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12439 Highfield Circle	\$1,340,000
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13506 Montclair Place	\$1,200,000
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7162 Whittlebury Trail	\$1,145,000
7604 Desert Inn Way	\$1,100,111
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# *Not such a ruff job after all*



Heidi Kurpiela

After getting matched with a dog, puppy raisers spend about a year preparing their pooches for the next phase of training.



It's hard. You see a puppy out at the UTC Mall, or walking down Main Street, floppy ears bouncing with each step. As you approach, you see it squirm with excitement, and just as you are about to reach down to pat that adorable head you see the telltale blue vest that says "guide dog in training," which halts you midstep.

It is SO hard not to pet that cuteness. But you realize: They're busy learning, and if you treat them like you treat your own dog at home, well, you will get the same results. Which is no good for the kind of behavior those who will rely on this dog require.

Nope, you have to keep your pats and your kisses to yourself, hard as it may be.

Now put yourself in the shoes of the people who volunteer to raise them. In our story on page 72, we get a window in to their world. Sure, they get a wriggly, furry bundle of fun to raise. But anyone

who has had a puppy knows they are also like lightning-fast toddlers who don't wear diapers and can chew up beloved possessions in seconds. Successful training requires ample energy, patience and consistency.

Aside from the basic stuff all dogs must learn, puppy raisers have about a year to get their pups ready for the big-time training. That means getting them socialized, exposing them to different environments and making sure they're teaching good puppy behaviors. No in-the-bed snuggles or table scraps for these pooches.

"We make sure that people understand that they are not just taking a puppy into their home and letting them be a dog," explains Leslie Shepard, director of puppy raising services for Southeastern Guide Dogs. "There are specific protocols they have to follow and expectations of what the puppy will be taught."

The puppy raisers also take a training course. As the organization says, you

don't have to be perfect to raise a puppy. You just have to be committed.

At first glance, that commitment may seem like a lot when you don't get a companion at the end. It must be a little heartbreaking to raise one of these smart, beautiful creatures and have to give them back.

But they do get the satisfaction of knowing that their time and love will help a person with a disability or struggle have a whole new life.

Shepard says about 70% of puppy raisers repeat the process, but with 250 puppies a year, they're always looking for the other 30%.

The raisers range from retirees to busy families with children. The commitment is a serious one, but so is the cause. If you think you might be interested — and can keep your snuggles in check — visit [GuideDogs.org](http://GuideDogs.org) to learn more.

*Kat Hughes*  
Executive Editor



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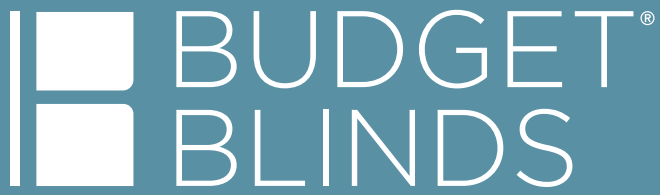
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# *BUZZ*

NEWS, HAPPENINGS AND PEOPLE

Sarasota restaurants expand east to take a bite of the market. **PAGE 28**





Photo by Liz Ramos

Paul, Mark and Rob Caragiulo first investigated expanding their restaurant business into Lakewood Ranch more than 20 years ago. They're soon opening a branch of their popular downtown eatery, Owen's Fish Camp, in Waterside.

# New Eats Out East

The lure of East County and its thousands of hungry newcomers is a magnet for Sarasota restaurateurs.

BY MARK GORDON | CONTRIBUTOR

Longtime downtown Sarasota resident and area barbecue doyenne Nancy Krohngold never thought of herself as an East County evangelist.

But four years into running Nancy's Bar-B-Q at Lorraine Corners, at State Road 70 and Lorraine Road, Krohngold believes she's carved out the perfect

place, and she wants everyone to know about it. "I consider this spot a marquee location," she says. "I feel like we are at the right place at the right time."

So much so that Krohngold, who started in the early 2000s with a catering operation that grew into a storefront restaurant, first in downtown Sarasota, has been chatting up others in the tight-knit Sarasota-Bradenton restaurant community about coming "out east."

Multiple other Sarasota restaurant owners share Krohngold's beliefs in it being the right place and right time for East County in terms of demographics and projected population growth. Proof comes in the roughly dozen restaurants and eateries that have either opened or are in the process of opening an East County location, from a

high-end Latin American business that serves artistic-looking dinners to a donut joint.

In the Mall at UTC area alone there are six spots with original locations in Sarasota. One is Selva Grill, the Latin American staple from Main Street in downtown Sarasota that opened a location in the West District at UTC in May 2021. Another is the Five-O Donut Co., which opened its fourth location, also in the West District at UTC, in March. The first Five-O Donuts were in downtown and south Sarasota. Other newcomers to the UTC area with original locations in Sarasota include Origin Craft Beer & Pizza Café and Crop Juice.

Mark Chait, director of leasing for

*Continued on Page 30*



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Continued from Page 28

East County-based Benderson Development, which developed and leases space in the UTC districts, says the expansion procession stems from a quality-attracts-quality strategy.

"They very much want to be part of the magnetism of UTC and the success of all the restaurants there," Chait says.

That's true outside UTC properties, too.

Krohngold first opened an East County Nancy's in 2015 on Lakewood Ranch's Main Street. That 1,500-square-foot location was a "big success from day one," she says, and when she had an opportunity to move to a bigger spot at Lorraine Corners, she took it.

At 5,400 square feet, her current location is more than threefold the size of the Main Street location, which she closed. And in 2020, Krohngold closed her downtown Sarasota location, a combination of the landlord selling the site and the pandemic squeezing the life out of the downtown lunch crowd. Now with Lorraine Corners her lone spot, Krohngold says she couldn't be happier. Even her 16.5-mile commute to work from downtown Sarasota allows her to amp up for or decompress from the day. "I'm so pleased with where we are," she says.

Some 4 miles south of Nancy's, in what's become East County's buzziest project in years, Waterside, lie several other restaurants that have origins in Sarasota. A notable one is Owen's Fish Camp, expected to open in October in Center Point. From the Caragiulo family, the Center Point Owen's follows the original one in Burns Court in downtown Sarasota.

Mark Caragiulo says he and his brothers investigated coming out east 20 or 25 years ago when the San Marco Plaza was in development. But back then, he says, the area was mostly sprawl, "with little sense of place."

Things have changed. The new Owen's Fish Camp will have 150 seats, 66% more than the 90 at the original. It will also have ample parking, a wraparound porch and be on the water. "We're pretty excited about being here," Caragiulo says. "We always had it in our mind to come out here, but now, with the density and demographics, you can't deny it. It's like its own little city now."



Photo by Brendan Lavell

Tsunami Sushi and Hibachi Grill owner Sam Ray and general manager Jeffrey Karasawa hope to open their Lakewood Ranch location in The Green by the end of 2022.



Photo by Liz Ramos

Christine Nordstrom, owner of Five-O Donut Co., says she is excited to open a new location at University Town Center.



Courtesy photo

Barbecue doyenne and entrepreneur Nancy Krohngold has become an East County evangelist. Many of her friends and fellow restaurateurs have followed her initiative to open branches in Lakewood Ranch.

## LOW-DOWN ON NEW EATS OUT EAST

Restaurants, donut shops and juice bars with original locations in Sarasota that are planning expansions or have already expanded to East County include:

■ **Bella Vita:** In development at Waterside Place. From owner Giuseppe "Peppe" del Sol, co-owner of Napule in Sarasota.

■ **Korê Steakhouse:** Open in Waterside Place. Owner has two Jpan locations, one in UTC and one in Sarasota.

■ **Crop Juice:** Developing a location at Waterside Place. Original location is in south Sarasota County, and it recently expanded in the Shoppes at UTC.

■ **Libby's Neighborhood Brasserie:** Opened on Lorraine Road in October 2019. From Tableside Restaurant Group, the original Libby's is in the Southside Village of Sarasota.

■ **Nancy's Bar-B-Q:** First opened in East County on Lakewood Ranch's Main Street in 2015. That location is now closed. Opened its current location at Lorraine Corners in 2018. The original Nancy's was in Burns Court in downtown Sarasota.

■ **Origin Craft Beer & Pizza Café:** Opened in Shoppes at UTC on Tourist Center Drive in February 2021. The original location is in Southside Village in Sarasota.

■ **Owen's Fish Camp:** Center Point location could be open by October. The original is in Burn's Court.

■ **Ruth's Chris Steak House:** Global high-end steakhouse chain announced in January it plans to open a 6,500-square-foot restaurant in Center Point. Its longstanding Sarasota location is in south Sarasota.

■ **Selva Grill:** Latin American-inspired steakhouse and seafood restaurant opened in the West District at UTC in May 2021. The original is in downtown Sarasota.

■ **Tsunami Sushi and Hibachi Grill:** Its location in The Green could be open by the end of 2022. The original location is in downtown Sarasota.

■ **Five-O Donut Co:** With three other locations in Sarasota, this popular donut shop opened its fourth branch in University Town Center in March.



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Photos by Liz Ramos

Michael Taaffe sees great potential in the park and wants to add new playgrounds, a pavilion, a boathouse and more.

# Beyond Rowing

Michael Taaffe, the chair of the Nathan Benderson Park Conservancy, shares his dreams to make Benderson Park a thriving gathering spot for the surrounding community.

BY LIZ RAMOS | CONTRIBUTOR

Michael Taaffe stood on the rooftop deck of the six-story Benderson Family Finish Tower at Nathan Benderson Park one recent spring afternoon. From that vantage point, Taaffe enjoyed a panoramic view of the 600-acre park.

But his concept for the park goes beyond his sightline.

Taaffe, a partner with Shumaker, Loop & Kendrick, took over as Benderson Park's board chair in September. His big plans for Benderson Park's future still include elite international athletic events but also embrace ways to engage local denizens through better access, new indoor and outdoor exercise and play areas, and community-designed events.

Taaffe notes that, in beginning months of the pandemic when gyms closed, people flocked to Benderson Park to exercise outdoors. He was among the hundreds who came every day to bike, inline skate, walk dogs, run, row and paddle. Two years later? According to Taaffe, even more locals are using Benderson Park as their go-to place to exercise and be outside.

Although Benderson Park has always served as an elite facility for rowing, dragon boating, canoeing and kayaking, Taaffe sees great potential in other uses.

"I see this as a diamond in the rough," he says. "We have 600 acres here, and we can do so many things we had never thought we could do before."

*Continued on Page 34*



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Sarasota County commissioners recently voted to help fund the construction of a 100,000-square-foot inside sports facility to top the planned boathouse for the park.

We spoke with Taafe recently about some of his thoughts for the future.

*People love coming here for the biking and running trails. What plans do you have for them?*

We're going to expand them. There are two types of trails: asphalt trails for biking and running and cinder trails for running and walking. We're going to expand the cinder trails around the southern end of the park to add an additional 2 miles to the already existing trails, which is about 3.1 miles.

*Playgrounds are also popular here; do you have plans for creating more?*

Absolutely. I'd like to see two playgrounds, one designed for younger children and one for older children, with the appropriate recreational equipment for both. Both will be under shade. We also want to have a food truck and a coffee truck so that the adults watching their children can get a cup of coffee or a sandwich. Eventually, we may add a small concession area with coffee, sandwiches and juices.

*What about plans for a pavilion?*

At the 500-meter mark (of the lake), we're going to install a cement surface with a large solid covering so that people can practice yoga and work out under shade. During the weekends, if there's an event, this can also serve as another shaded viewing area.

*What can you tell us about adding a boathouse to the park?*

The boathouse is essential because we need a permanent facility to run community events and have a long-term presence for people who want to use the park daily or for events. I don't want to get ahead of this, but it's going to be great if it happens.

*The anticipated I-75 overpass connecting the University Town Center area and Waterside Place of Lakewood Ranch could break ground in 2023 if funding is in place. What impact do you think the overpass is going to have on the park?*

It's going to open the park up directly

to Lakewood Ranch without having to go through the University (Parkway) interchange. The flyover is going to have wide multiuse lanes for running and biking, so that will give us access to Lakewood Ranch and Lakewood Ranch access to us to stage larger biking and running events.

