



nonahood news®

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ART FROM THE HEART

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Publisher's Desk

BY RHYS LYNN

2017 Was a Whirlwind - What Will 2018 Bring?

What a year! 2017 was one for the record books. Lake Nona is officially BOOMING. We had no shortage of amazing news. With so many huge announcements it's difficult to imagine the scope of what the Nonahood will look like in the coming years. It certainly feels like a tipping point has been reached, and things are moving forward at breakneck pace. Everywhere I look, dirt is being moved, buildings are being finished, and businesses are opening. Population density is increasing, too - some time in 2018 Nonahood News will hit a big milestone - 20,000 papers distributed each month!

When Jenny and I moved here 5 years ago we saw tremendous opportunity. There wasn't a whole lot here yet. We loved the idea, though, and took the risk that things would turn out the way we hoped. We hoped that we would see growth and new opportunities coming to the area. We crossed our fingers that development would proceed the way we imagined, but there were no guarantees. Fast forward to today's Lake Nona landscape, and anyone looking at Lake Nona will have a much different perspective. There's an electricity in the air and such a flurry of development that it's hard to keep up with everything! It puts us in a great position as we have no lack of amazing stories to tell and exciting things to talk about. We've got some big plans for 2018 with Nonahood News as well, but nothing we can talk about... yet.

I would also like to address something that I've seen popping up here and there - negativity about the pace of development. I know there will always be people who like to vocally complain about things, but I often see people respond to news of various announcements with comments like, "That's great, but where's our movie theater?" I understand that people want these things (we do too), but the scale of what's happening here is massive - I think we all need to understand that certain things can't happen until thresholds are met. If a movie theater were to have opened 2 years ago, would the population density support it? Commercial development is not a small undertaking and I would much rather see something done right

than done now. So I ask this of the community: give it time - amazing things are coming!

I am proud to see Nonahood News growing along with the Nonahood. We remain dedicated to promoting the great stories, people, and businesses that we have in our backyard. As we begin 2018, I hope that everyone in the Nonahood has a happy, healthy, and fun new year. The possibilities are endless, after all. We can't wait to see what the new year brings!



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Local Leaders

A Healing Heart Reaches Into Homeless Population

BY DR. DEBORAH C. GERMAN



Deborah German, M.D.
Vice President for Medical Affairs, Founding Dean
UCF College of Medicine

Andrew Aboujaoude says, "I've just always wanted to fix the world around me." And the junior biomedical sciences major at the UCF College of Medicine is doing just that by providing blood pressure screenings to Orlando's homeless. His efforts have earned the pre-med student statewide recognition and a feature in the national business magazine Forbes.

Aboujaoude established a nonprofit organization, Hearts for the Homeless, three years ago after he and two friends, Alexis Gheri and Jennifer Carvel, were volunteering to serve food to the homeless in downtown Orlando. "A homeless man was telling us about his life, how his kid had died and how he suffered a heart attack," Aboujaoude said. "He had gotten dragged down in bills and ended up here. As we were talking to him, a car came right by, the passenger rolled down the window and egged us. We all stood staring at each other for a couple seconds in disbelief

about what had just happened. We were in shock because someone had just tried to assault us. And the homeless man continued to talk, uninterrupted, as if nothing happened. That's when a fuse got lit."

While looking for ways to help, Aboujaoude and his friends learned that hypertension and cardiac disease were leading causes of death among the homeless. Connecting with a local church that gives free meals to the homeless, they began to provide blood pressure screening opportunities and general heart health education to Orlando's homeless population. Those who need medical attention are given information to connect with Grace Medical Home.

"Most homeless people are just trying to find their next meal - health is secondary," Aboujaoude said. "So, we came up with a plan to provide free, easily accessible blood pressure screening opportunities at food shares so that when people came out to eat, either before, after or during, they would gravitate to our table and take a blood pressure test while they wait."

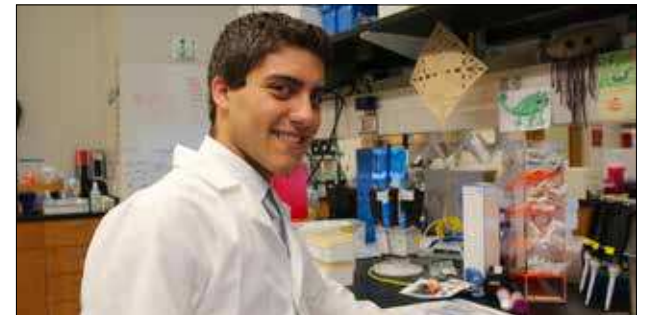
What started as a trio has now grown to a group of close to 300 volunteers who serve the community twice a week. Hearts for the Homeless also has expanded to other universities in Florida, serving communities in Gainesville, Tampa, Miami and Tallahassee. Aboujaoude is now focusing his efforts on enlisting even more schools around the nation to join him in serving the indigent. "We don't often take the time to listen to their stories. They are people just like me and you who rolled the dice and got a bad roll in life."

Aboujaoude received the Florida Campus Compact Student Excellence in Service Award for his work. The award recognizes university students for outstanding service to Florida's communities. "This award is a testament to what we do," Aboujaoude said. "It represents the good, wholehearted work and team ethic of those around me. It's also, for the homeless community, a testament that we have not forgotten them and

helps spread awareness that their wellbeing is a very important issue."

Forbes magazine also wrote about Hearts for the Homeless when the group worked to warn homeless people ahead of Hurricane Irma's arrival in September.

Aboujaoude is an outstanding student - he maintains a 4.0 GPA, is a member of the UCF Burnett Honors College, and he also conducts undergraduate research on malaria. He is currently interviewing for medical school, where he wants to channel his passion for helping others into a career as a physician. "There are so many issues we have, so much negativity and destruction, and I feel like the role of the physician is to do the exact opposite," he said, "to heal, fix and mend wounds and make everyone happy."



Andrew Aboujaoude

A Memo from Commissioner Jim Gray: Narcoossee Road Update

As Lake Nona continues to grow, we need to expand our road systems as well. Next summer, the city will widen Narcoossee Road from four to six lanes between the Beachline and Highway 417. In addition to expanding Narcoossee Road's capacity, we will redesign the intersections at Lake Nona Boulevard, Moss Park Road, and Dowden Road to better accommodate today's traffic patterns.

Final engineering is being completed, and I will hold several community meetings in early 2018 to share the roadway design and construction schedule. Look for an announcement of meeting dates and locations right after the first of the year. Construction bids will be procured in late spring with expansion work beginning next summer.

Also, our city traffic engineers are currently working with Orange County and the Central Florida Expressway authorities to explore options to improve traffic flow in all directions at the Narcoossee Road/417 interchange. We recognize this as a major access point that often creates traffic congestion and gridlock.

Finally, please understand that all the professionals involved in this expansion recognize the importance of Narcoossee Road to our local traffic flow. They have assured me every effort will be made to keep traffic moving as efficiently as possible during construction, and I pledge to monitor their efforts to make sure that happens.

Here's wishing everyone a very healthy and happy 2018!

City of Orlando Commissioner Jim Gray can be reached by email at Jim.Gray@CityofOrlando.net or by calling 407-246-2001.



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Rotary Update: Little Free Library

BY SONYA LABOSCO

Teamwork from the Rotary Club of Lake Nona Lunch, building materials from Home Depot and design inspiration from Maurita Sutton Brown of Designs by M-Simply Maurita have worked together to produce a bookcase for the Little Free Library that is now open for residents at the Ronald McDonald House. Every donated book has a stamp inside to show the teamwork of the community. The Lake Nona High School Interact Club stamped more than 350 books for the bookshelf. It is truly an honor for our community to share in such a project.

Little Free Library is a nonprofit organization that inspires a love of reading, builds community, and sparks creativity by fostering neighborhood book exchanges around the world. Through Little Free Libraries, millions of books are exchanged each year, profoundly increasing access to books for readers of all ages and backgrounds.

Reading is an important skill that needs to be developed in the earliest years of child development, and books help children develop vital language skills. The ability to learn about new subjects and find helpful information will build a child's confidence. The more children read, the better they become at reading, enhancing vital learning skills.


Reading also can open up new worlds and enrich children's lives. Through books and stories, children can learn about people and places from other parts of the world, leaving them more curious than before to understand and show concern for all of humanity. As Rotarians, their service falls within one of the following six areas: peace and conflict prevention/resolution, disease prevention and treatment, water and sanitation, maternal and child health, basic education and literacy, and economic and community development.

Little Free Libraries make a big difference, and the Rotary Club of Lake Nona Lunch fully supports such an inspiring community effort. They would like to offer special thanks to Rotarian Dr. Phylliss M. Olmstead, our community partners Home Depot, Designs by M-Simply Maurita, Interact Club of Lake Nona High School students Leah Laskowski, Ashley Andraski, Laissa Machado, Danna Chacon, the Ronald McDonald House and Nonahood News for their unwavering support.

To check dates or request information for a future Rotary event or meeting, visit the Rotary Club of Lake Nona Lunch website at www.lakenonarotary.com.

Any suggestions or recommendations on a future location for A Little Free Library, please email info@lakenonarotary.com.





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East Orlando Chamber of Commerce and NineSigma Partner to Launch Technology Council

BY BRITTANY BHULAI



Andrew Cole, Executive Director for EOCC

"We are connectors," states Andrew Cole, the executive director for East Orlando Chamber of Commerce (EOCC). In the past two years, there has been a spike in technology groups and organizations on the east side of town. This includes places such as Research Park, centered near University of Central Florida, and Lake Nona Medical City. With places like these, there sprouts a demand for researchers to be

able to connect with one another to share ideas and help aid each other in business development. With the assistance of Dr. Thomas O'Neal, who specializes in research programs at UCF, the EOCC created the Technology Council & Innovation Forum.

Having launched the plan in October 2017, the East Chamber partnered with an organization called NineSigma to help get the ball rolling. NineSigma is a global company whose mission is to connect businesses with innovators. They have worked in places such as Europe, Japan and even Dubai. More than two million solution providers are a part of their web. In a press release from EOCC, the CEO of NineSigma, Andy Zynga, commented, "We're excited to partner with the East Orlando Chamber of Commerce to bring this proven model to a new region. Its benefits will extend far beyond the limits of the project. Companies that work with us learn repeatable processes that deliver long-term business value."

One might ask what makes the forum so unique and one of a kind? Well, it's a place that allows business professionals from any technology company to meet face to face with like-minded individuals without the interference of what a general EOCC meeting might entail. This means there will be no sales pitch from a salesman or lawyer speaking about their new law firm. It will be a raw and "organic" collaboration between solution seekers and solvers, as Cole prefers to put it.

To kick off the new year, the big launch will happen this January or February as the EOCC finalizes the council's chamber members. They are seeking companies that specialize in different areas. Cross connections are important, and having members from different sectors of technology is beneficial in figur-

ing out problems across the board. Cole has identified the plus in doing so with the guidance of their new partner. NineSigma shared a case where there was an automotive company that was trying to find out how to measure the temperature in a quantity inside a container. Oddly enough, they found the answer from a company that specializes in dairy.

The East Orlando Chamber has simply provided the blank canvas for opportunity. Now it is up to the businesses who join to paint it to their needs. The EOCC's Membership/Business Development Kathy Mills added, "NineSigma is a wonderful partner for us because they help to fill in all the gaps."

The Innovation Council & Forum will plan to meet at least six times a year depending on the needs of the charter members. Ideas shared among members from business projects will remain protected under a non-disclosure. This will ensure privacy to that person's ideas that they share with the group.

Since the Innovation Forum will help connect businesses in Central Florida, that means Lake Nona will be drastically impacted by the movement. Medical City contains a giant chunk of technological aspects that will benefit from being a part of the council. It has pieces such as Guidewell Innovation Center, Nemours Children's Hospital and UCF College of Medicine. The forum also has drawn attraction from companies located farther out near Tampa and the Space Coast. Andrew says people will recognize Orlando as the technology hub after all is said and done. Businesses are being brought together, and recognition happens through being stronger in numbers. Cole ends his thoughts on the subject in confidence and excitement: "This is something that's different. It can impact us globally."

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Business & Real Estate

Lake Nona Gains Brazilian Attention

BY NICOLE LABOSCO

Floor-length gowns and tuxedos glide through the B Hotel and Spa as guests make their way to the first annual *Orlando Real Estate BrazilUSA* & Creative Design Gala. It was like a time warp to the Oscars, and Nonahood News was there to be a part of it. Once you checked in, you had your photos taken on a red carpet and backdrop, really tying in the whole Hollywood glamour feel to the night.

Champagne flutes were filled with some bubbly, and the night began with some mingling, hors d'oeuvres and live classical music produced by an electric violin, keyboard, a saxophone and a flute before entering the grand ballroom for the main event.

As we entered the ballroom, cascading in under the glittering chandeliers, we were served a delicious three-course meal and danced the night away.

In the glitz and the glamour of the diamonds, sequins and camera flashes, the true star emerged. The star of the night was the half-Portuguese and half-English *Orlando Real Estate* magazine, featuring many Lake Nona locations. Local landmarks including the VA, the USTA, Nemours and the glass house at Canvas were displayed throughout. While mingling, I had the pleasure of meeting the star on the cover of the magazine and a Lake Nona broker and resident, Christopher Regis.

Regis said the *Orlando Real Estate* magazine has helped him create new opportunities as a businessman.

"They have given me the opportunity to reach the right clients that are looking to invest and move here. Besides, I am a writer for [the magazine], which has given me more credibility."

One thing he's noticed about the Brazilian community is that the developing Lake Nona community is a perfect fit for their wants and needs.

"They are seeking quality of life, safety, quality education, healthy lifestyle, and Lake Nona has all of this. Plus, all the infrastructure that is being built here in Medical City, the Sports District, etc., it fits the profile of the Brazilians that have and continue to move to the USA."

What separates the *Orlando Real Estate BrazilUSA* magazine from others in the surrounding area?

"It is the only magazine in Portuguese that talks about the real estate market of Orlando, focusing on the different communities and areas. This means that every reader is a potential client," said Regis.



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The Value-Driven Culture of the Lake Nona Marriott Courtyard and Residence Inn

BY TRAVIS JACOB

Sustaining a winning corporate culture is extremely challenging in an industry where the average turnover rate is 73.8%. This means the average hotel loses six plus employees every month. Not so at the Marriott Courtyard and Residence Inn at Lake Nona Town Center. This team is different. The retention rate at this hotel is much higher than the national average. They rarely lose employees, and when they do, many times it is due to employees excelling and getting promoted to other locations.

I had the privilege of sitting down with General Manager John Luciew and Director of Sales Connie Steinwart to find out what makes this Marriott a place employees don't want to leave. It's important to mention that an organization's culture, good or bad, is dictated by the actions of those at the top. As the general manager, John is at the top at this Marriott Courtyard and Residence Inn location. The Marriott culture is built around the following five cornerstones:

1. Integrity. They believe in doing business ethically – doing the right thing, even when no one is watching, and doing what's best for the guest.

2. Community. They believe in being contributing members to the community they are in. One of the ways they do this is by participating in a "Share Day" that supports feeding children in need. They also believe in being good citizens through a recycling program where they recycle used bottles of soaps and shampoo as well as plastics.

3. Quality. They believe in operating with the highest quality service as well as maintaining the quality of their property. This cornerstone began in the development stage with the influence of Lake Nona's developer, Tavistock Development Company.

4. Profitability. Companies do exist to make money, and they believe hitting profit goals is just as important as the other four cornerstones.

5. Fun. They believe that a fun environment makes for happier and more satisfied employees. They are good at celebrating birthdays, having monthly lunches to celebrate the victories from the past month, and always finding ways to recognize and appreciate employees.

These five cornerstones are brought together daily in the hotel stand-up meeting. Every day, they bring the team together to discuss and give brief updates on the most relevant issues such as guest experience and rankings, events coming up in the area, and the main focus for the day.

Before we ended a great interview, Connie made it a point to let me know it is John who sets the example for a winning culture here (because he wasn't going to mention it himself). Employees always see the actions of the top leaders and will follow those actions regardless of any words they say. The leadership team willingly jumps in to do whatever it takes. No one is too good to do anything that needs to be done. There is good reason why the Lake Nona Courtyard and Residence Inn is ranked in the top 1% within the Marriott brand in customer satisfaction!

"Take care of your associates, associates will take care of guests, and guests will come back."

– Bill Marriott, founder of the Marriott brand



Photos courtesy Booking.com



Lake Nona Saturday Market Blends Unique Buys and Wildlife Support

BY VANESSA POULSON



This month, we were able to catch up with Andrea Kerlinger, the market manager for the Lake Nona Saturday Farmer's Market. If you have not yet attended the event, the market runs on Saturdays at the Lake Nona Valencia Campus. A variety of different vendors are showcased at the event, from Tesla to JMS Coffee, sure to offer something for every taste and preference.

Check out our interview with Andrea below!

NHN: What inspired you to move to Lake Nona and where are you from originally?

AK: The market started at Back to Nature Wildlife Refuge and Education Center in the fall of 2014, therefore, it has always been in Lake Nona since its conception.

NHN: Tell me about what inspired Lake Nona Saturday Market? What is the event's origin story?

AK: It originally started at The Wildlife Center on Clapps Sims Duda Road as a way to raise additional funding for the animals that needed care at the center.

NHN: How did the event begin to come together?

AK: It was the brainchild of the volunteers and staff at Back to Nature Wildlife Center.

NHN: Who are some of the vendors present at the event?

AK: We are an open market, which means we allow direct sales as compared to most markets, which don't. Our vendor list includes doTERRA Essential Oils, Local Raw Honey, Eagle Landscape Nursery, Caribbean Sweet Treats, Wildtree Organic Seasoning, Spices and Sauces, JMS Coffee (owned by a disabled veteran), Boston Creation's, Boot Camp of Orlando, REI (Recreational Equipment Incorporated spotlights with us), Tesla, A Bit of Energy Charms, BathFitters and Wholesale Direct Seafood, Avon, and locally grown produce when available.

NHN: How does Lake Nona Saturday Market add to the local community?

AK: We provide an unusual shopping opportunity for residents to purchase locally-sourced products where possible and unique items that would be of interest to the residents of Lake Nona. We showcase, promote and support local small business, women in business and artisans.

NHN: If you could describe the Lake Nona Saturday Market in three words, what would they be?

AK: Unique, aspiring and collaborative.

NHN: What do you hope for the future of Lake Nona Saturday Market?

AK: That it continues to grow and prosper so that we will be better able to support and care for the animals who live at the Back to Nature Wildlife Center

and so that we can continue to bring new and innovative vendors to the residents of Lake Nona. A huge thank you goes out to Valencia Community College for hosting us and, in particular, Mr. Johnathon Hernandez, campus director.

NHN: What is one of the biggest challenges you've had to overcome in putting the Market together?

AK: Being that it is an outdoor market, the elements play a large factor in our day-to-day success. The constant "wind tunnel" effect makes for interesting times for vendors and customers alike.

NHN: What has been one of the most memorable moments in the Market?

AK: Having the opportunity to sit and talk with several disabled veterans who have come to the market, to be able to listen to and share their experiences. Several celebrities we have met and the overwhelming, heart-warming response we have received from the residents of Lake Nona, several of our customers having become vendors at our market.

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Nona Growth: Lake Nona Home Builders

BY SOPHIA ROGERS

This month, we take a dive into who the production builders are in Lake Nona. The term "production" is used to identify high-volume construction allowing only pre-priced and architecturally drawn changes, or options.

From time to time, production builders may allow custom requests on a case-by-case basis. When they say no to a custom option, most likely it is due to the logistics required to satisfactorily complete the request. Changes to architectural blueprints involve every department, so a custom change could make or break the home building experience.

Lake Nona communities that feature new home construction are Laureate Park, Enclave at VillageWalk, and Somerset Park. With varying home types, buyers are sure to find a floor plan that suits their needs. Home designs include condos, single family front-load garages, single family rear-load garages, estate homes, and two-, three-, or four-story townhomes.

As important as the floor plan is, the lot you select is just as critical. Lot sizes will vary with each floor plan. A larger floor plan will have to be built on a larger homesite. Is the direction of the sun important to you? Do you want neighbors to the rear and sides? In new communities, these are important questions to think about. For example, just because you can see a view of the lake during the selection process, this does not guarantee a forever view.

If you are ready to move in right away, you can choose a model that is already complete, also called an inventory or quick move-in home. If you have a home to sell before moving, or prefer to uniquely personalize, you may want a build-to-order home. There are pros and cons to both.

Just remember, pricing and availability change quickly, which leads to my disclaimer: What is written in this article today might change in the future.

In alphabetical order, starting with the largest Lake Nona community, here we go:

Laureate Park

Located on Tavistock Lakes Boulevard, adjacent to Medical City.

Amenities include: pocket parks, bark park, LP Fitness Center, Aquatic Center, community gardens, paths and trails, playgrounds, high-speed internet.

