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The Power of Relationship

This February, let your relationships be your legacy—make people feel valued and leave an uplifting mark.

The most difficult and uncomfortable mind shift I've ever made in my life was realizing that relationships are more important than anything else—more important than being skilled, being right, being first, or staying the latest. Anything you can think of: relationships win. Thinking through that lens changes every conversation, every stance, and every approach. It's not an easy shift, but it's a powerful one, especially for those who thrive on doing well and winning. And one that can pay off, as the compound effect of relationships well nurtured can truly change the course of your life for the better.

As February kicks off, let this month remind you that relationships,

not things, are what make life richer. Relationships, not location, make life worth living. Even the best experiences can feel hollow without the right people by your side. Challenge yourself this month to see the world through this lens. Next time you're trying to prove a point and feel determined to be right, shift your focus—make the person on the other side feel heard and appreciated.

This issue is a deep dive into how love and connection show up in our lives, starting with our cover resident, Sophia Davis, who is the first to acknowledge that staying connected to her family, friends and mentors is what has made her own success possible..

Invest in the relationships that enrich your life. Call your dad. Grab a drink with an old friend. Text someone just because. Surprise your partner with a snack they enjoy. Do something kind for a stranger who might not expect it. Take the time to show up, because, at the end of the day, people will rarely remember what you do, but they'll always remember how you made them feel. Here's to the bonds that enrich our lives.

Brynn Mannino

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Meet the people behind the publication that make the magic happen each month.



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FINDING STRENGTH THROUGH CONNECTION

Sofia Davis' journey from a small-town upbringing to pursuing her dreams reveals the transformative power of strong relationships and self-belief.

PHOTOS BY JENNIFER DONATO
OF JKD PHOTOGRAPHY

ISLANDER PHOTOS
PROVIDED BY SOFIA DAVIS



Upper Brookville isn't just where Sofia Davis grew up; it's where she found her footing. Surrounded by a close-knit family and a supportive community, Sofia's journey highlights the power of strong relationships in building confidence and pursuing dreams. Perfectly aligned with the theme of our February 2025 issue, *The Power of Relationship*, Sofia's story reminds us that the people we surround ourselves with play a vital role in shaping our path.

Sofia's family life in Upper Brookville laid the groundwork for her values and ambitions. "My father, Mark, my mother, Diana, and my brothers, Alexander and Nicolas, taught me the importance of togetherness," she shares. Their traditions, from playing golf on Father's Day at the Mill River Club to trying out pickleball together, created lasting memories and a sense of belonging. "These moments showed me how meaningful relationships can uplift and ground you," Sofia reflects.

As a child, Sofia discovered her love for performance. "For 12 years, theater was my safe space," she says. Playing roles like Elle Woods in *Legally Blonde* and Velma in *Chicago*, she found joy and discipline in stepping into different characters. "Theater gave me the confidence to express myself and taught me the value of collaboration and hard work."

But confidence didn't come overnight. "I struggled with anxiety and self-doubt, which made pursuing my dreams feel overwhelming at times," Sofia admits. She credits

her growth to the people who supported her—her family, teachers, and mentors. "My parents always encouraged me, and mentors like Gene Forman and Antonio Mora played a pivotal role in guiding me, and coworkers like Sarahbeth, Fritz, Ryan, Michael, and Danny have supported and encouraged me every step of the way.

In college, Sofia's focus shifted to media and journalism. "My senior year at the University of Miami was transformative," she explains. It was here that she began exploring her voice in broadcast journalism, which deepened her love for storytelling. Through University of Miami Television (UMTV) and internships, she discovered how to blend her creative energy with her growing confidence.

Today, Sofia draws on these experiences to inspire others. "My journey taught me that self-love and a strong support system are essential," she says. "For me, it wasn't just about achieving goals but finding joy in the process and leaning on those who believed in me."





It's safe to say, the time Sofia invested in both herself and those around her paid off, as she recently began an exciting new role as the Coordinator of Entertainment and Talent for the New York Islanders, a position that she says embodies the blend of passion and connection she gained from her days on stage. "Working with the Islanders allows me to create memorable experiences for our fans while staying true to my love for performance and storytelling," Sofia says. "Whether I'm hosting live segments or helping design fan contests, I always aim to foster a sense of community and excitement." She emphasizes how the relationships she's been able to build with her coworkers, like her co-host Syke, have made the job even more rewarding. "It's a privilege to work alongside such talented and supportive individuals."

