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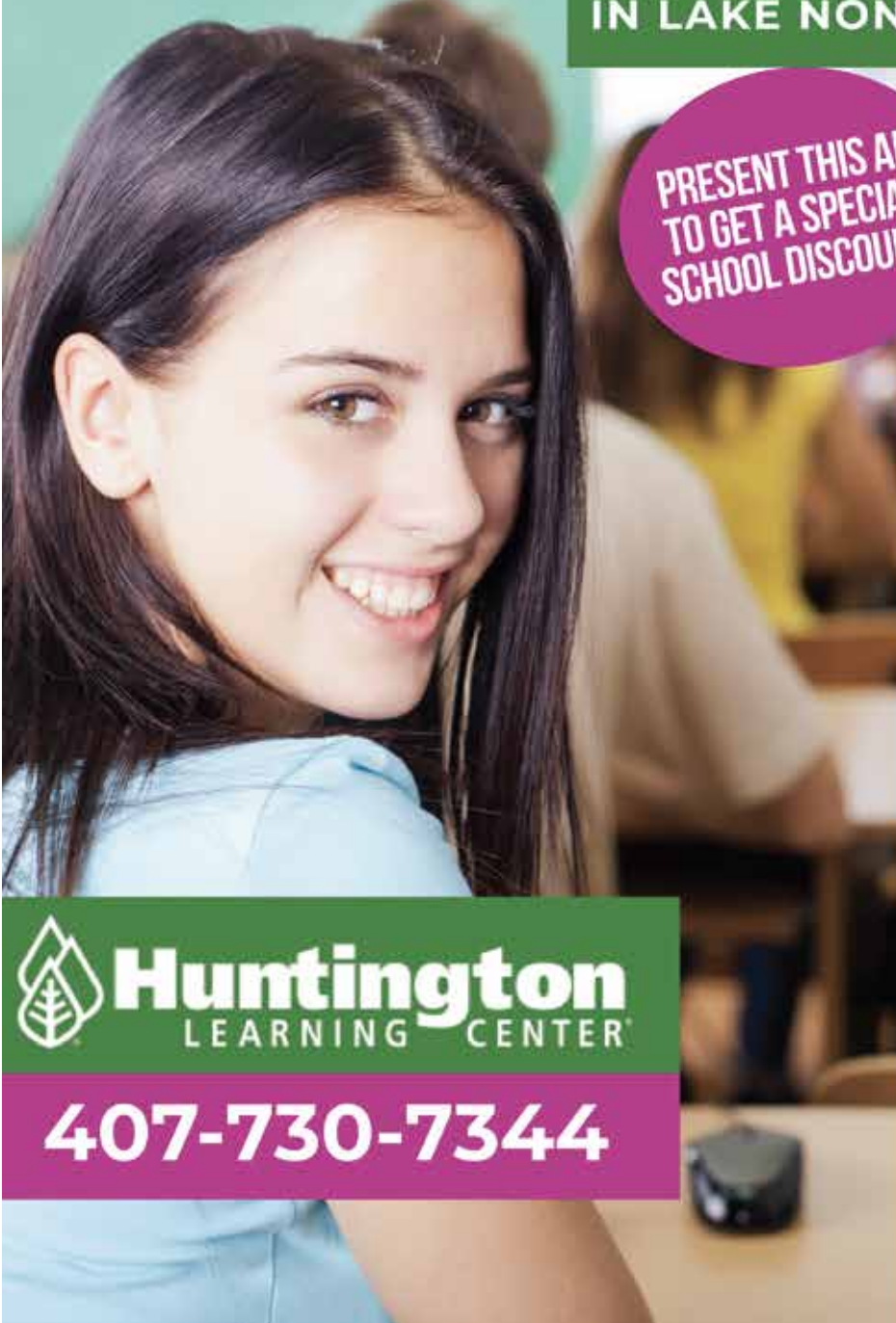
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NONA MEDIA

EDITOR'S NOTE

Editor's Note: El Carnaval

BY DEMI TAVERAS, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



Wow, how incredibly fast did February fly by?! January felt like the longest January anyone has experienced ever, and now we're already in March. But to be fair, for the last month, the nona.media team was busy at work putting together an amazing Nonahood Latino event for the community by the commu-

nity: El Carnaval 2020! Carnival, translated into Spanish as "Carnaval," is a traditional season in not only Latin American countries but in several places all around the world, during which everyone gathers to indulge in our favorite guilty pleasures, typically right before Lent. It's a time for celebration and fun, and Carnival easily becomes something to look forward to at the beginning of every year.

This tradition is the basis for our event, El Carnaval, where we get to take the magnetism and enchantment of the Carnival tradition and create the same ambiance here in our very own Lake Nona. Even if you're not familiar with the tradition, El Carnaval is an event for people of all cultures and ages in the community to reunite and have a blast listening to good music while devouring good eats



Photo by Cyril Desmond



Photo by Cyril Desmond

and drinks.

This year, we had exciting performances from several bands, including a batucada featuring talented samba dancers, as is customary for Carnival in Brazil! In between performances, you could easily grab some grub from a selection of savory food trucks and vendors or refresh yourself with sweet specialty drinks. The fiesta continued up until sundown, when the after-party at Boxi Park took over with everyone in high spirits from the fun-filled afternoon.

Thank you to all who came out far and wide to celebrate the culture, tradition and magic with us at El Carnaval. It was an unforgettable day, full of great music, food, dancing and entertainment! If you missed out, take a look at the hashtag #CarnavalLakeNona2020 to see photos and videos from the event. We hope to be celebrating with you again very soon!



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UCF Biomed Student Presents Autism Research At State Capitol

BY DR. DEBORAH C. GERMAN, M.D.



Dr. Deborah German

A College of Medicine biomedical sciences major investigating the link between processed food and autism presented her research findings at the state Capitol recently, sharing her discoveries with lawmakers, scientists and citizens from across Florida. Aseela Samsam was one of four UCF students chosen to represent student research at the Undergraduate Research Posters at the Capitol event.

Samsam has been part of a potentially groundbreaking study that found high levels of a food preservative called propionic



acid (PPA), which, if consumed by expectant mothers, could increase the chances of autism in their children. The study, led by the College of Medicine Drs. Saleh Naser and Latifa Abdelli, found that high concentrations of PPA lead to an imbalance in how neurons in the brain form. That causes a decrease in neural cells and damages the development of fetal brains. The results of the study were published in *Scientific Reports* in June 2019 and received news coverage worldwide, including *Forbes* magazine.

“It was an honor to be at the state Capitol discussing the autism research at our university,” Samsam said. “I’m happy to take the research out of the lab and UCF to a greater audience.”

With one in 59 children affected by autism, the need to understand the factors that cause the condition is more urgent than ever. According to the Autism Society, more than 3.5 million people in the United States live with an autism spectrum disorder, which can affect communication, behavior, movement and social development.

Samsam became interested in autism as a high school student when she participated in a Peer Inclusion Team that worked with special needs children.

“I became more and more interested in understanding and treating neurodevelop-

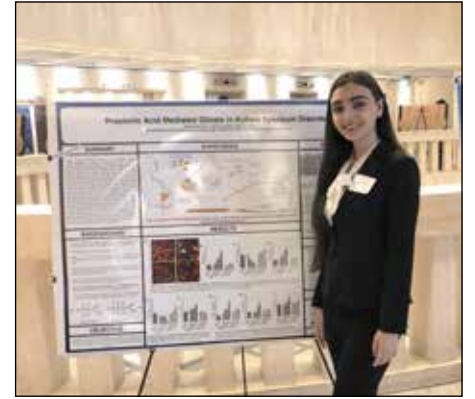
mental disorders, including autism spectrum disorders,” she said, “and wanted to see if there are ways to prevent or treat it.”

The Burnett School of Biomedical Sciences senior said her inspiration to pursue science and medicine come from her parents, Drs. Mohtashem Samsam and Raheleh Ahangari, both professors at the UCF College of Medicine.

“We are so proud of Aseela,” said Dr. Naser, “to be able to represent our lab and UCF – and to show how young researchers can really make a big impact.”

Samsam has already been accepted into medical schools for next fall and is looking forward to continuing her work on autism.

“I know there has to be more clues to discover, so it’s a stepping stone to find more factors linked to autism,” she said. “It’s like putting pieces together and then making sense of it and how it is important to the world.”



Deborah German, M.D. is the Vice President for Health Affairs and Founding Dean of the UCF College of Medicine.



Veterans Affairs Medical Center Hires New Director Alongside Management Changes in the New Year

BY MACKENZIE VENTURA

Many changes have been brought along with the new year at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs building located here in Lake Nona. The new year has brought big changes to the board as well as management of the VA medical center in Medical City. Mr. Timothy J. Cooke has recently been appointed as the new director of the V.A. Cooke previously served as director of the Martinsburg VA Medical Center in Martinsburg, Virginia, and has over 30 years of experience in Veterans Affairs.



The outlook for Cooke’s presence at the VA is highly anticipated. “With a strong sense of governance structure and ability to focus on customer experience, I am certain Mr. Cooke will be an asset to our VISN, our employees and volunteers, our health care partners, the community, and, most importantly, to the Veterans we are honored to serve,” said Dr. Miguel LaPuz, Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 8 network director.

In addition to the management changes, a contract has been awarded to Optum Public Sector Solutions to manage the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs going forward in order to improve care for veterans here in the area.

VA Secretary Robert L. Wilkie said, “The new Community Care Network (CCN) contract awards reflect our ongoing commitment to increasing veterans’ access to care and were designed based on feedback from veterans and other stakeholders.”

It should be noted that the VA was previously managed by TriWest Healthcare Alliance, and community providers contracted by TriWest should be sure to sign up with Optum to continue to provide service to veterans under CCN as they will not be automatically enrolled.

Gene Thatcher Honored As 2019 District 1 Neighborhood Block Captain of The Year

BY LINDA THIERRY



Congratulations, Gene Thatcher, for being honored as the 2019 District 1 Neighborhood Block Captain of the Year by the Orlando Police Department and the City of Orlando.

Gene has been a resident of Laureate Park since 2016. From the beginning, Gene actively made it her mission to meet her neighbors. There was a small group of residents pulling together a Neighborhood Watch. Gene immediately volunteered to be part of this grassroots group. Since then, she has tirelessly worked to keep the LP community safe and developed a fantastic relationship with the City of Orlando, Orlando Police Department, and Orlando Fire Department on behalf of the LP community. Gene was nominated for this award by District 1 Commissioner Jim Gray.

Gene has led the effort to communicate the value of a Neighborhood Watch Program (eyes and ears in the community to support the OPD). She coordinates the effort to develop a network of block captains



(meet your neighbors, share concerns, pick up packages for each other, prepare for hurricanes, and hold block parties), annually organizes a National Night Out celebration, regularly promotes the #9pmroutine on the LP social media sites (nightly checklist that includes checking to make sure vehicles are locked, garage doors closed, doors/windows locked), and encourages participation in the Dog Walker Watch program (they walk their dog three miles every day throughout the many trails/paths in LP and report suspicious activities).

In addition, Gene can be found volunteering at her two children’s schools, training their black lab as a therapy dog, and supporting the many community events for her friends and neighbors in LP.

In everything Gene does, she does it with unbridled enthusiasm and a smile. CONGRATULATIONS, Gene, on being named the 2019 District 1 Block Captain of the year! You make Laureate Park proud.

Nobel Notable of Laureate Park: Howard Temin, The Retrovirus Rebel Who Became an Oracle

ARTICLE BY DENNIS DELEHANTY
PHOTOS COURTESY OF WIKICOMMONS

This is the 12th in a series of articles that celebrate the lives of the Nobel Prize laureates whose names grace the 125 streets of Laureate Park. These laureates are extraordinary individuals who through their lifetime achievements have made our daily lives immeasurably richer, often in ways not readily evident



Whoever names the streets in Laureate Park has got to be a fan of The Mamas and the Papas. If you run with the younger set in the neighborhood, say, with those not yet 50, the mention of that supergroup might make you draw a blank. But for those of us who lived through the 1960s, that quartet loomed large upon that decade's prodigious musical scene, stirring the hordes of hippies of the day to pursue a struggle against what we then called the Establishment.

Last year, near the newly landscaped Dock Lake, a Crick Alley popped up on the neighborhood map. Not a Crick Street, or a Crick Avenue, or even a Crick Way. No, this had to be Crick *Alley*. One of the biggest hits recorded by The Mamas and the Papas, now rarely heard, was "Creeque Alley," a tune whose lyrics chronicled the group's early days and that reached number 5 on the Billboard charts. Either your correspondent has an overactive imagination, or our namer of streets doubles as a part-time punster. I, for one, would bet on the latter. But has our unknown labeler also concealed, in plain sight, sundry Delphic messages within our neighborhood map that speak to the close bonds between some of our Nobel Prize winners – consider the parallel paths of the streets celebrating poets Seamus Heaney and Derek Walcott – or the sour rivalries amongst others? I wonder because two of our laureates were not friends but instead engaged in a debate throughout the 1960s whose outcome had an unexpected and little-known influence on our battle to understand and control the virus that causes AIDS. This occasionally bitter contest pitted an academic Establishment, led by the man who discovered DNA, Sir Francis Crick, against a (nearly) lone rebel, the brilliant biologist Howard Temin.

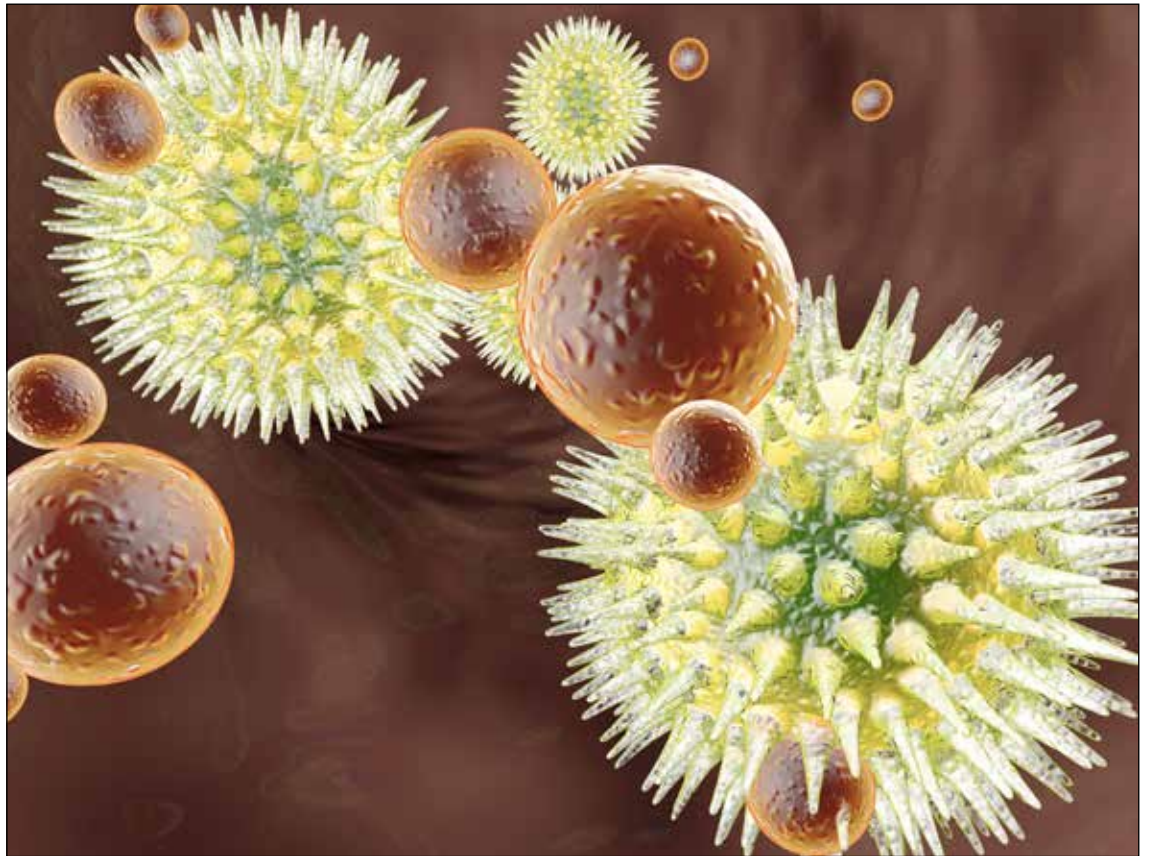
For his undergraduate degree, Howard Temin kept close to his Philadelphia birthplace, opting for that magnet for brainiacs, Swarthmore College. An apocryphal

account alleges that the college had to order more books because Temin had already read all those in the school library. Or maybe he had devoured all the books on biology, or even more likely, those related to animal virology, the subject that would soon become his professional passion. The field so intrigued Temin that his 1959 Ph.D. thesis at Caltech addressed certain curious properties of the Rous sarcoma virus, a cancer-inducing agent discovered in the early 20th century that produces malignant tumors in chickens.

