





# Inspiring Hard Work and Integrity

## Meet the Findlay Family

By Deborah Everest-Hill, Photos courtesy of Mango Studios

Amandalyn Findlay met her husband Sean eleven years ago when he decided to go to a club one evening after work and spotted her “beautiful face.” Sean recognized her but didn’t know from where. “I finally muscled-up the courage to go talk to her,” he says and after doing so the two realized they had attended the same church during their teens.

The couple exchanged numbers, became friends and eventually started dating. They were married at Spencer’s at the Waterfront in Burlington in August of 2015 and now have two boys: Malachi Scott, age 12, and Mateo who will turn 8 later this month.

Amandalyn says one of the reasons her relationship with Sean works is because

of their faith in God as individuals and as a couple. “As long as the love and mutual respect are in place, with God being the centre, it works.” She says other key elements of their marriage include “forgiveness, transparency, patience and love as well as mutual respect for one another.” Their family motto, Sean adds, is “united we stand; divided we fall.”

To the Findlay’s, time spent as a family and quality alone time are other important ingredients in a successful marriage. “From the time the boys were young, we’ve always made it a priority to set a strict bedtime for them, to ensure we get our evening one-on-one time with each other,” Amandalyn says. “We like to talk to each other about our dreams, goals, and ambitions and how to go about accomplishing them.” Sean adds that he and Amandalyn are each other’s “biggest cheerleader as well as each other’s biggest critic.”

Amandalyn was born in Trinidad and came to Canada with her parents when she was ten-months old. She lived in Mississauga and was raised by her mother who worked two jobs to support them. Because her mom was often busy, Amandalyn spent a lot of time with her aunt and cousins but her mom always made time for the two of them to do fun things on the weekends.

“I fondly remember her taking me to the Science Centre, Museum, CN Tower and Centre Island.” They would also go on shopping trips and her mom would take her to nice restaurants on occasion. “I never lacked anything which I know now that being a parent is hard work and I commend her.”

Growing up Amandalyn loved to read and write. “I swore I would have grown up to be an author or journalist.” Later in the summer before she started Grade 10, Amandalyn returned to Trinidad where her father lived because he owned a few hotels in the Caribbean. Initially, she only planned to stay for her two-month visit but her father was in the process of transferring a few of his business into co-ownership with her and in order to do so, she had to be enrolled in school. After the court process was completed which was about four months, she decided to complete her high school education there.

Amandalyn wrote her Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) exams about two years later after focusing her studies on sciences and language. At the time, she was interested in engineering or aviation and says she passed with distinction in three of her subjects.

When she returned to Canada, Amandalyn says the feeling was bittersweet because she loved her friends and family in Trinidad as well as the culture. Fortunately, she and Sean usually return to the island each year for the Carnival which takes place just before Easter. She says it is amazing. “A definite must experience.”

She attended Centennial College to become an aviation technician because she had always had a passion for airplanes but she ended up working in the banking industry.

“I completed my course in Avionics at Centennial College however at that time companies such as Air Canada and Bombardier were only hiring midnight Coleman shifts and that wasn’t the lifestyle I was

looking to have,” Amandalyn explains. There were also few women in the industry back then. “In my class of 40, there were only three females and by the time I graduated, it was down to one.”

Amandalyn wanted to switch her degree to the pilot program at Seneca College but wasn’t able to qualify for a student loan, so she took some time off and got a job with CIBC. After working in banking for nearly five years, Amandalyn realized she derived enjoyment from helping people and wanted to become a mortgage broker to educate others about wealth management.

“Growing up I didn’t have anyone to educate me on finances, credit, budgeting, how to buy a home or how to invest...,” she says. “My mom came to Canada when she was in her late 30s so she was already very cultured in her ‘old school’ Caribbean ways. Working at CIBC for almost five years really helped train and mould me into the professional I am today.”

While working full-time at the bank, she decided to write the mortgage agent exam. Once she passed, she “took a risk and jumped in full time with both feet.” She has been a mortgage broker for six years now joining the Sherwood Mortgage Group under the Mortgage Alliance brand and says she believes the combination of banking and brokering experience gives her a “holistic approach” with clients. “There isn’t a day that goes by that I wish I was doing something else,” she adds. “This is what I love doing and the fact that I have two offices across the GTA and I am able to work from home is an added bonus, especially with two boys in school.”

