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# WORK WELL: THE GIFT OF SOLITUDE AND THE PAIN OF LONELINESS

**BY NATALIA FOOTE**

*Work well provides mindfulness- and awareness-based solutions to maintain balance at work and in everyday life.*

**"To fall in love with yourself is the first secret to happiness."  
-Robert Morley**

I am all alone right now. My three men left for a boy's trip and for the first time in a very long time, I am all alone for two whole nights. Admittedly, I felt rejected when they booked a trip without me. A "boys' trip" — my boys are 13 and 11, and although I know this is actually the sign of my husband being a great dad and that the boys are at a time that shaping that bond is extremely important, to be completely honest, I felt rejected. Their trip was scheduled on a weekend where I was going to have an event. In their eyes, I'd be busy working. I would have quiet time to focus.

My event was cancelled, and suddenly, I had a very free, very alone weekend ahead of me. I made no plans for myself. This was purposeful; I was going to flow with life and sit with solitude.

In May of this year, the Surgeon General raised the alarm about the devastating impact of the epidemic of loneliness and isolation in the United States. In a time when we are connected worldwide, we can't seem to fully connect with each other. According to the release:

“Even before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, approximately half of U.S. adults reported experiencing measurable levels of loneliness. Disconnection fundamentally affects our mental, physical, and societal health. In fact, loneliness and isolation increase the risk for individuals to develop mental health challenges in their lives, and lacking connection can increase the risk for premature death to levels comparable to smoking daily.”

We “see” each other virtually through social media platforms, but the inner pain of feeling unseen and unheard is now an epidemic.

In my situation, I am never alone. Thus, being alone is a cherished experience. And even as an extrovert, I was excited about not having any commitments and doing exactly whatever I wanted to do. (It turns out I like very boring things, and I'm perfectly okay with that.) Not everyone fits my demographic. Although I was alone, I didn't feel lonely. People may experience solitude often; some may feel lonely, while others might not.

There is a vast difference between solitude and loneliness. Solitude is the state of being alone while loneliness is sadness because one has no friends or company. Solitude can be considered a gift, while loneliness is inherently painful. Solitude is only experienced when alone, but loneliness can be felt while surrounded by people.

The Surgeon General's Advisory lays out a framework for the US to establish a National Strategy to Advance Social Connection based on six foundational pillars:

1. Strengthen Social Infrastructure
2. Enact Pro-Connection Public Policies
3. Mobilize the Health Sector



4. Reform Digital Environments
5. Deepen Our Knowledge
6. Cultivate a Culture of Connection

In the Nonahood, we are so fortunate to have multiple opportunities to connect with our neighbors. There are groups and meet-ups for nearly all interests. And the growth in our community allows for the creation of new groups of interests.

Loneliness is the pain of feeling alone, but there are 8 billion people on this planet (all on Narcoossee right now.) And although **NOBODY** else has experienced what you have experienced, and no one sees the world through **YOUR EYES** but **YOU**, that is something you **SHARE** in common with 8 billion people.

Even though YOU are the only “YOU” on this planet (and that may stir up feelings of loneliness), the same is true about me. I am the only “I” on this planet. And then, the same is true for EVERYONE ELSE. We all SHARE each other’s “only-ness.” In our moments of loneliness we will always share each other’s “only-ness.” Humans are born with an innate capacity for forming social connections. Everyone else is more LIKE YOU than UNLIKE YOU. Finding a solution to loneliness is seeking inner peace.

Peace comes from accepting yourself and loving yourself as you are. (Let me pause and remind you that YOU ARE AMAZING!) Peace grows in spaces of discomfort. Seeking quiet moments for yourself to breathe or laugh or cry and embracing that discomfort. It's okay, you're human. By trying new things in your life, you get to practice that "discomfort." Go check out all the cool things in our neighborhood or step out of our bubble and check out all the other amazing events and meet-ups in Central Florida. It's not easy to simply "sit" with yourself, so start small. All the while, pause and NOTICE what is already good in your life and lean hard into that. NURTURE ALL the good that is already present in your life.

I'm so grateful for this time and gift of solitude. And yet, here I am writing. I guess I can't help but try and connect with others. Then again, I'm only human, just like you.

***Natalia Foote found yoga 20 years ago. Within those 20 years, she got married, had kids and switched career paths. Through all of life's changes, she always felt at ease after practicing yoga. She wanted to share that with others, so she began teaching yoga and meditation. She started threeR (release, reconnect and reset), a company that brings yoga, meditation and mindfulness to companies, events and individuals. To learn more, visit [www.nataliafoote.com](http://www.nataliafoote.com).***



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# NAMASTE WITH NATALIA: CORPSE POSE

## SAVASANA

PHOTO BY: NATALIA FOOTE

“It is not death a man should fear, but he should fear never beginning to live.”  
-Marcus Aurelius

Every yoga class ends with Savasana. Students come to class with mixed feelings. “I just want to lay in savasana the whole time.” “Can savasana be extra-long this time?” “I can do the yoga, but not the savasana at the end.”  
Regardless of your feelings toward the final rest, savasana is the one pose that is guaranteed in every yoga class. The posture is purposefully accessible to all and, despite the simplicity in the action of the posture, it is quite difficult to fully practice.

