

THE ARTIST: THE FAIRY QUEEN

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ARTIST: ISABELLA SMITH



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13

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Proofreading
Joe Henry

Layout Design
Marnie Brophy

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James Rayner

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EDITOR'S NOTE: BETTER TIMES ARE AHEAD

BY DEMI TAVERAS, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



At the end of last month, my parents celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary. Five years before the turn of the century during a frosty New York City winter, my father, Canaan, and mother, Fianmy, tied the knot after approximately six months together. “When you know, you know.” They had been planning what would have been a legendary vow renewal ceremony, but as you can imagine like with everything else, COVID-19 snatched it right away. Instead, my parents opted for a small dinner and enjoyed their anniversary at home in the company of each other, recalling all the memories and adventures they’ve had in their marriage. And it might sound odd, but looking back toward the past with them made me feel like better times are ahead.

The first 2021 edition of Nonahood News makes me feel this way, too. If you noticed when you picked up your paper the first week in January, we look kind of different, right? Much thanks to Marnie, our fantastic layout designer, our new look is clean, sleek, and modern, in keeping with our innovative Nonahood. The stories in this edition are also a reflection of our leading-edge community. As the year came to a close, we witnessed exciting developments in many areas, starting with the vertiport and further expansion of the Lake Nona Town Center. This past month brought the announcement of Brooks Rehabilitation Center and the VA beginning COVID-19 vaccinations. Our Lake Nona natives made us proud on a nationwide scale: Lake Nona Youth Sports Cheer brought home a first-place National Championship trophy, and our own Narcoossee Cash became the fastest English Pointer in the country, running a 100-yard dash faster than your average Florida driver.

Taking it all into account, I don’t think it’s foolish at all to be optimistic about what’s to come in 2021. Most people don’t have high expectations, but I feel like we’re almost there, you know? After building up such resilience month after month in every aspect of our lives, we’re surely approaching a better future that does lie ahead. Let’s skip the pesky resolutions, continue to follow protocols so we get rid of the even peskier masks, and finally wave goodbye (or whichever gesture you prefer, really) to 2020. **Know that 2021 will be better.**



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BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT: SUNTEK LAWN CARE

ARTICLE BY NICOLE LABOSCO
PHOTOS COURTESY OF SUNTEK LAWN CARE

We've all experienced disrupted sleep or tasks because someone nearby was getting their lawn serviced. Local company Suntek Lawn Care is helping change that scenario, so both lawns and neighbors are happy.

"Homeowners have always had to deal with noisy lawn care services invading their homes and disrupting their lives. I started Suntek four years ago because I believe people shouldn't have to sacrifice having a peaceful home to have a beautiful yard," stated Suntek CEO Christopher Regis. "With more electric vehicles on the road, a greater number of solar-powered homes, and the rapidly-evolving alternative energy industry, I wanted to create an environmentally-friendly solution for the lawn care service industry."

More and more families have been working and attending school from home due to the pandemic, and Suntek gives us one less distraction to worry about.

So, why should you choose Suntek over other lawn service companies?

"We cannot afford to continue neglecting our planet, our health, and the health of all the folks working in the industry. Suntek is very proud to be leading this change that is here to stay," declared Regis. "We use all-electric lawn equipment powered by solar energy, which does a more efficient job than their gas-powered rivals. They're better for the health of our clients and our team, and the best part is ... they put out very little noise!"

You might be wondering why that type of lawn equipment matters. Regis explained why it should matter to you.

"People are becoming more and more aware of the detrimental impact of burning fossil fuels. It's not only terrible for the air, water, and wildlife, but it's also extraordinarily harmful to their health! One new gas-powered lawn mower, for example, produces more volatile air pollution in one hour of operation than 11 new cars driven for the same amount of time! What good is a beautiful lawn if the surround-



ing environment is polluted and you're too sick to enjoy it?"

Suntek's lawn care services are competitively priced compared with the services of the gas-powered counterparts – but without the irritating noise! The business is currently only servicing the Lake Nona area but is in the process of rapidly expanding operations further in the Central Florida area. If you're interested in a Suntek franchise opportunity, visit www.suntekfranchise.com.

Taking care of your lawn can be a large task with several potential problems. For the next six months, Suntek will be providing lawn care tips in *Nonahood News* to ensure your yard is looking its best.

"Most homeowners have a clear vision of how they'd like their yard to look: beautiful, green, and healthy. The problem is, they aren't sure how to make that dream a reality, and most common lawn care services don't have the experience or training to make it happen."

The most popular lawn issues Suntek sees are the following:

- **Weeds:** "There are many types of weeds, but the three prominent are grassy weeds ... crabgrass, sedge weeds like yellow nutsedge, and broadleaf weeds like

dandelions. Some weeds come back year after year while other weeds die within 12 months."

- **Compacted Soil and Improper Aeration:** "Weeds thrive in compacted soil and soil that contains a lot of clay. Every other year, run an aerator over the lawn to give the grass roots the air and water circulation they need. Aerification is the process of removing small columns of soil called plugs to reduce compaction."
- **Thatch and Brown Spots:** "Thatch is a layer of dead and decaying vegetation – an unhealthy build-up of organic matter that can cause brown patches in a lawn – indicating a pH imbalance. You may notice a 'spongy' feeling when you walk across the lawn."
- **Grubs and Insects:** "Grubs cause lawns to turn yellow and die but are fairly easily controlled."
- **Pet Urine Spots:** "Cat and dog urine contains damaging amounts of nitrogen,

which can cause your lawn to brown. Try to keep your pets off that part of the lawn. If you catch the pet urinating on the plants, you may be able to reduce the damage by watering the area."

Regis stated that most homeowners already know the lawn problems they are dealing with because of how often they see them when they leave or come home from work.

"If you're feeling unhappy or even slightly embarrassed by the way your yard looks, feel free to reach out to me directly – (754) 265-6608. I'll be happy to give you some free guidance and recommendations to help you get a yard you can feel proud of!"

So, if you are in the market for a new lawn care service company that cares about the environment and lets you live your busy day with one fewer distraction, consider Suntek Lawn Care. Suntek offers 50% off the first mow for Lake Nona residents when they sign up. For more information, visit www.sunteklawncares.com or call (321) 396-2425 for a free quote.



LAKE NONA DOG 'CASH' WINS LIFETIME RECORD FOR FASTEST POINTER IN THE COUNTRY

ARTICLE BY FELICITY MAE GOMER
PHOTOS COURTESY OF CAM ABASCAL

Narcoossee Cash, a two-year-old English Pointer in Lake Nona, just broke the record for the country's fastest dog in his breed! At the Orlando Convention Center on Dec. 12 and 13, the American Kennel Club (AKC) held Fast CAT's (Course Agility Testing) trials, where Cash not only broke the AKC's lifetime record for the 100-yard dash, he broke his own personal record three times! Cash conquered the 100-yard dash in 7.329 seconds, running approximately 27.91

miles per hour.

