

Broker Spotlight

THE **Durango** HERALD

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the spotlight of the week*

Katie Sturm **Broker Associate**

Keller Williams Realty Southwest Associates
Ph: 970.799.3975 katie@katiesturm.com

Where did you grow up?

I am one of five kids. My dad was a Navy pilot and my mom is a nurse. We moved around every few years - FL, TX, VA, Rhode Island and eventually ended up in Doylestown PA. I went to college at VA Tech then graduate school at George Mason Univ., graduating with degrees in Engineering. All my siblings and their families still live on the east coast, but my husband and I decided to move to CO in 1996 because we both loved the CO lifestyle.

What do you like most about living in this area?

The beautiful outdoor playground right in my backyard and the fun and friendly people who choose to live here. What's not to love about a place where there is always an invitation to go to a party, camping or bike riding depending on your mood?

What do you enjoy doing when you're not working?

Anything outdoors with my friends and family - mountain biking, running, paddle boarding, snowboarding, camping and wakeboarding. I also enjoy tinkering on my home with various home improvement projects.

How long have you worked in Real Estate?

I bought my first home at a foreclosure sale in Virginia, then several other

fixer uppers over the years. My husband and I bought run down Victorian apartment buildings in downtown Denver and remodeled them in the evenings after our day jobs. I was inspired by our Denver Realtor, a very experienced broker, who took such good care of us when we were looking for investment properties. I got my license 7 years ago so I could use it to sell some homes my husband and I were building and to help my friends and family with their real estate searches.

What did you do before that?

After college I worked in the telecom industry as a sales engineer because I enjoyed sales and eventually moved into as an account manager in the high tech sales field in Washington DC. I then moved to Denver and left the workplace to raise my four children. When my kids were little, I would help my husband run his contracting business and oversee some of his custom home projects. I started selling his homes full time when my kids were all in school. With hard work and plenty of coaching from my co-workers, I am proud to be in the top 10% of Realtors in Durango this year.

What is your specialty?

I love helping buyers find a great value or a unique property especially families or people starting to get into investment property. I enjoy helping renters get qualified for financing and to become

first time homebuyers. I have assisted many distressed homeowners avoid foreclosure by working with them on a short sale which is very gratifying. The process is complicated and has scads of paperwork, but in the end it is about helping people move on to the next part of their lives when they are upside down in their mortgages. I am always on the lookout for good solid income properties and let my investor clients know as soon as something interesting pops up.

What is the most challenging/gratifying aspect of what you do?

Of course I love looking at houses any time - it is like treasure hunting! I find it very gratifying to put together transactions where all parties come away from the table feeling good about the deal. The most difficult part nowadays is telling homeowners that their houses are not worth what they expected and if we price it too high, we will end up chasing the market and the listing will take longer to sell. People feel they may be starting out pricing it too low, but that is rarely the case, and if it is too low they will get multiple offers. I also point out to sellers that they may be getting less than they would like on the sale but to remember that the home they are buying will also cost less so the effect is relative. Lower interest rates available now also afford today's buyer more buying power.

What is the most unique property you've listed or sold?

I helped assist in the arrest of a wanted criminal who was in town looking at ranch estates. My colleague and I made an appointment at the place he was staying to drop off contract documents for signatures and when he answered the door, he was greeted by an enthusiastic Cortez SWAT team.



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