The following year, Temin accepted a position as a professor of biology at the University of Wisconsin. There, he poured his boundless intellectual energies into experiments in his humble basement laboratory as he sought to discover why certain viruses, such as the Rous sarcoma, seemed to replicate their genetic material in the cells they infect. To biologists of the day, this made no sense. According to the prevailing dogma curated by such giants in the field as Francis Crick, genetic information traveled in one direction only: from DNA to RNA. Temin proposed that in the reproduction of certain viruses, such as Rous sarcoma, this process could work in reverse. That is, RNA could carry genetic information backward to form DNA and, in the process, reproduce cells infected with the virus. Throughout the 1960s, Temin promoted this iconoclastic view ceaselessly at countless scientific conferences. But no one listened. Francis Crick's rejection of Temin's theory was especially harsh.

Temin kept whistling in the wilderness, but still no one listened, until one day in 1970 when his exhaustive experiments finally produced concrete evidence for his unorthodox theory. Temin had found an enzyme in Rous sarcoma that induced its RNA to deliver genetic information to the DNA in cells the virus had infected. Temin hurriedly called his friend and colleague, David Baltimore, to tell him of the long-awaited breakthrough. But Baltimore had equally exciting news: He had simultaneously discovered, in mice, an equivalent enzyme in the Rauscher murine leukemia virus. The enzyme was soon christened *reverse transcriptase*, and the class of malignant viruses now also acquired a name: retroviruses. Five years later, the pair, together with their shared former mentor, Italian biologist Renato Delbucco, won the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for these crucial discoveries.

Up to this point, Temin and his colleagues had known of and worked with retroviruses found in animals only. Building on the knowledge gained in the detection of reverse transcriptase, the biologist Robert Gallo, then working at the National Cancer Center in Bethesda, Maryland, launched a hunt for retroviruses in humans, an effort that would not earlier have been possible. In 1980, Gallo and his team discovered the first human retrovirus in patients with cutaneous T-cell lymphoma. A few years later, his team detected the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), the agent responsible for AIDS. By then, the AIDS crisis was in full force and spreading across the globe. But the work accomplished by Howard Temin had given AIDS research-



ers a 10-year head start in their efforts to understand HIV and develop effective medications to fight AIDS.

In 1975, at a solemn dinner marking the 75th anniversary of the Nobel Prize in Stockholm, Howard Temin rose to speak. Many in the audience, including the king and queen of Sweden, puffed on cigarettes. In his remarks, Temin noted that his work and that of his two fellow laureates had been dedicated to the prevention of and possible cure for cancer. Now, though, scanning the hall, he could not help but express his outrage that "the one major measure available to prevent much cancer, namely, the cessation of cigarette smoking, has not been more widely adopted." Guests around the room quietly crushed their cigarettes. Not two decades later, at the age of 59, non-smoker Howard Temin was felled by lung cancer.

Not often can we draw simple and straightforward lessons from the lives of Nobel laureates. But in his lonely struggle against his own rival Establishment, Howard Temin taught us the simplest, most important lesson of all: When you know you are right, say the truth.

Next month: Gertrude Elion, Rational Drug Designer, or the Pharmacological Phenomenon

Dennis Delehanty moved to Laureate Park with his wife, Elizabeth, from the Washington, D.C., area in mid-2018 and began to research and write about the Nobel laureates honored by the street names in our neighborhood early last year. You can contact Dennis at donnagha@gmail.com.



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ARTICLE BY NICOLE LABOSCO

Getting an education is something we've all had to do to some extent. For some, learning comes naturally. For others, it can be a bit of a challenge, or they just want to learn more. This is where Huntington Learning Center comes into play.

"First in the industry, Huntington has the longest track record of helping students achieve academic success and boost their confidence ... we've been successfully helping kids learn for over four decades," stated Dr. Osman Fareeduddin, the executive director of Huntington Learning Center's Lake Nona location. "Our mission to give every student the best education possible has been our mantra since the beginning, and we love to see students realize 'I can' when it comes to school success. Named after the family that started it all, Huntington continues to be a family-owned company with its executives deeply involved in the day-to-day aspects of the business."

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Courtesy of Dr. Osman Fareeduddin.

lored tutoring programs that are unique to each child's learning style, and communication with parents. With this approach, we give your child the best opportunity at results," explained Fareeduddin.

Dr. Fareeduddin also runs the Hunter's Creek location, which opened five years ago, and he realized Lake Nona needed something similar.

"I was getting many students that were coming from Lake Nona all the way to Hunter's Creek due to the lack of options in the Lake Nona area. Due to this, I decided to open a center in Lake Nona to offer convenient services to the community."

You may be wondering why test prep and tutoring are important. Dr. Fareeduddin says it best:

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"[You'll notice] progress! Our students make great progress in a short period of time. For example, second graders threatened with retention can make so much progress that they avoid retention and, in fact, excel in third grade," Dr. Fareeduddin continued. "Middle schoolers facing an increase in more complex assignments can strengthen their foundational skills that will help them in high school and be-

brace creativity in your career or business.

So I set up a few quick gut checks to help you recognize when your hunt for quantity and volume overshadows your drive for quality. Here are a couple of questions to ask yourself, no matter what your career or business is, to ensure that a Creator Mindset blooms:

1. Why am I doing this?

So much of our time and energy is spent producing volume that the reason we produce it in the first place is outside the realm of our understanding. We are just "doing." The "why" is essential because without the why, we are just doing for doing's sake. There has got to be a reason in the first place about why we are doing what we are doing. And that reason will unlock the creativity we have traded for blind repetition. Stop for a moment and ask yourself why: For example, why do I own this landscape business? Is it to trim trees and hedge bushes? Or is it to mow lawns? I doubt it. I am certain that there is a far greater reason you are doing what you are doing than the activity of your labor. It is the magic that drew you to that profession in the first place. You need to rediscover the reason. And that reason will yield quality to your approach. You just need to remember enough of what got you there in the first place to uncover it. Sometimes, what we are doing has lost its purpose, and it simply becomes a multiplication of all that has come before it. Without creativity. And so within the reasons for the "why" of what you are doing, you will find a Creator Mindset and a renewed focus on quality.

2. What am I doing?

Are you stuck in endless meetings all day that seem to go nowhere? I know

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Although the center does not have an official grand opening date at the time of publishing, the center is open. Huntington Learning Center of Lake Nona is offering

a special for \$100 off an academic evaluation and is located at 13848 Narcoossee Rd., Orlando, FL 32832.

For more information, visit huntingtonhelps.com/center/lake-nona-fl or call (407) 730-7344.

Creator Mindset: Volume

BY NIR BASHAN



We live in a world obsessed with volume. The effort we make in our careers or in our business leads to always wanting more. We're in a constant cycle of more. We are told this cycle is good. Productivity, efficiency and predictability are what we crave so that we can get more.

But more of what? Who knows?

A relic of the analytical mindset that champions only what it can touch and feel, volume and the pursuit of more is something we constantly seek and desire because we feel it is tangible. We feel it is real. We crave its multitude. However, the endless worship of the analytical and quantification takes us away from creativity in any real sense. While we are on an endless search for more and more, the casualty is any meaningful development of a Creator Mindset.

This quest for volume and quantity clouds our vision when we try to think creatively. So instead, to become more creative in all that we do, we need to shift our focus away from *quantity* and onto *quality*. The quality of what we are doing is far more important than the quantity of what we are doing. Quality is the only scalable product that will ensure a Creator Mindset, no matter what you do. Because if you scale quantity, you end up making a lot of nothing. But scaling quality is a sure way to em-

I certainly feel that way from time to time. Are you focused too much on the details of the day-to-day that you have lost touch with the meaning of your work? Or does the pursuit of volume and quantity overwhelm you? I sure feel that way as I get bogged into details that don't seem to matter in a big picture initiative. But a brief look at the "what" behind the execution can lead you closer to a Creator Mindset and a focus on quality. For example, if you are a nurse – what is it that you do? Most think that it's providing care or administering initiatives and so on. What you are executing can seem like an unconnected series of detail, a daily routine that seems like an endless blur. But if you really look at the "what" of what it is that you do, you will tend to find greater meaning in connecting the work into purpose. Maybe it's a patent advocate that builds the "what" of your work as a nurse – or maybe it's a hub of information you are able to create for that patent. No matter what the "what" is, if you look at it creatively, you will tend to shy away from quantity and onto quality and meaning.

It turns out that with these two rather simple steps, we can help control an oth-



erwise out-of-control appetite for quantity because any approach to creativity has to have a strong why and what factor in order to reach creative solutions that the analytical mind alone cannot provide. And in that solution, there will be a newfound wealth of quality.

Nir Bashan is an executive creative director/managing director with over 19 years of advertising, entertainment, and business development experience. He helps teach folks in non-creative fields how to think creatively to solve problems. He leads workshops and lectures on topics relating to The Creator Mindset. McGraw/Hill is publishing a book on The Creator Mindset that will be released in 2020. www.nirbashan.com

Work Well: Motivation and Showing Up

BY NATALIA FOOTE

“Eighty percent of success is showing up.” – Woody Allen

The definition of motivation is the general desire or willingness of someone to do something. I understand the desire and willingness to rest and relax or the desire and willingness to dine out and spend money. But desire and willingness for activities that require hard work and effort are not as readily available. Actions that demand work and effort call for us to fully show up and be present.

As humans, our brains are constantly trying to find the easy way out. In *The Power of Habit* by Charles Duhigg, he explains why habits emerge. The brain is constantly looking for ways to save effort. Left to its own devices, the brain will try to make almost any routine into a habit because habits allow our mind to ramp down more often. Our brain requires energy to learn something new, and it requires a great deal of processing to simply maintain the rest of the body functioning appropriately. When it can save energy, it does. It's the reason that driving to a new place requires you to slow down, focus and perhaps turn down the music, as opposed to driving home from a familiar place and not recalling the drive because your brain has automated the behavior.

What is the last thing you were motivated to do? What do you WANT to be motivated to do? I can answer for myself: I am motivated to take a nap – although I cannot. I WANT to be motivated to write a book. Motivation for our wants requires work and planning. The planning is needed to overcome our already ingrained habits and the work required to put the plan to action – the part where you “show up.”

In *Smarter Faster Better*, also by Duhigg, motivation is analyzed, and he explains that we need to have choice in order to succeed. By giving ourselves choices, we feel in control, and the specific choice we make matters less than the assertion of control. It's the feeling of self-determination that gets us going. Duhigg gives the

example of fifth graders who were either told they were “smart” or they “worked hard.” The fifth graders who were told that they worked hard showed an active, internal locus of control because hard work is something we decide to do, where being smart is something out of our control. You can train your internal locus of control by placing yourself in situations where you practice feeling in control and reawaken your internal locus. Moreover, to teach ourselves to self-motivate more easily, we need to learn to see our choices not just as expressions of control but also as affirmations of our values and goals. Coming back to the question of what you WANT to be motivated to do gives your chosen actions larger meaning.

John Ruskin, author, critic and commentator, famously said, “What we think or what we know or what we believe is, in the end, of little consequence. The only consequence is what we do.” This is when we show up; we show up with a present and open mind. We can be physically in a room sitting next to our partner, and our mind is busy worrying about a deadline that is approaching. That is not showing up. Show up to your life and recognize the actions you are choosing to take for the life that you want.

In *The Success Principles* by Jack Canfield, he says, “When you take action, you trigger all kinds of things that will inevitably carry you to success. Things that once seemed confusing begin to become clear. Things that once appeared difficult begin to be easier. All manner of good things begin to flow in your direction once you begin to take action.”

Motivation comes with practice. Don't wait for perfection; don't even wait for the perfect plan. Make a choice to move yourself forward in what you want and take action.

Natalia Foote is the owner of threeR, a company bringing mindfulness, meditation and yoga practices to the workplace. Her mission in life is spreading love and light in the world. When not spending time with her family, you can find Natalia taking and teaching yoga all around Lake Nona.



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LAKE NONA REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE UPDATES



From the CEO — March 2020: **THINK LIKE THE "MAD HATTER"**

Start thinking about the Chamber Nona Festival "Mad Hatter" coming up April 18 at Nona Adventure Park. Visit our website's events page to find out about the exciting event and schedule. Nona Adventure Park has also added several more attractions including a clam-shell venue space and a sandy beach. It is going to be absolutely "Mad." We held our first Membership Orientation on Feb. 10. The fully packed event was a remarkable success thanks to our host, GuideWell Innovation, who provided not only the outstanding meeting

space but sponsored the lunch as well. Members who attended learned about our committees and their missions and were able to sign-up to volunteer or learn more. Do not miss the next one when we announce it. Your board of directors and Chamber staff constantly work to bring value to your community. Find out how you can benefit and participate in this process by calling us at (407) 796-2230.

Don Long, President/CEO



Jan. 21, Ribbon Cutting and Grand Opening Ceremony at avid hotel Orlando International Airport - Welcome avid hotel to the Chamber! We are excited to see your business flourish. (Photo by Madelyn Long)



Feb. 10, Membership Orientation - GuideWell Innovation Center hosted our very first Membership Orientation and provided a five-star lunch catered by Arthur's Catering! Members learned how to take advantage of their Chamber benefits and met with Committee heads to learn how to get more involved. (Photo by Felicity Gomer)



Feb. 13, Breakfast Connections with Andy Odenbach, VP of Sports Ventures at Tavistock Development Company, and Fabio Silva of Nona Soccer Academy - Andy Odenbach shared with our Chamber the newest big projects coming to our region. Fabio Silva spoke about the sports nonprofit sector in Lake Nona and inspired guests during breakfast. (Photo by Madelyn Long)



Jan. 24, Business Luncheon: "NeoCity and its Regional Impact" - Thanks to Osceola County Manager Don Fisher, BRIDG CEO Chester Kennedy, and VP of imec Bert Gyselinckz for speaking to our Chamber about the wonderfully high-tech NeoCity community. Thank you to The OC at NeoCity for the coolest venue and Savor...Kissimmee at Osceola Heritage Park for the wonderful meal. (Photo by Felicity Gomer)



Jan. 30, Ribbon Cutting and Grand Opening Ceremony at Makris Dental - Welcome, Makris Dental, to the Nonahood! We are excited to see you join the community. (Photo by Felicity Gomer)



Feb. 4, First Tuesdays After-Hours at Gatherings by Beazer Homes - Thank you to Gatherings by Beazer Homes for a beautiful First Tuesdays After-Hours! (Photo by Felicity Gomer)

NEW MEMBERS

- Advanced Endodontics
- AMS American Maintenance and Services LLC
- avid hotel Orlando International Airport
- CareerSource Central Florida
- Neighborhood Barre
- Nona Smiles
- Osceola Council on Aging
- Teresa Reilly-O'Doherty PA
- Osceola News Gazette Around Osceola.com



WHY YOU SHOULD JOIN & RENEW

THE LAKE NONA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, PART SEVEN

Training - Whether it is Breakfast Connections, Business Luncheons or Contagious Connecting, the Chamber hosts countless programs to help you increase your skills in all aspects of your business.

