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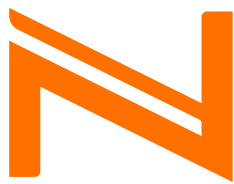
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EDITOR'S NOTE

BY RHYS LYNN, PUBLISHER & OWNER



As we enter our tenth year of publication and look ahead, I find it a good time to reflect on the past. While we were not the founders of Nonahood News, we are still fiercely proud of it and honored to help carry the torch for local journalism. We will always strive to be a valuable resource for our residents and the local business community.

We hear time and time again that people love reading this newspaper. I've heard from more than one person that it's the only thing they get in the mail that doesn't end up in the garbage. To me, that means something. I don't think we can ever say that publishing the newspaper has been easy - there is a constant pressure of managing deadlines, content, advertising, marketing, and no end of staying ahead of rising prices of raw materials, printing, and mailing. Print is expensive and difficult to scale up, but every time we hear positive comments from our readers, it helps us keep pushing forward.

The last few years have been especially hectic for us. We were just beginning to make use of our studio space in the GuideWell Innovation Center and step into more of a digital, video-centric workflow to serve as a companion to the newspaper when COVID made everything complicated. The building closed for a while, forcing us to move all of our equipment out and operate from home however we could. Our weekly news show, In The Nona, entered hiatus.

While we were trying to navigate the chaos that the last few years presented, I continued to diverge from local work as I took on more work in the video production space. Really, I was taking whatever came my way so that we could stay afloat in the midst of so much uncertainty. I was fortunate to be involved in some amazing projects - feature films, television shows, big commercials, sporting events, and music videos... Most of that, however, took me out of our local market. I traveled all around the state, country, and even internationally.

I have some amazing stories about those experiences, and I am proud of the work that I took part in. Still, I couldn't shake the feeling that there was always something missing. I was involved in doing good work and I was busy, but I didn't feel that I was building towards anything. Traveling felt less and less exciting and became a negative factor in my life - it took me away from my family, my friends, and my neighborhood. Perhaps most importantly, it took me out of the local market - I was too busy being everywhere but here to focus on Nonahood News and growing our digital presence. I realized recently that what I truly care about is right here: serving our local community.

I had to change some things. I've begun reorienting myself back to focus on the Nonahood - I've been regularly turning down work that would take me away from our area. I've also stopped working on longer blocks of video production work - intentions are always good, but back to back 12+ hour days really don't leave enough time for checking the inbox and following up on other projects. It's a little scary to turn down work in a time when every dollar counts, but my hope is that we are able to create a viable way to work in our local market and serve our local community, both residents and businesses.

What I am most excited about is the relaunching of our weekly news show, In The Nona. I was sad that it went offline and I am proud of what we have accomplished by bringing it back. It feels great to shout out local events, news, and information again. Seeing comments from people happy to see it's return has been wonderful. Producing the show is a labor of love, and we are still figuring out the best workflow to keep on top of gathering information and maintain quality and consistency. The production cycle never really stops, but it feels like a step in the right direction. If you haven't yet seen it, please give it a watch - leave a comment and let us know what works and what we can do better - we want to make this the best show it can be, and we love hearing what you think about it. Tune in or reach out to us here: <https://nona.link/itnbio>

Thanks for being a part of our journey - here's looking forward to the next 10 years and seeing where it brings us.

-Rhys Lynn

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THE WINNING FAMILY: BREAKING DOWN THE FIVE REASONS COUPLES SPLIT – AND HOW TO STAY TOGETHER

BY PASTOR RODNEY GAGE



Marriage is one of the most rewarding yet challenging relationships we can experience. My wife, Michelle, and I have been married for over 33 years. Like any couple, we've faced differences and endured trials. But it's what we chose to do during those difficulties that allowed us to experience breakthroughs rather than breakdowns – or worse, a breakup.

While every couple begins with the hope of "happily ever after," the reality is that relationships often encounter difficulties that can feel insurmountable. Research identifies five major reasons couples divorce, but here's the good news: These issues don't have to lead to isolation or separation. When couples work through their differences, they often emerge stronger, healthier and more connected than ever before.

Let's explore these five challenges and discover practical ways to overcome them.

1. Communication Problems

The greatest distance between two people is misunderstanding. In my experience, both personally and through working with hundreds of couples, communication breakdowns lie at the heart of most marital conflicts. Misunderstandings, avoidance of tough conversations, or a failure to truly listen can create emotional distance and frustration.

The Solution: Speak Less to Argue and Listen More to Learn

Genuine and effective communication begins with active listening. Create a safe space where both of you can share openly without fear of judgment or ridicule. Make it a habit to enter into each other's world. Check in daily about thoughts, feelings and goals. Focus not on winning arguments but on understanding each other's perspectives.

Remember, communication isn't just about solving problems; it's about building connection and oneness.

2. Infidelity and Broken Trust

Infidelity is one of the most painful breaches of trust in a marriage, often leading to deeper insecurity and disconnection. However, it doesn't have to signal the end.

The Solution: Transparency Builds Trust

Rebuilding trust begins with true repentance, honesty and accountability. Be open about your struggles, exposure to temptations and associations. Establish clear boundaries to protect your relationship. If trust has been broken, forgiveness can be immediate, but healing requires time, patience and intentional effort. Counseling can help address underlying issues and build a foundation of radical honesty and forgiveness.

Remember: The grass isn't greener on the other side – it's greener where you water it. Many assume life will be better with someone else, but research shows that second marriages often face greater challenges. Instead of walking away, consider the potential for growth and restoration right where you are.

3. Financial Stress

Money is one of the leading causes of marital conflict. Disagreements over spending, debt or financial goals can strain any relationship.

The Solution: Teamwork Makes the Money Work

Approach finances as a team effort. Start by creating a budget (or spending plan) together and being transparent about your financial situation, including debts and goals. Prioritize saving and make decisions with long-term dreams in mind. You may have to "give up to go up" by selling off to pay off. When you treat money as a partnership rather than a battleground, you'll build trust, reduce conflict, and align your purpose as a couple.

4. Lack of Intimacy

Emotional and physical intimacy are the glue that holds marriages together. When intimacy fades, emotional tanks are empty and couples may feel disconnected and unappreciated.



The Solution: Pursue Your Partner Daily

Intimacy grows when couples intentionally nurture and cultivate their oneness. Schedule regular date nights, express daily affirmations, and prioritize time for both emotional and physical closeness. Don't wait for the "perfect moment"; instead, seize small opportunities to connect – whether it's holding hands, sharing a laugh, or simply being present. Shift your mindset from "working on your marriage" to working on your togetherness.

5. Unrealistic Expectations and Incompatibility

Many couples enter marriage with idealized visions of what their mate or relationship should look like. When reality doesn't match these expectations, frustration and insecurity can take root.