Savasana, or corpse pose, is the practice of rest and, ultimately, death. The name reflects the appearance of the practitioner, who lies motionless on their back, resembling a peaceful, lifeless body – the corpse. This seemingly inactive posture holds profound symbolism as it encourages the individual to let go of all physical, mental and emotional burdens, much like releasing the final breath at the end of life.

The goal of yoga is controlling your own mind so nothing in the world can bind you. Savasana is the practice of letting go. There are no sensations, no emotions, no thoughts, and being nowhere and yet everywhere all at once. You can think about it, but a corpse does not think. You can feel it, but a corpse does not feel it. All that you can do is LET GO. It is the ultimate experience in detachment. Savasana can serve as an analogy for change. As seasons pass in life, we practice letting go and embracing what comes next.

Physically during savasana, the body enters a state of complete relaxation, reducing heart rate, blood pressure and stress levels. This relaxation response helps alleviate anxiety, fatigue and insomnia. Moreover, the pose aids in the recovery and rejuvenation of tired muscles, making it an essential component of intense yoga sessions.

Yoga, in its essence, aims to unify the mind, body and spirit. Savasana acts as the pinnacle of this integration, where practitioners experience a profound connection with their inner selves and a sense of oneness with the universe. The stillness of savasana allows individuals to experience a meditative state, where they can glimpse beyond the surface of existence and delve into the realms of their spiritual being.  
In this meditative state, one may experience a sense of transcendence, a dissolution of ego, and a realization of interconnectedness with all living beings. This profound spiritual experience is one of the reasons why savasana is



often considered the most challenging yet rewarding posture in yoga.  
The practice of savasana is a reminder of how precious life is. It is a practice in letting go and waking up to gratitude for what is present. Life is here! Life is NOW. Waking up from corpse pose is waking up to your life.

### Savasana:

1. Lie comfortably on the ground.
2. Relax and let go of tension.
3. Focus on the breath.
4. Cultivate mental stillness.
5. Remain in the present moment.
6. Stay in savasana for 5-15 minutes.
7. Awaken gradually.

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.**



# VISIT ORLANDO’S MAGICAL DINING RETURNS

Visit Orlando’s Magical Dining returns Aug. 18 through Oct. 1 for six weeks of delicious meals from 115 of Orlando’s most acclaimed restaurants. Three-course, prix-fixe dinners will be available for \$40 or \$60 per person plus tax and gratuity as part of a new tiered menu system. This year’s roster includes 16 new restaurants and seven restaurants recognized by the Michelin Guide.

The new additions to Visit Orlando’s Magical dining include Amare at Swan Reserve (\$40), Bella Tuscany Ristorante Italiano – Ocoee (\$40), Gyu-Kaku Japanese BBQ - Orlando and Flamingo Crossing locations (\$40), LakeHouse (\$40), MYlounge Orlando (\$60), North Italia (\$40), Osphere Grill, Sushi and Bar (\$40), Palate Bistro and Bar (\$40), The Palm (\$60), Park Avenue Tavern (\$40), Salt & The Cellar (\$60), and The Wilson Cocktails & Seafood (\$40).

Additionally, the seven restaurants recognized by the Michelin Guide include: AVA MediterrAegean (\$60), BACÁN (\$60), and The Pinery (\$40) – new additions to Visit Orlando’s Magical Dining – and returning favorites Kabooki Sushi East Orlando (\$40), Maxine’s on Shine (\$40), The Ravenous Pig (\$40) and Z Asian – Vietnamese Kitchen (\$40).

Delicious food isn’t all you get, though. Each year, Visit Orlando’s Magical Dining selects nonprofit organizations making a difference in the Orlando community to serve as a charity beneficiary. One dollar from every \$40 meal and \$2 from every \$60 meal will be donated to this year’s recipient, The Lifeboat Project. The Lifeboat Project is an organization raising awareness about human trafficking and empowering survivors through short- and long-term aftercare, residential programs, and education. More specifically, proceeds from Visit Orlando’s Magical Dining program will support The Lifeboat Project’s mental health counseling and trauma recovery and will assist with human trafficking prevention and education.

To ensure widespread impact, Visit Orlando will also donate \$2,000 to one local nonprofit in each of Orange County’s six commission districts that support a similar cause. These nonprofits include:

- Mustard Seed of Central Florida
- Nuevo Sendero
- One Heart for Women and Children
- Salvation Army Orlando
- Samaritan Village
- Wake Up Mentoring

Running concurrently with Visit Orlando’s Magical Dining is Visit Orlando’s Magical Nights. With Visit Orlando’s Magical

Nights, top Orlando hotels and resorts are offering special savings and other value-added perks such as discounts on rooms and special packages. The Alford Inn is offering a Magical Experience package, a one-night stay in a classic room complete with complimentary parking, a bottle of champagne and dinner for two at Hamilton’s Kitchen starting at \$329. Properties like The Lake Nona Wave, Meliá Orlando Celebration, Rosen Plaza Hotel, and JW Marriott Orlando Bonnet Creek are offering between 15 and 22% off your staycation depending on the hotel or resort.

You can take a look at menus, make reservations, filter and sort restaurant options, explore hotel offers and more at OrlandoMagicalDining.com. Additional menus and hotel deals will be added in the coming weeks.