RENEWED MEMBERS

- Amson Consulting
- Axiom Bank
- Centennial Bank
- Courtyard & Residence Inn by Marriott Orlando/Lake Nona
- Culver's of Lake Nona
- Envision Wealth Planners - Sean Gerlin
- Lake Nona Self Storage
- Latitude28
- Nona Title, Inc.
- Office of Lou Holtz
- Traction in Florida
- Trustco Bank
- Two Spurs, LLC dba Smashburger
- UCF College of Medicine
- Viscogen

RENEWED BRONZE PARTNER

Osceola County Board of County Commissioners

UPCOMING CHAMBER EVENTS

- March 3**
First Tuesdays After-Hours
PrimeMed Medical Plaza
5:30 - 7:30 p.m.
- March 5**
Legal Seminar Series - "ADR - Drafting Clauses and The Dispute Process"
GuideWell Innovation Center
5:30 - 6:30 p.m.
- March 12**
Breakfast Connections - "Creativity in Business" with Nir Bashan
8:00 - 9:30 a.m.
- March 17**
Operation: Edge
Ronald McDonald House
8:00 - 9:30 a.m.
- March 26**
Ribbon Cutting at Central Florida Children's Home
11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
- March 27**
Business Luncheon, Guest Speaker TBD
Location TBD
11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

REGISTER AT LAKENONACC.ORG

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Bold Move: Rising Starting Salaries Enhance Services for Orange County

ARTICLE BY TIFFANY MOORE
RUSSELL, ORANGE COUNTY
CLERK OF COURTS
PHOTOS COURTESY OF ORANGE
COUNTY CLERK OF COURTS



Central Florida's increasingly tight job market has employers examining the compensation they offer to attract and retain outstanding employees. Though my organization is in the public sector, our approach must be the same.

As Orange County Clerk of Courts, I lead more than 400 skilled employees, who maintain more than 67 million digital court documents as well as millions of paper records for Orange County and the 9th Judicial Circuit. To handle the sensitive files in our care with efficiency and precision, we employ a team of detail-oriented, motivated and diligent clerks. But, facing a shrinking pool of qualified workers, we made a strategic business decision that empowers us to *lead* rather than lag.

As of Jan. 1, we raised the minimum hourly wage for both full- and part-time clerks to \$14. This bump in starting pay, which amounted to a nearly 16% increase, benefits more than 75 hourly employees on our team as well as all new hires this year. Part of a two-phase approach, the initiative will ultimately elevate our minimum hourly wage to \$15 on Jan. 1, 2021.



It's a bold step rooted in research, strategic planning, and careful financial consideration. Higher wages help us attract skilled workers as well as retain the experienced team in whom we've invested training, guidance and resources. In today's employment landscape, our leadership team estimated the cost of turnover at about \$650,000 per year. Taking the initiative to raise the minimum wage not only makes financial sense for our organization, it's the right thing to do for our valued employees.

Ali Martin Rios, a new deputy clerk in our civil division, explained it this way: "If we want social justice to occur, our leaders have to step up to the plate and provide the means to make it happen. Clerk Russell has taken this step. Knowing that the cost of literally everything from rent to food has gone up in the Orange County and the Orlando metro area, she has decided to bring our starting salary up as well. By raising the minimum starting rate to \$15 an hour in 2021, she has come out ahead of almost everyone, not only in the county but in the state in showing appreciation for her workforce by providing a starting living wage."

In addition to increasing the minimum hourly wage, we provide our workforce with a competitive benefits package that

includes health, dental, vision, life and disability insurance as well as mental health support through an Employee Assistance Plan, family and medical leave, and a generous vacation policy.

Providing competitive salary and benefits enables us to continue efficiently serving the residents of Orange County, our customers. They rely on our clerks for a wide variety of critical services, from helping initiate or contest a civil case to managing probate issues and child support payments along with processing traffic and criminal

files. Our team assists customers in filing domestic violence injunctions and seeking help for a loved one with mental health or substance abuse issues. We also process passport applications and issue marriage licenses. Some Orange County residents are surprised to learn we even perform wedding ceremonies, including the special Valentine's Day event I had the honor of officiating for 20 local couples last month.

Looking back on this process, my proudest moments have been the positive responses that have come from our team, including more seasoned employees who recognize the positive ripple effect this change will have on the organization as a whole.

Laura Keating, a senior deputy clerk from our criminal division, put it best when she said: "The Clerk's office did the right thing when they decided on this hourly wage increase, and I'm very proud to say that I work here. The increase doesn't affect me directly, but I know what this means to the newer clerks, and I couldn't be happier for them."

Tiffany Moore Russell is the Orange County Clerk of Court. Want to know more about the Orange County Clerk of Courts and its employment opportunities? Visit www.MyOrangeClerk.com. The Orange County Clerk of Courts is an Equal Opportunity Employer.



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The Artist: DIY Art

ARTICLE BY DEMI TAVERAS
PHOTOS COURTESY OF
ELIZABETH GAZE

Since August 2018, DIY Art in VillageWalk has been a haven where people of all ages can exercise creative energy and turn it into all sorts of arts and crafts that will serve as fond memories for years and years to come. Get to know Elizabeth Gaze, the owner of DIY Art, and how she brought her art shop into fruition.

Nonahood News: Tell me a little bit about your shop, DIY Art, in VillageWalk.

Elizabeth Gaze: So here, I offer after-school art clubs, mostly for elementary school kids. For birthday parties, any age – like I've had 4-year-olds and I've had 65-year-olds having birthday parties here. I'm offering wood signs now, more of the sip-and-paint designs as well, so it's pretty much if you tell me what you want to do, we'll figure out how we're gonna do it. I like to be creative.

NHN: What drove you to open up the shop?

EG: I took time off when my son was born, and when he went to preschool, I told my husband I wanted to go back to work. But he works a lot, and it was going to be really hard for me to have a regular job – we try not to put our child in daycare – so I actually started out mobile, where I worked from my house and I went to your house, or wherever you want to go, and I would teach the class. That was great, and it gave me the flexibility I needed to where it worked with my family real well. And when this space became available, I applied for it.

NHN: Do you personally teach any of the classes/services offered? You said earlier you only have two other teachers?

EG: Yes, and they teach one school – they teach over at Eagle Creek – and I do pretty much everything else.

NHN: Do you mostly do paintings or other types of arts and crafts?

EG: With kids, I do a lot of different things. I have one club where I teach drawing, and we teach more of the cartoon-style drawing because it's important that the kids like what they do. If I teach them how to draw landscapes, they don't really care, but if I teach them how to draw cartoon versions of the *Harry Potter* characters, they're super excited. And the lessons are pretty much the same, so it's good skills. But then, I have a class where we do painting, and we do an 8x10 every week. And I teach them a little bit about mixing and combining colors, but then, we do other stuff, too. For the holidays, we did lots of crafts, where we made gifts they could take home to their parents or grandparents. This week, we made our Valentine's boxes – it's fun and creative and they like it. Or if the school has a STEAM project. A couple of weeks ago, we did a conveyor belt, using a box and rubber bands ...

NHN: That's very creative.

EG: Yeah, well, it was a school assignment, so [to] the kids that were in art club, I said if we want to work on it here ... everybody's were a little different, but we had all the supplies and we really put the thought into it. It was fun.

NHN: So there are several art clubs based within this shop?

EG: Yes, I have an art club that meets at Eagle Creek that somebody else teaches. I teach

the Laureate Park Elementary club, and here, we have a drawing club and a painting club. And then, I just throw in some extra activities with that.

NHN: What brought you to Lake Nona? And why VillageWalk?

EG: My husband works for the VA; he retired from the Navy, and this is where we landed. We've been here eight years; it's good. I'm originally from Texas, so when we moved here, there was like a lot more green space, so it's an adjustment. We love VillageWalk; we love our neighborhood. We've been in VillageWalk the whole time. I live one street over [from the shop]. It's a 10-minute walk. We have a golf cart if I'm feeling super lazy. It's really nice, too, because the bus lets off right by the basketball court, so when my art clubs meet, you get off the bus, you come here, I get the kids a snack, we have our lesson. And I do have a few people that drive over from Laureate as well.

NHN: What's been the most rewarding aspect of opening up DIY Art?

EG: I like that I'm not only able to be a part of the community, but I also do a lot of giveback events. I actually donate back art supplies. I've given thousands of dollars in art supplies to [Laureate Park Elementary], which is just awesome. And just being a part of community events, like getting to know everybody, and I love when I'm at the grocery store and a kid comes up. I just like that; it makes me feel like I'm home.

NHN: Any future goals/plans with the shop?

EG: I just want it to keep growing. I want to be a presence, if that makes sense. I mean, there's so much to do here outdoors, but indoors particularly, like my son ... we joke that he rejects nature. He's allergic to grass; he's allergic to flowers. He gets bit by more than two mosquitoes, and we'll end up at Nemours. So he does karate and that's great, but there's not a lot of indoor activities. This is something to do when it's blazing hot in the summer. I keep it at 72.

NHN: Anything else you'd like to highlight about DIY Art?

EG: I love working with all of the kids, and I love being able to give back. I just got an email from a school that's not even around here, and they want me to come to their Fine Arts night. Because kids ... like at school, they have their standards they have to hit, but here, they can just ...

NHN: Be free?

EG: [laughs] Yes!

DIY Art is located in VillageWalk at 8524 Insular Lane #103. For more about DIY Art, check out www.squareup.com/store/DIYArtLLC or connect with DIY Art on Facebook (www.facebook.com/DIYARTLLC/) and Instagram (@DIYArtLLC).

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>.

Fly High, My Black Mamba

BY DR. WILLIAM FELIX

Like all of you, the news of Kobe Bryant's death caught me by surprise. I am literally choking as I write these lines, trying to contain the grief that agglomerates in the chest. I could write articles left and right about his physical attributes and the unique traits of his psyche. My comments would be redundant and repetitive. Therefore, I prefer to share my personal story of the great Mamba. Today, I am not the doctor but a fan in grief.

My first encounter with Kobe in 2010 was everything less than a dream. His bodyguards tried to get me off the court while I watched him practice. I was providing medical coverage at the NBA All-Star Game in 2010. My orders were to remain on the court until the last athlete left. Despite the resistance of his entourage and about five extremely uncomfortable minutes, I stayed. It was worth the snub. The night was long. The man stayed for three hours practicing perimeter shots. He did not stop! It was like seeing a top continuously spinning without losing momentum. He had just finished a two-hour practice session with his team. The man easily lost five liters of body volume, in addition to the many others that he sweated in his first training that day. Interestingly, he was not meant to be there. He was injured and did not play during the All-Star Game. Instead of taking a weekend off somewhere else, he was actively working on his rehab while practicing with the very best.

The next morning, he arrived two hours before his team and again practiced intensely. He was compulsively executing the same shot. This time, he focused more on three-point shots. His technique was perfect. However, he demanded more and more of himself. There were no cameras. His attitude was not a show. My clinical

eye saw an obsessive-compulsive man. I, the fan, saw greatness in his quest for perfection because basketball immortality occurs not by pure talent but with incessant practice and exhaustive study of the game. What very few know about Kobe was that, although he spent hours polishing his skills, he doubled that time by observing the recordings of his games and learning from his mistakes. It was not enough to score 81 points in a match; he always wanted to know how to strain 100. There was always fire in his eyes and in his hands, the poison that neutralized his opponents. No wonder he was the Black Mamba. If his career as a player was exciting, the future to come was more fascinating, projecting him as one of the best scholars in the game. That's why this hurts so much!



Two years later, my wife, my son, Esteban, and I ran into Kobe at the elevators of The Westbury Mayfair. We were at the London Olympics; I was the assigned NBA physician. His gaze was fixed forward, all in silence. I remembered what happened two years ago and avoided greeting him. However, my 18-month-old son had a different plan and reached out to him. My wife and I tried to contain our child. Suddenly, Kobe stared at him. I honestly thought that, like many others, he noticed some of the physical traits my son exhibits as a part of his Down syndrome. But he looked at him differently; it was filled with tenderness. Words were unnecessary. My wife was enchanted. This man finally conquered my heart.

Fly high, my "Black Mamba."

Tough Things To Talk About: Handling Uncomfortable Situations

BY NATALIA JARAMILLO

It happens to everyone. You're sitting in a cafe, and a strange man comes up to you and compliments your clothes. Or you are in an office meeting and someone asks that you clean up your workspace more often. No matter what type of situation you are in, the feeling is the same – anxious and maybe a little sweaty. These situations can range from widely uncomfortable to just ruining the moment, but they can all be dealt with. Uncomfortable situations will happen throughout life, so it's a matter of learning how to handle them appropriately.

Let's say you are in an uncomfortable situation that involves politeness. For example, your friend's mother is in town, and she just served you something you hate and now you don't know what to do. In an uncomfortable situation like this, it's best to be polite and try to eat some of it; if it's absolutely terrible, play around with your food and then quickly offer to put the dishes away, saving yourself from having to eat it all and having the person notice. Situations like these have options; you can decide to be a little brave and tell the person how you really feel in a polite manner, or you can just hide it and avoid the subject.

In uncomfortable situations at work, the key is to think about what you say or do before you do it. This will save your relationships with coworkers, your job, and possibly your position. For example, let's



say in your break room, a colleague asks you to clean up after yourself because you never do. If you were to be aggressive about the situation, the colleague and everyone else around you will now think you are a hostile person, and that label may stick. If you say something positive and offer feedback about the way they asked you, your job and people's opinions about you will likely stay positive. When it comes to work situations, it's often best to be direct but polite; this is your field of work where you make money, and everyone wants to protect it at all costs.

Moving into a deeper level of uncomfortable situations, if you are in a public place and alone and someone is making you feel uncomfortable in a way that poses a threat to you, be cautious of how you react. It's best to be calm and rational during situations like this. Let's say you are alone in a park and a strange man comes up and says you have pretty eyes in a creepy way, and you begin to feel uncomfortable. The best thing to do is thank them, stand and walk away toward a more corded area. It's not good to confront them or make them feel that it was anything special as this could lead them to believe that it impacted you.

The important thing to note about uncomfortable situations is that it's all in how you deal with it and you shouldn't let it bother you. Often, it's best not to react in an angry or aggressive manner and to try to be as polite as possible.

Looking for Spring Break Plans? Pick Up a Racket and Head Over to the USTA National Campus

BY DANIEL PYSER



March marks the return of a program that debuted last spring at the USTA National Campus in Lake Nona as, once again, spring break camps will be offered to local youth tennis players who are off from school.

The camps will be held March 17-19, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., during the Orange County Public Schools' spring break. They are designed to mimic the popular USTA National Campus Summer Camp.

There are three camp options available, based upon age and skill level:

The Family Zone Spring Break Camp, similar to typical Red Ball and Orange Ball programming, is for children ages 5-10 and will include instruction from National Campus staff as well as play-based activity, all with an emphasis on tennis "FUNDamentals." Players will be grouped by age and ability level within the camp.

The Youth Development Spring Break Camp is open to middle school- and high school-aged players at the beginner through intermediate skill levels. Players, who will be placed in groups of similar level and age, will be introduced to the fundamentals of the game through a rally and game-based curriculum. Their practices will include a dynamic warm up, drills with instruction, and match play.

The High Performance Spring Break Camp, the most advanced camp, is offered to players who participate in regular National Campus High Performance programming. Players will be placed in groups at a similar level, and

their practices will include a dynamic warm up, drills with instruction, and match play.

The start of the month will also mark an important transition in National Campus programming as Simon Gale takes over as the new USTA National Campus' director of tennis. At the end of February, he formally replaced the retiring Kathy Woods, who had held the role since the campus opened.

In his new role, Gale will direct all instructional and tennis programming at the National Campus. He will oversee a teaching staff of approximately 40 USPTA-certified professionals, ensuring the teaching experience at the campus is at the highest standard of excellence. Additionally, he will develop programs to engage pros both locally

and nationally, using the campus as a hub of collaboration and innovation. Gale will also provide training and development opportunities for young teaching professionals at the National Campus.

"I'm thrilled to be part of the team helping to shape the future of tennis, and it's incredibly motivating to work at this one-of-a-kind facility," said Gale. "In my new role, I hope to make an impact on the growth of the sport by creating a culture where providing the best experiences and cultivating a true connection to the sport is part of our DNA. We will do this by delivering the highest quality of tennis instruction and innovative programming. I've been collaborating with the USTA for more than 10 years in the coach education and youth tennis space, and it's truly an honor to be able to continue the path we started a decade ago, working with the industry-leading team at the USTA National Campus."

Currently, the National Campus offers more than 30 different programs with more than 120 program sessions per week. To date, these programs average more than 1,200 participants.

For more information on the Spring Break Camps and all USTA National Campus programming, please visit reserve.ustanationalcampus.com.



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Colon Cancer: Knowledge Is Power

If you're 45, it's time to get screened.