The AKC Fast CAT competitions are welcome to "All-American" breeds, where the dogs compete against other pups in their weight class. They run one at a time, chasing fluffy white flags flying in front of them, racing to their owners posted at the finish line.

Owners Cam and Mike Abascal, Lake Nona natives, adopted Cash from Louisiana nearly two years ago. They were drawn to the temperament of the Pointer breed and quickly snagged up their own from a new litter in our neighboring state. As luck would have it, another young girl from Orlando had her eye on a pup from the same litter. "At that point, we knew it was meant to be, so Mike and I flew to Louisiana and drove both Cash and his sister back to Orlando," said Cam.

Cash lacked subtlety when showing his humans that he loved to run. He started with running against the neighbor's Dobermans and hardly stood a chance, but after a short time, he could leave them in the dust. He had also tried out the Fast CAT "Fun Run" in 2019 in Deland and loved it. "He now runs wind sprints with all the neighborhood dogs and loves challenging the occasional rabbits passing through," Cam told us.



Preparing a pup for a feat like this is similar to the way we prep ourselves for great athleticism: healthy eating, lots of water, practice, and exercise. It's a natural instinct and talent for a Pointer to point. "We encourage fast starts by asking Cash to hold his point, and then, when ready, we say, 'BREAK!'" Cam described. "Then, it's on. He turns into Fast Cash."

Cash doesn't spend his days racing squirrels and burning rubber, like one may think. Rather, he leads a pretty luxurious life. Cam and Mike like to take him out for struts around the Lake Nona Town Center, and at home, Cash loves lounging around in his sunny window seat, relaxing and watching TV. His

incredibly sweet temperament makes him a joy around other dogs and people. His talent for dressing up is not lacking, either; this speedy canine won the Inaugural Boxi Park Halloween Costume Contest with a "spotty" ensemble.

"Cash also likes catching the frisbee. My hubby, Mike, and he have sort of a Tom Brady-Rob Gronkowski relationship."

Cam and Mike hope to bring Narcoossee Cash to the next Fast CAT Invitational, where he can showcase his speed and passion. For now, they plan to continue giving their sweet boy a healthy and full life here in Lake Nona.

LET'S TALK LAKE NONA: A BRIGHT NEW YEAR



Happy New Year, Lake Nona! 2020 came and went in a flash and, at times, in slow motion. In a year that was more challenging than anyone expected, we found strength in our community and continued to celebrate new milestones together. And we look forward to keeping the momentum going through 2021.

In 2020, we set the stage for bright minds to come together in our entrepreneurial ecosystem with our expansive 5G network powered by Verizon. We announced the Verizon 5G Innovation Hub, a development and collaboration space for 5G-enabled solutions backed by industry expertise and guidance from the Verizon team. The lab shares the ground floor of the new 16,000-square-foot Pixon MS² space with the leAD Lake Nona Sports & Health Tech Accelerator, a new program launched in 2020 for startups to test and refine their ideas in our living lab community and eventually bring them to market.

In Lake Nona, we're creating the ideal place for entrepreneurial companies, big and small, to call home. "A place where they can engage with and learn from each other and Lake Nona residents – our citizen scientists," said Juan Santos, senior vice president of Innovation at Tavistock.

In his role, Santos has been participating in a monthly meetup called "First Thursdays," where a growing list of innovators gather to share ideas and learn from each other's successful and not-so-successful experiences. Members include entrepreneurs from UCF, the leAD accelerator program, WHIT, and more. This year, the group is looking to cultivate connections between more bright minds in Lake Nona by opening their meetings to the community, hosted in the new Pixon MS² space.

Six new companies will join the first cohort of startups in the leAD program this year. And they'll have a new playground to test their ideas with the opening of the Lake Nona Performance Club. The new state-of-the-art fitness center is set to open this summer with

a fresh take on fitness that focuses on whole-person health. As a club member, you may even have the opportunity to help leAD startups test their products.

In 2020, we also unveiled plans for the Lake Nona Vertiport, the country's first regional hub for high-speed, electric vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) aircrafts. Aerospace is one of the areas Santos is most excited to see advance in Lake Nona.

"Autonomous vehicles aren't just on the ground in Lake Nona – they're already in the air," he said, referring to security drone testing that's currently in a pilot phase in the community.

Next, Santos says, are plans to expand our drone testing for medical use cases, including a drone that can fly a defibrillator and one that can transport organs from one hospital to another because "we happen to have every kind of hospital right here in Lake Nona, a major airport next to us, and the desire to be helpful to innovative companies."

In March, Lake Nona will welcome its first adult hospital – the UCF Lake Nona Medical Center. The facility will function beyond 24-hour emergency services to provide unique educational opportunities for students at the UCF College of Medicine next door.

Down the road from the new hospital in Lake Nona Town Center, the modern and iconic Lake Nona Wave Hotel will open this fall. The new hotel will offer a luxury experience surrounded by a variety of botanical trees and plants, both new and repurposed from our ongoing tree relocation program. Landscaping around the hotel will also include new art installations, adding more unique pieces to Lake Nona's colorful collection of public art.

Keep an eye out for other new art installations, including a mural that will cover the exterior façade of Pixon along Lake Nona Boulevard, designed by the same artist behind last year's Prismatic Mural on the new chiller plant in Lake Nona Town Center.

As new art and technology projects continue to evolve, we're excited to keep exploring and leveraging the new innovations we welcomed in 2020 to see just how bright we can make 2021 and beyond in Lake Nona.





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NOBEL NOTABLE OF LAUREATE PARK: JACINTO BENAVENTE, MADRILENIAN DRAMATIST O UN DRAMATURGO MADRILEÑO

BY DENNIS DELEHANTY

This is the 18th in a series of articles that celebrate the lives of the Nobel Prize laureates whose names grace the 130+ 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. The author's young cousin, Ciaran Stordy, a genuine madrileño, contributed to this article.