Ashton Woods Homes



Founded in 1989, privately held, builds in six states.

Home Types: Three-story townhomes, single-family rear-load garage, single-family front-load garage.

Townhomes: 2,227-2,395 square feet.

Single family: 1,961-2,705 square feet.

What makes this builder unique:

"Ashton Woods offers an unparalleled design experience, including a variety of flexible floor plans with many structural options to choose from, as well as thousands of selections and finishes available at our studio. The possibilities to personalize

are endless, and the result is a home that is uniquely yours." - Kristin Vuckovic, marketing manager

Beazer Homes | Gatherings of Lake Nona



Beazer Homes homebuilding roots run deep, back to George Beazer in England in 1696. The company began U.S. operations in the 1980s, publicly held since 1994, trades as BHZ, builds in 13 states.

Home types: active adult 55+ condos.

Two-bedroom condos 1,368-1,549 square feet.

Three-bedroom condos: 1,799-1,809 square feet.

In addition to Laureate Park amenities, Gatherings of Lake Nona offers residents maintenance-free living with elevator access, dedicated clubhouse, resort-style pool, fire pit, pickleball court, bocce ball court and a dog park.

What makes this builder unique:

"Gatherings of Lake Nona is 55+ active adult living in a totally unique lifestyle solution for the local area. Residents enjoy low maintenance, high efficiency homes close to everything that matters in the Lake Nona community. Secure entries, garage space for every home, elevators and private balconies create homes of both style and substance. Not only are amenities like a resort pool and expansive clubhouse part of the equation, but pickleball, bocce, a dog park and more recreational opportunities raise the quality of life. At the same time, many buyers and visitors tell us they are lowering their cost of living compared with other housing options. Consumer research has shown a large number of baby boomers plan to move to an age-restricted community when they reach 55 or beyond. Beazer Homes designed Gatherings to provide an attractive option in this housing style." - Russ Beymer, marketing manager

Craft Homes



Founded in 2015, privately held, builds exclusively in Laureate Park.

Home types: Two-story townhomes, single-family rear-load garage.

Townhomes: 2,040-2,079 square feet.

Single family: 1,864-2,952 square feet.

What makes this builder unique:

"We believe that your home should be guided by the life you want to live. It should be built smartly, with ambitious standards for design and technology. Its design should be purposeful, developed to thoughtfully intersect with and enhance the lives of those who live there. And we believe the home building process should be collaborative, with open communication and a guided design process all along the way.

"That led us to a philosophy based on respect - for your time, your vision, and your needs - that gives

you the strongest voice in the homebuilding process. Our approach - and our company - is different because we take great strides to listen, to connect and to understand your needs and the needs of your family so the home you build matches the life you live." - Ashley Schlageter, VP of sales and marketing

David Weekley Homes



Founded in 1976, privately held, builds in 13 states.

Home types: single-family front-load and single-family rear-load garage.

Single family: 1,628-4,284 square feet.

What makes this builder unique:

"David Weekley Homes brings more than 40 years of homebuilding experience to Laureate Park at Lake Nona. As the nation's largest privately-held builder, we deliver the exceptional quality, resources and choices of a larger builder, while maintaining a strong commitment to providing the unparalleled, personalized customer experience you'd expect from a boutique builder.

In addition to making a difference in the lives of our customers, our team members are living out our purpose of building dreams, enhancing lives through the volunteer and philanthropic efforts of our CARE program. By working together, our team members, homeowners, homebuyers and community partners are enhancing lives in the communities in which we work and live!" - Valerie Wagoner, marketing coordinator

Dream Finders Homes



Founded in 2008, privately held, builds in seven states.

Home types: single-family rear-load garage.

Single family: 1,956-2,459 square feet.

What makes this builder unique:

"Dream Finders Homes is so excited to be the newest single-family home builder in Laureate Park! It is our distinct privilege to join some of the finest, most reputable production builders in the nation here in Lake Nona.

"In partnership with our preferred lender, Jet Home Loans, DFH is pleased to pay all closing costs and prepaid items to every buyer when they choose to work with Jet or pay cash for their new home. This is our everyday incentive and has been a huge help for many families in being able to purchase their new home in Laureate Park!

"As awesome as this opportunity is for our buyers, Lionel and I also get the pleasure of being able to say 'yes' a lot. 'Yes' to moving a wall, changing a room, adding doors or windows and allowing the homeowner to put their unique personal touches on their new home. Most builders will not allow for custom

Nona Growth: Lake Nona Home Builders

changes to their plans. Dream Finders Homes has a very different approach to homebuilding and home buying.

"We work with our new home owners to design their new home to fit their family, instead of making the family fit the home. Knowing we are helping families to improve their lives is a rewarding feeling." - Melissa Schemmel and Lionel Jacquemond, dream team consultants

Minto Homes



Founded in 1955, privately held, builds in Canada and Florida.

Home types: Two-story townhomes, single-family rear-load garage.

Townhomes: 1,650-1,944 square feet.

Single family: 2,016-3,159 square feet.

What makes this builder unique:

"Minto's easy care, low maintenance home choices at Laureate Park offer designs to suit any lifestyle from young professionals to family living to empty nesters and multi-generational households. Single-family floor plans include three or four bedrooms, plus loft and den, and all have two-car garages. Homes range in size from 2,016 square feet under air to 3,159 square feet under air. Options are available to add a second floor retreat and three-car garage to selected floor plans. Courtyard home floor plans range from 1,650 square feet under air to 1,944 square feet under air. Courtyard homes include two or three bedrooms, plus a unique loft with 10-foot ceilings that can function as a playroom, hobby room or private retreat." - Steve Svopa, vice president

Pulte Homes



Founded in 1950, publicly traded as PHM, builds in 24 states.

Home types: Four-story townhomes with optional rooftop terraces.

Single family: 2,107-2,167 square feet

What makes this builder unique:

"Pulte Homes is adding to the mix with a luxury four-story townhome design that features incredible views from the rooftop terrace. The modern open concept floor plans are ideal for entertaining with oversized islands that overlook the gathering room and kitchen, all within walking distance to the amenities and trails that Laureate Park has to offer. Come visit us today at the Laureate Park sales office located at 18602 Waksman Place, Orlando, FL 32827. You may call to make your personal appointment at 303-552-6016." - Alexis Jahnke, sales consultant

Taylor Morrison | The Preserve at Laureate Park



Founded in 2007, publicly traded as TMHC, builds in nine states.

Home types: Single-family front-load garage estate homes.

Single family: 2,748-4,983 square feet.

What makes this builder unique:

"What sets us apart as a builder is trust, having won America's Most Trusted™ Home Builder by Lifestory Research 2 years in a row.

"What makes us unique in Laureate Park is that we have our own gated retreat within the community. Only 151 estate homes spread across 56 acres, securely nestled within the confines of one of our nation's fastest growing master planned communities. We are offering 14 four+ bedroom neoclassical tradition floor plans to place on homesites as large as a half acre!" - Wendee Burnette and Karin Jimenez, sales consultants.

Enclave at Village Walk

Located on Lake Nona Boulevard, adjacent to USTA and Lake Nona Golf and Country Club.

Amenities include: executive home gated community with 70-foot wide homesites, three-car garages and tile roofs with high speed internet.

Pulte Homes



Founded in 1950, publicly traded as PHM, builds in 24 states.

Home types: single-family front-load garage.

Single family: 2,909-5,118 square feet.

What makes this builder unique:

"With luxurious home designs in one of the city's most sought after areas of Orlando, Enclave at VillageWalk at Lake Nona is the perfect place to call home in the heart of Lake Nona. This luxury, gated community attracts families looking for exceptional schools, plenty of living space and world-class amenities.

"We have introduced two new floor plans to our portfolio of six different home designs to fit your family's needs. We are now ½ 'sold out,' so don't miss out on your chance to own the ideal home in this wonderful community. Come visit us today at the Enclave sales office located at 11754 Savona Way Orlando, FL 32827. You may call to make your personal appointment at 407-313-1055." - Katy Arrington, sales consultant

Somerset Park

Located on the west side of Lake Nona, off of Lake Nona Boulevard.

Amenities include: gated community, high-speed internet with community pool and playground.

Century Homes



Founded in 2014, privately held, builds exclusively in Florida.

Home types: single-family front-load garage.

Single family: 1,593-3,826 square feet.

What makes this builder unique:

"At Century Homes, our goal is to be a family builder. For us, these are not just empty words but are indeed the creed by which the owners manage the company. Our new homes are specifically designed with families in mind in an effort to bring together value and superior design.

"Our new home designs are well thought out, with architectural plans focused on one main theme: bringing the family together. Century Homes' floor plans include centrally located computer centers in convenient, open areas where parents can guide their children's activities on the internet as well as functional family rooms and kitchens that provide ample space for gathering. Our master suites are spacious dream retreats. All house plans offer rear porches to smartly combine outdoor spaces with inside spaces. We also include more storage space than other production builders, so our customers can park their car in their oversized garage. And the exterior look and feel of our homes was created by the best team in the market, offering customers a custom feel at a production price.

"The team itself at Century Homes is a family, made up of courteous and capable professionals who work with pride to ensure that your home is built with the quality and value that they would want for their own loved ones." - Ashley Schlageter, VP of sales and marketing

MI Homes

Founded in 1976, publicly traded as MHO, builds in eight states.

Home types: single-family front-load garage.

Single family: 1,758-4,068 square feet.

What makes this builder unique:

"The commitment to our owners with our 15-year warranty and the quality of our construction to support it. We have 40 years experience in building new homes. We test every home to ensure 3.1 Energy Star Efficiency Certification." - Veronica Maurovich, sales consultant

Sophia Rogers is a six-year Lake Nona area resident and Realtor/Founder of NewHomeSalesCFL.com. A wife and mom of 4, family, relationships, real estate, and business are her passions.



Features

Art From the Heart: Carlos Alberto Quintero

BY VANESSA POULSON



Whether you're from his home country of Colombia or the United States, if you've seen a piece of Carlos Alberto Quintero's artwork, you know it's impossible not to be captivated. Quintero's use of color and pattern, along with the intermixing of realism and the abstract, make for graphic designs illuminated with color and rich with texture, adding vibrance to the real world and bringing fantasy to life.

Quintero's humble story begins in Bogotá, Colombia, where, as a child, he found his love for the arts in both poetry and acrylic painting and then, eventually, in graphic design. It is the medium of graphic design where Quintero has found the most success and passion. Many of his current works contain those graphic design elements to showcase his extraordinary use of color, layout, lines, patterns and texture.

Quintero's specialization in graphic design does not end with just the designs themselves. He also has managed to create a subgenre of art that is all his own, dubbed Quiropaintings, in reference to his surname Quintero. These Quiropaintings combine the elements of graphic design and digital painting. A Quiropainting is created through building different layers of the artwork, starting with models and other photographic elements and building on them to create a three-dimensional effect on the canvas. Next, the canvas is laser printed, painted with acrylic paint and finished off with a variety of different varnishes and characteristic textures with certain geometric effects.

"I made a limited edition of 25 pieces signed and numbered with their respective certificate of [a] uthenticity, meaning they can only be acquired by 25 people in the world," says Quintero on his unique Quiropaintings.

While Quintero was still in Colombia, after studying at the National University of Colombia with a focus in

graphic design, the mayor of Bogotá commissioned him to carry out a visual campaign with 320 students. He was to educate them in visual art and make the inhabitants better citizens with a great sense of belonging. This work brought him notable recognition in his home city as well as internationally, adding to his already immense artistic resume.

After learning this, I was even more curious to discover where Quintero found his inspiration to create such distinct and innovative work. His answer was quite simple, "Inspiration is the product of work." He explained that he is not strictly an abstract artist in the real sense of the word, but that every work he makes is the product of an image conceived in his thoughts. Quintero thinks art has scientific support. His images have a slow and emotional construction, based on research, and carefully made. He continued to explain that there is a moment or special point when inspiration is attracted – the magic does not wait, and it allows artists to create satisfactory images. He



believes his images are the result of study and investigation, and while they may not be liked by all the public, they are always very well constructed technically.

Quintero has a variety of new projects on the horizon, including a potential offer to join an exhibition in Europe as well as efforts to gain sponsors willing to help him have his art exhibited in public spaces and schools to "...aesthetically benefit the population. Art with a purpose!" Quintero calls it. Although his art has already been featured on clothing and swimwear for women, and in large-scale print works, Quintero's dream project is much less of a personal ambition and more of a conscious effort to help inspire young artists to chase after their own dreams and follow their artistic ambition. He dreams of creating an art-specific university where young people can study and perfect different artistic pursuits ranging from dance to painting and develop their own spiritualities in the process.

Quintero explained that art has a spiritual mission and is not necessarily meant to be decorative or just to fill walls. He believes that art should take us to other unknown and wonderful spaces – even on a journey with our spirit to other worlds as well as the body. "It is precisely the mission of art to nourish our spirit and quench our spiritual thirst," Quintero concluded.

NOMINATE AN ARTIST

We are looking for interesting artists who live in the Nonahood to be featured. If you or someone you know should be nominated to be a Nonahood News Featured Artist, send your nomination to <http://nonahood.to/artist>.



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A Parisian in America: An Interview With Lake Nona's Own Instagram Influencer

BY VANESSA POULSON



Alpa Rama.

If you live in the Lake Nona area and haven't heard her name yet, you've likely been living underneath a rock for the past few years as this "Orlando Influencer" has been taking social media and the internet by storm through her very aesthetically pleasing fashion

Instagram account and blog, inspiring all of us in the Nonahood to add a little more style to our lives.

Alpa's interest in fashion started when she was young and growing up in Paris, France. One of the biggest hubs for innovative fashion, design and creativity, she found herself constantly exposed to new and beautiful designs and daydreaming when she would one day be able to buy all of the beautiful clothing.

"I started dressing up on my own at a very early age and buying my own clothes with my pocket money where all the other kids would buy toys," says Alpa on the subject.

After leaving France and moving to the Lake Nona area four years ago, while starting her blog and Instagram, Alpa's popularity has been gaining traction since she first posted back in 2013.

"I initially started this as a hobby, and just after posting about 200 photos, I got reposted by big brands that made me gain a lot of followers, and that's how my profile got visibility [from] the fashion brands," says Alpa.

This visibility from high fashion brands brought a plethora of opportunity for Alpa in the fashion industry around the Orlando area and across North America. She's been able to work on a variety of exciting projects such as collaborating with Bloomingdale's, Neiman Marcus, and Salvatore Ferragamo as well as internationally acclaimed brands such as MAC, Burberry, Makeup Forever, and Bare Minerals.

"I could not believe it," says Alpa. "It came to me as a surprise that one day I'd be able to partner with such a well-known enterprise."

Yet, even in all her success and popularity, Alpa still faces challenges in maintaining her blog and Instagram as the world of bloggers is rapidly expanding and changing. Bloggers have to make sure to continue to be innovative and creative while thinking of what their personal audience wants to see according to the current fashion trends.

A minor challenge all influencers go through is getting a photographer for their shoots so that they have up-to-date and relevant content for their followers.

"I am lucky enough to have my best friend take my photos so we can work out the schedule, but sometimes it doesn't and you are stuck between the deadline from the brand and having no content, so that is stressful."

Even Alpa has had incidents where she's suffered some fashion mishaps, helping us all to know that not even the biggest fashion influencers are immune from fashion accidents.

"I confidently arrived to an event and one of my sandal strap[s] broke. Well, bare feet it was!" Alpa jokes.

When asked about her personal fashion icon, Alpa credits Coco

Chanel because she is a person who "stuck to her style her whole life, which gave her a distinct style. She was a confident woman with herself and her creations. She created timeless designs such as suits for women and the little black dress while making sure it was comfortable for women. I love her style and what she projected through it."

With all her popularity and rising success with various brands, Alpa continues to stand by the motivation she's had since beginning the journey of creating her blog and Instagram account.

"My goal when I started blogging was to influence the fashion industry in Orlando and an attempt to make Orlando ladies implement that French chic touch to their daily outfit," Alpa states. "I always believed that first impression matters and that you never know who you are going to meet, so always dress acceptably to the situation."

For those looking to build their own social media following and to develop themselves on the internet as a brand, whether through fashion or other pursuits, Alpa offers this advice:

"I think the more you try to go for a bigger following, the more you will overstress and actually have a reverse effect. It's a vicious cycle, and a lot of girls are falling into it, unfortunately. The advice I would give is remember why you started influencing on social media. If it's to become Insta-Famous, then I suggest you quit and move on to something more reliable. Now, if you genuinely feel like you have something to offer and it could be in any field, not just fashion, then keep your content real and creative, be patient because all hard work is rewarded somehow, be humble, be consistent, have a business mindset, and be social."

Nowadays, though Alpa is focusing on her blog more than her fashion consulting, she insists that her doors are still open if you'd like to contact her for advice on finding your own personal style and how to look your very best, no matter your body type, confidence, or any other influencing factor in your personal fashion experiences (alpa.rama@gmail.com).

Alpa was able to offer me some wonderful advice for my personal fashion (being very tall and



narrow, I often find it difficult to find clothing that fits to my height) that I found to be incredibly helpful in applying to my everyday looks, and I'm certain she'd be willing to do the same for you!

You can find more of Alpa's fashion content on her blog at <http://www.aparisianinamerica.com/> or on her Instagram [@alpa.rama](https://www.instagram.com/alpa.rama).



In the Garden: One Person's Trash Is Another Garden's Treasure!

BY AMBER HARMON

You might think twice the next time you throw out a banana peel or used coffee grounds. If you were composting that waste, not only could you reduce your contribution to local landfills, but you could use it to fertilize your lawn and garden. How, you ask? Well, it's simple with composting.

Many people think of composting and automatically picture smelly, rotting food. I'm here to tell you that composting, when kept balanced, can be close to odorless. It also is much easier than you think.

Why would anyone want to compost? First of all, composting is environmentally friendly. You take food and yard waste, and instead of putting it out with the trash, you convert that waste into fertilizer. In Central Florida, we also lack many nutrients in our soil due to the high amounts of sand and clay. We are continuously purchasing fertilizers for our lawns and gardens. Instead, compost can be used to provide the additional nutrients needed through an organic method.



What is compost? Compost is the material created when, according to the University of Florida Extension Office, "Micro-organisms break down organic matter such as leaves, grass clippings and kitchen waste." In general, compost can be broken down into green and brown matter.

The green matter consists of leaves, branches and paper products such as: twigs, shredded newspaper, paper plates, etc. Anything that is put into the compost bin should be small. The larger an item is, the longer it will take to break down. So, do some work for Mother Nature and shred the newspaper before you add it to the compost pile.

The brown matter consists of grass clipping and kitchen scraps such as veggies, egg shells - preferably ground up - fruit cores, tea and coffee grounds. Some animal manure, like chicken manure, also can be used. This is a topic that requires more detail. For more information, see this University of Florida publication: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ss506>.

What not to compost! Things that are not good to add to compost are weeds or plants that have fungus or disease. Also, meats, oils and fatty foods should not be composted. These items take a longer time to break down and can cause a foul odor and attract scavengers like raccoons, which become a real nuisance.

How to begin: The first thing you do is get a composter. Compost bins can be as simple as a wooden box with aerated slats and no top to a plastic bin that can be turned with a handle. For anyone who lives in the City of Orlando, you are eligible for a free composter from the city. Yes, that's right, completely free, thanks to Mayor Buddy Dyer's *Green Works Orlando* initiative. Just follow this link and request your composter: <http://www.cityoforlando.net/solidwaste/composter/>.

Once you have a composter, layer the brown and green material with three to four inches per layer. Then, the microbes will stay hard at work, breaking



down all of the materials in the bin. It is important to keep the layers moist, not soaked, as you go along. Proper moisture is key to the material decomposition. After a week, the compost pile should be turned and watered if it looks dry. That's it! If the pile is turned and watered regularly, the compost can be "ready" for use in as quick as six weeks. If the pile is left alone, it can take up to six months to break down. You know the compost is ready when it's dark brown and crumbly. Happy composting!

For more information, see your local IFAS Extension Office publications.

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Tough Things to Talk About: L.O.V.E. for Nona & The Greyson Project

BY LILIANA PICKENS

"There are moments that the words don't reach. There is suffering too terrible to name. You hold your child as tight as you can and push away the unimaginable." – Lin-Manuel Miranda

December – a magical time of the year when people are focused on what Santa is going to bring their kids. We don't even wait for December anymore. Christmas shopping starts in November, before Thanksgiving, and takes on a life of its own come Black Friday. We decorate our homes, our yards, even our cars!

What we forget is there are families that spend the holidays in the hospital with their sick kids. Most of these kids are fighting unimaginable battles – not such a magical time. Time stands still for these families as they see their kids fighting for their lives.