BY SUNINA NATHOO, M.D.



March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. According to the American Cancer Society, the colon cancer death rate in this country could be cut by more than half if Americans simply followed recommended screening guidelines. Early detection and treatment are critical. If caught early, colorectal cancer is 90% curable. If precancerous polyps are found during screening, the disease is often altogether preventable. Because colorectal cancer can develop without signs or symptoms, a colonoscopy could serve as a life-saving test.

New guidelines: Get screened at 45.

Men and women are affected equally by colorectal cancer. For patients of average risk with no family history, it is now recommended that screenings for colon cancer begin at age 45*, with follow-up screenings every five to 10 years, even for people who feel perfectly healthy. If you do have a family history of cancer, are experiencing pain or bleeding, or have a previous history of polyps, your doctor may recommend that you be screened earlier or more frequently.

A colonoscopy is not as hard as you think.

There's no need to feel embarrassed or ashamed during a colonoscopy. It is your doctor's job to perform these life-saving screenings, and every effort is made to help patients feel comfortable during the painless procedure.

- You'll be asked to follow a clear liquid diet the day before your procedure. This means only water, clear broth, soda, tea, coffee (without milk/creamer), clear juice (without pulp), Jell-O, popsicles, and other flavored drinks (nothing red or purple).
- You'll be given instructions on using a laxative mixture

to empty your bowel so that your colon can be viewed clearly during the procedure.

- Gone are the days of drinking a gallon of laxative in one dose. Most patients can use newer, low-volume bowel cleansing divided in two doses, which is less amount of liquid to drink, making preparing for a colonoscopy easier.
- During the colonoscopy, your doctor will look at the inner lining of your large intestine (which includes your rectum and colon). A thin, flexible tube called a colonoscope is inserted while you are sedated.
- Most patients have very little awareness that the procedure is taking place. You're done within an hour.

A colonoscopy is the most effective way to prevent, detect and diagnose colon cancer. Along with functioning as a screening test to check for cancer or precancerous polyps in the colon or rectum, a colonoscopy can also help find ulcers, tumors and areas of inflammation or bleeding. It is important to be screened for colon cancer even if you are not currently experiencing pain or bleeding.

Colorectal Cancer Risk Factors

Even if you have no family history of colorectal cancer or polyps, you are at increased risk if:

- You are 45+ years of age
- You are overweight

- You are physically inactive
- You smoke and/or excessively consume alcohol
- You eat a lot of red meat
- You have diagnosed or undiagnosed Type 2 diabetes
- You have Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis

**Although the screening guidelines have been lowered to age 45, some insurances may not cover the screening until age 50.*

About Dr. Sunina Nathoo

Sunina Nathoo, M.D., is a board-certified gastroenterologist with advanced fellowship training in gastroenterology and hepatology. Dr. Nathoo has received multiple awards for her distinguished scholarship, and her clinical interests include capsule endoscopy, acid reflux, and inflammatory bowel disease.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, visit GetScreenedToday.com or call (407) 609-7395.



Namaste With Natalia: Upward Facing Dog

Urdvha Mukha Svanasana

Your Monthly Yoga Pose

ARTICLE BY NATALIA FOOTE
PHOTO BY LAURIE HASSELL

"It smells like UPDOG!"

"What's UPDOG?"

Upward facing dog, or *urdvha mukha svanasana* (updog for short), is a pose commonly seen in vinyasa yoga classes. It is a pose that flows from chaturanga into downward facing dog. Downward facing dog is the sibling pose of *urdvha mukha svanasana*. Updog is a heart opener; it is a pose for an inhalation and expansion of the lungs.

Many yoga poses are named after animals or sages. *Urdvha mukha svanasana* is named after a loyal dog who stayed with Yudishthira on his quest to heaven. Although the story is one of loyalty and dharma, or right behavior, it is also quite literal in the look of the pose. Upward facing dog resembles a dog stretching the top of their chest.

In humans, the pose opens the chest and strengthens the back. The legs are activated, and the core tightens to protect the lower back. In the full expression of upward facing dog, the toenails and hands are on the mat. The legs are slightly hovering above, and the spine is long. The hands press into the mat, and the shoulders move down and back, away from the ears. The pose is active, but it is commonly performed inappropriately due to the quick nature of a vinyasa class. The pose is usually held for one breath, and it comes after the strengthening pose of chaturanga (aka yogi push-up).

Common differences seen in upward facing dog are settling into the lower back or sinking into the wrists and allowing the shoulders to come up to the ears. If upward facing dog is too strenuous or causes pain to your body, modify the pose to cobra pose, where the legs are still on the ground.

1. With your belly on the ground, place your hands under your shoulders.
2. Firmly press your hands into the mat and lift your back, neck and head.

3. Imagine as if the bottom tips of the shoulder blades were pulling the collar bones to open the chest.
4. Straighten the arms while bringing the naval toward the spine.
5. Press the toenails on the mat and "turn your legs on" by activating the leg muscles and slightly rolling the thighs inward.
6. If done correctly, you should have the shoulders stacked over the elbows and wrists in one long energetic line.
7. Stay for 1-5 breaths.

Be aware of your jaw clenching or your shoulders rising. With consistent practice, the strength for the pose will come. Modify to cobra or low cobra to avoid strain or injury. Furthermore, the pose is named after a dog and should have the same energetic feel. Try to keep the pose calm and refreshing.

Namaste!



Natalia Foote is the owner of threeR, a company bringing mindfulness, meditation and yoga practices to the workplace. Her mission in life is spreading love and light in the world. When not spending time with her family, you can find Natalia taking and teaching yoga all around Lake Nona.



Orlando International Airport Will Not Take Action Against Coronavirus at This Time

ARTICLE BY NATALIA JARAMILLO
PHOTO BY GREATER ORLANDO AVIATION AUTHORITY

Orlando International Airport will not be taking action against the coronavirus, due to not having direct flights from Wuhan, China.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has asked certain airports with direct or connecting flights from Wuhan, the area impacted most by the coronavirus, or COVID-19, to take part in additional screening of passengers; however, Orlando International Airport was not one of these.

“We will continue to collaborate with health officials, monitor the situation for changes, and will act accordingly,” said Rod Johnson, assistant director of public affairs of the Greater Orlando Aviation Authority.

The CDC is screening passengers from direct or indirect flights from Wuhan in Los Angeles International, John F. Kennedy International, San Francisco International, Atlanta’s Hartsfield-Jackson, and Chicago O’Hare International airports.

MCO, despite being named the “Best Large Airport” by USA Today and having a record-breaking 50.6 million international and domestic passengers visiting in 2019, takes direction from the Florida Department of Health and the CDC.

The CDC reports that 90% of all passengers arrived or traveled through one of these five airports; therefore, they



created a more intensive screening process for only those airports.

COVID-19 is not currently spreading in the United States, according to the CDC. In the United States, the CDC reports that 443 people are being investigated for the virus as of Feb. 14, and Florida has no confirmed cases of the virus. Globally, the CDC has confirmed 50,580 cases of the coronavirus as of Feb.15.

MCO, the busiest airport in Florida, was recently named the first-ever airport operation to earn full accreditation by the Emergency Management Accreditation Program.

“As the busiest airport in the state of Florida, receiving this accreditation should provide an extra layer of comfort for the traveling public because they can know that Orlando International is prepared to respond to any emergency situation,” said Phil Brown, CEO of the Greater Orlando Aviation Authority.

In order to receive the accreditation, MCO was judged on a variety of areas, including program management, administration and finance, prevention, communications and warning, training and incident management, among others.



EDUCATION

Valencia’s Lake Nona Campus Has a ‘50-50’ Shot of Funding New Building This Year

ARTICLE BY CHRISTIAN CASALE
PHOTO COURTESY OF VALENCIA COLLEGE

The request from Valencia College’s Lake Nona Campus to the Florida legislature to receive an estimated \$43 million in funding for a new building has a “50-50” shot of getting approved this year, according to Florida House Rep. Rene Plasencia.

“There is obviously a need [for a new building] as we’re such a high-growth area,” said Rep. Plasencia, who represents the Lake Nona Campus and helps advocate for its interests in the capital. “[House] leadership has come and toured Lake Nona; I brought them in last summer so they could see the growth out there.”

The funding would come from the Public Education Capital Outlay (PECO) fund – a lump sum that is used to fund new college and state university buildings. According to Rep. Plasencia, a “PECO list” is organized by need and time waiting – with the schools at the top receiving funding first.

“We only funded two projects with PECO dollars last year,” Rep. Plasencia said. “It’s not because we didn’t have the money, it’s because our leadership decided not to do it.”

Every year that the campus doesn’t get funded, the cost of construction will go up. However, once the state government commits to funding the new building, it will have to keep with it until the project is complete. It’s just a matter of moving up the PECO list, and, according to the campus’ executive dean Dr. Mike Bosley, the sooner the better.

“We’ve asked for planning dollars this year,” Dr. Bosley said, “and it will be funded over the next three years.”

According to Dr. Bosley, the campus began in Lake Nona High School in the 2010-2011 school year, where it served around 900 students.



The single-building, 18-classroom campus now sits on a 23-acre property and was designed for 3,500 students.

It’s enrollment in 2018-2019 nearly doubled that figure.

Dr. Bosley said that the campus has been “a little packed” lately, but the administration has compensated by “being really good stewards of our space,” offering more times for classes – early in the morning, into the evening, and on Saturdays – and some online and mixed-mode classes, the latter of which mixes online and in-person education.

“We described the [new] building as very similar to the one we have – 85,000 square feet,” Dr. Bosley said. “It’ll support growth and jobs – we’re talking about expanding the biotechnology program we have here and bringing in other technology programs.”

The campus offers an A.S. in biotechnology laboratory sciences and partners with the University of Florida College of Pharmacy, the University of Central Florida College of Medicine, the Veteran’s Administration Hospital, and Nemours Children’s Hospital.

The campus’ master plan is to build two more buildings to keep up with the rise in enrolled students and the growth of the Lake Nona community, but Dr. Bosley affirmed that the main focus is getting the new building approved first. If the campus’ plan is approved, the construction of the building would begin next year.

The new building would be another step in the streak of growth by Valencia College over the past several years. The college opened its Poinciana Campus in 2017 to better serve dual-enrollment students in Osceola County. At the beginning of this school year, a shared downtown campus with UCF opened near Parramore. College-wide enrollment has grown from nearly 39,000 students across four campuses in the fall of 2009 to more than 77,000 across seven in the fall of 2019.



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5 Reasons Why School Choice Counts for Your Child!

ARTICLE BY MARIA DEL AMO
PHOTOS COURTESY OF OSCEOLA COUNTY CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Selecting a school for your child can be challenging and confusing. In the state of Florida, we are blessed to have school choice programs that provide options which allow parents to decide where their children will attend school.

The term “school choice” in the context of education typically refers to policies and programs that empower families to choose the best school for their children. Through school choice programs, families whose children would otherwise attend assigned public schools are given financial resources enabling them to attend the school of their choice, including traditional public schools, public charter schools, both secular and religious private schools, and homeschooling.

Whether you are thinking of moving your child to another school or you are looking for a school for your little one, remember that we have two wonderful schools within a short drive of Lake Nona. In Osceola County, we have one school in St. Cloud and another school in Kissimmee.

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Below are five reasons why you should choose a Catholic school for your child’s education:

- 1. High Academic Standards** – While the typical academic expectation is one year of growth per one academic year, Catholic school students in Osceola County consistently exceed this norm every year by placing at a greater



advantage for higher academic achievement and overall progress. STREAM (science, technology, religion, engineering, arts, and math) is incorporated into the curriculum, offering a dynamic learning environment. The use of new technologies in the classroom prepares students for high school and beyond.

- 2. Faith-Filled Communities** – Although they serve children and families of different faiths, their priority is to build a solid foundation of faith within the Catholic traditions as well as instilling morals and values, including service to others.
- 3. Safe, Secure Environment** – They are committed to providing a safe, secure and supportive environment for students, teachers and staff where everyone can grow.
- 4. Enriched Student Life Activities, Athletics, and Clubs** – They believe in the development of the whole child and provide opportunities for students to develop their God-given talents. That’s why the schools offer multiple options for students to become critical thinkers, problem solvers, great team collaborators, and good stewards of the world. These opportunities allow them to take what they have learned in school and apply it beyond the classroom.
- 5. Financial Assistance and Scholarships** – Both schools participate fully in the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship program, Step Up for Students, and scholarships such as AAA, McKay, and Gardiner Scholarships. They also provide other scholarship opportunities to families with a demonstrated need.

We invite you to visit Osceola County Catholic Schools. They have a track record for academic excellence and for developing students to reach their full potential. Eighth graders graduate well prepared for the rigors of high school, including honors and AP coursework.

Our welcoming teachers, staff and students are eager to show you around and share with you and your child the fun and exciting things happening at each school. To schedule a campus tour or learn more about our schools, visit us at www.osceolacountycatholicschools.com.



SUN BLAZE ELEMENTARY

BY TODD PERKINS, PARTNERS IN EDUCATION COORDINATOR



This year’s Modern Woodmen School Speech Contest asked contestants to give a speech addressing the topic, “What Freedom Means to Me.” Speeches were between three and five minutes long and in the student’s words. Ten talented finalists represented more than 200 fifth-grade students who participated. We want to congratulate all of our finalists, especially Aaliyah (1st), Josephine (2nd), and Penelope (3rd). We would like to thank Kevin Cadogan, one of Central Florida’s top communicators, who made a special appearance to share with our students during the Oration. We would also like to thank our judges, Kevin Kendrick, Jim Dobson and Courtney Sellers.

The goal of the Orlando Police Department program Su-



perkids is to instill in students personal ownership of their choices and how those choices will impact their future. We want to congratulate Sophia for having her essay selected from more than 200 entries. Officer Ruhl did an outstanding job putting together the celebration ceremony. We want to thank Dunkin Donuts for donating munchkins to all of our students and Astro Skate of Orlando, which provided free passes for each student.

Literacy Week at Sun Blaze was an event to remember! We had guest readers visit all of our classrooms throughout the week. The week started with superheroes reading their favorite story to multiple classrooms. Special guest

readers for “Team Up with a Book” included the following: members of the USTA National Campus, Lake Nona High School, and Olympic gold medalist Mackenzie Soldan. During the week, our older Stingrays were able to buddy read with our younger Stingrays. We celebrated on Friday with a character and vocabulary word parade.

I would like to invite our Lake Nona community to follow our social media links to stay connected with all that is happening at Sun Blaze Elementary. The website address is SunBlazeES@ocps.net. You can follow us on Facebook at [SunBlazeES.ocps.net](https://www.facebook.com/SunBlazeES.ocps.net) and our

new Twitter account: [@SunBlazeElem](https://twitter.com/SunBlazeElem).

Go, Stingrays!



NORTHLAKE PARK COMMUNITY SCHOOL

BY LEE PARKER

Miss Florida Visits 2nd Grade Classes

On Jan. 9, Mrs. Brao and Mrs. Jack’s class got a special visit from Miss Florida! Michaela McLean visited their classrooms and read a book to the children about the Florida Everglades. Her visit was sponsored by the Everglades Foundation. Thank you to parent Jennifer McKenna for arranging the opportunity.

Spelling Bee Winners

On Jan. 24, we had our annual school spelling bee. Congratulations to our top three students:

1st place – Abdus-Samad, 5th grader

2nd place – Camila, 3rd grader

3rd place – Sharanya, 5th grader

Abdus-Samad will represent NLP at the district spelling bee. Thank you to our spelling bee judges: Kevin Kendrick, Pam Feinauer and Brenda Maneri. Also, thank you to Mrs. Feinauer for stage decorations.



LAUREATE PARK ELEMENTARY

BY SUZANNE WORKUM, PRINCIPAL



This past month was full of exciting academic events, such as the Spelling Bee, Literacy Week, the first-ever vocabulary parade, and the fifth grade oration contest. Our Longhorns have been busy!

All of our Longhorns, from pre-K to fifth grade, participated in our first vocabulary parade to celebrate literacy week. Each of our students chose a vocabulary word and created a costume around that word. In addition, we celebrated literacy week with flashlight reading and storytellers.

Congratulations to Shiv Jani, our Spelling Bee winner. Students in grades 3-5 competed in the annual Spelling Bee.

