

## The Florida Real Estate School by Pier 21 Realty, LLC Hosts Grand Opening



Aiden and Phil Simonetta

Broker-Owner Philip Simonetta and his Realtor son, Aiden Simonetta, have opened the doors of their new company, The Florida Real Estate School by Pier 21 Realty, LLC. On March 11, they welcomed more than two dozen guests to tour the office and classroom spaces at the Cassat Avenue headquarters. One attendee of note was Escrow, the black cat who serves as Pier 21's resident mascot.

The grand opening event included a full Italian spread of baked ziti, which Phil cooked himself; an array of salads; and sweet desserts to balance out the taste buds. To close the celebration, Phil gave a Real Estate Career Day presentation to visitors interested in joining the profession.

The Simonettas' unique firm operates as both a real estate brokerage and a licensed real estate school, authorized by the Florida Real Estate Commission (FREC) to provide a comprehensive suite of licensing courses. In addition, Phil will be organizing weekend workshops as part of a mentorship program. "Through my travels of all the years being involved with real estate in one form or another, I decided that with all my experience, it's time to give back," Phil said.

This Jacksonville office is the first of four that the father-son duo have planned. Though in operation only a short while, the company has already gotten more than 300 likes and followers on Facebook.

## Plush N' Prana offers unique experience in Riverside



Plush N' Prana owner Claudia Prana stands before the boutique she envisioned so clearly when she first saw the Park Street property for lease.

When Plush N' Prana owner Claudia Prana received a phone call saying she had received the Restoration and Rehabilitation Award from Riverside Avondale Preservation (RAP), she said she had to listen to the voicemail "several times" before she could comprehend its meaning.

Plush N' Prana — her "exotic, elegant and worldly clothing store" — had only opened at the beginning of December 2022 and she was still acquainting herself to the Riverside community. After researching online, however, she came to understand what the award was.

"It was sort of a validation, a recognition, sort of almost like my heart is home and home is here," she said. "...I felt the warmth of this community. I had this feeling that it is a very heart-based community: a heart-based,

artistic, human-based community. I felt that when I renovated the building and this welcome really validated that for me."

Prana offers kimonos, bathrobes and bath/body and home goods in her richly-colored boutique, which seems to draw customers in the moment they open the door.

"That is a message," she said. "Products are great, colors are wonderful — they're a reflection of Mother Earth and nature — but there is an element of the heart. [My] intention is that people feel — even if it is only for a minute or two — the calmness that is necessary for us to find ourselves."

Plush N' Prana is located at 2761 Park Street in historic Riverside. It is open Wednesday through Saturday, 10:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. and Sunday, 12:30 to 5:30 p.m.

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