The Solution: Celebrate Differences, Align Strengths and Goals

Instead of focusing on how you and your spouse are different, focus on your shared strengths, dreams and values. Discuss your vision for the future and work together to make it a reality. Differences can complement each other, adding balance, perspective and strength to your relationship.

Unity isn't about being the same – it's about moving in the same direction.

Is Divorce Really the Answer?

It's easy to believe that leaving a struggling marriage will lead to greater happiness. But studies show divorce doesn't always result in a better life or a more fulfilling second marriage. Many who separate face the same challenges with a new partner.

The truth is, the key to a satisfying marriage isn't finding someone "better" – it's choosing to strengthen the relationship you already have. Staying and working through difficulties creates an opportunity for growth, healing and a deeper connection. Yes, there are extreme instances where abuse, abandonment or unrepentant unfaithfulness may justify divorce. However, too many couples use the excuse of "irreconcilable differences" as a way out, hoping to find someone "better."

Marriage is about more than partnership; it's love in action. It's about mutual submission, sacrifice, serving one another, commitment, resilience and teamwork. The challenges you face together can either tear you apart or bring you closer, depending on how you handle them.

Invest in your marriage. Take the first step: **Listen more. Forgive freely. Pursue togetherness daily.** Together, you can overcome any obstacle and build a marriage that flourishes.

Rodney Gage is a family coach, podcaster, 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 learn more about how you can get a copy of his new book called Why Your Kids Do What They Do, go to www.thewinningfamily.com or ReThinkLife.com.

WHEN IS A GOOD TIME FOR ROTH CONVERSION?

BY KALEY MORA



In life, you often get second chances – and the same is true with investing. To illustrate: You might not have been able to contribute to a Roth IRA during your working years due to your income level, but you may get that opportunity as you near retirement, or even when you are retired – through a Roth conversion.

Why is a Roth IRA desirable for some people? Here are the key benefits:

- **Tax-free withdrawals** – You put in after-tax dollars to a Roth IRA, so you can withdraw your contributions at any time, free of taxes and penalties. And if you've had your account for at least five years and you're at least 59 1/2, you can also withdraw your earnings free of taxes.
- **No RMDs** – With a traditional IRA, you'll have to start taking withdrawals – called required minimum distributions, or RMDs – when you turn 73, or 75 if you were born in 1960 or later. But there's no RMD requirement with a Roth IRA – you can essentially leave the money intact as long as you like.
- **Tax-free legacy for your heirs** – When your heirs inherit your Roth IRA, they can withdraw the contributions without paying taxes or penalties, and if the account has been open at least five years, they can also withdraw earnings tax free.

But even if you were aware of these advantages, you might not have been able to invest in a Roth IRA for much of your life. For one thing, you might have earned too much money – a Roth IRA, unlike a traditional IRA, has income limits. Also, a Roth IRA has only been around since 1998, so, in the previous years, you were limited to a traditional IRA. As you approach retirement, though, you might start thinking of just how much you'd like to benefit from a Roth IRA.

And you can do so by converting your traditional IRA to a Roth. While this sounds simple, there's a major caveat: taxes. You'll be taxed on the amount in pre-tax dollars you contributed to a traditional IRA and then converted to a Roth IRA. (If you have both pre- and after-tax dollars in your traditional IRA, the taxable amount is based on the percentage of pre-tax dollars.)

If you have large amounts in a traditional IRA, the tax bill on conversion can be significant. The key to potentially lowering this tax bill is timing. Generally speaking, the lower your income in a given year, the more favorable it is for you to convert to a Roth IRA. So, for example, if you have already retired but have not started collecting RMDs, your income may be down.

Timing also comes into play with the financial markets. When the market is going through decline, and the value of your traditional IRA drops, you could convert the same number of shares of the underlying investments and receive a lower



tax bill or convert more shares of these investments for what would have been the same tax bill.

Finally, you could lower your tax bill in any given year by stretching out your Roth IRA conversions over several years, rather than doing it all at once. You'll want to consult with your tax advisor before embarking on this conversion – but if it's appropriate for your situation, you could find that owning a Roth IRA can benefit you and your family for years to come.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor.

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SAVOR TOOTH TIGER: INA'S ENGAGEMENT CHICKEN

BY ALLYSON VAN LENTEN
PHOTO COURTESY OF ALLYSON VAN LENTEN

This Valentine's Day, make a romantic dinner with Ina Garten's famous Engagement Chicken. As the story goes, a group of women working at *Glamour* magazine made Ina's recipe for their boyfriends and were engaged within 24 hours. Whether that's true or not, Ina does often joke, "Make a roast chicken, a man shows up!" This year will be my 10th anniversary with my husband and, like Ina, I really love cooking for him. After all, I get to enjoy it, too!

I really went on an Ina Garten bender recently after devouring her latest book, *Be Ready When the Luck Happens*. Not a cookbook this time around – but her memoir. What a truly fascinating life, and I am thrilled that she chose to share her story with us. Many fans know that Ina worked at the White House writing policies for nuclear energy budgets before becoming a food icon, but how she decided to leave a stable job to follow her passion is even more impressive. My favorite part of the book was the kismet story of when Jeffrey first saw Ina from across the campus of Dartmouth College. A story of love at first sight never gets old.

If you love Ina's cooking show, *Back to Basics*, you can watch her make Engagement Chicken in Season 2, Episode 13: Chicken 101. For a magic recipe, it is surprisingly simple. It is essentially a roast chicken with vegetables and a lemon-garlic-wine sauce. I like to serve this with a toasty baguette and a green salad. For success, follow a few of Ina's chicken tricks. Ina suggests to salt the whole chicken right when you get it home from the grocery store. She believes that it permeates into the chicken and gives it great flavor. She also suggests drying the skin of the chicken very well with paper towels so that it browns nicely. I take one departure from Ina's recipe. After roasting, I remove the garlic from the chicken and add it to the sauce to allow the garlic flavor to shine. Other than that, I follow her recipe implicitly.

Engagement Chicken (Serves 2-4)

Ingredients:

- 1 whole chicken (4-5 pounds)
- 2 lemons (quartered)
- 2 sweet yellow onions (sliced thick)
- 1 head of garlic (not peeled, sliced in half, crosswise)
- Olive oil (for coating the chicken and tossing with the vegetables)
- 1/2 cup dry white wine (I use Pinot Grigio)
- 1/2 cup chicken stock (of course Ina makes her own perfect stock)
- 1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
- Plenty of salt and black pepper

Instructions:

1. Preheat the oven to 425 degrees Fahrenheit.
2. In a large roasting pan, place the chicken in the middle. Pat the chicken dry with paper towels, inside and out. Discard any giblets.
3. Coat the skin with plenty of olive oil, salt and pepper. Season the inside of the cavity as well. Cut 1 lemon into quarters and add to the cavity, along with the garlic.
4. Using kitchen twine, truce the legs together.
5. In a bowl, mix the sliced onions and lemons with more olive oil, salt and pepper.
6. Arrange the vegetables around the chicken in the roasting pan.
7. Roast for an hour and 15 minutes or until the internal temperature reaches 160-165.
8. Remove the chicken to a platter and allow to rest covered with foil for at least 20 minutes before carving.
9. In the roasting pan, bring the stove top to medium heat and put the roasting pan directly over the heat. Add the white wine and deglaze the pan, stirring with a wooden spoon to release any brown bits of flavor. Add chicken stock and flour. Stir for a few minutes until thickened. I strain the sauce over a fine mesh sieve over a bowl to keep out the solids. Serve sauce in a gravy boat along with the platter of chicken and vegetables surrounding it.



