



Around the Ranch

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THE COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER OF LAKEWOOD RANCH

WEDNESDAY, MAY 17, 2023



RANCH NITE WEDNESDAYS WILL TAKE ITS SUMMER HIATUS STARTING IN JUNE – With summer right around the corner, Ranch Nites is drawing to a close for the season, so don't miss your last few chances to enjoy the popular party! For more pictures, see pages 12-13. Photo by Ryan Angell

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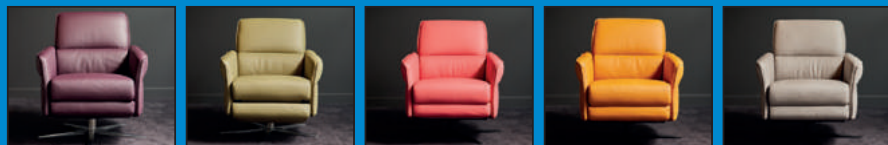
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Advertising Sales/Circulation: Around the Ranch is published by Lakewood Ranch Media which is solely responsible for its content. The Herald-Tribune is responsible for the printing, distribution and sales production of this newspaper. The articles and editorial viewpoints contained in this publication are written solely by Lakewood Ranch Media with the assistance of the Community Services Office and other offices in Lakewood Ranch, none of which are associated with the Herald-Tribune.

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- Brian Higgins, Owner, with son Kyle

Getting “Forked” at Waterside Might Be a Good Thing!

By Ernie Solle
Community Correspondent

One thing we have in fair numbers around Greater Lakewood Ranch are breakfast-and-lunch restaurants. They can be found in numerous locations around town.

Some are relatively mediocre places. Some are chain places, where you know what to expect because you’ve had the same food in multiple locations all over the country, and those can get kind of boring. Some have a menu tending toward the kale-heavy “vegomatic.” I tend to favor those restaurants to which I can go with my bride or a friend or two ... or more ... and partake of a good meal and enough coffee to get me fully awake for the rest of the day.

As to what constitutes a good meal, I’m not particularly interested in a gourmet experience for breakfast. I like omelets, oatmeal, bacon and eggs, pancakes, waffles ... that sort of thing, along with well-brewed coffee.

Good service is important, too. No one likes to get seated in a restaurant, and then have to wait a long time just to place an order, or endure a longer-than-average wait for their order to be served. Usually, I allow plenty of time for breakfast, but I don’t plan for it to be an all-day experience.

Recently a new breakfast-and-lunch place opened at Waterside Place. The name of this new place is “Forked at Waterside,” and, if my experience on my first visit to Forked is any indication, a return trip is in order.

I picked up my friend, Alex, around 9:30 a.m. for our trip to Forked. We figured that by timing our arrival for around 10 a.m., we’d likely avoid the early morning rush of folks who might want to get their breakfast prior to heading off to work, but not so late that we’d get into the lunchtime crush.

We felt fortunate in getting a parking spot just across the street from the restaurant. The two of us walked in and were informed by the hostess that we might be waiting about 15 minutes.

The wait turned out to be much less, though, and we got a table inside of five minutes. Once seated, we were greeted by our waitress, Kait, who took our drink orders (black coffee and ice water for both of us), and gave us menus to peruse.

Alex was apparently rather hungry, as he ordered the “Bob’s Big Breakfast.” I wanted to compare the type of omelet that I frequently order at other such restaurants with that of Forked, that being a “western” or “Denver” omelet. At present, Forked doesn’t have that style of omelet on the menu per se, but they do offer a “Veggie-licious” omelet containing tomatoes, onions, green peppers, spinach and mushrooms, to which I added ham for an additional two dollars, making it pretty much identical to my usual. The omelet came with fruit and toast.

While we waited for our food, we were able to taste the coffee, which I found to be strong and robust – a definite better-than-average cup, in my book.