There is an amazing group of volunteers in Nona-hood called L.O.V.E. for Nona: Ladies Organized for Volunteer Efforts. This organization was founded by Lindsay LaRouche, neighbor and owner of the Nona Tap Room. The group gives its members the opportunity to be the change they want to see in the world and to contribute to different causes on a monthly basis. The group meets every first Thursday of the month. Each month, the group picks something to contribute to and bring to the next meeting. One of their founding members, Megan Geers, suggested for the group to contribute to The Greyson Project for its December meeting. Megan is an industrial and system engineer by day, a 24/7 wife and mom to a 6-year-old boy who keeps her very busy. She shared with me that she grew up with very little money, and every day she wakes up she is very thankful and blessed when she looks around at the life she has worked really hard to achieve. She loves L.O.V.E. for Nona and the opportunity it provides to work with a group of amazing women giving back to the community.

When Megan brought this up, we asked her why

The Greyson Project? Here's her reply:

"Our Nona community has come together on a lot of projects to help out our fellow neighbors, so I asked my friend if I could head up collecting for Nemours and was fairly confident that we could meet the 75-bag goal that Nemours had given us [for holiday bags]. But I don't want the Nona community to stop there. Yes, Nemours is the local hospital here in Lake Nona, but so many of our residents have been to Arnold Palmer or Florida Hospital as well. Once we crush the 75-bag goal, any bags donated will help out another children's hospital that hasn't met their goal yet. The goal for Arnold Palmer is 125 bags and Florida Hospital is 200 bags. The thought of more than 400 children across Central Florida who will be spending the holidays in the hospital just breaks my heart."

What is The Greyson Project?

Their mission: "To bring joy to children and their families spending holidays in hospitals across the country."

To understand its purpose, you need to understand its story. In 2010, Greyson's parents admitted their infant son into Arnold Palmer Hospital and ended up staying an extended time there through the holiday season. A friend went to visit them in the hospital and noticed that their room was the only room decorated for the holidays. They had received a care package with decorations to make the room feel a little more like a home for the holidays. In February 2011, Greyson passed away, shortly after his first birthday. It wasn't until 2015 when that friend who noticed the room was decorated had the idea to collect holiday bags filled with decorations and activities to bring a little cheer during a very difficult time for families.



The Greyson Project was born, as a tribute to Greyson.

In its first year, 2015, they collected a total of 71 bags that were delivered to two major hospitals in the Orlando area. In 2016, they collected 495 bags and delivered to nine hospitals in five different states. How many rooms they will be able to add some cheer in 2017 remains to be seen! However, they have drop-off locations across 13 states, collecting for 25 hospitals!

L.O.V.E. for Nona collected more than 30 bags, and they have drop-off collection points around the Nona-hood to make it to at least 75 bags and cover Nemours!

"There are moments that the words don't reach. There's a grace too powerful to name. We push away what we can never understand, we push away the unimaginable." – Lin-Manuel Miranda

You can bring some joy to these kids and families. If you want to get involved with L.O.V.E. for Nona, visit their Facebook page. If you want to get involved with The Greyson Project, visit their website at www.thegreysonproject.org.

County Commissioner Jennifer Thompson Looks To Pass Her Baton to Longtime Aide in District 4 Race

BY BRITTANY BHULAI



If anyone wanted to know who District 4's county commissioner, Jennifer Thompson, would put in office to succeed Her, it would be Susan Makowski. "I've been with Thompson for seven years. I know why something was approved, and I know why it wasn't approved," Susan firmly claims. Standing

by Thompson's side for both of her terms as commissioner, she too has built relationships with the community and its developers.

The gold nugget to Susan's life story began in 2002. Heading into her second year of graduate school, Makowski was diagnosed with breast cancer and became a patient of the American Cancer Society. Recalling her thoughts, she says, "I went through the treatment, lost my hair, went through six months of chemo." Even though she was hit with this challenge, she refused to quit grad school and used that as encouragement to keep going and fight. Her strong spirit kept her well, and she ended up beating cancer.

A year after her diagnosis and treatment, Susan had her eyes set on owning a home in Northlake Park. After she settled down, it was not long before Relay for Life came knocking on her door. The YMCA near her hosted the Relay for Life events, and they

were interested in making her their "survivor chair." She accepted the offer wholeheartedly.

At the time, she was working a sales job and spent much of her time traveling for work. However, that job was not fulfilling enough for her, so she ended up leaving her job and went to work for the local cancer society. She wanted to return the favor they had done for her in her time of need. It was there that she met Jennifer Thompson. Thompson was a volunteer at the society. The two quickly became peas in a pod. "I told her I was running for office, and I needed her to come help," says Thompson. So, her good friend left her post at the cancer society and geared all her energy toward Jennifer's campaign. Two years later, the ladies landed themselves in office. Politics was never Susan's cup of tea, and she never saw herself being an aide to a county commissioner, however, when she saw the positive impact they were making on the community, her perspective changed.

There are a few projects that Thompson has under her belt that she would like to see continued once her time as commissioner expires. Currently, there is a community park that is in the works for building on Moss Park Road. If everything goes through, the park will have two or three ball fields along with a few playgrounds. There also is the Back to Nature Wildlife Refuge that was funded \$3.5 million for expansion and renovation from Thompson and her team. She would like to see that the funding stays with them.

Additionally, there is a situation with Split Oak Forest that concerns Thompson. Split Oak Forest is a wildlife conservation area that is home to a variety of mammals and reptiles such as bats, otters, freshwater turtles and alligators. Different kinds of fish and birds also call the forest home. The problem Thompson is

fighting against is Osceola County's proposal to extend a parkway that would interfere with the forest. Thompson needs to make sure the board at Central Florida Expressway stays aware of the damage on the ecosystem that would result from putting roads through Split Oaks.

There is no other person than Makowski that Thompson trusts to take her place, to handle the business and keep things running smoothly. A lot of growth has picked up on this side of town within the last seven years, and Susan already knows her way through the ropes. "I can't image anybody finishing the stuff we started as a team together than her – I've known Sue for about a decade," states Jennifer.

The other qualifying candidates for the 2018 election as District 4's county commissioner are Kevin Ballinger, Maribel Gomez Cordero, Gina Perez-Calhoun, and Nicolette Springer.



ReThink Life: A Conversation About Life, Leadership and Relationships

BY RODNEY GAGE, LEAD PASTOR



ReThink... Direction

One of my most embarrassing moments took place several years ago at my son's class field trip. The class was going to one of Florida's original theme parks, Jungle Adventures. I was sure the day would create a lot of fun memories for Luke and me.

The morning of the field trip, we met at the school. At this time in my son's life, he was bound to a wheelchair. Therefore, his teacher permitted us to drive separately and instructed us to follow the yellow school buses to our destination. There was no way to lose a big, yellow bus, so I didn't bother to even get directions. Luke's teacher gave me her cell phone number just in case we got separated. As we approached a major intersection, I decided to go around the bus in front of us so Luke could wave at his friends on the bus. When I pulled back into the lane, we were in front of the bus we'd been following. I noticed there were several other yellow school buses lined up at the stoplight. When the light turned green, the buses in front of us turned right and drove up the onramp of the interstate. I followed them, even though it seemed a bit odd that the buses behind us went straight in-

stead of turning right. I really didn't give it too much thought because I was confident I was doing the right thing by following the yellow school buses in front of me.

But soon, doubts began to surface. What if we were supposed to go with the other buses? This was the way to Jungle Adventures, wasn't it? Unwavering in my resolve to keep following the yellow buses, I drove on and we all finally arrived in a parking lot about 30 minutes later. I noticed there was a huge gator head with a sign that read "Gatorland." With a perplexed look on his face, Luke exclaimed, "Wait a minute, Dad! This is not where our class is going! We're supposed to be at Jungle Adventures."

About that time, my cell phone rang. Luke's teacher asked "Did you get lost?" In a state of denial, I explained, "We're at Gatorland!" Luke and I raced across town to join his class. I'd done exactly what I thought was right, but it was very wrong. I followed the buses, but I followed the wrong buses.

Andy Stanley says, "Everyone ends up somewhere, but few people end up somewhere on purpose." How many times have we set out to achieve New Year's resolutions only to end up in a place 12 months later that we never intended to be?

Here are three things you can do this new calendar year to keep you moving in the right direction to achieve your goals:

1. (Re)direct your purpose.

When people lose their "why," they have a tendency to lose their way. Keep your "why" at the forefront in everything you do. Knowing your purpose will help you stay focused on your vision and being your best in reaching your desired goals in the most important areas of your life. Tyron Edwards once said, "Thoughts lead on to purpose, purpose leads on to actions, actions form habits, habits decide character,

and character fixes our destiny."

2. (Re)direct your priorities.

Notice the word "prior" in the word priorities. Knowing your purpose "prior" to all the temptations and keeping your "why" in front of you at all times will help you decide up front what the non-negotiables are in your life (faith, vibrant marriage, quality time with kids, good health, integrity, etc.). Knowing your purpose will help you stay true to your vision and priorities so that when the "priority prowlers" come knocking, you can say "no" to the good and "yes" to the best.

3. (Re)direct your passion.

When we lose our passion, it's usually because we have made the wrong turn along the way that has caused us to follow the wrong bus that is taking us further away from our purpose. Rediscovering your passion will help you rediscover your purpose. Remember, if you don't follow the right bus (your vision and purpose), you could end up at "Gatorland."



Rodney Gage is an author, speaker and the founding pastor of ReThink Life Church. His passion is to help people live life on purpose. To learn more, check out rethinklife.com.



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Caribbean-Infused Meson Sandwiches Is Newest Neighborhood Restaurant

BY: JEANNETTE RIVERA-LYLES

Call it the perfect *marriage*, a match made in heaven or fusion cuisine, Meson Sandwiches has taken a good ole' American standard and reinterpreted with Caribbean flair. The results are original and delicious sandwiches that will make your taste buds happy. Even better, they will soon be in our neighborhood as Meson is coming this March to the Nonahood area.

The Puerto Rico-based restaurant chain, which Travel + Leisure magazine designated as one of the best fast casual chains in the world, will open its newest Central Florida location in Lee Vista, across from the Home Goods store and near Epic Theaters. For added convenience, the stand-alone store will have a drive thru.

"This is our fourth Central Florida location and we couldn't be more excited," said Felipe Perez, Meson Sandwiches president and cofounder. "This community has welcomed us with open arms and has made each one of our stores a success. We are looking forward to making delicious, fresh sandwiches infused with island flair, for our Lake Nona neighbors."

The other three locations are in 1010 West Osceola Pkwy., Kissimmee, The Florida Mall and Orlando Vineland Premium Outlets.

Meson's menu offerings are diverse and plentiful. The base for all sandwiches is Meson's famous criollo bread, toasted on the grill just long enough to be flaky and crisp on the outside, and fluffy and slightly sweet in the inside. Another signature element is a nice heap of crunchy, shredded cabbage instead of lettuce in all of its sandwiches, which adds another layer of texture. What meats you choose to place on the delicious cabbage bed, it's up to you. But let's just say that the Rotisserie Chicken and Virginia Ham sandwiches are to die for. If you are in a more adventurous mood, don't miss the Picante Pepper Steak (roast beef, spicy house pepper sauce and swiss cheese), the Caribe (rotisserie chicken, Virginia ham, sautéed onions and melted Swiss cheese), or the Cubano (seasoned roast pork, Virginia ham, pickles and swiss cheese).

Natural fries are readily available to go with anything you want, but we recommend substituting once in a while for *sorullitos*, slightly sweet Puerto Rican corn fritters shaped almost like small ladyfingers cookies. They come with a tangy garlicky sauce on the side for dunking. Is your mouth watering yet?

"We will not disappoint," Perez said. "We treat our guests as if they were our family and make every effort for our dining rooms to be an extension of theirs."

Meson is a great breakfast destination as well. It boasts of serving only "serious coffee", grown in the mountains of Puerto Rico in small batches by families of growers that have been doing so for generations. Whether you favor an espresso, a café con leche or a cortadito, this coffee is sure to knock your socks off. Delicious Caribbean style hot cereals and fresh pastries complete the morning offerings.

The story of Meson goes back almost 45 years to Aguadilla, a small coastal town in Puerto Rico's northwest. Felipe Perez, senior, opened a small sandwich shop to cater to the locals as well as to the steady influx of tourists, many of them American surfers. Beaches in Aguadilla are well known for world quality surfing waves. The older Perez was familiar with New York City's Jewish style delis, and incorporated some of their elements -hence the cabbage and deli meats like roast beef- into his sandwiches. He infused his creations with the seasonings and cooking styles of his native Caribbean region. Customers' response was overwhelmingly positive. Today, Meson has 37 stores in the island.

"We poured our heart into what we do, extend great customer service to our guests and become an active and responsible member of the communities where we are," Perez said. "That's the not so secret of our success."



Health, Fitness & Sports

USTA National Campus Jumps Into Year Two With Eye on Progress

BY DANIEL PYSER

The USTA National Campus is celebrating its one-year anniversary in January. Jan. 2, to be exact, marks the 365th day of operation for the groundbreaking facility that has established Lake Nona as a premier sports destination.

As the anchor of Lake Nona's Sports & Performance District, the USTA National Campus has made a splash this year, gaining the attention of the tennis community in Orlando and beyond. With 100 courts spread across its 64-acre site, the USTA National Campus is one of the largest tennis facilities in the world, and the USTA has worked tirelessly to utilize the resources at its disposal in Lake Nona.

From local programming, both youth and adult, to junior tournaments, collegiate tennis, USTA League, wheelchair tennis and everything in between, not to mention the new home of USTA Player Development, the USTA National Campus' success this year has exceeded every tennis fan's wildest imaginations.

The lifeblood of the USTA National Campus is the programming that is available to local residents on a daily basis. With after-school and weekend youth programming, and daily adult sessions, in addition to youth and adult camps, hundreds of Central Florida tennis players are utilizing the courts under the direction of the USTA National Campus professional staff.

The campus has played host to more than 100 events this year, ranging from elite junior tournaments, to Junior Team Tennis, to USTA Pro Circuit events and USTA League play, to collegiate conference tournaments and community engagement events, truly cementing itself as one of the preeminent tennis venues in the world.

The USTA Pro Circuit is returning in 2018 with a women's tournament in January and another in March that will showcase professional tennis on the Lake Nona courts. The USTA Pro Circuit serves as the pathway to the US Open and tour-level competition for aspiring tennis players and a frequent battleground for established professionals from across the globe.

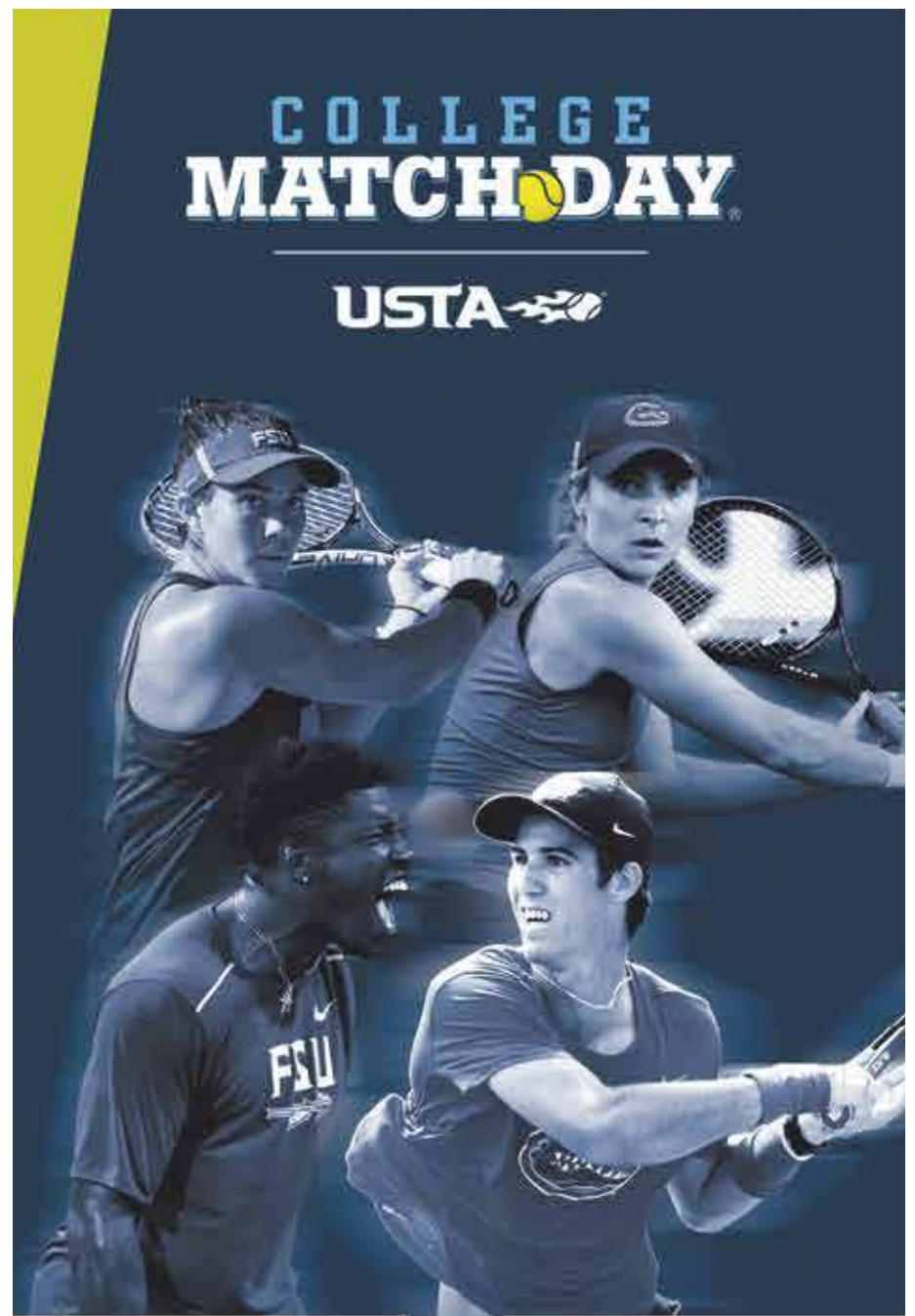
Throughout the fall, the USTA National Campus served as one of the hosts of the USTA League National Championships. USTA League, the world's largest recreational tennis league with more than 915,000 participants annually, crowned dozens of champions over five different weekends in Lake Nona - and is set to do so again in 2018.

Also returning in 2018 is College MatchDay, one of the USTA's primary platforms to showcase college tennis, featuring a slate of eight matches on six dates that will showcase some of the nation's top college tennis programs. Six College MatchDay events in 2017 drew more than 5,300 fans, with 1,700-plus turning out for a match between Florida and Florida State men. The 2018 schedule kicks off with a rematch between the Gators and Seminoles, this time featuring both the men's and women's teams, on Feb. 3.

One of the most impactful components of the USTA National Campus is USTA Player Development, which relocated its headquarters to Lake Nona from Boca Raton when the facility opened in January. The USTA National Campus now serves as the home base for the Team USA coaching, training and medical staff. Hundreds of American professionals and juniors have trained at the USTA National Campus this year, with a number of pros permanently relocating to Orlando to train in Lake Nona year-round.

Included in that list is Madison Keys, who reached the 2017 US Open women's singles final and who is currently ranked in the Top 20 in the world. She is joined by Top 100 players CiCi Bellis and Jennifer Brady on the women's side, as well as Frances Tiafoe on the men's side. All four are considered among the game's rising stars.

Heading into year No. 2, the USTA National Campus is primed to build on its inaugural-year success by bringing tennis of all levels to the courts in Lake Nona.



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Is a Partial Knee Replacement Right for You?

BY OBINNA ADIGWEME, MD – UCF HEALTH



Obinna Adigweme, MD – UCF Health

Knee arthritis affects more than 14 million individuals in the U.S. Its effects can be gradual and as time passes, the pain associated with arthritis can start to limit your daily activities. In fact, about 43 percent of people with arthritis report some level of hindrance.

Aching knees are one of the most common symptoms of knee osteoarthritis. This is especially impactful because your knees are an essential joint in ensuring your ability to walk or run and remain active.

Knee replacement is one of the most successful surgeries performed today. It relieves the pain and stiffness from arthritis. In knee replacement surgery, worn-out cartilage is replaced with metal and plastic components. Most people assume that the only option is total knee replacement, where the entire joint is replaced. However, if there is healthy cartilage to preserve, patients should inquire about a partial knee replacement.

There are three compartments to the knee: the inner (medial), outer (lateral), and kneecap (patellofemoral). In knee osteoarthritis, the cartilage protecting the bones of the knee slowly wears away. This can occur throughout the knee joint or just in a single area of the knee. Partial knee replacement surgery, also referred to as unicompartmental knee replacement, involves replacing only the worn-out

parts of the knee. This means that only the damaged area of the knee is replaced, not all parts as is done in a total knee replacement.

Compared to a total knee replacement, a partial knee replacement procedure is performed through a smaller incision using techniques called less-invasive or minimally-invasive surgery. This results in less pain, a quicker recovery, and less blood loss. It often can be performed as an outpatient or short-hospital-stay procedure. Also, because the healthy parts of the knee remain, including all ligaments, many patients obtain greater range of motion and a more natural feeling in the knee.

