

# Around the Ranch

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THE COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER OF LAKEWOOD RANCH

WEDNESDAY, MAY 27, 2020



**PROGRESS SURGES ON AT WATERSIDE PLACE.** Work is going gangbusters at Lakewood Ranch's newest town center, Waterside Place. The vibrant, lakefront town center will feature shops, restaurants, and community events like concerts, festivals and farmers' markets. For more information see pages 12 and 13. Photo by Ben Eytalis.

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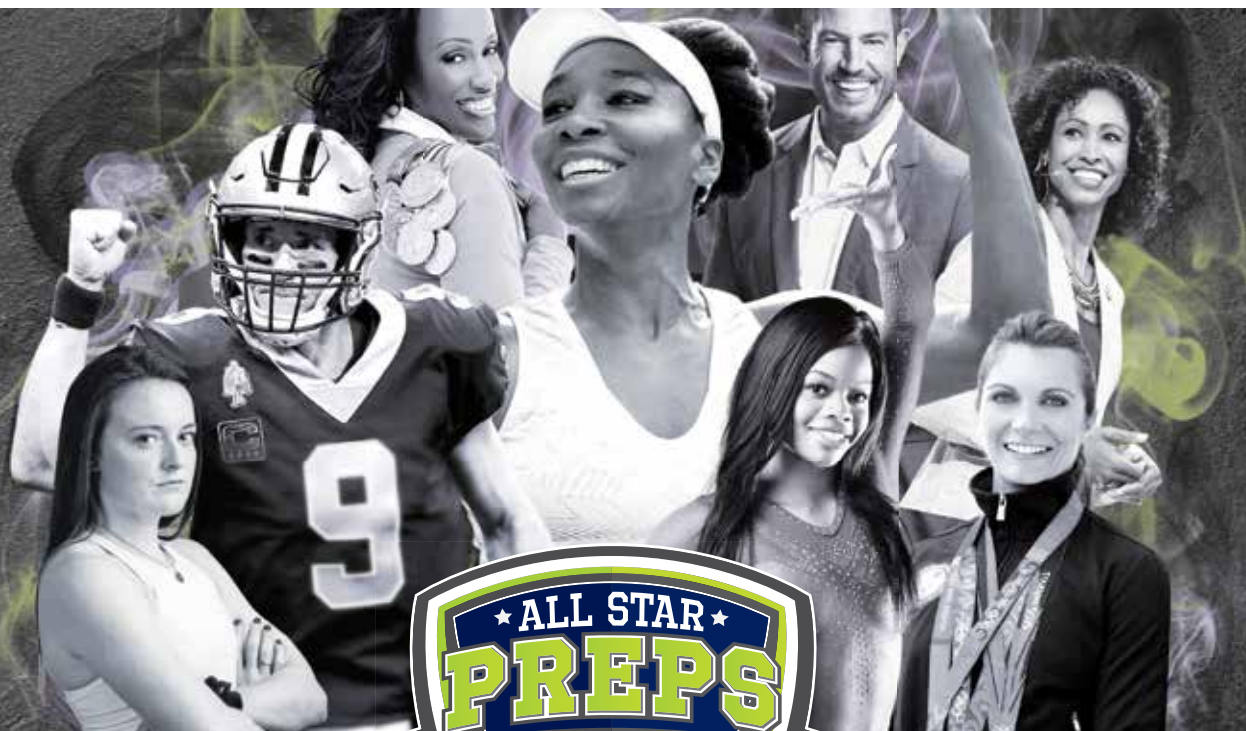
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# "The Chillmobile": Cool Fun in Your Neighborhood

BY ERNIE SOLLER,  
Community Correspondent

Kids. They usually have a place to go to, to meet their friends, and to do something called "learning."

That place is called "school," and with the urgencies of the COVID-19 pandemic, schools are closed.

Kids are home with their families. And, for some time at least, this isn't necessarily a bad thing. After all, dads, and/or moms are often not able to be at home. They both work, usually outside the home.

But then, families were told to stay home and "shelter-in-place." Schools put out on-line teaching programs, and parents spent more time playing games with their kids at home. (My younger son went out and bought a badminton set, which he set up in his back yard so his kids could go out side to play – as long as it wasn't raining!)