As our food arrived, I was almost taken aback at the quantity of food on Alex’s plate – it was so large that he actually asked Kait



PHOTOS BY ERNIE SOLLER

for a small plate just to hold his toast. The “Bob’s Big Breakfast” consisted of two eggs, hash browns, a good-sized biscuit with gravy, a large slice of ham, two plump sausages, and two strips of bacon, in addition to the toast. This was absolutely NOT a small portion!

He dug into the Big Breakfast, and I popped a couple of forkfuls of omelet into my mouth. And then I stopped and took a good look at the omelet. It was a plain ham omelet – there were no veggies. I pointed this out to Kait, who, after checking with the kitchen and finding that the cook had seen “ham” on the ticket and made a ham-only omelet, told me that they were going to make a totally fresh omelet, with all the items I had expected. It arrived very quickly – and was nice and hot – and very good.

Such things can happen, but Kait and the Forked crew were up to the task of taking care of their customers quickly and efficiently. I was impressed.

The menu at Forked at Waterside is quite extensive, giving the hungry diner a lot of interesting and different items to choose from. They offer four different varieties of Eggs Benedict, as well as eight types of pancakes and three types of waffles. There are lots of different lunch items, too. You can add a number of side items to your food order, and Forked at Waterside also does car-



ryout, so if you’re in a hurry or have a meeting to furnish with food, you’re in luck at Forked at Waterside.

Some of the menu items have catchy names, such as the “Elvis Hunk of Burnin Love French Toast,” featuring graham cracker-coated challah bread, peanut butter, banana cream cheese, bacon, bananas, a berry compote and ... more bacon.

In addition to inside table service, Forked at Waterside also has seating outside, and has a small bar area with a pass-through window. While we were there, a guy was eating at the window, while his dogs were relaxing at his feet outside.

The décor at Forked at Waterside is fun, with signs pointing to various destinations, and their distance from Forked, such as Mote Aquarium the Big Cat Habitat, and Key West. There are also fun signs on the walls too, such as “May the Fork Be With You.”

Forked at Waterside – good food, cheerful, efficient service, and a pleasant location. Try it!

Forked at Waterside is located at 7600 Island Cove Terrace, #100, at Waterside Place, in Lakewood Ranch. Hours are 8 a.m. to 3 pm. daily. For more information visit forkedeats.com or call 941.355.3672.

Little Library with a Big Message

By Aliye Presley

In an increasingly technological world where children play, and even attend school on tablets and other touchscreen devices, there is one irreplaceable constant: the look, feeling, and even smell of a traditional book.

Arbor Grande resident Elizabeth Henderson first began the process of having her group recognized as an official Lakewood Ranch club in 2018 – with hopes of bringing accessible reading to every park in Lakewood Ranch – and was subsequently stalled due to the pandemic.

Fast forward to 2023: the club has officially been established. Henderson knew she was onto something great when an unexpected 15 residents showed up to the very first club meeting.

Throughout the months following the initial meeting, club members came together to gather materials for, build, paint, and even decorate Greenbrook's very own Little Free Library.

Henderson beamed as her vision came to fruition at the Greenbrook Adventure Park Little Free Library opening at the beginning of April.

Sisters Katerina Farese of Tampa and Arielle Monserez of Country Club East sponsored Greenbrook's Little Free Library, and dedicated it to their late mother, Irene Farese, who died of cancer last June. Farese was an avid reader, and the new Little Free Library houses some of her beloved books. A plaque on the new library reads "In Loving Memory of Irene Farese."