By having the additional distance, we can host half and full marathons and Ironman triathlons because we have all the roadways and the Celery Fields. We'll have access to run more long-distance events that will start in the park and finish in the park but circle through Lakewood Ranch.

*What do you think will be the biggest revenue generators with all the new improvements that you're planning?*

The events that bring teams from around the world and nation — those that stay for a week or two at local

hotels and eat at local restaurants — will continue to bring vital revenue to the area. But that will not overshadow the day-to-day community events that happen here. It's a symbiotic relationship between events that generate revenue and programs that benefit the community.

*How does it feel to be in the planning process of what's to come?*

It's exciting. I've always known the potential of rowing and how it changes people's lives — and the life of the community around it. And now, to see people out here every day running, biking, walking — it's also wonderful to know that Benderson has become an important and welcoming destination for our surrounding community. The park is quickly becoming the center of our community and the biggest active public park in the area.

“

*The park is quickly becoming the center of our community and the biggest active public park in the area.”* **MICHAEL TAAFFE**



People flock to Nathan Benderson Park for various events throughout the year.



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# Coast is Clear for Coastal Orthopedics

A construction and build-out project with a price tag of more than \$30 million positions a fast-growing medical group to meet East County's current and future demand.

BY MARK GORDON | CONTRIBUTOR

Some development and real estate deals are born on the golf course; others are doodled on a cocktail napkin. The site of one of the biggest construction projects in the region over the past 12 months — an 88,000-square-foot orthopedics facility in East County — was cooked up in a butcher shop.

The scene was the Chop Shop, a Bradenton institution on Manatee Avenue West. It was there in 2019 that Dr. Arthur Valadie, Coastal Orthopedics' president, bumped into commercial real estate broker Tom Brown with Wagner Realty.

The conversation quickly turned from meat to land, namely a 17-acre site on State Road 64, just east of Interstate 75. Valadie had spied it while driving by. Coastal Orthopedics, founded in 1973, was going through a growth spurt, and leadership sought a new facility to both meet current demand and prepare for the future. A growing percentage of Coastal's patients are from both the East County area, where Coastal has had a large presence for 16 years, and north of Manatee River, in Palmetto, Parrish

*Continued on Page 38*



Photo by Mark Wemple

In his leadership role at Coastal Orthopedics, Dr. Arthur Valadie recognizes the need to expand to meet the needs of a growing population out east.





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Photo by Tom Thomas

Coastal Orthopedics' new 88,000-square-foot facility features six operating rooms and 64 exam rooms.

*Continued from Page 36*

and Ellenton.

So, the right plot of land was essential. "I brought it up to (Tom), who had done some real estate work for us," Valadie says. "He was a bit surprised. It was a big piece of land."

The land purchase, for which Manatee County records show Coastal paid \$5.3 million in February 2020, represents a milestone moment for both the medical practice and East County. The new two-story facility is essentially a mini-hospital, providing a full suite of comprehensive orthopedic surgery, sports medicine, spine care, pain management and physical therapy services. The investment, Valadie says, is north of \$30 million, including build-out, equipment and land purchase. "It's a big investment for us," he says.

What makes this investment even more notable is that the organization behind it is an independently owned medical group. Coastal Orthopedics, with 20 doctors and 19 physician assistants and nurse practitioners, and a total payroll of some 300 employees, has resisted becoming part of a corporate medical group or hospital chain. That independence is rare, given the health care industry's move toward giant, all-encompassing organizations. Coastal

is also the only orthopedic group in the Bradenton area that wholly owns its own surgery center.

"As a physician and a patient advocate, I'm excited because this facility allows us to provide the most modern and up-to-date premium care in the country," says Valadie, a sports medicine specialist at Coastal, in addition to his leadership role. "As a business owner, I'm excited for several reasons. It will bring our administrative staff under one roof. Also, being independently owned is really important to us, and this helps us solidify that. And when you have a beautiful facility like this, it can really help you attract and retain key people."

Coastal has other offices and branches around Manatee County, including one near Lakewood Ranch Medical Center. And it recently moved into new space in west Bradenton, where it's had a presence for decades. "We have always grown organically to meet the needs of patients," says Coastal Orthopedics' marketing manager Megan Batty.

The State Road 64 facility broke ground on March 9, 2021, and is scheduled to open to the public by this June. It includes an ambulatory surgery center, physical therapy department, diagnostic imaging services and a Mako knee replacement robot.

There's also a six-room surgery center to help address increasing demand for outpatient surgery, particularly joint replacement and spine surgeries. The practice expects at least 200 of its 300 employees to work at the complex regularly, with that number increasing based on patient needs.

Valadie says all the decisions behind the complex come back to Coastal's North star: to provide both access to high-quality care and experienced physicians and staff. Standing outside the facility in late March, with workers outside paving the parking lot and crews inside working on electricity for exit signs, Valadie also peeked ahead. One idea, he says, is to open an orthopedic urgent care center in the facility focused on spines and fractures.

A bigger concern? When, not if, will Coastal outgrow its new building? Valadie realizes the East County population surge shows no signs of abating, and Coastal's disciplines and specialties, which revolve around improving a patient's quality of life, are tailor-made for the demographic flocking to the area: younger baby boomers.

"It's a big challenge," he says. "How do you make it affordable for today but the right size to match the growth of the community?"

## COASTAL ORTHOPEDICS BY THE NUMBERS

**88,000**

Square feet of new site on State Road 64

**17**

Acres

**2**

Floors

**6**

Operating rooms

**20**

Pre and post-op beds

**6**

Private recovery rooms

**64**

Exam rooms

**60**

Support services cubicles

*Coastal expects at least 200 of its 300 employees to work at the complex regularly, with that number increasing based on patient needs.*



# The 22/23 Season

Anna Pellegrino | Photography by Matthew Holler



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# PULSE

THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY

Local studio uses dance to strengthen spirits of all ages. **PAGE 46**





# Making an Impact

The Community Connections Resource Guide has quickly become an invaluable tool for the social services community.

BY ERIC SNIDER | CONTRIBUTOR

**T**he Sarasota/Manatee region is rich with nonprofits and aid organizations but until recently no central source listed them. That changed in 2020, when Making an Impact — itself a nonprofit — published its Community Connections Resource Guide, which has quickly become an invaluable tool for the social services community.

The booklet lists nearly 300 organizations with accompanying descriptions outlining their mission. Services are broken into 17 wide-ranging categories, including abuse, food pantries, housing and shelter assistance, and alcohol and drug addiction. The organizations are further subdivided into the geographical areas of Manatee County, Sarasota County and the Venice/Northport area.

“It was originally created to help those who help others,” says Victoria Kasdan, co-founder and chair of Making an Impact. “But it’s also available to the general public — although, I have to say, we didn’t always have enough (copies) to go around.”

That scarcity was effectively solved in January when the guide debuted online in a user-friendly, searchable form. The digital version was largely

*Continued on Page 44*



Photos by Lori Sax

Victoria Kasdan established Making an Impact as a nonprofit and quickly started bringing in money from grants and donations.



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made possible by a \$15,000 technology-focused grant from the Knight Donor Advised Fund of the Manatee Community Foundation. Previously, the guide had existed only as an on-line flipbook. The grant also paid for advertising on public transportation and a promotional video.

Making an Impact published the third edition of the Community Connections Resource Guide in January. Copies are distributed to local nonprofits, government entities, law enforcement agencies and faith-based institutions. They've become invaluable aids to staffers seeking to match the appropriate organization with the people they're assisting. The case management department of the Lakewood Ranch Medical Center utilizes the guide, as do three of Lakewood Ranch's EMS stations. The Manatee County Sheriff's Office puts them in the hands of officers in the field.

Kasdan exudes the confidence of a woman who is used to getting things done. She grew up on the South Side of Chicago and worked for 20 years as a registered nurse in the intensive care unit of the city's University of Illinois Hospital. Kasdan went on to sell pharmaceuticals, medical equipment and medical insurance in her hometown and Minneapolis and New Jersey. After the youngest of her three children graduated from high school, Kasdan and her husband sought a more temperate place. That turned out to be east Bradenton.

In 2015, Kasdan signed on as executive director of We Care Manatee, a nonprofit that helps the uninsured get health coverage. She left in 2019 to start her own (for-profit) consulting agency, Mission Made Possible, specializing in health and human services.

One of her clients wanted a comprehensive list of charities in Sarasota. She poked around and discovered that none existed. Kasdan found her way to Linda Hoy, a CPA who moved to Sarasota from upstate New York in 2005. A recent divorce had heightened Hoy's awareness of aid organizations, so "I started researching what Sarasota and Manatee counties had to offer, since I was new to the community and didn't know myself," Hoy wrote in an email.

Her simple document grew to more than 100 pages and 200 nonprofits. But she didn't know what to do with it.

"My worst fear was that when I died, my resource guide (would die) with me," she says.

Enter Kasdan. She reckons that Hoy's document got the guide about "60% there. But it was not ready for prime time in the form it was in then."

Kasdan and her husband were on a cruise around Australia and New Zealand when COVID-19 abruptly shut down the world. Back in Bradenton, with plenty of time on her hands, Kasdan contacted Hoy about moving the project forward.

"It became pretty clear right away that Covid would create a lot more need in the community and the guide would be even more necessary," Kasdan says.

Kasdan established Making an Impact as a 501(c)(3), convened an eight-member board of directors and, along with Hoy, set about finishing the resource guide. By early summer of 2020, they'd released the first printed edition in an 8-1/2 x 11-inch format. Kasdan soon found out from nonprofits, particularly the American Red Cross, that the book needed to be more portable. Shrinking the size and adding a ring binder added to the cost. Kasdan, no slouch at fundraising, started bringing in money from grants and donations.

The all-volunteer Making an Impact has remained small, with virtually no overhead and administrative costs making up less than 5% of budget. The most recent edition of the guide added 19 new nonprofits and cut a few that had failed during the pandemic, bringing the total listings to 283. There are now 3,000 copies in circulation.

"When Linda and I started this, it was because we thought there may be more people like us who needed information to help others," Kasdan says. "What we didn't realize was how many of them there were."

#### GET IN TOUCH

##### **Making An Impact**

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##### **Email:**

Info@Making-An-Impact.org

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**Website:** Making-An-Impact.org



Linda Hoy started the guide, which has now grown to showcase nearly 300 nonprofits.

“  
*When Linda and I started this, it was because we thought there may be more people like us who needed information to help others. What we didn't realize was how many of them there were.*” **VICTORIA KASDAN**



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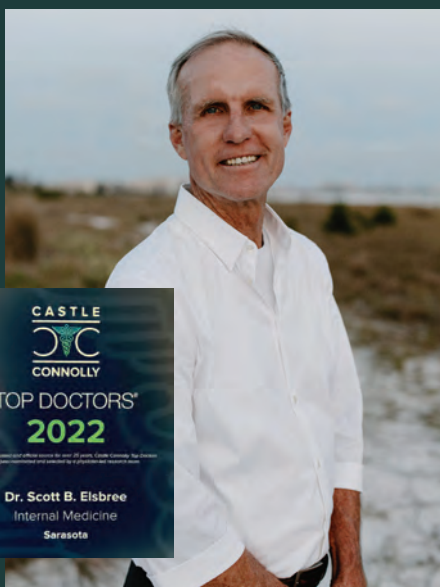
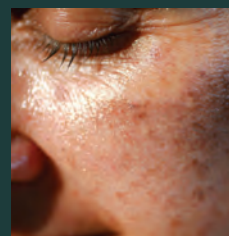


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*class act*

# Changing Lives Through Dance

Alana Turner,  
founder of Art & Soul,  
believes dance can  
be transformative  
for people of all ages.

BY SPENCER FORDIN | CONTRIBUTOR

**T**he power was out, and patience was thin.

Alana Turner, founder of the Lakewood Ranch-based Art & Soul Dance Company, can still recall opening her doors right after Hurricane Irma struck Florida in 2017.

Turner, who had a background in social work and child protection prior to operating dance studios, knew exactly how she wanted to handle the adversity.

