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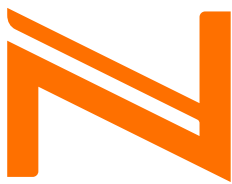
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EDITOR'S NOTE: SPRING IN THE NONAHOOD

BY ANGELICA MEDINA, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



With spring just around the corner, our community is coming alive with energy, as neighbors reconnect, new residents settle in, and events begin to bloom. Whether it's enjoying the natural beauty of our parks, attending one of our vibrant community events, or exploring the latest developments in our ever-evolving town, March invites us to celebrate the joy of change and growth.

This month, we also take a moment to appreciate the individuals and organizations who continue to make Lake Nona such a special place. From local schools fostering future leaders to the businesses that bring innovation to our doorstep, we are grateful for the people who give our community its unique spirit.

Let's continue to work together to keep Lake Nona a place where everyone feels at home, where connections are made, and where opportunities are abundant.

Happy Spring, Lake Nona!



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GINSBURG INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH EQUITY AT NEMOURS CHILDREN'S HEALTH GRANTS \$120,000 TO CENTRAL FLORIDA ORGANIZATIONS FOR INITIATIVES THAT FOSTER COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

BY NEMOURS CHILDREN'S HEALTH

The Ginsburg Institute for Health Equity at Nemours Children's Health (Ginsburg Institute) has awarded five grants totaling \$120,000 to organizations in Central Florida for innovative projects aimed at fostering collaboration in the community.

The grant recipients and their initiatives include:

- The University of Central Florida College of Medicine and ELEVATE Orlando: Partnering to introduce students to career opportunities in medicine through hands-on learning experiences designed to inspire future health professionals.
- Cristo Rey High School and Boys & Girls Clubs of Central

Florida (BGCCF): Collaborating to enhance after-school enrichment programs and help students build leadership skills critical to their academic and personal growth.

- Wolomi: Supporting maternal and family well-being by connecting mothers to mental health counselors, resources, and support through an accessible digital platform.
- 4Roots, HEBNI Nutrition and Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida: Launching a program to combat food insecurity by improving access to resources and educational opportunities within Orange County Public Schools.
- Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Florida and REED Charitable Foundation: Working together to provide high-quality literacy materials and support to students across BGCCF locations, ensuring equitable access to essential educational resources.

"The recipients of these grants have demonstrated a profound commitment to improving the health and well-being of children and families in our community," said Nancy Molello, Executive Director for the Ginsburg Institute. "We're thrilled to support these transformative projects, and we're equally excited about the partnerships they will cultivate, which can inspire lasting collaboration for years to come."

To be considered for these grants, organizations submitted proposals for community-based projects that align with the Institute's focus areas. The proposals were evaluated on innovation, community engagement and sustainability, with a

particular emphasis on fostering multi-stakeholder collaboration. All grant recipients attended the Ginsburg Institute's 2024 Symposium in October 2024.

A first-of-its-kind initiative, the Ginsburg Institute was launched in 2022. The Ginsburg Institute works across the region to provide leadership, build community partnerships and create innovative programs to improve children's health and lives.

About Nemours Children's Health

Nemours Children's Health is one of the nation's largest multistate pediatric health systems, which includes two free-standing children's hospitals and a network of more than 70 primary and specialty care practices. Nemours Children's seeks to transform the health of children by adopting a holistic health model that utilizes innovative, safe, and high-quality care, while also addressing children's needs well beyond medicine. In producing the highly acclaimed, award-winning pediatric medicine podcast *Well Beyond Medicine*, Nemours underscores that commitment by featuring the people, programs and partnerships addressing whole child health. Nemours Children's also powers the world's most-visited website for information on the health of children and teens, [Nemours KidsHealth.org](https://www.NemoursKidsHealth.org).



AN EXTRAORDINARY WOMAN IN ANY ERA

BY HELENE CAVALLO



In celebration of Women's History month, I would like to honor a woman who made a huge impact on science and the medical field with her discoveries and contributions and was

very much ahead of time. This person is Marie Curie.

Up until the early 1800s, women were unable to own property, have legal rights to their children, go to a university, earn equal wages or enter many professions. They had to turn any money they made over to their husbands and, of course, were unable to vote.

It was not until 1848 in both the United States and Europe that women finally won the long and arduous battle for equal rights. In Europe that year, a number of Western European countries added gender equality into their new constitutions as a result of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which recognized both gender equality and equality between spouses. It was not until 1920 in the United States and between the years of 1893 and 1960 when six European countries granted women the right to vote.

However, during the 1800s and well into the 1900s, other than working as nurses, midwives, and typists/stenographers and in domestic-type positions, women would not be taken seriously in many career paths or positions. Their main role was still seen as maintaining a household for their families. It was almost unheard of for a woman to become a doctor, lawyer or any other career that was male dominated. Except for the rare woman who was incredibly brilliant and strong willed, which brings me to the subject of this article.

Marie Curie:

Born on November 7, 1867, in Warsaw, Poland, to poor parents with four siblings, her name was Maria Skłodowska (later Marie Curie). When very young, out of necessity, she became a governess, but she had a passion for knowledge, so she read and studied and learned all she could on her own aside from what she learned from her father, who

was a teacher.

Given an opportunity to move to Paris, she entered Sorbonne University, where she learned physics and mathematics. In 1894, she met Pierre Curie, a professor at the School of Physics and a scientist. They were married in 1895, and she changed her first name to Marie, the French form of Maria.

Becoming researchers at the School of Chemistry and Physics in Paris, they began studying invisible rays given off by uranium, which had been recently discovered by another scientist, Henri Becquerel. During her research, Madame Curie was sure she had found a new element, which appeared extremely radioactive, but the other scientists were not convinced. Additional testing showed that the new element was 330 times more radioactive than uranium, and they called this polonium. Subsequent tests revealed another new element that was much more radioactive than polonium.

In 1898, the Curies published evidence of the discovery of this new element, which they called radium. Their work involved very strenuous, manual labor which, unbeknownst to them at the time, was also life-threatening. They became physically exhausted and sick, which today we recognize as the beginning of radiation sickness. In 1903, the Curies were awarded the Nobel Prize for Physics jointly with Becquerel for their work on radioactivity.