But after the kids do their online "homework," after the board games are played several times over and the toys rearranged, after they've watched hours of TV and played outdoor games in the back yard, what's a kid to do?

When that pivotal point of boredom hits, being a kid during COVID-19 is a little like being in solitary confinement. They can't have their friends over.

"Social distancing" has taken over and, as a kid, your're kind of stuck.

However ... someone has stepped in to alleviate the "pain and suffering" of our kids and grandkids.

Tammy Hauser is the owner of Vintage Sarasota Gifts and Discover Sarasota Tours. She operates a tour business in downtown Sarasota, which offers 18 different packages to tourists, geared to the interests of her clients, such as a city tour, a circus tour, and even a tour of Sarasota's Amish community.

She hires performers to be tour guides, since they're adept at speaking in public, and can easily master the specific tour information for the benefit of Hauser's clients.

After a hugely successful February, with the arrival of the virus in March, Hauser's tour business became nonexistent. After all, when everything is shutting down, who is going to book a tour?

So, what to do?

A while ago, Hauser bought a vintage late-70s Good Humor ice cream truck, which she usually parks outside her office in downtown Sarasota, primarily as an advertising gimmick to bring in the tourists.

Now, however, with tours being cancelled, the ice cream truck has become her lifeline – and a way for kids to be kids again.

Hauser went on Facebook, advertising the availability of "home-delivered ice cream treats." And what happened next is a real pandemic success story.

Lakewood Ranch moms picked up on the advertising on



PHOTOS BY ERNIE SOLLER



Facebook, told their friends, and now Hauser, with the able assistance of Max, the Ice Cream Dog, is to be found driving the "ChillMobile" through the streets of Lakewood Ranch's neighborhoods, dispensing ice cream – and the ability to be a kid (or to be a kid once again).

I caught up with Hauser at Lakewood Ranch's Mallory Park village. She'd told me that the last time she visited there with the ChillMobile, she had 1,000 sales in a two-hour period!

I saw parents and kids waiting at the curbside. I saw grandparents out there with their grandkids.

I saw a young girl running down the street to catch up with the ChillMobile.

Lakewood Ranch moms are even setting up kid birthday parties, using the ChillMobile. They call in advance and order a certain amount of goodies (a \$20 minimum), and then Hauser



delivers to the home of each kid with curbside service. The kids have a good time, and the kids and their families can wait at the end of their own driveways for the ice cream truck!

Hauser is now doing ice cream deliveries 10 hours a day, seven days a week!

And, yes, I bought an ice cream bar from the ChillMobile. It took me back to my own childhood, waiting to hear the ice cream man's bell ringing on a warm summer evening.

Congratulations, Tammy, and thanks for the memories!

For more information visit [TheChillMobile.com](http://TheChillMobile.com) or call (612)578-0952.



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## HEALTH OF WEALTH

# In Appreciation of Teachers

BY HULDAH MATHIS

It would be an understatement to say that nearly every aspect of life looks different these days! We have all had to find new ways to do business, to communicate and to do even the most basic things of daily life. As hard as it has been to be isolated from family and friends and to have uncertainty in so many categories, it has been encouraging to see innovation and resilience in the face of the very real challenges we're facing.

I thought I would take a break from our usual topic of finances and planning this month just to highlight one of those examples. I know I am not alone in having an even greater appreciation for TEACHERS over these recent weeks!

Every industry has had to quickly go virtual in ways that many of us could have hardly imagined. Teachers had to pivot almost immediately from not only teaching content but



to also helping students adapt to life in a virtual world. Most teachers have had zero training for converting an entire lesson plan to a Zoom format almost overnight, much less having to deliver it from their own living rooms. For many, that has also included helping their own children become virtual students at the same time.

Teachers are amazing, selfless, dedicated people who are

in it for the pure love of helping their students learn. If you ask most of them to name the hardest part of these present circumstances, it isn't the Wi-Fi going out or the extra hours of internal faculty calls they are doing every week now too. It is the loss of interaction face-to-face with their students. They miss being able to give hugs on the tough days, they miss watching them on the sports fields and they miss being able to be a confidant after class. They worry too. Being in a home learning environment isn't good (or even safe) for every child out there and many teachers feel helpless right now to have impact in those challenges.