When the current pandemic washes away, you might be tempted, as one of your first acts, to fly directly to Madrid to steep yourself into the energetic nightlife of that lively metropolis. Where better to let off steam and celebrate the return of normality after a lonely year in lockdown? Since the journey across the Atlantic may leave you peckish, you might, upon your arrival, wish to slip out for an early dinner. Experienced travelers know, though, that making dinner reservations at 7 or 8 p.m. in any eatery in Madrid is a futile undertaking. In fact, if you arrive at a restaurant, say, at 9 p.m., you and your date will invariably find yourselves sitting alone in a silent, empty room. But at about 10 p.m., the natives will start filtering in, and approaching midnight, the place will be humming with the noisy chatter of enthusiastic diners. That is the hour when Madrid's nightlife truly kicks in, tracing a diurnal pat-

tern, perplexing to those of us lacking in Iberian DNA. Six hours later, on certain streets of the city, travelers awoken early to catch morning planes sift past dozens of local revelers tottering homeward. When do madrileños sleep, you wonder?

I have no credible answer to that question. All I can say is that it is not hard to admire a people so intent on enjoying life with their nightly patronage of the countless bars, restaurants, and clubs that blanket their city. (The scenes described above are, of course, pre-pandemic, but one can't but think that the nightlife of post-pandemic Madrid will be restored quickly to its natural nocturnal frenzy.) Perhaps, playwright Jacinto Benavente, a lifelong madrileño, often took part in this nightly saturnalia, if only to glean material for his prodigious theatrical output. Through the more than 170 plays he produced over his lifetime, Benavente brought to the Spanish stage the laughs, loves, flaws, and trials of his compatriots in a stunning variety of dramatic forms, including tragedy, comedy, farce, satire, and a peculiar twist on fairy tales. In choosing him for the 1922 Nobel Prize in Literature, the Swedish Academy honored Benavente for the manner in which he had "continued the illustrious traditions of the Spanish drama."

Benavente was drawn to the theatre at a young age. The son of a successful pediatrician, he read drama voluminously in several languages, and not just the Spanish playwrights of the Golden Age – Lope de Vega, Calderón de la Barca, and Tirso de Molina – but also Molière, Shakespeare, and leading European dramatists of the day. Dr. Benavente, however, disapproved of his son's attraction to the stage and prodded him to study law. Fate intervened in 1885 when the 19-year-old Benavente lost his father to a sudden illness. Dropping the study of law, Benavente took advantage of his copious inheritance to travel abroad widely, mainly to England, France, and Russia. Returning to Madrid years later, he launched his literary career in earnest with a comic play, *El nido ajeno* [Another's Nest], which unhappily garnered little success. But Benavente persevered, and by the turn of the century, he had started to attract respect and, eventually, fame as a genuinely innovative playwright.

The first two decades of the 20th century were arguably Benavente's most fruitful. Among the many plays he produced in that period, two of his dramas, *La malquerida* [The Misbeloved] and *Los intereses creados* [The Bonds of Interest], have gained lasting admiration and popularity. *La malquerida* is a wrenching tale of jealousy, incest, and murder, a play packed with overwhelmingly raw emotion. The drama unfolds in a rural Spanish town where, early in the action, the middle-aged Esteban takes the life of his stepdaughter's fiancé and points the culprit as another young suitor, Norberto, who happens to be Esteban's nephew. Norberto's alibi, however, is watertight, and the townspeople's suspicions slowly shift toward Esteban. As the police close in on the family homestead, Esteban and his stepdaughter,



Acacia, publicly proclaim their love for one another – news that horrifies Raimunda, mother of Acacia and wife to Esteban. As the final curtain falls, Raimunda is felled by Esteban's shotgun. This is powerful stuff.


A happier tone infuses *Los intereses creados*, in which Benavente offers a hilarious yet complex farce echoing the comedies of Shakespeare, from whom he drew much inspiration. As the play opens, two penniless *pícaros*, Leandro and Crispín, enter a town, seeking board and lodging with nothing but the clothes on their backs. Through clever dupery, they find both, and the days that follow manage to convince the entire town that Leandro is a prosperous señor (though he pays none of his bills) and Crispín his manservant. Crispín is gifted with an astoundingly nimble tongue that allows him to duck, dodge, but ultimately dominate the trickiest of situations. So much so that, by the end of the comedy, Crispín has not only managed to arrange Leandro's marriage to Silvia, the town's wealthiest debutante, but also forced Silvia's disconsolate father to pay off the considerable debts the two con men have accumulated during their short stay in town. With a touch of genius, Benavente has layered into this play his many influences, such as the Spanish picaresque tradition or – through use of typecast characters clearly marked as "harlequin" or "punch" – the popular Italian theatrical genre known as *commedia dell'arte*. And with Crispín, Benavente has created a rogue for the ages, a rascal so beloved in Spain that his statue stands today in a square in central Madrid.

It would be nothing short of presumptuous to imagine that Lake Nona's nightlife could ever rival Madrid's. But maybe just as well, since the folks hereabouts would probably prefer a stretch of sleep between midnight and dawn


– even if, as the internet tells us, nearly a third of Lake Nona's residents have genealogical roots that lead back to Spain. As we await the construction of an expanded Lake Nona Town Center, or the nation's first sky taxi vertiport, or still more wellness facilities, might we also dream of someday enjoying a bit of higher-brow culture in our town? Perhaps an art museum or – dare I say it – a professional theatre staging the timeless dramas of playwrights of the stature of a Jacinto Benavente? (For a start, though, we would just be happy with a local library so that we could at least borrow a few of those volumes of those plays to read ourselves ...)

Next month: George Smoot, the Measure of a Cosmologist





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THE OLLI SHUTTLE JOINS MOVE NONA

ARTICLE BY CAMILLE RUIZ MANGUAL
PHOTOS COURTESY OF LAKE NONA

Lake Nona’s Move Nona autonomous program, the largest and longest running single site AV fleet in the U.S., will be joined by a new vehicle soon.

If you’ve traveled on an AUTONOM shuttle manufactured by NAVYA, you’re in for a new experience with the Olli. Like the original shuttles, Olli is a fully electric and autonomous vehicle equipped with various sensors that guide it from one stop to another with accurate location and mapping.

Olli is 80% 3D-printed with 100% recyclable material. Printed in about nine hours, the shuttle comes together in a modular building block construction. Like many other innovations in Lake Nona, Olli is upgradable as the technology continues to evolve.



Find the Olli model on our streets with the Ride Beep App, where you can see current hours of operation, latest routes, and shuttle status updates.

Local Motors, the world’s first and only digital vehicle manufacturer, makes Olli in Knoxville, Tennessee. The Olli 1.0 model holds up to eight passengers and operates at the max speed of up to 15 mph in autonomous mode. The Olli 2.0 will join the first-generation shuttle in early 2021 for further testing on public roads in Lake Nona’s living lab community.



Beep, Lake Nona’s Move Nona operation partner, will monitor Olli along with the rest of our fleet at Beep’s headquarters and state-of-the-art central command center in Lake Nona Town Center.