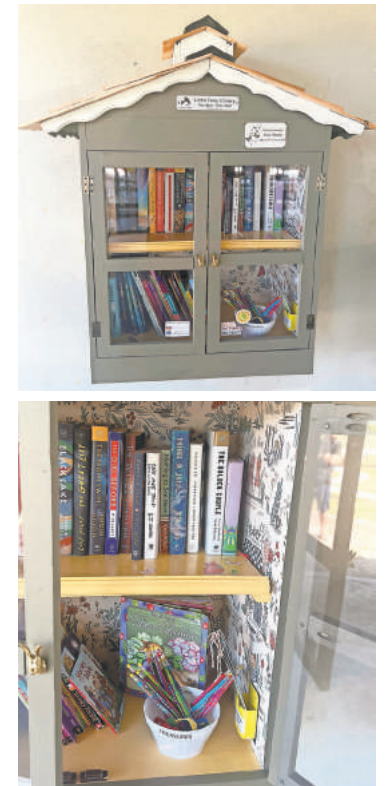
Henderson hopes to see more Lakewood Ranch residents join in as the club works on installing libraries in more local parks.

"We're just a group of people who want to spread a love for reading," said Henderson, smiling while looking around at all who gathered for the special opening.

Do you want to help bring more Little Free Libraries to Lakewood Ranch? Contact Elizabeth Henderson to donate books, sponsor a library, or join the club at littlefreelibrarylwr@gmail.com.



Founder of the Little Free Library Club, Elizabeth Henderson, performing the ribbon cutting with sisters Katerina Farese and Arielle Monserez, who dedicated the library to their late mother Irene Farese.



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PHOTO BY ERNIE SOLLER

Presenting: The “Data Dump”

LWR Business Alliance and LWR Community Activities get Together to Provide a needed Service to Residents and Businesses

By Ernie Soller
Community Correspondent

One resident drove his SUV up to the Data Dump operations area in the parking lot next to the Lakewood Ranch Town Hall, opened up the back gate of his SUV, and took out some old computer equipment, handing the materials to a member of the Quicksilver recycling team. His yellow Lab also tried to get into the act, hopping out of the vehicle and getting very friendly with the Data Dump crew. The recyclers went right to work on his equipment.

Another opened the back gate of his SUV and disgorged multiple old laptops, a couple of desktops, etc. He must have been saving all this in preparation for the Data Dump for a long time!

Let's take a look at the “why” of Data Dump Day.

Recycling is a big thing these days. Our local governments have issued large bins for residents to toss items that used to go into landfills, but are now being recycled-and re-used.

But take a look at the information label on the top of your recycling bin. It tells you what you can place in that big bin. They're asking for glass, aluminum cans, steel (or “tin”) cans, paperback books, junk mail, magazines and newspapers, cardboard, plastic containers such as milk cartons, and those containers from the grocery store which contain fruit and other items.

Guess what items are notably absent from the list of recycled items? Computers, phones, TVs, and other electronic equipment.

And why does your local community recycling center NOT want these items? Because these electronic devices contain lots of toxic elements, such as lead, mercury, chromium, etc.

Such items will pollute our landfills and yes, they should be

recycled. But they can't be just thrown in with the more “ordinary” items that you're invited to put into your big recycling bin because of all those toxic elements.

Data Dump Day gives Lakewood Ranch businesses and residents the opportunity to recycle their unwanted or not-working electronic equipment in a safe, environmentally friendly manner. And, as a side benefit, if you took your old computer to the Data Dump, the friendly folks at Quicksilver Recycling took your old computer, and removed the hard drive, then destroyed that hard drive, so that no one could retrieve your data – ever.

As for the remaining parts of your computer, the “normal” metal parts, such as the outside cases of your desktop, were stacked on pallets for transport to a place where they could be chewed up and re-melted into new material. Other components went into other, segregated bins.

Representatives were on hand from Lakewood Ranch Community Activities, the Lakewood Ranch Business Alliance, as well as Thrive Managed Services, a Lakewood Ranch Business Alliance member and provider of IT strategies tailored to the needs of their clients. And their clients are found all over – even the Boston Celtics are a Thrive client.

As for the company which recycles all those old electronics, Quicksilver started out as a recycler of fluorescent light tubes. Many of us may not realize it, but fluorescent light tubes contain mercury, an element well-known to be toxic to humans, so don't just toss old ones in your household trash!