She wanted to help children, just as she'd done at every stage of her career. And she wanted to do it free of charge.

"If you think people are interested in dance classes when they don't have electricity and water, no, they aren't," says Turner, now happily running a thriving enterprise. "But here's what we did. Parents were able to go back to work after about a week, but the kids were still not back to school. So, we offered free camps for any of the kids whose parents had to work. If they gave a donation to the Irma relief fund, their kids came here for camp for free."



*Continued on Page 48*

Art & Soul founder Alana Turner with student Irelynn Ettinger

Photos by Lori Sax



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Victoria knew she had a complicated pregnancy but didn't expect to be rushed to the ER at seven months. That night, baby Luke was born and placed in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU). Victoria underwent emergency surgery to save her life.

It's unusual to experience the ER, Trauma Center, NICU and ICU all at once, but this story's happy ending is testament to the skill and dedication of the critical care teams at SMH.

Victoria says the nurses were her angels and her doctors were amazing. The message from her husband and children: "Thank you for saving our family."

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Scan or visit [smhf.org/victoria](http://smhf.org/victoria)  
to watch the family's story.

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380701-1



It was that ability to integrate community action and philanthropy into her business model that pervades Art & Soul to this day. Five years later, Turner reaches 250 students from age 2 to adults in classes that include jazz, ballet, tap and hip hop.

Turner's daughter Kiki, a dancer and multisport athlete, helps run the studio when she's not working on her studies at State College of Florida, Manatee-Sarasota.

Art & Soul has intense, skill-focused dance classes and brings students to regional competitions, but it also teaches kids at a more fundamental level.

"The whole purpose is to be inclusive as opposed to specific to a population," says Turner about her students. "They all work together. They all hang out together, and it really breaks a lot of barriers."

Turner opened her first dance studio in Toronto in 1990, but she missed her background in social work. So, she began offering scholarships to foster kids and could see the immediate, tangible gains they made in their lives.

"I saw with my own eyes how they began to feel confident," she says. "They could be artistic and creative and all the things that they wouldn't typically have a chance to do. When I moved here in 2014, I initially didn't want to open another dance school. I thought, 'I've done that already. I've been really successful. I'm going to do something else.' But truthfully, I didn't see the opportunity to serve the populations I wanted to serve in other dance studios. So, I just said, 'I'm going to do it myself.'"

Five years later, she's doing exactly that.

One of the projects closest to Turner's heart are her weekly classes with ReImagine Dance, which brings a group of special needs children to work toward building skills and friendships.

The kids are prepping for a performance at Manatee Performing Arts Center in late May, but week to week, they're surprising themselves and their parents with what they've learned.

Shannon Johnson and Melanie Simmons, parents with the ReImagine Dance program, said they can see the progress the kids are making not only in class but also at home.

"It's amazing to see how much they have opened since we started," says

*Alana Turner wants to empower more kids to feel confident about themselves and their futures. She also wants to spread the message that doing good in the community feels good.*



Art & Soul students like Sofia Basile, Juliana Fazio, Irelynn Ettinger and Raelynn Dine can choose from classes that include jazz, ballet, tap and hip hop.

Johnson. "Truman wouldn't do anything at first, and now he sings during the entire class and dances. When he goes home, he'll sing and dance all night long."

"We want them to learn dance," adds Simmons. "We want them to be successful and show that they can be wonderful, just like everybody else. And they know that, but they don't usually get the ability to express it. Sometimes, there's just not that many opportunities for them. But most importantly for us, they get to build friendships here. At least for my daughter, she doesn't have a lot of opportunities outside of school

to meet people who are like her."

That gets right to the heart of it for Turner, who believes dance can be transformative and life-changing for people no matter their age or ability.

Turner wants to empower more kids to feel confident about themselves and their futures, and she wants to spread the message that doing good in the community feels good, too.

"Our platform is dance," she says. "But we'd be more than happy to work with anybody in the community who wants to offer these kinds of opportunities to kids with different challenges and abilities."

### WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Art & Soul's website lists dozens of summer camps and activities.

**Address:** 6279 Lake Osprey Drive

**Phone:** 941-388-8603

**Website:** [ArtAndSoulDance.com](http://ArtAndSoulDance.com).





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# calendar summer 2022

## JUNE

### JUNE 1

#### CLASSIC CAR SHOW

Enjoy classic cars from 5-8 p.m. on Lakewood Ranch's Main Street. Anyone with a classic car, truck or anything with wheels is welcome. Enjoy food, music and prizes. Admission is free; participation is \$10 per vehicle. Continues July 6 and Aug. 3.

■ For information, visit [LakewoodRanch.com](http://LakewoodRanch.com).

### JUNE 3

#### MUSIC ON MAIN

This monthly event is on Lakewood Ranch's Main Street from 6-9 p.m. Enjoy a free concert, food vendors, beer trucks and kids activities. Pop and rock cover band Fuse will perform, and the event benefits Friends of the East Manatee Library at LWR. Continues July 1 and Aug. 5.

■ For information, visit [LakewoodRanch.com](http://LakewoodRanch.com).

### JUNE 5

#### YOGA IN THE PARK

Join a free yoga session at 9 a.m. at Waterside Park, 7301 Island Cove Terrace, Lakewood Ranch. Bring your own mat and water bottle. Mats must be placed 6 feet apart. Event continues every Sunday.

■ For information, visit [LakewoodRanch.com](http://LakewoodRanch.com).

### THE MARKET

Far from the typical farmers market, The Market at Lakewood Ranch is a curated gathering of the best flavors in the region, cooking demonstrations and more. Visitors can purchase produce, meat, poultry, seafood, breads, pasta and other prepared foods from more than 60 vendors from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Waterside Place, 1561 Lakefront Drive, Lakewood Ranch. Event runs every Sunday.

■ For information, visit [TheMarketLWR.com](http://TheMarketLWR.com).

### JUNE 9

#### LWR 101: RESIDENT ORIENTATION

New to the area or just want to get



File photos

Sarasota Crew's Eva Harris rows through the course at Nathan Benderson Park at the 2021 USRowing Youth National Regatta.

more involved? Join this resident orientation virtually at 6:30 p.m. at [Facebook.com/LWRCommunityActivities](https://Facebook.com/LWRCommunityActivities). It's a great chance to learn about the community. Continues July 14 and Aug. 11.

■ For information, visit [LakewoodRanch.com](http://LakewoodRanch.com).

### JUNE 9-12

#### USROWING YOUTH NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

USRowing will host its Youth National Championship regatta from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily at Nathan Benderson Park, 5851 Nathan Benderson Circle, Sarasota, where spectators can watch a top-level rowing competition.

■ For information, visit [NathanBendersonPark.org](http://NathanBendersonPark.org).

### JUNE 11

#### CARS & COFFEE

Join automotive enthusiasts from 8-10 a.m. in the West District at UTC, by Ford's Garage, 295 N. Cattleman Road, Sarasota, for a show of exotic,

sports and classic cars. All makes and models are welcome. Admission is free; a suggested donation is \$10 per car. Continues July 9 and Aug. 13.

■ For information, visit [MallAtUTC.com](http://MallAtUTC.com).

### LIGER LUAU

Big Cat Habitat & Gulf Coast Sanctuary, 7101 Palmer Blvd., Sarasota, hosts its second annual Liger Luau from 5:30-8:30 p.m. Enjoy animal guests, a silent auction, live music, raffles and games, a Hawaiian-inspired buffet and more. Tickets are \$75.

■ For information, visit [BigCatHabitat.org](http://BigCatHabitat.org).

### JUNE 14

#### MOVIES FOR HEROES

Sarasota Film Society hosts a monthly movie event for the military. Active, nonactive and retired personnel, as well as their families, are

*Continued on Page 52*





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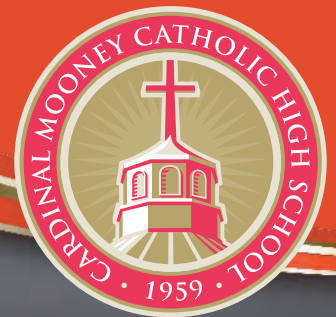
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*Continued from Page 50*

invited to Lakewood Ranch Cinema, 10715 Rodeo Drive, Lakewood Ranch, for a free movie starting at 11 a.m. June's screening is of "Dunkirk." The event continues Aug. 9 with "The Last Samurai."

■ For information, visit [FilmSociety.org](http://FilmSociety.org).

#### **JUNE 16 SUMMER FUN CLUB**

From 10 a.m. to noon, visit the Dillard's Court at the Mall at UTC, 140 University Town Center Drive, Sarasota, for activities, crafts, music and more. The free event will have a different theme each week. Runs Thursdays through July 21.

■ For information, visit [MallAtUTC.com](http://MallAtUTC.com).

#### **JUNE 16 DAD'S DAY BLOCK PARTY**

From noon to 2 p.m., visit the Grand Court at the Mall at UTC, 140 University Town Center Drive, Sarasota, to treat your dad. Enjoy burgers, beer, vendors and giveaways while meeting players from the Tampa Bay Buccaneers and Tampa Bay Lightning.

■ For information, visit [MallAtUTC.com](http://MallAtUTC.com).

#### **JUNE 17 NIGHT MARKET**

Shop more than 40 local vendors offering produce, handcrafted goods, cocktails and more from 5-9 p.m. on The Green in the West District at UTC. Continues July 15 and Aug. 19.

■ For information, visit [MallAtUTC.com](http://MallAtUTC.com).

#### **JUNE 25 NBP REC DAYS**

Runs from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Nathan Benderson Park, 5851 Nathan Benderson Circle, Sarasota. The public is invited to visit Nathan Benderson Park on NBP Rec Day and experience paddleboarding, kayaking, canoes and fishing. Rides on a 15-foot sailboat will also be available. The event costs \$10 for adults and \$5 for children. Anyone age 16 and older who goes fishing needs a freshwater fishing license. Event continues July 9.

■ For information, visit [NathanBendersonPark.org/programs/#nbprecdays](http://NathanBendersonPark.org/programs/#nbprecdays).

#### **JUNE 25 CRAFT FAIR**

Shop for unique items from more than 20 vendors from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Mixon Fruit Farms craft fair at 2525 27th St. E., Bradenton. Event continues July 23 and Aug. 27.

■ For information, visit [Mixon.com](http://Mixon.com).

## **JULY**

#### **JULY 2-3 FOOD TRUCK FESTIVAL**

From 2-9 p.m. each day in the parking lot of The Mall at University Town Center, 140 University Town Drive, Sarasota, celebrate Independence Day at the Suncoast's largest food truck festival. More than 30 food trucks will be on site, along with a kids zone. Admission and parking are free. Sunday night will end in fireworks.

■ For more information, visit [MallAtUTC.com](http://MallAtUTC.com).

#### **JULY 3 FIREWORKS 4-MILER**

The Fireworks 4-Miler race begins at

7 p.m., after the kids dash begins at 6:30 p.m. New divisions this year are Swift Stroller and Furry Friend. Race day registration and packet pick-up open at 5 p.m. The race will provide a race shirt, a medal and glow gear for all participants, and the top 100 male and female finishers will receive a commemorative prize. Stay for a race after-party with food and drinks. Fireworks explode over the lake beginning at 9 p.m. Race registration is \$30-\$40. For the virtual race option, registration is \$40, and time submissions will be open July 1-3.

■ For more information, visit [RaceRoster.com](http://RaceRoster.com).

#### **JULY 3 FIREWORKS ON THE LAKE**

Take part in this fireworks show with festivities beginning at 4 p.m. at Nathan Benderson Park. The fireworks will begin over the lake when the sun goes down, around 9 p.m. Details to come.

■ For information, call 941-358-7275.

*Continued on Page 54*



Employee Humberto Lleras launches Sarasota resident Colin Harden, 7, on the Power Jump at Mixon Fruit Farm's art fair in 2019.



