

# “Always put yourself in the other’s shoes; if it hurts you, it probably hurts them.”

When I met my husband, Brandon, about 12 years ago, one of the things that attracted us to each other was that we both wanted to create lives that allowed us to influence the people around us positively. With that goal, lots of determination, and prayer, we both started down the scary but rewarding path of entrepreneurship. For years, Brandon has supported me as I have built my own business as a Loan Officer at a locally-owned mortgage company, Treadstone Funding. Now, it was my turn to support his dream.

About eight months ago, Brandon and I took a huge leap of faith and bought a business in Byron Center. Formerly known as Byron Center Fit Body Bootcamp, my husband had been the Facility Director and Trainer there for many years. When the offer of ownership was presented to us, we knew God had big plans for this gym and community. The familiar, vital core values would remain the same while we rebrand under a new name, Bell House Training Co. We couldn’t wait for all the beautiful things to come with the new ownership! But, like all big dreams, they need financing. So Brandon and I started down the road of financing our dream of entrepreneurship.

The first step in our process was the most exciting for me because it allowed me to do for myself what I do for my clients all the time: tap into the equity of my home to make a dream a reality. So Brandon and I took out a line of equity on our home to fund the down payment we needed to obtain Bell House Training Co.

The next step in purchasing Bell House Training Co. was to acquire a Small Business Loan. Treadstone Funding is a residential mortgage company, and because of this, we had to go elsewhere to obtain the commercial type of financing needed. This became a pivotal moment for me. The process was a rollercoaster of emotions, from the initial excitement to the anxieties and uncertainties. Unfortunately, it was a horrible experience. The need for more communication, delayed timeframes, and the lack of organization, the list goes on. The whole process reaffirmed my commitment to excellence in providing lending services to my clients and brought a huge new wave of gratitude for my team at Treadstone. My team has set the bar so high compared to what is experienced generally in lending; trust me—I can attest to that!

Ultimately, going through the financing process allowed us to walk the same path as my clients and to understand their viewpoints while going through a significant life change. It’s a constant reminder of why we do what we do—to empower homeowners to take on the rewarding homeownership journey through my guidance at Treadstone and to empower others to lead healthier, happier lives through Bell House Training Co. Through our journey, we hope to inspire and lead others in the right direction while adding immense value, as we strive to do every day.

## Kalah Stratton

616.774.9514

KalahS@treadstonemortgage.com

