



BRIDGET

SALELA

▶ REALTOR® feature
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CATALYZING HIGH PERFORMANCE WITH “THE VILLE”

Celebrities and busy executives have estate managers and assistants to manage their affairs, why not busy households in Naperville? That was the idea behind UrGo2Girl, a business launched by Bridget Salela in early 2013. Soon, she was juggling everything from dog grooming to landscaping and luxury car maintenance for her elite clients.

Eventually, she found herself buying and selling homes on their behalf, even acting as a general contractor on renovation projects. That’s when she fell in love with the process. “My clients began purchasing investment properties and fixing them up,” says Bridget. “That’s when the lightbulb went on. I knew I had to get into real estate.”

Without fully knowing what she was getting into, Bridget signed up for real estate license training and jumped in with both feet. Her experience buying and selling luxury real estate for others, she thought, would give her unique insight as an agent. But in a competitive market like Naperville, a new approach and trusted partner would be her keys to success. “To start this new career, I wanted to have a partner that I knew I could trust, was interested in doing real estate differently, and would hold me accountable to that,” she says.

Ironically, Bridget’s long-time family friend and neighbor of 17 years, Walt Burrell, had recently transitioned into real estate. He had gained valuable access to a variety of properties through his successful California Closets franchise, which he had sold. “When I told him I was going to get my real estate license, it was like, ‘Oh, boy. Are

we going to end up having this awkward competition thing going?’” she reflects. Over several weeks of discussions, they decided to join forces instead of competing. He eventually agreed and The Ville was born at Coldwell Banker Residential in Naperville, based on the pair’s shared experiences with luxury homes in their previous careers.

Two years later, Bridget’s and Walt’s hard work and distinct expertise has paid off. In 2019, The Ville had a total revenue of \$32 Million, beyond impressive for a small group so new to luxury real estate. The Ville received the 2019 Coldwell Banker International President’s Circle Award and was named the #1 Coldwell Banker Team in Naperville. They also became Guild Certified through the Institute of Luxury Home Marketing. The Ville started growing their team by adding a third broker associate, Nikki Genthner, a rookie to real estate, who closed \$4.5 Million her first year in 2019.

“It’s that team approach that Walt and I feel so proud of,” she says. “We want each member to be successful and get credit for their own achievements. Our brokers are not competing against each other but working together.”

Giving back to the local community has been a focus for Bridget since she moved to Naperville so naturally, a heart for service and has become ingrained in The Ville. Bridget’s firefighter husband of 23 years, Scott, was promoted to Bureau Chief of Training for Naperville Fire Department the same month The Ville was launched. Such drastic life changes for both could have meant disaster. “It was stressful to say the least, but Scott transitioning off his 24-hour shifts to more of a nine-to-five position made it easier for me to work nights and weekends,” she said. “It turned out to be a blessing in disguise for the success of The Ville.” With this attitude of thankfulness, you’re likely to find Bridget and The Ville at Naperville Professional Firefighters for a Cause charity fundraising events. There, the team works tirelessly to support her husband, now a Division Chief, and his heroic colleagues and their families.



The Salela Family, left to right: Troy, Scott, Gianna “Gigi”, Bridget and Luke



Bridget with husband Scott, a Division Chief in the Naperville Fire Department

Together, Bridget and Scott are raising three distinctively different children. Luke, 17, has an entrepreneurial streak. He founded Salela Detail at the age of 14 detailing luxury cars in Naperville and now has recurring clients from Iron Gate Motor Condos to Trump Tower. He may be their future REALTOR®. Troy, 15, is a charmer. An offensive lineman at Naperville North High School, Troy makes friends easily and has a very busy social schedule. Bridget fears she may never see him again once he gets his driver’s license. And then Gianna (“Gigi”), 11, is the princess of the house. She has a sweet and tender personality but has a competitive



The Ville, left to right: Tom Maschmeier, Nikki Genthner, Bridget, and team co-founder Walt Burrell



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side, dancing in hip hop contests every other weekend. Bridget and Gigi have birthdays in the same month, so that means “girl trips” in the future. As a family they love pool days in their backyard and traveling together. One of Bridget’s favorite things to do is just snuggle up with them on the couch after a long

day all together with their two dogs Bronx and Brooklyn.

The only pursuit Bridget might enjoy more than luxury real estate may be her fondness for luxury sports cars. Her passion for Porsches has become

a hobby she shares with her sons, who always join her on trips to rallies and exotic drives. “They are constantly signing me up for car meet-ups at extravagant places,” she laughs. “In the past few years, we’ve driven to helicopter hangars, gorgeous mansions,

Lower Wacker Drive, and, my favorite, the Iron Gate in Naperville.” She’s also put this pastime to work in her day job, using luxury cars to connect with potential clients. Bridget has become known for closing down the street in front of a luxury listing and inviting sports car enthusiasts to showcase their cars.

In 2020, The Ville aspires to continue their meteoric growth, while improving upon their unique approach. They have added a commercial broker, Tom Maschmeier to their team to fuel their expansion into commercial real estate. Reflecting on all they have accomplished in just two years, Bridget

is quick to direct appreciation and praise on her partner, Walt Burrell. “Every day I think about how glad I am that we joined forces,” she says. “I just knew we could do something really big together!”