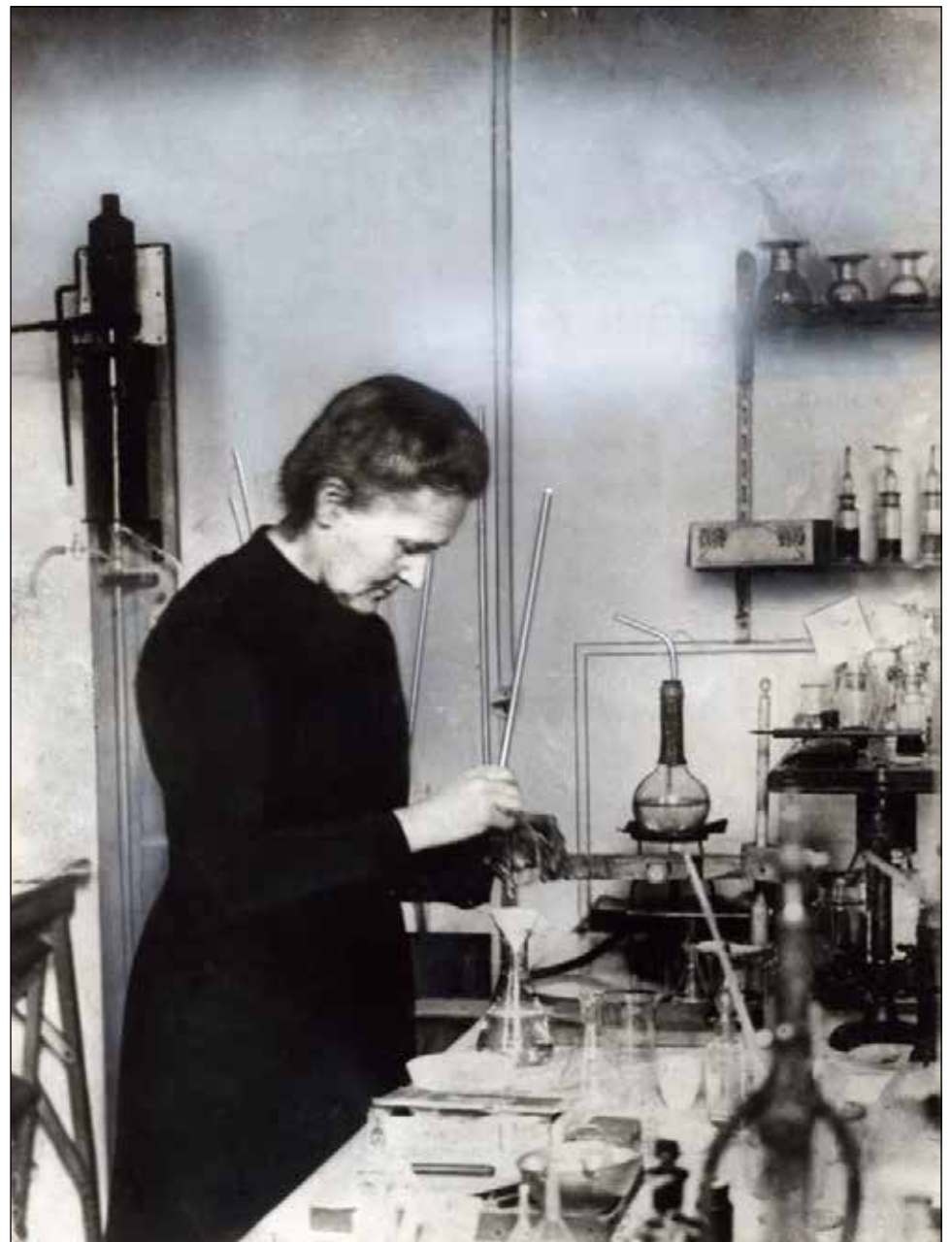
Sadly, in 1906, Pierre was killed in a street accident. However, Marie continued her work, replacing her husband as professor at the Sorbonne and conducting lectures. She went on to be awarded another Nobel Prize in 1911 in Chemistry after creating a way of measuring radioactivity. Two laboratories were built by the Sorbonne, one of which was for the study of radioactivity led by Marie Curie.

During the First World War, Madame Curie developed small, mobile X-ray units to diagnose injuries near the battlefield and became director of the Red Cross Radiological Service. In October 1914, powerful X-ray machines named *Petits Curies* were completed. Madame Curie, together with her daughter, Irene, headed to the front line to take X-rays of wounded men to locate broken bones, bullets and shrapnel.

After the war, Marie continued to conduct research, teach and receive many more awards and honorary degrees from universities in many countries.

On July 4, 1934, Marie Curie died in Passy, France, at the age of 66. The cause of death was given as aplastic pernicious anaemia, which developed after years of exposure to radiation.

Through her brilliance, strength and perseverance, she has saved many, many lives



over the years with the use of radiation both for diagnostic purposes and for shrinking tumors.

One of her many inspiring quotes is: *You cannot hope to build a better world without improving the individuals. To that end, each*

of us must work for his own improvement. And at the same time share a general responsibility for all humanity, our particular duty being to aid those to whom we think we can be most useful.

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.

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PET ALLIANCE OF GREATER ORLANDO KICKS OFF “KITTEN CON” THIS MONTH

BY PET ALLIANCE
PHOTO COURTESY OF PET ALLIANCE

Central Florida’s Go-To Pet Experts Launch Newest Month-Long Initiative Dedicated to Our Feline Friends

“Kitten Season” is here, and Central Florida’s go-to pet experts Pet Alliance are dedicating this month to our feline friends with the kickoff of “Kitten Con”, an educational celebration to help the beloved

organization and animal loving Central Florida community get ready. Running virtually all month long, Pet Alliance will feature special kitty content on their social media channels, including behind-the-scenes stories about the kittens in their care, fun and educational content and tips on various topics, such as kitten season, finding a kitten in the wild, fostering, adopting a cat, cat medical education, community cats, donation items needed, plus a closer look at what Pet Alliance’s brand new Orlando shelter means for kitten seasons to come.

“After another highly successful Paws in the Park, we are excited to turn our attention to our cherished cats and kittens during Kitten Con,” says Pet Alliance Executive Director Steve Bardy. “Every year at this time, thousands of kittens are born outside and brought to our doors. It’s critically important to us to bring extra focus and awareness to our cat and kitten population and garner community support to ensure them the best care possible. We hope everyone enjoys the fun, sweetness and learning with our very own Kitten Con!”

For more information on Pet Alliance and Kitten Con, visit www.petallianceorlando.org, and stay tuned to Pet Alliance socials @PetAllianceGO (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Threads).