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Continued from Page 52

## JULY 30

### JACK HARTMANN

#### BACK-TO-SCHOOL BASH

Jack Hartmann, known for his kids music channel on YouTube, will be performing at Mixon Fruit Farms, 2525 27th St. E., Bradenton. Doors open at 10 a.m., and the hourlong concert begins at 11 a.m. The play place, which features bounce houses, an obstacle course and an inflatable slide, will be open until 3 p.m. Tickets are \$15; children under 2 years old are free. Parking is free.

■ For information, visit [Mixon.com](http://Mixon.com).

#### CORNHOLE AND COCKTAILS FESTIVAL

From 3-7 p.m., Manatee Sunrise Kiwanis Club hosts its second-annual Cornhole and Cocktails Festival at Manatee County Fairgrounds, 1402 14th Ave. W., Palmetto. Enjoy an indoor cornhole tournament, music, food, drinks and raffles. Admission is \$35; parking is free. Guests must be

21 or older to attend.

■ For more information, visit [ManateeSunriseKiwanis.com](http://ManateeSunriseKiwanis.com).

## AUGUST

### AUG. 6

#### BACK TO SCHOOL BASH

Prep for the new school year from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Mall at UTC, 140 University Town Center Drive, Sarasota. The free annual bash offers activities, performances, giveaways and a school supplies scavenger hunt.

■ For information, visit [MallAtUTC.com](http://MallAtUTC.com).

### AUG. 11-14

#### USROWING MASTERS NATIONALS

The USRowing Masters National Championships will be held at Nathan Benderson Park, 5851 Nathan Benderson Circle, Sarasota, where spectators can watch the regatta that will feature racing in more than 200 masters categories.

■ For information, visit [NathanBendersonPark.org](http://NathanBendersonPark.org).



Lakewood Ranch resident Becky Wilkes and her dog, Molly, watch the band perform at April's Music on Main.

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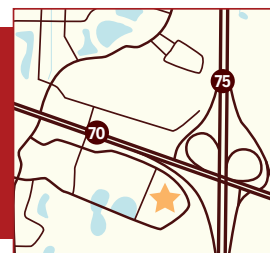


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# Suit Yourself

BY HARRY SAYER | CONTRIBUTOR

Summertime ... and the Florida living is easy. Now that most of the tourists are gone, it's the perfect time to act like one. Sure, it's hot, hot, hot. But that's what beaches and pools are for. It's time to suit up — and forget the rumpled relic from last summer at the bottom of your drawer. If you want to make a splash, it's time for a new suit. Here are some ideas.

## Lotus Boutique

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941-906-7080

[Lotus-Boutiques.MyShopify.com](http://Lotus-Boutiques.MyShopify.com)

Ah, the Rico. Strappy cutouts showing peekaboo hints of skin. Designed by the iconic Australian company Bond-Eye, this colorful, asymmetrical one-piece made from high-tech fabric that both stretches and stays in place makes a splashy fashion statement.

Bond-Eye's Rico one-piece: \$200





## Swim City

50 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota  
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SwimCity.com

Michael Kors' take on the "Itsy Bitsy Teenie Weenie Yellow Polka Dot Bikini" is neither itsy nor yellow. But it's still a lot of fun. This bikini's kicky, retro style boasts a sensible high-waisted bottom. Feel like revealing a bit more skin? Try Billabong's vibrantly floral Bring on the Bliss bikini and bralette underwire top. It's made from super-soft, recycled stretch fabric. Great in the water — and good for the Earth, as well.



Billabong's Bring On  
The Bliss bralette:  
\$49.95



Michael Kors'  
bikini top: \$78

Michael Kors' high-waisted  
polka dot bikini bottom: \$78



Billabong's Bring On  
The Bliss bikini bottom:  
\$65.95

Flomotion's Native Nomad boardshorts: \$60



## Compound Boardshop

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CompoundBoardShop.com

Feel like hitting the waves? Howler Brothers' Bruja boardshorts are perfect for any surfing safari. These dial up the comfort with extra spandex and also feature a Velcro pocket and fly. Flomotion's "native nomad" boardshorts are equally rad. These two-way stretch shorts feature quick-dry, anti-microbial and UV block fabric. Whoa. And they've also got a scalloped leg design and snazzy zippered side pocket. (You don't have to be a surfer to wear this gear, but you'll look like one.)

Howler Bros' Bruja boardshorts: \$59



## Crowder's Gifts and Gadgets

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Mud Pie's crab print trunks will turn your crabby lad's frown upside down. These boys' swim trunks feature a mesh-lined interior and come in a variety of colors, including blue, yellow and red. Little girls will also smile at Mud Pie's reversible (and adorable) leopard and pink-striped three-piece swimsuit sets. Each is equipped with a pom-trimmed peplum flounce and a coordinating bow headband. How cute is that?



Mud Pie's leopard and striped reversible swimsuit for girls: \$50

Mud Pie's crab print trunks for boys: \$22

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# Great Escapes!

## ST. PETERSBURG

The Vinoy Renaissance Resort and Golf Club is a grand old Mediterranean Revival Hotel built in 1925 and restored to its former glory. Sip a refreshing beverage on the grand veranda and relax into the day. Photo courtesy of the Vinoy Renaissance

## FORT MYERS

Fort Myers Beach Pier. Courtesy photo

## ST. PETERSBURG

The "Helical Staircase" at the Salvador Dali Museum. Photo courtesy of Visit St. Pete Clearwater.

## ST. PETERSBURG

The Chihuly Collection at the Morean Arts Center is a stunning, permanent collection of world-renowned artist Dale Chihuly's unique artwork. An iconic 20-foot glass sculpture greets you at the entrance. Photo courtesy of Visit St. Pete Clearwater.



Summer is here. It's time to hit the road to some great — and close — destinations. BY SU BYRON

MATLACHA



Walk on the wild side at Leoma Lovegrove's Gallery and Gardens. Photo by Patricia Horwell

Sponge diver at the Sponge Docks in Tarpon Springs  
Photo by Jacob Pierce

TARPON SPRINGS





# ST. PETERSBURG

Talk about dramatic entrances. You arrive after a breathtaking drive across the luminous Sunshine Skyway Bridge. St. Petersburg is more like several cities, a colorful tapestry of districts and neighborhoods with distinct personalities. Instead of trying to cover it all, let's visit downtown St. Pete for this travelogue.

## WATERFRONT ARTS DISTRICT

This stretch of the Tampa Bay waterfront is a bustling hot spot of upscale boutiques, pubs, galleries, hotels and restaurants. It's also home to many of St. Pete's beloved museums, including the surreal **Salvador Dali Museum (1)** and the more reality-based **Museum of Fine Arts**. Plan to spend hours exploring the 26 acres of parks and the revitalized **St. Pete Pier (2)**. On the pier itself, explore Tampa Bay's unique ecosystems at the **Tampa Bay Watch Discovery Center (3)**. The green spaces near the pier offer more possibilities. For a close encounter with art, experience "**Bending Arc,**" **(4)** Janet Echelman's ever-changing outdoor sculpture that she created with 180 miles of twine and 1,662,528 knots. For a close encounter with nature, **Vinoy Park** offers shady spots for picnics, winding trails for biking and walking, and music festivals.

## WHERE TO STAY

If panache and laidback luxury are on your wish list, make **The Vinoy Renaissance Resort and Golf Club** your base of operations. Long ago, this Mediterranean Revival palace grandly rising above St. Petersburg's waterfront was a tony destination for wealthy industrialists, Hollywood celebs, politicians and literary types. It's still the best perch in town.

501 Fifth Ave. NE; [Marriot.com](http://Marriot.com).



1. The "Helical Staircase" at the Salvador Dali Museum provides a dramatic backdrop for Café Gala.



2. Plan to spend hours exploring the revitalized 26-acre St. Pete Pier district.



3. Families will enjoy learning about Tampa Bay's vast and complex estuary at the Tampa Bay Watch Discovery Center.



4. Janet Echelman's constantly changing twine sculpture seems to be woven from clouds the artist pulled down from the sky.

## IF YOU GO:

**Travel Time:** About 40 minutes from Lakewood Ranch

**Salvador Dali Museum:** 1 Dali Blvd.; [TheDali.org](http://TheDali.org).

**Museum of Fine Arts:** 255 Beach Drive N.E.; [MFAStPete.org](http://MFAStPete.org).

**Tampa Bay Watch Discovery Center:** 700 Second Ave. NE; [TBWDiscoveryCenter.org](http://TBWDiscoveryCenter.org).

**Morean Arts Center:** 719 Central Ave.; [MoreanArtsCenter.org](http://MoreanArtsCenter.org).

**Florida CraftArt:** 501 Central Ave.; [FloridaCraftArt.org](http://FloridaCraftArt.org).

**Imagine Museum:** 1901 Central Ave.; [ImagineMuseum.com](http://ImagineMuseum.com).

**Haslam's Book Store.** 2025 Central Ave.; [Haslams.com](http://Haslams.com).

**The Dog Bar:** 2300 Central Ave.; [DogBarStPete.com](http://DogBarStPete.com).





## THE CENTRAL ARTS AND GRAND CENTRAL DISTRICTS

St. Pete's vibrant art scene becomes even more evident in the **Central Arts District (5)** just a few blocks west. A main attraction is the **Morean Arts Center (6)**, which encompasses the Center for Clay and a dazzling collection of Dale Chihuly's glass art creations. The **Florida CraftArt Gallery** celebrates works by regional artists. Along with its artful delights, Central Avenue is a fun, funky mishmash of urban murals and street art, retro boutiques, restaurants, bars, and live music venues. The Grand Central District is just a bit further to the west. Here, you'll find the **Imagine Museum** (and its mesmerizing contemporary glass art) and the bookworm's paradise of **Haslam's Book Store**. If your canine companion is with you, don't miss the doggie-and-human heaven of **The Dog Bar (7)** — an off-leash dog park and a fully loaded human bar. *Woof!*

### FROM TOP:

**5.** Explore St. Pete's Central Arts District with its bustling mix of museums, galleries, funky boho boutiques, and plenty of restaurants and watering holes.

**6.** Firing up a colorful glass creation at the Morean Arts Center

**7.** Sit. Stay. Drink. Your pups will have a ball at the Dog Bar — you will, too!

### WALK THE ART

Every second Saturday of the month, from 5 to 9 p.m., St. Pete hosts its popular **ArtWalk**, where dozens of galleries across the city's five art districts — Waterfront, Central, Edge, Grand Central and Warehouse — open their doors. *Info:* [StPeteArtsAlliance.org](http://StPeteArtsAlliance.org).

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# MATLACHA

This funky fishing village and artists' colony is Old Florida to the core.

Old Florida's alive and kicking in this funky fishing village on a tiny barrier island (which forms a bridge from the mainland to Pine Island) about an hour south of Venice. Matlacha's three-block main commercial drag is a menagerie of flamboyantly painted buildings and fishing shanties housing art galleries, kitschy shops, clothing boutiques, hole-in-the-wall eateries and waterfront restaurants. Bring your camera for colorful shots and your appetite for fresh seafood.

Must-dos include visiting the **Wild Child Art Gallery (1)**, which features art, jewelry and other creations by more than 100 Florida artists. Check out **Leoma Lovegrove's Gallery and Gardens (2)**, a trippy studio, exhibit space and gift shop. Famed as the "Peter Max of the South," Lovegrove loves to invite visitors to stroll through the lush tropical gardens behind her gallery. **Island Visions** celebrates original tropical, nautical and steampunk work by more than 50 artists from across the nation.

Hungry? Chow down on some of the freshest seafood in the region at the **Blue Dog Bar** (the "Mullet Sampler," also known as the "Pine Island Holy Trinity," serves up mullet three ways: filet fried, blackened and as a smoked dip). For a downhome Southern grub breakfast, the **Perfect Cup Roastery & Café's** Cajun omelet with andouille sausage and blackened shrimp and crawfish will leave you smacking your lips. Around sunset, head for the outdoor Tiki bar at **Miceli's Restaurant**, perched smack dab on Matlacha Sound. Here you can sip a refreshing beverage while digging live tunes and watching birds flock to a nearby island aviary. Kayakers will enjoy saltwater

sojourns through the mangroves of Matlacha Pass Aquatic Preserve. **Gulf Coast Kayak** and other paddleboard and kayaking tour companies will gear you for your journey. (Gulf Coast's "Early Bird Guided Eco Tours" at dawn are always a special treat.)