Early reservations are strongly encouraged for both Visit Orlando’s Magical Dining and Visit Orlando’s Magical Nights.



Photo courtesy of Lake Nona Wave Hotel: BACÁN Short Ribs





THE ARTIST:  
LANH BALAGTAS

BY CAMILLE RUIZ MANGUAL  
PHOTOS COURTESY OF LANH BALAGTAS



Nonahood News: Tell us about you and your art.

Lanh Balagtas: My name is Lanh. I am a maternity and motherhood photographer. I started doing photography about six years ago, and I went all in on maternity and motherhood about three years ago. I love creating an experience for moms that allows them to feel beautiful throughout the entire journey of motherhood. A lot of times, we forget how beautiful the journey is.

I've always loved taking photos because, in the end, what you're left with are the photos. Your memories are going to fade, but when you have the photos to go along with those memories, they stay vivid.

NHN: Recent artistic accomplishments?

LB: I've won six or seven awards. There's this competition called the Portrait Masters, where you enter images and seven of the top portrait photographers in the world judge your images. I've won seven awards there. I've been published in a local magazine and on an online blog called Every Last Detail, which is a wedding blog.

NHN: Most rewarding project?

LB: It always brings me a lot of joy to photograph IVF moms. I am an IVF warrior myself, so anytime that I get a client who has been through the IVF journey, that's when I feel so much love. I love all my clients, but for me to be able to capture this journey for them means so much to me because I know how much they've been through.

NHN: Most challenging project?

LB: It's always challenging to take photos of kids. Kids are unpredictable, especially toddlers. You don't know what mood they're going to be in, if they're going to pay attention, if they're going to laugh or smile for the photos. It takes a lot of patience and quick movements to interact with the kids. Those are the most challenging, but those are also the most rewarding because these are the photos that a lot of moms cherish the most.

NHN: How do photoshoots typically go?

LB: I offer hair and makeup to my clients. It's just one less thing that moms have to worry about. For the first two hours, my client's going to have their hair and makeup done. During those two hours, I'm prepping for the shoot. I'm getting

everything organized as far as the backdrops, the studio, making sure the dresses – because I offer a wardrobe for moms – are ironed and getting everything prepped for the moms. When it comes time for the session, I'm guiding the clients the entire way. None of my clients are models, so I'm telling them how to stand, where to put their hands, how they should hold their kids. After the shoot, I go through all the images, choose the best ones, do a soft edit on those, and get them ready for my clients to look at so that they can choose which images they love.

NHN: Who or what inspires your photography?

LB: My inspiration has always been Lola Melani. She's also a maternity photographer, and she teaches as well. I've taken quite a few of her courses, and they have been so helpful to me.

NHN: Passions besides photography?

LB: I keep quite busy because I have two young kids. I have a four-year-old and a one-and-a-half-year-old. Aside from that, not only do I do photography, I'm also a full-time optometrist. I have a lot of help from my parents, my in-laws and my husband as well. I would not be able to do it all without them.

NHN: New projects in the works?

LB: I have this huge event coming up on August 26th. It's a motherhood event that's centered around getting beautiful photos of moms and kids. It's going to be an in-studio event, and the ladies from Velvet & Twine, a floral design company in Central Florida, are going to transform the entire studio into an indoor garden that will serve as the backdrop for the photos. I've been dreaming about this for over a year now.

NHN: Describe your artistic style.

LB: I believe that you should dress up for your photos. Your photoshoot day is not like a normal day when you are out and about in the park. This is something that's going to be hung on your walls or live in albums forever. You want to look your best in the photos. I offer a client closet for my clients. I have a lot of couture gowns, but I also have more casual dresses, too. I don't believe in just showing up in jeans and a t-shirt for the photo shoot, so I would describe my photos as upscale, timeless, high-end style portraits.

NHN: Where can people find you/your art?

LB: My website is [lbalagtasphotography.com](http://lbalagtasphotography.com) and my Instagram and Facebook handles are [@LBalagtasPhotography](https://www.instagram.com/LBalagtasPhotography).



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 [nonahood.to/artist](mailto:nonahood.to/artist).

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# NONA. LIFE. STYLE: COOL STYLES FOR HOT DAYS

BY MARISSA BURNS  
PHOTOS COURTESY OF LV SOCIAL



Every year, I am surprised! Even after 30-something years of living in Florida, I am still surprised by the severity of the hostile heat and humidity in August. It's like a swampy slap in the face that can start to feel personal. (Especially on mornings when perfect curls turn frizz ball after 0.3 seconds outside.) While the rest of the country starts fall preparations with apple treats and pumpkin flavors, we pack purse napkins to discreetly dap foreheads (and armpits) after a walk in from the parking lot.

The summer heat can feel endless as we venture into August and September, making it a challenge to dress for work when it's so dang. hot. So how do we stay stylish when the climate compels us toward cut-offs and flip-flops? Well, my fellow melting professionals, allow me to present a few of my favorite pieces for looking polished



**Sleeveless Tops:** In most work environments these days, it is perfectly acceptable for women to wear sleeveless tops. My most common suggestion is a sleeveless version of a quintessential workwear staple, the classic collared shirt. Even without a jacket, this will work in most industries because of its streamlined, professional cut and high neck coverage. Of course, other sleeveless tops work, too, just be sure the straps are wide enough to conceal undergarments and provide appropriate coverage for a professional setting. For more corporate environments, you can always keep a light layer at your desk for interacting with clients or colleagues.