Move Nona recently launched two new routes connecting passengers to a variety of different resources around Lake Nona, from restaurants and retail at Lake Nona Town Center and Laureate Park Village Center to recreation at Heroes Community Park and Nona Adventure Park to essential services at the Orlando VA Medical Center.

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THE ARTIST:
THE FAIRY QUEEN

ARTICLE BY DEMI TAVERAS
PHOTOS BY BOZANICH PHOTOGRAPHY



Six-year-old Isabella Smith feels a calling to model, and nothing can hold her back when she has the support of her parents, James and Noemi, and the help of the brilliant Bozanich Photography. See how she became the Fairy Queen in the interview with *Nonahood News* below.

Nonahood News: Can you tell me a little bit about Isabella Smith?

James and Noemi Smith: Isabella Smith is an affable girl, who always wears a big grin on her face. You would never know that this six-year-old girl already encounters struggles in her early life. She was born with severe bilateral club foot and arthrogryposis, which affects her knees and legs. Isabella often wears leg braces and undergoes surgery to help correct them. Even with braces or surgery holding her back physically, she maintains her upbeat and pure personality on a daily basis! She makes sure to tell us every day how much she loves us. Our little Isabella is a bundle of sweetness and funny at the same time – she’s always making jokes! She enjoys going to school to see her teachers and friends. She also adores animals and loves interacting with them.

NHN: What originally drove Isabella to the idea of modeling? (She looks like a natural!)

JS, NS: When Isabella started watching kids’ commercials, she would tell her mother, “I



want to do the same thing they do.” So we decided to do as much as possible to help her pursue her dreams, but always making sure to explain that she must have discipline and make good grades in school. We know that pursuing this kind of career may be difficult for her, but we don’t want to let anything stop her from doing what she wants to do and may be really talented at. We feel that she deserves an equal opportunity, just like any other kid would.

NHN: How did this shoot with Bozanich Photography come to be?

JS: After searching for the right agency – and what a journey because we didn’t know much about the modeling industry – we decided to ... instead see if we could find a photographer locally to do a modeling photoshoot. We are lucky that Noemi found someone right here in our hometown that was professional and could take care of everything. Noemi spoke with Bozanich Photography and had many questions about the process of her child becoming a model. Many of the first steps are headshots to present to an agency and to showcase talent. This photoshoot definitely went above and beyond since Noemi wanted to give Isabella the full modeling experience!

NHN: What was it like working with Isabella and having her as a model that was different than other experiences?

Kristina Bozanich: Isabella was certainly the youngest model I have ever worked with! There were many challenges that we had to

face – for one, Isabella liked twirling and running around, which would cause her hair to fall out. (In fact, it did, and we had to walk back in the park to find it.) With Isabella being so young, her mother and I had to be flexible with what Isabella felt like doing. To add to the excitement, we played pretend that she was the “Fairy Queen” in the forest. As the shoot continued, Isabella added to the story as the scenery changed and told us that the “evil pirates” were out to get her. During the photoshoot, we had one mishap with ants that overtook Isabella’s dress when I asked her to lean against a tree. I was distressed when I saw the ants on Isabella and her beautiful dress! Later, she seemed to laugh about it when she said that the “pirates had planned the attack.”

NHN: What inspired the artistic vision for the shoot?

KB: Noemi purchased a beautiful dress with many layers of tulle. As the photographer, I circled some of my artistic vision to how the dress would look. I knew that, for a girl of Isabella’s age, this would be a beautiful scene in one of our Florida forests (make her look like a modern princess). To diversify our shoot, I asked her mother to bring something for the beach as well. I wanted something bright and colorful – which the yellow dress certainly was! At the very end of the photoshoot, I wanted to go into something unique and artistic. I saw an adult version of painted



hands in a beauty ad. I wanted to replicate this but use Isabella in a way to make it look like the dark part of a fairytale or a nightmare. For this final image of the photoshoot, her mother and I used our own hands to form around Isabella, and I timed the shot with a remote trigger.

NHN: How did Isabella and Noemi react to seeing the gorgeous photos from the shoot?

JS: Isabella and Mom were fascinated with the pictures and could not believe how amazing everything looked. Seeing the outcome of all of the elements – the dresses, the hair, the scenery, and, of course, Isabella – could not have pleased us more.

NHN: What’s next for Isabella? Dancing perhaps?

JS, NS: Dancing (Isabella would love to learn flamenco). Ice skating is another interest of hers as well. She has another surgery scheduled very soon, so we will have to see how her recovery goes before we jump into the next activity.



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FROM THE CEO

Happy New Year! I think we all agree to welcome 2021 with fanfare, appreciation for the strength we displayed during 2020, and a shared love for our family and friends who supported us. This year, we can build greatness by working together. Your chamber is here for you, and we look forward to seeing you all during the coming year.

Please stay safe and well.

Don Long, President/CEO

EVENT GALLERY



Nov. 20, Ribbon Cutting for Nona Soccer Academy (Photo by Madelyn Long)



Dec. 4, Ribbon Cutting and Grand Opening Ceremony at XL Soccer World (Photo by Felicity Gomer)

NEW MEMBERS

Aagaard-Juergensen, LLC

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Inspired Performance Institute

Lach Orthodontic Specialists

Luxury Realty, Inc.

Makris Dental Prostodontics

Osceola Council on Aging

Thrive Services, LLC



Nov. 24, Ribbon Cutting and Grand Opening Ceremony at Lime Fresh Mexican Grill (Photo by Madelyn Long)



Dec. 9, Virtual Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for Bronze Partner Synovus Bank (Photo by Madelyn Long)

Breakfast Connections with Chris White of Traction in Florida

"How to be a Great Boss Without Being an A**hole"

January 14

8:00 - 9:30 a.m.

Location TBD

Register Here

Ribbon Cutting & Grand Opening Ceremony for Uptown Eyecare

January 9th

2:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Register Here

Business Luncheon with Central Florida Expressway Authority Public Affairs Manager Emily Brown

January 22nd

11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Register Here



Dec. 1, First Tuesdays Return at Bonefish Grill: Ugly Sweater Edition (Photo by Felicity Gomer)



December 10, Breakfast Connections – Update on the UCF Academic Health Sciences Center with Dr. Deborah German, vice president for health affairs and dean, College of Medicine. (Photo by Felicity Gomer)

BROOKS REHABILITATION CENTER COMING TO LAKE NONA

BY NATALIA JARAMILLO

Expected late 2021, Brooks Rehabilitation will begin construction for a hospital center in Lake Nona, with 60 beds initially and then further expansion in the Orlando area.