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NONA.LIFE.STYLE: COMBAT THE CLOSET CHAOS WITH A CAPSULE WARDROBE

BY MARISSA BURNS
PHOTO COURTESY OF MELISSA HANLEY PHOTOGRAPHY



We're a month into a brand-new year. **How are we doing, team?** I'm just now emerging from a haze...induced by overly hectic holiday celebrations and that flu virus that hung on for ages. So while the calendar reads February, it's feeling more like January 1. My desire to set fresh goals in '25 is coupled with overwhelming piles of new stuff that landed in my house from well-meaning relatives set on gifting my children the loudest and largest toys. This mamma is ready to streamline!

Imagine starting a Monday morning with a clean, organized closet filled with pieces you love and want to wear! There's no better time to streamline your closet and bring intentionality into your style habits. **Crafting a capsule wardrobe is the key to mitigating closet chaos.** Plus, it's what all the cool kids are doing. Here are some

ways to simplify getting dressed...

A capsule wardrobe is a curated collection of versatile, quality pieces that work together to create multiple outfits. Instead of a closet bursting at the seams with items you rarely wear, a capsule wardrobe prioritizes thoughtful choices that align with your personal style and lifestyle. The benefits are endless: You'll save time picking outfits, streamline clutter, and reduce impulse shopping while also making a positive impact on the planet. (So many wins!)

Many articles on capsule wardrobes list items that "every closet should have." **But I believe staple pieces are different for everyone.** For example, if you're a stay-at-home mom here in sunny Florida, you probably don't need to invest in a classic trench coat. It just doesn't fit your day-to-day. What I love about the concept of a staple wardrobe is the focus on a few key pieces you can mix and match with ease.

One client's go-to wardrobe might revolve around work-appropriate dresses and tweed blazers, while someone else's essentials could be linen shorts and tank tops. It all boils down to what your lifestyle demands and what your personal style celebrates. The goal? Build a versatile foundation that works for you, not feeling beholden to a cookie-cutter list from the internet.

To create a capsule wardrobe, step one is a closet audit. Pull out everything you own and separate items into three categories: "love," "meh," and "why do I still have this?" Keep the pieces you genuinely enjoy wearing and that fit well. For the rest, consider donating, selling or recycling them responsibly. This process not only clears physical clutter but also gives you clarity on what you actually love to wear. **A successful capsule wardrobe reflects both your personal style and your daily activities.** Are you dressing for a corporate office, a creative workspace, or a stay-at-home lifestyle? Do you lean toward classic, bohemian or edgy looks? Understanding your style preferences and needs will guide your choices. Once you've cleared out, think about what foundational pieces are missing. Make a list. Now it's time to shop or swap.

A capsule wardrobe typically consists of 20-40 items, including tops, bottoms, outerwear and shoes. Aim to include pieces that can be dressed up or down, layered, or worn in different combinations to give you variety. These timeless staples form the backbone of your wardrobe and can be styled in countless ways. Remember, it's okay if you have basic pieces. Once you experiment with mixing and matching your core pieces, you'll discover fresh looks. **Accessories will extend your wardrobe's versatility.** You can easily update your foundational outfits with inexpensive accessories like scarves, belts, jewelry and bags. Rotating how you pair staples can help them to continuously feel fresh.

For any gaps in your wardrobe, look to sustainable options. Shop secondhand at thrift stores or online platforms like Poshmark. My current favorite shopping hack is the Beni app. When you are online shopping, the app will pull up similar options for less by scouring other sites, even secondhand ones. This provides good prices and alternative, gently used options. Invest in ethical brands that prioritize fair labor and environmentally friendly practices. Or organize a clothing swap with friends for a fun and budget-friendly refresh. (Just don't forget to invite me!)

Building a more sustainable capsule wardrobe won't happen all at once. You don't have to overhaul your entire closet overnight. Small, intentional steps can make a big difference. Over time, you'll refine your collection and discover the joy of dressing with intention. So strike while the iron of motivation is hot, friends! Use the holiday influx of stuff to incite a proper closet clear out, and then map a course for a more streamlined and sustainable style. One day, you'll wake up and have that magic closet moment where you actually like everything you own! It's a mindset shift that can even support and encourage those other healthy efforts you're after this new year. It's 2025, friends. **I believe in us.**

Marissa Burns is a personal branding expert, stylist and speaker. She empowers professionals to leverage their personal brand to grow their business. She is passionate about the small business culture in Nona and strives to facilitate community among our residents. She also hosts Nona's only weekly news show, In the Nona. Hang with her on socials at: @MarissaAlexandraStyle and @inthenona.news





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CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2025 ILLUMINATION AWARD HONOREES!

The Illumination Awards shine a spotlight on the exceptional businesses and individuals who shape and elevate our community. Hosted by the Lake Nona Regional Chamber of Commerce, this annual celebration honors those who have gone above and beyond to drive growth, foster innovation, and make a positive impact. Read on to learn more about this year's remarkable winners and their inspiring achievements.

Business Awards:

- Nonprofit of the Year: Meals With Mission
- Entrepreneur of the Year: Imaginostics
- Minority-Owned Business of the Year: Simcore Solutions
- Small Business of the Year: OneMed
- Business of the Year: Detailing Express

Individual Awards:

- Ambassador of the Year: Hemali Shah for being a rockstar volunteer
- Community Impact Award: Kristine Ford for spearheading the planning of the inaugural State of Medical City event
- Community Impact Award: Mark Reid for always advocating for Lake Nona and the local community across the entire region

As the lights dim on this year's Illumination Awards, it's clear that each winner embodies the spirit of progress and community collaboration that defines Lake Nona. Their diverse achievements and unwavering commitment to excellence serve as a beacon of inspiration for businesses everywhere. We look forward to seeing how these leaders continue to shape the future and raise the bar for innovation in our thriving region.

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 or call us at 407-796-2230. We would love to hear from you!



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PHOTO GALLERY



L to R: Allyn Carnahan, Kim Gordon, and Wynne Munster at First Tuesday at Nona Adventure Park. Photo by Rod Kerezsi.