Outside of work, Sofia remains grounded by her relationships. "Spending time with family and friends is my greatest joy," she shares. Whether it's trying a new restaurant, catching up over coffee, or enjoying a game of pickleball, Sofia cherishes the connections that keep her rooted. She also loves revisiting her theater roots through singing and discovering new songs to challenge herself creatively.

"I've learned that success is never a solo journey," she says. Her advice? "Surround yourself with people who uplift you, and never hesitate to prioritize your mental health." While Sofia believes that "confidence comes from within," she emphasizes the importance of recognizing that it can be "bolstered by the relationships that support you."

For Sofia, Upper Brookville will always be home. "This community has shaped me into who I am today," she says. "Whether you're pursuing a lifelong dream or simply looking to grow, remember that the connections you build along the way are what make the journey truly special."

If your family would like to be featured or if you would like to recommend a neighbor in the next available issue, email strollupperbrookville@gmail.com.

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Just Launched LITTLE LEARNERS

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PHOTOS BY FRANCESCA RUSSELL.

Winter wonderland at Planting Fields.

Planting Fields has become a second home for many visitors – families often come regularly to relax, enjoy time together, and make memories among the 409-acre site. We know how important the time we spend with our kids is, and how difficult it can be to disconnect from the stressors of our everyday lives. To help our visitors make space for the moments that matter most and enrich their lives, we created a very special new series dedicated to providing families and their children the opportunity to create cherished memories, while also educating them and introducing the natural world in interactive hour-long

workshops. For our youngest park visitors ages 2 – 5, Little Learners takes place on Friday every other week and focuses on making sure young ones not only get important time with their parents, but also fosters a sense of life-long learning. Each session has a different theme, such as local wildlife, pollination, gardening, weather, and more includes a nature-focused story, craft, and outdoor play. It is the perfect way to spend time with the little ones who mean so much to us.

February may conjure thoughts of cold weather and gray days for many people, but not for those who know about Planting Fields. This month, join us for the most iconic collection of winter blooms east of the Mississippi, located in the Camellia Greenhouse that only bloom between December and the beginning of March. Vibrant petals of pinks, reds, whites, and a hybridized tie-dye combination await you in the warmth of the historic plant house. It is truly a sight to behold and share with your littles ones as you look for ways to unplug, get out of the house and explore your neighborhood.



The wonder of the Camellia House at Planting Fields.

UPCOMING LITTLE LEARNER SESSIONS:

Animal Sounds Friday, Feb. 21 | 10 – 11am | Ages 2 – 5 | \$15 per child
Explore the fascinating world of animal sounds – from the calls of birds to the chatter of forest creatures! You'll be amazed by the sounds all around us and learn how animals communicate in their natural habitats.

Rainbows Friday, Mar. 7 | 10 – 11am | Ages 2 – 5 | \$15 per child
Discover the magic of rainbows with us as we read a colorful book, go on a rainbow scavenger hunt, and make our very own rainbow sun catcher to brighten up the day!

Spring Has Sprung! Friday, Mar. 21 | 10 – 11am | Ages 2 – 5 | \$15 per child
Join us as we explore the world of flowers! This Little Learners program includes story time, a flower craft and planting your own flower to bring home.

More programs and events for kids and adults can be found at plantingfields.org

MEET OUR NEW JUNIOR WRITER, UPPER BROOKVILLE RESIDENT JUSTIN KWOK

Justin is a student at Locust Valley High School and the school newspaper's editor for the Performing Arts. He is incredibly passionate about all kinds of arts from performing arts to visual arts to filmmaking. Justin aspires to share his love of the arts, tell the stories and experiences of others, and ultimately inspire readers to explore their own creativity.

If you have a story about the arts from performing to visual that you would like to share with your neighbors, email strollupperbrookville@gmail.com.



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As a lifelong Long Islander who grew up in Commack, my roots here run deep. I now call Laurel Hollow home, a picturesque part of this incredible island. My journey toward becoming a lawyer began early; my aunt and I would watch Matlock together, and I was captivated by the idea of standing up for justice. My older brother went on to attend law school at Hofstra University, and following in his footsteps, I, too, became a proud Hofstra alum.