Support Pet Alliance “Almost Home” Capital Campaign still under way to raise \$17.8 million to build the new Orlando shelter and allow Pet Alliance to continue provid-

ing 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 www.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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SAVOR TOOTH TIGER: BROWN BUTTER BLONDIES

BY ALLYSON VAN LENTEN
PHOTO COURTESY OF ALLYSON VAN LENTEN

Some of the most delicious recipes in the world start with butter, but there is yet another way to make butter even better...browning! Your entire home will be filled with the decadent, toasty scent of butter. Browning the milk solids in the butter creates additional flavor that gets unlocked thanks to a chemical change called the Maillard reaction. Much like the way that bread and toast taste different, the color change creates a new flavor all its own. Brown butter makes a unique addition to pound cake, chocolate chip cookies, and savory applications like brown butter sage ravioli. Today, I'm utilizing its magic in a Blondies recipe filled with caramel and chocolate chips.

Blondies are a cross between a brownie and a chocolate chip cookie bar. My favorite part of a chocolate chip cookie is the deep buttery flavor mixed with vanilla. Chocolate chip cookies are phenomenal crowd-pleasers in their own right, but Blondies are even easier because you don't need to portion them out. Simply mix the ingredients together and fill them in a baking tin like a brownie. Once they are cooled, they are chopped like a brownie served. For further decadence, serve warm with vanilla ice cream. Be prepared for ooh's and aah's from those lucky enough to taste these.

How does one brown butter, you may be wondering? Well, it only takes about 5 minutes of cook time, but you need to stay close to the stove. Using a skillet with a light bottom (now is not the time to bring out the cast iron skillet) is imperative. You need to be able to see the browning happening in the skillet. Stainless steel or enameled cast iron works well here. Over medium heat, add the butter and stir until melted, about 3-4 minutes. By the 5th minute or so, the solids in the bottom of the pot will turn to a golden color. The top will be filled with foam, so it can be difficult to see what's happening underneath. Stir often with a wooden spoon to check on the color. Once you see a golden color, turn off the heat immediately and scrape any bits on the bottom to keep from burning. Pour off the butter and scrape all of the golden solids into a bowl and transfer to the fridge to chill. Golden is the operative word here. If the color goes beyond gold, you risk burning the milk solids, which are not pleasant to eat. You'll need to start over.

Brown Butter Blondies With Chocolate & Caramel Chips (makes 9-12 servings)

Ingredients:

- 1 stick & 6 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 3/4 cup light brown sugar
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- 3 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2 eggs
- 2 cups all purpose flour
- 3/4 teaspoon salt, plus more for sprinkling on top
- 1 cup chocolate chips (bittersweet, dark, white, caramel chips or a mixture)

Instructions:

1. Brown the butter in a skillet over medium heat, stirring for 5 minutes until golden. Once you see a golden color, turn off the heat immediately and scrape any bits on the bottom to keep from burning. Pour off the butter and scrape all of the golden solids into a bowl and transfer to the fridge to chill for 15-30 minutes.
2. Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit.
3. Mix the chilled butter with the brown and white sugar until well-mixed and glossy.
4. Add the eggs and vanilla. Whisk to combine.
5. Add the dry ingredients in the bowl and mix until everything is just barely combined.
6. Press the blondie dough into an 8-inch by 8-inch square baking tray.
7. Bake for 30 minutes. Allow to cool in the tray for at least an hour.
8. Remove to cool further and cut when completely cool.





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CELEBRATING MINORITY-OWNED BUSINESS EXCELLENCE IN LAKE NONA

Minority-owned businesses play a vital role in shaping Lake Nona's economic future, driving innovation, and inspiring the next generation of entrepreneurs. The Lake Nona Regional Chamber of Commerce is proud to recognize three outstanding minority-owned businesses honored at this year's Illumination Awards: **Detailing Express**, **Simcore Solutions** and **OneMed**.

Detailing Express received the prestigious Business of the Year award. Known for their meticulous vehicle detailing services, Detailing Express has built a reputation for quality, reliability and customer satisfaction. Their commitment to excellence in automotive care, combined with their dedication to serving the community, sets them apart as industry leaders. With a strong emphasis on craftsmanship and attention to detail, Detailing Express exemplifies the entrepreneurial spirit that defines Lake

Nona's thriving business landscape.

Simcore Solutions, named **Minority-Owned Business of the Year**, has distinguished itself in the technology sector. Specializing in innovative IT solutions, Simcore Solutions helps businesses optimize their operations through advanced technology and strategic consulting. Their expertise in cybersecurity, cloud services and data management ensures that clients can navigate the digital world with confidence. By consistently delivering top-tier services, Simcore Solutions has earned recognition as a trusted partner for businesses of all sizes.

OneMed, honored with the **Small Business of the Year** award, is making a significant impact in the healthcare industry by providing high-quality medical care with a patient-first approach. Specializing in concierge-style healthcare services,

OneMed offers accessible, affordable and personalized medical care for individuals and families. Their commitment to innovation in healthcare, along with their focus on building strong patient relationships, has positioned them as a trusted provider in the Lake Nona community. By redefining the healthcare experience with convenience and care at the forefront, OneMed continues to set a high standard in the industry.

The achievements of Detailing Express, Simcore Solutions and OneMed highlight the vital role that minority-owned businesses play in shaping Lake Nona's economic future. Their success stories serve as inspiration for aspiring entrepreneurs and underscore the importance of supporting minority-owned enterprises within our community.

As we reflect on Black history in business,

it's crucial to continue fostering an environment where all businesses can thrive. The Lake Nona Regional Chamber of Commerce remains committed to promoting diversity, equity and inclusion, recognizing that a vibrant and resilient economy is built on the contributions of businesses from all backgrounds.

Congratulations to Detailing Express, Simcore Solutions and OneMed on their well-deserved awards. Your dedication and achievements enrich our community, and we look forward to witnessing your continued success.

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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L to R: Joel Ferguson and Hemali Shah, winner of the Ambassador of the Year Award.



L to R: Patricia Garcia of Meals With A Mission, winner of the Nonprofit of the Year Award.



Kristine Ford of AdventHealth, Community Impact Award winner.



Mark Reid of Beep, Community Impact Award winner.



The team from Imaginostics, winners of the Entrepreneur of the Year Award.



L to R: Hans Steinbrenner, President of Osceola Magic; Jade Simon and Jason Simon of Simcore Solutions, winners of the Minority-Owned Business of the Year Award; Joel Ferguson.



The team from OneMed, winners of the Small Business of the Year Award.



L to R: Sherry Magee of KPMG; Courtney Felton of Detailing Express, winner of the Business of the Year Award; Joel Ferguson.