All good teachers know the end goal: teaching kids to learn. Nothing has changed. Teachers have always had to adapt, be resourceful and ask for what they need. They're now teaching their students how to do those very things as they adapt to a new way of learning and managing time.

So, thank your child's teacher! Tell them you support them and ask how you can help on those days when the process feels bumpy. Give them grace and thank them again.

*Huldah is a Lakewood Ranch resident and certified financial planner with Northwestern Mutual. She is a Florida native and has been serving this community for 12 years.*

## LAKEWOOD RANCH GOVERNANCE MEETINGS



Lakewood Ranch governance meetings (as of this printing) are being conducted virtually. For updated schedule and login information visit:

[WWW.MYLWR.COM/953/VIRTUAL-MEETINGS](http://WWW.MYLWR.COM/953/VIRTUAL-MEETINGS)

## Virtual Vines & Vino

BY ERIC ONSTAD

From the rolling hills of Italy, Lakewood Ranch Golf & Country Club brought a unique virtual wine tasting experience to its members while socially distancing. The idea was to bring Prunotto Estate's tasting room into our living rooms via Zoom.

Members were fortunate to have Prunotto Estate's general manager – as well as multiple Antinori ambassadors from around the globe – join the wine experience.

In advance of the virtual tasting, Lakewood Ranch Golf & Country Club members picked up four bottles of delicious Italian wine along with a meat and cheese board.

"We wanted to create an afternoon of normalcy for our members during an otherwise difficult time," said Ryan Glenn, director of food and beverage at The Club. "This was a great way for our members to interact with each other and gain a bit of knowledge while adhering to social distancing guidelines. We will certainly have more of these unique experiences in the future."

More than 100 members joined together with the wine experts to examine, swirl and taste some of the finest wines from the Piedmont region of Italy. With childlike anticipation, the first bottle was uncorked and the participants began their tastebud tours. Members asked many questions about the region, the wines, and asked for suggestions on food pairings.

What made the event especially memorable was the wine experts virtually guiding members through the history of each wine's journey from sun, ground, grape, harvest, fermentation, bottle, and finally consumption.

While physically distant, we were all together fighting coronavirus one glass at a time.

"Many thanks for a fun afternoon during COVID-19 confinement," one club member commented. "A highlight of the week."



# Scientists Ask Members of the Lakewood Ranch Community To Participate in the Brain Health Initiative Pilot Study

BY DR. STEPHANIE PEABODY  
PsyD, HSPP, Neuropsychologist  
Founding Director, Brain Health Initiative

A comprehensive study of the brain health of Lakewood Ranch adult residents will launch this spring when the Brain Health Initiative (BHI) kicks off its pilot study to learn more about brain health.



The pilot study examines the ways Lakewood Ranch residents function mentally, socially, cognitively, and overall, as well as the factors in people's lives that present risk or promote resilience in brain health and performance.

Dr. Erin Dunn, an epidemiologist and research director of the Brain Health Initiative, said that adult residents of the community will be randomly selected to participate in a confidential, online questionnaire about their health, lifestyle and well-being and complete a series of cognitive computer games. The web-based survey includes questions about health habits, medical conditions, social relationships, recreational activities, and experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. Those participating will also be asked to share information about health behaviors such as exercise, nutrition, smoking, alcohol usage, sleep patterns, as well as demographic information.

Dr. Stephanie Peabody, neuropsychologist and founder and executive director of the Brain Health Initiative, encourages those residents who receive a recruitment letter to stand up for their own brain health and participate in the study and help inform the science that is essential to promoting and protecting brain health and fighting brain illness.

"Community participation is a critical component of the BHI," Dr. Peabody said. "The pilot study will help us capture risk and protective factors linked to brain health across multiple domains, including biological, psychological, behavioral, cognitive, and social factors. We will be incorporating key lessons



learned' from other successful community-based, population health projects, including the Framingham Heart Study, and Shape Up Somerville, to identify ways to protect our brain health across the lifespan at the individual and community level."