**Blazer Alternative:** This new take on a blazer has quickly become my very favorite for warm weather workwear. Meet the blazer vest. All the boss vibes of a blazer in a "keep you cool" sleeveless version. Choose a neutral tone for the most versatility and layer it over dresses or worktops of any sleeve length.

**Work Dress:** You can also "skirt" the heat (sorry not sorry) with work dresses or skirts. Leave the tailored, body con silhouettes for the fall and opt for breezy styles in lightweight fabrics. A few, comfortable dresses will be your workwear savior this season. I suggest a shirtdress as the top reads "classic workwear" and the looser fitting skirt style will help keep air circulating around your body.

**Shorts That Work for Work:** First, true shorts may not be appropriate for every professional. However, a shorter pant length will work for most. If your job allows, you can wear shorts

in a way that still says "business wear," especially if you are an entrepreneur and have more freedom with your work uniform. The key to pulling off a professional shorts look is to choose a tailored version with a modest inseam. I recommend an inseam no shorter than five inches for women's shorts. If you work in a more traditional office environment, choose a wide leg pant in a cropped cut instead. When it comes to shoes with shorts, opt for pointed toe flats or streamlined, low heels with a block heel. If the hem of your shorts or cropped pant falls below the knee, you are okay to pair it with traditional heels. Keep your top and accessories tailored and sleek for the most professional, buttoned-up aesthetic.

**For the Guys:** Try upping your polo game and choosing lightweight, dry wicking versions for your go-to summer office wear. In addition to polos, did you know they even make tailored pants in this magical, moisture wicking fabric? And they aren't just for hiking anymore. Seek out tailored work pants from brands like Tommy Bahama, Banana Republic and Bonobos. They may look like your traditional office khaki, but these pants have a stylish secret. These moisture wicking pants allow air to circulate freely, preventing that clingy trouser feeling. And, if you are in need of a more professional silhouette, try out a linen suit. Pair a light-colored linen blazer with matching pants. Add a white button down and you're the picture of summer sophistication.

I'd be remiss if I didn't mention that most office buildings like to balance the summer heat by arctic blasts from the office AC system. (It's a fun game we play here in Central Florida.) So while dressing to cool down, you may also want to layer up. Bring a light sweater or blazer along when you're headed to work.

So, remind yourself, the horrific humidity will eventually die down. A few months from now, we'll sip our pumpkin flavored coffee (with curls intact) and snuggle into our cardigans to warm our thin Floridian blood. Until then, I hope this guides you in selecting and styling work clothes to look and feel cool all summer long.

*Marissa Burns is a stylist, speaker, and boutique owner. Her mission is to help women leverage the power of personal style to get where they want to go in life, in business, and in relationship to themselves. She is also passionate about small business in Nona and building community among its residents. She invites you to connect with her on Facebook and Instagram @MarissaAlexandraStyle.*

# INNOVATION IN LAKE NONA: A SPOTLIGHT ON THE AREA'S THRIVING TECH SCENE AND STARTUPS

PHOTO CREDITS: LAKE NONA

Some places are proud of their history. Lake Nona is proud of its future. As Orlando's leading-edge innovation hub, Lake Nona has become a hotbed for innovation and a breeding ground for startups. The community's dedication to fostering a culture of innovation has attracted companies from startups to global brands across various industries, including health and sports technology, human performance, aviation, aerospace and beyond. This convergence of talent and expertise has created a vibrant ecosystem that fuels the growth and success of tech-driven ventures.

## leAD Lake Nona

The collaborative spirit in Lake Nona plays a vital role in driving the tech scene forward. Lake Nona emphasizes business-to-business collaboration, creating opportunities for startups to collaborate with established companies and benefit from their expertise and networks. The leAD Lake Nona Sports and Health Tech Accelerator, a global platform for tech startups, is the heart of Lake Nona's startup scene, fostering connections between emerging companies and industry leaders to facilitate mentorship and partnerships. This collaborative approach enables startups to access valuable resources, gain exposure, and accelerate their growth.

Let's dive into some of leAD Lake Nona's thriving startups that are shaping the future.

## Phlex

One of the latest startups to emerge from Lake Nona's tech scene is Phlex, which recently secured a partnership with global sports sensor company Polar Electro. Phlex, a graduate of the leAD Lake Nona's inaugural cohort, has developed a wearable device for swimmers and coaches in collaboration with Polar Electro. The device enables swimmers of all levels to track performance statistics such as heart rate, calories burned, and more through Phlex's innovative app. This groundbreaking solution not only enhances the training experience but also demonstrates the potential for technology to revolutionize traditional industries.

## NESTRE

Another successful leAD Lake Nona startup, NESTRE, stands out as a pioneer revolutionizing cognitive health and human performance. Led by former UCF football captain and Lake Nona resident Dr. Tommy Shavers, NESTRE's neuro-strength platform offers a unique app that provides cognitive assessments, training and analytics to improve mental and cognitive performance for users from all walks

of life. NESTRE's science-backed solutions and commitment to democratizing access to cognitive training exemplify the innovative spirit driving Lake Nona's tech ecosystem. NESTRE moved across the street once graduated from leAD to its permanent home in the Lake Nona Performance Club. Dr. Shavers and the NESTRE team were recently lauded during the Mayor's 2023 State of the City address as a powerful young company thriving in our community.