L to R: Joel Ferguson, Wedney Saint-Victor, John Garcia, and Edith Lopez at First Tuesday at Nona Adventure Park. Photo by Rod Kerezsi.



Real Bergevin speaking to guests at First Tuesday at Nona Adventure Park. Photo by Rod Kerezsi.



Rhys Lynn, Marissa Burns, Mike Power at First Tuesday at Nona Adventure Park. Photo by Rod Kerezsi.



Mark Mueller and Marcos Villarreal at First Tuesday at Nona Adventure Park. Photo by Rod Kerezsi.



Mike Power, Kirk Gordon, Marissa Burns, and Wynne Munster at First Tuesday at Nona Adventure Park. Photo by Rod Kerezsi.



Patti Gutter with Becki Cassidy at the ribbon-cutting ceremony for Magical Charcuterie. Photo by Rod Kerezsi.



Alexandria Spinelli and Candy Cole at the ribbon-cutting ceremony for Magical Charcuterie. Photo by Rod Kerezsi.

WE TAKE SO MUCH FOR GRANTED: PART ONE

BY HELENE CAVALLO



Back when I was growing up in the 1950s-1960s, we watched television shows after school during the daytime and at night, and it was a big part of our lives. We never thought about life before TV, or that it was not that long ago that families gathered around a radio to listen to stories and use their imagination, if anyone even remembers what that means.

Radio:

There seems to be a lot of debate as to who was/were the actual inventor(s) of radio and exactly when this occurred. However, several scientists and inventors made contributions to radio wave science in the 18th century, mostly in Europe.

Radio became popular with civilians following the war in the 1920s. By the 1930s, most of the publicly owned radios. People depended upon radio for both news and entertainment

Although radios are still widely used, many people stream music through the many platforms available now.

Music Formats:

The following is an approximate timeframe of the different music formats:

- 1948: Vinyl records were created which were played on a record player containing a needle or "stylus. Many older people or collectors still buy and use vinyl records. I remember when we would buy our favorite songs on a "45," which would play an individual song (probably over and over).
- 1963: Compact cassette tapes (cassette tape, audio cassette or tape), for recording and playing back audio, usually with a maximum capacity of either 30, 45 or 60 minutes per side.
- 1964: 8-track tape – Benefit over compact cassettes was that they held 8 soundtracks. 8-track players were offered in cars by Ford Motors Company. However, 8-track tapes were unreliable; they got stuck in the players and unraveled, didn't last for any length of time, you were unable to rewind the tape, and let's not forget the annoying loud click and hesitation right in the middle of a song. This was one of the things that seemed like a good idea at the time.
- 1982: Compact discs (CDs) were introduced which offer better sound quality with less background noise. CDs are still being sold today despite the various ways to stream and record music.



History of TV:

Electronic television was invented back in the 1920s. It wasn't until approximately 1940 that CBS started participating in television by televising 15 minutes of news in New York City. Commercial television started and the main shows were the Ed Sullivan Show, Texaco Star Theater and Candid Camera. Some of us may have grown up watching some of these shows. Of course, it all started out in black and white. Some of us still occasionally like watching an old movie in black-and-white, either because it may seem nostalgic, or the lack of color adds to the charm. Colorization of old movies is repugnant to some people like my ex-husband and son, which sets them off into a rant which raises their pressure to an alarming level.

It wasn't until the 1950s that TV became a household product. I Love Lucy, The Twilight Zone, Gunsmoke and Lassie came along. In approximately 1953, the first electronic color TV system was introduced, and the first color TVs were manufactured by RCA. However, programs had to be televised in color for this to be at all useful. It was not until around 1965 that color TVs became more affordable for families to purchase. Therefore, stations and networks started airing shows in color.

A big night or afternoon out was a visit to a local movie theater to see two movies and possibly cartoons in between as well. These days, there is no limit to what you can watch on your TV or computer as long as you're willing to pay for either cable or an app for streaming.

"Stay tuned" for Part II in the next issue.

Helene Cavallo grew up in Brooklyn, New York, the oldest of four children, and moved to Florida in 1997. She currently resides in Clermont, Florida, and recently retired from her full-time job of many years as a legal assistant/paralegal. Her dream has always been to be surrounded by animals which she has fulfilled by becoming a dog sitter in 2017 until the current time. She has always enjoyed expressing herself through writing and has fulfilled this wish by being fortunate enough to have some of her articles and stories published by local newspapers. Her hope is that readers will enjoy reading her writings as much as she enjoys writing them.

PEDALING TOWARD PROGRESS: CITY OF ORLANDO EARNS SILVER BICYCLE FRIENDLY COMMUNITY AWARD FOR PROMOTING MULTIMODAL TRAVEL AND BUILDING A BICYCLE-FRIENDLY AMERICA

BY ASHLEY PAPAGNI, PHD, CITY OF ORLANDO PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

The Award Recognizes Orlando's Contributions to Promoting Healthier, More Efficient Travel Options

The League of American Bicyclists awarded the City of Orlando the Silver Bicycle Friendly Community (BFC) designation, joining nearly 100 communities across the country contributing to the movement for a more Bicycle Friendly America. This recognition highlights Orlando's commitment to improving and expanding its bicycle network for both residents and visitors.

"Orlando has worked to transform the City Beautiful into the City Bikeable – a vibrant, sustainable destination that prioritizes safe and accessible options for cyclists," said Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer. "This Bicycle Friendly Community designation reflects our ongoing commitment to investing in bike-friendly infrastructure, building strong partnerships with local businesses and fostering community programs that encourage our residents to get out and bike."

While the award process takes into account visible elements

such as bike infrastructure, the Silver-level recognition also acknowledges Orlando's dedication to bike education through Cycle Savvy courses, pro-bike policies and community events such as the highly attended annual Bike to Work Day. Additionally, as part of the City's Growth Management Plan, Orlando is advancing infrastructure improvements through new initiatives, like Complete Streets and Quick-Build infrastructure programs.

"Bicycling is more than just a mode of transportation—it's a powerful tool for building healthier communities, fostering sustainability and connecting people," said Bill Nesper, Executive Director of the League of American Bicyclists. "The cities and towns recognized in this round of Bicycle Friendly Community awards are leading the way by investing in infrastructure and programs that make biking an easier, safer and more accessible choice. Their leadership demonstrates that supporting bicycling is an investment in a healthier future for everyone."

The Bicycle Friendly Community program encourages ongoing improvement, with communities renewing their status every four years to stay aligned with evolving safety standards and best practices.



"We're proud of this achievement and the recognition it brings to Orlando's commitment to safe biking," said Tanya Wilder, Director of Transportation for the City of Orlando. "As we celebrate this milestone, we're already looking ahead to the next opportunity to enhance our bicycle network, expand our programs and continue progressing as a Bicycle Friendly Community."

To learn more about bike-friendly programs and communities, visit Orlando Bike Trails and Paths and Bike League's BFC Program.