The pilot study is phase two of BHI's longitudinal study. The phase one pre-pilot information was used to design the pilot study. It also identified community coalition members and brain health champions. Community coalition members are lending their support to the pilot study.

"The survey data collected during this pilot study will serve as the basis for BHI's phase three," Dr. Peabody said. "Phase three will focus on a long-term study of brain health across the Florida Suncoast region and, through the Brain Health Innovation Lab, the opportunity for the region's residents, workforce and visitors (young and older) to participate in clinical trials that promote brain health, fight brain illness and optimize performance." Dr. Dunn said that understanding what causes brain health problems and how best to prevent brain disease remains one of the biggest medical mysteries of our time. "Especially now – when discoveries related to the brain are critically needed worldwide – I hope every community member who is contacted will step-up to help our team of scientists by participating in this study," Dr. Dunn said.

The BHI is a cutting-edge, new approach to protecting brain health and fighting brain

illness across the lifespan. The BHI is a collaborative effort led by the Massachusetts General Hospital, a Harvard Medical School Teaching Hospital, and the Academy for Brain Health and Performance and is designed to build brain healthy communities through education, research, innovation and action, and specifically focusing our efforts on brain health promotion, prevention, early detection, evidence-based intervention, and performance optimization. The BHI is creating a culture that promotes brain health protective factors and decreases risk factors, thereby improving brain health and optimizing brain performance outcomes for the Florida Suncoast region and beyond. Join the brain health movement, because brain health matters, and lifestyle makes a difference. For more information visit [www.brainhealthinitiative.org](http://www.brainhealthinitiative.org).

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# LAKEWOOD RANCH COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

**Building a true sense of community, through memorable events and social clubs.**



We had an opportunity this year to both help keep the Cinco de Mayo holiday festive, and support local music and restaurants, so we sponsored a Virtual Fiesta, with live music from La Lucha, and food specials from LWR Main Street favorite Casa Maya. We were able to reach thousands via the Facebook Live performance, all thanks to the support of our wonderful sponsors and LWR residents.



*Keith Pandeloglou  
Director of LWRCAC*

On The Ranch, we took an entire week to celebrate our #LWRMoms during LWR Mom's week! Each day, there was a way to help show your mom how much you care. From breakfast recipes easy enough for the kids to make, to Margaritas, live music, meditation, and even personalized cards we made sure to shower our #LWRMoms with love the entire week leading up to Mother's Day.

This year, our traditional tribute to heroes may have looked



a little bit different. I am so thankful that our community did everything we could to honor those who have given up so much for the freedoms we enjoy every day. On Memorial Day, we asked that all Ranchers exit their homes at 3 p.m. and join us on Facebook live to hold the National Moment of Remembrance, and to recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Immediately following the pledge, we aired our virtual tribute, which was a mix of memories from years past, stories of those who we've lost, and honoring those veterans who do so much for our community and our partner organiza-

tion, the VFW Post 12055. We also worked with Sarasota National Cemetery to identify those veteran Lakewood Ranch residents who we've lost in recent years, and honored them with a flag at their final resting place.

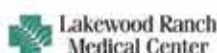
The VFW post and Lakewood Ranch Community Activities have partnered up to ensure that their annual scholarship program is still funded, so that Lakewood Ranch High School ROTC students still have opportunities to apply, and be awarded scholarships for their service. It's important to us at Community Activities to both honor the veterans, while also taking care of our students, who do so much for our events. Did you know that for most of our events, a large contingent of the event-day workforce is composed of student volunteers from Lakewood Ranch? We partner with different service organizations, including the Lakewood Ranch High School Key Club, ROTC, and Leaders to give those students opportunities to earn community service hours. They are also learning about how our not-for-profit works to connect and engage all Lakewood Ranch residents via our programming, community groups, social clubs, and give-back opportunities. It truly takes a village to put on events, and we're thankful to live in the #1 community in the country with so many that volunteer their time.

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# Dear LWR

Times like these we discover what is truly important. Worries that we may have had seem so small in comparison to our challenges today. The health of our family, our community, our world, becomes most vital. Over the past weeks, we have seen great acts of heroism, strength, care, and love - right here in Lakewood Ranch.