## Source

At a time when the textiles and clothing industry is seeking more sustainable solutions, Source is spearheading the development of sustainable athletic wear that surpasses conventional fibers. By re-engineering algae into a heat-managing and low-carbon alternative that also optimizes comfort for outdoor, motorsport and everyday athletes, Source is leading the way in creating eco-friendly solutions that prioritize both performance and sustainability.

## Break the Love

Break the Love is transforming the racquet sports club experience for the next generation. With a vision to create a one-stop shop for drop-in tennis clubs personalized for players based on interests, level and location, Break the Love is redefining how players engage with the sport. The platform not only provides players with convenient access to tennis facilities but also empowers athletes and property owners to contribute to the growth of the sport. Most recently, CEO Trisha Goyal has become the first recipient of the Tory Burch Foundation Sports Fellowship, in partnership with the International Tennis Federation's Advantage All, honoring Break the Love's commitment to supporting women founders in male-dominated fields and their collaboration with industry-leading organizations.

## To the Future & Beyond

Lake Nona's dedication to cutting-edge technology extends beyond individual startups. The community itself is designed to be a smart city that promotes connectivity and convenience and is home to innovative branches of nationally recognized brands like KPMG, Johnson & Johnson, Verizon, Guidewell, HCA Healthcare, and others.

The tech scene in Lake Nona is constantly evolving with new opportunities always peeking over the horizon, reinforcing its reputation as a regional powerhouse for innovation and a magnet for tech enthusiasts, entrepreneurs and investors. As the community continues to push the boundaries of what is possible, we can expect Lake Nona to remain a key player in the world of technology and innovation for years to come.





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LAKE NONA: FUELING GROWTH IN A RAPIDLY CHANGING COMMUNITY

I often talk about why Lake Nona is such an appealing place to live, work and play, but now I want to talk about some of the work that goes into creating such an incredible community. It certainly doesn't happen on its own!

The "Lake Nona vibe" is a common topic of discussion at events in other parts of Central Florida and, of course, the incredible people here contribute to this energy. Some of the most talented people across the globe along with world-class organizations contribute heavily to this "living lab."

Tavistock Development is a forward-thinking organization that has invested in cutting-edge technology and innovation, which put Lake Nona on the world stage and established a thriving community. This planning, investment and development has made Lake Nona a premier destination and a magnet for entrepreneurs and business leaders from around the world.

There are some incredible business incubator and accelerator programs in Lake Nona that help entrepreneurs innovate and scale their businesses. These include the leAD Lake Nona Sports & Health Tech Accelerator

and the UCF Life Sciences Incubator. As a direct result of these programs, Lake Nona is the home to some of the most innovative advancements in technology and health care today.

Each week, we see a multitude of business leaders from countries all over the world seeking to learn more about Lake Nona, how they can bring their businesses here, and even learn how to create similar communities in their own native lands.

The Lake Nona Regional Chamber of Commerce works to connect international business owners here in Central Florida with experts and a support network that can help them grow their enterprises here in the United States while working to serve their unique needs. The area is not only known for its technological advancements but also for fostering a strong sense of community.

The incredible economic development in Lake Nona fosters an entrepreneurial spirit that lives in the creative and ambitious people who work here or choose to call it home. It is a place

where people support each other by providing access to ideas, expert advice, connections, and even leading to investment.

The idea of economic development is tricky. It is often difficult for people to understand this concept and how it has a lasting impact on the surrounding area. Put simply, economic development is what happens when we work to attract businesses, help existing businesses grow, and create and retain jobs.

Everyone wins when people work together to ensure decisions are good for both the business and the community.

For information about how to join the chamber or to get the most out of your chamber membership, please reach out to the Lake Nona Regional Chamber of Commerce at [administration@lakenonacc.org](mailto:administration@lakenonacc.org) or call us at 407-796-2230. We would love to hear from you!



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EVENT GALLERY



Ilia Torres from the office of the Honorable Jerry L. Demings, Mayor of Orange County, and Ricardo Miranda-Rodriguez from the office of Orange County Commissioner Maribel Gomez-Cordero present proclamations to Kiddie Academy at their Lake Nona ribbon cutting.



Executives and staff of Kiddie Academy at the ribbon cutting for their new Lake Nona location.



Candy Cole, Executive Director of the Lake Nona Regional Chamber of Commerce, and chamber board members Kim Gordon of The Kendrick Team at EXP Realty and Viviana Solano of Northwestern Mutual enjoy an after-hours event at Pisco Peruvian Gastrobar.



Members of the Lake Nona Regional Chamber of Commerce enjoy an after-hours event at Pisco Peruvian Gastrobar.



