



~photography by Kevin Wildt

“Charlie! You knew you were going to be photographed for a magazine today, and still this is how you dress!”

~Penny Johnson,  
Co-worker at Keller Williams

## Charlie Houlik

As a child, Charlie Houlik wanted to be a teacher, a pioneer, and a mom. Today, she has been all of the above.

“I feel like a pioneer even now,” she says. “My dreams are coming true.” After receiving her degree in education and speech communications from Kansas University, Charlie worked for a management consulting firm, was involved in adult education, taught as a student teacher and as a substitute teacher, worked with the Fundamental Learning Center, Head Start, and Girl Scouts, and served on the board at Collegiate. “I believe my vocation is education, and it’s taken a multitude of forms,” she says.

Seven years ago, Charlie asked herself what she wanted to do next. “I thought I had enough time to parlay all of my experiences into a career that was self-directed and would allow time for my family.” Real estate showed the most promise. “I see real estate as an extension of my professional career in sales, education, and customer service.”

She earned her real estate license in 2002 and went on to achieve additional training such as Accredited Buyer Representative (ABR), Graduate Real Estate Institute (GRI) and Certified Residential Specialist (CRS). Out of 1.5 million realtors, fewer than 40,000 have the CRS designation; the curriculum is more rigorous and, since it is only offered locally on a periodic basis, requires an investment of time and travel.

Charlie joined the Women’s Council of Realtors where she gained valuable knowledge and exposure. When she became president of the state chapter, she had the opportunity to learn about the big picture. She participated in legislative meetings in Washington, D.C. and took leadership training in Chicago.

It was during her involvement with the Women’s Council that she met an agent with Keller Williams in Idaho. She was so impressed, she decided to take a look at Keller Williams in Wichita. In January of 2007, she joined Keller Williams Realty Signature Partners, LLC.

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"I really admire Gary Keller, the founder of the company," says Charlie. "He's been able to focus on this profession and elevate it to a much higher level. He's integrated many sales and leadership principles in a positive and exciting learning-based model. Plus, I get to be a part of something that the originator is still running."

Charlie brings the same creativity and enthusiasm to her career as a realtor, as she does to every aspect of her life. Charlie and Jeff Houlik have five children and share a strong and abiding faith. "He is my true north," she said. "I've never met another individual who has such a perfect compass. I think that we can choose to do what we want to do. You can tell in your heart when you are on the right path."

Outside of work and family, Charlie loves to travel, explore and experience new things. "I'm not a daredevil," she says. "I don't have to go a long way away to have a new experience."

When she first started in real estate, she used to drive around and go down new roads just to see what they were like. "Wichita is a big city, and I love it," she says. "I grew up in Belle Plaine. I had a small-town childhood; but my natural father lived in California, so I spent a lot of time in Malibu and southern California. Now there's a pretty big contrast. I learned that different things are going on in different places. We didn't do the same things in Belle Plaine that we were doing in Malibu."

She enjoys gardening and loves her three dogs, Hank, Teddy and Lily, who her husband affectionately calls the "little black herd." Now that her children are older, she allows herself more sleep than she used to. "I love to read every day and get up really early. I love to putter in my house," she says. "I also love early morning Mass."

When asked to describe herself, Charlie says she is a "fun, fearless female" who is very proud of her 27-year marriage and makes a conscious effort to help people. "Make today count. I'm so grateful to be in a leadership position that can touch a lot of lives," Charlie says. "I'm always stunned when I hear that some small thing I did for someone had a great impact."



Charlie has come a long way since her first job selling Kool-Aid and handmade clover chains. "In the land of lost things, what I'd really like to find are my missing words. You know, the ones that are always on the tip of your tongue," she says.

She admires Angelina Jolie because she lives life big and bold. "Angelina values being a mother and genuinely cares about making a difference in other people's lives. She uses her notoriety to bring attention to causes with global impact. She demonstrates to all women how to grow, change and continue to evolve as a person."

Just like Angelina, Charlie is a "fun-fearless-female," especially when it comes to fashions. "My friends say I'm a creative dresser," she admits. "I love shopping at TJ Maxx, and I have fun with my wardrobe and accessories."

Charlie's philosophy is to live every day as if it is your first, last and only. "My introduction to John Maxwell's literature, *Make Today Count* and *Leadership Gold*, continues to impact my life, increasing my awareness of all good things." ●

~BD THARP

“ Yes! I love being able to surround myself with positive people and things that make me feel good. ”

~Charlie Houlik