

FROM THE CLASSROOM TO CLOSING DEALS

Poway Adult School grad is turning knowledge into real estate success

By Nicole Carr

It is not surprising that Damon Bitts ended up working in real estate.

The retired Marine master gunnery sergeant and San Diego native says he grew up in a family where his father earned his living as a contractor and his grandfather and aunt worked as real estate agents. In addition, his father and grandfather once teamed up to refurbish and sell apartment buildings.

“I’ve always had an interest in real estate,” he says. “But of course, I had a higher calling.”

Bitts served in the U.S. Marine Corps for 26 years. Then, after retiring in 2012, he pursued a new career as a contractor at the Marine Corps Air Station Miramar in California.

“In 2016, I was complaining to my wife about how expensive homes were getting, and she just so happened to have gotten the Poway Adult School pamphlet with all the upcoming courses,” he says. “She was flipping through it and said, ‘Hey, they’re offering real estate licensing classes.’”

The couple read that Poway held its real estate classes from 6-9 p.m., so Bitts could attend after work if he wanted, and they thought the tuition was budget-friendly at \$125 a course.

“That’s a reasonable price for the amount of education that you’re getting,” he says. “So, she said, ‘Why don’t you do something about it?’ I said, ‘Fine. I’m going to get my real estate license.’”

Poway Adult School offers a range of certification and college credit courses that prepare students for in-demand jobs that pay well. The offerings include job-readiness and career planning workshops and seminars, as well as career courses in areas such as applied technology, computer applications, nursing assistant, court reporter, accounting, business, finance and real estate.

The real estate program is designed to enable students to study for and pass the California state real estate licensing exam.

The courses include Real Estate Principles, which reviews the basic concepts of real estate; and Real Estate Practice, which teaches students how to get started in the business, delving into topics such as agency, escrow, finance, contracts, marketing, listings, and working with buyers and sellers. A third class, Legal Aspects of Real Estate, examines the laws governing real estate.

Bitts says the adult school’s enrollment process proved easy, with staffers readily available to answer his questions, and that he liked the convenience of the night classes and the class instruction, which was offered in person.

“We had a dynamic teacher who made the courses interesting,” Bitts says. “The courses were based on what he had seen in the industry, rather than just going online and taking a course that is all text. You’re getting insight from a professional.”

He completed the three courses and passed the California Department of Real Estate exam in 2016. Then, with his real estate license in hand, he landed a job as a realtor with his former instructor, Gregg Watkins, who owns Watkins Realty Group and has taught for Poway Adult School for six years.

Bitts, who once spent three years as a Marine Corps recruiter, found success making sales within his first few months on the job, and especially enjoys helping other veterans find their next homes.

“I have a large military clientele,” says Bitts. “I look out for them, watch their money and negotiate some fantastic deals for them, and I’ve had repeat clients.”

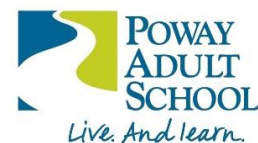
Bitts credits Poway Adult School for putting him on the path to his real estate career.

“It’s given me another avenue in something that I was very interested in and



Real estate agent and veteran Damon Bitts has found success through Poway Adult School’s real estate licensing courses and now helps clients, including fellow veterans, get into home ownership. Photo courtesy of Damon Bitts

given me the ability to learn what I needed to do to set me up for success—not just giving me a little bit of information and leaving me to figure it out on my own. The classes were very in-depth,” he says. “I can’t say enough about Poway Adult School. It gave me the start to be very successful.”



Poway Adult School is one of almost 300 adult schools in California that are operated by K-12 school districts. California Adult Schools provide education, training, and support services to ensure that adult learners reach their education and workforce goals. For more information, visit powayadultschool.powayusd.com or call (858) 668-4012.