My legal career kicked off in the District Attorney's office, where I honed my skills for three years before branching into private practice. Running my own firm for the past 12 years has been an incredibly rewarding journey, from a solo practice to a robust team of over 50. Our firm, headquartered in Huntington, now spans offices in Bay Shore, White Plains, Queens, and soon Syracuse.

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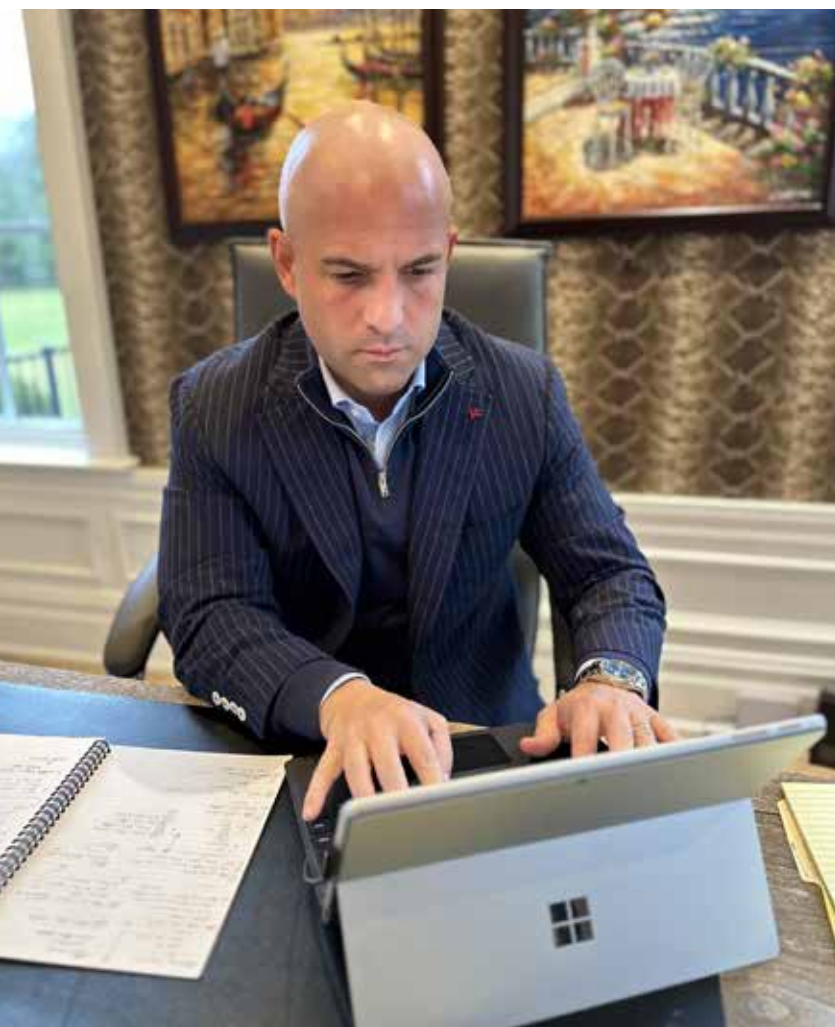
To Long Islanders facing legal challenges, my advice is this: find an attorney you trust. Your lawyer should be your advocate, handling the stress and complexities on your behalf so you can focus on moving forward.

Outside the office, Married to my wonderful wife, Melissa, I'm a dedicated father of three energetic boys. Weekends are spent on the sidelines, cheering them on in their various sports. If you spot me out there, feel free to say hello!

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THE FASANO FIVE WITH LISA FASANO

February 2025

Top trends shaping the Upper Brookville real estate landscape amid evolving luxury preferences



LUXURY MARKET RESILIENCE

Despite broader economic shifts, the luxury real estate market remains strong, with single-family home prices rising at twice the pace of the broader market. This trend signals that wealthy buyers remain confident, seeking properties that not only preserve wealth but also align with their lifestyle aspirations.

Key takeaway: For Upper Brookville homeowners, this remains a prime time to list luxury properties, as demand continues to outpace supply.

A POSITIVE OUTLOOK FOR 2025

With 85% of luxury property specialists optimistic about buyer demand and 74% about seller sentiment, 2025 is shaping up to be a promising year for luxury real estate. This optimism reflects recovery from past disruptions and the sustained growth of global wealth, particularly in emerging markets.