THE HISTORY, TRADITIONS, AND MODERN CELEBRATIONS OF VALENTINE'S DAY

BY HELENE CAVALLO

Valentine's Day, celebrated on February 14th each year, is a day that has become synonymous with love, romance, and affection. For many, it's an opportunity to express admiration for their partners, friends, and even family members. But how did this sweet tradition come to be? Let's dive into the history, traditions, and modern celebrations of Valentine's Day.

The Origins of Valentine's Day: A Story of Saints and Symbols

The history of Valentine's Day is a bit murky, with multiple theories about its origins. The day is believed to be named after one or more early Christian martyrs named St. Valentine. One popular story is that St. Valentine was a priest in Rome during the reign of Emperor Claudius II in the 3rd century. The emperor had banned marriages for young men, thinking that single soldiers were better warriors. St. Valentine defied the emperor's order, marrying couples in secret. When he was discovered, he was executed on February 14th.

Over time, Valentine became associated with love, and his feast day began to be celebrated on February 14th. Another theory ties the holiday to the ancient Roman festival of Lupercalia, which was held in mid-February and celebrated fertility, pairing off men and women through a lottery system. By the 5th century, Pope Gelasius I had replaced Lupercalia with St. Valentine's Day, cementing the connection to love and romance.

A Day for Love: How Valentine's Day Evolved

Valentine's Day took on a romantic flavor during the Middle Ages, especially in France and England. During this time, the idea of courtly love was prominent, and Valentine's Day became an occasion for knights and nobles to express their affection for ladies through poetry, gifts, and acts of devotion.

The tradition of sending handwritten notes or "Valentines" grew popular in the 18th century. By the 19th century, mass-produced greeting cards became available, making it easier for people to exchange heartfelt messages. Today, it's common for couples to exchange cards, flowers, chocolates, and other tokens of affection. The symbolism of the heart, red roses, and Cupid has become central to the celebration.

How Valentine's Day Is Celebrated Around the World

Though Valentine's Day is widely associated with romantic love, it has evolved into a broader celebration of affection in many parts of the world. Here are some unique traditions from different countries:

- **Japan:** Valentine's Day is celebrated with a twist—women typically give chocolates to men, with the expectation that men will return the favor on White Day (March 14th).
- **Finland & Estonia:** In Finland, Valentine's Day is known as "Friend's Day," focusing more on celebrating friendships rather than romantic relationships.
- **South Korea:** Similar to Japan, South Koreans celebrate Valentine's Day, but they also observe "Black Day" on April 14th, where singles gather to eat black noodles and commiserate.
- **Italy:** In Italy, Valentine's Day is a more intimate affair. Lovers often exchange small gifts and romantic gestures. It's also common to enjoy a special dinner together.
- **Denmark:** Danes exchange pressed white flowers called snowdrops, and men often give women anonymous love poems, known as "Gaekkebreve."

Modern Trends: Valentine's Day Beyond Romance

While Valentine's Day is often seen as a day for couples, it's increasingly becoming a day to celebrate all types of love. In recent years, there's been a shift towards showing appreciation for family members, friends, and even self-love. Some people take the opportunity to express their affection for their children, pets, and colleagues.

Self-care and self-love are also at the forefront, with many using the day to treat themselves to a spa day, buy flowers for themselves, or simply enjoy some quality time alone. The rise of "Galentine's Day" on February 13th, popularized by the TV show *Parks and Recreation*, encourages women to celebrate their friendships, showing that love isn't confined to romantic relationships.

The Commercialization of Valentine's Day

It's impossible to ignore the commercialization of Valentine's Day. The holiday has become a marketing bonanza for retailers, with sales of flowers, chocolates, jewelry, and gifts reaching billions of dollars each year.



While some may see this as detracting from the day's original meaning, others appreciate the opportunity to indulge in luxury or pick up a thoughtful gift for a loved one.

There's also the rise of experiences as gifts—whether it's a romantic dinner, a weekend getaway, or tickets to a concert. Many people are opting for experiential gifts that create lasting memories rather than material objects.

A Day for Everyone

While Valentine's Day may have started as a celebration of romantic love, it's evolved into a celebration of all kinds of affection. Whether you're spending it with a partner, friends, family, or treating yourself, it's a day to remind us of the power of love in all its forms. So this February 14th, why not take a moment to appreciate the people in your life, spread a little kindness, and share a smile?

PAWS IN THE PARK
PET ALLIANCE

FEB 8, 2025
SATURDAY
10AM-4PM

For over 3 decades Paws in the Park has united pet lovers and our vibrant Central Florida community in support of Pet Alliance! Join us at Lake Eola Park from 10am-4pm for the largest dog festival in America!!

Fun for the whole family:

- ✓ Pet Costume Contest, Lure Course, Doggie Fun Zone!
- ✓ Beer Garden, Food Trucks and Vendors!
- ✓ Live Entertainment and Free Activities!
- ✓ AND SO MUCH MORE!

SCAN TO LEARN MORE!

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LAKE NONA INTERIORS INSIDER: VOLUME SEVEN CREATING A HOME THAT YOU LOVE: YOUR GUIDE TO DESIGNING JOYFUL SPACES

BY EDINA HOUSTON



Hey there, fabulous neighbors! Let's take a moment to appreciate the magical little world we call home. As we juggle life's challenges, it's easy to forget that our living spaces can be powerful sources of joy. Picture this: You walk into your home and feel an instant lift in your spirits. Sounds dreamy, right? Well, guess what? You can turn that dream into reality! Let's dive into some fun and easy ways to create a home that not only looks amazing but also makes you feel like a million bucks!

Let the Sunshine in

First up on our happiness journey is natural light – the ultimate mood booster! Think of sunlight as your home's best friend. Luckily for us, our homes in Lake Nona have tons of windows that let in those golden rays, so embrace them! Swap out heavy drapes for sheers or light-filtering shades that let the sunshine pour in while keeping your privacy intact.

Pro Tip: Try placing a mirror opposite a window. This clever trick reflects that beautiful light and makes your room feel larger and more open. It's all about creating that airy vibe!

Bring the Outdoors Inside

Now, let's sprinkle in a little natural magic! Studies show that having plants around can drastically boost your mood and reduce stress. So, why not invite some leafy friends into your home? Low-maintenance plants like snake plants or pothos are perfect. Trust me – anyone can keep them alive!

If you have an outdoor space, turn it into your personal oasis. Picture potted plants, a small herb garden for your culinary adventures, and a cozy seating area where you can soak up the sun. And let's not forget your fabulous front porch! Imagine sinking into a comfy chair, sipping your favorite drink, and watching the world go by. Add some colorful cushions and a twinkling string of lights, and voilà! You've created the perfect spot for relaxation and making great memories.