2025 Illumination Award Winners, 1st Row L to R: Hemali Shah, Mark Reid, Courtney Felton, Kristine Ford, Jade Simon; 2nd Row L to R: Reynald Lamarre M.D., Sonita Khan M.D., Peter Ganpat M.D., Joel Ferguson, Patricia Garcia, Codi Gharagouzloo, Valerie Gharagouzloo, Candy Cole, Daniel Teper.

WINNING FAMILY: WHY WORK-LIFE BALANCE IS A MYTH – AND WHAT TO PURSUE INSTEAD

BY PASTOR RODNEY GAGE



Nik Wallenda, the legendary high-wire artist, has walked across Niagara Falls, the Grand Canyon and Times Square on a thin steel cable. Each step requires precision and adaptability. But here's what's surprising – Wallenda doesn't seek perfect balance.

"If you're completely still on the wire, you'll fall," he once said. Balance isn't about being motionless; it's about constant adjustment.

The same is true for life. Many parents chase the illusion of work-life balance, believing they must divide their time equally between career and family. But just like walking a tightrope, life isn't about perfect equilibrium – it's about learning to pivot and adjust with the changing seasons.

The problem? Parents feel pulled between work demands, endless emails, after-school activities, and the guilt of never being "enough" in either world. But what if balance isn't the answer?

I. Stop Chasing Balance – Seek Rhythms

Life doesn't divide perfectly into equal halves. Work isn't 50%, family isn't 50%, and rest doesn't neatly fit into the remaining hours. Instead, life moves in seasons of focus.

Research from Indeed and the Maven Clinic reports that over half of employees feel burned out, with working parents facing even greater pressure. The pandemic made this even worse when 6.5% of working mothers left the workforce entirely, unable to juggle responsibilities, according to the Maven Clinic.

Rather than forcing an unrealistic rigid split, parents should seek *healthy rhythms* instead. Some seasons require more professional focus, such as big projects, travel, deadlines. Others demand increased attention at home such as new babies, sick kids, anniversaries. The key is adjusting rather than feeling like you're failing at "balance."

II. Be Fully Present Where You Are

One of the greatest struggles parents face is blurred boundaries.

Remote work has made it harder to separate professional and personal life. Many parents feel the pressure to answer emails at the dinner table or take work calls on vacation.

Studies reveal burnout is at an all-time high, leading to anxiety, sleep problems, and exhaustion. In a recent article in the *New York Times*, U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy declared "parental burnout" as a public health issue. In his article, Dr. Murthy stated, "It's time for a major shift in how society values parenting."

The cost? Families experience emotional



distance, children feel unseen, and relationships suffer.

Wallenda understands this principle better than most. While crossing the Grand Canyon, 48 mph winds threatened to knock him off balance. His strategy? Laser focus. He didn't think about the crowd or the drop below – just the next step.

Parents must do the same. When at work – be all in. When at home – be all in. Shut off work notifications at night. Put phones away during dinner. Resist the urge to check emails during family time. Presence is more valuable than time – because even if you're physically there, your mind might not be, and your kids or spouse know it.

III. Protect Non-Negotiables

Some things must remain sacred. Many parents let work creep into every corner of life, believing they'll make it up to their family later. But here's the truth: You can't outsource your presence.

Studies from Columbia University and SHRM reveal that kids who regularly have family dinners experience:

- Better mental health
- Higher academic performance
- Lower rates of anxiety and depression

Couples who prioritize date nights report stronger marriages, better communication, and lower stress levels.

The most successful families protect non-negotiables like:

- Family dinner at the table (even if it's only 20 minutes).
- Bedtime routines with kids (stories, check-ins).
- Regular date nights (because strong marriages create strong families).

If you don't schedule these moments, work will steal them from you.

A Better Alternative: Work-Life Integration

Rather than striving for balance, parents should aim for work-life integration, a system where work and family don't compete but complement each other. This means:

1. Identifying Priorities: Different seasons require different focuses.
2. Setting Boundaries: Create clear start and stop times for work to protect family time.
3. Scheduling Non-Negotiables: Treat family moments like business meetings – set, scheduled and protected.

Success at work means nothing if it costs you

your family.

Nik Wallenda knows that, on the high wire, you can't afford to be careless. Every step is intentional. He doesn't seek balance, he seeks control over his rhythm.

The same is true for you. Rather than chasing balance, seek healthy rhythms that allow both work and family to thrive together. The goal isn't perfection – it's presence. Because at the end of the day, your greatest success won't be measured by what you accomplish at work, it will be measured by who you loved well.

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.

FROM BROOKLYN TO ORLANDO

BY PATTY REBER
PHOTOS COURTESY OF PATTY REBER



“Hi there, would you like to try a sample?” You most likely have already met Larson Smith from Talkin Sweet (@talkinsweetft) as he peers out the window of his “smok’in” trailer. He has a rounded face with a wide smile and an amazing personality with a voice filled with excitement for his product. Larson, who was named after his dad, is the son of Costa Rican immigrants who instilled in him an incredible work ethic.

His mom owned beauty salons in Brooklyn, where Larson

started working at the age of 10. Larson had a strong sense of his entrepreneurial mindset from an early age and eventually ran the business when his parents took trips to Costa Rica. As Larson came of age, he joined the U.S. Army as a Military Police Officer (thank you Larson for your service!). With only 30 days left to his contract, he was sent to Iraq for a six-month deployment, which turned out to be two years. It changed his life and taught him to adjust to situations with a positive attitude and thankfulness for being alive.

In 2004, Larson, now in Orlando, completed his M.P.A. in Emergency and Disaster Management. His entrepreneurial spirit kicked in again, and Larson started a podcast called Talking Sweet, which turned into Talkin Sweet Frozen Treats. The flavors he creates will speak for themselves, but you cannot imagine until you try them. Larson creates sorbets that are also alcohol infused. I tried several non-alcoholic samples

since I couldn't stop myself!! My favorite was the strawberry chocolate chip. I felt it my responsibility to graduate to a large cup of it – still wanting more.

Larson can take special orders for one or two gallons and has catered weddings, divorce parties (I'm sure that's one for the alcohol flavors!), gender reveals, corporate functions and any occasion in between.

His goal is to never stop learning and to continue growing in absolutely everything he does from his personal life to his business life. Larson and his wife and three children live in Orlando. They love it here! Don't miss this extremely happy business owner who absolutely loves what he does and who has the great handcrafted product to prove it. You can sample his delicious flavors at Rollin Food Trucks Rally every Tuesday night from 5-8 p.m. at Adventure Park in addition to other locations you can view on Instagram.

JULIAN VILLELA IS BACK ON THE NORTH AMERICAN BROADWAY TOUR!