Key takeaway: Buyers and sellers should feel encouraged by the positive outlook. This may be the perfect moment to engage in transactions, with market conditions favoring both sides.

EXPANDING INVENTORY UNLOCKS PENT-UP DEMAND

A growing inventory of luxury homes is easing previous supply constraints, offering more options for discerning buyers. With more choices available, buyers no longer need to rush or overbid, which may unlock previously pent-up demand.

Key takeaway: Buyers in Upper Brookville will find more opportunities in 2025. However, homes that stand out will still attract significant interest, so be prepared to act quickly.

THE GROWING INFLUENCE OF AFFLUENT WOMEN IN LUXURY REAL ESTATE

Affluent women are playing a significant role in driving demand for luxury real estate, influencing purchasing decisions and shaping the features



of homes. As more women achieve financial independence through leadership, entrepreneurship, and inheritance, their preferences are increasingly guiding the design and functionality of luxury properties. In Upper Brookville, this trend reflects a growing demand for homes that cater to a sophisticated, multifaceted lifestyle.

Key takeaway: Real estate professionals in Upper Brookville should focus on designing properties that meet the needs of this influential demographic by including features such as private wellness spaces, home offices, and homes that offer both privacy and room for entertaining. Homes that align with modern, independent lifestyles are likely to attract significant attention in the local market.

VALUE-DRIVEN LUXURY

Affluent buyers are placing greater emphasis on value, seeking properties that offer not only luxury but also long-term returns and unique experiences. This shift represents a growing focus on thoughtful, sustainable luxury investments.

Key takeaway: Upper Brookville buyers should consider properties that offer more than just opulence—seek homes with historical charm, energy efficiency, or distinctive design features that deliver lasting value.



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DIVERSIFY YOUR INVESTMENTS to Weather Market Turbulence

BY MICHAEL DISPIRITO, MBA, CHFC, AEP, MSFS, UPPER BROOKVILLE RESIDENT

During times of rising interest rates, high inflation, and bear market growliness, a fully diversified portfolio can help lessen the impact of volatile conditions. A diversified portfolio weaves together a range of strategies from different industries, paired with products from varied sectors, classes or risk ratings. The intent is that when some sectors decline, they're *offset* by other sectors that increase, thereby

diminishing the negative impact and in turn, lowering stress levels for investors. Here are some strategies you might consider:

Dividend-paying stocks: In addition to providing consistent income, many dividend-paying stocks are in sectors that can more easily withstand economic downturns. They provide the **dual benefit** of potential stock price appreciation coupled with

dividend payments -- a good recipe for outperforming inflation over time. Dividend-paying stocks aren't risk-free, so do your research to determine if they're an appropriate strategy for your portfolio.

Short-term debt: Bonds such as Treasury Bills have an inverse correlation to the stock market and tend to rise in price as stock prices fall. In addition, because the U.S.

government backs them, Treasury securities are considered a safer investment relative to stocks.

Precious metals: Precious metals (purchased directly or through exchange-traded funds) have potential to produce positive returns during prolonged bear markets because they hold their value and offer a hedge against inflation.

REITs: Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) consist of real estate assets that typically produce income at different times, and must distribute 90% of their taxable income as dividends to investors. REITs develop and improve their properties and reinvest in other properties to produce returns.

Indexed annuities: An annuity is a contract with an insurance company that provides an income stream during retirement. Indexed annuity returns are based on an index like the S&P 500. If the value of the index goes up, you receive a return based on that value. If the value of the index goes down, you receive a guaranteed minimum interest rate. Other things to know about indexed annuities:

- Your principal is protected during a down market, and you won't lose your initial investment or any accumulation.
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- Annuities provide a guaranteed lifetime income and protection against longevity risk since annuity payments are provided for life.

Your financial professional should work closely with you to determine if any of these strategies are appropriate for your situation (or if now is a suitable time to diversify your portfolio as you work towards your goals). If you don't currently have a financial professional (or feel under-served by the one you have), give us a call.

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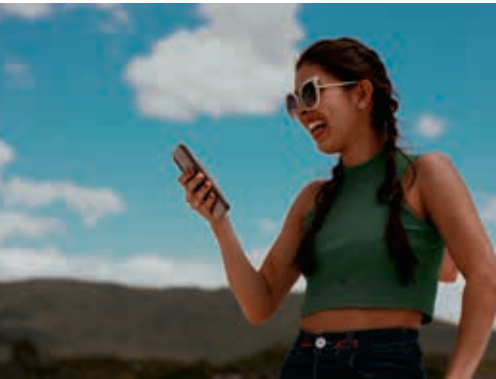
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BE IN THE MAGAZINE

You deserve it!