DAT Media brought their digital advertising truck to an after-hours event for the Lake Nona Regional Chamber of Commerce (LNRCC). Left to right, Adisen Krisle, LNRCC Business Development; Sean M. Flynn, LNRCC Member Services Manager; Kim Gordon, LNRCC Board Secretary and REALTOR® with The Kendrick Team at EXP Realty; Brandy Bennett of the Downtown Orlando Partnership and LNRCC Board Chair; Viviana Solano of Northwestern Mutual and LNRCC Board Member; Becki Cassidy with HMS CPAs and LNRCC Board Treasurer; Gary Salzman of Orlando Law and LNRCC Board Member; and Candy Cole, Executive Director of the Lake Nona Regional Chamber of Commerce.

Ricardo Miranda-Rodriguez from the office of Orange County Commissioner Maribel Gomez-Cordero presents a proclamation to the Global Family Support Foundation at their ribbon cutting.



Candy Cole, LNRCC Executive Director, with Edward DeAguilera of the Orlando Regional REALTOR® Association.



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Adisen Krisle, Business Development Representative for the Lake Nona Regional Chamber of Commerce, met with a group of young professionals





## MISSION

Save lives through the prevention and cure of ovarian cancer and to improve quality of life for survivors and their caregivers.

## HOW WILL YOUR DONATIONS HELP?

Free meals, counseling, support groups, financial assistance, research

## EARLY AWARENESS

Promotes early detection through a variety of educational initiatives, community health fairs, branded publications, and mass media campaigns.

## QUALITY OF LIFE

Provides vital information & resources to newly diagnosed Survivors, support for Survivors and Caregivers, prepared meal delivery and mental health counseling for women in treatment.

## RESEARCH

The NOCC is dedicated to funding research that will lead to the detection, diagnosis, and treatment of Ovarian Cancer.

## COMMUNITY EVENTS

Brings our communities together toward a common cause as we engage thousands through events such as Together in Teal and Team Teal endurance events.

According to the American Cancer Society, **Florida** is the second highest state for Ovarian cancer cases

**T**exas Hold'Em Fun with All In One

**E**xcellent food and drink from Gators' Dockside in the Lake Nona area

**A**n opportunity to donate to NOCC and help women affected by Ovarian Cancer

**L**ots of Amazing Silent Auction items waiting for your bid



for free programs and services offered by the National Ovarian Cancer Coalition (NOCC), please contact:

**Nikki Coppola**  
Southeast Regional Manager

850-270-5709

ncoppola@ovarian.org

## WHY AM I HOLDING THIS EVENT?

Hi! My name is Jennifer Baldwin and I am a 64 year old survivor of Ovarian Cancer. On November 22nd 2019, I was diagnosed with Stage 3 Ovarian Cancer.

After three rounds of chemotherapy and a full hysterectomy, the entire world was uprooted by the pandemic and I finished my last three rounds of chemotherapy in isolation, officially going into remission in June of 2020. Following the conclusion of my treatment, I was placed on an oral chemotherapy drug to keep the cancer at bay where it belongs, however, in the Spring of 2022, I had my first recurrence followed by an additional three rounds of chemotherapy. In June of 2022 I happily entered remission again, however in a twist of events, will be heading back to chemo this August as my cancer has returned but I am forever a warrior and the third time's the charm!

This experience has forever changed my life and in turn inspired me to write a song entitled, "You Are Not Alone" to let all women with Ovarian Cancer know that they are not and will never be alone. With your donations to the NOCC we can all help to envision a future where no more women lose their lives to Ovarian Cancer.

for event questions or additional information please contact:

**Jennifer Baldwin**  
Event Coordinator

407-970-3804

jennybwarrior@gmail.com



Helping to prevent and cure Ovarian cancer as well as improve the quality of life for all survivors and their caregivers



### Gator's Dockside

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a portion of the proceeds of all food and beverage sales will be donated to the NOCC

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for event questions or additional information contact  
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All event proceeds minus expenses will be  
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**BY CAMILLE RUIZ MANGUAL**  
**PHOTOS COURTESY OF IVONNE VEGA**



Vivonne Vega: I am a real estate agent. I'm a buyer's agent and a seller's agent, so I help people search for homes. I help them sell their house. I love being a real estate agent. I've been a real estate agent for about two years. I started with a different broker, and I changed over to Keller Williams. It's closer to where I live. It's more convenient.

IV: I wake up at 6:30 in the morning. I take care of my pets; I have two dogs and a cat. I take them out for a walk, I feed them, give them treats. Then I get ready for the gym. I weight train either at the Lake Nona Performance Club, Crunch Fitness, or a community gym. I'm a little bit of a gym rat. If I'm not training, I'm practicing yoga or stretching. I head to my office between 9:30 and 10 a.m. From there, it's meetings at the office, making phone calls, following up with people, or I'm out showing properties to people. I try to have a schedule, so that way

IV: If I have several showings in one day, scheduling them so there's not a big time-gap in between is a challenge. I remember having one client and I was showing them 10 properties, so having to schedule each one was a challenge. Sometimes those properties are tenant-occupied. Scheduling a time to where the tenant is okay with showing the property is a challenge, too.

IV: Helping my clients find the biggest investment of their lives, which is their home. I like being part of that process from the beginning to end. I get just as excited as they do. I know my clients and I help them make that decision about what type of home they want to purchase. That's really fun for me.

IV: Lake Nona is great because the office is close to where I live in VillageWalk. I love the area. It's beautiful here. I like the convenience of the shopping, the restaurants, and the communities here are so beautiful. Plus, Lake Nona is so close to my husband's work, it was ideal for my kids at school. It just makes sense.

