



▶ rising star | By Zachary Cohen
Photos by Ryan Corvello

KELLY LEE



The Finnell Lee Homes team (left to right: Eva Anifantis (Operations Manager), Kelly Lee (co-founder), and Anne-Marie Finnell (co-founder)).

It All Starts With Community

“Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success. If you love what you are doing, you will be successful.” —Albert Schweitzer

Although Kelly was a stay-at-home mom for 10 years before entering real estate, she was by no means confined to her house. While raising her four children, Kelly continuously served her community as an advocate and supporter. A Washington, D.C., resident for over 30 years, Kelly was the former PTA President, a board member for Janney Elementary School, and the co-founder of an annual community 5K, which raises

much-needed funding for teachers and students at DCPS.

“My husband is also very involved with coaching baseball and basketball in our area, which has allowed us to meet and become friends with an incredible number of people in our community. I think this visibility has given me the name recognition and trust of community members,” Kelly explains.

In 2015, Kelly was aspiring to a new career. Her children were getting older, and she was seeking a new vocation that would be fun, flexible,

fulfilling, and profitable. Her previous career was in sales for a publishing company, and the idea of selling real estate sparked her interest.

Anne-Marie Finnell stepped up not only as a mentor for Kelly, but also as a dear friend.

“Her constant guidance, unwavering support, and continued education have allowed me to grow and learn more quickly than I ever thought possible,” Kelly explains. Last year, Anne-Marie and Kelly founded their own real estate team, Finnell Lee Homes at TTR Sotheby’s

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International Realty, and are well on their way to developing one of the area's top real estate teams.

Both Ann-Marie and Kelly have been recognized in the *Best of Washingtonian* every year since 2015. They were recently recognized as GCAAR Top Producers (2019), and *Bethesda Magazine* Top Producers for Montgomery County (2019). Additionally, they just won the Top Producer award for GCAAR, *Bethesda Magazine*, and *Washingtonian* for 2020.

“[The biggest win-win is] to be able to do the job I love and work with people I love — not just in terms of my teammates and clients, but with other agents in the marketplace,” Kelly says. “In this business, working collaboratively with agents on the other side of a transaction is crucial. Most often, everyone involved in a transaction has a common goal of getting to the closing table. I think it is crucial to have a productive and positive working relationship (especially when a transaction gets complicated) with the agent on the other side of the deal. This attitude goes a long way in creating goodwill for not only our clients but for our colleagues in the industry.”

Kelly learned quickly that her reputation among her peers makes a difference. “Agents on the other side of the transaction can make or break a sale for you,” she reminds us.

Early in her real estate career, Kelly discovered the juxtaposition of balance and flexibility in the business. While both are inherent positives of working in real estate, actually achieving balance and flexibility is a challenge that every agent faces. “Time management and time blocking is something I need to work on,” Kelly admits. “It seems as though there is not enough time in the day to get what I need to get done. Along those lines, I need to do a better job of turning off my cell phone/computer at specific times in the evening to be fully present with my family.”

While Kelly has achieved tremendous success in her own right (she closed just shy of \$12 million in 2019), she's still honing in on her own version of success, and balance is a critical component. “Success to me is achieving an equal balance between family and work — to be surrounded by family and friends whom I love dearly.”

Outside of work, Kelly spends most of her time with her husband, Rob, and her four children, Elizabeth, Robbie, Annie, and George. Kelly and Rob were married in American University Park 20 years ago and still reside there today. Just as she was before entering real estate, Kelly remains a staunch community advocate to this day.

“I do think that one of the reasons I love real estate is because real life is often part of my work life,” she says. “Attending social and community events is what I do anyway, and this is a great way to develop business.”



Finnell Lee Homes is a major sponsor of Northwest Washington Little League at Friendship (Turtle) Park.