The fifth grade team replicated space scenes in their hallway to bring science to life. The idea was to engage students' interest in learning more about our solar system and general principles of astronomy.

Our fifth grade students recently participated in an oration contest with the theme of "What Does Freedom Mean to Me." Congratulations to Asad, Kai and Reed, who were the top three winners.

Ms. Quinn's first grade Kindness Squad is ready to spread some kindness to the students, staff and families at LPE. Each month, these fantastic first graders will complete secret missions!

For the second year in a row, Laureate Park Elementary's #GoldTogether for Childhood Cancer Relay for Life Team was recognized with the Top School Team Award. Mrs. Stephanie Brauner, advisor of the National Elementary Honor Society, was recognized with the Gordy Klatt Motivator Award. Lara Patel, fifth grade National Elementary Honor Society member, was recognized with the Nona Hero Award.

Laureate Park PTA added something fun and engaging to the science lab: a new 3D printer. We are excited to see how our students and teachers use this new feature in S.T.E.M. learning. PTA was also proud to send our legislative chairs to Tallahassee for three days to legislate and bring the noise for teacher retention in Orange County. PTA recently donated hundreds of new books to our library. The addition to the library will expand the options our students have when checking out books. Laureate Park PTA is committed to advocating for literacy and balancing the need of technology and handheld books.



EAGLE CREEK ELEMENTARY

BY JESSICA SCULLY

Hello, Panther Community!

Special Olympics

Last month, ECE first grader Susanna Fisher won 2nd place in the county competition for Special Olympics! Susanna is now headed for regionals, and we are excited to cheer her on!

Literacy Week

We celebrated Literacy Week here at Eagle Creek during the last week in January. Each day, our students cited their favorite poems and facts, dressed as their favorite book characters, and more! Literacy can take us anywhere, and we have so much fun celebrating each year!

Chorus – All County

On Feb. 6, four of our students participated in the OCPS All County Music Series! Congratulations to Zoey, Madison, Ashton and Gabriel for representing ECE and doing an AMAZING JOB! We are so thankful for our music teacher, Ms. Darlene Grande, for directing our students and bringing such wonderful opportunities to the students of Eagle Creek.

Field Trips

Our students have been enjoying educational field trips. Our recent learning has taken our fourth graders to St. Augustine, third graders to the Orlando Repertory Theatre, and kindergartners to the Orlando Science Center. Our fifth graders are anticipating their upcoming trip to the Kennedy Space Center, and our first and second graders are eager to visit the zoo!

Spelling Bee



We have some amazing spellers here at Eagle Creek Elementary! Our top spellers from fourth and fifth grade competed to see who the top speller is at our school. Congratulations to fifth grader Manuela Rubio for winning the spelling bee! Our 2nd and 3rd place winners were fifth graders Steven Ta and Lino Villalobos.

Black History Month



In early February, our kindergarten classes kicked off Black History Month with their musical Motown performance. Our grade level STEAM groups also performed during the show and provided STEAM displays to welcome our guests. Thank you, Ms. Grande, Ms. Sullivan, Ms. Zimmerman, and our kindergarten team for an amazing event!

National Elementary Honor Society

Congratulations to our National Elementary Honor Society members! We held our induction ceremony last month, and we are so proud of these students for all of their hard work in academics and community service projects. Please help us in welcoming our newly inducted NEHS members.

Kiwanis Kids

On Feb. 11, our K-Kids visited the Somerby retirement and assisted living facility in Lake Nona to deliver handmade cards and gift bags to residents for Valentine's Day. The students and residents had a wonderful time sharing Valentine wishes with one another.



Outstanding Teacher Nominations

Congratulations, Ms. Andraski and Ms. Scully. Ms. Andraski was nominated for the OCBA Liberty Apple Award for exemplary service to the education of students in our community. Ms. Scully was nominated for the Air Force STEM Teacher of the Year Award. Great job and CONGRATULATIONS!



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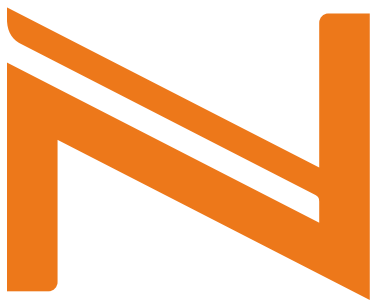
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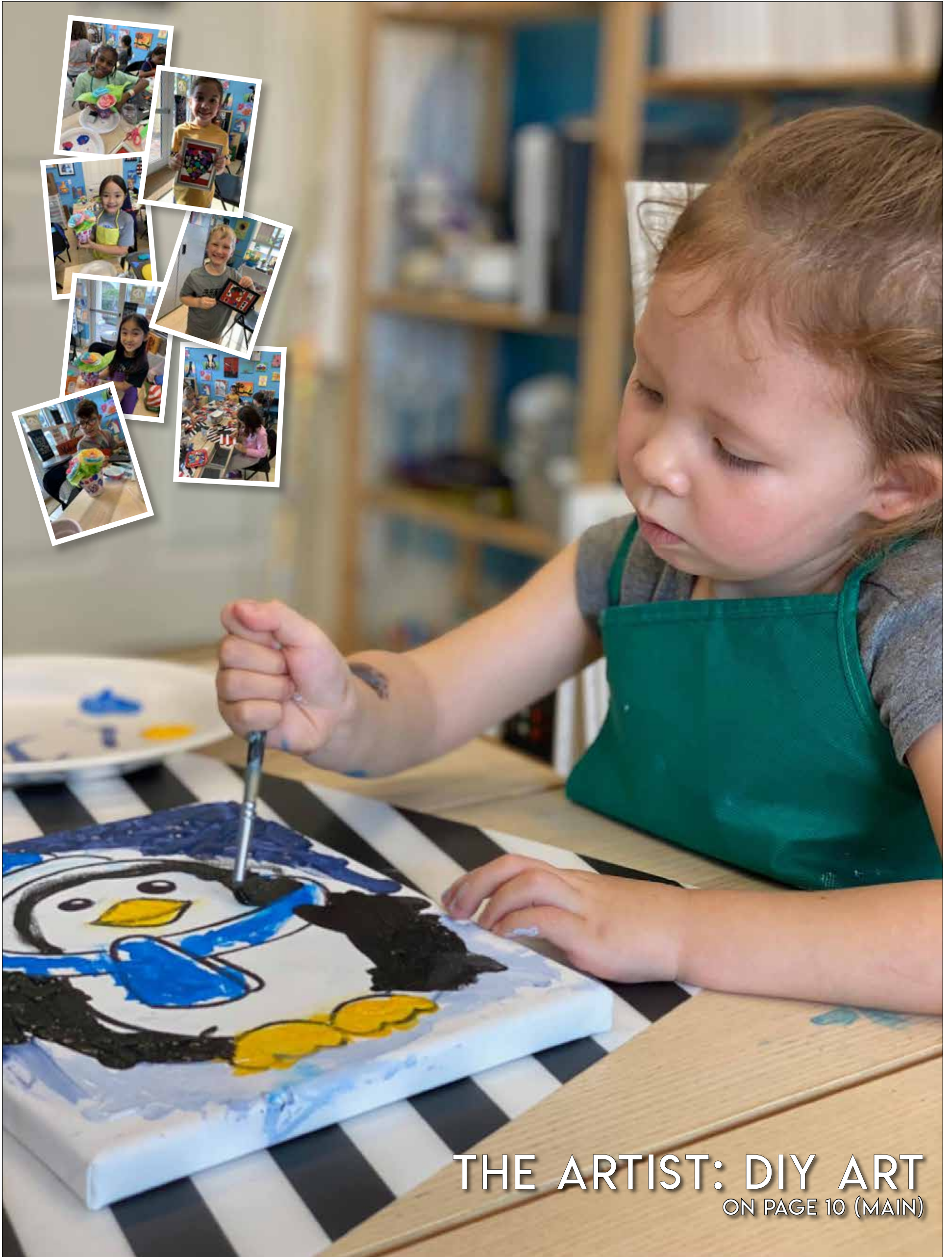
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entertainment



THE ARTIST: DIY ART
ON PAGE 10 (MAIN)

Katie's Cucina: Chocolate Chip Muffins

BY KATIE JASIEWICZ, KATIESCUCINA.COM

It's crazy to think we are already into the third month of a new year and decade! This month, I wanted to share my go-to muffin recipe. I'm highlighting chocolate chips in the muffins; however, you can replace the chocolate chips for freshly chopped strawberries, raspberries, or even blueberries! Muffins are actually really easy to make and an easy recipe for any beginner baker.

Best of all, if you have kids and want to get them in the kitchen more, this recipe is a great way to get them involved and interested in cooking the food they eat. One of my goals for this new decade is to get my children more involved in the kitchen. My kids are still pretty young, but I'm learning about how I can get them interested in cooking. I will pre-measure some of the ingredients and let them pour the ingredients into the bowl before we turn on my stand mixer to mix the muffins.

This muffin recipe bakes a dozen. But if you ever wanted just a few muffins and not a dozen, I have a pro tip for you. You can freeze chocolate chip muffins (and any muffin for that matter). You want to make sure the muffin has cooled completely before freezing. Then, store in an airtight container or freezer safe bag in the freezer for up to three months.

To reheat, you simply defrost the day before in the refrigerator or place in a microwave for 30-second intervals until thawed and warm. I love to make a batch of muffins for my kids for breakfast. I'll let them enjoy a few and then freeze the rest. In about two to three weeks, I'll start thawing and reheating them for breakfast. It's my way of easily switching up breakfast and not having a single person bored of eating the same foods over and over again.



Whether you have never baked muffins before or are a pro baker, I think you'll find this recipe for chocolate chip muffins delicious and easy to make!

Katie Jasiewicz is a full-time food blogger and recipe developer at KatiesCucina.com, a recipe blog that provides family-friendly, easy-to-make recipes that anyone can make. Join her on her culinary adventure, where life always tastes good.



CHOCOLATE CHIP MUFFINS

Servings: 12 | Prep time: 10 min. | Cook time: 25 min. | Total time: 35 min.

Ingredients:

- 8 tablespoons unsalted butter softened at room temperature; 1 stick
- 1 cup granulated white sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla bean powder
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 2 cups flour
- 1/2 cup 2% milk
- 1 1/4 cup mini chocolate chips

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees Fahrenheit. Grease a muffin tin or line the cups with liners. In a mixer fitted with a paddle attachment (or using a hand mixer), cream the butter until smooth. Add 1 cup of the granulated sugar and mix.
2. Add the eggs, vanilla, baking powder and salt, then mix. With the mixer running at a low speed, add 1/2 of the flour then 1/2 of the milk and mix. Repeat with remaining flour and milk. Then, add in the chocolate chips.
3. Use an ice-cream scoop or large spoon to fill the muffin cups 3/4 full. Bake until golden brown, 25 to 30 minutes.
4. Let the muffins cool in the pan for 5 minutes before turning out. Enjoy immediately or cool to room temperature. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to five days.



Breaking News: Earth Fare Closing All Stores

BY DEMI TAVERAS



We have to say goodbye to Earth Fare! The company has just announced the expectant closure of its 50 grocery stores and corporate office. According to a press release, Earth Fare, Inc. will commence inventory liquidation sales at all of its stores, and all employees have been notified that Earth Fare is closing its doors.

"Earth Fare has been proud to serve the natural and organic grocery market, and the decision to begin the process of closing our stores was not entered into lightly," said Earth Fare in the press release. "We'd like to thank our Team Members for their commitment and dedication to serving our customers, and our vendors and suppliers for their partnership."

We know everybody will soon be making their way to their local Earth Fare (their two Orlando locations being in Lake Nona and the downtown area) before the closure, which the company encourages to do before it's too late. They also emphasized that there will be a large assortment of merchandise with significant price reductions before they eventually shut their doors for good.



14208 Bella Lane | \$625,000

This four-bedroom, four-bath home boasts a split bedroom floor plan in the gated community of Live Oak Estates. The residence is situated on a corner lot with 1.21 acres in the Lake Nona region, a fast-growing area of Orlando with a variety of shopping, restaurants and medical city. Close to major highways for an easy commute around Central Florida.

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Let's Talk Lake Nona: Local Boutique Businesses Making an Impact

BY LAKE NONA

A variety of locally-owned businesses have recently opened in Lake Nona sharing one common theme: a focus on health and wellness. Located within walking distance from each other, these businesses contribute to Lake Nona's dedication to cultivate a healthy and thriving community for everyone who lives, works and visits here.

"I'm happy to be part of a community that makes wellbeing a priority," said Elizabeth Diaz, Lake Nona resident and owner of Florida's first Neighborhood barre, coming soon to Pixon along Lake Nona Boulevard. "The growth here is incredible. There's just so much opportunity right now for families, businesses, health and wellness. The restaurants coming in and fitness boutiques close by – it's just a great place to bring a business right now."

Combining the elements of dance conditioning and weight training for all skill levels, Neighborhood barre offers free pop-up events to its members and residents of Pixon, where they will move in near Veg'n Out, a recently-announced new tenant. The locally-owned, plant-based eatery is scheduled to open this spring.

"Bringing Veg'n Out to life in Lake Nona gives us the opportunity to share our passion for a natural lifestyle and make a direct impact in our community," said the café's owner, Ashley Torres, who worked with a holistic nutritionist to develop the restaurant's unique menu of smoothies, salads, juices and more.

Pixon is also home to resident-owned Rukus Cycling Studios and Club Pilates. This collection of boutique businesses makes a big impact because they are owned by local entrepreneurs who know and love our community.

Jim Kilp, owner at Rukus Lake Nona, and his family have lived here for 16 years and watched the growth with excitement. "The sense of community and focus on health and wellness is important to us. When I was thinking about starting my own business, it was always about what I could bring to Lake Nona and how I could give back to the community."

Rukus is a high-tech indoor cycling facility featuring a variety of classes focused on cardio and strengthening the upper body. On Fridays after the 5:45 p.m. ride, Kilp and his business partner Amy Hudson host a happy hour for Rukus guests and members, who often stay after class to socialize. They recently started hosting a Sunday brunch after the 9:15 a.m. ride, bringing in snacks and ordering cold brew from Foxtail Coffee a few doors down.



Next door to Rukus is Club Pilates, owned by long-time Lake Nona resident Michelle Bethencourt. Club Pilates specializes in core building reformer fusion exercises for all ages and fitness levels.

In Lake Nona, these locally-owned businesses are creating jobs and building relationships that not only encourage healthy living but also a sense of community.

"I love Lake Nona – what it's doing and what it's going to do," said Kilp. "At Pixon, I knew we would be part of the action with Club Pilates next door, Foxtail a few doors down, and Neighborhood barre coming soon. Not a bad place for new and local business owners."

To keep up-to-date with the latest Lake Nona news, visit LakeNona.com.



Nona Your Neighbor: Paul Romero

ARTICLE BY CAMILLE RUIZ MANGUAL
PHOTOS COURTESY OF
PAUL ROMERO



Nonahood News: What is your job?

Paul Romero: I bring people together to solve complex problems. My employer is CHEP, which is a subsidiary of Brambles, and my current title is director of network automation. Prior roles with the company have been equally split between operations, engineering and safety. My current responsibility combines all prior roles to

develop and manage automation projects. Project success is measured by cost reduction and increased capacity.

NHN: What does your day-to-day schedule look like?

PR: It varies. I travel frequently to many locations in the eastern U.S. There may be meetings in Atlanta or working with project teams in one of our many service centers. When not traveling, I am in the office meeting with co-workers and third-party agencies.

NHN: What would you say is the most challenging and rewarding aspects of your job?

PR: One of the bigger challenges is quickly making strategic decisions with not all the information. I therefore get involved in risk assessment and management. An enjoyable aspect is achieving major project milestones and looking back on the success. It's like planting seeds and, over time, seeing them grow, mature and bear fruit.

NHN: What got you interested in doing your current job?

PR: In 2004, I was managing operations for a Honeywell plant in Georgia when I received a phone call about an engineering opportunity in Orlando. Since my undergrad is mechanical engineering and I really missed the Florida weather, the opportunity was very attractive. With the sup-

port of my wife, we made the move back to Florida.

NHN: Where are you from originally?

PR: My wife and I are from El Paso, Texas, but have lived the longest in Florida. We previously lived in Brandon (near Tampa) and Panama City, Florida.