“Brooks is known for our expertise in caring for the most complex injuries and illnesses, such as spinal cord injury, brain injury, stroke, and multiple traumas,” said Trevor Paris, Brooks Rehabilitation System’s chief medical officer. “Building a hospital in Lake Nona will allow us to provide exceptional care now as a destination medical center.”

In 2019, 392 of the 10,183 crashes in Florida during the Thanksgiving holiday period resulted in serious bodily injuries and 98 fatalities, according to a press release by the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles.

The more people who survive serious accidents, the more serious bodily injuries that often need rehabilitation to allow the patient to fully recover back to normal, according to the Institute of Medicine and National Research Council Committee on Trauma Research. Now, Lake Nona will have one rehabilitation option close to home.

Brooks Rehabilitation, headquartered in Jacksonville with a secondary location in Daytona Beach, has been in the physical rehabilitation business for over 50 years and has one of the largest inpatient rehabilitation hospitals in the country with 160 beds, according to a press release.

“We look forward to collaborating with the UCF College of Health Professions and Sciences and the College of Medicine around educational programming and research in Lake Nona’s living lab environment,” said Doug Baer, president and CEO of Brooks Rehabilitation.

Planning ahead for the future, the rehabilitation center plans to add other related services and community programs in Lake Nona.

“What impressed us further about Brooks is their commitment to research and education, in addition to specialized care, enhancing people’s lives, not just in the present but innovating continuously with an eye to a brighter future,” said Rasesh Thakkar, senior managing director at Tavistock Group.



ORLANDO VA BEGINS COVID-19 VACCINATIONS

ARTICLE BY NATALIA JARAMILLO AND PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE ORLANDO VA

The Orlando Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center began vaccinating veterans in long-term care facilities against COVID-19 and started vaccinating health employees on Dec. 16.

The Orlando VA healthcare system is one of 37 VA centers across the country that are first to offer the vaccine, due to its ability to store the vaccine at extremely cold temperatures and vaccinate large numbers of people, according to a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs press release.

“Ultimately, the department’s goal is to offer the vaccine to all veterans receiving care at VA,” said VA secretary Robert Wilkie in a news release. “As increased vaccine supply is obtained, VA plans to distribute these vaccines at additional facilities to provide the vaccine to more veterans and employees.”

As part of their COVID-19 vaccine distribution plan, the Department of Veteran Affairs will directly report data on the vaccines administered to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and will supply the public with updates on the number of people who received the vaccine from the VA center.

The Pfizer vaccine was deemed 95% effective at preventing COVID-19 infection when the two shots were taken 21 days apart and the most common side effects, ranging from injection site pain to headaches and chills, do not last long, according to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

All 37 VA medical centers chosen to administer the vaccine first across the country, including the Orlando VA, will monitor and record any side effects caused by the vaccine into a tracking system used to monitor all reactions caused by many different vaccines, including the flu shot.

The Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine has been linked to two nurses in England having an anaphylaxis reaction to the first shot; however, the CDC issued guidance, suggesting people with a history of severe allergic reactions to a vaccine in the past should be monitored for 30 minutes after receiving the vaccine.

For those veterans looking for more information, take a look at the VA Coronavirus Vaccine FAQ page or sign up to receive notifications through the VA’s COVID-19 Vaccine Stay Informed tool.



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USTA: THE RISING TENNIS SURGE

ARTICLE BY DANIEL PYSER
PHOTO COURTESY OF USTA

For those looking for a safe and easy way to get fit in the New Year, look no further than tennis.

Recreational tennis has continued to thrive across the U.S. in the face of the pandemic. Indeed, people have taken to the sport in impressive numbers in this pandemic-plagued year, that surge continuing even into the colder fall months.

The numbers prove the point: Year-over-year data shows significant growth in racquet sales and tennis participation throughout the nation.

According to the Tennis Industry Association (TIA) Quarterly USA Wholesale Equipment Census, racquet sales in the entry-level category have seen significant growth in the third quarter of 2020, compared to the same period in 2019. This July-September time frame coincides with the period when much of the country began to reopen for business, following the initial wave of COVID-19. The increase is seen in both the youth and adult demographics, with shipments of youth racquets up 40.9% and shipments of adult racquets under \$50 (entry-level) seeing an increase of 43.3%. For all price points, racquet shipments are up 37.7% in that same time period.

In addition, the Physical Activity Council reported 10.08% of the U.S. population playing tennis over that span, compared to 6.75% in the third quarter of 2019 – an increase of

nearly 50%. With the U.S. population now over 331 million, the 3.33% jump represents roughly 11 million tennis players.

The USTA National Campus is no exception as the campus has boasted strong programming numbers since reopening in June.

Those who have yet to hit the courts in Lake Nona can take advantage of the ongoing “Free 30” promotion, which includes a free 30-minute hitting session with one of the campus’ teaching pros. The promotion is available for any player who has never participated in USTA National Campus programming.

Players of all ages and ability levels can take advantage of this new offer as it is designed to create a more personalized introductory experience for those participating in campus programming for the first time.

The 30-minute session will include tips and evaluation, and the pro will recommend classes and programs based upon the player’s skill and interest at the conclusion of the session. They can also make recommendations about equipment purchases at the Pro Shop and guide the player through registration.

For children, the pro can also discuss with parents different programming options based upon the player’s desired pathway.

There is no commitment to sign up for programming, and all guests will receive a welcome bag. Please visit www.ustanationalcampus.com/freethirty for more details.





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KATIE'S CUCINA: HOW TO BUILD THE BEST SMOOTHIE

BY KATIE JASIEWICZ, KATIESCUCINA.COM

A new year typically means that most people are looking to improve their health and overall food choices. One way to pack in quite a bit of fruit and veggies is to make a smoothie. They can be nutrient-dense without tasting like it was served from the earth. Best of all, you can prep most ahead of time, making it easy to blend on a busy morning.

Here are a few of my tips and tricks on how to build the best smoothies:

- **Buy Local** – I prefer to buy from the farmer's market or farm stands for my fruits and vegetables. This is typically the best way to get the freshest produce possible and at less of a cost than at the grocery store.
- **Freeze** – Freeze fruit to avoid having to add lots of ice. Rinse and thoroughly dry fruits and vegetables prior to freezing. Always freeze when produce is at its freshest to capture all the nutrients it packs.
- **Make Ahead** – Make frozen fruit and vegetable packs with freezer bags. Label the bags and store flat in the freezer. This will make for quick smoothie blends in the morning or for an afternoon snack.
- **Fruits** – The sky's the limit as to which fruit to add in your smoothie. I stick to some of the basics I have on hand, like

bananas, apples, strawberries. If in season, I'll add fresh peaches, mangos, blueberries, raspberries, and blackberries. I almost always have frozen pineapple, mango, and mixed berries in my freezer at all times. This allows me to ensure the flavors year-round without the higher price tag.

