

CHICAGO

REAL PRODUCERS[®]

INFORMING AND INSPIRING REAL ESTATE AGENTS

**SAM
SHAFFER**

The Combination of
Kindness and Business

Making a Difference:

JDRF: Improving Lives.
Curing Type 1 Diabetes.

SAM SHAFFER

▶ cover story

By Chris Menezes
Photos by Lindsay Schirk





THE COMBINATION OF KINDNESS & BUSINESS

Sam Shaffer has a genuine heart for taking care of the people around him, most of all, his clients. Sam attributes his propensity for kindness and optimism to his natural inclination to teach. This genuineness comes through in every aspect of the honest, hard work that he has, and continues to put, into building his business, Chicago Properties, and in his ability to make the best out of any situation.

After graduating from Southern Illinois University in 1993 with a degree in recreation, Sam went to work with the Jewish Community Center (JCC), teaching sports classes and running day camps. He left the JCC in 1998, as the dot-com era began to burgeon, to work for a software company called Computer Associates. From there, he joined an Internet startup company called Yes Mail, where he sold high-end, and highly respected, Internet marketing.

Although Sam did well in Internet sales, the industry was extremely volatile, and as many companies started to go under, he became concerned about his longevity in the industry. Then, one day, his friend's father, who was heading up a sales center for JDL, a big-time developer at the time, told Sam that he should get his real estate license so he could go to work for him. Sam thought it would be a good opportunity, so in 2002, he obtained his license. However, when Sam went to see his friend's father, the man had to say to Sam, "Sorry, I don't have anything for you. We're dead right now."

Sam had another friend, Dan Kravitz, who had his own brokerage which consisted of one employee (himself) buying and rehabilitating properties to rent out. Sam joined Dan and they became a two-man wrecking crew. While Sam had no formal training as a REALTOR®, he had a lot of autonomy in his collaborative partnership with Dan as they began to build their business. Sam helped Dan manage his apartment buildings as a rental agent while cultivating and developing his own brokerage.

Through sheer grit, determination, and their willingness to work harder than anybody else, Sam and Dan built Chicago Properties to include five other agents and an office manager. Dan still handles the renovations, construction, and development, while Sam continues to develop the brokerage and work with clients. Sam was recently ranked within the top 15 brokers in volume and has consistently sold roughly \$50 million a year.

"I really felt I had a lot to prove, and I still feel that way. I don't take anything for granted, and I am appreciative of all my opportunities. I'm still trying to get better, smarter, and more efficient," says Sam.

Sam is currently focusing on client communication, and you can see his inclination to teach coming through. His objective is to "over communicate" with his clients: calling them, letting them know what is going on, how showings went, what's on the agenda for the weekend, what their plan is, etc. "The last thing I want is to have a client have to ask me for feedback. It's a stressful process for them, and I don't want to have them in the dark," Sam says.

Sam has been married to his wife, Eden, for fifteen years. They have two children — Joey (12) and Louie (9). When Sam isn't working or spending time with his family, he enjoys CrossFit and playing basketball.

In addition, Sam and Chicago Properties have been huge supporters of the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (now just, JDRF) ever since Sam's youngest son was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes at age 2. Chicago Properties creates and hosts a huge fundraiser for JDRF every year: a JDRF walk at the lakefront in October. The event has raised tens of thousands of dollars for the organization.

"I think one thing that has been very helpful to my business is having like-minded people on my team. We all have the same goals and talking points. I feel I am beyond lucky to have people with whom I have so much trust and confidence in," says Sam.



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