Photos courtesy of Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau.

**1.** The Wild Child Gallery features art, fine crafts and jewelry by more than 100 Florida artists.



Photo by Patricia Horwell

**2.** Discover a special dose of whimsy and delight at Leoma Lovegrove's Gallery and Gardens.



**3.** A peek inside the Blue House at Matlacha Tiny Village, a former RV park turned into a picturesque village of brightly colored tiny homes



**4.** The Margarita House at Matlacha Tiny Village

## WHERE TO STAY

The **Bridgewater Inn** bills itself as "a fisherman's dream come true." In classic fishing camp style, this nine-room inn is built on a dock extending into Pine Island Sound. Just stick your pole out your window and you're gone fishing! They can also hook you up with inspired fishing and boat charters. 4331 Pine Island Road; [BridgeWaterInn.com](http://BridgeWaterInn.com).

Or think small and check into **Matlacha Tiny Village (3 and 4)**, a former RV park reinvented as a picturesque village of five brightly colored mini-inns, each about the size of a compact garage. Each micro-mansion sleeps four people. 4661 Pine Island Road; [MatlachaTinyVillage.com](http://MatlachaTinyVillage.com).

## IF YOU GO:

**Travel Time:** About an hour and 15 minutes from Lakewood Ranch

**Wild Child Art Gallery:** 4625 Pine Island Road; [WildChildArtGallery.com](http://WildChildArtGallery.com).

**Leoma Lovegrove Gallery & Gardens:** 4637 Pine Island Road; [LeomaLoveGrove.com](http://LeomaLoveGrove.com).

**Island Visions:** 4643 Pine Island Road; [IslandVisions-Timeless.com/IslandVisions](http://IslandVisions-Timeless.com/IslandVisions).

**Blue Dog Bar:** 4597 Pine Island Road; [BlueDogMatlacha.com](http://BlueDogMatlacha.com).

**The Perfect Cup:** 4548 Pine Island Road; 239-283-4447.

**Miceli's Restaurant:** 3930 Pine Island Road; 239-282-8233; [Micelis-Italian.com](http://Micelis-Italian.com).

**Gulf Coast Kayak:** 4120 Pine Island Road; [GulfCoastKayak.com](http://GulfCoastKayak.com).





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# FORT MYERS

Two of America's most-celebrated inventors and entrepreneurs made this subtropical city their winter home. Take a visit and see why.

**Edison & Ford Winter Estates (1 and 2)** is this city's high-voltage attraction. This 20-acre property contains a world-class botanical garden, historical museum, laboratory and the winter homes of two American icons — and buddies — Thomas Edison and Henry Ford. Your children's eyes will light up with wonder (and your inner child will feel the same way) witnessing Edison's hundreds of inventions, including the motion picture camera, phonograph, stock tickers, the electric lightbulb and other man-made marvels. Experienced historians lead daily guided tours — and they're worth every nickel.

While you're in the neighborhood, be sure to visit the **River District**, Fort Myers' historic downtown area. Here, the grand brick buildings are old, but the vibe is new. The place bustles with outdoor cafes, art and antique galleries, live music and art festivals, open air markets and bustling breweries. A short drive away, the Florida version of **Times Square (3)** awaits on Fort Myers Beach. This fun (but noisy!) hangout boasts live music, street performers, and abundant souvenir and beach and surf shops. Grab a cold brew and a shrimp burger at the **Pierside Grill and Famous Blowfish Bar** overlooking the beach and the public pier.



Photo courtesy of the Edison and Ford Winter Estates

**1.** The Edison & Ford Winter Estates is a 20-acre property encompassing a world-class botanical garden, historical museum, laboratory, and the winter homes of two American icons — and buddies — Thomas Edison and Henry Ford.



Photo courtesy of Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau

**2.** Children can learn how Thomas Edison invented hundreds of man-made marvels at the Edison & Ford Winter Estates.



Photo courtesy of Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau

## WHERE TO STAY

The **Luminary Hotel** offers enlightening views of the Caloosahatchee River, along with plenty of places to eat and quench your thirst. Enchanting eateries include the retro-style Ella Mae's Diner and the über-elegant Silver King Ocean Brasserie. Ask for a balcony suite overlooking the river. *2200 Edwards Drive; LuminaryHotel.com.*

## FUN FACT

In 1886, Thomas Edison purchased land along the Caloosahatchee River in Fort Myers. That's where he built his winter home, which he and his wife, Mina, called "Seminole Lodge." In 1915, Henry Ford and his wife, Clara, bought the adjacent site and built a bungalow-style house they dubbed "The Mangoes."

## FORD AUTOMOTIVE TOUR AT EDISON & FORD WINTER ESTATES

Accompany automotive curator James Moss for a new perspective on the evolution of the automobile, from the Model T to the Model A, gasoline to electric. *Mondays at 10:30 a.m. EdisonFordWinterEstates.org.*

**3.** Times Square on Fort Myers Beach is a fun (but noisy!) hangout, boasting live music, street performers, and abundant souvenir and beach and surf shops.


## IF YOU GO:

**Travel Time:** About an hour and 15 minutes from Lakewood Ranch


**Edison and Ford Winter Estates:** 2350 McGregor Blvd., Fort Myers; EdisonFordWinterEstates.org.

**Pierside Grill and Famous Blowfish Bar:** 1000 Estero Blvd., Fort Myers Beach; PierSideGrill.com.






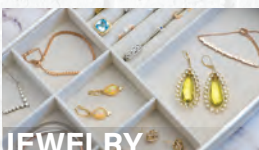
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# TARPON SPRINGS

Come for the sponges, and stay for the baklava. Opa!

Tarpon Springs boasts America's largest Greek community. That heritage began with sponge-diving Greek immigrants in the 1890s, and it's going strong today. You can still see sponge divers offloading their day's harvest from the sea on **the docks (1)**. No, you can't dive with them, but a visit to the Spongeorama Sponge Factory is the next best thing. Here, you can watch a movie about the local sponge harvesting industry and purchase sponges and olive oil-based products. The souvenir shops along **Dodecanese Avenue (2)** (the city's main drag) offer more proof that Greek traditions are alive and well here. Treasures include olive oil, authentic Greek fishermen caps, religious icons, and blue "Nazar" amulets and beads designed to ward off the evil eye. Yes, it's a fascinating glimpse at a unique culture, but the food is the main attraction. These twisted streets are filled with outstanding restaurants and bakeries, including the celebrated **Hellas Restaurant & Bakery (3)**. (To impress your server, practice your Greek before arriving. Proper pronunciation of *moussaka*, *dolmades*, *pastitsio* and *tzatziki* is a sign of respect, and they appreciate it.) After the feast, it's an ideal time for a cruise. **Odyssey Cruises** offers a one-hour narrated tour exploring Tarpon Springs' historical connection to the unique local ecosystem. Before you leave, visit **St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral**. It's a sacred place of marble sculpture and intricate, ancient designs from the original St. Sofia's Cathedral. It's an awesome space — in the original, literal sense.



Photo by Jacob Pierce

**1.** Sponge divers still unload their treasures on the sponge docks in Tarpon Springs.



Photo by Patricia Horwell

**3.** Be sure to share a tableful of appetizers at Hellas Restaurant & Bakery in Tarpon Springs.



Courtesy photo

**2.** A stroll down the main street, Dodecanese Avenue, offers additional proof that the city's Greek traditions are alive and well.

## WHAT'S COOKIN' AT HELLAS RESTAURANT

Everything. But if you've got a crowd of hungry diners, start with some shared appetizers, including the *saganaki* (fried cheese), *taramosalata* (made from *tarama*, the salted and cured roe of the cod), the *skordalia* (potato garlic spread) and the *spanakopita*. The fresh seafood rules here — so go for the whole fish of the day. But leave room for baklava!

## FUN FACT

**How did Tarpon Springs get its name?** Legend has it a little girl named Mary Ormond Boyer was standing on the edge of Spring Bayou in 1880 when a fish jumped out of the water right in front of her. "Look at the tarpon spring!" she hollered. So the story goes. It was probably a mullet, but who'd want to live in Mullet Springs?

## TSIFTETELI AND BOUZOUKI, ANYONE?

You can't leave Tarpon Springs without a little *tsifteteli* (belly dancing) and *bouzouki* (a traditional Greek stringed instrument). You can experience both on a Saturday night visit to **Mama's Greek Cuisine**. It's billed as "Where the Locals Meet to Eat." Now we know why.

## IF YOU GO:

**Travel Time:** 1 hour, 20 minutes from Lakewood Ranch

**Hellas Restaurant & Bakery:** 785 Dodecanese Blvd.; HellasBakery.com.  
**Mama's Greek Cuisine:** 735 Dodecanese Blvd.; MamasGreekCuisine.net.  
**Spongeorama Sponge Factory:** 510 Dodecanese Blvd.; Spongeorama.com.

**Odyssey Cruises:** OdysseyCruises.net.  
**St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral:** 36 N. Pinellas Ave.; StNicholasTarpon.org.



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Pictured: Jason Cohen, Photo by FST; Jannie Jones, Photo by Matthew Holler; Michael Daly and Patrick Noonan, Photo by Matthew Holler.

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# Puppy Love

The Lakewood Ranch Puppy Raisers group lays the groundwork for a dog's transition into more advanced guide dog training at Southeastern Guide Dogs.

BY ERIC SNIDER | CONTRIBUTOR

**F**our women clad in matching light blue shirts have assembled at the entrance of The Fish Hole, a miniature golf course at the end of Lakewood Ranch's Main Street. Each is accompanied by a well-mannered dog on a leash. But this is no puppy play date; no, sir. This is a business meeting.

The women are volunteer puppy raisers for Southeastern Guide Dogs, a Palmetto-based nonprofit that's one of the premier providers of service dogs in the country. They're members of the Lakewood Ranch Puppy Raisers, one of the organization's 37 puppy-raising groups throughout the United States, found mostly in Florida. The canines are in training to become round-the-clock support animals for people who are visually impaired, veterans with disabilities, or children and teens facing significant challenges. The organization provides the dogs free of charge.

The Lakewood Ranch Puppy Raisers have convened at this busy attraction on a cloudless afternoon in mid-March to go through a series of training exercises. They clearly adore their pooches, who remain calm and dutiful by their sides. It's a business meeting that radiates love.

Still, there's work to be done. The puppy raisers and their charges wend through the serpentine greens of the

miniature golf course. Music blares. Sound effects ring out. Players pause their games and watch as the dogs stop and sit, and a handler places a big, yummy treat just a few feet away. Then, after a few seconds of resisting temptation, the pups are rewarded with a smaller treat. The raisers liberally dole out these bite-sized morsels, accompanied by the constant cooing of "good giiiiirl," and "good boy." It's all part of today's focus on impulse control. And that includes "underfooting," which exposes the dogs to different surfaces, such as, in this case, artificial turf and faux pebbles.

Jenni Scamardo, Southeastern Guide Dogs' regional manager, is running the show. Late 20s, tall, brunette, she casts a watchful eye over the proceedings, delivering instructions in a no-nonsense style.

The attendees include Alex Jeanroy, the Lakewood Ranch area coordinator who's accompanied by Mason, a 3-year-old Goldador. He did a stint as



a guide dog, but the work ultimately didn't suit him. So, Jeanroy and her husband adopted Mason in March 2021, and Mason became an ambassador dog for Southeastern Guide Dogs. He's the only canine on hand that nearby kids are free to pet.

Jeanne Heere has come with Andre, a 9-month-old black Lab. He's not been neutered — Southeastern Guide Dogs might use him as a breeder — so she and her cohorts keep an eye on him around the females. Occasionally, Andre approaches one of the other dogs, perhaps with amorous intent, and Heere gently pulls him back. Teresa

*Continued on Page 74*

Photos by Heidi Kurpiela

**Right:** The Lakewood Ranch Puppy Raisers' youngest trainee, 6-month-old Daisy, plants a wet kiss on puppy raiser Teresa Will.