Comfort Is Key

Alright, let's talk about comfort because a cozy home is a happy home! When you're shopping for furniture, go for pieces that feel as good as they look. Think plush sofas that hug you back and soft chairs. Opt for lightweight fabrics like cotton or linen – perfect for keeping your space feeling fresh and breezy.

Now, let's get creative with your layout! I'm a firm believer in feng shui. An open floor plan can create a sense of flow and make your home feel super inviting. Arrange your furniture to encourage conversation – seating that faces each other is a great way to spark laughter and connection. A well-thought-out layout can turn even the smallest space into a cozy gathering spot.

Personalize Your Space

Your home should be as unique as you are! So let's make it personal! Fill your space with items that tell your story – family photos, travel souvenirs, and commissioned artwork that resonates with your heart. These personal touches can spark joy and create a sense of belonging.

How about creating a gallery wall? It's like a visual scrapbook that showcases your personality. Mix and match frames, colors and sizes for an eclectic look that screams "YOU!" Not only does it add character to your space, but it also brings a smile to your face every time you walk by.

Foster Connection

Last but definitely not least, let's talk about connection! Our homes are where cherished memories are made, so creating spaces that encourage meaningful interactions is a must. A large dining table is perfect for family meals, game nights, and all those belly laughs. A cozy living room with plenty of seating invites everyone to gather for Netflix marathons or just to catch up.

And don't sleep on that charming front porch! It's the ideal spot to invite friends over for a chat or enjoy a peaceful evening with family. Picture this: twinkling lights, comfy seating, and a refreshing breeze – it's the ultimate recipe for connection and good times.

Final Thought

Creating a home that increases happiness is all about making fun and intentional choices that reflect your style while enhancing your well-being. By embracing natural light, incorporating nature, prioritizing comfort, personalizing your space, and fostering connection – both indoors and on that delightful front porch – you can transform your living environment into a joyful sanctuary.

So, as you embark on this exciting home design adventure, remember that your space should nurture your happiness. After all, a happy home is the foundation for a happy life! Here's to creating spaces that make your heart happy!

About Edina Houston

Edina Houston is a professionally skilled interior designer dedicated to creating visually appealing and functional spaces tailored to her clients' needs. Specializing in creating luxurious, comfortable environments that uniquely reflect each project's individuality, Edina infuses her work with a deep passion for design and unwavering dedication to excellence. Connect with Edina on Facebook and Instagram @EDesignsAndCo



SOLO PARENT PARTNERS WITH THE STATE OF FLORIDA TO PROVIDE FREE RESOURCES TO THE STATE'S OVER 653,000 SINGLE PARENTS

BY SOLO PARENT

Solo Parent, a national nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting and empowering single parents to raise healthy, resilient children, has announced its new partnership with the State of Florida. Through this partnership, Solo Parent will provide vital resources, community and support to the state's single parents, ensuring they know they're not alone and there is hope.

Florida ranks among the highest in the nation for single-parent households, with over 22.2% of households with children led by single parents. This translates to more than 1.475 million—over 40% of the state's youth—living in single-parent households. In response to this significant need, Solo Parent's partnership with the State of Florida provides connection, community, and hope to single parents, furthering its mission to support families nationwide.

"We are thrilled to bring Solo Parent's life-changing programs to Florida," said Elizabeth Cole, Vice President of Solo Parent. "Our mission has always been to meet single parents where they are and help them discover a community of love, connection, and transformation. This Florida partnership will allow us to serve single-parent families across the state, creating a ripple effect of hope and healing."

Free resources Available to Florida's Single Parents Include:

- Unlimited, 24/7 access to the new "4 Habits of Successful Solo Parents" video course: Practical and empowering lessons designed to help single parents thrive.
- Online and in-person support groups: Safe spaces where solo parents can connect, share, and grow.
- Daily meditations and a vibrant online community: Inspiration and encouragement to navigate life's challenges.



- Live events across Florida: Opportunities to gather, learn, and be inspired as part of a supportive community.

For more information about the Florida partnership and its upcoming programs, visit [SoloParent.org/Florida](https://soloparent.org/Florida).

About Solo Parent:

Solo Parent Society was founded by CEO Robert Beeson in 2017. Fully aware of the complexities that single parents face, Beeson drew on his eight and a half years as a single dad to start this organization. Initially piloting a support group in Franklin, TN, the group was at capacity without ever being mentioned from the pulpit. The groups have expanded to 18 different states, the US military, and international online groups. Robert released a book in 2018, "Going Solo - Hope and Healing for the Single Mom and Dad" with Focus on the Family. Solo Parent Society has now reached over 220,000 solo parents across the globe through groups, resources, podcasts, and daily devotions. For more information, visit the website at soloparent.org/florida.

LAKE NONA ARTS SPRING SEASON!

BY STEPHANIE HOUDE
PHOTOS COURTESY OF STEPHANIE HOUDE



Our local community arts nonprofit, Lake Nona Arts, has started their fourth season! Lake Nona Arts is dedicated to growing communities of people who enjoy participating in the arts. In previous seasons, Lake Nona Arts has offered a community choir (whom you may have seen at events including the Oh What Fun! festival at Town Center) and an orchestra for adults (18+) in our Lake Nona and SouthEast Orlando community.

The spring 2025 season started off strong with a new group giving an opportunity for community members to try their skills at improv. The improv group is being led by Randy Tennison and Matt McLaughlin. McLaughlin was searching for an opportunity to start an acting troupe in the Lake Nona area and connected with Lake Nona Arts. His skills, combined with Tennison, who has experience leading improv sessions previously, create an

exciting new opportunity for Lake Nona Arts and local residents.

Lake Nona Arts choir had their first rehearsal on January 14. Directed by Stephanie Houde and Jonathan Morris, the choir has grown steadily over the last 18 months. Expanding their membership and skills, the choir has been able to perform throughout the Lake Nona area, and the spring 2025 season will also provide many opportunities to see our local singers. The choir is non-auditioned.

This is the fourth season for the community choir, and they are working on an exciting season of Broadway music. They will be singing at the Lake Nona Town Center new event, Lake Nona Arts Festival, on February 22. Check in with Lake Nona Arts social media accounts for more details.

Lake Nona Arts Orchestra will begin rehearsals on March 2. They are still open to adults (18+) in the area who have proficiency in their instrument. The orchestra will be performing the Broadway music with the choir at the May concert.

Whether you are looking to participate in the choir, orchestra or the improv group, it's not too late! Email lakenonaarts@gmail.com for more information, or check out the website www.lakenonaarts.com for ways to register. If you are not interested in performing, but looking for a way to support the local arts in your community, please reach out to lakenonaarts@gmail.com to learn about the ways you can donate to our nonprofit.

Lake Nona Arts is a registered 501(c)3co committed to creating an arts community for adults (18+) in the Lake Nona Area. There are no auditions required. For more information, contact us at lakenonaarts@gmail.com.