Good candidates for partial knee replacement have exhibited excellent results, according to current literature. Recent studies have demonstrated success similar to a total knee replacement and with a lower morbidity rate. Partial knee replacements are now being considered a final solution to knee osteoarthritis instead of a stopgap before total knee replacements. If arthritis does eventually progress years after a partial knee replacement, conversion to a total knee replacement is still an option and can be performed relatively easily.

Unfortunately, partial knee replacements are not suitable for everyone. There is still some debate within the orthopedic community as to exactly which patients are perfect candidates. It is widely agreed upon, though, that the procedure should not be per-

formed in patients with inflammatory arthritis (i.e. rheumatoid arthritis), significant knee stiffness or ligament damage. An orthopedist will examine the potential candidate's knee in the office, obtain X-rays and sometimes an MRI to determine the best solution. Advancements in technology and techniques have made this less-invasive surgery an option for many more patients.

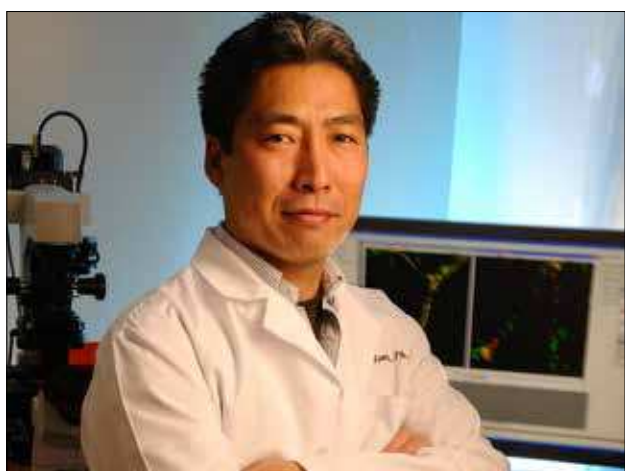
If you are experiencing knee pain due to arthritis, consult an orthopedist who is experienced in knee surgery to learn about your options. Ask if you are a candidate for partial knee replacement. Don't miss out on the things you love to do because of knee pain. The most common comment I hear from patients is that they wish they had opted for the surgery sooner.

Dr. Adigweme is an orthopedic surgeon at UCF Health, specializing in hip and knee surgeries. Learn more at ucfhealth.com.



Scientists Find Key to Growing New Blood Vessels

BY DEBORAH ROBISON



Masanobu Komatsu, Ph.D.

Scientists at Sanford Burnham Prebys Medical Discovery Institute (SBP) have discovered a key to growing new blood vessels. Their finding could lead to new treatments to improve blood flow in ischemic tissue, where blocked blood vessels prevent nourishment of surrounding tissue, such as that found in atherosclerosis and peripheral vascular disease associated with diabetes.

Masanobu Komatsu, Ph.D., associate professor at SBP's Lake Nona campus, researches normal and abnormal blood vessels to understand the complex signals that are essential for angiogenesis, the growth of new blood vessels from pre-existing vessels. The goal of his research is to make discoveries that will

improve blood flow to various organs or limbs and provide treatment for a range of diseases, such as repairing damaged heart function, preventing limb amputation among diabetics or targeting cancer fighting drugs directly to tumors.

"Our research shows that the formation of fully functional blood vessels requires activation of a particular protein. This mechanism is necessary for the formation of the hollow structure within a blood vessel through which blood flows," says Dr. Komatsu. "The findings are important because they shed new light on the biological process needed to increase blood flow in ischemic tissues." The research was recently published in *Nature Communications*, a prestigious peer-review journal.

Previous efforts to treat ischemia by creating new blood vessels have focused on delivering vascular endothelial growth factor (VEGF) to ischemic sites. But all of these studies, including more than 25 phase II and III clinical trials, have failed to offer significant benefit to patients.

Komatsu's research team used a combination of



3D cell culture and living tissue to show that VEGF promotes vascularization, but the vessel structures formed are chaotic, unstable and non-functional. "Functional vessels need to have a lumen – a pipe-like opening that allows oxygenated blood and nutrients to travel through the body," explains Komatsu, "and VEGF alone cannot fully support the formation of such a vessel structure."

"Generating new blood vessels is similar to the way trees grow; sprouts develop from existing vessels and then branch out further and further to restore vascularity," says Fang-fei Li, Ph.D., postdoctoral associate in Komatsu's lab and lead author of the paper. Junko Sawada, a staff scientist in the Komatsu lab, was a co-author of this study.

The research team's next step is to activate the signaling process that promotes vascular growth through either gene therapy or pharmacologically. While new treatments based on this discovery are still years away, the discovery offers hope to patients for whom invasive treatments or surgery are not an option.

Local Youth Tennis Team “Fahrenheit 451” Leaves Competition in the Ashes

BY VANESSA POULTON

Fahrenheit 451, a tennis team comprised of exceptional kids aged 10-14, won first place when they played in the the Under-14 League for USTA Junior Team Tennis of Central Florida. The team includes Brennan-Pier-son Wang, Kwesi Carrington, Sabrina Jaramillo, Mazen Abouelkheir, Pranav Kumar, and Gabriela Almanza. Gregory Wang volunteered as the parent team captain and was responsible for assisting the team during games, keeping score, and organizing practices.

“They are a great group of kids. All are serious about tennis and play with different styles. At the end of the season, the team really came together as a team, cheering, rooting for each other, staying until the last match was finished, and coming together on the doubles play. It was a great experience,” says Wang.

The USTA selected kids and asked them to participate in the USTA Junior Team Tennis (JTT) league, where they battled teams from Celebration and Hunter’s Creek, among others. The team practices once a week at the USTA campus here in Lake Nona. They typically compete every weekend at Lake Cane Tennis Center or at the USTA – playing two singles and three doubles matches.

Though this JTT season is over, the team is planning to stay together for future seasons. They are hoping to compete in the JTT Sectionals, which would include teams from across the state of Florida and then, hope-fully, head for the JTT Nationals.

We wish all the best to the team and hope to witness their future successes!



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Nemours Children's Health System Expands to Winter Garden

BY SOPHIA ROGERS

On Oct. 22, 2012, Lake Nona welcomed Nemours Children's Hospital to Medical City.

Five years later, Nemours has added 11 specialty care locations, 16 primary care and six urgent care locations all across Central Florida. Next year, families in West Orange County will have access to Nemours Specialty and Primary Care services in one convenient location.

Groundbreaking has begun in Winter Garden at Sonata West, 2020 Daniels Rd. Scheduled completion is spring 2018, and the facility will be open to patients by May 2018. Winter Garden Mayor John Rees proudly states, "We welcome Nemours to Winter Garden. It is a great addition for our families and the West Orange community to receive services in their backyard."

The proposed 12,000-square-foot medical facility will offer families a range of services from routine checkups and immunizations to specially trained pediatric teams to diagnose and treat complex conditions. Specialties will include cardiology, gastroenterology, general surgery, ophthalmology, orthopedics, sports medicine, ear, nose & throat, and pulmonology.

Martha McGill, Chief of Network Operations for Florida and Enterprise Vice President for Nemours Children's Health System, says, "This new location will help us deliver that team approach to a child's care by providing a broad range of specialty under one roof and making it as convenient as possible for families."

Notable awards and achievements for Nemours Children's Hospital since 2012 include the following:

- In 2017, the Florida Hospital Association awarded Nemours Children's Hospital the Innovation of the Year and Leadership in Quality and Patient Safety Awards.
- Nemours Children's Hospital in Orlando earned the distinction of being named one of only nine "Top



Children's Hospitals" in the country in 2016 by the Leapfrog Group in recognition of their exceptional quality and patient safety.

- Nemours Children's Hospital has been named among *Orlando Sentinel's* Top 100 Companies for Working Families in 2013, 2014 and 2015.
- A technology that is helping more Florida families access pediatric care was honored by the Florida Hospital Association (FHA). Nemours CareConnect, a new approach to telehealth that brings board-certified pediatricians into homes, schools and hospitals, won an award for Innovation of the

Year in Patient Care at the Florida Hospital Association's annual meeting in Orlando.

- Nemours Children's Hospital in Orlando earned The Lantern Award from the Emergency Nurses Association in 2015 and 2017 for commitment to quality and innovation in emergency care.

Nemours' founder, Alfred I. duPont, firmly believed that "it is the duty of everyone in the world to do what is within his power to alleviate human suffering." Mr. duPont's words and his legacy of compassion have lived on for more than 70 years through the care and services provided to children and families at Nemours.



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Homes Inspired by You

Nona Cycle: Finding My People – Fellowship and Fundraising on Two Wheels

BY DEBRA LOWE

A week before Thanksgiving, I flew to Tucson for the third consecutive year to cycle 106 sometimes painful, sometimes exhilarating but in the end always gratifying miles participating in El Tour de Tucson. I easily (and at a much lesser expense) could have done the same locally as the Horrible Hundred was held the same weekend. Or, I could have spent the weekend getting a head start on holiday preparations.

Why did I travel halfway across the country to ride a bike 106 miles? I returned to Tucson to ride in appreciation for the people who supported my hoped-for accomplishment by contributing more than \$130,000 toward the organization I work for, Rotary International, and its efforts to eradicate the crippling disease polio from the face of the earth. So, on Nov. 18, I was two of 18,000 wheels gliding through the Sonoran Desert, propelled by 9,000 cyclists including my Miles-to-End-Polio Team staff members and more than 100 Rotary Club members from Australia, Brazil, France, Germany, Tucson and Evanston, Ill. Rotary's fundraising target for Miles to End Polio this year was \$10 million, including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's 2-to-1 match.

Each year, I've been at the starting line with my staff colleagues, close to 12 men and women with the intention of riding in solidarity, but that was never the reality for the next eight-plus hours. They take off, and for the most part, I don't see them until the photo ops at the finish line. At the starting line this year, while questioning my sanity, I found myself standing next to Jeff, a Rotarian from Jacksonville, whom I met back in June at a Rotary event. A few weeks after we talked about Miles to End Polio, he emailed to let me know he was registered to ride. We communicated via email a few times during the summer, so it was a pleasant surprise to find myself next to him. Eight hours and 106 miles later, Jeff, my "wingman," as we referred to each other, and I crossed the finish line. He was giddy from having completed his first Century ride, and I was equally giddy at having improved my time by 30 minutes. It was no surprise that my teammates had been relaxing at the finish line for some time, but this time it did not matter, I had found my "person." We had cheered each other on, laughed while struggling uphill (or zooming downhill), distracted ourselves from our screaming, painful legs with conversation and marveled at the landscape that unfolded before us. Having found my "person," the ride took on a whole new meaning – fellowship, inspiration, encouragement.

Looking back a few weeks prior to heading to Tucson, I knew I needed to ride with a group but did not want to be "that person" who holds the group back because they promised a "no-drop" ride and now are stuck with a tortoise-like rider.

But members of the Nona Cycle Club convinced me via Facebook comments that it would be fun. So, on a

sunny Sunday morning the week before heading to Tucson, I met Lake Nona Cycle Club at Canvas. Everyone was welcoming and reassured me that I would not be a burden or left behind in the middle of Narcoossee. Thirty miles later, while we were relaxing at Starbucks, I thought to myself, "I have found my people." I came away with the confidence I needed to line up in Tucson, clip in with 9,000 other riders, hold a line, not panic when being passed and pedal on the shoulder of a busy road.

Early Sunday, a week after Miles to End Polio, I was at Canvas to set out again with Lake Nona Cycle. The pace was faster than last time, and I quickly realized I was not fully recovered from Tucson. I began to bonk nearing the halfway point, but several club members were quick to come to my rescue, providing a subtle "push" and the ability to draft. Much to my dread, I was at times "that person" – slower than the herd but not being cast out because of it. Back at Starbucks, I knew for sure I had found my people.

Cycling is often a solitary sport; we compete with ourselves, to be faster, to silence the negative chatter in our heads, to ride toward a goal or away from a disappointment. However, as I've learned, cycling is also about fellowship, new friendships and spending quality time with like-minded people. To all of you intimidated by your own fears and hesitant to ride with a group, just show up, introduce yourself, clip in and find "your people."

Do you like to cycle or want to learn how? Join the Nona Cycle group for weekly rides: <http://nonahood.to/nonacycle>



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Education

Johanna López and David Grimm Announce Their Candidacies To Represent District 2 on the Orange County School Board

BY VANESSA POULSON

Two school teachers and Lake Nona locals have announced their candidacies to represent District 2 on the Orange County School Board. Johanna López has been a Spanish teacher at Colonial High School since 1999 and is 2017 OCPS Teacher of the Year. David Grimm is a Lake Nona High School and Innovation Middle School teacher and Orange County school teacher for the past 20 years.

López makes great impact in the lives of her students each and every day, not only in academia but also in extracurriculars and sports. López is known for her students' consistent perfect passing scores in the national AP Spanish Language and AP Spanish Literature exams. She also has served as Colonial's Girls' Varsity Volleyball Coach and Hispanic Honor Society Sponsor.

Grimm has his own list of incredible scholastic accomplishments, including coaching several sports teams at all levels and serving as an administrative dean. Grimm also has worked as an assistant athletic director on the high school level and an athletic director for middle school, while additionally representing a high school as the District Math Professional Learning Community Facilitator. And he has served as the senior class sponsor at our very own Lake Nona High School. "I was a student at Liberty MS and graduated from Colonial HS. I have been an OCPS employee since 1998. My wife has been an OCPS teacher since 2001. My one daughter graduated from central Florida schools, and another is a 3rd grader at Sun Blaze. My mom is a retired OCPS bookkeeper. I am Orange County Public Schools," said Grimm.

López made Orange County School history in 2017 by becoming the first Latina to be awarded Teacher of the Year, and this recognition comes with her notable work in the local community. She is the founder of

the online space Familias Presentes: Estudiantes Excelentes, a place where parents can be informed on different educational issues and opportunities. She also is a member of the Orange County Classroom Teachers Association (CTA), Maestros Puertorriqueños en Acción, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Teachers Advisory Council. "At first, I was really hesitant about entering this race because of how polarized our political system has become. However, after many conversations in which my students and former students encouraged me to run, I realized how this candidacy could potentially empower our community. Without a doubt, this will be a people-powered campaign, primarily led by my former and current students!" said López.

Grimm has called Central Florida home since birth and Orange County home since 1988. He has been constantly inspired by his local community to enact change and volunteer in local efforts. Grimm was recently able to work on the Pig Run, benefiting the BACON foundation at the Central Florida Children's Home, and the Hurricane Maria 5k to raise money for Puerto Rico. In the past, he also has worked with Homes for Our Troops, which helped fundraise more than \$2,500 to build a home in Lake Nona for a wounded veteran.

While serving as senior class sponsor, Grimm helped with the collection of formal dresses for students that did not have any for their prom, homecoming, or quinceaneras. They successfully collected more than 100 dresses, which allowed students to create some very unforgettable memories. "We need school board members who are passionate about the students but also the teachers and communities they serve. Members who are not using these positions as a stepping-stone in the political process but who are professional

educators. I will stay up to date with educational trends while always remembering the successes of the educational past. I will use my passion to do what is best for students, teachers and our communities. I will bring back the heart of education!" said Grimm.

For more information and/or press inquiries, contact Johanna López at Johanna@votejohannalopez.com.

For more information and/or press inquiries, contact David Grimm at vote4grimm@gmail.com.



The Grimm Family



The López Family

School Update: Moss Park Elementary

BY STEPHANIE OSMOND ED.D., PRINCIPAL AT MOSS PARK ELEMENTARY

One of the goals we strive for at Moss Park Elementary is giving students multiple opportunities and experiences that will spark their interest and a love of learning. This month, we have focused on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) activities. We give students opportunities to have hands-on experiences both in and out of the classroom. In Ms. Whalen's gifted classroom, students were busy creating food trucks complete with business plans requesting funds and explaining how they will be spent. Other students created entire cities out of 2D and 3D shapes in a project called Geometrocity, which includes geometry, social studies mapping and problem solving. Ms. Whalen highlighted these projects at our STEM night co-hosted by Ms. Eck. Our students enjoyed science activities from the Orlando Science Center and math activities through Mathnasium.

Every quarter, our Eagles also participate in a STEM challenge where students work to solve the problem and compete with each other. This quarter, the winners of the STEM challenge presented their bucket towers built to be the highest and hold the most amount of weight. These challenges are hosted by neighboring schools that have graciously incorporated Moss Park. We are thankful for the opportunity to meet and compete with other students in the Lake Nona neighborhood to build our community bond.

Additionally, we will begin implementing our Project Lead The Way in the first- and second-grade classrooms to create hands-on, real-world science activities. We are also very excited for our first LEGO LEAGUE Jr. team. Under the guidance of Ms. McCloe and Mr. Lohman, students will focus on teamwork and imaginative thinking. They are constructing LEGO robots that they will showcase in January. We are all so excited to continue to give your students these unique experiences throughout the year and look forward to seeing them soar into 2018!



School Update: Eagle Creek Elementary School

BY KATELYN F. NEWCOMB

On Saturday, Dec. 9, Girls on the Run had their celebratory 5k race. This race took place at UCF and was hosted by Track Shack. The girls practiced twice a week for several months in preparation for this 5k. At each practice, they also learned lessons about staying healthy, emotional well-being, standing up for yourself and the definition of true beauty. Additionally, the girls designed and organized their own service project to better the community. This season, the girls chose to take donations to help the Big Dog Ranch Rescue (BDRR). This rescue has been busy flying in pets from hurricane locations (Puerto Rico, Houston, and Florida Keys) to their shelter in Florida. They work to rehabilitate and find homes for the pets when they have been displaced from storms. We are so proud of the Girls on the Run team at Eagle Creek.



BY DARLENE B. GRANDE

The ECE Panther Chorus performed a holiday show for WFTV Channel 9 Toys for Tots Drive last month. ECE Student Government Association, K- Kids and Chorus joined together in a schoolwide toy drive and brought toys to the station.



School Update: Northlake Park Elementary School

BY SALLY SHUMAN

First grade visits Dinosaur World

First grade students and teachers at NorthLake Park Elementary School visited Dinosaur World in Plant City. The children were able to participate in many interactive shows. They took a guided tour with a "paleontologist" through a cave, a dig site and a workstation. They watched a demonstration on the correct way to excavate a fossil from a site and then were able to dig for their own fossils in a stocked area that had various items. The children selected their three favorite fossils to take home. In the Dino Gem Excavation, the children found gems, arrowheads and real minerals that they took home. The Bone Yard was a big hit as they had tools to start excavating a 27-foot skeleton located under the sand. This was truly a fascinating journey of learning in a prehistoric playground for our first-grade students.



Santa's North Pole

NorthLake Park created Santa's North Pole for our community members who moved to the NorthLake Park area from Puerto and the Virgin Islands because they were impacted by the hurricane. The students of these families are now enrolled at NorthLake Park Elementary. Many items were donated through A Gift for Teaching, Delivering Good and the Edyth Bush Charitable Foundation. Families were invited to select items for their children from Santa's North Pole. Items included toys, clothing, shoes, and baby items. The office staff transformed the room into a festive, Holiday North Pole. We even had our own elf to help the parents select items for their students.



School Update: Laureate Park Longhorns Are Setting An Example in the Community

BY KAREN LEE, KINDERGARTEN TEACHER AT LAUREATE PARK ELEMENTARY

Laureate Park Elementary has had a strong start to their inaugural year. One of our school rules is "always set an example," and our students, in their extracurricular activities, have taken that to heart.

Our Chess Club, sponsored by Ms. Furio, media specialist and reading coach, meets weekly on Wednesday mornings. It is attended by students from K through 5th grade with skill levels from beginner to championship. The Chess Club will attend its first tournament in March against other Orange County Public Schools. One member of the club, third-grader Sritej Sai Sattaru, recently won first place in the under-600 category in the 2017 National Scholastic K-12 Championship of the United States Chess Federation.

In December, Laureate Park Elementary sent three students to the OCPS STEM Bucket Challenge that took place at Shenandoah Elementary. Third-graders Landon Tinetti and Angelina Chenault and fourth-grader Keira Meyers represented Laureate Park Elementary. Keira took second place overall for her STEM creation.

Girls in the 3rd through 5th grades make up our Girls on the Run club. This club is designed to allow every girl to recognize her inner strength and inspires girls to define their lives on their own terms. In December, the girls participated in a Girls on the Run 5K event. This celebratory, non-competitive event is

the culminating experience of the curriculum. We are so proud of our girls who worked so hard to realize this accomplishment.

K Kids, which is the elementary school chapter of Kiwanis, is a service club led by elementary school students and teaches the value of helping others through community service projects. Laureate Park Elementary has a strong club of 35 students led by 3rd grade teacher Ms. Burch. Laureate Park Elementary's K Kids participated in the Avalon Aglow Holiday Parade and are currently collecting canned food donations for the Second Harvest Food Bank. Their winter service project is to collect and donate jackets to the local homeless shelter.