NHN: What brought you to Lake Nona?

PR: In 2004, we looked at properties in Southeast Orlando, but the selection was limited and the pace of the market was very active. My realtor then showed me a home in North Shore, which met the requirements for our young family and three dogs. We made an offer and officially became residents of Lake Nona.

NHN: What would you say is your favorite part of living in Lake Nona?

PR: Watching the growth. At the time we moved here, Publix and surrounding stores near Moss Park, in addition to the Northlake Park YMCA, were the main activity sites. Being close to the airport is also a huge benefit. We have also become friends with many good people who make up the Lake Nona community.

NHN: What would you say to anyone who is considering a move to Lake Nona?

PR: Lake Nona is family-friendly. It has good schools and many places to spend time with the kids. It is also a safe community with respectful neighbors and diverse backgrounds. Our community is also home to the one and only Lake Nona Toastmasters club, where you can meet interesting people and develop your public speaking and leadership skills.

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in Ken Ludwig's *Moon Over Buffalo*, we decided to go check it out and head over to Osceola Arts in Kissimmee for a night of community theatre.

Community theatre is wonderful, for it brings both aspiring actors and experienced theatre veterans together. Whether the performers and crew intend to fly off to New York to audition on Broadway after the curtain closes or simply plan to go home to their families and day jobs, for a few short months, community theatre provides a second family, a support system, and a strong sense of accomplishment. In our case, the production we saw also provided a night of laughs and lots of conversation over our slices of key lime and peanut butter pies. In other words, it was a great date night.

Looking to change things up and take in a local performance yourself? Check out one of these great local theatre productions happening in the next few months. Don't forget to save room for PIE afterwards! It's the law!

Osceola Arts (www.osceolaarts.org) will be doing the musical *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* until March 15, followed by the musical *Once on This Island*, which opens March 27 and runs through April 5.

Mad Cow Theatre, in downtown off Church Street (www.madcowtheatre.com/), will be doing Arthur Miller's play *All My Sons*, a story of a post-war American family in a tragic downfall of lies, greed, love and loss, from March 25 to April 19.

Orlando Shakes, in partnership with UCF (Orlando Shakespeare Theater, Inc.), produces classic, contemporary and children's plays. Their signature series shows include *The Three Musketeers* by Catherine Bush, adapted from the novel by Alexandre Dumas, and runs through March 22. The last children series production of the season will be *Interstellar Cinderella*, a musical that will run April 9 through May 2. (www.orlandoshakes.org/)

Garden Theatre, a beautiful historic theatre in Winter Garden, will be doing



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Patrick Barlow's new adaptation of *Ben Hur*, a light-hearted comedic take on the timeless story, until March 15. Then, Roald Dahl's beloved story of an extraordinary young girl comes to life in *Matilda the Musical* April 24 through May 24. (www.gardentheatre.org/events/plays/)

Lake Nona High School's theatre department will be doing their version of *The Drowsy Chaperone*, a musical within a comedy. If you haven't been to see a show at our high school, you are in for quite a treat. These kids are talented, and their theatre program is comparable, if not better, to any of the other mentioned professional or community theatres. There are only five public performances, and they will be April 16-20. Tickets will be available via www.teachitx.com.

One Date at a Time: Pies & Plays

BY SHARON FUENTES



If you have been following this column, you know how I feel about movie dates, but what you may not know is that I LOVE "going to see a show" dates! It's not that I have anything against the movies. I enjoy a good chick flick, and movie theater popcorn is second to none. Perhaps my hatred of movie dates stems from the simple fact that, when we do go to the movies, I usually spend a good chunk of the time elbowing Hubby to keep him awake. Why then, you may be asking yourself, would I think taking my husband to see a play would be such a great idea? Simple! Theatre is live with real people up there, which results in real emotional connec-

tions between the actors on stage and you (and whoever is lucky enough to be sitting next to you). That kind of shared experience doesn't happen at the movies. (It's true, there are studies that prove this and everything.) As if this is not enough to convince you that seeing live theatre makes for a great date, how about the fact that you will never have to experience boring small talk and awkward silences during post-show dessert conversations? There is just so much to talk about after watching an unedited performance happening right before your eyes. (Note: For those who may not know, there is an old unwritten commandment that states that one must digest what they saw happening on stage while eating a good slice of cheesecake or something just as equally decadent. Hey, I didn't write it, I just follow it.)

While flying to New York to see a Broadway show and eat Junior's cheesecake sounds like heaven, it's not very realistic. Nor is scoring tickets for one of the wonderful touring company productions at the Dr. Phillips Center. (*Hamilton*, I will see you one day!) But fortunate for us, there are so many hidden theatre gems in our city just waiting for you to discover them. Whether it is semi-professional or wholly amateur, local regional or community theatre, college or high school production, theatre IS readily available – as are places to get dessert afterwards! After finding out that a friend's husband was starring

tion between the actors on stage and you (and whoever is lucky enough to be sitting next to you). That kind of shared experience doesn't happen at the movies. (It's true, there are studies that prove this and everything.) As if this is not enough to convince you that seeing live theatre makes for a great date, how about the fact that you will never have to experience boring small talk and awkward silences during post-show dessert conversations? There is just so much to talk about after watching an unedited performance happening right before your eyes. (Note: For those who may not know, there is an old unwritten commandment that states that one must digest what they saw happening on stage while eating a good slice of cheesecake or something just as equally decadent. Hey, I didn't write it, I just follow it.)

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Dog of the Month



Olive

Owner: Joey Quinlan

Breed: Labradoodle

Age: 1 year (at time of submission)

Dog's Quirk/Story: Olive is a one-year-old labradoodle puppy. She loves chasing lizards, playing with other dogs, and sitting in the sun. She's a big fan of car rides and naps with humans. She loves the Woof Gang bakery treats (but not so much the baths!).



Do you have the cutest, weirdest, smartest, or coolest dog in Lake Nona? Let's hear about it! Your furry friend could be featured in an upcoming issue! Submit your Dog of the Month nomination at <http://nonahood.to/pet>

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January 2020



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Laureate Park



50 HOMES
Active Inventory



21 HOMES
New Listings

SOLD LAST MONTH: 11

Average sold price:

\$509,968

97%

List to sold price ratio



38 DAYS

Avg. Days on the market

Eagle Creek



25 HOMES
Active Inventory



5 HOMES
New Listings

SOLD LAST MONTH: 5

Average sold price:

\$500,998

98%

List to sold price ratio



42 DAYS

Avg. Days on the market

Village Walk



19 HOMES
Active Inventory



2 HOMES
New Listings

Sold last month: 5

Average sold price:

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97%

List to sold price ratio



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To Generation Z: How to Travel When You're Young

BY NATALIA JARAMILLO

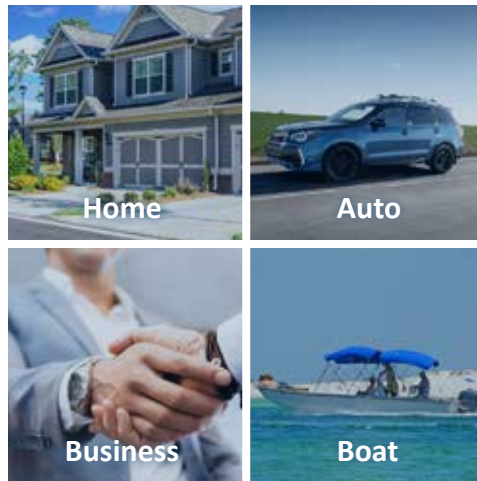
One of the best life lessons I have found is to travel, especially alone, but if that's not an option for you right now, traveling with family and friends works well, too. I have been to Europe, South America, the Caribbean, Canada, and Mexico and currently study abroad alone in England. All of my travels have consistently taught me one thing: People are the same everywhere you go. Everyone, no matter what country, has felt the same things you have felt: sadness, happiness, homesickness, excitement, confusion, hot and cold. For me, this lessened my fear of traveling to a new, faraway place alone because I knew everyone has encountered similar things as I have. Yes, sometimes one country may be harder to get around due to language barriers or culture, but in the end, traveling grows your mind so much that it's worth taking some risks.

In order to save money and because you are probably young, I recommend starting out traveling within the U.S. Drive to a nearby state if you have a car and just explore the city. If you are a little more willing to spend your money, try traveling to Canada. The country has beautiful scenery and city life combined into one, depending on where in the country you go. If you are luckier or have more means, give Europe a try. Western Europe is one of the most famous travel destinations for many people and will make traveling there alone or with friends and family easier. If there is a place you have always wanted to go, there is no time like when you are young. Take some time to get your finances in order and go; just drop everything and go for a week or even a month.

Now that I have filled your head with end-

less possibilities and you are excited, here is how you could make your dreams come into reality. If you are in middle or high school, check with your school or even your school district to see if there are any plans for trips that the school is sponsoring. I went to Western Europe during spring break of my senior year with one friend and came out with lifelong friendships, enriched culture, and an open mind in just a week. I suggest you start looking sooner rather than later into these options as they often require almost a year of planning and paying. There's always a decent price on travel; I wish there weren't. Another option is if you are already in college, you may be able to partake in studying abroad for a full semester or even just a few weeks in the summer – which is much cheaper – or you can go on excursions with your university similar to those in high school. Traveling with your school is one of the best ways to travel when you are young because a lot of the planning you may not know you even need is done for you, and the cost is lumped together. Always have extra money saved up when you're going through the school!

Now, let's say you aren't in school and don't have the luxury to join a school trip, even though sometimes you can join a school trip even if you aren't in school; traveling is more possible than you think. Take the time to decide on your budget first, then go from there to figure out where you would like to go. Use websites that can give you the best deals and offer packaged flights and hotel stays so that everything is together and reliable. Hotels are, in my opinion, better for younger tourists or traveling alone because you can meet people in the hotel and get advice on what to do once you're there, whereas an Airbnb-type apartment may be more expensive and isolating. Hostels in Europe are the way to go to save money, and like everything planning to travel, especially when you're young, takes time and effort. Research and save, and you will be on your way to learn about new people and cultures. The sky is the limit for your life and your travels.



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Mama's Turn: Giving Yourself Permission

BY SHARON FUENTES

I recently said YES! I know that statement in and of itself may not seem very important, but allow me to explain and you will see why it is indeed worthy of that exclamation mark.

Over coffee one day, my dear friend and I were talking about how different life is now that our kids are older. I mentioned how I felt like I am ready to start something new, but I don't know what that is or if that is even possible. My friend excitedly admitted to me, "I feel the same way. Don't get me wrong. This first part of my life has been great, but it's almost like I have been on a hamster wheel and, for the first time, paused, like really paused and looked around. There are so many things I want to do and try, Sharon. I just want to say YES to everything." And while shaking my head in agreement because I truly did get the way she was feeling, a tiny voice inside me that I desperately didn't want to listen to was saying, "You can't do that! That would be selfish! What would others think?" And then, I gasped (which really confused my friend) because I realized what my problem is. For a very long time, I have been telling myself that putting myself first was selfish. But that is not the meaning of selfish. Thinking constantly only about yourself is selfish. I can still do things for myself and care about others. In fact, most likely doing things for myself will make me want to do things for others even more. It just means that sometimes I would need to say NO to others so that I can say YES to myself.

It's impossible to be who you are truly meant to be if you are always looking to others for permission. Not to mention how exhausting it is always worrying about

what others think. So, I decided to give myself permission to step off the hamster wheel (just like my friend did) and pause, really pause (yup, like my friend) and look around. Amazing how clearly you can see when you really allow yourself to. What I saw was that I, too, was ready to make new choices and explore!

Giving yourself permission to be yourself takes practice. It starts with small permissions, such as granting yourself permission to rest when you are tired or sick or asking for assistance when you need it. For some of us (and by some, I really mean me), that alone will take a lot of effort and may be all they can do for now. But eventually after doing that for a while, you will be able to write yourself a permission slip to do even more.

My permission slip allowed me to enroll at the new Club Pilates studio here in Lake Nona, and I discovered how much I LOVE IT! I know, who knew? I hate exercise, especially group settings as they usually make me feel self-conscious and inadequate. But this is so different. Yes, the reformer machine is a bit daunting, and yes, you are with others. But it's such an independent thing, and you truly are on your own personal journey, seeing what your body can do, pushing only as much as you can right now. And I never would have known this if I hadn't given myself permission to try a class and sign up!

I also gave myself a permission slip to say yes to a new project that I started with my hamster wheel friend. It's called Part Two Project (www.parttwooproject.com), and it's all about our journey to finding out what our Part Two looks like and connecting with people who have already found theirs so we can learn how they did it and why. Ironically (or maybe not so ironic), most of them simply started with giving themselves permission to say YES! See a pattern here folks? I am.

But perhaps you are stubborn like me and want to change things in your life but still need someone to tell you it's okay to do so. Well, here you go ... I GIVE YOU PERMISSION! I give you permission to take some time EVERY DAY to acknowledge



your feelings. I give you permission to be vulnerable and strong at the same time because, yes, it is possible to be both. I give you permission to celebrate every time you listen to your gut or quiet that nagging inner voice of self-doubt. I give you permission to try new things that may make you happier, stronger and healthier. I give you permission to rediscover old passions that could lead to new opportunities or at the very least a fun new hobby! I give you permission to pause on your own hamster wheel of life, REALLY PAUSE, and just look around. I can't wait to hear about what you see when you do.

Sharon Fuentes is an award-winning freelance writer, special needs parenting advisor and the author of the book, The Don't Freak Out Guide to Parenting Kids with Asperger's. You can reach her at sharon@sharonfuentes.com.



In the Garden: A Recipe for Success in the Spring Vegetable Garden

BY AMBER HARMON

Spring flowers are all around, and with the month of March comes time to plant your spring vegetable garden. Spring planting dates can differ from gardener to gardener, but the basic premise of when to plant is largely determined by the weather. It is safe to plant spring seeds and starter plants once the danger of the last frost is over. This is because tiny sprouts and newly transplanted plants typically die off in a frost or a freeze. Also, spring plants are typically heat-loving and not at all cold-tolerant like the plants left over in the garden from the fall, like broccoli and cauliflower. Can you imagine planting an entire spring garden too early just to have the contents frozen? Historically in Central Florida, which is Hardiness Zone #9b, the last frost is typically in the month of February. Thus, the month of March can be a safe bet to begin planting for the spring. These Laureate Park Community Garden residents are enjoying March planting out in the garden. Just north of us, however, in Zone #8, it's possible to get a frost or freeze into the month of March, and they may wait until the end of March to begin planting for the spring.



Getting prepared for the spring vegetable garden is quite an exciting time. The first thing to do is to talk to your family or household about what they will enjoy eating from the vegetables that grow well in our region this time of year. Starting with the right plant in the right place will help ensure the success of the yield received from the plant. Then, pick seeds and starter plants based on the hardiness zone. For us, it means plants that are heat-tolerant and pest-resistant. There are many organic varieties of plants that meet these criteria; they are just a little harder to find.

We have a nice variety of seasonal vegetables on the Seasonal Menu tab on MyNonasGarden.com that are good to plant in the month of March. Some of the go-to options are tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, squash, zucchini, salad greens, and herbs. These plants will thrive from March through June. Then, it just gets too hot for these vegetables once we get into the months of July and August. Be sure to plant some very heat-tolerant plants, like okra, eggplant, Malabar spinach, mint, and rosemary, that can actually keep growing into and through the heat of the summer. This way, you prepare your garden for the spring and summer all in one planting.



If you have any question about seeds or a plant that you see in the store, the search tool on the University of Florida website can be used to look up a plant and make sure it should be grown in this season and this hardiness zone. Do not assume that since you see the seeds or plants in our local area stores that it is anywhere near the right time to plant them in our region. Unfortunately, not every business is that thoughtful.



If you already have a garden, a nice way to refresh it for the new season is to amend at least a third of the garden with a new fresh mix. This mix should include potting soil or mix, along with a fresh compost blend to provide a good boost of nutrients. Then, add either perlite or peat moss to help aerate the soil and build up the soil structure. Add a nice, balanced organic fertilizer for a foundation of nitrogen (N), phosphorous (P), and potassium (K) nutrients, as directed on the package. Finally, it's a great nutrient enhancement to add worm castings to the garden soil. Worm castings help to provide the much-needed micronutrients and good bacteria. The micronutrients act as a catalyst for the plants to be able to absorb the macronutrients: N, P, and K. It's kind of like eating food with your vitamins so the body can absorb them.