IV: We moved in about 2016. I thought it was beautiful here. I love the restaurants and shopping. Restaurants are my entertainment. I love to go out to eat. That's what attracted me here, and at the time it was close to my husband's work. I wasn't working for Keller Williams yet.

IV: I would consider weight training and yoga my hobbies. It's my passion. I've been exercising since I was 17 years old. I started in Miami at a place called Living Well Lady. I was working there as an instructor teaching



cardio classes and workout classes. I used to bring in a pretty good crowd. To this day, I still teach yoga classes. I teach free classes to the community every other Saturday outside the Spring of Life Church. I also teach at the VillageWalk Town Center Ballroom on Tuesday evenings at 7 p.m. I love teaching people how to exercise. Before becoming a realtor, I was a personal trainer, so I stay after class and I talk to people about yoga, working out, or real estate.



IV: In the next five years, I see myself still in real estate and helping other realtors with their careers by being a mentor to them, helping them grow their business. I also see myself still giving back to the community and teaching yoga.

IV: It's the restaurants, the shopping, the entertainment. Lake Nona is beautiful and very well-maintained. I'm proud to say I live in Lake Nona.

IV: Move to Lake Nona! I would give them the same reasons why I'm here – for the shopping, for the entertainment, for the restaurants. I'd have to mention the gyms, of course. If you're a gym person, the gyms are close by. There are other things out there, too. Again, Lake Nona's beauty, how well the communities are maintained. ... There's also Medical City, I mean you have easy access to great hospitals, medical doctors; you have high quality healthcare here.





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## TO NONA & BEYOND: STARLINK LAUNCH

BY EMERSON & ETHAN WALSH  
PHOTO COURTESY OF EMERSON & ETHAN WALSH

On a humid Florida night, at 11:50 p.m., SpaceX’s Falcon 9 rocket lifted off from Space Launch Complex 40 carrying the Starlink 5-15 mission to low Earth orbit. The first stage utilized on this mission, designated B1060, completed its 16th successful flight after landing on the droneship “A Shortfall Of Gravitas” some 640 km (~398 miles) downrange.

Upon payload deployment, the 54 Starlink satellites onboard joined the already massive space internet constellation that is over 4,400 satellites strong. This was also the final launch for the version 1.5 satellites – the version 2 satellites are more powerful and, as a result, have greater broadband capacity. SpaceX currently has more than 1.5 million customers using their network. The constellation is expected to continue its rapid growth for the foreseeable future in order to reach an even larger customer base.

In the photo captured by Ethan Walsh, one can see the first-stage burn of Falcon 9 streaking into the upper right corner. Fortunately, the weather cooperated and we had an unobstructed view of the full arc. The sound from the launch was also exceptionally loud despite being many miles away!



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A man in a dark pinstripe suit, white shirt, and dark tie stands against a dark background. His head is replaced by a large, glowing yellow lightbulb. He is gesturing with his right hand, palm up, towards the text on the right. The lightbulb has a bright yellow glow and a red and green lens flare effect around it.

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# SAVOR TOOTH TIGER: BAKING A BETTER CAKE

BY ALLYSON VAN LENTEN  
PHOTOS COURTESY OF ALLYSON VAN LENTEN



Does anyone else find baking cakes incredibly frustrating? Cooking comes naturally to me. Baking on the other hand? It seems that a degree in chemistry is needed to produce a decent cake! I have compiled a list of tips and tricks to baking better cakes. No more cursing in the kitchen. No more throwing out lumpy, dense, dry cakes. We are learning from our mistakes!

I asked my dear friend and bakery owner about the biggest pitfalls in cake baking. Let's start with the most notorious culprits to a dry, dense cake. A surefire way to a bad cake... over mixing the batter, using cold ingredients, and too high of an oven temperature. Using room temperature ingredients ensures that your cake batter will blend together, not seize up. You'll want to leave butter, eggs and buttermilk out on the counter for at least an hour before baking. Another tip from my cake guru is to bake at a lower temperature for longer. I knew that "low and slow" worked for meats, so why hadn't I considered this method for baking? This cake bakes at 325 degrees for 35-40 minutes, instead of the usual 350-degree oven.

Using the right ingredients and equipment can help as well. Cake flour has less gluten than all-purpose flour and can help lighten up a cake. As for levity, you'll want to be sure that your baking powder hasn't expired, which can deflate an otherwise great cake. Most baking powders only last about six months, so make sure you check before baking. For layer cakes, you want to be sure that you're using the right pans. I'm a fan of 8 inch by 3 inch aluminum pans. The cakes rise up and create taller layers. No matter the pan you use, be sure to check for doneness periodically. To ensure a cake is done, the toothpick test really does work.

As for decoration, I love a classic white buttercream with a few flowers. A quick note on using fresh flowers. Unless you have access to homegrown, edible flowers completely free of pesticides, you'll most likely be using store-bought flowers. Make sure to wrap the stems of any flowers that have contact with your frosting with plastic wrap. You need to create a barrier between flowers that may have been sprayed with chemicals. I hope this helps you create a dreamy cake for your next gathering. Happy baking!