- **Vegetables** – I like to place a handful of spinach or kale in my smoothies. If you have a high-power blender, these greens will break up and you'll never know they are in your smoothie. Other vegetables I blend in are fresh beets, carrots, cauliflower, zucchini, and avocado.
- **Liquid** – I like to use yogurt if I have it on hand. It adds a creamy layer to my smoothies. I sometimes will also use whole or 2% milk if I'm looking for the added protein and fat. To keep the smoothies dairy-free, add in a plant-based milk or nut-milk, like almond milk. Other liquids you can use are 100% fruit juices or even coconut water/milk.
- **Sweeteners** – If the fruit is not enough to sweeten the smoothie, I'll add a tablespoon of honey or even agave nectar to my smoothies.
- **Other Add-Ins** – I sometimes use a scoop of protein powder or blend in plain tofu. The tofu sounds crazy, but it works. And you'll never know because it adds a silky texture to the smoothie! I will add a scoop of collagen (to my adult smoothies – not for kids), or to get extra health benefits, I'll add in fish oil for the healthy benefit of omega-3s. I love adding peanut butter powder or plain peanut butter to smoothies. A scoop of cocoa powder has been found to help with inflammation; this will give you a nice chocolatey flavor.

Favorite Smoothie Combos

If you are stumped on how to mix and match smoothie flavors, here are a few of my favorite combinations:

- **Strawberry, Apple, Banana** – No dairy in this recipe, keeping the ingredients very simple. I will use 1 frozen banana and 1 cup of frozen strawberries, which means no ice to water down the smoothie, as well as 1 apple sliced into chunks. Blend until smooth.
- **Chocolate, Peanut Butter, Banana** – 2 tablespoons of peanut butter, 1 tablespoon of cocoa powder, 2 frozen bananas, 2-3 pitted dates, ½-cup of spinach, and a splash of almond milk makes for the most delicious, decadent smoothie.
- **Ginger Banana Green Smoothie** – 2-inch piece of ginger peeled, 1 banana, 1 cup of coconut water, 1 cup of frozen mango chunks, a handful of fresh baby kale and baby spinach leaves. Blend until smooth.
- **Pineapple, Peach, Banana** – 1 ripe banana, 1 pitted peach, and 1 cup of pineapple with juice; 2 cups of ice.
- **Green Smoothie** – 1 cup strawberries, 1 banana, a handful of spinach/kale, ½-cup of milk, and ½-cup of ice. To avoid getting a very leafy-green taste, try blending the greens first with the liquid base. Then, add the remaining fruits that are naturally sweet, like strawberries and bananas, and blend again until smooth.

Overall, just get creative and don't be scared of mixing things up! Try to stick with 60% fruit, 30% veggies, and 10% liquid/other add-ins. Over time, you will get good at mixing up delicious smoothies. For more smoothie recipes, head on over to KatiesCucina.com, where I have quite a few flavorful smoothie recipes.



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.



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LAKE NONA HOUSING MARKET UPDATE

November 2020



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Laureate Park



40 HOMES
Active Inventory



12 HOMES
New Listings

SOLD LAST MONTH: 21

Average sold price:

\$479,870



List to sold price ratio



66 DAYS

Avg. Days on the market

Eagle Creek



14 HOMES
Active Inventory



2 HOMES
New Listings

SOLD LAST MONTH: 11

Average sold price:

\$401,130



List to sold price ratio



52 DAYS

Avg. Days on the market

Village Walk



18 HOMES
Active Inventory



5 HOMES
New Listings

SOLD LAST MONTH: 7

Average sold price:

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List to sold price ratio



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LAKE NONA YOUTH SPORTS CHEER TAKES NATIONALS

ARTICLE BY AMY KLEINER
PHOTOS COURTESY OF LAKE NONA YOUTH SPORTS

Lake Nona Youth Sports, home to the Jr. Lions, is the oldest youth sports program of its type in the Lake Nona community. Our football and cheer programs are affiliated with Pop Warner, the largest youth sports organization in the world. The 2020 season was my first year serving as cheer director after having been with the Jr. Lions for the last seven years as team parent and coach, and it has been an honor to lead my team of coaches and athletes to a remarkably successful season.

Cheer season usually starts Aug. 1, but due to COVID-19, our season was postponed until Aug. 29. For the first 20 hours of practice, we condition, learn fundamentals, sideline cheers, and get to know one another. All squads practice three times a week at Heroes Community Park. Each squad cheers on their associated football teams every Saturday during the regular season that extends through October as well as the playoff games in November. In September, we start working on our competition routine, which is a choreographed, two-and-a-half-minute routine consisting of dance, stunts, tumbling, and cheer. New to the program this year is dance. Dance teams learn a choreographed routine in Pom, Hip-Hop, or Theme, and athletes perform these routines at Pop Warner competitions in November and December. There are three competition events each season: local, regional, and national.

After sideline season is complete in late October, the first competition to attend is the local Mid Florida event. Teams that place first or second at this event will move on to the Southeast Regional Championship. Teams that place first or second at Regionals will then move on to Nationals. This season, Mid Florida and Regionals took place at the Silver Spurs Arena in Kissimmee. Nationals took place at the Orange County Convention Center. Pop Warner also organizes a celebration party for all teams in attendance at Nationals each year. This year, the party was at Universal Studios.

Losing an entire month of practice due to COVID-19, all of our cheer and dance teams didn't have much time to learn the routines, but all four cheer squads worked together and pulled it off! Our Tiny Mite squad was led by head coach Lindsay Broadhurst. Coach Lindsay and her family are new to the Jr. Lions family. She and her cheer staff did a great job coaching their team this season. The little cheerleaders, ages 5 and 6, had so much fun on the sidelines as well as performing as an exhibition team at Mid Florida and Regionals.