For new gardens, be sure to pick a location for your garden that has a minimum of six hours of direct sunlight and a source for regular watering. These components are key to the success of any plants in your garden. Then, just repeat the recipe for soil listed above to fill the entire garden. Be sure to get out and start your garden therapy this spring season.

Amber Harmon is the owner of My Nona's Garden, where they sell and service low-maintenance, elevated, organic vegetable gardens. Our mission is to bring health, promote growth, and provide vegetable gardening education to local communities, one garden at a time. Visit www.MyNonasGarden.com for more information.

"We make organic vegetable gardening easy!"



Felicity Mae Know

BY FELICITY MAE GOMER

Q: “Do you have any suggestions on how to maintain a healthier lifestyle and stop eating late at night?” – Marie

A: I am by no means qualified to give health advice, but I’ll list some tidbits that I use to help myself or that I’ve been told to do (because, let’s face it, how many times do we act on the advice given to us when it means we’d have to eat less or exercise more? Blech!). Consider trying intermittent fasting. Work and school have a lot to do with what time we take our meals and snacks, but if you narrow it down to an eight-hour window within which to eat, you might yield results that work for you. You can train your body to become accustomed to eating within a time frame of, say, 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. so that your

hunger no longer rages in the off-hours. Sticking to a schedule such as this can help you stop eating earlier in the day and stop making midnight runs to Taco Bell for those gorgeous chicken-rolled tacos. Practice discipline and adjust the time frame as you see fit. Find a friend or family member to hold you accountable or even to try it out alongside you. Set small, realistic goals in increments for yourself in regards to exercising, losing weight, or shifting your eating habits. Change doesn’t happen overnight! If you believe you only have time to work out three times a week, commit to that. Find creative workouts to do at home that don’t cost money or travel time, if that’s what works best for you. Find a routine to settle into that gives you a minimum number of times to work out, a time frame to eat within, and maybe a weekly checkup with a friend to keep you motivated and honest. Slipping up doesn’t quantitate the end of the world, but it is up to you to visualize what outcomes you desire and then manifest them.



Q: “Do you have any advice on how to move on after being cheated on?” – Hector

A: First of all, let me say how truly sorry I am that you’ve experienced this. One of the worst things a human can do is betray one’s deepest trust and love. The kind of damage this brings is torrential, but it is not irreversible. It sounds to me like this just wasn’t the one for you, my friend. It will take a lot of time to recover – I won’t lie to you. Take time to fall in love with yourself all over again: try new things, find hobbies, meet new people, and work on showing yourself the love you deserve and the love that this person never fully gave you. Surround yourself with good people that you trust and forget about romance for a little while. If you find you can’t sleep in the middle of the night because your mind is going 3,000 miles a minute, listen to a podcast or watch a calming, familiar movie. Distract yourself if you happen to be alone when the feelings hit. It never hurts to talk to someone about it; I am a firm believer in the idea that everyone can benefit from talking to a mental health professional. Please don’t feel alone in this! You are loved and adored, and one bad apple who broke your heart will not spoil the other apples in the barrel (is that how the saying goes?). Focus on your own happiness, heal, eat good food, clean your room, exercise, etc. – you’ll be okay! Don’t let this ruin your perspective on love. The right person will come along and give you a reason to put your trust in someone again. Until then, be the love you deserve!

Q: How do you keep from overexerting yourself? – Carlos

A: Know your limits and establish boundaries. In any context, these are words to live by. Maintain balance in all aspects: If you had a hard day, do some things to care for yourself like taking a bubble bath or ordering your favorite food to bring home. Call a friend or family member to vent or ask for their input, if you feel that it might be valu-

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able. Think about the things that bring you joy or relaxation and keep them in mind for the times where you’re stretched a little bit too thin. Take some PTO when you need to. Don’t be afraid to cancel plans when you feel like you need to decompress alone. If you need immediate relief during the workday or a stressful event, go to the bathroom and practice a Mindfulness Body-Scan Exercise (Google it!). Nothing brings me more solace than escaping for a bit to relax, and then knowing I have a cold beer and a rom-com to go home to later that evening. Nothing is worth overexerting yourself. You are talented and capable, and your energy is worth just as much as anyone else’s. Be aware of your limits in any situation!



Lake Nona
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Family Shift: How To Bring Out the Best in Your Kids

BY RODNEY GAGE, LEAD PASTOR



RODNEY GAGE
FOUR FAMILY COACH

Years ago, our family went to a spring training baseball game at Disney's Wide World of Sports to watch the Atlanta Braves play. After the game was over, the announcer invited all the women attending the game to come down to the ball field to participate in a contest. They had buried a one-carat diamond in the dirt in the infield of the baseball diamond. They gave each woman participating in the contest a plastic spoon and instructed them to line up against the fence in the outfield. At the sound of the gun, the women were to run as fast as they could to the infield and start digging in the dirt. The object of the contest was simple. The lady who found the diamond first got to keep it. I don't recall seeing any women leaving the stadium early that night! At the sound of the gun, the women took off running toward the infield and started their digging. After about 20 minutes, a woman started jumping up and down, screaming with excitement. She had found the diamond!

If there is one lesson I learned from watching hundreds of women that night, it was this – none of those women ran to the infield to go looking for the dirt. Instead, they ran as fast as they could to look for the diamond.

Imagine how different our family relationships would be if we focused on the diamonds rather than pointing out “the dirt” and the imperfections of each other. There is nothing more demoralizing to a relationship than digging up all the negative things in another person to reinforce unfulfilled expectations.

Sadly, we live in a negative and toxic culture. Now more than ever, it is essential that we learn to become a good finder, especially with your kids. Here are three things you can do to find the diamonds and bring out the best in your kids.

1. Give Confidence.

Giving our kids the confidence that we believe in them brings out the best in them.

Acceptance always precedes transformation. The best way to bring out the best in your kids is to see the best in them by giving them the confidence they need.

Here is what I know to be true after nearly 30 years of working with families. Nagging, criticism and pointing out failures and imperfections never change anything or anyone. The only thing nagging and negativity do is de-value our children. They create an atmosphere of insecurity. If we consistently point out the diamonds (positive qualities) in our kids, they will grow with greater confidence in themselves and live with a greater sense of security.

2. Give Vision.

It's not about seeing our kids as *they are* but rather for *who they can become*. Our kids tend to live up to what we expect. Studies show that we become what we believe the most important people in our lives think about us.

An excellent example of how this works is a story from Bruce Wilkinson, an author and teacher. Years ago, he was a new professor

at Multnomah University, and at the first faculty meeting, he received his class assignments. Another professor saw his sheet and said, “Bruce, you've been given two of the section A classes. They're the brightest students in the university. They're engaged and a joy to teach. You're fortunate to have section A students in your first year.” Bruce discovered that to be true – he absolutely loved teaching those kids. They were so much more fun to teach than the other classes. They were smarter and asked better questions.

At the end of the year, Bruce told his department supervisor, “Man, I sure hope I get the section A classes again next year!” The supervisor told him, “Bruce, there is no section A. We canceled that program six years ago.” When Bruce went back and checked his grade books, he found that those “section A” classes may not have been advanced placement, but they got more A's and wrote more thoughtful term papers than his other classes. Bruce realized that because he expected them to be better students, they rose to the challenge.

As parents, we will have the opportunity to shape our children into who they can become by the positive expectations we have of them.

3. Give Patience.

There is no such thing as a perfect parent, nor is there such a thing as a perfect child. We are all a work in progress. Our kids will make mistakes, and they will fall short of our expectations. However, as we continue to show confidence in their lives and ex-



pect the best of them, they will flourish.

What is the key to having patience with our kids? It's love! The best use of life is love. The best expression of love is time, and the best time to love is now. As you extend grace and encouragement along the way of your parenting journey, you will see your children thrive and bring great joy and reward to your life as a parent.

Rodney Gage is a family coach, author, speaker and the founding pastor of ReThink Life Church that meets at Lake Nona High School. His passion is to help families stop drifting and start living with greater intention. To learn more, check out familyshift.com and rethinklife.com.



SPORTS & FITNESS

Camp Gladiator Trainer Talk: Tough Love From Your Community Coach

BY VERNICE SALVERON

How many hours of your day are filled with things that are not constructive or productive? I challenge you to take half an hour and fill it with something that can literally add years to your life – exercise.



As we are about to close off the first quarter of 2020, I'm going to put my tough trainer hat on and send out some tough love to this incredible community. My mission is to help others and positively

impact the lives of as many people as possible. I truly believe that we are capable of doing amazing things, but not all of us are treating our minds and bodies with the care and respect they deserve to allow our ultimate potential to shine through. Everyone deserves to be fit, healthy, strong and confident, and this means that we must invest time and effort into ourselves to maintain and develop our minds and bodies. And let me remind you that taking time for ourselves is not selfish! It's a necessity!

As a coach for almost 10 years, I have heard many reasons why people avoid exercise. But most of them can be categorized in one of three main themes: lack of



time, resources or comfort. All of these excuses are lies wrapped in a reason. And I want to challenge these negative thoughts.

Those who think that they lack time will say, “My kids have too many after-school commitments, I don't have time after work, or the fitness class is too late.” If this is you, ask yourself how many times do you sit and scroll through social media? How many times do you “Netflix and chill?” How many hours of your day are filled with nonessential tasks that add nothing to your life when 30 minutes of exercise a day can literally add years to your life? Everyone is given the same 24 hours in the day, and CEOs of major companies find time to move their bodies. Why can't you? If you really want to do something, **YOU WILL FIND THE TIME!** I challenge you to revisit your schedule and block out non-negotiable YOU time and then manage everything else around that. You don't need to join a gym or get a membership; you just need to move! Run, walk or download a workout on YouTube. Move your body! No excuses!

Those who think they lack resources will say, “I don't have help with the kids; I'm too tired after work, and I need my sleep. It is too expensive to join.” If this is you, instead of blaming your lack of resources, start being resourceful. The great thing about our problems is that we are often the solution. Talk about your problems

with your close friends, family, spouse or trainer, and brainstorm ways to make it work so that you can get 30 minutes of exercise in every day. At Camp Gladiator, we welcome your children to come to camp, so if not having a place for the kids is your problem, then come on over!

Those who lack self-confidence or comfort will say, “I'm not fit enough for that. I don't know what to do; I don't want to feel embarrassed, or it's too hot/cold outside.” If this is you, I mean this next phrase in the most loving and kind way possible – you have to suck it up! You don't need to be great to start, but you do have to start to be great! Don't compare yourself to anyone; run your own race at your own pace. You were never meant to stay where you are right now. We are all meant to develop, grow and become greater beyond our cur-

rent comprehension. Complacency and staying in your comfort zone will kill your potential. The feeling of being scared and out of your depth is an opportunity for growth and to be more! Do not let your negative thoughts hold you back from the endless possibilities that await you. **GO FOR IT!**

If you want a place to start or restart your health and fitness journey, come visit your local Lake Nona Camp Gladiator Community. We will welcome, encourage and support you, all while burning calories and getting fitter, faster and stronger!

Vernice Salveron-Gasper, CPT, Partner Trainer, can be reached at (321) 947-9948 or vernicesalveron@campgladiator.com. Like Camp Gladiator on Facebook and follow @campGladiator on Instagram for exclusive offers, fitness tips, pictures, events, camp updates and more! Visit the website at campGladiator.com.

Camp Gladiator Location & Times

- Lake Nona Family Dentistry – Monday, Tuesday, Thursday 5:15 a.m.
- Spring of Life United Methodist Church – Tuesday, Thursday 5:45 p.m.
- Moss Park Elementary School – Monday, Wednesday 6:30 p.m.



Lake Nona Youth Sports' Lacrosse Program Spruces Up for Spring

ARTICLE BY VALERIE SISCO
PHOTO COURTESY OF LAKE NONA YOUTH SPORTS



Lake Nona Youth Sports is introducing an updated competitive lacrosse program for boys and girls called Heroes Lacrosse in honor of the military veterans who have volunteered to build the sport in Lake Nona. Previously known as Junior Lions Lacrosse, Heroes Lacrosse is all-new with a focus on enhancing core skills and character-building values. Participants will compete in the Florida Lacrosse Association League playing against other Central Florida teams.

"We've made some exciting upgrades to our program to deliver an outstanding experience for our young athletes and prepare them for more competitive play at the high school level," said John Chin, head coach and director of lacrosse for Lake Nona Youth Sports. "We take our inspiration from the player's creed: I lead, I grind, I serve. We want to show them how sports can build character to bring out the best in them."

The boys' program includes four divisions of league play for grades 1-8 and an inaugural program for girls in grades K-8, run by parent-volunteer coaches who receive training and support from Coach Chin and his assistants. Mike Bensey, former president of Lake Nona Youth Sports, is return-

ing as co-director to help evolve the new program with Coach Chin and work on the physical, technical and mental aspects of the game.

"I'm looking forward to sharpening their individual skills of scooping, shooting and footwork during our practices, as well as teaching the team concepts of transition play, man-down defense, and offensive principles," Coach Chin said. "But we want them to enjoy the sport and make new friends, too."

Lake Nona Youth Sports is a community nonprofit organization with the goal of cultivating and enhancing a young athlete's skill and passion for sports. The all-volunteer coaches offer kids an opportunity to participate in a fun, safe and exciting sports environment. The lacrosse program started through a grassroots community movement in 2015. The following year, the Lake Nona Youth Sports' board of directors officially adopted the sport and held free clinics to help promote lacrosse under the Lake Nona Junior Lions brand with organized practices and scrimmage programs.

In 2017, the Lake Nona Junior Lions lacrosse program aligned efforts with Lake Nona High School, where John Chin was coaching the boys' varsity lacrosse team. He also worked to bring the popular co-ed SPEED Lacrosse™ to the area, building a stronger lacrosse presence in Lake Nona. Anticipating the success of the rebranded Heroes Lacrosse program, a committee of parent-volunteers has been formed to help with administration, logistics and games.

"If your kids want to improve cardio and footwork skills and learn one of the fastest-growing sports in America with more scholarships than other popular sports, this program offers them a great opportunity," said C. R. Dunnivant, president of Lake Nona Youth Sports. "New players are welcome, and kids will receive newly designed uniforms they can keep after the season."

For more information, visit LakeNonaYouthSports.org or contact LAX@LakeNonaYouthSports.org.



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LAKE NONA YOUTH SPORTS

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CURRENT EVENTS

- HEROES Lacrosse**
 - Try out our new upgraded lacrosse program, formerly Jr. Lions Lacrosse. We emphasize core values of GRIND, LEADERSHIP, and SERVICE while having fun and making new friends! More info online or by emailing below: JRLionsLacrosse@lakenonayouthsports.org
- Spring Tournament Flag Registration Opening in March**
 - Under the Lights, powered by Under Armour. All registrations are online through the link to flag football on our main page.
- Sideline Cheer**
 - Registrations opening in March. All registration done online through our main page.
- Football**
 - Conditioning camps and clinics available now.
 - Camps are designed for skill building.
 - Info and registration online through our main page.
 - Tackle Football Registration opening in March. All registration done online through our main page.
- Opportunities to Help**
 - *Feeling led to help families in need?* "Sponsor a Child Program."
 - We are always looking for new corporate sponsorships. Please send us an email: JRLionsFundraising@lakenonayouthsports.org or find us on social media: www.facebook.com/LakeNonaJuniorLions/

Email LakeNonaJRLions@LakeNonaYouthSports.org or for more information LakeNonaYouthSports.org

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The Lake Nona Book Maven Review

The Silent Patient

Author: Alex Michaelides

This book was another recommendation by a friend. Before I decided to read it, I checked the typical websites and found it was rated 4.07 at Goodreads and was their #1 Choice for 2019. It was rated 4.5 at Barnes & Noble and was listed as a New York Times #1 Best Seller. I also stumbled across some websites indicating Brad Pitt has optioned the book for a movie. And although the author has previously worked on Hollywood films as a screenwriter, those are pretty good achievements for a first novel! Okay, I'm in for the read.