**Above:** Andre is the Lakewood Ranch Puppy Raisers' token "black sheep."









Puppy raisers Teresa Will, Jeanne Heere, Sandy Wilke and Alex Jeanroy with their guide dogs Daisy, Andre, Toma and Mason.

## SOUTHEASTERN GUIDE DOGS BY THE NUMBERS

- Opened 1982
- States served: 50
- Dogs and puppies currently overseen and in circulation: Approximately 1,200
- Waiting period to receive a dog: Six months to a year
- Cost to receive a guide dog or service dogs, as well as student training: Free
- Cost to raise and train a guide or service dog: Tens of thousands of dollars
- Breeds that Southeastern Guide Dogs raises and trains: Labrador retrievers and Goldadors (a cross between a Lab and a golden retriever), because of their intelligence, trainability, temperament and robust health.
- Dogs Southeastern Guide Dogs produces per year: Approximately 250
- Dogs placed in the hands of those who need them every year: Approximately 100

*Continued from Page 72*

Will has brought Daisy, a yellow Lab — at 6 months, she's the youngest and smallest of the bunch and, understandably, the most apt to be a tad frisky.

The pups, who are past the small and cuddly stage, were bred at Southeastern Guide Dogs' Palmetto headquarters and went through eight to 10 weeks of early education before being assigned a human. Each of them, save Mason, wears a blue vest — called a coat — that indicates they are guide dogs in training.

Toma, a female yellow Lab, 9 months old, is tagging along with Sandy Wilkey, who began her volunteer career as a puppy raiser in 2019. "I retired (from work) and was looking for new things," she says, "something that was productive and fun." Wilkey effusively affirms that she found both while rearing two puppies, Ginger and Felix, who have moved on to their guide dog careers. "You have to figure out what makes the dog tick," she explains, then offers an example: "Felix would steal socks, and

you'd have to get them out of his mouth. It was a signal that he wanted to play."

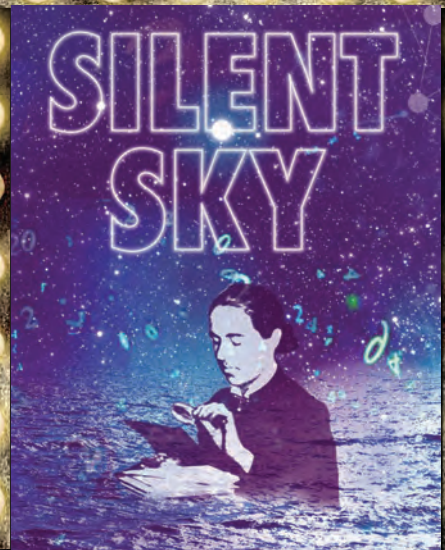
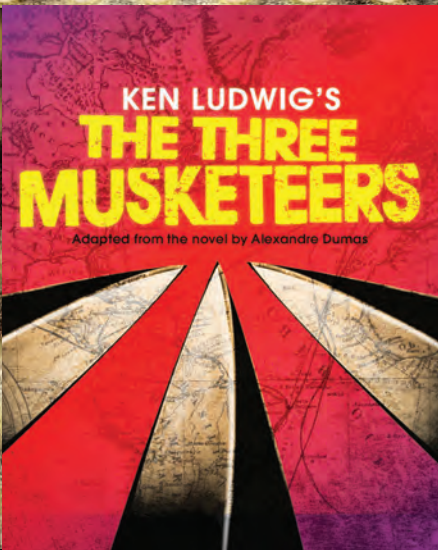
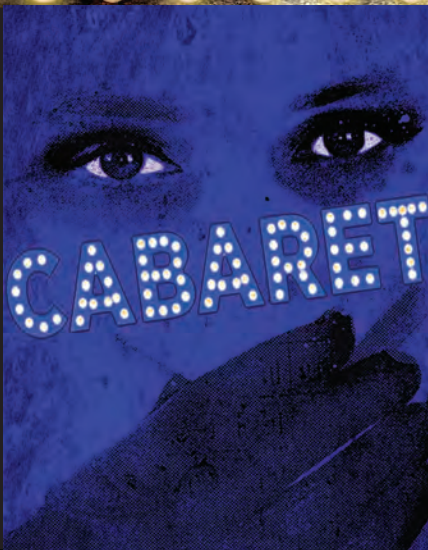
All well and good, but sock theft is no type of behavior for a guide dog. Wilkey helped rid Felix of the habit by throwing socks on the ground and rewarding him with treats when he didn't go after them. She took the process a step further. "You know how dogs love chips?" Wilkey asks. "We got to the point where I could throw chips on the ground and he would walk right across the top of them and not eat one."

Wilkey estimates that training a puppy requires three to four hours of concentrated work a day. The hardest part to teach? "Getting the dog to do nothing," she responds without hesitation.

Think about it. A guide dog often has to be idle for long periods as a sightless person eats at a restaurant or a veteran with PTSD takes in a movie. There's no room for error. The dog cannot lunge at a squirrel, bark at a

*Continued on Page 76*





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Continued from Page 74

stranger, chase a passing car, or any of the endless potential distractions they'll surely encounter. It's full discipline, full time. And it's the puppy raisers who lay the groundwork for the canine's transition into more advanced guide dog training at Southeastern Guide Dogs' headquarters.

It's not enough to be a dog-lover, although that's a good place to start. Raising a guide dog is a serious commitment requiring patience, persistence, strategy, creativity and, most of all, time. The volunteers take puppies into their homes and over the course of about a year put them through a kind of basic training.

"Puppy raisers pick up a cute little bundle of 10 or 15 pounds and watch them turn into 60-, 70- and 80-pound dogs," says Leslie Shepard, Southeastern Guide Dogs' director of puppy raising services. "They teach them all the basic skills that they need for their future careers. Think of it as taking a preschooler through high school. The puppy raisers teach house manners, potty training, socialization, basic cues and more. They are the ones who teach the dogs how to be focused, not distracted by the world."

Twice a month, sometimes more often, puppy raisers gather to take the dogs to an airport, a supermarket and other locations for training sessions and exposure to areas they'll encounter during their guide dog careers.

All told, raising a puppy is an important job and can be taxing at times. But it is, above all, a fulfilling one. "I've done a lot of work for nonprofits, and this is the most incredible volunteer experience I've ever had," says Shepard, who started raising puppies before joining the Southeastern Guide Dogs staff. "It's so rewarding to know that the work you've put into this puppy can go on to really change someone's life, to help their confidence, independence and dignity. And we shouldn't forget that it's fun, too."

She's right. Being a puppy raiser is not all work and no play. The Lakewood Ranch members gathers regularly at one of their homes to allow the dogs to enjoy fun and games with one another. And, in the process, the humans have formed lasting friendships among themselves. "Sometimes we get together without the dogs," Alex



Alex Jeanroy is the area coordinator for Southeastern Guide Dogs' Lakewood Ranch Puppy Raisers. Her "chukker pup" Mason, served as the 2020 Sarasota Polo mascot puppy and has since graduated to Guide Dog Ambassador status.



Sandy Wilkey and guide pup Toma capture the hearts of passersby during St. Patrick's Day festivities along Lakewood Ranch's Main Street.

“

*Of course, we expect you to get attached.*

*We'd be worried if you didn't. But while you might want the dog, someone else needs the dog. It's a special gift for you to raise a puppy, then give it up."*

**LESLIE SHEPARD, SOUTHEASTERN GUIDE DOGS' DIRECTOR OF PUPPY RAISING SERVICES**

Jeanroy says. "We can enjoy each other's company without (the puppies) sitting underneath the table. Sometimes we need TLC too."

All of this commitment, all of this gratification, all the love given — it brings to mind a possible occupational hazard. How do puppy raisers manage the attachment? How do they let go of this wonderful creature that's been a constant companion for months, this soon-to-be hero dog they've nurtured?

Addressing attachment issues is part of puppy raiser training, Shepard says. "We tell them, 'Of course, we expect you to get attached. We'd be wor-

ried if you didn't. But while you might want the dog, someone else needs the dog. It's a special gift for you to raise a puppy and then give it up.'"

Shepard adds that, during her tenure, no one has refused to return a puppy or even suggested they might.

To reinforce this notion of letting go, Southeastern Guide Dogs holds special receptions on the Palmetto campus, where the puppy raisers get to meet the person to whom the dog was assigned.

"The puppy raisers get the satisfaction 10 times over when they see the dog working," says Shepard.



## BRED FOR THE JOB: JENNI SCAMARDO'S PASSION FOR PURPOSE

In 2010, when she was a junior in high school, Jenni Scamardo was exploring options for the service hours encouraged by her Houston-area high



school when she came across an ad soliciting puppy raisers for Southeastern Guide Dogs. She'd never heard of it but was intrigued.

After consulting with her mother, Jenni soon received her first puppy, Lou-Lou. "When I was at school, my mom handled her, but it was understood that when I was home it was my full respon-

sibility," Jenni says. She went on to raise a second dog, Sully, during high school and into college at Texas A&M. Then came Tasa and Kiya while she was a student. You might say Jenni was hooked.

Looking back, she says, "Raising puppies taught me that when things get tough you don't back out. It helped shape who I am today because it taught me at a young age how to handle tough challenges."

After graduating, Jenni took a job in Houston in events and fundraising but carved out plenty of time for pups. She took on a role of volunteer coordinator for a puppy raising group. "I loved my work in events, but I was slowly but surely creeping in the direction of getting a job in puppy raising," she says.

Jenni was familiar with Southeastern Guide Dogs, having visited a few times to pick up puppies. When a regional manager position opened up, she threw her leash into the ring and lassooed the gig. In August of last year, Jenni packed up and moved from Houston to Palmetto, a short distance from the Southeastern Guide Dogs campus. "The opportunity to do something you really love doesn't come knocking very often," she says. "It's taken some time to get used to not having my network of friends and family around, but I was lucky that I already knew a handful of people here, which has made the transition here a good one."

Jenni spends her days answering emails from puppy raisers and groups, entering data into a computer, getting out into the field to meet with volunteers and running training sessions like the one at The Fish Hole. She's also in charge of puppy raising groups in Houston, Austin, Dallas and Fort Worth, and does quarterly site visits to each. Jenni doesn't have set hours and spends plenty of time working on nights and weekends.

Does she keep track of those hours? "I have to, to submit them," she says. How many hours a week? "I think I'll keep that number to myself," she says with a hearty laugh.

*Learn more at [GuideDogs.org](http://GuideDogs.org) or call 941-729-5665.*

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**Dr. Garland Glenn, DC, PhD**, of The Carroll Institute, answers some of the most common questions about Alzheimer's Disease and Cognitive Decline.

**Q:** Is memory loss as you age normal?

**Dr.G:** First the distinction between normal and common must be made. Memory loss as you age is common but doesn't make it normal. No one should accept cognitive issues as a normal part of aging. Cognitive decline occurs for a reason. The challenge is to identify the reasons and fix them.

**Q:** What causes Alzheimer's and Cognitive Decline?

**Dr.G:** People are often told we don't know what causes Alzheimer's and nothing could be further from the truth. Over the past 25 years, through research lead by The Buck Institute at UCLA, we have identified 36 different things that cause dementia of all types including Alzheimer's.

**Q:** How do you stop and reverse the symptoms of Alzheimer's and Cognitive Decline?

**Dr.G:** The first thing that must be done is to uncover what is driving the problem. At **The Carroll Institute** we use specialized lab testing designed specifically for identifying these underlying causes. By working with a knowledgeable team, expert practitioner, well trained health coaches, modern nutritionist, and others, We are able to resolve these contributors one at a time.

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# RIDING HIGH

Behind a \$30 million investment, a young entrepreneur is taking big strides to turn the TerraNova Equestrian Center into a leading destination.

BY MARK GORDON | CONTRIBUTOR







The view from the VIP tent at TerraNova. Courtesy photo

The images of an elite equestrian sports enterprise — champion horses, celebrity riders and posh soirees — don't immediately fit the laidback, rural ambiance of Myakka City.