BY ANGELICA MEDINA
PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE VILLELA FAMILY

Exciting news for Broadway fans and Lake Nona residents alike – Julian Vilella is making his highly anticipated return to the stage! Featured in Nonahood News in August 2024, Julian's incredible journey began with a whirlwind 10-month North American Broadway tour, where he dazzled audiences with his portrayal of “Young Simba” in *The Lion King*. After performing over 130 shows, the Vilella family's adventures continued as Julian received a third contract offer for the role, sending them on another nine-month tour!

This time, however, there's a special twist – Julian and his family are headed home! The Vilellas will be back in the Orlando area, and Julian will be performing at the Dr. Phillips Center this April/May! It's a wonderful opportunity to see a fellow Lake Nonian shine on a grand stage, and we couldn't be more excited for his homecoming.

Support Julian at the Dr. Phillips Center!

If you've ever wanted to see Julian's incredible performance in *The Lion King* firsthand, here are the dates you can catch him at the Dr. Phillips Center:

April 23 at 7:30 p.m.

April 24 at 1 p.m.

April 25 at 8 p.m.

April 26 at 2 p.m.

April 27 at 6:30 p.m.

May 1 at 7:30 p.m.

May 2 at 8 p.m.

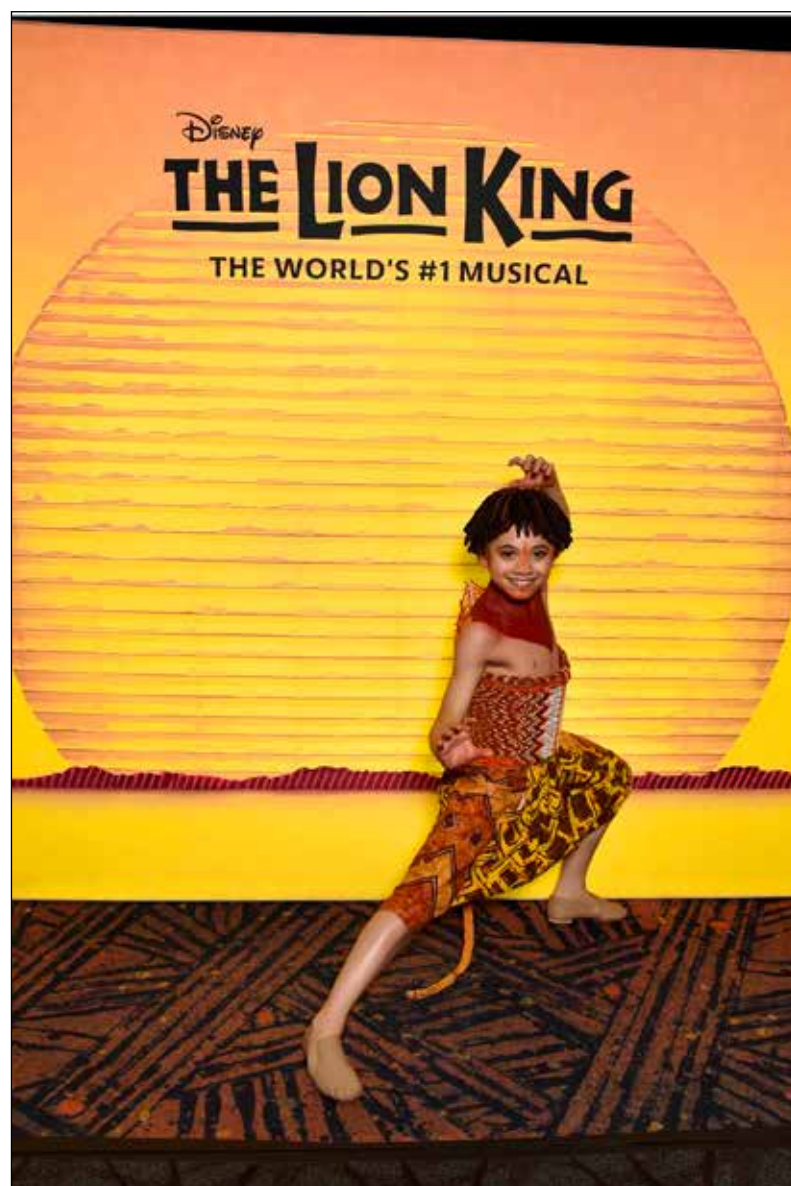
May 3 at 2 p.m.

May 4 at 6:30 p.m.

May 8 at 7:30 p.m.

May 10 at 2 p.m.

May 11 at 6:30 p.m.



How to Get Tickets:

Be sure to grab your tickets early to see Julian perform in this spectacular show! For more information and to purchase tickets, visit The Lion King Official Website.

Want to Learn More About Julian?

To get an inside look into Julian Vilella's journey on tour and his experiences in the spotlight, check out the original feature we published back in August 2024. Julian's inspiring story is a true testament to his dedication and passion for the arts.

*Let's come together to support a talented local star as he takes the stage once again! Whether you're a long-time fan of *The Lion King* or new to the magic of Broadway, this is an event you won't want to miss.*

LAKE NONA INTERIORS INSIDER: VOLUME EIGHT TOP 10 DECORATING MISTAKES AND HOW TO FIX THEM: A GUIDE FOR EVERY HOMEOWNER

BY EDINA HOUSTON



Decorating your home can be one of the most exciting yet daunting tasks. With so many choices – from colors to furniture styles – it's easy to make mistakes along the way.

Fortunately, I'm here to help you recognize the common pitfalls that can happen and help you avoid them in the future. Here's my guide to the top 10 decorating mistakes homeowners make and how to fix them.

1. Choosing Paint Colors Without Testing

Mistake: Picking a paint color based solely on a tiny swatch can lead to regret. What looks good in the store may appear completely different on your walls.

Fix: Always test samples on your walls and observe them at different times of the day. Paint a large patch to see how the color interacts with your lighting. This will ensure you love it before committing.

2. Overcrowding a Room With Furniture

Mistake: Cramping too much furniture into a small space can make it feel cramped and claustrophobic.

Fix: Measure your space and plan your layout. Choose fewer, larger pieces that fit the scale of the room. Consider leaving some open space to allow for movement and breathing room.

3. Ignoring Scale and Proportion

Mistake: Using furniture that is either too big or too small for a room can throw off the balance and functionality.

Fix: Always consider the dimensions of your space before buying furniture. For example, in a large living room, a tiny coffee table might get lost, while oversized sofas can overwhelm a small den. Aim for harmony by mixing sizes thoughtfully. Measure twice and purchase once!

4. Hanging Artwork and Framed Photos Too High

Mistake: Art hung too high can create a disconnect in a room, making it harder for everyone to enjoy the piece.

