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magazine

Shelly Tripp

broker/agent of the month

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"I set a goal when I was six years old that I wanted to have a family."

*Making a difference in all she does*

# Shelly Tripp

by Janine Creager • photography by North Light Photography



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Shelly Tripp of Coldwell Banker knows all about making the best of a bad situation. From growing up in an abusive home with a drug dealing father to being homeless and sleeping on the street at the age of 14, Shelly learned early on that success and happiness in life was up to her.

"The best advice I ever received," shares Shelly, "was that 'You cannot control what happens to you, but you can control how you feel about it.' If you want to be successful, you have to focus, believe in yourself and do."

Shelly was born to parents who married when they were just 16, and was later abandoned by her mother when she was only a toddler. She then lived with her father, and a grandmother who tried her best yet was equally overwhelmed. Shelly was physically abused by her father, the very person she should have been able to trust, and even entertained thoughts of suicide to escape her horrific situation.

"We lived in Phoenix across the street from the projects," Tripp remembers. "My dad had to hotwire our house so people wouldn't come in and steal the drugs." Then Shelly's grandmother died when she was just 14. That's when she and her younger brother left to live on the streets.

For some people, starting out life in such deplorable conditions might mean only one thing: a one-way ticket to a life of misery and destruction. But Shelly felt that her life had been preserved and guided by a Higher influence, and knew that her life could be better than it was.

"I talked to God everyday," says Shelly. "He was the one I could talk to growing up. There was no adult that I could trust." She firmly believes that it was divine intervention that brought her to Utah to live with an aunt and uncle, a decision that ultimately turned her life around.

"God helped me through the real tough times. He was and is my best friend."

With a strong faith and people around her that could offer more guidance than she had received in the past, Shelly worked to plan her way out of the chaos she had been handed.

"I set a goal when I was six years-old that I wanted to have a family," she says. "I made promises to myself that I would never get divorced, that I would be a good mom and would listen to my kids and believe what they tell me."

True to her promise, Shelly now has a family that is the number one priority and passion in her life. She has been married to Darrell Paul Tripp for 25 years and has four children and one grandchild. The Tripps have also cared for several foster children over the years. She loves them all deeply and enjoys spending time with her growing family.

"I always wanted a family and now I have a family," says Shelly. Unfortunately, her brother, with whom she suffered the hardships of her youth, has made different choices that landed him in prison where he currently resides.

But Shelly was determined to move beyond her pain and make something out of her life. She knew she had to rely on herself and no one else. "I knew then and I know now that I'm the only one who can make things happen for me." And because of what she endured, she never lost sight or vision of those around her who are in need of help.

Especially the children.

"When your childhood is gone, it's hard. That's why I have such a passion for these children who are out there who don't have a childhood who are growing up too fast, learning how to protect themselves from big people," says Shelly. "The only good thing that comes out of it is that it makes you really strong. I absolutely love making a difference in children's lives." Six years ago, true to the spirit she felt deep within her, she founded Kids Fest through the Salt Lake Board of REALTORS®.

"Kids Fest raises funds for The Christmas Box International which builds and operates temporary shelters for abused and neglected children," she explains. "I have an incredible committee and a passion to help these children. I have a lot of compassion because I want to fight for the weak and abused."