In Florida, the sport is more commonly connected to places like Wellington, a Palm Beach County village dubbed an “equine epicenter” by the Robb Report in 2019. The article further stated that Wellington is “the horse riding capital of the world,” where “the who’s who of the international equestrian set” comes to town every winter, including celebs like Jennifer Gates (daughter of Bill) and Jessica Springsteen (daughter of Bruce).

And yet, in Myakka City, some 30 miles from downtown Bradenton and 150 miles from Wellington, the TerraNova Equestrian Center is quickly gaining notice. With Hannah Herrig Ketelboeter, a dynamic 26-year-old entrepreneur and equestrian competitor at the helm, TerraNova is taking big strides toward becoming a leading national competitive destination for events in this niche sport.

While overtaking Wellington as an equine epicenter might not be in the foreseeable future, several equestrian industry insiders insist TerraNova is a place to watch. “There really isn’t a big equestrian facility like us on the West Coast of Florida,” says Herrig Ketelboeter, TerraNova’s co-founder and owner-operator.

“They have everything they need for a first-run facility, and it’s only going to get better and better,” adds Derek Braun, founder and president of the Lexington, Kentucky-based Split Rock Jumping Tour, which hosted the first of what’s projected to be an annual event at TerraNova in January. “The facility is incredible. The investment the owners have put into it is amazing.”

One other notable equestrian facility in the Sarasota-Manatee region is Fox Lea Farms in Venice, which was founded in 1983 and hosts about 40 events a year. Another newer equestrian facility in Florida is in Ocala. That one, the World Equestrian Center, is a multimillion-dollar facility Herrig Ketelboeter likens to Disney World in that it features lots of bells and whistles but also a lot of, well, everything, on its mammoth 375-acre complex. The enterprise includes a 248-room hotel with rooms and suites that overlook the open-air grand stadium to watch events and competitions.

*Continued on Page 80*



Continued from Page 79

Ocala has more than 1,200 horse farms, so it's a logical spot for something as large as the WEC. While plenty big, TerraNova (named for a horse Herrig Ketelboeter had while growing up: Tara, combined with the Latin word "nova," for new) is designed with the trifecta of competitors, horses and spectators in mind.

"We are more laid-back and relaxed here," than some of the higher-end spots in Wellington and the WEC, Herrig Ketelboeter says. "We want everybody to have a really great experience here. We try to draw people from all over, but we also want to boost the local equestrian scene."

## ATTENTION TO DETAIL

TerraNova, which has 20 employees (a figure that jumps to about 50 leading up to and during an event), is one part equestrian and event center and one part estate home community.

TerraNova Estates, where lots for custom-built homes are at least 5 acres, covers 1,064 acres of the total property. Planned amenities in the gated community include a resort-style pool, streetlights for winding roads and riding trails. Sales information for the community states that homes will have "the feel of old Florida with giant Spanish-moss-covered oak tree hammocks, lush green grass lanes teeming with deer" and more.

The 225-acre event site, meanwhile, is designed to be a go-to spot for all levels and segments of equestrian completion. Olympic gold medalist Mark Phillips designed the cross-country course, and other prominent equestrian professionals worked on the project as well.

TerraNova has six competition and practice arenas. It also has facilities that house a gym, a lounge with a kitchen, a laundry room and a full bathroom for boarding clients. Then there's the spare-no-expenses barn. An Amish builder based in Pennsylvania, B&D Builders, which only constructs barns, handled the high-end home for horses for TerraNova. With rubber paver pathways and wide stalls, including one with air-conditioning, the picturesque TerraNova barn can easily be a stand-in for just about any barn in Wellington. B&D broke ground on the barn in January 2020 and finished in October 2020.

All that attention to detail leads Herrig Ketelboeter on a path to her passion: equestrian competition. TerraNova hosts a variety of competitions, including hunters and jumpers, the latter of which is an Olympic sport, and eventing, which is kind of an equine triathlon. TerraNova also offers lessons and training and sells horses.

Sales and horse training were what Herrig Ketelboeter initially had in mind when she and her husband, Zach, started planning TerraNova in 2017. Both accomplished equestrian competi-

Continued on Page 82



Jumping the Ringling Bridge obstacle at TerraNova

Photo by Al Green

“

*It's very beautiful for the horses because there is a lot of grass, but it's also well done for the people. The architecture is stunning, and the footing is good. This is a fantastic addition to show jumping in Florida.”*

**SCOTT KEACH, AN EQUESTRIAN COMPETITOR WHO PARTICIPATED IN TWO OLYMPICS.**



Photo by Al Green

The Florida-based Swedish rider Jennie Jarnstrom-Dennis and her Hanoverian mare, Flower Girl, after a cross-country run.





Hannah Herrig Ketelboeter and Zach Ketelboeter at TerraNova

Photo by Giana Terranova

## THE RIGHT TRACK: BASIC TERMS

**Buck:** When a horse kicks its hind legs into the air with front legs on ground, usually out of joy.

**Dressage:** Style of riding where horse and rider perform movements with time and precision.

**Eventing:** Competition involving three disciplines of dressage, cross-country and show jumping.

**Irons:** Stirrup irons are attached to the saddle and designed to support the rider's feet.

**Jodhpurs:** Tight-fitting, full-length riding trousers.

**Mucking out:** Cleaning stalls.

**Tack:** Equipment used to ride and train horses.

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tors, the couple met in 2015 while training for an event in Wisconsin.

All told, TerraNova, financed for the most part by Herrig Ketelboeter's father, Bradenton insurance executive Steve Herrig, is at least a \$30 million project. That includes \$10.5 million for the land where the estates will be built — the site of a previous community that didn't work out. The equestrian site was acquired for \$2 million in a series of transactions in March 2018, Manatee County property records show.

Steve Herrig, who along with his wife, Natalie, bought Herrig Ketelboeter her first horse, named Skip, when she was 10 years old, is the CEO of Sunz Insurance. The company, focusing on workers compensation insurance, does more than \$400 million a year in revenue.

## TOP FLIGHT

Steve Herrig's role at TerraNova is somewhere between silent partner and involved parent. Day-to-day oversight of the equestrian center and the vision to grow it into a national destination for world-class events falls to Herrig Ketelboeter.

Braun, whose Split Rock Jumping Tour has hosted events everywhere from Oregon to Texas to California, lauds Herrig Ketelboeter for prioritizing details at TerraNova. "I won't host a show at a facility that's subpar or not great for an exhibitor," Braun says. "There are millions of facilities out there but only a few that are willing to put the work in like TerraNova and Hannah."

Up next for Herrig Ketelboeter? Land more events, both from private shows like Split Rock and the sport's governing body, the United States Equestrian Federation. Its first major event, The Event at TerraNova, was held in October and drew more than 150 competitors. Upcoming events are scheduled for both October and January 2023.

"We are steadily building out our facilities and planning a lot of events for the next year," Herrig Ketelboeter says, adding the build-out includes a VIP hospitality pavilion and two new barns to hold 276 more horses.

Since Herrig Ketelboeter still competes, entering one or two events a month, overseeing the business side of the sport, where the focus significantly widens, has been one of the best aspects of TerraNova. "Being part of it from both sides has been really interesting," she says.

## GOOD FOOTING

Scott Keach, a New Zealand-born equestrian competitor who participated in the 1988 and 2016 Olympics, was, like Braun, impressed with TerraNova. Now based in Ocala, Keach won the TerraNova Grand Prix during the first week of the TerraNova Spring Series, held March 16-27. "Coming from Ocala, where we have the World



Inside the VIP tent at TerraNova

Photo by EQMedia

“

*The facility is incredible. The investment the owners have put into it is amazing.”*

**DEREK BRAUN, FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT OF THE SPLIT ROCK JUMPING TOUR**

### BY THE NUMBERS

**TerraNova  
Equestrian Center**

**225**

Acres for equestrian  
competition

**1,064**

Acres for estates  
development

**6**

Arenas

**20**

Employees (50  
during an event)

Equestrian Center, which is also amazing, this is an absolutely beautiful place," Keach says. "It's very beautiful for the horses because there is a lot of grass, but it's also well done for the people. The architecture is stunning, and the footing is good. This is a fantastic addition to show jumping in Florida."

Kudos for TerraNova run from the inner circles of the sport — from equine competition experts like Keach and Braun — to local businesses and organizations hoping to attract well-heeled visitors to Manatee County from around the nation. Elliott Falcione, director of the Manatee County Convention & Visitors Bureau, says that like many visitors who tour TerraNova, he was "blown away" with all the elements already put in place. "I can't wait to see what they have one year from now," he says, "much less three to five years from now."





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# HAVEN

SPOTLIGHTING LIFE ON THE RANCH

Glamorous yet informal, a home in LakeHouse Cove has it all. **PAGE 88**

Pampered pooch: Maddie relaxes in front of the fireplace.



A large, rectangular swimming pool with a blue tile border and a modern metal frame roof. The pool is situated on a paved deck. In the background, there is a large body of water (a lake or river) and a row of houses across the water. The sky is clear and blue. The text "A Perfect Fit" is overlaid on the left side of the image.

# *A Perfect Fit*





**A busy family finds the perfect  
home and community in  
LakeHouse Cove in Waterside.**

BY ROBERT PLUNKET | CONTRIBUTOR

The home's pool  
and spa overlook  
Lake Mallard.





What is it like living in a new community? Hundreds of Lakewood Ranchers are finding out, as a whole slate of neighborhoods are in full development. Each caters to a slightly different demographic. Some are family-oriented, while others appeal more to retirees (or those soon to take that plunge). But everyone seems to agree that the place getting the most buzz is Waterside. And with good reason. It's the southernmost Lakewood Ranch community — the first in Sarasota County — and boasts something new: water. Constructed around seven good-sized

lakes, Waterside offers unique views and something almost as exciting: the Ranch's newest shopping and dining center. Two communities (a dozen more are on the way), Shoreview and LakeHouse Cove, are fully operating and where we recently visited Kevin and Heather Mathews to see how things are going. The Mathews are LakeHouse Cove pioneers and old-timers. Their home was one of the first constructed on their street, and for the past two years they've gamely put up with cement trucks and construction workers. But now with most of the neighboring homes completed and new residents moving in, the Mathews are basking in the happy results of their decision. Their path to LakeHouse Cove was

circuitous, they admit. Originally from Charlotte, North Carolina, they made the move to Florida when Kevin's company relocated to Largo, just north of St. Petersburg. They knew they wanted a place like Lakewood Ranch, but after searching throughout Pinellas County, they realized there wasn't one. So, they bought a home in Bridgewater, a gated community in the Ranch, and Kevin resigned himself to a 40-minute commute each way. The home in Bridgewater was nice, but it wasn't their dream home. It was a little dated, and the layout was not open enough. After looking around for a while, they found the perfect place when they visited a Lee Wetherington

**TOP-LEFT:** Comfort is the keynote in the expansive living room.

**TOP-RIGHT:** The adjacent family room opens to an outdoor dining area.

**BOTTOM:** An open concept kitchen features high-end appliances and clerestory windows.

*Continued on Page 92*



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*Continued from Page 90*

model, the Windsong. And when the perfect waterfront lot appeared, everything fell into place.

"We had moved a lot," Heather says. "I'm done. Build me my dream house, and I'm not moving."

The Mathews' new dream house is a perfect size for their needs. One son, Ian, is still at home, homeschooling as he completes high school. There's another son in St. Pete, a daughter in North Carolina and two grandchildren, so there had to be plenty of room: 3,677 square feet, with three bedrooms, plus an office and bonus room.

As it did with so many families, the pandemic created a new normal. The first thing to go was the worst: Kevin's

commute. Once he was able to work from home, he figured out the best way to do it, and now he conducts all his business that way. His office is simple and minimal. It is most notable for the fact that not a single scrap of paper is visible anywhere. Everything is done by computer, and even more impressive is Kevin's own, which he built himself: an elegant hunk of glass and Lucite and electronics standing next to his desk. Another example of his handiwork: the walls of storage in the garage, intricately outfitted with metal cabinets and workspaces.

If Kevin takes care of the practical side of things, it's Heather who is the home's design muse. She put together the look of the home, which might best be described as elegant informality.