Fix: The ideal height is eye level, generally 57-60 inches from the floor. Consider grouping smaller pieces together at eye level for a cohesive gallery wall feel.

5. Neglecting Lighting Layers

Mistake: Relying solely on overhead lighting can create harsh shadows and an unwelcoming atmosphere.

Fix: Incorporate layers of lighting – ambient, task and accent. Use floor lamps, table lamps and wall sconces to create a warm, inviting glow. Dimmer switches can also add versatility to your space.

6. Forgetting About Functionality

Mistake: A beautifully decorated space can still feel off if it doesn't serve your lifestyle.

Fix: Consider how you use each space. If you have kids or pets, durable fabrics and easy-to-clean surfaces will be important. Design with both aesthetics and functionality in mind to create a home that works for you. Your home is your haven – not a museum.

7. Sticking to One Style or Store for Everything

Mistake: Following one strict design style can make your home feel like a showroom rather than a lived-in space.

Fix: Mix and match styles that resonate with you. Pair modern pieces with vintage finds or blend timeless elements with decor. This creates an eclectic, inviting atmosphere that feels uniquely yours.

8. Overlooking Storage Solutions

Mistake: Clutter can quickly take over a beautifully designed room if there's nowhere to put things.

Fix: Invest in stylish storage solutions like custom built ins, decorative baskets, ottomans with hidden compartments, or multifunctional furniture. This not only keeps your space tidy but also adds to your decor.

9. Hanging Drapery Panels Too Low

Mistake: Hanging drapery panels too low can make ceilings feel shorter and rooms appear less spacious.

Fix: Install curtain rods closer to the ceiling, ideally 4-6 inches above the window frame. This creates the illusion of taller ceilings and gives your windows a more polished look. Opt for longer drapes that touch the floor for added elegance.

10. Choosing the Wrong Size Rug

Mistake: A rug that is too small can make a room feel disjointed, while one that is too large can overwhelm the space.

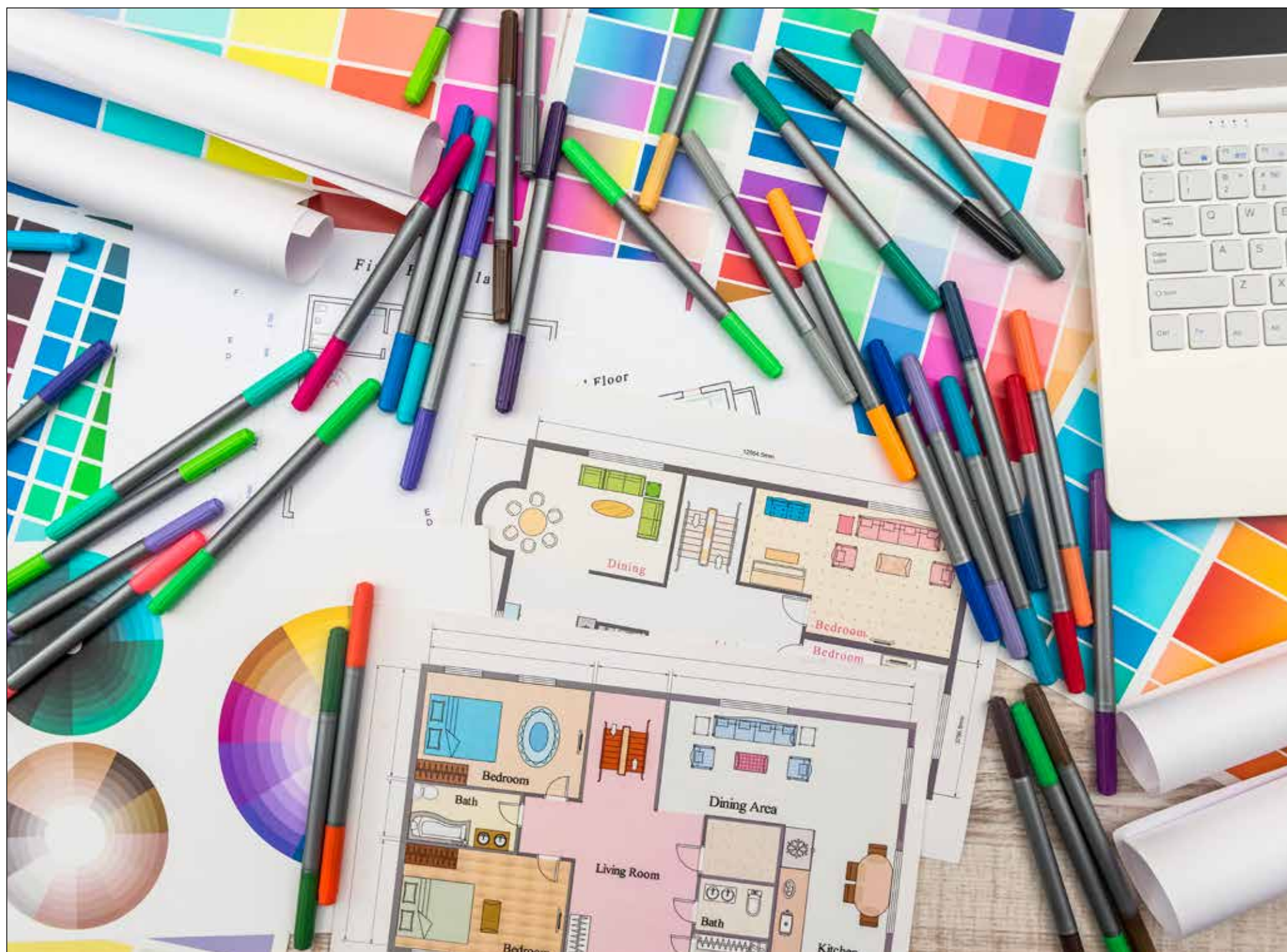
Fix: When selecting a rug, aim for a size that allows at least the front legs of your furniture to sit on it. In a living room, this often means choosing a rug large enough to fit under the coffee table and reach the front legs of the sofas. In a dining room, ensure the rug extends beyond the chairs when they are pulled out. This creates a cohesive look and a more inviting atmosphere.

Conclusion

Decorating mistakes are a natural part of the process, and even the most seasoned designers encounter them from time to time. The key is to learn from these missteps and embrace the journey of creating a space that reflects your style and meets your needs. With these tips in hand, you'll be well on your way to transforming your home into a stunning sanctuary that you and your neighbors will admire. So grab your paintbrush, rearrange those furniture pieces, and let your creativity shine – your dream home awaits!