School Update: Sun Blaze Elementary Movement and Music at the Movies

BY TAMI TURNER, PRINCIPAL AT SUN BLAZE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

On Thursday, Nov. 30, Sun Blaze Elementary held the first of three grade-level performances, *Movement and Music at the Movies*, featuring our fourth- and fifth-grade students. The evening consisted of two separate shows that showcased each class performing a chorus selection and dance routine for hundreds of family members and friends. The students' songs were beautifully sung, and the dance routines incorporated some very impressive movements. At the beginning of the evening, I shared with our parents that I was so proud of all the time and dedication each student put into making this performance a success. Try Everything is a song recorded by Latin Grammy Award winner Shakira for the Disney movie Zootopia. The lyrics in the chorus serve as a great message for our students.

"I won't give up. No, I won't give in till I reach the end, and then I'll start again. No, I won't leave I want to try everything. I want to try even though I could fail, I won't give up. No, I won't give in till I reach the end, and then I'll start again. No I won't leave I want to try everything. I want to try even though I could fail."

That's exactly what our students did that night; they tried everything. They danced, sang and performed in front of a large audience. I am so proud of each student and hope they continue to try everything. I want to express my appreciation to our special area teachers for equipping and encouraging these students and planning such a wonderful evening for our students and families.

Girls on the Run

This year also marked our first Girls on the Run program at Sun Blaze. Girls on the Run is a transformational, physical activity-based positive youth development program for girls in 3rd -8th grades. Life

skills are taught through dynamic, interactive lessons and running games. The program culminates with the girls being physically and emotionally prepared to complete a celebratory 5K running event. The goal of the program is to unleash confidence through accomplishment while establishing a lifetime appreciation of health and fitness. Our girls participated in the 5K at the University of Central Florida on Saturday, Dec. 9. We are so very proud of all the girls who were a part of Girls on the Run, and I want to thank Ms. Pickering and Ms. Cadogan for their time and investment as their coaches!

Field Day

Full STEAM Ahead Field Day was spread over three days, with two grades participating each day, on Dec. 12, 14, and 15. Students rotated through many stations that focused on coordination, teamwork, problem-solving, endurance, flexibility, throwing, running, and strength skills. I want to thank the many volunteers who came out to work and support our school. I also want to thank our P.E. teachers, Mr. Alvarez and Mr. Nieves, for all of their hard work and preparation.

STEM Challenge

STEM challenge opportunities are available for Sun Blaze students quarterly and require them to use science, technology, engineering and math to solve three different real-world problems. Our most recent challenge was to construct a Bucket Tower. Students had to build a tower using only the following supplies: 40 standard size straws, string, one cup of any size, and masking tape. The goal was to build the tallest freestanding tower that will hold the most weight. The towers were scored using a height times weight-held formula. Our top three qualifiers were able to compete against other schools at the next level of competition on Dec. 13. It was a privilege to see their towers and congratulate our three finalists. I would like

to thank Ms. Ninah for her direction and leadership with the STEM challenges at Sun Blaze.



School Update: Lake Nona Middle School STEAM Knight

BY CHERYL WOOD, ED. S., ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL AT LAKE NONA MIDDLE SCHOOL



Today's job market is tough. Applicants significantly outnumber the available jobs. However, companies in the fields of science, technology and engineering are actually struggling to find skilled workers and are looking abroad to recruit the expertise they need.

It is crucial that students develop the foundational knowledge and skills necessary to pursue whatever career path they desire. Our school schedule reflects the importance of science, engineering and technology so that we don't limit our students' options for their future.

If you are new to the idea of STEAM, the acronym stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math, and it started as simply STEM, without the A for Art. STEM- and STEAM-based learning has become a huge educational movement in the U.S. in recent years. It began because of the noticeable lack of candidates entering the fields of engineering and science in the U.S. compared to other countries. This year, our event has grown from just a science event to one that includes our technology, art and math departments.

During the evening, each department showcased student work, presented demonstrations and introduced activities to spotlight some of our curriculum that we do in each department. We had our science fair projects on display. Mr. Science (Mr. Neason) was back this year with chemical reactions to stun and amaze. The art department had a gallery of student work that is sure to put the Smithsonian exhibits to shame. Our math and science departments spon-

sored activity stations which demonstrated that these two subjects really can be fun! Our technology department was on camera showing the TV production station for morning announcements.

The STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art as design, and mathematics) fair is a natural setting to promote learning of important academic content and to support student development of 21st century skills, such as critical thinking and problem solving - skills that are in high demand in today's workforce! Our pictures reflect a successful Knight. Thanks to all who supported the STEAM Knight.

Knight Careers: DIT Students Earn Microsoft Office Specialist Certifications to Prepare for College and Career

We are pleased to announce 26 Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) certifications in PowerPoint 2013, an industry-recognized, standards-based credential for validating Microsoft Office skills, were earned on Nov. 14.

The MOS certification is recognized globally by academia and business as the premier credential for individuals seeking to validate their knowledge, skills and abilities related to the Microsoft Office applications. LNMS began offering the MOS certification in the 2016-2017 school year to students in 8th Grade DIT (Digital Information Technology, a high school credit course) through their partnership with Certipoint, a Pearson VUE business.

"We are pleased Lake Nona Middle School has successfully implemented the Microsoft Imagine Academy program and is awarding these valuable MOS certifications that help so many students prepare for further education and build their resume," said Prin-

icipal Mrs. Jackson.

The DIT course focuses on helping students achieve a "bundle" of three certifications in PowerPoint, Word and Excel.

Knight Music

Tw'as the weeks before Christmas, when all thro' the LN Country Club,

The 6th Grade Chorus was singing, before the guests chowed down on grub.

The children were nestled all snug on the stairs, as the tree was now lit by the stairwell with care.

The chorus children had antlers on the top of their heads, and soon would be settled down in their Lake Nona beds.

Now, Dasher! now, Dancer! now, Prancer, and Vixen! On Comet! on Cupid! on Donner and Blitzen!

But I heard them exclaim, ere they drove out of sight, Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good-night!



STEM Focus: Industrial Engineering

BY ANDRE GARCIA

In prior articles, we've discussed a number of STEM careers in the aerospace industry as well as the impact UCF's outgoing president, John Hitt, has had on a number of regional STEM-related industries. In this article, we will discuss the discipline of industrial engineering, what it is, what industrial engineers do, what industries they're typically employed by, and their career outlook and salary projections for the future.

Industrial engineers are usually thought of as process engineers. They look to make things run smoother, eliminate waste, and save time and money by making processes more efficient. Industrial engineers tend to look for efficiencies within a process, whether it's a supply chain, like getting raw materials to a manufacturer more quickly or sourcing materials from closer locations, or automating and optimizing manufacturing processes like consolidating steps or changing when a particular step or process is performed during manufacturing. For example, should a car manufacturer put the wheels on the chassis at the beginning of the assembly line or at the end of the assembly line once the body panels and drivetrain have been installed? When should the seats be installed? These are the types of questions and problems an industrial engineer is tasked with.

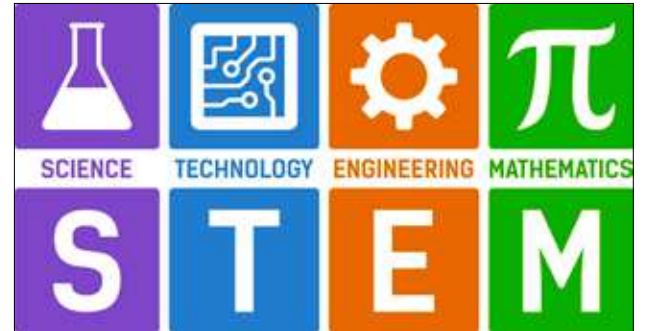
Industrial engineers are employed by a wide array of companies and industries. Large manufacturing companies such as automakers, aerospace companies, and consumer products manufacturers employ many industrial engineers. Companies with complex logistics and supply chains such as Amazon, UPS and Home Depot no doubt employ many industrial engineers. Even companies that might not seem like they employ many industrial engineers in fact do. For example, theme park operators such as Disney employ industrial engineers to optimize the flow of their theme parks, lines at rides, and channeling people through the parks in an efficient manner.

So, how does one become an industrial engineer? Universities offer traditional bachelor's, master's, and doctorate degrees in industrial and systems engineering. Doctoral candidates will usually go into an academic or research setting to study new processes, techniques, theories, and principles of industrial engineering, but not quite practice it in the same manner that a bachelor's- or master's-level practitioner will. Some of the best schools for industrial engineering are the traditional powerhouse engineering schools such as Georgia Tech, Michigan, UC Berkeley, Purdue, Virginia Tech, Stanford, and MIT. Schools in Florida

with an industrial engineering program include UCF, UF, FSU, FAMU, USF, and others.

High school students interested in the field are encouraged to connect with faculty and staff in engineering departments and learn more about what programs they offer. Industrial engineers analyze lots of data to quantify the improvements and savings from their proposed processes, changes and optimizations. A strong quantitative foundation and inclination on the part of the student will be necessary. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, industrial engineering is the third most popular engineering discipline, constituting approximately 17% of engineers. Median starting salaries for engineers with 0-5 years of experience is a healthy \$62,000 with steady growth into the \$75,000 range by the 5-10 year mark and increases there on. Those with advanced degrees are usually able to garner about a 25% premium over bachelor's degree engineers, which earns them a starting salary of \$77,000 with a master's and approximately \$100,000 with a Ph.D. The median income for an industrial engineer in the U.S. is \$83,000.

Industrial engineering is an engaging and in-demand career field. High school students should investigate the field to better understand exactly what a day in the life of an industrial engineer looks like and use that to decide where to pursue their collegiate education. Once they are in school, they should try to get involved with research that professors are conducting as well as seek internships that usually lead to career



opportunities. Graduate admissions will be competitive, so undergraduates with a desire to pursue graduate education should keep their grades up and study extensively for graduate admissions exams.

At EduCoach, we help students discover STEM fields and help guide students through the education and career process. For more information, visit EduCoachOrlando.com.

Dr. Andre Garcia is a scientist/engineer at a large defense contractor and owner and founder of EduCoachOrlando.com. He has previously worked as a scientist for the Army, Navy and Air Force, was named one of "UCF's 30 Under 30" in 2015, and has significant experience in academia, industry and government STEM careers. He can be reached at EduCoachOrlando@gmail.com.



School Update: Lake Nona High School Theatre Department Updates

BY DANY OLIVEIRA

On Dec. 4, at Lake Nona High School, Thespian Troupe 7434 had an Evening of One Acts that featured our award-winning one act *When the Hurly Burly's Done* and some original scenes from theater classes. All proceeds from this event went to Unicef for Hurricane Maria Relief in Puerto Rico. We are super pleased to announce that we raised \$1,000 from this event. Thank you so much to everyone who came to support and donated to the cause.

Coming up on Jan. 29 at 7 p.m., we are hosting a benefit to feature all the events that got a superior rating at the District V Thespian Festival. All proceeds from this benefit will go directly back to the students to help pay for their Florida State Thespian Competition. If there is a specific student you would like to help out, say their name at the door and the money will go directly to them. If you choose to not say anyone's name, the money will be split evenly among the students going to the state competition. We hope to see you there!



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ENTERTAINMENT

JANUARY 2018

Happy
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Back to Basics: Fresh Finds

BY NICOLE LABOSCO AND VANESSA POULSON

Welcome to Back to Basics, where we classy ladies try to establish just how basic one can be in the Orlando area. Each month, we'll be taking on a new theme, and we'll be searching for the best in basic trends. We've all heard some of the most recent popular foodie trends: charcoal, galaxy and unicorn as well as familiar classics such as pumpkin spice and peppermint. We hope we can inspire the rest of the Nonahood to embrace their inner basic.

To kick off 2018 on the right foot, we decided to visit some hot spots here in Lake Nona and in the Orlando area that specialize in healthy, fresh foods and drinks. These places are known for their attention to detail, from everything to color, taste and texture to, of course, the source of the food.

Raw Juice Bar and Healthy Eats

Order: Flu Fighter with CBD Oil, Acai Smoothie Bowl, Wheatgrass Shot

Place: Raw Juice Bar and Healthy Eats

Final Review Nicole: I joked that I wanted to just send Van by herself to do this adventure, but obviously I couldn't do that. I'd be missing out! The wheatgrass shot was pretty funky. It smelled like grass mixed with juice, but I can't pinpoint the juice flavor. There were lots of different flavor notes. It went from tasting kind of sweet, and then the flavor quickly diminished into an extremely bitter and sour, a nearly intolerable taste. Call me dramatic, but it was pretty gross. Probably why they call it a shot and why Van didn't finish it, so I took one for the team.



The Flu Fighter smoothie was actually pretty decent, which, if we're being honest, I definitely didn't expect. The most apparent flavors are the ginger, lemon and CBD. Once the drink hits your tongue, you immediately notice the sourness of the lemon, but it quickly fades away and transitions into the bitterness of the ginger. The mint is a hidden flavor, and I would've loved to taste more of it because I'm a fanatic!

The showstopper was the acai bowl! The crunch of the chia and hemp seeds, pineapple, coconut flakes and granola on top were perfect. It was seriously so delicious that I officially understand the hype which surrounds it!



Final Review Vanessa: Okay, honesty time, I hate wheatgrass. The smell is completely strong and overpowering, like the grass after you've just mowed the lawn. I took one sip and couldn't bear to finish the shot. I gagged. I was uncomfortable. I don't care how healthy it is, it was like I had licked the ground after doing yard work, and that is not something I can get behind. The smoothie was a different story, however. With the strength of the ginger and the freshness of the lemon and kale, I felt refreshed with every sip and energized and relaxed as well. The CBD oil addition, which was recommended to us by the employees, supplied a nice boost of flavor. The smoothie bowl came with a lot of toppings and was fresh and filling for breakfast or lunch. I don't know if I'd make the drive all the way out here each day to get a morning smoothie, but I did, for the most part, enjoy my time here, except for that wheatgrass shot - never again!

Taste: 6/10	Aesthetic: 8/10	Price: 3/10
Environment: 9/10	Proximity to Nonahood: 4/10	

The Sanctum

Order: Golden Turmeric Latte with Hemp Milk, Matcha Maca Latte with Hemp Milk, Cheddar Broccoli Soup with Pumpkin, Shiva Salad, Alfredo Pasta

Place: The Sanctum

Final Review Nicole: Okay, anyone who knows me knows I'm super obsessed with matcha. There's literally nothing better than it. This drink order was an easy decision for me. I asked for coconut milk, but they didn't have it. I tried the hemp milk. I didn't even know that was a thing! As always, it was delicious and got better with every sip! So



smooth and creamy. It smelled like happiness in a mug, but it reminded me of Christmas time for some reason. I can never go wrong with matcha. If we're choosing between green drinks, this is the one for me, and fingers crossed it always will be.

Van's Golden Latte was really good, too! I actually liked it a little more than my matcha latte but didn't regret my decision whatsoever. This latte was in fact golden and smelled like everyone's favorite aroma of walking past a Cinnabon in the mall. The taste was so smooth and creamy, with a little spice. It reminded me of chai, and I am totally content with that!

The soup was delicious. Normally when you eat vegan foods, you can tell the flavors aren't quite the same, but this soup was spot on. It was very creamy and thicker and was my favorite part of the food discovery adventure that is Back to Basics: Healthy Eats.



As soon as I tried Van's salad, I actually said, "Wow, it's not that hard to eat healthy!" and then we both laughed because it really is more expensive to eat healthy. The salad was super flavorful, which can be a rare and troublesome find when it comes to the green leafiness.



Being the Italian, I'm a HUGE pasta fan. Alfredo, carbonara, pesto, you name it. So, naturally, I ordered pasta. This pasta came with a small salad on the other side of the bowl, and initially I wasn't sure if I should mix it in. So, I tried it separately, and the dressing didn't disappoint.

Final Review Vanessa: The aesthetic appeal in The Sanctum is incredibly high. From the first moment you walk in, you are welcomed with comfortable music and charismatic employees who are willing to assist you and cater to any health or dietary needs you're trying to meet.

I don't know if you've seen the latest internet trends, but turmeric has come out in full swing with health nuts everywhere. The spice offers many benefits, including promoting health antioxidants in the body, but also as an anti-inflammatory. This latte did not disappoint. The flavor is rich and creamy but also bold and intense. It's a great pick-me-up and alternative to straight coffee in the morning. The soup came next, and it was rich and creamy, even though it was entirely vegan. If you didn't know, you wouldn't notice.

The Shiva salad comes with kale, butternut squash, candied walnuts, chickpeas, coconut flakes, and curried peanut dressing. The flavors came together like a melody of freshness, with each one complimenting the other perfectly. I've had salads before where the kale was too "leafy" and it caused the flavor to be a bit overwhelming, but that wasn't the case here. Everything about this experience was absolutely perfect.



Taste: 8.5/10	Aesthetic: 10/10	Price: 5/10
Environment: 10/10	Proximity to Nonahood: 3/10	

Grown

Order: Apple Cider Seasonal Soup of the Day, Havana Salad with Chicken, Capri Wrap with Homemade Chicken Salad

Place: Grown

Final Review Nicole: I looked at the menu, saw the prices and pretty much simultaneously shuttered. Guys, if you're on a budget, Grown is not the place for you. I was pretty excited to try the wrap, but I wasn't too thrilled. Originally, I wanted to order the seared portobello mushrooms, but they didn't have any because they are still being impacted by the hurricane. All of the food is sourced from the Miami Grown location. I then decided to go with the sautéed shrimp, and they were also out of that as they



hadn't received their seafood shipment. I then decided the homemade chicken salad would do. The wrap was delivered, and for its size, the price was not worth it.



Again, being the Italian, I was excited for the fresh caprese, but my wrap came out with feta cheese instead of the mozzarella and, yes, I noticed immediately. This broke my heart.

The crunch of the kale, romaine lettuce and the onions added some nice texture, but there wasn't much substance to the wrap. The chicken salad wasn't too flavorful, and I was pretty underwhelmed. As for the soup, the aroma came off as more pumpkiny, but the flavor was delicious! I was worried that for not having many ingredients, it would just taste like apples sat in milk for a long time, but this soup was tasty! The apple flavor was very faint, but the spice was there. It was rich and creamy, but not heavy.

Final Review Vanessa: I ordered the salad, and I can say I wasn't disappointed in the taste department. The salad arrived with plenty of avocado and chicken, fresh corn salsa and plenty of leafy greens. It was a great balance of different flavors and was very filling. The dressing was a nice, smoky avocado, with accents of lime that made the salad refreshing and enjoyable. The biggest negative about Grown, in my opinion, is the price and complexity of the menu (but mainly the price). At first glance, it can be a bit overwhelming to try and order, and though all of the products on their menu are organic (which is fantastic!), it's hard to justify paying \$18 for a salad all the time.



Taste: 7/10	Aesthetic: 8/10	Price: 2/10
Environment: 10/10	Proximity to Nonahood: 10/10	

Tropical Smoothie Cafe

Order: Avocolada Smoothie and a Detox Island Green Smoothie

Place: Tropical Smoothie Cafe

Final Review Nicole: Okay, I love smoothies! When I order from Tropical Smoothie Cafe, my usual order is the indulgent smoothie called Bahama Mama. I decided to change it up to go along with this article. The avocolada immediately caught my eye because of the coconut and lime. I was actually surprised at how good this smoothie was. I'd gladly order it again. It wasn't too sweet, but sweet enough to be enjoyable and still taste healthy. It made me feel like I actually started my day off right with making a healthy decision. At first, I wasn't too into the idea of mixing avocado in the smoothie, but it's actually really good! I'd definitely recommend it and look forward to having it again!

Final Review Vanessa: Tropical Smoothie does a really great job at providing a decent selection of healthy smoothies and meal options. Many smoothies can be made without added sugar and with supplements like Fat Burner and protein. I really enjoy the Detox Island Green because it contains no added sugar and healthy ingredients like spinach and ginger. The smoothie isn't very sweet, but it's very filling and chock full of antioxidants and nutrients. Their menu often has good seasonal smoothies and food items that are usually very healthy. It's a great place to start a diet or lifestyle change, simply because of all the options they have on the menu.



Taste: 9/10	Aesthetic: 6/10	Price: 8/10
Environment: 7/10	Proximity to Nonahood: 10/10	

Okay, it's time to be honest. Eating healthy is NOT cheap. Check back with us next month when we take in the best sweets and treats of February, just in time for Valentine's Day.

Nona Heroes: Specialist Robert BJ Jackson

BY NICOLE LABOSCO



In this recurring special feature, Nonahood News recognizes and honors those everyday heroes who have served or are currently serving our country and making a difference in our community. Those who reside in the Lake Nona and surrounding area are our Nona Heroes.

This month, Nonahood News features Lake Nona resident and Army National Guard Specialist Robert BJ

Jackson. This hero had served for almost five years. He enlisted in the Iowa National Guard five months out of high school.