TURNOVER ISN'T A MYSTERY. HERE'S WHY YOUR ROCK STARS ARE OUTTA HERE

BY DR. LINDA TRAVELUTE, FOUNDER, MAXIMIZED LEADERS



Let's have a candid moment here: When turnover hits your team, who's walking out the door? Is it your rock stars who are packing up their desks while the underperformers are still warming their seats?

If so, you might want to stop pointing fingers at HR and start looking in the mirror.

Arnold Glasgow said it best: "One of the tests of leadership is the ability to recognize a problem before it becomes an emergency." And if losing top talent isn't screaming "emergency" at you, I don't know what will.

Let's be real – great people don't quit for funsies. They don't roll out of bed one morning and say, "You know what? I'm bored of being happy and successful." Nope. They leave because something (or someone) isn't working.

Quick story

A friend of mine – let's call her Billie – was crushing it at her company. She loved her job, poured her soul into it, and was basically the person you'd want cloned for your team. But her boss? Yikes. He was *that guy*. The one who hijacked her ideas in meetings, only showed up to criticize, and couldn't be bothered to say thanks when she landed big wins.

She stuck it out for a year, and then she was done. She didn't just leave quietly, either. She walked straight to a competitor who treated her like the rock star she was. Oh, and she took her clients with her. Burn.

Here's the thing: Billie didn't leave her *job*. She left how the job *made her feel* under bad leadership. And here's the zinger: her old company didn't just lose her – they lost the revenue she brought in and the reputation she built. Double burn.

Why People Really Leave

Brace yourself – it's not because the coffee machine was broken or the snacks in the breakroom weren't gluten-free.

When people leave, it's usually because their basic human needs aren't being met. You know, the ones that matter most: feeling valued, having a voice, and seeing a future for themselves.

Psychologists call this Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory. I call it common sense: People stick around when they feel like their work and ideas matter.

When they don't? They're gone. And not even a fat paycheck will keep them around if they're drowning in bad vibes every day.

Your Leadership Gut Check

Here's where it gets uncomfortable, but stick with me. Ask yourself:

1. Are you creating an environment where your team feels like they can thrive? Or are they just surviving?
2. When someone amazing leaves, do you actually ask *why*? And I don't mean in a "fill out this exit survey" kind of way – I mean really digging in and finding out what you could've done differently.
3. Do you listen more than you talk? Or are you already formulating a response before they've finished a sentence?
4. Do you give credit where it's due? Or is it all "me, me, me" in front of the higher-ups?

What to Do Next

If this is hitting a little close to home, good news: You don't have to be perfect. You just have to start doing a little better. Here's how:

1. **Audit Your Turnover.** Look at who's left and why. If you don't know, go back and ask.
2. **Ask for Feedback.** Yeah, it's awkward. But it's also how you get better. Try this: "What's one thing I could do differently to support you?" And then zip it and listen.
3. **Pick One Thing.** You don't have to revamp your whole leadership style overnight. Start with one change. Maybe it's actively listening. Maybe it's giving more recognition. Whatever it is, commit to it this week.



4. **Make It About Them.** In your next meeting, shine the spotlight on your team. Who's crushing it? Call it out.

One More Thing

You're not going to get it right every time, and that's okay. Leadership is messy. But the best leaders? They own their mess, clean it up, and keep moving forward.

Because at the end of the day, your team isn't leaving for another office. They're leaving for a leader who sees them, hears them and values them. Be that leader. Or, you know, start writing goodbye cards.

Check out the latest episode of the Leader Fuel Podcast for more on this and the fuel you need to keep going and growing as a leader.

Tune in to the Leader Fuel Podcast with Dr. Linda Travelute for the fuel you need to keep going and growing as a leader! Dr. Linda, a certified John Maxwell coach and CEO of Maximized Leaders, blends psychology with real-world leadership strategies to help you thrive in every aspect of leadership. Want to take your leadership to the next level? Listen to Leader Fuel wherever you get your podcasts and get ready to lead with confidence!

THE IMPORTANCE OF BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Black History Month, celebrated every February in the United States and Canada, serves as a reminder of the profound contributions and achievements of Black individuals throughout history. It's a time for reflection, recognition, and education about the significant roles that Black people have played in shaping our societies, from arts and culture to politics, science, and beyond. Although Black history should be celebrated year-round, dedicating a month to its exploration allows us to focus our attention on the often overlooked or underrepresented aspects of history. Here's why Black History Month holds such importance:

1. Recognizing Historical Achievements

Black History Month highlights the incredible achievements of Black individuals, many of whom overcame systemic racism, slavery, and immense adversity. From pioneers like Harriet Tubman, who led enslaved people to freedom through the Underground Railroad, to modern figures like Barack Obama, the first Black president of the United States, the month offers an opportunity to acknowledge the history that has been underappreciated or erased in mainstream narratives. By honoring the legacies of these individuals, we celebrate the resilience and perseverance of the Black community.

2. Educating Future Generations

Education is the key to dismantling ignorance, and Black History Month plays a pivotal role in this effort. Schools, museums, and various institutions use this time to teach students, particularly young people, about Black history in a meaningful way. By learning about the struggles and triumphs of Black communities, students can gain a deeper understanding of both the historical and contemporary struggles that many face today. Moreover, it fosters empathy and respect for cultural diversity, which is crucial in our increasingly globalized world.

3. Challenging Stereotypes and Combating Racism

Unfortunately, racial stereotypes and prejudices persist in many parts of society. Black History Month serves as an important counterpoint to these negative perceptions, providing a space to amplify voices, stories, and historical narratives that challenge these stereotypes. It provides a platform to highlight the diversity within the Black community and show that Black history is not a monolith. By sharing the complexity and richness of Black culture and history, it is possible to break down misconceptions and combat the racial biases that persist.

4. Amplifying Black Voices

Historically, Black voices have often been silenced or ignored in mainstream society. Black History Month offers an opportunity to amplify the voices of Black authors, artists, activists, scientists, and leaders who have made profound contributions in their respective fields. Whether it's through music, literature, political activism, or the sciences, Black innovators have left an indelible mark on the world. Recognizing these contributions not only honors their legacy but also inspires future generations to continue their work and contribute to the progress of society.

5. Promoting Social Change

While Black History Month focuses on reflection and celebration, it also serves as a call to action. The stories and struggles that are shared during this month can be a powerful reminder of the work that still needs to be done to achieve true racial equity. From addressing disparities in education, healthcare, and the justice system to combating the persistence of racial profiling and discrimination, Black History Month encourages dialogue about social justice and motivates individuals and communities to work towards positive change.

6. Fostering Unity and Solidarity

Black History Month is not just a celebration of Black culture; it is an invitation for everyone—regardless of race or background—to learn, reflect, and engage in meaningful conversations about race, equality, and justice. It serves as an opportunity for solidarity and unity among people of all races. When we acknowledge the contributions of Black individuals and the struggles they've faced, we cultivate a sense of shared history and a collective responsibility to build a more just and equitable world.