You delivered groceries to those at risk, you donated masks, food, and artwork to LWR Medical Center, you painted your driveways and sidewalks, you supported LWR restaurants and businesses, you homeschooled your children, and you stayed home to help flatten the curve.

Thank you for helping make this time a little easier for our community. Never have I been more proud to chant **#WEARELWR**.

With much love,

*Monaca Onstad*  
Director, Community Relations



**YOUR ONLINE COMMUNITY HUB.  
CHECK OUT OUR COMMUNITY  
CALENDAR FOR VIRTUAL EVENTS**

# AROUND THE RANCH



PHOTOS BY BEN EYALIS

## New Town Center Awash with Activity

Work is well underway on Waterside Place, Lakewood Ranch's newest town center. Waterside Place will be a vibrant, lakefront town center with stylish shops, acclaimed restaurants and much more. Community events like concerts, festivals and farmers' markets will be held in Waterside Park, an eight-acre peninsula. The Players Centre for Performing Arts, Sarasota's oldest performing arts organization, is also making its home in a stunning new theater that will host nearly 400 performances a year.

Waterside Place offers local and regional business-

es a wealth of opportunities. The town center includes 115,000 square feet of in-line and free-standing commercial space, and ample office space is also available. Businesses that will flourish in this environment include boutiques and specialty retail shops, restaurants, spas and neighborhood-oriented professional services.

Signed tenants include Derek the Salon, Atria Café, Crop Juice, Foundation Coffee Co., Paint Nail Bar, Kilwins, So Fresh, Yoga Shack, and Kore. Buildout is expected to take place in the first quarter of 2021.

For more information visit [watersideplace.com](http://watersideplace.com).



# The “Urban Taco” – Something New for Lakewood Ranch Foodies

BY ERNIE SOLLER,  
Community Correspondent

“Taqueria” is a term that defines a business, the main product of which is the taco – the quintessential Mexican “street food.”

Until now, in central Lakewood Ranch, the area close to the intersection of Lakewood Ranch Boulevard and State Road 70, there was no such place, unless you consider a couple of close-by Mexican cuisine restaurants which served tacos as part of a varied menu of Mexican specialties. Most of our area’s taquerias were located close to the middle of Bradenton, or on the west side of town.

Well, now you can drive over to Lakewood Ranch and State Road 70 and find – right between Truman’s and Marco’s Pizza – the newest addition to the Lakewood Ranch list of restaurants: the “Urban Taco.”

Urban Taco is located in the spot that used to house Mojo’s Cuban, and it is no coincidence that the next location for Urban Taco will be in Venice – in a place which used to house another Mojo’s restaurant.

The owners of Urban Taco – brothers Peter and Doug VanDerNoord and their family – came from northern Indiana, where several generations of the family had once been in the construction business.

A while back, a family member purchased a marina in Palmetto that Peter VanDerNoord eventually turned into the River House Restaurant.

After brother Doug moved to Florida, the brothers opened Fratelli’s Pizza on the west side.

Not long ago, the brothers decided to try something different. They had been approached by the owners of the Mojo’s restaurants to take over the former Mojo’s locations and in the process, Urban Taco was born.

The effort has been a real family affair.

Alanna VanDerNoord, daughter of Doug, had studied marketing at the University of South Florida and was working in that field until about two years ago, when the family asked her to take over their marketing projects. Her older sister deals with accounting, her mom handles the interior design of their properties, along with scheduling events, and her aunt (Peter’s wife), does purchasing and packaging.

The whole family pitches in to make their projects successful, and this was very much in evidence when I visited Urban Taco to get a taste (or two), of Urban Taco’s fare. Several family members were on hand, working at the store, to make sure that their opening period was successful.

The food at Urban Taco is based primarily on the taco. There are several styles of tacos available, and the customer can also



PHOTOS BY ERNIE SOLLER



do a “create-it-yourself” dish.

There are several standard tacos available, such as the Urban taco, which features carnitas, cilantro, shredded cheese, pico, and “urban guac.” My companion chose a couple of those for her lunch.