Let Stroll capture your precious memories in 2025! These are just a few ideas to spark inspiration—but no celebration is too big or small. Feature Families have the opportunity to work with our amazing *Stroll Upper Brookville* photographer, JKD Photography (IG: @jkdpotography; jkdpotography.com).

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Welcome to Residenza di Serenità

Your Retreat on Pine Valley Road

Contact Lisa Fasano (516) 717- 9748 • lisa.fasano@compass.com today for a personal tour of Residenza Di Serenita—where elegance and sophistication await.



Imagine mornings in a tranquil haven where the world's chaos fades. Nestled on Pine Valley Road, Residenza di Serenità transforms daily life into a luxurious escape, balancing elegance and peace.

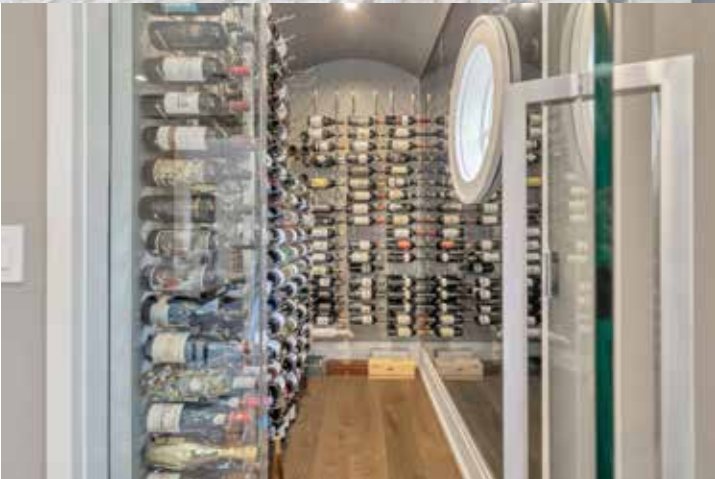
A Graceful Beginning

Morning light pours into the marble foyer, illuminating its grandeur. Descend the elegant staircase beneath a shimmering 100-year-old French crystal chandelier. The scent of espresso and warm breakfasts fills the air, inviting you into your day.

In the living room, high ceilings and intricate moldings create a serene space, perfect for curling up with a book. From there, French doors in the family room frame views of the patio and manicured backyard. Gentle breezes flow through, connecting indoors with a vibrant outdoor sanctuary.

The Heart of the Home

The chef's kitchen is a hub for creativity and connection, featuring a wood-burning pizza oven, stone countertops, and walnut cabinetry. Friends and family gather around the expansive island, sharing laughter and meals. Nearby, a sunlit breakfast area





opens onto the patio, merging indoor charm with outdoor beauty.

Spaces for Rest and Celebration

At day's end, the primary suite becomes a personal retreat. High ceilings, a cozy fireplace, and a spa-like marble bathroom with radiant heated floors provide comfort and luxury. Step onto the private terrace to unwind with views of the serene grounds. Six en-suite bedrooms ensure that guests experience equal comfort, each offering a peaceful haven for quiet moments or lively conversations.

The dining room, anchored by a glass wine sanctuary, turns meals into memories. It's an ideal setting for celebrations, where every gathering feels special.

Endless Possibilities

The finished basement, accessible by elevator, offers 10-ft ceilings, a media room, fitness center, and steam shower. A secondary kitchen and recreational spaces provide versatility, blending seamlessly with direct access to the backyard.

A Backyard Paradise

Outside, a fully tiled pool and spa sparkle under the sun, complemented by cascading waterfalls and a lounge area. An outdoor kitchen with a Kalamazoo barbecue and pizza oven inspires al fresco dining. As night falls, fountains and a gas fire pit create a magical setting, perfect for sharing stories under the stars.

At Residenza di Serenità, every detail invites relaxation, connection, and the joy of a life well-lived.