7. Celebrating Black Culture

Black culture is incredibly diverse, encompassing a rich array of traditions, art forms, music, fashion, and more. Black History Month gives us a chance to appreciate and celebrate the cultural heritage that has shaped not only the Black community but society at large. From jazz to hip-hop, from African dance traditions to contemporary visual arts, Black culture has contributed profoundly to the global cultural landscape. Recognizing this helps us all understand the value of cultural exchange and the importance of preserving these traditions.

Conclusion

Black History Month is far more than a time for reflection—it is an essential moment for education, celebration, and activism. It gives us the chance to honor the rich history and ongoing contributions of Black people to society, while also acknowledging the challenges that still need to be addressed. By recognizing and embracing the significance of Black history, we create a more inclusive and empathetic world for everyone. Let us carry the lessons, achievements, and stories of Black history throughout the year, not just for a month, but as a commitment to justice, equality, and understanding for all.



PET ALLIANCE ANNOUNCES THE 31ST ANNUAL 'PAWS IN THE PARK' PET FESTIVAL RETURNING TO LAKE EOLA PARK IN DOWNTOWN ORLANDO

BY PET ALLIANCE
PHOTOS COURTESY OF SHAUNA HUNDEBY AND PET ALLIANCE

The Largest Pet Festival in the United States Returns to Orlando Featuring Adoptable Pets, Dock Diving and Doggy Sports, Pet Costume Contest, Food Trucks, Beer Garden, Pet-Friendly Vendors and More

Pet Alliance invites all pet lovers to join together at the largest pet festival in the United States, the 31st annual "Paws in the Park" returning to beautiful Lake Eola Park in Downtown Orlando on Saturday, February 8. Paws in the Park kicks off at 10 a.m. with the signature Pet Costume Contest featuring celebrity judges and cash prizes. Participants and their furry family members can invite their friends and family to join them for the special award ceremony, costume contest and festivities. Then, all attendees and their fur pals will enjoy a full day of both "human" and "canine" activities until 4 p.m. Activities include the famous dock diving for dogs, lure courses, beer garden, a variety of food trucks and shopping, pet products and more, plus plenty of pet adoption opportunities. Pet Alliance's mobile vet unit will also be on site and providing free vaccines. The event is free and open to the public, with fundraising opportunities available to help support Pet Alliance.

"We are very proud to host the largest pet festival in the United States right here in Orlando!" says Pet Alliance Executive Director Steve Bardy. "Each year, Paws in the Park gets bigger and bigger, and it's so exciting and heartwarming to see our amazing animal-loving community grow more and more. Whether it's families' annual tradition or their first festival, we are officially counting down to see all of our special guests enjoy the adorable costume contest, incredible dock diving for dogs and much, much more amusement, entertainment and activities at the one-and-only Paws in the Park."

Paws in the Park supports the mission of Pet Alliance, the region's oldest and largest animal welfare agency, to educate, shelter, place and heal pets and their families with compassionate, responsible care. Funds raised from the hugely popular event will help Pet Alliance save over 4,000 dogs and cats this year by providing shelter, care and love until they find their forever home.

Paws in the Park 2025 Top Dog Sponsors include: Downtown Development Board, Reed Nissan, MetLife Pet Insurance, Subaru North Orlando and World's Best Cat Litter.

For more information on Pet Alliance, to fundraise for Paws in the Park and to register for the Costume Contest, visit www.petallianceorlando.org and www.pawsinthepark.org.

Support Pet Alliance "Almost Home" Capital Campaign is still under way to raise \$17.8 million to build the new Orlando shelter and allow Pet Alliance to continue providing the highest level of care and support for dogs, cats and pet owners. Pet Alliance is offering a number of unique naming opportunities to showcase support of helping pets at the shelter. To learn more, visit <https://petallianceorlando.org/almosthome/>.

About Pet Alliance

Pet Alliance was founded in 1937 as the Orlando Humane Society. Since then, the organization has worked hard to provide positive and safe outcomes for pets. Today, Pet Alliance has a dedicated focus on the welfare and well-being of dogs and cats in Orange, Seminole and Osceola Counties. As the "go to" experts in Greater Orlando, they do good things for dogs and cats and the people who love them. Their goal is to provide compassionate and knowledgeable services for pets and to be leaders in innovative animal care and veterinary medicine. More than 4,000 surrendered pets and homeless animals turn to Pet Alliance for caring, compassion and hope through their shelters each year. Pet Alliance provides food, medical care and shelter for dogs and cats until they find their new homes. In addition to providing housing and care, Pet Alliance works to develop progressive and innovative programs that help keep pets and people together. Pet Alliance also provides low-cost spay/neuter surgeries and animal wellness through their public veterinary clinics. Their shelter programs are supported entirely by donations from the community they serve.



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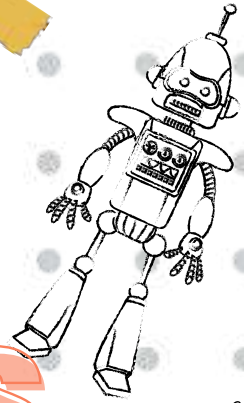
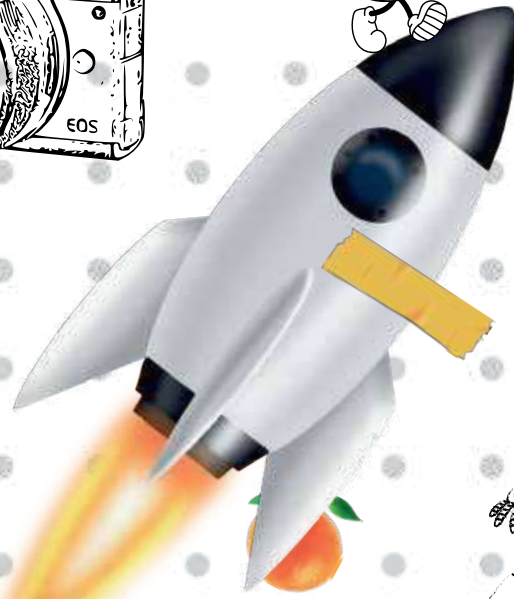
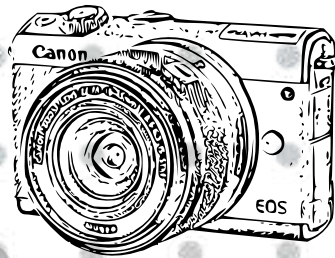
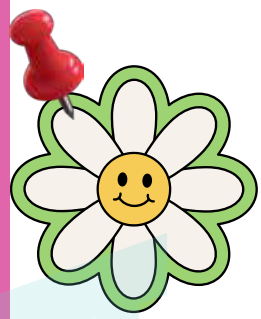
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