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Over the years, Amandalyn watched other people generate wealth from investing in real estate and the concept intrigued her. “The opportunities in real estate are endless,” she says. “It’s the most creative and profitable way to grow your net worth... even in these uncertain times.”

Sean was born in Toronto and grew up in Scarborough. His family later moved to Mississauga where he attended high school and was active in sports such as basketball, volleyball and track and field. He also attended church and was involved with community events as well as being focused on his education.

Sean discovered he had an interest in business at a young age and earned a scholarship to attend York University where he obtained a double major in Business Management and Computer Science. He then went on to an internship with Nortel Networks and work for CI Investments where he remained for ten years; five in the company’s IT department and five as a business analyst in finance.

Like Amandalyn, Sean was interested in real estate

and decided to obtain his licence in 2016. He worked part-time for the first two years and then immersed himself in the role in 2018. He is currently a full-time realtor for Century 21 Millennium Inc. His focus is residential real estate in the Stoney Creek and Hamilton area and he says he enjoys it because it combines his two passions: real estate and helping people.

The Findlay family moved to Stoney Creek from downtown Mississauga five years ago and they don’t miss the hustle and bustle of the city. “We love how peaceful and safe it feels,” Amandalyn says. “Everyone has been so friendly and there’s a true sense of community here.”

While the Findlays can’t take part in activities like they usually would at the moment, the boys continue to practice their basketball skills with the outdoor net and have taught themselves to play the piano using some Apps.

Their youngest son Mateo is into sports but is currently fascinated with solving Rubix Cubes. “I don’t know how he does it but he’s proudly able to solve any colour on the 2 by 2 and 3 by 3,” Amandalyn says. His latest challenge is a new 10 by 10 cube that he recently received as a gift.

Malachi, the oldest, is into coding and more technical activities and is a member of the African Canadian Christian Network (ACCN) Techtronix Club which takes part in robotics competitions. In the robotic season, Amandalyn says Malachi meets with the team at Humber College where professors help the kids build the robots and teach them the different systems.

The ACCN is an organization that provides black youth with the opportunity to obtain full scholarships to some of the most prestigious private schools and Science Technology Engineering Mathematics (STEM) programs in the GTA. Both Amandalyn and Sean have volunteered with the ACCN.

“Through a network of churches and other organizations, we’re able to partner and really make a significant difference in the opportunities these children have access to,” Sean explains.

Both Sean and Amandalyn enjoy travelling, entertaining and discovering other cultures. “Sean is a great cook,” Amandalyn says and both have specific cuisines they like to prepare: Sean, dabbles with barbecue and Asian and Amandalyn prefers to make Caribbean and Italian dishes.

There is also a three-year-old Rottweiler named Dolce in the family. Dolce has a beautiful temperament Amandalyn says and she bought her because Sean wanted a baby girl. With two boys in the house, she has become a spoiled girl.

As a family, the Findlays like to go for walks in the Fifty Point neighbourhood and by the lake in Grimsby. Going to church at Lakemount Worship Centre is also a priority and if the family can’t go every Sunday, they watch the service online. In the summer, barbecues and entertaining friends are a common occurrence.



Both Amandalyn and Sean have been inspired by their parents who demonstrated determination and a strong work ethic. "Both our parents migrated from Trinidad and Jamaica when they were in their 20s and had to build a life for themselves from nothing, in an unknown country, with a handful of people they knew, into the successful individuals they are today," says Amandalyn.

To put this in perspective the couple adds that their parents did not have the resources that are available today. "We really believe when you want something, you create a plan and you work on it daily," Amandalyn notes. "If you fail to plan, then you plan to fail," is a perspective Sean's father often shared with them.

The couple hopes to keep this spirit of hard work and dedication alive in their boys. They also want them to understand and demonstrate integrity as well as respect for themselves and others.

"We want to challenge them to push themselves and not be cookie-cutter," Amandalyn says... "We frequently have discussions with them on business ideas, how to tie in their dreams and profit from it, how to manage the money they receive, advising them to put half away and spend one quarter on whatever they like and try to grow the remaining one quarter."

Amandalyn and Sean also believe in rules and discipline. "The boys sometimes get upset when we say no to things," Amandalyn says, "but we always talk about the reasoning to our decisions and they always understand where we're coming from. We're blessed to have such beautiful boys, inside and out."

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⤴ Spring blooms on Pisa Drive - Photo by Jonnica Hill.