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



LAKE NONA ARTS: WHAT WAS YOUR FAVORITE SUBJECT IN SCHOOL?

BY STEPHANIE HOUDE
PHOTOS COURTESY OF LAKE NONA ARTS

Some of you were thinking “lunch” – don’t deny it! Others of you were thinking “recess” when you got to play kickball with your friends. Maybe you had fond memories of art class and the endless possibilities a blank piece of paper and a box of crayons or palette of paint offered you. Several of you thought about a performing arts class, like choir, band or theater, where together with your friends you shared your talents with others to create something beautiful.

So, why did you stop?

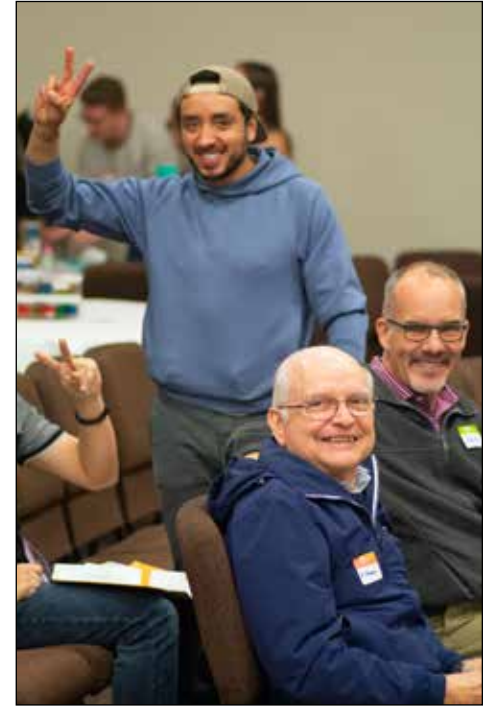
Lake Nona Arts believes this kind of fun isn’t only for school-age kids. The community schools offer wonderful programs for the students, and our organization is here for those who graduated – recently or many years ago! We eagerly promote and nurture participation in the arts by adults (18+) in our community. Our choir is weeks into our fourth season, with some big concerts coming soon. Our orchestra just kicked off our third season with the first rehearsal on March 2. The newest Lake Nona Arts endeavor, an improv troupe, completed its first very successful season, culminating in a friends and family show on Feb. 28. There are other artistic endeavors being discussed, including a film club and a photography club. We are also interested in arts that are usually done by oneself, like writing and painting, where we might plan low-key social gatherings where like-minded creators can share their creative journeys.

What creative yearning do you have and how can we help you express the art inside you?

We would love to have you join one of our ongoing community arts groups or reach out to connect with us to attend a concert or suggest an idea to expand the arts community in our area!

Email lakenonachoir@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 lakenonachoir@gmail.com to learn about the ways you can donate to our non-profit.

Lake Nona Arts is a registered 501(c)3 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 lakenonachoir@gmail.com.



CULTIVATING CALM: THE ART OF NOT PANICKING IN LEADERSHIP

BY DR. LINDA TRAVELUTE, HOST OF THE LEADER FUEL PODCAST



When America raced to send the first men into space, they trained their astronauts in one critical skill above all others: the art of not panicking.

This isn't just a fascinating piece of history – it's a powerful lesson for every leader.

In today's high-stakes world, where every decision impacts your team and organization, mastering calm under pressure isn't a luxury; it's a necessity.

The Survival Mode Flip

When panic strikes, our brains flip into survival mode. Suddenly, we override systems, ignore procedures, and react impulsively rather than responding with strategy. In leadership, these knee-jerk reactions can lead to costly mistakes and lost opportunities.

Imagine a tiny spacecraft hurtling 150 miles above Earth with no room for error. One moment of panic could be catastrophic.

NASA's Solution to Astronaut Panic

NASA's solution was simple: train relentlessly. Astronauts drilled every detail of their mission – from the breakfast routine on launch day to the countdown itself – until uncertainty was replaced with familiarity and fear with calculated action.

Now, ask yourself: When was the last time your heart raced and you felt that surge of panic in a high-pressure moment? Maybe it was during a critical meeting or an unexpected crisis.

Reflect on that moment and consider how the panic affected your leadership. Recognizing these instances is the first step to transforming your response.

Just as NASA's astronauts built their muscle of calm through repeated training, you too can cultivate this essential skill.

It begins with exposure – practicing challenging scenarios in a controlled setting. This isn't about pretending panic doesn't exist; it's about acknowledging it, understanding it, and taking deliberate steps to neutralize its impact.

It's not about becoming numb or emotionless, either. It's about achieving a state of calm equanimity where irrational emotions don't hijack your decision-making.

Imagine approaching a crisis with the mindset, "I'm not going to let this derail me. I can focus on what I can change." Shifting from panic to proactive problem-solving isn't just refreshing – it's transformational.