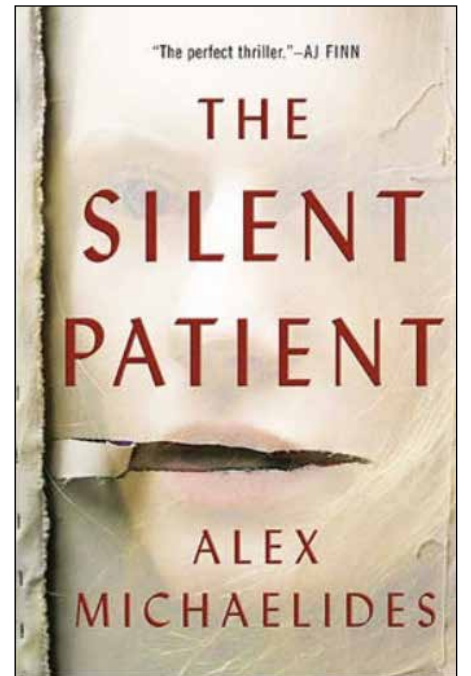
This story takes place in current day Lon-

don, England, and centers around Alicia Berenson, a famous painter who almost certainly shot and killed her fashion photographer husband, Gabriel. Shortly after the shooting, Alicia created a strange painting that is likely related to the killing itself, but the meaning of the painting is indecipherable. Add to the mystery that from the time of the vicious murder, Alicia has refused to speak. The other main character, Theo Faber, is a criminal psychotherapist who is focused on Alicia and her situation presumably because of his academic interest in her refusal or inability to speak. He manages to become part of the staff at The Groves, the secure psychiatric unit where Alicia was sent after her trial, where gradually he begins to work with her and researches her background.

As the story unfolds, we find out details about Theo. We follow him in his search for information about Alicia, and along the way, we learn about his painful childhood, his marriage situation, and his personality. And as he digs into Alicia's previous life, we also find out details about her presumably happy marriage and her difficult childhood. Outside of work and in his search to understand Alicia, Theo interviews Alicia's few family members

and a former associate from the art world. On the surface, the mystery seems to be why Alicia won't speak and why she murdered her husband. But there is more to the story than that, and kudos to the author, who is able to spin this tale out to its surprising and complicated conclusion without giving away the surprise until the end.

Included in the weave of the fabric of this tale is a repeated reference to an ancient Greek tragic play, *Alcestis* by Euripides. In fact, Alicia's last painting is entitled "Alcestis." It turns out the author of this novel is half British and half Greek, so his knowledge of Greek tragedy was not entirely out of left field, and this reference turns out to be one of the keys to the murder. But you don't have to be a fan of Greek tragic plays to figure it out – just wait until the author does it for you. It's a fun and thrilling ride to the end. I read the Kindle version of this book, but I understand the audio version is also quite good. Happy reading!



The Nona Film Review: Birds of Prey

ARTICLE BY DEMI TAVERAS
PHOTOS COURTESY OF
[INSTAGRAM.COM/BIRDSOPREY](https://www.instagram.com/birdsofprey)

RATED R



Four years ago, *Suicide Squad* hit theaters during the dog days of summer, and a craze erupted over the Joker's match-made-in-heaven: Harley Quinn. Their relationship was one to be admired on social media for the rest of 2016. And during October? Forget it, you couldn't go to a single Halloween party without seeing a couple dressed as the Joker and Harley Quinn. News of a sequel focusing only on the female villain-turned-antihero was announced shortly after the success of *Suicide Squad*, and in the beginning of February, *Birds of Prey* (and the *Fantabulous Emancipation of One Harley Quinn*) officially released in theaters! Don't worry, I'll use *Birds of Prey* for short.

Birds of Prey concentrates on Harley after her breakup with the Joker, and Harley is going through it. She has to figure out how to be

steady on her own, independent of a "master," and has to avoid all of the people she greatly wronged while she was with the Joker. One of those people is Roman Sionis, a gangster who doubles as the supervillain Black Mask. But Roman is searching for a beautiful diamond leading to the fortune of the Bertinelli crime family, and when he tries to take out revenge on Harley, she convinces him that she's the best mercenary in Gotham to find the precious diamond.

Where is the diamond located exactly? Oh, just in the stomach of a pickpocketing girl named Cassandra Cain, who had the bright idea to steal it from Roman's right hand man and swallowed it in a panic. After some shenanigans, Harley is able to track Cassandra down and keep her safe from Roman until she can ... extract the diamond, if you know what I mean. With the help of the Huntress, Black Canary, and Detective Renee Montoya, Harley and Cassandra ensue on crazy, action-packed pursuits to protect themselves. *Birds of Prey* holds nothing back as it's only the second film in the DC universe to be rated R – lots of swearing, a hint of gore, and enough jaw-dropping fighting scenes to make every girl feel eager to kick some tail.

Something I found interesting about *Birds of Prey* is that the story is told similarly to the Marvel film *Deadpool*. Harley doesn't shy away from popping up in voiceover to explain each step of her journey, much like Wade Wilson did as he transformed into the iconic antihero. The narrative timeline of the film also jumps back and forth, like in *Deadpool*, which works in favor of Harley's character; it wouldn't feel like an organic storytelling from Harley Quinn if there wasn't this much manic energy



traveling from plot point A to plot point B.

Overall, these DC universe movies are attempting to get better as they continue to retell stories about our cherished superheroes; they always make for an exciting, thematic experience (Martin Scorsese would know about that). The soundtrack is also full of potential hits, my favorite being "Diamonds" from Megan Thee Stallion and Normani. I do suggest checking out *Birds of Prey* and deciding for yourself, but don't forget to sneak in your bacon, egg, and cheese sandwich!

Demi is the editor-in-chief for Nonahood News. She is a lover of the arts and always eager to discuss films, TV and music. Send in shows to be binge-watched at demi@nona.media!



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DECORATING DEN
INTERIORS

Sunny Side Up: The Real Florida Man

BY PHILIP LONG

Believe it or not, I've never read anything about "Florida Man." But I hear the scuttle about him. He takes up a lot of the news cycle about Florida, and I'm thinking, *He's not the only dude in Florida, why does he get to hog all the limelight?* So I've come up with a list of stories that the press should cover about real – pinch us, we're real – Florida men.

Florida Man notices birds. In particular, he notices there are lots. Many of them, he notes with a mental note, have long legs and long necks. He wonders why for 15 seconds. Then, he gets distracted because his Pop-Tart goes ding in the toaster.

Florida Man complains about having to take a shower. He's already taken one after exercising in the morning, he needed one after walking from car to work in the morning, he needed one after walking from car to home in the evening, and climbing into bed, his wife says, "Honey, you really should take a shower, you're sticky, and you smell a bit like mildew." Florida Man stews in bed (with just a pinch of parsley).

Florida Man complains about traffic and other stuff. He goes the wrong way on the toll-way that claims he's going east when he's really going north and he wanted to go west. He realizes he has to turn around, which doubles his toll, and makes him worry about his bank account. His thoughts spiral. He's a writer, and writers, teachers and artists aren't valued as much as stock brokers, bankers and people who work with real money in arm's reach. He doesn't at all fume about The Man and wish he lived when artists were revered. He sees a gator in a retention pond, and all negative thoughts drift away as he delights in his ninth sighting of the year.

Florida Man pays taxes. Well, his wife does. Florida Man's wife begins whining in late November about taxes, which are due in April. She complains herself into a state of near mental breakdown before she pays for a tax service. One year, she happened upon a friend who "loves doing taxes" and offered to do them for her. While friend is not interesting, he makes up for what he lacks with a calculator, pencil, and a perversely peculiar joy.

Florida Man goes fishing. Knowing fishing is done a lot in Florida and that it's one of those things that makes you a man, he acquiesces to his son's begging. They set out with stupid plastic lures that couldn't catch a tree, which is definitely attempted. Miraculously, son catches a fish. Florida Man delights in son's victory and, after feeling a tug on his



line, yells that he's got something humongous on his line only to reel in a green-brown slime ball of pond snot. Florida Man questions the *man* part of his title.

Florida Man knows that venturing into the woods behind his home is a bad idea. But Florida Man can't resist all the green and believes there is a Garden of Eden (with requisite fountain of youth, sword in stone and clearing from *Twilight*) just around the next bundle of ferns. Florida Man notices the ground getting squishy. Florida Man swallows mouthful of spider web. Merciless brambles attack Florida Man, palm frond swipes Florida Man square in the eyeball, weird nobby wood roots trip up Florida Man, and finally, thoughtful, mitten-shaped leaves arrest Florida Man's fall. As Florida Man flees, he loses shoe in misstep in bog of eternal stench. Once home, he thinks, "I'm a real man."

Florida Man doesn't close garage quickly enough to escape a herd of mosquitoes following him. Florida Man curses his luck, begins slapping neck, back, calves and ears every 3.25 seconds. Florida Man weighs delights of working in the garage with the reality of inhabiting the same space as the life-sucking blighters. Florida Man runs into house and later begins to sob a little into his soup at dinner. Florida Man's wife asks what's wrong. Florida Man wipes tear from eye and relates that being a Florida Man is hard, and perhaps he should settle for being a Florida Sissy.

Florida Man goes outside. Florida Man curses heat. Florida Man goes inside.

So there you have it. This is what the news should be covering. And here's to all the Florida Men (and Women) out there who are trying to live in, let's just say, very interesting circumstances. A writer once mused that one of the worst curses one can receive is "May you live in interesting times." I think the same applies for interesting places. But then, it's not so bad, is it? And boy, the woods are so green this morning. I need to get out from behind this screen. There have to be some elves out there this time, but I'll settle for a fairy or two.

Philip is a father and husband, who coaches soccer with Coerver Coaching, and freelances as a writer, illustrator and carver. He's constantly sniggering to himself whilst whittling spoons and toys in the kitchen (hey, it's way too hot outside). To his wife's chagrin, the kids track wood chips around the house. He would love to hear from you at plong3510.com, either to giggle with him about something silly he wrote, or for any carving, illustration or writing needs. Oh and please remind him to sweep up.

An advertisement for Orlando Health's Emergency Room. On the left, a smiling man and woman are embracing. In the background, a modern building with large glass windows has the word "EMERGENCY" written vertically on its side. The word "CHOOSE" is written in large, white, bold letters across the middle of the image. Below it, the text "EXPERTISE AND EXPERIENCE FOR EMERGENCY CARE YOU CAN TRUST." is written in white. To the right, there are two columns of text listing services and expertise. At the bottom, there is a yellow button with the text "OrlandoHealth.com/ER" and a cursor icon. Below the button, a small note says "*Not for life- or limb-threatening emergencies." At the very bottom, the Orlando Health logo and "Orlando Regional Medical Center" are displayed.

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ORLANDO HEALTH | Orlando Regional Medical Center

Tour de Cure Comes to Lake Nona in March

ARTICLE BY CAMILLE RUIZ MANGUAL
PHOTOS COURTESY OF MAIN.DIABETES.ORG

On March 29, the American Diabetes Association (ADA) will host its annual fundraising event, Tour de Cure, at Lake Nona Town Center in Orlando. Tour de Cure events raise money for research, advocacy, programs and education to prevent and cure diabetes and improve the lives of all people affected by diabetes. Tour de Cure places a huge emphasis on being accessible to anyone who wants to contribute their time and energy to furthering the mission of the American Diabetes Association. Participants can choose to ride, run, walk or even participate in the event virtually. When participants register for the Tour de Cure, options include:

- General Participant (Select your route; ride, run or walk)
- Team Captain (Lead a company team or family/friend team)
- Future Champion (Set your goal to \$1,000 or more)
- Participant living with diabetes (Type 1, type 2, gestational)
- Virtual Participant (Unable to attend event day but committed to supporting the diabetes community, fundraising for your local event, and earning recognition gifts)

Additionally, anyone who is living with diabetes can register Red Rider or Red Strider, so the community of supporters can rally behind them.

“I have been a diabetic for over 36 years, and the ride showed me more support than you will ever know,” says Kara Landorf from Landorf Pricks. “Nothing better than hearing, ‘Go Red Rider!’”

For other participants, like Alice Slaughter Flowers from Ride4Rose, Tour de Cure is enjoyable because of “the fellowship and feeling of accomplishment shared with other participants who have the same goals.”

To partake in Tour de Cure, participants commit to a fundraising goal. All fundraising efforts support the ADA’s vision for a life free of diabetes and the burdens that come with it. Founded in 1940, the American Diabetes Association is the nation’s leading voluntary health organization with a mission to prevent and cure diabetes and improve the lives of individuals affected by diabetes. Through these types of fundraising efforts, the ADA is able to fulfill its goals and mission. As recognition from the ADA, participants will earn Recognition Gifts at milestones to show appreciation for commitment to the mission. Everyone is encouraged to participate and bring friends, family, co-workers and more along for the ride, run or walk.

The day of the Tour de Cure event is meant to be like a party to show support for those individuals with diabetes, to celebrate everything that has been accomplished through fundraising, and to promote awareness about the American Diabetes Association as well as about diabetes.

“My team participates every year and never fails to have a great time,” says Dawn Atanasio from TeamOne. “Every year, we make more friends with other cycling clubs – becoming one big happy cycling family.”

For the Lake Nona event, participants can register to join the Nona Cycle team. The team welcomes walkers and runners as well as cyclers, and more information can be found online by searching Nona Cycle Tour de Cure team.

For more information about how you can participate in Tour de Cure at Lake Nona Town Center, please visit diabetes.org/lakenona. If you are interested in learning more about the American Diabetes Association, please call the ADA at 1-800-DIABETES or visit diabetes.org.



MARCH EVENTS

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

- 4 Pop Warner Cheer Committee Meeting
- 4 Nona Business Referral Group (NBRG)
- 6 Gentleman’s Night Sip and Shop with J. Hilburn Custom Menswear
- 6-8 Coming Together As One Women’s Conference
- 8 Teen Writers Workshop at the Holocaust Center
- 11 Nona Business Referral Group (NBRG)
- 14 PechaKucha Night Orlando v28
- 14-15 St. Patrick’s Day Weekend at Boxi Park
- 16 Harry Connick, Jr. – True Love: An Intimate Performance
- 16-20 OCPS Spring Break
- 18 Nona Business Referral Group (NBRG)
- 19 A Conversation About Corporate Social Responsibility
- 21 Homebuyer Workshop
- 22 Canvas Pop-Up Shop: Earth Girl Products
- 25 Nona Business Referral Group (NBRG)
- 26 Nona Connect – Building Communities Through Connections
- 27-29, 31 The Daughter of the Regiment
- 28 Fight for Air Climb Orlando
- 29 Tour de Cure Lake Nona
- 29 Canvas Pop-Up Shop: Covered Planners

Weekly Events

LAKE NONA FARMERS MARKET

Saturdays 11 a.m.-3 p.m. | Lake Nona Town Center
www.facebook.com/LakeNonaFM

THE SATURDAY MARKET at Valencia Community College Lake Nona

Saturdays 9 a.m. | Valencia College, Lake Nona Campus
12350 Narcoossee Rd.
www.facebook.com/LakeNonaFarmersFreshMarket/

LP YOGA

Mondays & Wednesdays 6 p.m. & 7 p.m. | LP Fit in Laureate Park
www.facebook.com/learnlakenona/

MORNING MEDITATION

Wednesday 6 a.m. | Lakehouse in Laureate Park
www.facebook.com/learnlakenona/

CYCLE & CORE

Tuesdays & Thursdays 6 a.m. | LP Fit in Laureate Park
www.facebook.com/learnlakenona/

LIVE + LOCAL

Thursdays 6-8 p.m. | Crescent Park in Laureate Park
www.facebook.com/learnlakenona/

ART AFTER DARK

Fridays 6-9 p.m. | Lake Nona Town Center
Food trucks on first Friday of each month
www.facebook.com/artafterdarklakenona/

YOGA NONA Sponsored by Lake Nona Life Project

Saturdays 10-11 a.m. | Crescent Park in Laureate Park
www.facebook.com/learnlakenona/

Please check our online calendar for event details like locations, any costs or registration requirements, etc. You can also submit your organization’s events online. www.nonahoodnews.com/events

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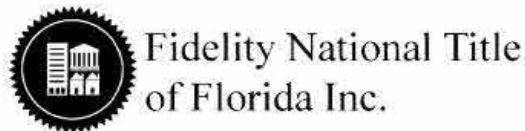
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