I, on the other hand, decided to try something different. I chose a couple of the Baja Fish Tacos: fried snapper, cilantro, pico, and garlic cilantro.

I was offered a choice between corn or flour tortillas for our tacos, and chose the flour tortillas, which were heated before being given their “coatings” of the varied items that made up the specific tacos.

As the store was at the time of my visit only open for carry-out, we took our tacos home, popped them into the microwave to heat them up just a bit, and the results were good – flavorful and well-balanced.

One thing that impressed me about Urban Taco’s carryout was the quality of the packaging. At some restaurants, doing carry-out might mean that on the way home, or to the office or the park, the contents of their flimsy containers might end up all over the bag they’re packed in. Not at Urban Taco. The



containers holding our tacos were still in great shape when we arrived home, and I actually had to use a bit of force to open them! Much better than scraping your food from the bottom of a bag!

Tacos are not the only items available at Urban Taco.

The store offers steak or chicken quesadillas, your choice of various burritos, several “bowl” options, such as a “green bowl” featuring chicken and various veggies. The customer can also order Urban Nachos, or even a Cuban sandwich.

There are items for kids, and desserts, and drinks – including margaritas, beer and wine – in addition to soft drinks.

Urban Taco handles carry-out orders at [www.urbantacoFL.com](http://www.urbantacoFL.com), or call (941)253-0911.

So, now Lakewood Ranch has its own taqueria.

Urban Taco – “Food that Cares” – try it!



# LWRBA

## LAKEWOOD RANCH BUSINESS ALLIANCE

The Lakewood Ranch Business Alliance (LWRBA) is a business organization committed to connecting, educating and strengthening the business community in the Lakewood Ranch region. The LWRBA's 750+ member businesses reflect a wide variety of small and large businesses across all industries in and around Lakewood Ranch. More information is available online at [www.LWRBA.org](http://www.LWRBA.org).

"Be Prepared." Upon hearing the Boy Scout motto, someone asked Scouting founder Robert Baden-Powell the inevitable follow-up question. "Prepared for what?" "Why, for any old thing," he replied.

This is the kind of advice we need to think about every day. Our region had been on a straight upward trajectory. Almost every economist for the past year had said we had a runway for continued growth. While they mentioned political unrest internationally or a pending election here in the United States, no one mentioned the expectation that the coronavirus would cause so much distress worldwide. As we have in the past, we will overcome this hurdle and be much stronger as a region and community.

One can see the outpouring of humanity within our region by reviewing the 2020 Giving Challenge results. Amid a pandemic, the Community Foundation of Sarasota County raised \$18,432,471. This commitment was broad and included donations from 58,947 donors in support of 687 separate non-profit organizations in a 24-hour period. If this does not show what our region can do, then what does?

As we emerge from our stay at home order through the state's phased approach to re-opening, we need to be sure to continue to look for obstacles just below the surface. Please talk to your advisors (accounting, financial, legal, insurance, real estate and investments)! Understand your cash flow! Do you have an 8-week or 12-week rolling cash flow? If not, now is the time to start one. Although it is a great tool while business is good and revenues are growing, it is even better when tightening occurs. Your professionals are waiting for your call. Call them. Or let us know at the Alliance if you need an introduction to certain support functions.

The Alliance stands ready to reconnect, continue to enlighten on relevant topics and assist your business with renewed growth. Our team is hard at work developing new and innovative ways to keep connected within the business community. Visit our events calendar at [LWRBA.org/events](http://LWRBA.org/events) for a full schedule of upcoming programs and virtual meetings.

We are grateful to each and every one of you for the loyalty and support of LWRBA and each other! Remember to "Buy local, Stay local and Play local" as we stay safe together!



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# Coronavirus (Hopefully) In The Ranch's Rear Mirror

BY ERNIE SOLLER,  
*Community Correspondent*

By this time of year, residents of southwest Florida are often grumbling about all the traffic created by the thousands of snowbirds who flock to Florida for a chance at warmth and sunshine. Beaches and parks are more crowded, and restaurants are full, with long waits for tables being a common occurrence. But this year things are different.

There is a worldwide pandemic happening now due to COVID-19, an event which has, at least temporarily, changed life here in Lakewood Ranch.