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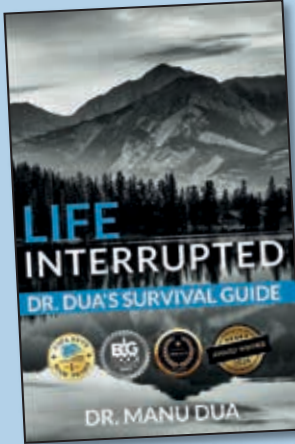
REAL ESTATE
RESOURCE

The information contained herein has been obtained by The Lisa Fasano Team, Global Real Estate Advisor at Compass | lisa.fasano@compass.com // 516-717-9748.

Address	Neighborhood	List Price	Sale Price	Sold Date	DOM	Beds	Baths	Acreage
1347 Chicken Valley Road	Upper Brookville	\$2,998,000	\$2,950,000	11/02/23	73	4	5	2
2 Locust Lane	Upper Brookville	\$3,199,000	\$3,000,000	11/08/23	32	5	4	2
1005 Wolver Hollow Road	Upper Brookville	\$1,750,000	\$1,575,000	11/20/23	123	4	4	3.86
111 Mill River Road	Upper Brookville	\$829,900	\$892,500	11/29/23	31	3	3	2.13
80 Mill River Road	Upper Brookville	\$3,688,000	\$3,500,000	12/22/23	169	5	4	2.68
70 Wolver Hollow Road	Upper Brookville	\$2,475,000	\$2,400,000	01/11/24	91	8	4	2
1281 Wolver Hollow Road	Upper Brookville	\$2,475,000	\$2,350,000	01/26/24	243	4	4	3.1
1185 Pine Valley Road	Upper Brookville	\$1,495,000	\$1,285,000	02/27/24	171	5	4	2.05
1167 Pine Valley Road	Upper Brookville	\$2,950,000	\$2,850,000	03/06/24	196	6	4	3.48
8 Remsens Ln	Upper Brookville	\$1,000,000	\$800,000	03/11/24	273	3	1	2.16
347 Juniper Drive	Upper Brookville	\$1,100,000	\$1,300,000	04/17/24	5	4	4	2.01
1275 Wolver Hollow Road	Upper Brookville	\$10,250,000	\$10,000,000	07/19/24	111	7	8	5.14
353 Juniper Drive	Upper Brookville	\$7,450,000	\$6,000,000	07/23/24	279	6	7	1.99
43 Chestnut Hill Drive	Upper Brookville	\$9,950,000	\$9,850,000	07/31/24	20	7	10	5.28
939 Ripley Lane	Upper Brookville	\$5,500,000	\$5,100,000	08/07/24	2	6	5	8.33
343 Chicken Valley Road	Upper Brookville	\$3,100,000	\$2,900,000	08/14/24	54	4	3	5.5
987 Wolver Hollow Road	Upper Brookville	\$1,795,000	\$1,795,000	08/22/24	10	6	5	2
861 Remsens Lane	Upper Brookville	\$2,248,000	\$2,275,000	08/29/24	28	4	3	2
4 Filasky Court	Upper Brookville	\$2,995,000	\$3,200,000	09/12/24	71	6	5	2.27
999 Wolver Hollow Road	Upper Brookville	\$2,650,000	\$2,700,000	10/30/24	15	6	4	2.58

This is your neighborhood Real Estate Resource page. This information can be useful when trying to compare property values or for just keeping a pulse on the real estate market in our area. For questions regarding the properties listed, or about real estate in general, consult a real estate professional.

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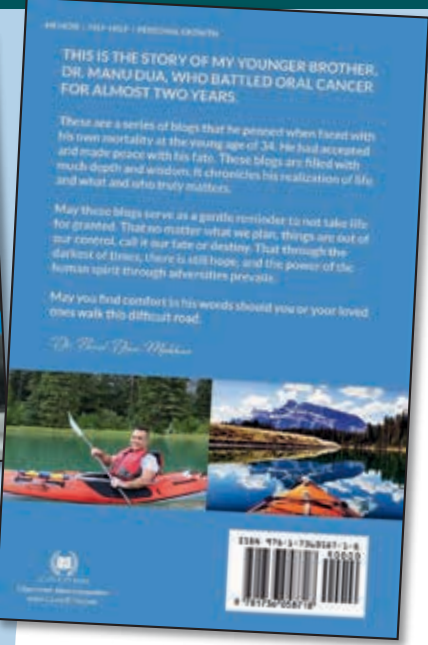


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