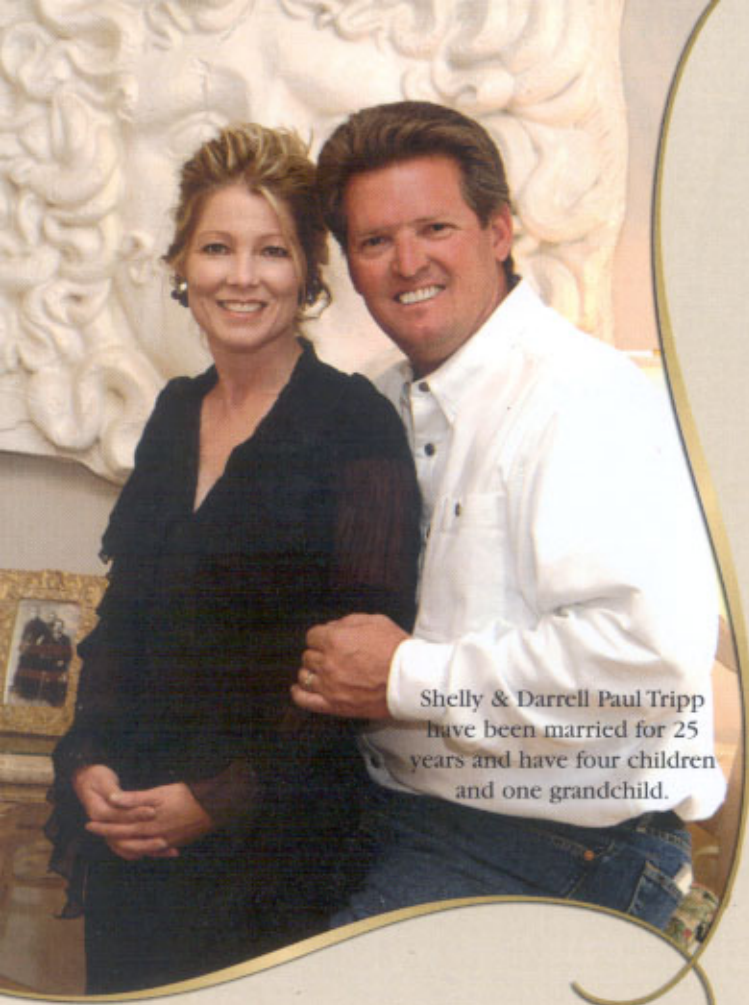
In its first four years, Kids Fest raised more than \$100,000 for Christmas Box House.

Her passion for helping children has also extended to orphans living half-a-world away in Russia. She is especially aware of older children, those five years and older, who are often overlooked by parents seeking to adopt. She is currently working to bring many of these orphans to Utah to allow them to experience the joys of life they have thus far been denied, and to give them a chance to get acquainted with prospective adoptive families.

But Shelly is more than just an advocate to these children; she and her husband Paul adopted their youngest daughter Aly

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from Russia three years ago. "When we saw her come to the door, we both knew she was the one," Shelly says.

"She's just like me," she continues. "You'd never know that she was adopted. She was found on the street when she was three years old and, like me, is also a survivor."

Beyond her family and the work she does to help children both locally and globally, Shelly Tripp has a third passion that allows her to share with others the great lessons she has learned throughout her life.

"My third passion is real estate. I love solving problems and making things happen. If there's a problem to solve, I say, 'Bring it on.' I care about everybody and work hard to help people get what they deserve." Anyone can look good whenever there's a smooth transaction, she explains. "A true professional knows how to solve problems."

Before going into real estate, Shelly initially thought of going into law to help fight for the elderly and the weak. But the money and time it would have taken to make that happen were more than she wanted to take on.

"I decided to go into real estate because it didn't require a lot of money up front and I figured out that all I needed to do was to serve people and get them what they wanted and I would be successful." Shelly Tripp followed her heart and gave it her all from the very beginning. Not surprisingly, she was chosen as Coldwell Banker's Rookie of the Year in 1989, with less than 12 months in the business.

Over the past decade and a half, Shelly has put the skills that helped her survive and overcome the trauma of her youth into her real estate practice.

"Pain drives me to success," she admits. "Just like in life, there are things you can't control in real estate because there are so many other people involved." Among those people are professionals that tend to be rather uncaring and self-serving.

"In real estate you run across some really mean people. I've had some people like that, but it's weird, I still care about them. I truly have compassion because I understand what is on the other side of those feelings."

In an industry that may seem more cut-throat than cooperative at times, Shelly once again draws on her sense of kindness and friendship.

"I love my relationships with other REALTORS®. They're not my competitors; they're my friends." In offering advice to others in the real estate business, Shelly is quick to share her secret of success: a secret that has brought her as much happiness as it has helped those with whom she works.

"Work hard for your people and really care about them," she explains. "Listen to what their needs are, then help them get what they want. You'll be successful if you take care of people."

Shelly knows who she is deep down inside and what she is capable of accomplishing. "Whatever it takes, I'll get it done. I'm glad to be where I'm at. If you learn from the bad things in your life, you'll be better. You have to take the bad and make it good."

For all her passions and activities, whether with her family, her charity work or in real estate, it's no secret that Shelly Tripp is one busy woman. Reflective of this fact is her license plate which reads, "Busy 1."

"I look at myself and say 'It's amazing. I used to live on the street and look where I am now,'" says Shelly. "I know what it's like to be weak and alone, and I know I can make a difference." ★

# Shelly Tripp

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