



COVER STORY

By Jenna Caputo

For the Pennartz Family, Home Is Where the Heart Is

Sheri Pennartz knows what it's like to move around. After living in Germany for 12 years, and travelling around the world on top of it for her husband's job, Sheri became all too familiar with the game of not only finding a home for her family, but finding someone she could trust to help her locate the right neighborhood and schools, learn a new language and culture, and meet new people. It

became such a part of her life that she thought it was something she'd like to do when she eventually came back to America. "I wanted to help other families," she says.

Originally from Baltimore, Maryland, Sheri grew up an active child, participating in field hockey, tennis and cheerleading. She always enjoyed travelling. Sheri met her husband Carsten while working at a

fitness center selling memberships in Maryland. Originally from Germany, Carsten was a chemical engineer and travelled the world for his job. Sheri returned to Germany with him to start their family.

Life abroad was never dull. Leaving the country to visit other areas was a requirement for the visa, so while Sheri's family lived in Germany, Israel and Taiwan, they also visited Switzerland, Hong Kong, Philippines, England, Thailand, Egypt, Guam, Italy, Turkey, Africa, Malaysia, Amsterdam, Sweden – the list goes on and on. Her favorite place to visit was Bali because not only were the people and hotels really nice, she also enjoyed the beautiful handcrafted jewelry and culture. She met some influential people in her travels as well, including Shimon Perez, President of Israel.

Teaching herself German by volunteering in a German kindergarten class and in a church, she then took classes until she became fluent. She also has the ability to understand Mandarin. She taught aerobics to the German professional hockey team, Nuremberg Ice Tigers, every other day for coordination. Sheri also taught English to the business professionals in the German-based company, Siemens – an engineering company composed of workers from around the world, specializing in MRIs and medical diagnosis, as well as energy-efficient, resource-saving technologies for power generation and transmission.

Deciding it was time to come back to the states, Carsten's job offered them five location choices. They chose the Capital District since it was closest to Sheri's family in Baltimore. Now a Construction Director for GE, Carsten still has to travel, but Sheri's family has now been based here for 12 years out of their 25-year marriage. Their children: Marcel, 20, is a student at Plattsburg and plans to pursue his masters in international financing in Germany; and Lars, 17, is a senior

in Shen and plans to attend UTI in Boston. The family also now includes 3 dogs – Chester, Stella, and Lilly, and one cat, Pheebe. Still active, Sheri and her family enjoy running in local charity 5k races.

Not knowing anyone when they first moved here, Sheri arranged a book group and a Bunco game group to meet some of her neighbors and to connect with people. She also volunteered at local YMCA events. She started her business off sitting on a hockey bench in Clifton Park stuffing folders, and eventually grew her business through the school and community and is now in the top 5% of the newly formed Berkshire Hathaway Home Services, which recently merged from Prudential and is run under Warren Buffet as Chairman. She is an area specialist and has received numerous high honors and presidents awards. In addition to her general real estate clients, Sheri also helps international families relocate to the area for Global Foundries and other technology companies, guiding them in the right direction to finding the perfect homes for their families.

Remembering what it is like to be in that situation, all of Sheri's clients are treated as relatives. She works very hard to know the area, the market and is always looking out for her clients' best interests. "I treat people like they are my own family. People do not know that I work 60+ hours a week to make my buyers happy and sellers feeling they picked the best person to get the job done."

She is passionate about helping people meet their real estate goals – whether selling or buying. "Buying and selling is a very emotional process. You need to trust the person who will represent you to take care of all your needs." It is a process, and her advice on the first thing to consider when buying a house is to get preapproved. Then decide where you want to be financially within that



amount. She cautions to always keep reserves. Be sure to actually drive by the neighborhood location of a house you're interested in to ensure you like the location, and consider the layout, upgrades and flow of the entire house before making any decisions.

If you're selling a house, be sure to get a current market analysis for your area before starting. Don't over invest in your property before checking the analysis, because the market for your neighborhood might not be able to support your investment.

When choosing the right agent for you, check referrals, websites and testimonials from prior clients for the past two years. Read them carefully. Focus on going with an area specialist that does real estate as a full time job in order to get the benefit of a full, reliable experience.

As a realtor, Sheri is privileged to hear many interesting stories from people's lives and says that everyone has their own special needs in what they look for in a house. She has had clients that look for a house based around their pool table or their cats, as well as the typical needs like a specific

kind of kitchen. "I love meeting new people and hearing their stories," says Sheri.

Sheri and her family have certainly settled into the Capital District, and like most people in Clifton Park, states how much she loves the community and location. In her spare time, Sheri loves to read, run, attend local theatrical productions, participate in local events, and yes, she still enjoys travelling, although she doesn't feel the need to constantly roam around anymore. "We were very fortunate at a young age to experience all these cultures while we and the kids were still young."

Sheri loves being a part of this community and is happy to give a free market analysis to any seller and a free consultation on what's currently happening in the market for this area. She can be reached at 894-8994 or at spennartz@bhhsblake.com. ■

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