## Vanilla Buttermilk Layer Cake With Vanilla Buttercream

### Cake:

- 1 cup unsalted butter (2 sticks, softened to room temperature)
- 1 1/2 cups granulated sugar
- 2 eggs plus 1 egg white (room temperature)
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 cup buttermilk (room temperature)
- 1 1/2 cups cake flour (spooned and leveled)
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda

### Buttercream:

- 6 cups powdered sugar
- 2 cups unsalted butter (4 sticks, softened to room temperature)
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 3-4 tablespoons of heavy cream

### Instructions

1. In a stand mixer with a paddle attachment, blend butter and sugar on medium for 3-4 minutes.

2. Add the eggs and vanilla. Mix for 2 more minutes on medium.
3. Mix all the dry ingredients in a separate bowl and whisk together.
4. Fold in the dry ingredients to the butter/sugar/egg mixture. Slowly mix in the buttermilk as well. Mix all ingredients together until just combined. Don't over mix.
5. Using two 8-inch round pans, butter and flour the sides and add a round of parchment to the bottom.
6. Divide the batter equally between two pans. Bake at 325 for 35-40 minutes. The edges of the cake will pull away from the side of the pan and a toothpick should come out clean in the center.
7. Allow cakes to completely cool before assembling and frosting. You can cool in the fridge.
8. For the buttercream frosting, mix all the ingredients together in a stand mixer bowl with a whisk attachment. Whip frosting on medium for several minutes until light and fluffy.
9. When cakes are completely cooled (and I mean completely!), you can begin assembling. On a cake stand, put a dot of frosting on the stand to glue the bottom layer.



# THE WINNING FAMILY: THE SECRET TO YOUR CHILD'S SUCCESS THIS SCHOOL YEAR

BY PASTOR RODNEY GAGE

As students and teachers return to school, the unknown factors of a new school year can cause all kinds of mixed emotions, from excitement to anxiety. If there is one factor that will determine your child's success, it's encouragement. Encouragement is oxygen for our souls. Who doesn't need or want encouragement? As we seek to encourage our kids, remember that our words can create clarity and confidence or cause confusion.

I ran across a hilarious book recently called "Anguished English." It talks about the misplacement of words in our everyday life. For example, here are some notes parents sent to their child's teachers;

My son is under his doctor's care today and should not take *P.E. Please EXECUTE him*. Here's another one: *Please excuse John from yesterday's absence. He was sick, and I had him shot*.

Let's ensure the encouragement we give our kids as they begin the new school year is specific, creative and genuine.

I love the quote from William Arthur Ward: *"Flatter me, and I may not believe you. Criticize me, and I may not like you. Ignore me, and I may not forgive you. Encourage me, and I will not forget you."*

Out of all the teachers and coaches I had throughout my academic journey, it was the ones who went out of their way to encourage me that I have never forgotten and impacted my life the most.

Our words have the power and potential to build up or tear down. Our words also have the power and potential to determine the success and failure of our relationships as well. Leadership expert John Maxwell says, *"Encouragement is the glue that holds relationships together."*

I have never met a child, student or adult who didn't need to be encouraged. The dictionary defines encouragement like this: *to urge forward and positively persuade toward a goal; to inspire with courage, spirit, or hope; to stimulate*.

The truth is, we all need to be encouraged. If encouragement is oxygen to our souls and the glue that holds relationships together, why do many of us have difficulty encouraging others, especially our kids?

## Two Roadblocks That Keep Us From Giving Encouragement

- **Insecurity Factor**

Keyword: *Intimacy*

Encouraging others is difficult or uncomfortable for some of

us because it puts us in an intimate space. It's putting ourselves out on a limb, which can make us feel awkward or insecure.

- **Inability Factor**

Keyword: *Anger*

Some of us have unresolved anger, and the negative words that come from our mouths reflect that anger.

As a parent, what roadblock do you have to deal with so you can be freed up to be your best and give your best to your child? Remember, your kids take their cue from you!

## Two Major Benefits of Giving Encouragement to Your Kids

- **Change**

When we see our children's potential and speak words of affirmation and encouragement into their life, change and growth will follow.

- **Confidence**

As change and growth begin, it gives our kids confidence and builds momentum in their lives.

The five most important words parents can say to their kids are: *You did a great job!*

As your kids start the new school year, don't allow the roadblocks of insecurity or inability to rob you of being a "voice" of encouragement to your kids. Feed them encouragement and watch them thrive. Remember, when we encourage others, we will be encouraged. That's called the law of sowing and reaping. During a time when kids are under so much pressure, deal with negative influences, and hear so many voices of confusion and contradiction, let's commit to being the biggest cheerleaders and encouragers we can be for our kids! Remember, it takes courage to give enCOURAGEment.

**Rodney Gage is a family mentor, author, speaker and the founding pastor of ReThink Life Church, which meets at Lake Nona High School. His passion is to help families win at home and in life. To receive a FREE copy of one of his books, go to [www.thedoublewinclub.com](http://www.thedoublewinclub.com). To learn more about his marriage and parenting mentoring, check out [thewinningfamily.com](http://thewinningfamily.com) and [rethinklife.com](http://rethinklife.com).**







**Rodney Gage**  
Lead Pastor

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**NEW!** Nona Recreational Tournament December/23



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