"Honestly, I would love to say I joined because of selfless service or I wanted to change the world for the better or even for the college benefits. However, my reasons for joining were merely based on the fact that a group of friends said I couldn't do it. I set out to prove them wrong. And I did just that. When I joined, I was a scrawny kid weighing 125 pounds, five feet 10 inches, and seven months later after training, I was 190 pounds [at] six feet two inches."

The specialist explained the backstory behind why he chose the Army National Guard over any other military branch. "One of my grandfathers was in the Navy, so I decided to talk to a Navy recruiter first. The moment he said six months at sea, six months on land, I walked over to the Army recruiter. One of my friends and roommates I lived with was already in the Iowa National Guard in a combat MP unit, so I spoke to his recruiter after that. He made serving my community and state sound rewarding and used national disasters such as flooding, etc., as an example."

Before his deployment, Jackson was based out of Camp Dodge in Johnston, Iowa. "I served as a guardsman until being brought on to full-time guard. Then I would be brought onto active army orders. I was deployed to Iraq as part of an advanced team to set up base on Baghdad International Airport (BIAP)."

Jackson was able to achieve his specialist promotion twice and was promoted quickly. He was looking forward to any and every challenge of making sergeant, however his time serving was cut short due to an injury. Some of his greatest memories were created while at basic training at Fort Benning in Georgia. "In basic, you're pushed to your limits mentally, physically, emotionally and then expected to push past your perceived limits. You learn a lot about yourself and your ability. This has helped me

throughout my personal and professional life. Going through the deployment in 2003 was a true learning experience as well. Imagine going to a war zone as an 18- to 22-year-old, leaving behind what you believe life is: your family, friends and home. In a combat zone, you're not exactly going to the mall shopping to buy new shoes. You now have to rely on the man or woman next to you. Your background, personal beliefs and views may differ from the guy or gal next to you, but you work as a team to complete the mission at hand. Camaraderie and brotherhood/sisterhood become life. You start to learn about what life means to you and what it's worth and just how blessed we are here in the United States."

What is this hero up to nowadays in the Nonahood? Robert BJ Jackson fills his days by giving back to the community and keeping involved in local organiza-



tions. "Over the past 14 years, I have been in international, national and local nonprofit development/management as well as public speaking. This has provided me with amazing opportunities over the years to continue serving, just in a different capacity.

"Since moving to Lake Nona, I have been able to take part in some amazing organizations such as Lake Nona Youth Sports (Lake Nona Jr. Lions) through my children and as a football coach. I sit on the board of directors for Fairways for Warriors. I have taken part in fostering/training service dogs through Pawsitive Action Foundation. I am the international co-chair for God Flag & Country oratory competition.

"Most recently, I joined South Orlando Rowing Association [SORA Crew] as an adaptive rower. With the help of local Paralympic rower and senior national adaptive team rower and Tokyo Olympic hopeful Mike Varro and coach Terry Davison [father of senior national team and Tokyo Olympic hopeful Ben Davison], we are training an all-veteran crew for indoor and outdoor rowing events. Our first major event will

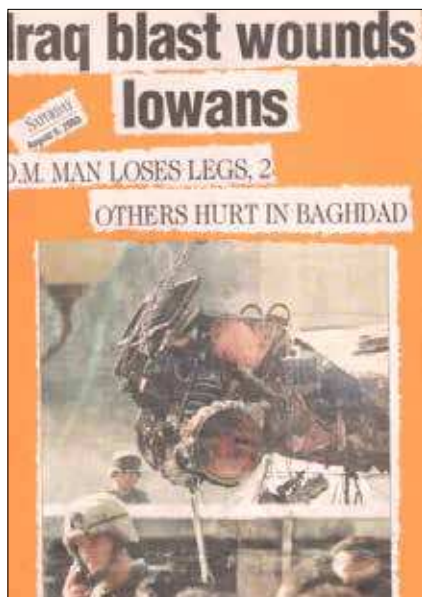
be the San Diego Crew Classic in March. Our goal is to qualify local veterans to represent America in the indoor rowing at the Invictus games in Sydney, Australia, [in] October of 2018."



For more information about Lake Nona Youth Sports, you can visit here: <http://nonahood.to/lnys>.

For more information about SORA, visit here: <http://www.soracrew.com>.

If you would like to nominate someone for our next Nona Heroes feature, please complete the form here: <http://nonahood.to/nonaheroes>.



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Nona Motors Ride of the Month: Enzo Collado's 2012 Jeep Wrangler

BY BRITTANY BHULAI

Make/Model: 2012 Jeep Wrangler Unlimited. Six-speed manual, all-wheel drive.

Horsepower: About 285 from the engine and 160 from the wheels (currently stock).

Current Mileage: 44 thousand.

Cost: \$26,000.

Backstory:

Originally from Bordeaux in France, Enzo Collado was "born into cars," as he states. He lived in a small town named Saint Aubin, and his cousin's family owned a business that evolved around cars. They had their own gas station, a body shop, a Fiat dealership, junk yard and a tow truck company.

His thirst for muscle cars, especially the Mustangs, came about when a yellow V6 convertible and a white coupe GT pulled up at the family-owned gas station one day to get fuel. There was a Ford plant not too far from them, and the Mustangs were frequently test driven. Their station was the closest place for gas.

The boys admired the cars and asked the gentlemen if they could go for a spin in them. With the permission of his cousin's mother, they got to do just that. According to Enzo, Mustangs were a beautifully rare sight to see in France since they were American-made cars. This upped the muscle-car thrill factor for him.

He and his family also went to car meets. When he was about four years old, he went to his first meet. A lot of his childhood also was spent in the family's junk yard. He and his cousin would mess around with the trashed cars. In fact, one day they took a Jeep for a run on a motocross course that his cousin's brother had built in the junkyard. It was his uncle's old Jeep from the '70s or '80s. Since they lived in the back country of France, they took the Jeep mudding first. Blasting through the dirt, mud was flying so high it went over the roof. "We came out of it, and the car was still running," chuckled Collado.

That's when they decided to give the motocross track a go. So, the boys went for it. Pausing a bit to explain this part, Collado says they managed to flip the Jeep over on its side with two wheels in the air. The story gets better, though, because not only did they flip the Jeep over but his uncle had no idea what had happened to his Jeep, and they wanted to keep it that way. With no time to spare, they put their heads together and found a used bulldozer from the junkyard to attach to it. They stepped on the gas and rolled the Jeep back on all fours. It was placed back in the garage before his uncle arrived, and all was well. "We never touched the Jeep again until the next maybe 10-15 years," he adds. The whole experience left Enzo with the impression that you could have one heck of a field day in a Jeep.

Prior to his Jeep, he owned a 2010 Mustang, 4.0 V6 in grabber blue. He also had a Ford F-150 that was traded for his current ride. He has had his Wrangler for about a year and a half now.

Mods: Painted the trim on the inside a dark grey color. He installed LED lights. There are four flood lights on the bumper. There are halo eyes installed in the headlights. He has wheel spacers and red, painted brake calipers and lug nuts. The whole theme is black and red. The interior has red seat covers as opposed to the original black. The Jeep also has mud tires and a high lift.

Future mods: Collado is planning on painting the wheels to match the black and red color scheme. He also is looking into

placing a cold air intake in it. He's put about \$2,000 into the Wrangler so far, but if he doesn't have to spend money on the mod, he will do it himself.

Future/dream car: "I'm planning to jump back into a Mustang," says Enzo. He truly misses his old Mustang. As for his dream car, he replies, "Honestly I don't have one dream car, I have a few hundred." The list goes as follows: 1968 Shelby GT, 1969 Boss Mustang hatchback, Ferrari Enzo (after his name, of course), 2014 Ford Shelby, 770 Equus Bass, 1958 Corvette Stingray, 1968 Charger and Challenger, and a classic Chevy. "I'm mostly into classic cars," he says after going through his wish list.

What makes this car yours? For Enzo, he likes to think of his Wrangler as different from the others one would see on the road. He wants to make his Jeep unique in ways others would not modify it. The bumper is different, and the lighting is different. There will be more to come as Collado does not plan on getting rid of the Jeep anytime soon.



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Pet of the Month



PET NAME: ZAR

PET AGE: 2 YEARS

TYPE: Golden Retriever

PET QUIRK Zar is a Golden Retriever playful pup who loves nothing more than hugs, cuddles and his soccer ball. He is a Medical Response Service Dog trained and certified by the Pawsitive Action Foundation in Saint Cloud, FL. In his spare time, he likes to become a K-9 cop and be the good boy who arrests the bad boys. He's also an employee of Nonahood News.

Submit your pet for pet of the month at <http://nonahood.to/pet>

Clothing for a Cause: Elephant Pants

BY JENNY LYNN

There is an amazing company I buy clothing from that is very dear to me, and I probably purchase a pair of their harem pants once or twice a month. These aren't just pants, they are the most comfortable pants you can wear, and they're made at Elephant Pants. There are plenty of different styles, colors and sizes to choose from, and they are always adding new collections which I add to my closet more times than I can count. I can easily say I have one of every color, even the rombo gold harem ones.

Elephant Pants was established in 2014, and their main mission is to save elephants. When you purchase from Elephant Pants, they donate \$1 per item sold to save the elephants. Their pants are made of 100% rayon, which is super light and breathable and is perfect for our hot days here in Florida.

One of their newer items is named after an elephant named Minnie. Minnie was born in Asia in 1966. She was taken from the wild and exported to North America the same year. She was purchased by the owner of a private wild animal farm in Alberta, Canada. At age 17, she was sold to Circus Vargas, and her name was changed to Minnie. After traveling for years with the circus, Minnie was sold to the Haw-

thorn Corporation and was then leased for use in circuses and performing exhibitions. As a result of USDA prosecutions against the Hawthorn Corporation for violations of the Animal Welfare Act for inadequate care and mistreatment of its elephants, Minnie was transferred to The Elephant Sanctuary in Tennessee.

Elephants are some of the most majestic animals, and when I came across Elephant Pants, I saw a place where I can do my part in saving these amazing animals. Elephant Pants makes sure that a portion of every sale goes to an organization in the fight to save elephants in Africa. From 2010 to 2012, there were more than 100,000 elephants poached for their ivory alone; that's one elephant every 15 minutes.

More than \$145,000 has already been donated to several charitable organizations in saving elephants. One of Elephant Pants' current partners is Tusk.org. At Tusk, they are working on five strategic initiatives: anti-poaching, community conservation, human and wildlife conflict mitigation, habitat protection, and technology and innovation.

You can purchase your very own items at www.theelephantpants.com.



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Nona Alumni: Kyle and Sandra Herrera

BY NICOLE LABOSCO

In this recurring monthly special, Nonahood News will be featuring those who've graduated from Lake Nona High School and will recognize the achievements they've made since. Some will have been a part of the first graduating class. Others might have graduated a few years later. Few have stayed in the Lake Nona area, and many have explored the world or are still doing so. Let's see where life's journey has taken them so far!

Name:	Kyle Herrera	Sandra Herrera
Age:	24	23
Year Graduated:	2011	2013
Occupation:	Munitions System Journeyman, Military	Child Development Center Assistant
Current Location:	Aviano, Italy	

This month's stars are located just south of the Dolomite mountain range and about 45 minutes north of Venice, which makes them the envy of a lot of people and their ultimate travel goals.

Sandra: "We had always wanted to travel, and we said if we could choose where to live in Europe, it would be Italy because it is relatively central, which makes traveling easier. We are stationed in Aviano, which is in the northeastern corner."

Kyle: "I was given a list of bases to choose from once completing training in Texas and was assigned to the 31st fighter wing here in Aviano, Italy."

Sandra's family moved to Florida when her father retired from the Air Force in England. They moved to the Nonahood in 2007, and her family is still here for the most part. Meanwhile, Kyle's family moved to the Lake Nona area more than 25 years ago, and he was born here.

Mrs. Herrera's goals for after high school were to get her degree, become a teacher (high school and then college), to travel and to get married and start a family. Another success out of Lake Nona High School.

"After high school, I got my degree from the University of Central Florida (UCF) in 2016, became a teacher within a month, and then within four months of that, I was married, and I am still traveling."

While a student at Lake Nona High, Mr. Herrera's ambitions were to attend a good college and play college-level sports. He was accepted into UCF after attending Florida Atlantic University (FAU) his freshman year of college. He was unable to play sports due to an injury during his senior year of high school but graduated with his bachelor's degree from UCF.

I'm sure we all want to know how this young couple found themselves residing in a quaint Italian town with views of a mountain range that is so close to major cities. Kyle has lived in Aviano for a little over a year, and Sandra joined him on his journey about six months ago. The couple will reside in Italy until around May 2020 when Kyle's contract is up. How did the Herrera's Italian voyage begin?

Sandra: "After being a military brat for so long, I never really thought that I would get to experience that lifestyle again, and when I first started dating Kyle, it was still not really a for-sure lifestyle for us yet. Once he got accepted [into the military] and we got married, I was excited to be in that military family again. Overall, my journey was really simple. I worked hard in high school and graduated fourth in the class - that made getting into UCF really easy. I started dating Kyle the summer before my senior year, which was June of 2012. I graduated UCF with a 3.8 [GPA] after 3½ years and got my degree in Secondary Science Education. I taught at East River High School after I graduated until the school year was over. During that time, Kyle and I got engaged during Spring Break and married by a double proxy while he was back in Italy and I was still in Florida. After that, I spent the summer with friends and family and then moved to join Kyle and start our life together."

Kyle: "I joined the military after completing my degree hoping to get into officer training school. I will be applying in 2018. I went to basic training at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas, for eight weeks. I then went to a three-month course at Sheppard Air Force Base, where I received training on my particular job. Here at the 31st fighter wing, I am currently working conventional maintenance, which entails building bombs, providing ammunition for the F-16s, as well as building countermeasure munitions. I [also] received awards for averaging above a 90 percent on my qualifying tests to progress in my career field and awarded coins from the group commander and base commander."

Naturally, one is curious if they are speaking the native language. Parli Italiano? (Do you speak Italian?)

Sandra: "No! I want to, and I'm trying to learn it through exposure and Duolingo*, but it's hard. Italians speak very fast!"

(*Duolingo is an app which helps users learn the language of their choice.)

Kyle: "We have learned the basics: the ability to have a short conversation and ask where things are. Things like directions, ordering food, and other basic questions."

Having had the pleasure of knowing how beautiful Italy is myself, I had to discover what it was like to actually reside there and what locals do for fun in their new hometown.

Sandra: "Because I used to live in England, I had a sense of what living in Europe was already like. It is very rural, slower moving, smaller towns, tractors in the roads, markets shutting down streets type of life. In Italy, specifically, it is hard because not very many people know English, so communicating is difficult, but some words are similar, so we can make it work. But knowing that you're in Europe and seeing a different way of life and a different kind of landscape is awesome. I knew that living in Europe would be amazing, but I had no idea that it would be so beautiful and scenic everywhere you go. I want to take pictures of everything here so I can remember it when we move back."

Kyle: "Europe is amazing! Traveling is extremely easy and cheap. I am able to visit multiple countries within a few hours' drive. The culture and lifestyle is much different than the States. The architecture here is magnificent. It's everything I thought it would be. I've visited Slovenia, Croatia, Germany, Austria and Switzerland so far. I have a lot more places on my list."

With traveling to nearby countries being so accessible, it must be difficult to resist the urge to visit a neighboring town. When the Herreras aren't traveling, one might find them playing sports or getting creative.

Sandra: "I like to draw and paint and do little projects around the house if I am alone. If we are together, we like to travel, go outdoors and do things like go to the lake or rafting, but mostly we eat and try out new Italian cuisine for fun."

Kyle: "On base, intramural sports are extremely competitive. I play on the base soccer team as well as the base volleyball team. I also play on the squadron soccer, flag football, volleyball and softball teams. Traveling is our most frequent activity seeing as Venice is a 45-minute train or car ride away. Slovenia and Croatia are also within a short driving distance, and we live five minutes away from the Dolomites, where we can go hiking in the summer and snowboarding in the winter."

With so many accomplishments at such a young age, what are some current goals for you at this point in your life?

Sandra: "Right now, my biggest goal is to live up to the opportunity of being in Italy and travel and see as much as possible. I also would like to start my master's degree, but finding an all-online degree for higher education is a little tricky, so I might have to wait until we are back in the States. [In the next five years] I would say, if we decide to stay in the military, then I see us somewhere overseas still and adapting to a new country and traveling more. If we move back stateside, then I would see myself teaching biology again and then thinking about starting a family at some point after we are both set with jobs and a home."

Kyle: "Some current goals I have set for myself would be to win BTZ (Below the Zone), which involves beating out other airman who come in at the same time as me and ranking up six months earlier. Another would be to submit my officer application as well as paying off my student loans. Within the next five years, I hope to be an officer in the Air Force, hopefully stationed at Ramstein Air Force Base in Germany."

Yet, out of all of this couple's successes, they consider each other one of their biggest milestones in life! (Swoon!)

Sandra: "We got engaged in March and got married in April. We decided to do a double proxy, which means we both send in paperwork to the state of Montana and they get two people to stand in as us at the altar to do the ceremony. We decided to forego a wedding and instead use all of that saved money for a really awesome honeymoon (which is still in a planning phase but we are thinking about a two-week trip to multiple countries in Asia). As far as wedding photos, we are going to get a dress and a tux and a photographer and take some really awesome pictures around the Italian countryside!"

Kyle: "A major milestone we got through was getting Sandra moved over here. We got a house and just recently bought a new car. She got a job working at the Child Development Center to add to her teaching resume. I have progressed at a good rate in my career field. I will be applying to start my master's degree next spring. Well...our engagement wasn't as romantic as we planned. Because I had to leave the States in a hurry, there wasn't much of an engagement. But this winter/spring, we plan on doing a photoshoot in the mountains! We will be waiting to have a formal wedding until we move back stateside. We might also be getting a puppy here soon!"

Written for current and future Lake Nona alumni by a Lake Nona alumna. Check back in to our February issue to learn about our next Nona graduate(s)!



Make 2018 a Year of Intention Rather Than Resolutions

BY ODETTE VACCARO

Each new year feels like a blank canvas. For many, it's typically a time for resolutions. I, for one, have never been the resolution type. My friends who are the resolution type frequently end up disillusioned, frustrated and disappointed when they don't meet their hard-and-fast goals. Did you know that research shows only about 8% of people actually achieve their New Year's resolutions?

So why are resolutions so ineffective for the most part? The actual meaning of the word resolution is a "firm decision to do or not do something" or "the action of solving a problem." When I think about it this way, it seems to me that a resolution comes from a negative view rather than one of optimism and hope. What we focus on expands. So why do we choose to focus on what we DON'T like or what we need to change, rather than on what we DO want to invite into our lives? The idea of resolutions also seems really focused on an outcome, rather than a process. But isn't life all about the journey? Wouldn't a softer, more positive approach allow us to enjoy the view along the road AND also lead us to our intended destination?

This is why I propose that this year we give up resolutions and look to the power of intention instead. Intentions are a powerful way to align yourself, your mind and your energy with the type of person you want to be and the type of life you want to live. Rather than thinking of your life as a "problem to solve," it allows you to breathe in a sense of anticipation and opening to new possibilities.

Setting intentions for the new year, as opposed to resolutions, allows you to reflect on the motivation behind the changes you want to create; it lets you prioritize what is most important to you and effect change from within through real transformation.



When you set an intention, you identify the why behind your resolutions, the purpose toward which you are working. Having that clear, you are better able to listen to your everyday needs and adapt your daily life to head toward your desired results. It allows you to detach from the outcome, and instead lets you be in a flexible state of mind in which you can be still, observe and adapt. The power of intention is that it sets the stage for events, people and synchronicities to come into your life and conspire with you to make things happen – to pave the road toward your objective.

Rather than decide you need to lose 15 pounds, think about the why behind that. Do you want to feel healthier? Do you want to be more active? Then set an intention for THAT and watch the inspiration start flowing.

To set your intentions, simply begin with stillness and listening. Be honest about who you are and what you value, and then allow that to be a lighthouse in your life and daily actions. This is a powerful way to raise your emotional energy, achieve success, and feel happier. Your intentions will provide a roadmap and reminder for how to live out each day. They will give you purpose, as well as the inspiration and motivation to achieve it.

Who says January 1st is the only time to rethink and restart? Every day of your life is a new opportunity to make a new, better choice, to start again, to be reborn. So make today, whatever day on the calendar it is, your new beginning. Set the intention to be who you want to be and watch it unfold.

The Resurrection of Fashion's Groovy Past

BY VICTORIA PUTZEYS

Just like seasons, fashion trends come and go. I think we can agree that some trends, like poodle skirts, need to stay where they belong, and that is in the past. However, one of the most fascinating things about fashion is the ability to look at an outfit that distinguished society at a certain point in time and bring back some nostalgia. Perhaps we don't notice it in the present moment, but fashion, like music, works together and leaves its mark on human culture. When we place trends on a timeline, it allows us to observe its influence through the eyes of a historian. A fashion trend being recycled from eras past is not a foreign concept, and it happens more than we realize. Designers are able to take a little piece of fashion's past and incorporate it into their collections.



