013 – OahuRE.com.

Bryn leads a small group of agents and a full client care team with OahuRE.com today. In 2021, his team sold 197 properties for over \$145 million,

totaling over \$1 billion in residential real estate on Oahu since forming. Instead of a standard commission, they offer an alternative \$3,500 flat fee along with a discounted full-service option and a 20% rebate for buyers.

“Since my real niche was building a good website, I used technology to improve the processes involved in selling real estate and was able to offer all of it for less commission,” Bryn explained. “I am always passionate about continually improving my real estate business and offering great services and marketing advantages to our clients. I know people really appreciate not only saving money on commissions but getting great service at the same time.”

As Bryn continues improving his approach to real estate, he is learning to become a successful stock trader at the same time and has spent hundreds of hours back-testing trading strategies. He even uses his coding skills to

back-test various scenarios and test different approaches.



Bryn is also a single dad with two kids, Zachary (12) and Jazmine (10), whom he enjoys spending time with when he is not working. Additionally, he is passionate about healthy living.

“For me, the first thing for success is having good health,” he said. “If you do not have good health, nothing else matters. I think the other thing that is important is you enjoy doing what you do. And, of course, finding the right niche that will help you catch the wind and take flight.”

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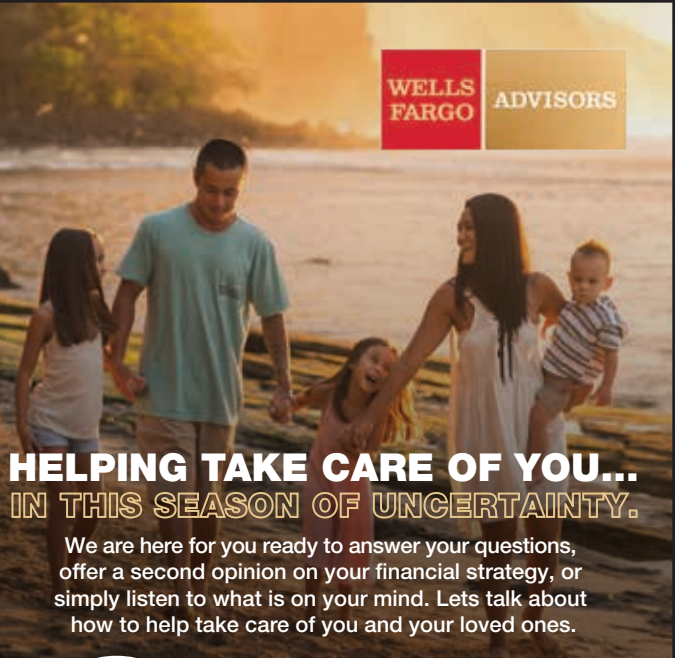


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