Create Your Training Exposures

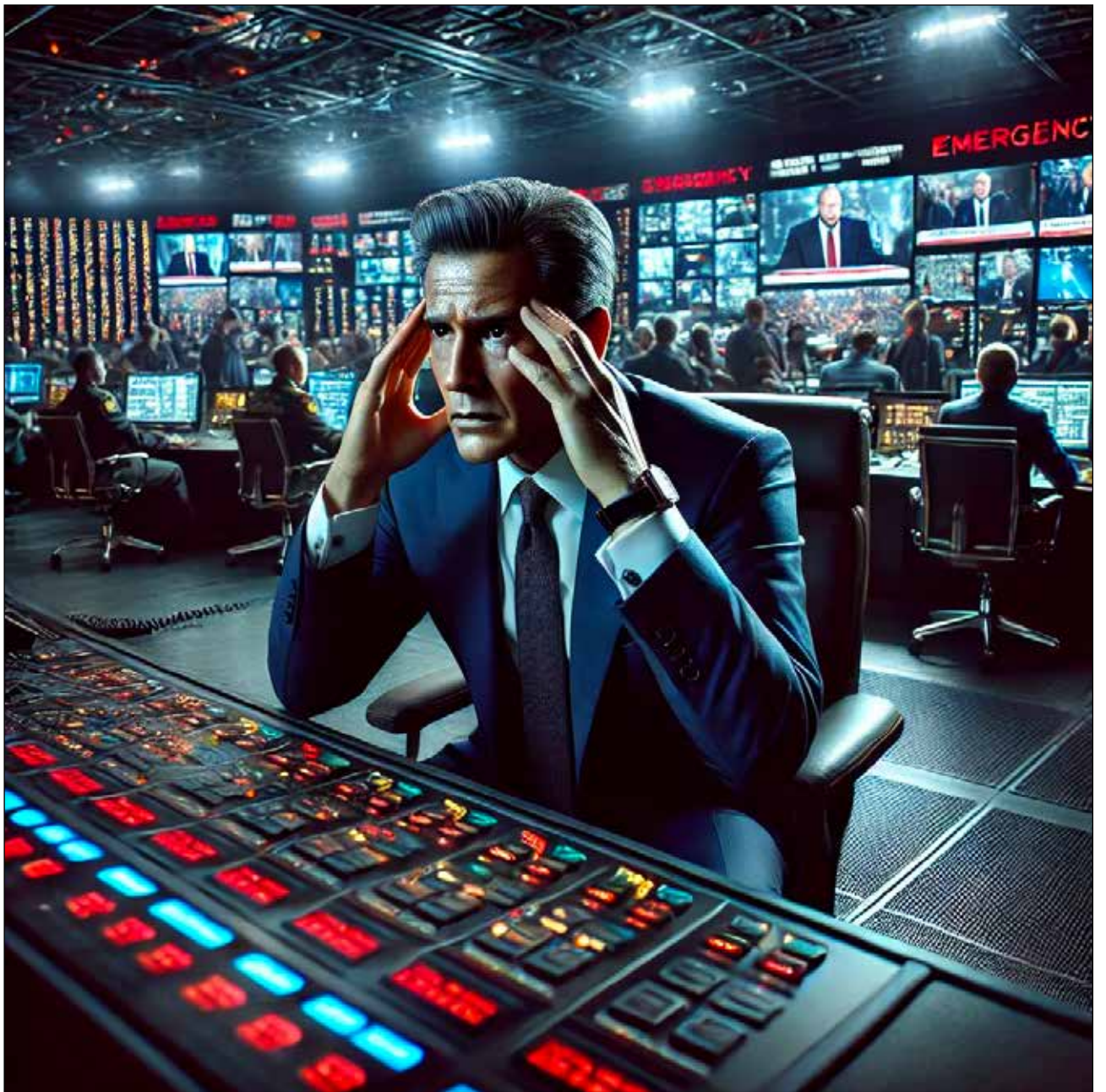
I challenge you to incorporate what I call "training exposures" into your leadership practice. I use these "training exposures" with coaching clients, and it creates big shifts.

Before a big presentation or a tough conversation, rehearse your responses. Walk yourself through every possible scenario, mentally preparing your key messages. With enough practice, your reactions become deliberate, not instinctively chaotic.

Logic Always Wins Over Panic

One of the most empowering truths is that logic always wins over panic. When a crisis hits, emotions surge and cloud your judgment.

But ask yourself: Does reacting impulsively really give you



more options? Does yelling or panicking solve the problem at hand? More often than not, it only creates more chaos.

For instance, imagine experiencing a setback – a missed opportunity, a business loss, or a miscommunication. The natural impulse might be to spiral into negative self-talk.

Instead, pause and ask, "What can I control here? What's one actionable step I can take right now?" Breaking the problem into manageable pieces shifts your focus from fear to solutions.

Create Your Mantra

I often rely on a simple mantra: "I am not going to die from this." It might sound over the top, but repeating it helps reset your mindset.

It's not about dismissing your feelings; it's a way to remind yourself that the stakes, while important, are rarely life-or-death. That small phrase reclaims control and refocuses your energy on what matters.

High-pressure moments can either be paralyzing or transformative. When you're able to harness your calm, you not only lead more effectively – you inspire confidence in your team.

They see that even when the pressure is on, you can navigate challenges with clarity and purpose.

This week:

Commit to one actionable step that will help you train your mind to stay calm under pressure. Maybe it's a daily mental rehearsal before big meetings or a pause to reframe your thoughts when stress hits. Your team, your organization and, most importantly, you deserve that level of control.

Remember, leadership is about inspiring confidence in the face of uncertainty. When you lead with a calm, clear mind, you empower those around you to do the same.

Choose Calm

Next time you feel that familiar surge of panic, stand tall, breathe deeply, and choose to respond with clarity rather than chaos. After all, a calm mind is your greatest leadership asset.

Want more topics like this? Tune into the Leader Fuel Podcast with Dr. Linda Travelute wherever you listen to your podcasts. It's the fuel you need as a leader to keep going and growing.

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!

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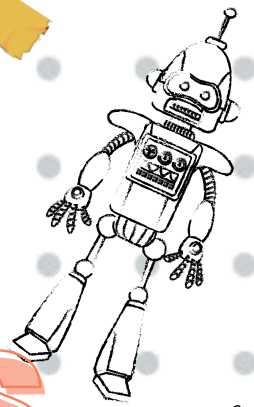
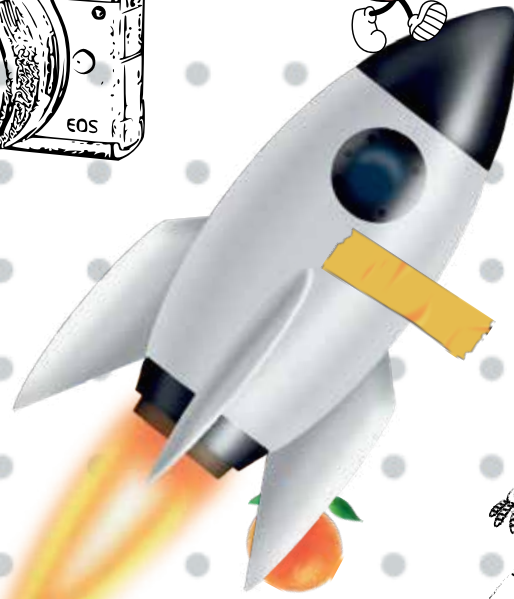
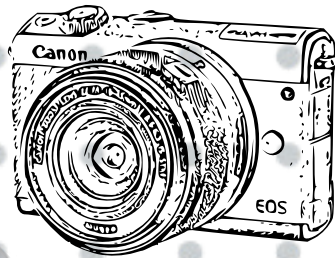
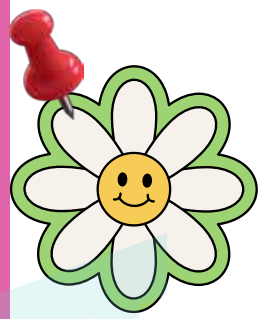
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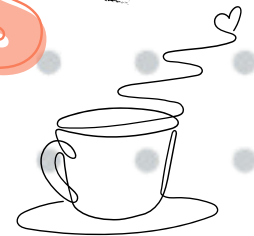




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