When you attend a 1970's decade party, there's a reason the room is bustling with disco music and wide-collared shirts and bell bottom jeans as if you just walked onto the set of *The Brady Bunch*. That's because the 1970's marked a temporal, earthy and whimsical time, a time when people were finally able to make statements with their clothes and their music. Diversity and free spirits were in full force. The individuality within this decade was

flourishing, just like the floral prints and mismatch, earthy patterns. This decade is easily distinguishable with its shift dresses, crochet tops, and sophisticated embroideries. The styles that came out of this decade stand the test of time even among all the new trends that always seem to be surfacing.

History is once again repeating itself, and recently you might have noticed some pieces that look quite familiar, as if they could be straight out of a *Sonny and Cher* episode. Today,



bellbottoms, platforms and suede have become staple pieces in closets once again. It's as if this retro era has been resurrected and is gracing the covers of countless magazines and fashion blogs. These decades-old statement pieces are adding some long-lost vibes to today's outfits, and I have to say it is pretty groovy!

Trends come and go, but the eclectic, influential spirit of this distinctive decade will always leave fashion lovers reminiscing and mixing it into their wardrobe. Now don't mind me, I'll be queuing some Led Zeppelin and Pink Floyd and grooving in my new bell-bottoms!

Family Fridays: Season's Greetings From Mickey's Very Merry Christmas Party

BY VANESSA POULSON

In this special edition of Family Fridays, we set off for Disney's Magic Kingdom to celebrate the holidays at Mickey's Very Merry Christmas Party. This event offers plenty to do for young and old, from parades and fireworks to a huge variety of holiday treats and drinks. There is no denying that no one does the holiday season like Walt Disney World. Disney has always provided the highest caliber of holiday entertainment, activities, foods and beverages, and, of course, holiday cheer. Mickey's Very Merry Christmas Party was no exception to Disney's knack for top-notch flair and style. Every moment of the event transports you to a winter wonderland of holiday spirit and timeless joy.

Entering the park, guests are given special wristbands that allow them access into Mickey's Very Merry Christmas Party - this is an exclusive event that cannot be accessed with a regular park admission ticket. The moment you first walk into the kingdom, you are bombarded with holiday lights, Christmas wreaths, and a whole host of decorations and holiday sights. Most spectacular of all, perhaps, is Cinderella Castle, which for the winter season is draped in lights of blue and white, making it look encased in ice and snow. I got major goosebumps seeing it for the first time, and as a girl who's spent 17 years of her life in Central Florida, that doesn't happen at the theme parks very often anymore.

After recovering from taking in all the beauty of the castle, my boyfriend, Andrew, and I made our way to the entrance of the party, where our wristbands were checked and we were allowed into the event. The holiday cheer continues down the path, and it is here that you are given your first TASTE of the holiday - quite literally - with a massive Santa Claus sugar cookie. Little did I know, but this was just the first in a whole collection of holiday treats I would be receiving throughout the night. After consulting our map, we realized that each candy cane marking on it represented another sweet snack stop, where we could receive even more holiday goodies.

Andrew and I, being two of the most competitive people we know, both raced off to find the next vendor and were pleasantly greeted with another cookie and a vibrant, icy blue snowcone. After this experience, we swung by Club Tinsel, where we both demonstrated that neither of us has any dancing ability and instead decided to enjoy our hot chocolate and snickerdoodle cookie outside and away from the general public.

Fueled by sugar and the motivation to try as many of these tasty treats that we could, we continued on through the park and into the Storybook Circus section of Magic Kingdom to look for the next treat. On our way, we ran into Donald and Daisy, and I made sure to give a wave to them while walking (though they seemed to be in a rush, so sadly, they did not wave back). Before getting on The Barnstormer ride, a childhood fear and love of mine, we found another of the candy cane stations, this time complete with two peppermint chocolate chip cookies and a bottle of Nesquik chocolate milk.

While racing through the park trying to sample all the holiday goodies, we also made time to stop and take in the lights and sounds and also to ride a few rides, including the Tomorrowland Speedway, The Barnstormer, It's a Small World, Haunted Mansion, and Splash Mountain. Obviously, Andrew and I are kids at heart.

After drinking our third and fourth drinks, including sparkling apple cider and sweet hot chocolate, we started to fall into a sugar coma, so we skipped the eggnog station and additional cookie stations. Nonetheless, we continued our walk through the park at a much more leisurely pace, and rather than focusing on where the next treat station was, decided to enjoy the holiday spirit without the sugar rush.

By this point, it was already time for the Holiday Wishes Fireworks show by Cinderella Castle, so Andrew and I raced back toward Main Street to find a spot where we could get a perfect view of the sky above. We were most certainly not disappointed. The fireworks show was full of upbeat Christmas songs

and spirit, combined with bright flashing fireworks and a kaleidoscope of lights across Cinderella Castle. Disney certainly knows how to enchant an audience with just the right amount of spectacle and pizzazz, because no matter whether you're young or old, Disney fireworks will always take your breath away.

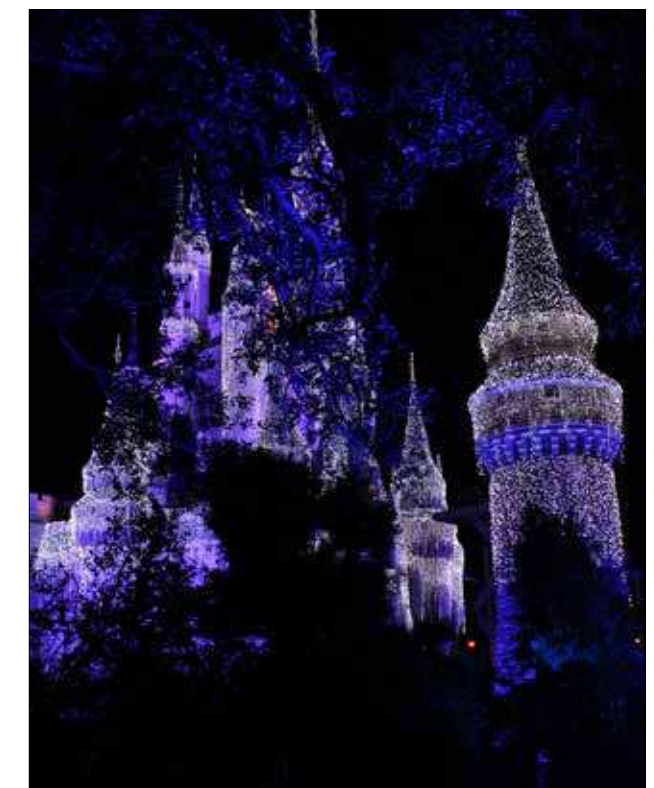
With both of us being exhausted and crashing from our sugar highs, after the final boom of the fireworks, we decided to head out of Magic Kingdom and back on the monorail to find our car. As we made our way to the exit, the classic Floridian version of snow, Snoap, came fluttering down in bubbly flurries, catching the red and green lights in a prism of color and holiday joy.

Mickey's Very Merry Christmas Party has proven once again to be an exceptional event for those of all ages. It is absolutely impossible not to be completely entranced in the holiday season when you're transported into the fantasy world of Disney and surrounded by helpful cast members, delicious treats, and festive lights.

Though he's a man of few words, he summed up the event nicely. Mickey's Very Merry Christmas Party makes an exceptional Friday night adventure not only for families but also couples of all ages. Goodness knows, Disney is hard to beat when it comes to the amount of holiday cheer and effort they put into each and every event.

Would I go back next year?

Absolutely.



Mama's Turn: I Casually Promise To...

BY SHARON FUENTES



It's a new year, and that means time to make New Year's resolutions; which most likely are all just the things you wanted to achieve last year but didn't get to. Seriously, who the heck came up with the idea of resolutions? Your life doesn't change just because you flip the calendar. Yet, every year people will make ambitious, unrealistic

resolutions that they inevitably won't keep. That's why this year I am resolving to not make resolutions. Instead, I will make casual promises to myself that I am under no legal obligation to fulfill! Here is a list of what I am casually promising to do in 2018.

1. I casually promise to...remember to write 2018 instead of 2017.
2. I casually promise to...stop hanging out with people who ask me what my New Year's resolutions are.
3. I casually promise to...listen to opera in the car and

to sing along loudly (and, of course, off key) in an Italian-sounding but totally made-up language (because, um, I don't speak Italian) when driving my teens and their friends places just to get out of always having to drive (since my "listening to '80s music" plan backfired on me when the kids declared it was "retro" and "cool").

4. I casually promise to...stop texting my kids when they are just upstairs to tell them dinner is ready. Instead, I will go back to the old fashioned way - SCREAM IT!
5. I casually promise to...make a cheat sheet of all my passwords that should save me approximately 318 hours a year trying to remember them.
6. I casually promise to...stop nagging my husband - unless he forgets to do the tiny little thing I asked him to do three days ago but he still hasn't done. Or he does something stupid or wrong or...
7. I casually promise to...ditto number 6, except with the kids!
8. I casually promise to...leave the past in the past - so if I owe you money, I'm sorry, but I am moving on!



9. I casually promise to...add DRINK COFFEE to my To-Do list every day. That way, I will always have something to check off and feel accomplished about.
10. I casually promise to...remember throughout the year whenever something bad happens that "this too shall pass." It may feel like a kidney stone - but it will eventually pass!

Nona Your Neighbor: Ryan Thomas

BY VANESSA POULSON

Meet Ryan Thomas, area sales manager for Northpoint Mortgage and Nonahood resident since 2016. He has a passion for staying active, writing, and being involved in the local community through volunteering.

1. How did you end up in the Lake Nona area and where are you from originally?

We are from New Hampshire. I came to Florida for the first time on my honeymoon in 2000 when my wife introduced me to Disney. Immediately, I fell in love with everything Florida from the weather to the palm trees. We are a Disney family and have been going to Disney every year since. We decided we wanted to live where we vacation, so we looked for areas close to Disney and the airport, and we stumbled on Lake Nona. We arranged a long weekend to Disney on Memorial Day weekend in 2016 and decided to look at homes for a future move and fell in love. My wife said if we can get this house, I would move to Florida now, and that was it. I made a full price offer. We went home and told all our family and friends, put our home on the market and packed



up and headed to Florida.

2. What do you do for work?

I am an area sales manager for Northpoint Mortgage; I manage the Lake Nona office, and I originate mortgages. I have been originating loans since 2001 and have been with Northpoint Mortgage going on my fifth year. When I told them I was moving to Florida, they told me they would open an office for me here in Lake Nona. I'm licensed in New Hampshire,

Maine, Massachusetts and Florida to originate loans.

3. What has been one of the biggest successes in your life?

It has to be my marriage to Jessica. I come from a broken home as my mom has been married many times, and I have eight half-brothers and sisters. Building a family and staying together has always been my goal. Ever since I was younger, I wanted to find that special someone, build a life with them and one day have children. My wife and I have been married 17 years and we have a 13-year-old daughter, Rachael. I am so proud to be a husband and father. I tell people it's the thing I'm most proud of. It's not always easy, but that is what makes it so great. There are other successes I have experienced so far along my journey but none as rewarding.

4. One of the biggest struggles in your life?

Balancing family, life and work. My job requires me to be available pretty much all the time, and it is easy to get lost in my job. I am passionate about what I do, and I work a lot. As I watch my daughter grow before my eyes, I know these days will not last forever. Surrounding myself with good people and a good support system is critical in being able to balance family, life and work, but it is always a struggle.

5. What are you looking forward to having here in Lake Nona?

We love going to the movies - I find myself getting lost in them. It is the one time I can decompress, sit still and not worry about anything. Having a movie theater within walking distance to my home [will be] awesome. We go to the movies a few times a month, and it will be so nice when it is here in Lake Nona.

6. What is something you would tell to a person or family considering moving to Lake Nona?

It will be the best decision you ever make.

7. What is your favorite part of Lake Nona?

By far the people. Moving to Florida 16 months ago and not knowing a soul was scary. It's so easy to meet people in Lake Nona and so many ways to get involved in community activities both in my neigh-



borhood and throughout the Lake Nona community. I find that we are not the new people, but everyone is new, and we all are looking for the same thing. It's so great to meet other people and hear about where they are from and why they moved here. It's very easy to make connections and make friends that I know we will have for life. It really is a special place.

8. Tell me about one of your most memorable experiences?

Last year, my wife and I went to the Super Bowl. We both love the New England Patriots, and we saw one of the most amazing comebacks of all time. The entire experience is one I will never forget.

9. Who is an inspiration for you?

My daughter inspires me to want to be better every day. It's so important to me to be a good role model for her and at the same time to make her proud. She inspires me to be a better person.



Do you want to nominate someone for Nona Your Neighbor?

Visit this link or send an email to vanessa@nonahoodnews.com, tell us about your nomination, and you could be featured in the next edition of Nonahood News!
<http://nonahood.to/nonaneighbor>

Nonaventure: Ice Skating Face-Off

BY NICOLE LABOSCO

We all have that one friend who is a die-hard adrenaline junkie who loves to discover their next greatest adventure. That friend is me. This feature is all about uncovering Lake Nona and Orlando's greatest activities, especially if you enjoy living life on the edge!

In our December issue, I braved through freezing temps to witness a show made of ice, and this month, I decided to keep the whole wintry ice theme going with ice skating. While I feel most Floridians prefer going when it's a hot summer day, I prefer going when the temperature begins to drop and we finally get the winter experience. Yes, I'm saying I look forward to the windy, freezing nights where one's face turns numb. In all honesty, blame the stylish winter outfits that take up too much space in my closet.

As a young adult who grew up in the Nonahood, I struggled to find one of my favorite activities, ice skating, anywhere nearby. After a decade and a half, there are still only two ice skating rinks even remotely close, with the closest one being about 30 minutes away. Let's see which rink skates to the top.

The Ice Factory of Central Florida

2221 Partin Settlement Rd.
Kissimmee, FL 34744



The Ice Factory is about 30 minutes from the Nonahood. The location offers two different-sized rinks for skating, although one is so small that you wonder what its purpose really is. Before I hit the ice, I grabbed a quick snack at the concession stand: nachos and fried pretzels. The nachos were okay, but let's be real – you could quickly taste the plastic bag the cheese came from. I was done after one bite. All my fellow Nonahood staff know how much of a cheese connoisseur I am, so that may come as a shock. As for the fried pretzels, they came out a bit burnt and were coated with cinnamon sugar. I ordered them not knowing exactly how it would be prepared, but I was thrilled to see the cinnamon-y goodness. Although I ate most of them, I'd say it was a pretty mediocre attempt at mimicking Auntie Anne's pretzels. It was typical concession food.

Unfortunately, the night I went to skate was one of the public skating times for the studio rink (the smaller rink). When I say it's small, I'm not exaggerating. Guys, it's honestly a waste of space unless it was used specifically for little kids or for skating lessons for those who've never had the pleasure of blade meeting ice before. The sad part is that the main rink, which is NHL sized, is more than half the size of the studio rink.

It appeared the studio rink was neglected compared to the main rink, as there were several chips in the ice and it just couldn't hold its own next to the larger arena. I couldn't help but think what would happen if too many people showed up to the public skate and the studio rink was the rink scheduled to be used. I'm not sure how you could get more than 15 or so people on that rink at the same time and still have it be safe. Luckily, there were only about seven others there that night.

As far as pricing, admission ranges from \$8 to \$12 depending on the time and day. Sometimes, skate rentals are included. Otherwise, skates are \$2 to \$5 more depending on what type of skate style you prefer (figure skate, hockey skate, padded, etc). Skate sessions range from about two hours to four and a half hours, again, depending on the day and time. This equates to a pretty good deal, but only if you can skate

on the main rink.

For those of you who are like me and have a shoe size which is a half size (ex: 10.5), you might run into a problem. The Ice Factory does not carry half sizes, meaning you will either be stuck with a skate that is too small and crushes your toes or you're left with the other risky option of skates that are too big and result in a loose skate and a far greater risk of falling, twisting/breaking an ankle, etc. I chose the larger skate and was nervous I was going to hit the ice plenty of times, but I never fell. (Shocking, I know. I fell only once for a photo, I swear!) When the skates don't fit right, let me tell you...you won't be getting far or going fast. Successful and fun skating is all about finding the best-fitting skate, and for me, hockey skates are the way to go. I didn't notice any lockers, so leave any personal items at home or with a non-skater, otherwise you leave them out in the open hoping no one takes them. I might have gone around the baby rink 50 times or so before my ankles really started to hurt from the lack of support, and I called it quits.

Overall, I'd say The Ice Factory is more kid-friendly and also is for those who aren't completely involved in the whole ice sports scene of figure skating and hockey. Just because it's a bit closer doesn't make it better.

RDV Sportsplex Ice Den

8701 Maitland Summit Blvd.
Orlando, FL 32810



RDV Sportsplex is about 45 minutes from the Nonahood. Although it's a bit farther than The Ice Factory, I would say it's worth the trip. RDV is a much larger facility with two full-size NHL skating rinks and much more to offer for those looking for activities other than ice skating or playing hockey. RDV offers one hour and 45-minute skate sessions about one to two times a day depending on the day of the week. Admission costs \$7.28 (tax not included) for regular skate sessions and admission for Friday and Saturday night sessions is \$10.10 (tax not included), with skate rentals \$3.75 plus tax.

The only downside to the day for me was that RDV, like The Ice Factory, did not have half-size skates. You might begin to realize how this can be a problem. I tried on two pairs of figure skates, which seemed to run small for me, before asking to switch to my preferable hockey skates. The employee recommended I go a size smaller than my usual shoe size with these as they tend to run larger. He was right. I guess the third time really is the charm! And I was beginning to get embarrassed constantly having to exchange for a larger size. At last ready with a skate that felt snug, I could finally skate to my full potential today! The employee at the skate pick-up offered to help lace up my skates to maximize the fit, but Van came in to save the day. Did you know our very own Vanessa Poulson has figure skated most of her young life?! Neither did I.



For 50 cents each, RDV offers lockers to hold your belongings while you are skating – but you must have quarters. Just a heads up to future visitors, they don't give you cash back. There is an ATM on site, but I'm sure there's a withdrawal fee. The same employee kept saving the day, offered to keep our purses behind the skate counter and said our shoes would be fine pushed underneath the bench. (Note: This is not something they usually offer to do. I think it was just because it was a slower day of business.)

So, off we went to hit the ice and I took off, leaving Van in the dust. She looked like a baby giraffe learning to walk! HAHA! In her defense, she just shipped her figure skates off to Michigan, and rental skates do not compare. It was too bad, though...I was ready for her to embarrass me, but instead I was left to make a fool out of myself. What else is new? Needless to say, as the breeze whipped through my hair as I glided down the ice, I felt like I was in a trance. I had been waiting for this ice skating moment for the longest time. I knew I had it in me to skate quickly. I became so hot that I actually took off my beanie and jacket and was still warm. I think I was just skating a little too hard. After an hour and 15 minutes, I could have kept skating, but Van was hungry and so off we went to grab some grub. I made a quick stop at the Bear Bites Concession Stand to see what they offered and ended up walking away with some delightful and whimsical cotton candy. I've always been a fan of the pastel sugary clouds.

Since RDV is a massive athletic facility, a short walk away from the Ice Den is a Nature's Table. During that quick journey, you pass tennis courts, the Orlando Magic headquarters, a gym and more. At Nature's Table, I ordered a Baja turkey panini featuring an avocado-jalapeño mayo, which was pretty good, but not as flavorful as I had expected. I also ordered a side of pasta salad and a Cocolada smoothie, mixing two of my favorites: banana and coconut! The smoothie was delicious! Van ordered a Mediterranean salad with a cherry limeade Starbucks refresher and a brownie, and she was pretty happy as well.

All of this skate talk makes me want to get back into speed skating and hockey. Yes, I used to play hockey and speed skate when I was younger, but neither were on the ice. I've been wanting to upgrade to the ice for awhile now. I think it's time (and long overdue) for the Nonahood to get its own ice skating venue. I can see a venue like RDV really booming in our area. Shall I form a petition to bring something like that to the Sports and Performance District? Fingers crossed one is in the future development plans. I'd be there several times a week!

So there you have it, RDV Sportsplex reigns champion in my opinion, and Nonaventure avoids breaking the bank (and ankles) to keep the winter spirit alive before the hot and humid weather returns.

Have a suggestion? Fill out our Adventure column form at <http://nonahood.to/nonaventure>. What do you want to see me review next?

Meet the Press: Elaine Vail, Managing Editor

BY NICOLE LABOSCO AND VANESSA POULSON



Elaine Vail is the managing editor here at Nonahood News. She is Nicole and Van's favorite person ever (sorry, Rhys!). From her incredible kindness to her ability to keep the rest of the staff organized, Elaine always defies expectations and handles every situation with grace and poise. We are incredibly lucky to have her.

