

THE REALTOR®



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LIRealtor.com

LIBOR Names 10th Annual YPN 20 Under 40 Rising Stars in Real Estate

By Christina DeFalco-Romano,
Public Relations & Communication Programs Manager



Long Island Board of REALTORS® (LIBOR) is proud to announce the recipients of the tenth annual Young Professionals Network (YPN) 20 Under 40 Rising Stars in Real Estate Awards.

Throughout a year marked by extraordinary circumstances, this year's honorees adapted, persevered, and went above and beyond to provide exceptional service to meet the needs of their clients.

Our finalists range from those with roots in the business, who now operate family-owned brokerages, to those who have established themselves within a few short years, one while working simultaneously as an FDNY Firefighter.

This year's 20 Under 40 Class has been a part of community endeavors such as distributing over 6,000 masks and hand sanitizers to those in need, and fundraising for local small businesses suffering financial hardships throughout the pandemic. Others have

made it their mission to educate and advocate building wealth through homeownership.

A common thread among recipients is their demonstration of ingenuity and perseverance in navigating industry obstacles and pressures brought forth by the pandemic, to seeing their clients through the buying and selling process from start to finish.

"The Young Professional Network's primary objective is to educate, cultivate, and identify the future leaders of real estate all of which this year's recipients embody. The 20 Under 40 Rising Stars in Real Estate Award recognizes REALTORS® who not only maintain exemplary sales production but are also making a difference in our communities. Amid such unprecedented times, this year's recipients showcased

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



Carlos "Josh" Benitez
Keller Williams Realty Elite
Massapequa



Andrew Blee
Galaxy Realty Group
Bay Shore



Laura Chattoo
Douglas Elliman Real Estate
Franklin Square



George Diliato
Exit Realty Island Elite
Port Jefferson Station



Richard Drury
Douglas Elliman Real Estate
Roslyn



Jonathan Enriquez
Exit Family Realty
Lindenhurst



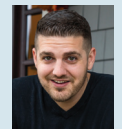
Jonathan Finnerty
Signature Premier Properties
Sayville



Hong Guo
Voro LLC
Great Neck



Kevin Iglesias
Realty Connect USA LI
Miller Place



Richard R. Krug Jr.
Colwell Banker American Homes
East Meadow



Paul Licari
Berkshire Hathaway
Woodbury



Amanda Lowe
Signature Premier Properties
Amityville



Briana Murphy
Signature Premier Properties
Smithtown



Emilia "Mia" Pizzo
Daniel Gale Sotheby's International Realty
Northport



Maria Raimondi
Catalanotto Real Estate Group
Nesconset



Travis Steward
Douglas Elliman Real Estate
Babylon



Maresca Visone
Douglas Elliman Real Estate
Farmingville



Jamie (Xiao) Zheng
Jamie & Connie Real Estate
Flushing



Humayun Zaman
Keller Williams Legendary
Franklin Square



Ron Zimmerman
Keller Williams Realty Elite
Massapequa



President's Message

*By Susan Gruen Helsinger, President
Long Island Board of REALTORS®*

I hope everyone had a safe summer. Now that the weather is cooler and fall is upon us, it is time to enjoy the changing of the leaves and savor mother nature's work.

September is REALTOR® Safety Month, a month designated to helping members understand the risks they face through knowledge, awareness and empowerment.

Long Island Board of REALTORS® (LIBOR) has implemented an assortment of tools focused on agent safety that brokers and agents can use to establish a strategy or incorporate into your current office safety protocol.

Available to all LIBOR members as a free member benefit, is the Real Safe Agent (RSA) program. Real Safe Agent is more than a personal safety app, it's a crime prevention system built specifically for the real estate industry. Based on behavioral science, the system empowers our real estate community to cooperate and collaborate for the purposes of keeping each other safe.

In August, RSA added new features and improvements to its program, including the ability for brokerages/agents to create and join communities — or safety groups of their own.

RSA is a superior product that is uniquely intuitive and able to prevent crimes against REALTORS® in addition to providing safety/rescue options to those who might be in distress. Please take advantage of this member benefit and sign up for the app today — your safety comes first. Further information on RSA and additional resources are available at www.LIRealtor.com/safety. ●

Voice YOUR Vote!

*By Geoffrey Mock, Government Affairs Director, Queens
Long Island Board of REALTORS®*

Last year, when the New York State Legislature expanded voting options, the opportunities were endless to cast your ballot. This year, Election Day is on November 2, and early voting begins October 23 and will run through October 31. This will give us the opportunity to use our voices in local elections, both on Long Island and in the city. Your Government Affairs Department is determined to make sure you are fully prepared to vote. Below, are some frequently asked questions that may be helpful to you in preparation for Election Day.

Q. How do I know if I am a registered voter and if so, where do I go to vote?

A. The New York State Board of Elections has a NYS Voter Registration Search on its site. Just fill out the required information and it will tell you where you're registered and where your polling location is. Visit <https://voterlookup.elections.ny.gov/> for more information.

Q. I'm not registered, what do I do?

A. In order to vote on November 2, you will have to fill out a New York State Voter Registration form. Applications must be postmarked no later than October 8 and received by a board of elections no later than October 13 to be eligible to vote in the General Election. Visit <https://www.elections.ny.gov/VotingRegister.html> for Voter Registration forms.

Q. I'm going on vacation that first week in November and won't be able to vote.

A. Yes you can! Visit www.elections.ny.gov/VotingAbsentee.html to download an Absentee Ballot application, fill it out and send it in! November 2 is the last day to postmark ballot. It must be received by the local board of elections no later than Nov. 9. Military Voter Ballots must be received no later than Nov. 16.

