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**ELENA
LICARI**

Determination &
Perseverance



▶▶ star on the rise

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Elena Licari, a real estate agent with the Joe Velasco Group at Compass, is also a fire engineer for the City of San Jose. She has always been interested in real estate, but the decision to pursue it as a second job came about after meeting her husband, Tony, a builder, developer, and licensed general contractor with 20+ years of experience.

“When we met, he said, ‘Hey, I hope you’re ready for this crazy ride. I’m about to start remodeling this house that I’m in,’” Elena says. “I was all on board and helping him with demo and having fun. It really bought us closer together. It was really special to see that house come together.”

Elena realized she wanted to get into real estate when one of their agents was talking about comps.

“I wanted to know what a comp was and how to do it,” Elena says. “It dawned on me with my time schedule, ‘Why don’t I take on this role?’”

JOURNEY TO REAL ESTATE

Elena went on to obtain her real estate license and expressed her excitement about it to the people she worked with at the firehouse.

“Before I knew it, I had a couple of co-workers that asked me to help them buy and sell,” she says. “And then I had an amazing mentor, Tom Khorram, and that’s how I got into it.”

Elena began getting opportunities, started meeting people, and learned the value of doing open houses and networking.

“It’s interesting watching it all happen from the outside,” Tony says. “When she first started doing real estate, every company, brokerage, wanted her to be on their team.”

HARD WORK LEADS TO GOOD THINGS

Elena’s interest in real estate has since evolved into a deep passion for the field.

“It will be midnight, and I’ll have to pry myself away from work,” she says. “I’ll wake up ready to



go. I’ve been so excited about real estate and all the stuff I have to do.”

Determination and perseverance have been key factors in Elena’s journey to becoming a firefighter and real estate agent. At 18 years old, after participating in a Middle College program for two years, she did an accelerated EMT program and found great mentorship, which jump-started her path. She then worked as an ER tech in an emergency room, went through the fire science program at College of San Mateo, volunteered for the Menlo Park Fire Department, attended paramedic school, started testing, and then was hired in the first class of 30 people off the list out of thousands who took the test at the San Jose Fire Department.

“It was extremely challenging,” Elena says. “I knew there was no option to fail. I was going to do it.”

That can-do attitude was also exhibited when she was younger, especially with her involvement in martial arts.

“That really gave me focus,” Elena says. “For the first time as a child, I found my own power and learned that if I worked hard, showed up, and was consistent, good things were going to happen to me.”

Elena went through the ranks and became a black belt when she was 16 years old. She also excelled in sports while in school; she went to the championships for cross-country and track, and wrestled.

“You went till you broke, and when you broke you made sure you didn’t give in,” she says. “And then you kept going. It was a physical and mental push.”

Elena’s strong work ethic was influenced by her parents. Elena and her family immigrated from Ukraine and left as refugees, having to seek asylum due to political reasons and the Chernobyl disaster.

Her mother had gone through nursing school and also taught music, while her father, a civil engineer by trade, worked odds and ends jobs until they got back on their feet.

“They hustled,” Elena says. “From an early age, I saw that and learned that. I also had this feeling inside of me that I never wanted to ask my parents for money or things because of how hard they were working for it.”

REAL ESTATE SKILLS

In addition to a strong work ethic, Elena’s commitment to being a team player has helped her as a real estate agent.

“I’ve always liked collaboration,” she says. “That’s what I really love about being a part of a real estate team. The Joe Velasco Group ranked in the top 1% nationwide per the 2018 Wall Street Journal REAL Trends, and #177 out of 1.4 million agents based on sales volume. I am on a team of seven, so my clients get the



support of seven agents. This allows me to successfully manage both of my careers while providing timely and quality service to my clients. Being a firefighter is incredibly rewarding, and I love helping others. One of the other beautiful things about this career is also that when I check in, it's for a 48 hours shift and then I am off for four days straight, allowing me to be off most weekends.

At times, when I check in to the firehouse, I can count on Joe and the team to respond to my clients while I save lives. I do the same when he goes on vacation with his family to Disneyland, saving his family life," Elena says with a laugh. "My team and I fully support each other."

"With my fire crew, we're always together. We're always collaborating. We're rolling up to a fire. We're all putting our brains together like, 'Hey look out for this. Look out for that. What's our task? What's our objective?'" The same goes for my real estate team – not only are you able to elevate yourself because you're constantly bouncing things off of each other, but you're always there for your client. You're able to help them in a different way because you have different perspectives."

Elena is also a great communicator.

"When communicating with clients or people... I always try to think of what way I need to be right now for them to understand what I'm saying or for me to communicate what I need effectively," she says.

THE POWER OF THOUGHT

"Whenever trying something new, you have to step out of your comfort zone and expand your way of thinking. That is one of the things I love about embarking in real estate; you have to think quickly and be solution-oriented. This process also really reinforced my beliefs in the power of your thoughts. Everything starts with a thought and that thought is a powerful first step in creating what will happen in your reality."



"Whatever we declare that we are going to do, I just do it as if there is no opportunity to fail," Elena says. "I think about how is what I'm doing good energy and how is what I'm doing helping others. I love it just when I am able to make people smile. That always makes me really happy."

COMPASS

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