Extrovert or Introvert? What's that in-between one? Ambivert. Depends on the situation and who I'm with.

Indoors or Outdoors? Halfway – I love sitting on my covered back porch when it storms, love sunsets, love plants and animals, but mostly from the comfort of my lanai. (I had to ask Rhys how to spell that fancy Floridian word for back porch.)

Sun or Snow? Snow is breathtakingly beautiful, but I HATE driving in it, and I hate being cold. I LOVE THE SUN.

Dogs or Cats? I have two rescue kitties. I would love to have dogs because I love their personalities, but they need to learn to bathe themselves and use a litter box first.

Vans or Converse? Sandals.

Coffee or Tea? Ice water.

Adventurous or Laid Back? I wish I were adventurous, but I'm not. I love to try new things, but I am not much of a risk-taker. I've definitely opened up more since moving here, though. I don't think I'm laid back, either. I have high expectations and an obsessive personality.

Canon, Nikon or Sony? I'm sorry, I don't know.

Am I fired?

What brought you to the Nonahood?

Hubby got recruited for a job at Orlando Health, so we packed up 20 years worth of crap in Indy and left the only family and friends we've ever known and started over. We moved here in August 2015. It was so dang hot, we wondered what we'd gotten ourselves into!

Where are you from originally?

Most recently, from Indianapolis, Indiana. I was a Navy brat, so I've lived in New York, Virginia, and South Carolina before settling in Indy. I only remember Norfolk, Virginia, though.

What's your favorite hobby?

I love music. My degree is actually in music education, but I stopped teaching many years ago to be a stay-at-home mom. I miss playing the flute and percussion and hope to join a community band or orchestra someday.

I love to read self-help/self-improvement books, but I'm a slow reader, so I don't read a lot because I always feel like I should be working on something else.

Probably my favorite thing to do since moving to Florida is sitting on the beach with my family, just chillin', no agenda.

What's your biggest dream?

Honestly, I'm already living my dream. I have an amazing family who I love spending every minute with, I live where people spend years saving to go on vacation, and I have the coolest job in the world working with the best team of people I could ever hope for. This might sound really strange, but I've always wanted to be an editor. Seriously, living the dream, people! Moving here has been one of the best things that has ever happened in my life.

Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

Hmmm – I'll be 52 (OH MY GOSH, that sounds SO OLD). I hope to be continuing to live my dream in Florida, spending more time on the beach, and loving my job at NHN. By then, hubby and I will be empty nesters, so that'll be new...um, I don't like this question..

What are you most excited about in Lake Nona?

I LOVE the people here. Seriously, I have never in my life met a more close-knit community of people who care about each other, enjoy being together, and help each other out. I love the choice of restaurants – always something good to eat here. I love the innovation and the diversity and being in the center of so much exciting growth. And it's just beautiful here!

Who's your biggest inspiration?

My kids, Vicky and Bridget. They inspire me to be better, work harder and never give up.

Hubby, too. Aaron really is my hero. I don't know what I'd do without him. Except when his snoring keeps me awake...

What's your favorite book?

The Peacegiver by James Ferrell.

What's something you've done that scared you the most or brought you out of your comfort zone?

Leaving everything and everyone behind I'd known my whole adult life and moving to Florida.

Describe one of your most memorable experiences.

Leaving everything and everyone behind I'd known my whole adult life and moving to Florida.

Check back next month to get to know another Nonahood News staff member!



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Travel: Paris & Amsterdam

BY DEBORAH BULLEN

In last month's Nonahood News, "London Calling," I shared the first installment of our travel log through Paris, London and Amsterdam. This month, I'm inviting you along to share our time in Paris and Amsterdam. We left London by way of the Channel Tunnel, or Chunnel, and arrived approximately two hours later in Paris. This was our first visit to the City of Lights. As you'll see shortly, we crammed as much as possible into at least three of those days.

We stayed in the Place Vendome area near the Tuileries Gardens. After checking in, we checked with our concierge about purchasing tickets. If you plan to go armed with only your Rick Steve's handy guide (in other words, sans tour group), consider purchasing the museum ticket week-long pass. You gain access to the front of the line in many places, and after what feels like decades of walking, you will need it.

Our hotel also called ahead for dinner reservations (Café Constant, near the Eiffel Tower) and the Seine River Cruise. We had a nice dinner, toasting our first evening with champagne and foie gras while we waited to be seated. The boat ride at night is a pretty standard tourist activity, but you know what? Paris really is the most beautiful city at night with the bridges and Notre Dame all lit up, so go for it even if you dislike the usual touristy list of must-dos. On our way back to our hotel, the Eiffel Tower lights started their shimmery dance – also a treat for first timers.

Our second day there, and our first full day, I felt like we already had a grasp of getting around the city. Paris is such a wonderful walking city with views on literally every corner. Once you have a map, you can pretty much go anywhere. Of course, if you are holding that map, be prepared for a skilled pickpocket to approach. Most people are forewarned – just keep going. We headed to Notre Dame, which of course is magnificent, decided to forgo the two-hour wait to the top in favor of lunch on the Left Bank, a browse through the Shakespeare and Co. bookshop, and a stroll through the Latin Quarter.

We headed back over the bridge and went straight to the front of the line at Sainte Chapelle. I've talked to people who overlook this gem of a "chapel" even though it's very close to Notre Dame, but don't make that mistake. The light coming through the stained glass in late afternoon creates a feeling of awe and reverence. We had dinner that night at Les Deux Magots, which once had a reputation for being the meeting place for literary elites such as Hemingway and artists, and it is now a popular tourist destination. Yep, it was full on, no-holds-barred tourist mode with no apologies.

On day three, it rained, which was actually perfect since we needed to see museums. We started with the Louvre in the morning. And since you could spend months in there and probably not see some things twice, we saw the obligatory Mona Lisa, Venus de Milo,

etc., until we felt so exhausted juggling places with other tourists and most particularly their never-in-short-supply selfie sticks, we exited with relief into the rain and a restaurant for lunch. Refreshed and undaunted, we headed for the Musee d'Orsay, where we promptly lost each other for an hour (well, What's App hadn't been invented yet). After recovering my husband, we spent over an hour on the fourth floor, which is where you want to go to see the Impressionist paintings.

The whole museum is worthwhile, of course, but you should be getting the idea by now that tired feet, sensory overload and a crowd of people can be a very reasonable excuse for an early cocktail. So, with that in mind, we headed toward the hotel only to be waylaid by, you guessed it - another museum. I convinced my husband to stop and, going to the front of the line again, we made our way into the wonderful, tiny Musee d'Orangerie. Don't miss this one, either – the Monet paintings that encircle the oblong room are just something to sit and ponder. We did finally get that glass of wine, and it felt well earned.

Day four was bright and sunny as we set out for the Bastille, later stopping by a market to pick up random lunch items for a picnic near the Jardin du Luxembourg. What a nice way to spend an afternoon, wandering among the hedges, watching children glide boats across the fountain, taking pictures and enjoying the day. It was much later that afternoon when I began to feel queasy and ended up spending that night and the entire next day in my room with a stomach bug. Bill had to take himself to the Rodin Museum and Montmartre, but I know he didn't have any fun because he told me that to make me feel better. And I got better, so he was telling the truth. But by then we were leaving for Amsterdam.

We caught up with our Dutch son, aka our foreign exchange student Maikel and girlfriend. Since this was his territory, we let him be our guide. The hotel he'd recommended was the nicest of our trip – a gorgeous, recently renovated Waldorf Astoria property, the Pulitzer Amsterdam, near the center of everything. Our Maikel has excellent, if expensive, taste! We went on a boat tour around the city with a guide who educated us on the history that I've since completely forgotten. We rented bikes that afternoon as he once again guided us through, around, and all over Amsterdam. We met his Dad for the first time for dinner that night and spent a very memorable, special evening exchanging stories of Mike and our son and their high school stories (read shenanigans).

The next day was spent walking the city, shopping and several hours at the Rijksmuseum, best known for its Rembrandts, Vermeers and Van Goghs. We said goodbye that evening, and while they headed back to London, we spent one more night before catching an early flight the next morning.



Les Deux Magots, Paris



Paris at night



Sainte Chapelle



Luxembourg Garden



Musee D'Orsay

Katie's Cucina: Meal Planning 101 + Bolognese Sauce Recipe

BY KATIE JASIEWICZ, KATIESCUCINA.COM

It's a new year, which means many of you have made resolutions. Or, as I like to call them, "goals." I recently saw a friend post on Facebook how she was overwhelmed with the dinnertime process with two small kids. She asked for advice and tips on how everyone does it. This is a topic I'm often asked about, and one that I'm pretty well versed in. I figured this would be a great time to share some of my own tips and tricks. It's a new year, and if you have a goal to cook more, I'm here to help you.

Typically, I cook five dinners a week Sunday-Thursday. I try my best to go to Publix only 1-2 times a week. I meal plan on a Saturday/Sunday and then shop on Sunday/Monday depending on the menu I come up with and the ingredients I have on hand. Yes, I actually cook that many meals a week. I also cook breakfast and plan lunches. I plan every single ingredient and try to overlap some ingredients so that I ensure no food is wasted and it's all consumed. If one recipe calls for cilantro, I try to plan another meal later in the week that will use the rest of the fresh cilantro. Planning the menu each and every week is key if you really want to get serious about eating in more often. I also have it written down on a board in my house, so everyone knows what's for dinner. If you're new to menu planning, I wouldn't try for 5 days - I would aim for 2-3 days until you get the hang of it, then slowly add in another night or two.

Here is a sample menu:

Sunday-Spaghetti (make a double batch and save half for Wednesday night) with Bolognese sauce (make a large pot of sauce and freeze half of it to use for dinner in a few weeks), salad, and garlic bread.

Monday-Sheet pan lemon chicken with potatoes and asparagus (checkout KatiesCucina.com for the recipe).

Tuesday-Tacos! (Always Mexican food on Tuesday nights in my house. Whether it's beef, chicken, fish tacos or fajitas, or enchiladas.)

Wednesday-Shrimp scampi with roasted broccoli and garlic bread (reheat the leftover spaghetti from

Sunday night).

Thursday - Chicken curry with naan bread.

On Sunday, as I'm working on the Bolognese sauce, I will chop extra onions and garlic for other meals in the week and store them in airtight containers in the refrigerator. I always keep frozen shrimp and fish on hand in my freezer for an easy Friday or Saturday night dinner in case kids don't nap and are crazy and we don't venture out to dinner.

I love to switch up my menus each week and use a combination of store bought and homemade. I have two young kids, and everyone eats the same meal in my house. I make meals I know everyone will eat, and if it's a night where one of my kids can't eat it, I have leftovers for them. I'm also big on everyone eating together, so we eat between 5-6 p.m. I realize that doesn't work for some families, so you need to do what works best for you and your family. Most weeks I'll grab a rotisserie chicken from Sam's Club and use up leftover chicken in enchiladas or even make a pot of soup! One of my favorite easy side dishes lately has been roasting vegetables. Grab a package of pre-chopped fresh broccoli, place on a baking sheet and drizzle with olive oil, sprinkle with salt and pepper. Bake at 400 for 10-15 minutes until crispy. Same goes with green beans and asparagus.

I'm sharing one of my family's favorite recipes this month. Every home needs a good Bolognese sauce in their back pocket, and that's what I'm providing for you here. I hope all my tips and tricks will help get you on track to making more meals at home this year and enjoying a little extra family time here in the Nonahood.



Bolognese Sauce

Yield: 10

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 60 minutes

Total Time: 75 minutes

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1/2 onion, minced
- 1 carrot, peeled and minced
- 2 tablespoons garlic, minced
- 1lb. ground pork
- 1lb. lean ground beef
- 12 pepperoni, diced
- (2) 28oz. cans of crushed tomatoes
- (1) 12oz. can of tomato paste
- 1 tablespoon dried parsley
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1/8 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1/2 cup whole milk
- Salt & pepper
- Fresh parsley, basil, and parmesan cheese for garnish

Directions

1. In a large pot, heat olive oil and butter. Add onion and carrot and cook until onion is translucent, about 3 minutes. Add the garlic ground beef, ground pork and pepperoni to the pot. Cook on medium heat, breaking up the meat for 10 minutes or until the ground beef and pork are no longer pink.
2. Once the meat is cooked, add in the crushed tomatoes, can of tomato paste, dried parsley, sugar, red pepper flakes, whole milk, and salt and pepper to taste (I like to add 1/2 teaspoon of salt and pepper at a time). Mix well, place heat to medium-low, and let the sauce simmer for 45 minutes, stirring occasionally. Once the sauce has thickened, pour it over pasta and garnish with fresh parsley, basil, and Parmesan cheese.

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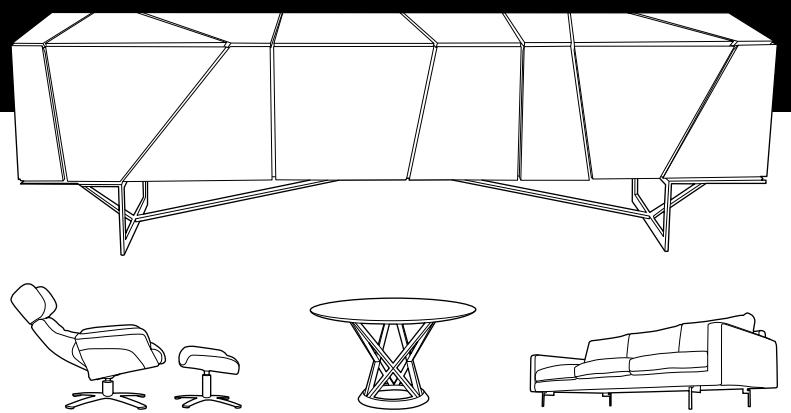
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Finding the Lifestyle You Desire

The 4 P's of Creating Lasting Resolutions in Health, Wellness and Life

BY DR. JENNIFER WADDY



January is here, and I have a confession – I have a love-hate relationship with this time of year. While I love the season of change and new beginning, I am not a huge fan of the laundry list of New Year's resolutions that accompany the highly anticipated January 1st. It is estimated that 50% of us create a New Year's resolution with most commonly including weight loss, exercise, improved money management, and debt reduction. Research also has shown that most fall short after only two weeks of continued effort. Typically, most people are back where they started, if not even further behind, by December. For this January, let's not make any empty resolutions. Let our efforts to reinvent ourselves or be the best version of self be rooted in a realistic plan for lifestyle changes worth following all year.

Here are my four action steps when making a resolution or any lifestyle change you can follow all year.

1. Clarify the PROBLEM

The first step in any meaningful change will be to first identify the correct problem. Many times, we have goals we set, but we don't take the time to explore the key issues preventing our success. With my weight-loss clients, for instance, most have accomplished weight loss at some point in their life, but they are not successful with KEEPING the weight off. I find the true problem not in the ability to lose weight but to sustain the habits that found them success in the first place. We then reframe the question to "how can we maintain our weight after losing it?" This often puts things into a different framework, and our approach isn't centered on weight but more so the ability to be consistent with daily habit changes. By clarifying the true problem, we get a better idea of the big picture and focus on the appropriate solutions.

2. Commit to the PRACTICE

After you have identified the problem and found the right idea and/or method for your solution, you must practice and be in a "practice" mindset. Let me explain. Too often, we commit to a process in order to reach a specific goal, and it becomes a project. So much emphasis is placed on the outcome that we miss the beauty and learning potential in the process. Projects often have deadlines and often cease at the first sign of failure. Instead, make yourself accountable to goal behaviors and rarely to goal outcomes. I find these behaviors lead to lasting changes and will create your eventual success. Focus on the process, not the project.

3. Find your PASSION

We all know that motivation is a powerful tool. Passion is the intrinsic motivation that drives the practice. I don't proclaim that everyone has to turn into a health guru or fitness enthusiast when trying to lose weight, but you must cultivate a sense of self-care and self-love that drives you toward a healthy behavior. When you have passion, you do not have to rely on extrinsic motivators. When you have passion, your struggles aren't as daunting as you look within to reignite your drive and ultimately the process.

4. PERSEVERANCE Over Persistence

Finally, you must understand that, with anything worth changing, there will

be ups and downs. There will be times when motivation is absent. You must recognize that perseverance will power you through these low points. Persistence allows you to commit to a course of action, no matter the outcome. While perseverance is steadfastness in doing something despite the difficulty or delay in achieving success, with perseverance, you can disengage from failed strategies to seek new ones without leaving the actual process. Successful people choose perseverance over persistence and understand that quick fixes are rarely the solution and rely on calculated changes over time.

In life, as in health and wellness, more than half of us are destined to fail with the resolutions we create. For 2018, I challenge you to skip the list of resolutions. Take the time of self-exploration and identify a problem worth fixing, develop a realistic action plan, be passionate about the practice, and simply persevere.

Dr. Jennifer Waddy shares a passion and vision for helping others lead healthier lifestyles and sees

this as her niche to serve. She has heavily been involved in the fitness arena since participating in sports early on to her undergraduate degree in Exercise Physiology. Always wanting to be a physician, she earned her medical training from Duke University where she conducted clinical research in cardiac rehabilitation and explored the benefits of a medically supervised comprehensive wellness program. For more information, visit <http://www.enduranceweightloss.com>.



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At The Movies— Star Wars: The Last Jedi

BY JORDAN EICHENBLATT

Star Wars – the last *Star Wars* movie I’m going to see. *Star Wars: The last Jedi* WAS AWESOME.

I feel like Gollum from Lord of the Rings. I can’t make up my mind. I love it. I hate it. There is no inbetween. Also, there are no spoilers here. But let’s be honest, by the time this review is published, if you haven’t already seen the movie, you’re probably not worried about spoilers.

The writing is great, but also the writing sucks. There is a moment that makes absolutely no sense, but at the same time it does.

Don’t complain about the comedy moments in this, *Star Wars* has always had comedy moments in it – it wasn’t something the Marvel cinematic universe started. It’s something George Lucas and *Star Wars* started and even spills over a little bit into Indiana Jones.

This is a movie where you think it’s so predictable, but it isn’t, but then it is, but for a different reason. How do I write a review about a movie where I can’t explain scenes in detail because you’re too lazy to go see it. The fighting sequences are some of the best fighting sequences within *Star Wars*, but they aren’t the fighting sequences that you would expect.

With one last movie in this final trilogy, there is a last hope in J.J. Abrams to make it the best one yet because I still cannot make up my mind on *Star Wars: The Last Jedi*.

This movie gets a seven Goldblum out of a possible 10 Goldblums. But if you are really looking for that movie you should see this holiday season, go online and download a movie called The Room. It is the worst movie ever made, but it is so fantastically bad, it is awesome.

And then go watch James Franco and Seth Rogen’s baby, The Disaster Artist. Honestly, if this movie does not win an Oscar, I don’t understand movies.

Sorry, Obi-Wan Kenobi! Just like you, I’m split in half. If you’re reading this and don’t understand that joke, then I’m going to spoil *Star Wars* for you after all.

Everyone is dead.



Courtesy of TM & © Lucasfilm Ltd.

Nonahood Calendar

Visit www.nonahoodnews.com/events for updated events and detailed information.

January Events:

- 10 LNRCC Breakfast Connections (8:00 - 9:30 am)
- 10 EOCC Membership 101 (4:00 - 5:30 pm)
- 17 EOCC Chamber Luncheon (11:30 am - 1:15 pm)
- 19 Ponte Health Building Health Forum (9:30 am - 4:00 pm)
- 19 Nona, Bikes and Beer (and wine) at Night - Nona Cycle (6:30 - 9:30 pm)
- 20 Central FL's Inaugural Wounded Vet Run (8:30 am - 2:00 pm)
- 20 Homebuyer Workshop (12:00 - 1:30 pm)
- 24 Laureate Park Elementary Spirit Night @ Chipotle (5-9 pm)
- 25 EOCC Coffee Club Nona (8:30 - 9:30 am)
- 26 LNRCC Business Luncheon (11:30 am - 1:00 pm)

THE MONDAY MARKET AT LAKE NONA YMCA

Mondays 4:30 - 8 p.m.
YMCA of Central Florida (Lake Nona)
9055 Northlake Parkway
<https://www.facebook.com/Lakenonaymcafarmersmarket/>

ART AFTER DARK

Fridays 7:00 - 10:00 pm
Lake Nona Town Center
<https://www.facebook.com/artafterdarklakenona/>

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Saturdays 8:00 - 9:00 am
Crescent Park in Laureate Park
8374 Upper Perse Circle

BTN LAKE NONA SATURDAY MARKET

Saturdays 9:00 am
Valencia College Lake Nona Campus
12350 Narcoossee Rd
<https://www.facebook.com/LakeNonaFarmersFreshMarket/>

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To add your Nonahood Event to our calendar, visit <http://nonahood.to/calendar> or email the details along with your contact information to info@nonahoodnews.com.

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