Q. All this information is great, but who am I voting for?

A. This year elections are local. You'll be "pulling the lever" for seats like Nassau County Executive and Legislature, Suffolk County's Legislature, several Town Supervisors and council members. If you're in the city, you will be voting for candidates running for NYC Council and a new Mayor.

Q. How does my vote affect my business?

A. Our Association supports legislators who support REALTORS®. Your vote means your advocating for your clients, for your business, and for yourself! ●

Taking Steps to Stop Fair Housing Violations Against People with Disabilities

*By Doreen Spagnuolo, Corporate Counsel and
Patrick Fife, Associate Corporate Counsel,
Long Island Board of REALTORS®*

It is important that people with a disability have the same rights to acquire, use and enjoy housing as do non-disabled individuals. However, housing discrimination against persons with disabilities has unfortunately become an increasingly common type of housing complaint.

To avoid these complaints, brokers and agents need to take the time to understand the details of federal, state, and local laws that protect persons with disabilities from illegal housing discrimination. These laws cover disabled individuals who are themselves buyers or renters as well as individuals who live in, or who are going to live in, a unit with a disabled person.

The Fair Housing Act describes a disability as a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of such person's major life activities. New York Human Rights Law has a more expansive definition which includes a physical, mental, or medical impairment that prevents the exercise of a normal bodily function.

Disabled individuals have the right under the law to request a reasonable accommodation or modifications to a housing unit, and the refusal to accommodate such requests can violate the law. Reasonable accommodations are changes in any rule, policy, procedure or service needed in order for a person with a disability to have equal access to and enjoyment of their home. Examples of reasonable accommodations include allowing an overnight caregiver despite a policy prohibiting overnight guests, providing a designated parking space, a space for van parking, or allowing a service animal despite a "no pets" policy. Reasonable modifications are physical changes to housing that make the unit accessible to someone with a disability, such as ramps or bars. A person with a disability must be permitted to make reasonable modifications to their housing unit or to the public or common areas if necessary for equal access.

One exception to a reasonable accommodation or modification is if it would present an undue administrative



or financial burden to the housing provider or constitute a fundamental alteration to a program. But the housing provider must discuss with the requester if there is an alternate accommodation that would effectively address the requester's disability-related needs.

Discrimination against disabled persons comes in many forms – all of which must be avoided. There is direct discrimination, unequal treatment, refusal to allow a reasonable modification or make a reasonable accommodation, and the failure to take affirmative steps to ensure that disabled individuals enjoy the use of, or have access to, housing to the same extent as non-disabled individuals.

All of the following are examples of illegal discrimination: giving applicants with a disability different information about the availability of advertised housing than would be given to persons without a disability; not offering persons with disabilities the same opportunities to inspect advertised or available units; steering applicants with disabilities to different units, floors, or buildings than applicants without disabilities; charging or requiring different rental rates, deposits, application fees, types of insurance, and credit checks to persons with disabilities than to persons without disabilities; discouraging applicants with disabilities by not returning phone calls, making follow up contacts, processing applications, or offering waiting list opportunities while encouraging applicants without disabilities by these methods.

Violation of fair housing laws are serious and can result in hefty fines, punitive damages, attorneys fees, and the loss of your real estate license. Therefore, it is

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4




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 The Voice For Real Estate Since 1910

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DECEMBER 31, 2021**

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YPN 20 Under 40

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

evolving resilience through their accomplishments. On behalf of LIBOR's YPN, I want to congratulate this year's award winners for proving they are indeed Rising Stars," said YPN President Christopher Bacchus, a former 20 Under 40 Rising Star himself (2016) and 2020 REALTOR® Salesperson of the Year recipient.

The 2021 applicants were chosen by the YPN selection committee, competing among a group of well-qualified candidates, for their excellence in the areas of sales production, leadership and community involvement. The committee strives to ensure they have a diverse group of finalists in terms of business niches, gender, ethnic background, and geographic location. Additionally, the committee looks for compelling stories — such as interesting business strategies or obstacles overcome — in choosing recipients.

It is with great honor that LIBOR celebrates the accomplishments of these real estate professionals who bring pride to the industry. ●

Taking Steps to Stop Fair Housing Violations Against People with Disabilities

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

important to continually educate yourself on the issue of fair housing by reviewing available resources such as LIBOR's Fair Housing Hub at www.lirealtor.com/fairhousing and the New York State Division of Human Rights Fair Housing website at dhr.ny.gov/fairhousing.

Unfortunately, despite your best efforts to stay educated, you may still face situations where your client engages in conduct that violates fair housing laws. If you do encounter such discriminatory behavior, you must act quickly to remove yourself from the situation and address the conduct. Doing so will lessen your potential liability and hopefully prevent a fair housing violation from occurring.

For instance, a landlord may tell a listing agent that he is refusing to lease to a tenant who requires the assistance of a wheelchair because he doesn't like the look of an access ramp or say he is charging a person in a wheelchair a higher rent because they may scuff the walls.

In response to such situations, agents and brokers should take the following steps:

- Remind the client of your obligations under the Fair Housing Act, and that it is your and your office's policy not to discriminate.
- Inform the client that you cannot continue discussions with the client, and immediately report the conversation to your broker.
- Discontinue representation of any client who has made a statement or taken an action in violation of fair housing laws.
- Document the situation in writing, including stating what actions you took in response to the client's violations (i.e., that you informed the client their actions were illegal and that you ceased discussions with and representation of the client).

- If you are unsure whether a client's actions violate fair housing laws, you should consult with an attorney.

If agents and brokers act promptly and follow these best practices it will not only help protect them from legal liability, but it will help stop fair housing discrimination against people with disabilities from occurring. ●