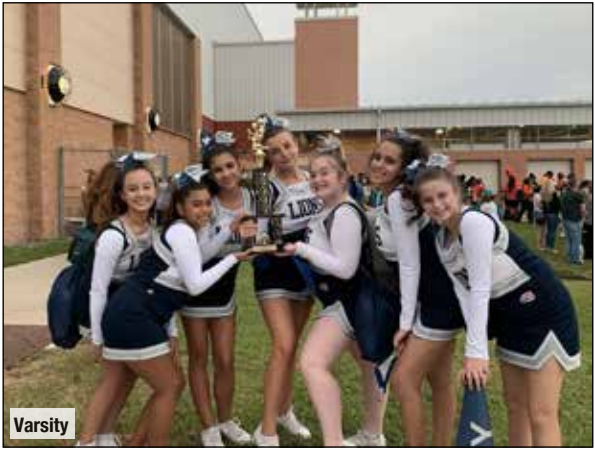
I served as head coach of the Jr. PeeWee cheer squad, ages 9-11. The largest squad in the program – at 18 girls – also had a great season! The team placed second at Mid Florida and seventh out of 17 at Regionals. While this team did not get to move on to Nationals, the girls are ready to work hard and are determined to get there next season.

Our Varsity squad, ages 12-14, was led by head coach Jessica Sparks, who is also new to the Jr. Lions family. She jumped right in and led her small team of seven girls to victory at Mid Florida with a first-place title! It is extremely difficult to choreograph a cheer routine with only seven girls, but the Varsity coaching staff came up with a great routine that wowed the judges! While they did not move on to Nationals, these athletes had an amazing performance and are ready to do it all again next season!

Last but certainly not least, our Mitey Mite squad, ages 7-8, was led by head coach Taylor Estevez. Coach Taylor went above and beyond, taking on double duty as her team was

rostered as both a cheer and dance team. Her team of 14 competed in two routines, one for cheer and one for dance. Having a background in dance, Taylor's love for the art really came through as she created a winning Pom routine for her team. Coach Taylor, her cheer staff, and all her athletes worked so hard this season – and it paid off! The Mitey Mite team took first place for their Pom dance routine at Mid Florida, took first place at Regionals, and competed Dec. 7 at Nationals to take home a first-place National Championship trophy, along with an invite to compete on Feb. 26-28 at the YCADA Globals in Atlantic City, New Jersey!

As cheer director of Lake Nona Youth Sports, I want to congratulate all the Lake Nona Jr. Lions cheer and dance teams on your success this season! I couldn't be prouder! Our success would not be possible without the amazing group of volunteers we have to help mentor our athletes. Board members, coaches, team parents, and our Jr. coaches from Lake Nona High School have such a positive impact on all our athletes. Their love of cheer and dance really shines through, and it shows through the success of our teams. Thank you all so much for all you do! Go, LIONS!



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TO GEN Z: WHY YOU SHOULD BE MORE POLITICAL IN 2021

BY NATALIA JARAMILLO

Being more political in 2021 is not about choosing a political party or wanting to get into politics as a career choice. Instead, it's more about how you can develop into an overall better and knowledgeable person. A more political person can be defined as one that is aware of the government's actions and public affairs of entities around the world – within the sphere of importance to the person. Take a teacher, for example. A teacher could become more political by understanding the governmental policies that impact them and the different parties' views on said policies. Consider this new year as a fresh start to improve yourself and your political mindset.

You can start by understanding the opportunities that being more political can open for you. In school or among friends, a more political person can understand and discuss different policies that are brought up in conversation and will be able to decide for themselves which policy makes the most sense. Being more political, in general, allows you access into conversations that can open your viewpoints and give you a new perspective on topics. More politically knowledgeable people are often seen as intelligent, so, in a work sense, it can benefit you because it shows that you have a grasp on current events happening around the world and how they can be resolved.

In a *New York Times* study, 526 American voters from different walks of life spent a weekend together and gained the understanding of why others had the views they did – everyone's background impacts their views on politics, according to the 2019 article. The study also found that the more this diverse group of people talked to each other, the more empathetic and informed the group became.

Politics do matter, and you should care because they impact you and your family. Understanding the impact politics have, on both the local and federal levels, will drive you to learn more. It is equally important to stay informed on an international level. You think a war between two foreign countries may not directly impact you and, therefore, decide not to investigate the topic further, but the federal government of your country will inevitably take a stance that will be seen positively or negatively. This can translate back on to you in the simplest ways, like when traveling internationally, so why not take a few minutes to research and learn more?

You can give your own opinions and form your own thoughts on topics with the more research you do. When it comes time to vote, you'll be more than capable to fully recognize the reasons why you voted for each candidate. Furthermore, researching the political stances of businesses that you are interested in or schools you are looking at can also help you determine which deserve your patronage. You have more freedom as a citizen when you do your duty as a citizen and consider how politics are working for you, why they matter, and how they impact you.



FELICITY MAE KNOW

BY FELICITY MAE GOMER

Q: "What advice do you have for making New Year's resolutions?" – Daniel

A: We've had plenty of time to think for the past 10 months. What thing have you thought about doing this whole time? What goal keeps resurfacing in your mind? Life has proven itself time and again to be unpredictable and short. What will you do this year to bring yourself peace, joy, and achievement? (Although, honestly, getting out of bed is an enormous accomplishment after making it through 2020.) Did you do any self-reflection that has led to any realizations? I know, for me, I've gained the Quarantine Fifteen, and I've had this time to motivate myself to get back to a regular workout routine. For many people, more than ever, there will be first-time gym memberships. Think about what you deserve. What project will bring you the most fulfillment? What is reasonably achievable? I recommend writing down your resolutions and placing them somewhere that you will see. Every. Single. Day.

Don't be too discouraged if you don't stick to your goals; you've had a hard year. Being conscious and putting forth some effort is better than not at all, and you are a better person for trying. However, do the best you can! Write things down, reflect on how you stuck to your goal that day, and celebrate every success and every milestone. These will keep your motivation high. Find a partner with a similar resolution and hold each other accountable. Calibrate yourself back to normal and do what you can to improve, always.

Q: "I feel like I'm drifting away from my partner. I don't know whether I should stay or go. How do I decide what is best for me and our family?" – Janiel

A: I mentioned something a while back that was drilled into my head while studying international politics: One should choose to do the greatest amount of good for the greatest amount of people. However, that is not always accurate in this context. It is a hard decision and one that seems to be encompassing us recently. Quarantine with our partners has been awakening. The bottom line is that you should never put yourself in an unhappy position. You should never be ashamed for doing what will make you happy, and you should never be ashamed for leaving something behind that was not working. If you love your partner and know that they love you, maybe try dating again. Pretend like you've just met and ask questions you've never asked before, play games with each other, experience things together. Date them all over again. You may find the reignition of your spark, or you may solidify your suspicion that they are different people now. That may not work for you. Having kids together complicates things, but nobody knows your circumstances better than you. If it is dead, let it go, and give each of you a chance to continue their search for happiness.

