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By Jess Wellar  
Photos by Michelle Reed

*Whatever  
It Takes*

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“I once did a deal on a jet ski,” Kara Heaslip remembers with a laugh. “I was on vacation and my client called, so I raced back to the dock and put the deal together. You don’t set your own hours in this business — your clients do.”





IT TAKES TIME AND A LOT OF ENERGY TO MAKE IT IN A TOWN WITH SUCH **FIERCE COMPETITION.**

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Top producer Kara Heaslip is a member of The Patrick Dearborn Team at John R. Wood Properties | Christie's International Real Estate.

It's exactly that sort of mindset that is behind Kara's exceptional success as a Certified Luxury Home Marketing Specialist with John R. Wood | Christie's International Real Estate. In the business for 14 years, Kara has earned the reputation of being "the concierge REALTOR®" for good reason.

**A NATURAL ENTREPRENEUR**

Born and raised in Richmond, Kentucky, Kara comes from a proud military background. Her family settled in Naples when she was 7, and Kara learned the value of hard work and salesmanship from an early age while working in her family's local grocery store.

"Both my mother and father (who met at Camp Lejeune), my grandfather, and my uncles are or were United States Marines and Army,"

Kara notes. "So loyalty, dedication, and discipline were ingrained in me growing up."

After marrying her husband, a professional golfer, in 1996, Kara spent the next seven years on the national golf circuit as his caddy, touring the country in the couple's RV. She notes it was a fun time in her young adult life, caravanning on the road. But once Kara became a mother, a change of pace was in order.

Her husband took a job running a local golf course while Kara stayed home to raise their infant daughter. However, after a few months of listening to her husband return home from work sharing stories of his members' housing woes while they were away on vacation, a lightbulb suddenly went off. Kara decided to start her own house-sitting business, a role that

perfectly leveraged her people skills, attention to detail, and self-described "type A, high-gear personality."

Kara notes this experience laid the groundwork for an eventual pivot to real estate, sparked by her in-laws' suggestion to obtain her license to take over their clientele as they eyed possible retirement.

"My in-laws, Judy and Kevin Heaslip, were wonderful mentors and I worked with them for nine years. They have been brokers in our town for 30 years and really made me the Realtor I am today," she acknowledges.

"I was already housesitting in that realm anyway, so when I became an agent, I had clients," she adds. "I had honestly never thought about real estate, but decided to give it a try feet-first — and here we are!"

**AUTHENTICITY AT THE CORE**

Since transitioning into real estate in 2010, Kara has made her mark without obsessing over stats. Yet, her accomplishments speak volumes, including a groundbreaking \$7.8 million residential sale that set a new benchmark in The Bayshore Arts District last year. Kara closed over \$20 million in sales in 2023, as well, and had no clue she had even made the top 100 ranking in SWFL until her phone rang.

"When the publisher called and told me I was in the top 100, I was like, 'I am?'" she laughs. "If you start driving for numbers, you're not focused on your clients."

As part of The Patrick Dearborn Team for the past five years, Kara loves being on a close-knit group of seven agents that works well together. "As a team,

we all just balance each other out," Kara affirms. "Together, it's a perfect medley of professionals to give our clients the best service. Everybody vibes."

Kara's approach to connecting with clients is 100 percent authenticity and passion 100 percent of the time. "What you see is what you get — I'm the person on social media making fun of myself," she declares.

Kara's secret sauce also includes striving to be a "concierge Realtor," as she will go above and beyond to ensure her listings shine and her clients feel valued. "I will do whatever it takes to get a listing sold," she asserts. "I will spend hours decluttering and staging my listings prior to the photos and video to ensure the property is at its absolute best. I have completely redesigned the interior decor as well. I meet with my

client's contractors, especially if they are out of town. Whatever it takes!"

Kara's advice to aspiring agents echoes this same mantra of perseverance. "Do not think that this is a business that you can do part-time," she counsels. "It takes time and a lot of energy to make it in a town with such fierce competition. It's also a crazy business and there's a lot of work behind the scenes."

**A BALANCED LIFE**

Outside of work, Kara cherishes time with her family, including her husband of 28 years, Dan, and their young adult daughter, Isabella. Dan has been the director of golf at Windstar on Naples Bay since 2007, while Isabella is a junior at Florida State University.

The Heaslips enjoy boating and exploring new destinations together with







Kara Heaslip and her German shepherd, Charley



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their three beloved dogs — rescues Maggie and Lulu, and 100-pound long-haired German shepherd Charley — adding extra fun to their family outings.

In her spare time, Kara is fully committed to her well-being, and can usually be spotted at CycleBar most mornings. “I love being outside in nature and working out. This profession can be all consuming so decompression is important to me to stay mentally and physically refreshed... As long as I get fresh air and sunshine somewhere, it recharges me,” she shares.

Kara’s commitment to well-being extends to her community involvement with the Bayshore Arts District, where she helps nurture creativity and inclusivity. “I am on their board of directors as I believe creativity and individuality are so important in this world. It would be very boring if we were all the same,” Kara points out. “We raise funds for the area to expand artistic event programming, provide studio space for local artists at lower costs, and advance our community outreach initiatives.”

As she looks ahead, Kara envisions continuing down a long, fruitful path in real estate, potentially pursuing a broker’s license someday.

“The future is limitless, right? As long as you dream big, make a concentrated effort, and aren’t afraid of the word ‘no,’ then anything is possible,” she concludes.