On April 1, Florida's governor, Ron DeSantis issued a statewide "stay-at-home" order. This order seemed to put the final touch on the effort to shut down normal activities for the purpose of containing the virus.

Suddenly, there was no traffic. Mall stores were closed. Small businesses put signs up on their doors telling customers that they planned to open, but only after the virus pandemic was under control. Restaurants were reduced to offering curbside or drive-in pick-up, or deliver only – no inside or outside seating. Supermarkets changed their hours to enable sanitizing and the stocking of shelves when customers were not in the stores, and offered special hours for seniors and first responders.

So, with things being very different, what did Lakewood Ranch look like?

On the third day after the governor's order, I took a drive around the area to find out just what Lakewood Ranchers are doing. And, for the most part, they WERE staying home.



PHOTOS BY ERNIE SOLLER

As for traffic, the question might be ... What traffic? On a Saturday morning, State Road 70, a normally very busy six-lane highway, had only a few cars moving down its lanes. I had no problem at all making a left turn onto SR 70 from White Eagle Boulevard, usually a busy intersection with traffic from the neighborhoods north of the highway and the folks coming in and out of the parking areas at our Lady of the Angels Church.

The parking lot at the church was totally empty. The only peo-

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ple I saw were several photographers who, keeping their space, were trying for shots of the eagles perched in the trees at the edge of the lot.

At Crowder's Hardware on Lakewood Ranch Boulevard there were a handful of cars in the parking lot, but most of the drivers appeared to be more interested in purchasing donuts from the Peachey's Baking Company mobile donut bakery truck, which was set up for business on one side of the parking lot. Those folks were obviously aware of the "keep at least six feet apart" rules, even as they waited their turn to buy a donut.

Moving south on Lakewood Ranch, the Lakewood Ranch "Y" was totally deserted – not even one car in the parking lot, and at the usually busy soccer fields by Lakewood Ranch High, the only activity on the fields belonged to the gulls who had taken over the turf, and were busy calling out to each other. Lakewood Ranchers appeared to be heeding the signs telling them that the fields were closed. So, what about the Premier Sports Campus? Not one person did I see on any of the fields – not even a solitary jogger.

Driving past Lakewood National, I did spy a number of intrepid golfers doing their thing on the course. After all, golfers will go out to play no matter the conditions.

And then I took a drive toward Lakewood Ranch Main Street. I was greeted by a sign for the Station 400 restaurant offering curb-

side pickup, but there were absolutely no cars parked along Main Street, and the only traffic I saw consisted of two cyclists and a solitary vehicle moving down the street. There were NO pedestrians.

It was as if Lakewood Ranch had been suddenly turned into a ghost town.

But, we know that Lakewood Ranchers are tough, and optimistic, and once this virus thing has passed, kids will again play soccer at Premier Sports, churches will reopen, the "Y" will have a full parking lot, and you'll need to wait a while for a table at your favorite restaurant.

And then, maybe we can complain about the traffic once more.



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The Florida Registration number for Meals on Wheels PLUS of Manatee is #CH1420. A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Division of Consumer Services by calling toll-free (800-435-7352) or at [www.800helpfla.com](http://www.800helpfla.com) within the state. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval, or recommendation by the state.

# Neal Land & Neighborhoods Donates \$10,000 to Meals on Wheels PLUS of Manatee

Neal Land & Neighborhoods, a Manatee and Sarasota-based master-planned community developer, has made a \$10,000 donation to Meals on Wheels PLUS of Manatee to address the increased need for meals amid COVID-19.

"As the need for food in our community continues to climb, we are so grateful for the support of Neal Land & Neighborhoods," said Amy Towery, vice president for development, Meals on Wheels PLUS of Manatee. "The services we are providing are critical and are meeting the immediate needs of Manatee County residents. These services would not be possible without financial and in-kind support from the community."

Since the start of the virus outbreak, Meals on Wheels PLUS of Manatee has seen a 30% increase in meal requests from vulnerable seniors. Throughout the month of March, over 18,900 meals were provided to home-bound residents in Manatee County.