If there is any hope for reconciliation through couples counseling, forgiveness, or communication, work hard at it. Love is a crap ton of work. When you both get used to one another after so long, you become settled, content. It can feel like you are falling out of love when in reality you are just a little too comfortable. Focus on this differentiation before you come to a decision. Use your resources and people around you to help sort your thoughts and collect input. There is nothing wrong with separation, and there is nothing wrong with fixing things: Both are honorable feats. I wish you the utmost happiness, and I hope that your decision will bring you solace.



WORK WELL: LET THE
RESOLUTION GO IN
THE NEW YEAR

BY NATALIA FOOTE

The past year changed our habits and routines. It also created worldwide chaos that will leave repercussions for years to come. In the last 10 months, you changed. We all did. This is not only true for 2020, it is true for any other time in your life. Ten months of living means 10 months of learning, growing, changing, or regressing.

How do you feel about your life right now? Have you made positive changes since March? Have you drifted and now live a life that would be unrecognizable a year ago? Maybe you have made conscious choices and see a better, healthier version of yourself.

We are what we repeatedly do. Your behavior determines your identity, and it takes keen awareness to see how we continue to behave. This past year, you have created new habits that you may not be aware of. According to James Clear, author of *Atomic Habits*, as habits form, your actions come under the direction of your automatic and unconscious mind. Habits require little to no attention, making them both powerful and dangerous as you can easily fall into old patterns before you realize what's happening.

We sometimes place our life on autopilot and let it drift in whichever direction the wind may take it. We let life pass us by without taking conscious action in our lives. This is how we lose our way and end up asking, "How did I end up here?" You may drift in your career, marriage, friendships, or with your children – it can affect your whole life.

When our habits become automatic, we stop paying attention



to what we are doing. Awareness is key to changing habits. Habits become so ingrained we do not realize that our actions, in fact, reflect our habit track. Mindfulness in action allows us to become aware of present good or bad habits.

Throughout the books *The Compound Effect*, *Atomic Habits*, *The Power of Habit*, and *Hardwiring Happiness*, the key message is to be consistent with your actions and take small, positive steps every day to make a shift in your life in the direction you want it to go. The four books mentioned all speak of making small steps, allowing those steps to create routine, and thus allowing routine to become a positive habit.

If you lost your way this past year, think of where you want to go. What type of person do you want to be? Then, begin to make choices as if you were already living that person's life. Every time you make the choice to ACT as the person you want to become, you are actually BECOMING the person you want to be. You are creating a habit within yourself, and with repeated action, you will one day wake up and notice that you are more like the person you wanted to become.

Losing your way doesn't happen overnight. Habit formation doesn't happen overnight.

James Clear suggests avoiding goals and instead creating a system for what you want. Goals are the results you want to achieve, where a system is the process that leads to those results. Achieving a goal only changes your life for the moment. Instead, by focusing on a system, you can constantly modify that which you can control in the process toward your goal. If your goal is to run a marathon, you may achieve it and then quit. However, if you focus on the process of running, you may become a lifelong running enthusiast. The

journey toward your goal becomes more enjoyable when you focus on a system.

This new year brings along renewed hope and a sense of a fresh start. Omit the New Year's resolution and create a system for yourself. Think of the life you want and make small changes in the direction that you want your life to move toward. Begin to behave as if you already have that life and focus on the process in getting to where you really want to be.

NONA YOUR NEIGHBOR:
DIANA WALCOTT

ARTICLE BY CAMILLE RUIZ MANGUAL
PHOTOS COURTESY OF DIANA WALCOTT

Diana Walcott is a stay-at-home mom and the owner of online boutique Wind + Root. She is also a Lake Nona resident. Read our interview with her below!

Nonahood News: What is your job?

Diana Walcott: I am a stay-at-home, homeschooling mom. About this time last year, I created the online boutique Wind + Root. I was looking for something that I could do while the girls were in gymnastics, or in that little bit of free time that moms have. I thought an online boutique would be fun. When I looked into it, I realized I didn't want to just be selling typical goods available for resale. I didn't like where those things were coming from, how the people making them were being treated, so I started looking into fair trade products and came across some amazing brands that are doing great things with fair wages, helping women come out of trafficking situations, or helping prevent orphaning. I fell in love with some of the products I was seeing and the mission behind the brand.

I have jewelry and accessories all made by women in developing countries. Most of my products are a more simplistic, modern style. I wanted things that any woman could throw on and it adds a little something to any outfit. It's amazing with each product because they're handmade and they have a story behind them. When you pick them up and you feel them, you feel like someone put their love and effort into it.

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

DW: Homeschooling in the morning. I have two girls who are five and seven years old. Afternoons are usually gymnastics or whatever the kids' activities are and a little bit of work on my business.

NHN: What would you say are the most challenging and rewarding aspects of balancing everything?

DW: The most challenging thing is probably finding enough time for each one of them and making sure that I'm giving 100% to each one of them. The most rewarding is probably ... I mean, it's all rewarding. I'm getting to a point with the girls and their homeschooling that I'm seeing a lot of the work that I've put into it in the last three years come to fruition. With the business, being able to continue ordering from the brands that I carry, knowing that the more sales I receive, the more I can order from the women making these products, and they're able to then feed their families, send their kids to



school, and provide food and shelter.

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

DW: I was getting to the point where the girls weren't babies anymore, so they didn't need my attention constantly. They were getting into gymnastics and I had more free time during that time, so I thought why not do something. Once I came across how I could make a difference using some of the skills and knowledge I already had from my previous career, it seemed like a great fit.

NHN: Do you have any interesting hobbies, collections, or interests?

DW: We like to be around Lake Nona. Bike riding, walking, fitness in general, hanging out with friends here. We do some traveling around Florida. Some for leisure, some for the girls' gymnastics. We love the trails and being with nature. It's an adventure for the little ones and for me, quiet time.

NHN: What brought you to Lake Nona, and when did you move here?

DW: We moved here about six years ago for my husband's job. We're from Connecticut, and I was researching the best places to live in Florida. Lake Nona was one of them. We visited a few other areas around Orlando, but in Lake Nona, you just get a sense of the community here and how different it was from anywhere else. The aspect of knowing your neighbors and the community events – there's a certain pride in living here. Also, the growth of it is exciting to us, too.

NHN: What would you say is your favorite part about Lake Nona?

DW: How easy it is to make friends, be social, and always have events or activities to go to. Also, what's available to do outdoors here and how it's so easy to spend time outside. There are days that I can take the girls out on their bikes, go on the swings, ride to Foxtail or somewhere else, go to another playground, and come home hours later. Where else can you do that?

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

DW: It is very family-oriented, a great place to raise your family and enjoy the amenities and the development.



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