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Giving Back

Cultivating a Cause-Based Brokerage

By Bridget McCrea

Anthony Marguleas has always had a penchant for giving back to the communities, organizations and individuals who need his support, but after a cancer scare, this owner of Amalfi Estates and leader of The Marguleas Team in Pacific Palisades, Calif., took that passion to a completely new level. “Twenty-five years ago, I had Stage 4 of a rare type of cancer,” says Marguleas. “Even after a bone marrow transplant and radiation treatment, I was given a 25 percent chance of survival.”

Luckily, Marguleas beat those odds and says he’s since “realigned” his priorities to focus on what’s most important in life. And while he earns a respectable livelihood from his successful real estate career, Marguleas says he’s less centered on material things and more focused on making a difference in the community—and for the people around him.

Finding Ways to Give Back

Early on, Marguleas says, he explored innovative ways to give back without having to write out big checks to charity. In 2009, with four teenage children to support, he decided to give 100 percent of his commission (approximately \$60,000) on two home

On a mission to donate \$1 million to charity, this California Realtor® looks beyond the dollars and cents of real estate sales and focuses on helping the communities, organizations and individuals around him.



sales annually to charities, schools and nonprofits. Then, he began giving 10 percent of his net commission—on every sale—to a charity of the customer’s choosing.

At its core, The Marguleas Team is a philanthropic real estate brokerage that gives 10 percent of its net commission back to the community. In 2015, Marguleas hired a business consultant who specializes in charitable giving to help his team develop a charitable giving plan that would articulate the firm's core values and charitable goals. "We had donated to about 50 separate charities, and the consultant helped us narrow that down to five (Make-a-Wish® Foundation, spcaLA, American Cancer Society, PATH and Homeboy Industries)," says Marguleas. "We did this so we could make a more impactful difference to these organizations."

Marguleas says his goal is to lead by example and encourage other real estate firms to start giving back more. "Once we started giving 10 percent back, we saw other top agents following suit," he says. "If we can get every agent to give 10 percent back, the impact on our community and the country is staggering. In one year in Los Angeles alone, \$36 billion in homes are sold. That translates into \$90 million per year [that could be] back to charity."

Future Goals

Going forward, Marguleas says he wants to give the majority of his commissions to charity once his four

children graduate from college. To date, the firm has donated \$381,000, including \$129,000 last year and \$132,000 [as of August 2016]. And, while Marguleas' passion for giving transcends his real estate career, he says clients do notice the efforts. "They love it," he says. "It deepens our relationship with our client and honors that relationship with a charitable donation."

Driven by challenges and the opportunity to help others, Marguleas says he was largely inspired by Warren Buffett's and Bill Gates' Giving Pledge, a commitment by the world's wealthiest individuals and families to dedicate the majority of their wealth to philanthropy. He was also inspired by a customer whose granddaughter had recently died from a rare heart condition while playing soccer at school. "His story made me cry," says Marguleas, "and further solidified my philosophy that giving back not only helps others, but also enhances the relationships that we have with our home buyers and sellers."

Bridget McCrea is a Clearwater-based freelance writer specializing in real estate and business.

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