The organization is also providing food to families via its Food4Families program, which has already supplied more than 85,000 meals to families. In addition, Meals on Wheels PLUS is providing food to nearly 100 food pantries and partner



agencies across the county, which have seen a 20% increase in food being withdrawn.

Neal Land & Neighborhood's \$10,000 donation will benefit the Food4Families program, providing 500 bags of food containing 15,000 meals to residents in need.

The gift helped kick-start donations to the organization via the Giving Challenge on April 28-29 through the Sarasota Community Foundation. Donations in the amount of \$25-\$100 were matched by the Patterson Foundation during the Giving Challenge.

"We found it impossible to sit back while members of the community struggle under the burden of COVID-19. We're happy to be able to offer support for the great work of Meals on Wheels PLUS," said John Neal, president of Neal Land & Neighborhoods. "The need for nutritious food in our community is unfortunately great during this challenging time."

To give, food donations can be shipped directly to Meals on Wheels PLUS via Amazon Smile or Quind.com. The organization has wish lists of items on both websites. Secure

gifts can also be made online at [www.mealsonwheelsplus.org/donate](http://www.mealsonwheelsplus.org/donate). A \$20 gift can feed a family of five 30 meals and a \$50 donation can feed a senior for an entire week.



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#### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Email:

Tammy.Clark@LakewoodRanchGolf.com

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# Estia will be The Ranch's First Single-Family For-Rent Community

Zilber Residential Group, the multifamily division of Zilber Ltd., has announced plans to open Estia at Lakewood Ranch, one of Florida's first single-family for-rent communities.

Located off Lakewood Ranch Boulevard, adjacent to Bob Gardner Park, Estia at Lakewood Ranch will include 230 residences, including 102 one-bedroom, 725-square-foot units within 51 duplexes, as well as 128 stand-alone, 1,000-square-foot, two-bedroom homes.

Each home will feature 10-foot ceilings, private, fenced-in backyards, screened-in patios and built-in dog doors. The community will also include a future amenity center with a pool, fitness center, community room, dog park and more.

Estia's residences are currently under construction and expected to be available for move-in this fall. The model homes and clubhouse are expected to be completed and open this summer. Pending social distancing guidelines and recommended best practices from leading health organizations, virtual and private tours may be offered initially upon opening.



A growing trend in real estate, single-family for-rent communities generally appeal to renters seeking a long-term residential experience versus an apartment, where opportunities are often limited to short-term leases. Communities like Estia at Lakewood Ranch tend to include the best of both worlds: the benefits of a professionally managed and amenitized community of high-quality homes with elevated appointments, as well as the conveniences of a maintenance-free residence.

"Lakewood Ranch is the ideal location for Estia because it offers numerous lifestyle elements that typically appeal to a wide variety

of tenants, including active professionals with young families, and downsizers," said Mike King, director of residential investments for Zilber Residential Group. "The community will appeal to those who desire a private home, low-maintenance living and robust lifestyle offerings."

According to Metrostudy, the demand for single-family for-rent communities is largely due to trends in household economics, one being the rent-by-necessity group of mostly younger families for whom down payment hurdles, monthly payment challenges, interest rate pressures, and rising for-sale prices have

put homeownership beyond their means, and households who choose to rent as a way of opting for a "less strings-attached" lifestyle ... and, yet, want to do so in a detached, single-family house in a new residential community.

"We're thrilled to introduce one of Florida's first premium, single-family for-rent communities here in Lakewood Ranch and expand upon the variety of housing options available to our prospective residents," said Kirk Boylston, president of Lakewood Ranch Commercial. "For many renters, these new units will serve as strong starter homes and a potential stepping stone to ownership of a more traditional, single-family home in Lakewood Ranch."

Zilber's additional communities developed in Lakewood Ranch include Echo Lake Apartments, and Home by Towne's Waterfront at Main Street condominiums, and the single-family home community LakeHouse Cove at Waterside.

For more information about Estia at Lakewood Ranch, please call 941-222-1898, email [EstiaLWR@lincolnapts.com](mailto:EstiaLWR@lincolnapts.com) or visit [www.EstiaLakewoodRanch.com](http://www.EstiaLakewoodRanch.com).

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