The décor is light and bright and high-ceilinged, with views of the lake from almost every room. "I wanted to get away from the browns of our old house," she says. "I wanted grays and greens."

She credits the design staff at Lee Wetherington for help with all the myriad choices, including the tile, moldings and wall colors. Matter Brothers was the source of most of the furniture. The Mathews went for a premium kitchen with high-end appliances from Wolf and Sub-Zero. The same tile flooring runs throughout the entire home, and yes, another tweak was the enormous walk-in shower in the primary bath.

If the Mathews' home seems to have

**TOP-LEFT:**

The primary bedroom offers a picture-perfect view of the lake.

**TOP-RIGHT:**

Carefully planned garage storage and workspace is a handyman's delight.

**BOTTOM:**

In the primary bath a soaking tub complements a roomy walk-in shower.

*Continued on Page 94*



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Continued from Page 92

a little extra sizzle, it's because of the other three residents: two French bulldogs, Maddie and Cooper, and a very fluffy cat named Oliver. They share a very pet-friendly house. There are little doggie beds everywhere family members gather. And if that isn't good enough, doggie steps help the canine family members climb up on the couch. When the dogs get too much for Oliver, the cat retreats to his own "room," a walk-in closet rebuilt to include a large bin-like space where he has a litter box and a lounging area. He has his own private entrance, which is too small for the dogs. But then, they have their own fenced outdoor area, so it all works out.

The Mathews have seen the neighborhood come to life and have made many friends among the neighbors, whom they both describe as "amazing." They're also enjoying the amenity center with its canoes and kayaks. Soon there will be a water taxi over to the shopping and dining at Waterside.

Till then it's a short bike ride away. And the idea of pickleball is being considered.

But amenities and pickleball are just the icing on the cake. The prize remains the Mathews' new home and the way it complements their lifestyle. Things will get even better when Kevin's parents move into the retirement villa they are currently building in another new community, nearby Windward. Then there will be three generations enjoying the LakeHouse Cove home.

And on sunny afternoons even the pets get into the act. With its view over what is officially known as Lake Mallard, the whole household is a window onto Florida's vibrant natural landscape and wildlife. They've seen countless birds, including pelicans and egrets and cranes. There are also turtles that come up in the yard and, of course, a resident alligator. Maddie and Cooper don't seem fazed by the gator; they can spend hours out by pool, their attention riveted by the birds who fly gracefully over the water, silhouetted against the blue tropical sky.



## We're neighbors covering neighbors.

### Jay Heater

MANAGING EDITOR EAST COUNTY OBSERVER

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**Alma mater:** University of Arizona

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***FAR LEFT:***

Accent details add sparkle to the home's décor. The color palette is inspired by the aquatic setting.

***MIDDLE:***

The home's exterior blends contemporary coastal with British West Indian design.

***ABOVE:***

Maddie and Cooper await their next treat before a run in their very own yard.

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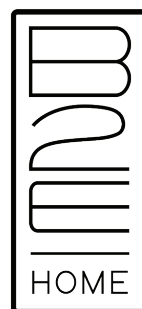


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# Antonio Pariano of Cassariano

The celebrated chef and restaurateur gives us a behind-the-scenes look at his inspirations and tricks of the trade.

BY ABBY WEINGARTEN | CONTRIBUTOR

Cassariano Italian Eatery has lured patrons to its downtown Venice location for the past 15 years, so it was only natural for restaurateurs Antonio Pariano and Luca Cassani to expand their culinary reach to Lakewood Ranch. They opened their new locale on Nature's Way in the San Marco Plaza in October, serving their beloved dishes inspired by the cuisine of Northern Italy. From the *Ravioli di Ricotta e Noci con Gorgonzola e Pere* to the *Petto d'Anatra Arrosto con Risotto ai Fichi*, the fare at Cassariano (a portmanteau of Pariano and Cassani's surnames) is both classic and authentic.

Pariano is also Cassariano's chef. Born and raised in Northern Italy (like his business partner), he graduated in 1989 from the Culinary Institute in Torino. He did exchange training in Washington, D.C., during his teenage years before serving as an executive chef for international hotels.

Pariano then moved to Sarasota from New York in 2006 and met Cassani, and the two began whipping up bistro flavors and fine contemporary (as well as sustainable) cuisine. Their regulars continue to return for Cassariano's pappardelle Bolognese, breaded veal chop with buffalo mozzarella cheese and pan-seared halibut with sundried tomato crust.

Pariano offered these musings and insights on a recent (and rare) day off.

## **My cooking mentor was...**

A chef I started working with in Italy after I graduated from the Culinary Institute, the late Mareo Gazzato. We worked together at a fine dining restaurant in



Photos by Lori Sax

Antonio Pariano enjoys listening to bossa nova as he prepares his culinary feasts.

downtown Torino called Arcadia. This gentleman just wanted to teach me the profession, the skill. I'm sad because my time with him ended after three years. I started working with him when I was 16, and we started to have a nice kind of father-son relationship.

## **One of my newest culinary obsessions is...**

Sous vide. It is a technique of low-temperature cooking in a water bath. You make the food in poachable bags, and you immerse the bags inside the water and set the temperature. You can get extremely precise temperatures with this, and all the flavor, juice, and color stays in the food. The perfection is unbelievable.

## **When I'm traveling, I tend to eat...**

If I go to South America, I want to feel like a South American person. In Europe, same thing. I try to not just be a

tourist but immerse myself completely in the local culture.

## **When I'm not working, I am...**

A husband, a father of five, a tennis player and a gardener. I really enjoy staying home and working around my house. On the weekends, I like to set up a table, and my family and I have meals together.

## **My go-to cookbook is...**

"The Silver Spoon," a traditional Italian cooking book. This is my culinary bible. What I really like about the book is that it's deep in the tradition of Italian cuisine, but at the same time, it respects how you can merge the old with the new. You can discover a technique that they used in the 1900s and use new tools and ingredients, and rediscover recipes but still respect the tradition.

*Continued on Page 98*



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Continued from Page 96

**I became a professional chef because...**

Well, that was a big battle with my parents. My dad was totally against it. He used to tell me I'd have to work all the time — Christmas, Easter, etc. — and not to do it. But now he's very proud. When I was about to finish high school in Italy, my intention to go to culinary school became stronger and stronger. I never had another job in my life. I've always worked in hospitality.

**Lately, I have been craving...**

Red meat and dark chocolate.

**My go-to comfort food is...**

Street food; any cart or food truck or little hole in the wall.

**My chef hero is...**

My mom, Barbara. She raised three children and one husband, and she thought every single day about what to cook for lunch and dinner. She never disappointed with the quality of food, the creativity — always thinking

about how to do better, how to make us happy around the table. In Italy, that was a big deal. The consistency and the love she put into her food was incredible.

**My favorite breakfast is...**

A classic, traditional American breakfast with pancakes, waffles, eggs and sausage. Sometimes, I even have breakfast for dinner.

**My favorite kind of customer is someone who is...**

Curious and open-minded. I like all my customers, but a curious customer who wants to discover more and more is great.

**The top faux pas that a customer can make is...**

When they are close-minded and start to think “my way or no way.” Still, the customer is always right, so we try to do our best.

**When I cook, I like to listen to...**

Bossa nova. It's something easy that I don't need to pay a lot of attention to.



Antonio Pariano's bible is “The Silver Spoon,” a traditional Italian cookbook.

**The top three ingredients I always have at home are...**

Extra virgin olive oil, cold-pressed; a very good balsamic vinegar; and fresh, organic eggs. With these three things, I can build an Italian menu.

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# art and about

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Courtesy of The Ringling  
"Remembrance" by Eleanor Merritt



Courtesy of The Ringling  
"Here Comes the Sun" by Eleanor Merritt



Courtesy photos  
"Eureka Day" at FSU Center for Performing Arts

**The Life of an Artist.** "Eleanor Merritt: Remembrance" explores a lifetime of work by the beloved Sarasota-based creator. Curated by Steven High, this retrospective is the museum's first solo exhibition of an African-American female artist. The multimedia art on display employs the late artist's unconventional use of materials, a combination of conventional painting with collaged elements of tapa cloth, beads and clothing remnants. The resulting imagery speaks to your mind and heart with Merritt's unique symbolic vocabulary. She evokes the Black experience with iconic female figures and sacred figures from the natural world, including images of the sun, birds, enthroned queens, ordinary women and

also herself. These visions dance between abstraction and realism. The artist sees the world with both eyes open: one eye focused on external reality, and the other eye looking within to imaginary realms. Thanks to Merritt's art in this powerful exhibit, you'll get a chance to see through her eyes. Don't miss it. *Through August 21 at The Ringling, 5401 Bay Shore Road, Sarasota; 941-359-5700; Ringling.org.*

**Viral Marketing.** The title of the Asolo Rep's production of Jonathan Spector's "Eureka Day," directed by Bianca LaVerne Jones, takes its name from a progressive day care center. Its educators believe in the values of inclusion, discussion, diversity, dialog, social jus-



Bianca  
LaVerne Jones



Jonathan  
Spector

tice, gender diversity and non-confrontation. As they're also a private business, these educators also believe in the value of the bottom line. Unfortunately, many of the parents don't believe in vaccinations. When a child at the school comes down with mumps, the county health department orders quarantine for all unvaccinated students. No discussion, no dialogue — it's an order. The five progressive ed-

*Continued on Page 102*



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Continued from Page 100

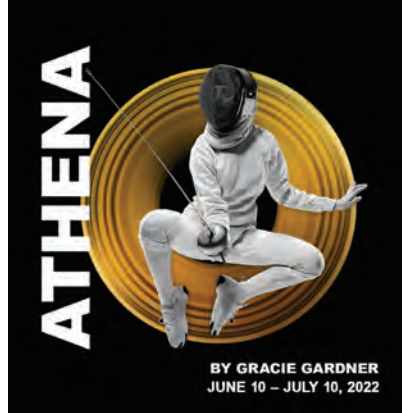
ucators on the board are normally of one mind, but this order splinters them as they wrestle with the mandate. Telling parents what to do just isn't their style. Social media has put them in the eye of an anti-vaxxer hurricane. The results are hilarious — and oddly timely, as Spector (who is a New College alum) wrote this before Covid made the scene. *Through June 4 at FSU Center for Performing Arts, 5555 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. 941-351-8000; AsoloRep.org.*

**En Garde!** Gracie Gardner's "Athena" at Urbanite Theatre explores the personal dynamics of two young fencers. Mary Wallace and Athena are training for the Junior Olympics and both supporting and competing with each other. The thrusts and parries of their



Gracie Gardner

fencing are echoed in the pointed jabs outside the practice arena. They'd like to be friends, but ambition and friendship can't coexist in their lives. The result is a poignant allegory on what it



costs to be the best of the best. Director Summer Wallace puts the spotlight on the sacrifice of young female athletes: the demands of rigorous training and the inevitable loss of life experience it requires. *June 10-July 10 at Urbanite Theatre, 1487 Second St., Sarasota; 941-321-1397; UrbaniteTheatre.com.*

**Songs of Freedom.** There are three opportunities this summer to hear from the extraordinary talents that comprise the Lakewood Ranch Wind Ensemble. First, a small group of its members will perform military marches and patriotic songs during The Tribute to Heroes Parade, a salute to veterans on May 22 at Main Street in Lakewood Ranch. Next



Courtesy photos  
Lakewood Ranch  
Wind Ensemble

up, 35 members of the group will perform a solemn tribute to fallen heroes at the "Memorial Day Concert" May 30 at the National Cemetery off SR-70. The musical pyrotechnics conclude with "American Fanfare," a collaboration with Choral Artists of Sarasota at the Sarasota Opera House on July 4. The Wind Ensemble, led by Joseph "Joe" Miller, will start the concert with patriotic tunes and rousing marches and, in the third section, perform alongside the 35-member Choral Artists' choir. Expect to be moved by such timeless anthems as "My Country, 'Tis of Thee," "America the Beautiful" and "You're a Grand Old Flag." [LWRWindEnsemble.org](http://LWRWindEnsemble.org).



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