Quicksilver doesn't recycle fluorescents anymore, but they sure know how to recycle electronics.

If you didn't make it to this year's Data Dump Day, keep your eyes open for the time and place of next year's event. You'll be glad you did.

Lakewood Ranch Community Fund Launches its Builders Give Back Program

The Lakewood Ranch Community Fund (LWRCF) recently announced the launch of its Builders Give Back program, through which builders make a \$100 donation per closing to the LWRCF in the name of the new homeowner. Those currently participating are Anchor Builders, Homes By Towne, John Cannon Homes, Lee Wetherington Homes, AR Homes, Pulte Homes, and Stock Luxury Homes. The program is further supported by Lakewood Ranch Communities, which will donate a matching \$100 per closing to the LWRCF.

The new program benefits the LWRCF by both developing engagement with homeowners in their community and introducing them to local philanthropy, which in turn will help create support for the LWRCF into the future.

“This program allows new residents to experience the welcoming and giving culture of Lakewood Ranch right when they move in,” said Adrienne Bookhamer, executive director of the LWRCF. “Our builders understand that the lifestyle in Lakewood Ranch is unique, and they are supporting that by participating in Builders Give Back. There is no better way to thank new residents than by contributing to the community and helping the LWRCF make an impact here.”

The Lakewood Ranch Community Fund has a “live here, give here” approach, Bookhamer explained. “We are supporting local life-changing nonprofit organizations and causes embedded in the area. This program brings new residents into the fold when they move in and provides them with an opportunity to give back themselves. By engaging our new residents early, we are hoping for more involvement from the community to make an even bigger impact locally.”

The mission of the LWRCF, which is financed fully by residents and businesses, is to support the nonprofits that are doing impactful work in Lakewood Ranch and the surrounding areas in Manatee and Sarasota counties. As Lakewood Ranch continues to grow, the needs of the community – including human services, education, animal services, and arts and culture – will also grow.

Bookhamer added, “During COVID, we gave out more than \$75,000 in grants to help nonprofits that were directly impacted by the pandemic, and after Hurricane Ian, we partnered with Lakewood Ranch Communities and Lakewood Ranch Community Activities and raised \$10,000 to grant to nonprofits affected by the hurricane.”

For more information, visit lwrfund.org or call (941) 208-6799.



Your LWR Story

By Maggie Milne

Meet Lakewood Ranch residents, Jim and Monika Templeman.

Jim is from Chicago, Ill., and Monika was born and raised in Southern California. Prior to their life in Lakewood Ranch, Jim and Monika lived and worked in the Washington, D.C. area. Jim's career was in finance and management, including international assignments; he excelled as a director and CFO. Monika, an attorney, was corporate counsel and a law professor. She is the former national director of Employee Plans Compliance and oversaw pension plan compliance in the U.S. and U.S. territories. She also served as a national government speaker.

Jim retired in 2011, and the couple started making plans for their future, exploring locations for their permanent retirement home. Their vision of an ideal location included natural beauty and a great climate. Both Jim and Monika love boating, hiking, and communing with nature. They decided to explore Sarasota and the surrounding areas to find their forever home, where they could enjoy year-round outdoor activities, water views, and leisure, cultural, and sports activities. Their first Florida search took them to Venice, Osprey, and Sarasota. They loved all the culture and charm in Sarasota as well as the beautiful beaches and outdoor lifestyle. Jim and Monika, however, wanted a location where there would be a sense of community, where homes and neighborhoods were lovely, where a host of activities were available in the community. Their realtor, who soon became a friend, suggested Lakewood Ranch.

Initially, Jim and Monika wanted to live close to the Florida Gulf Coast or Sarasota Bay, but once they saw Lakewood Ranch they fell in love! Lakewood Ranch is 15 miles from Lido Key, an easy drive for a day at the beach. The couple looked at both existing and new construction homes. They chose an existing house that had wonderful interior upgrades. The moment they walked in they knew they would buy it. Located in the Mizner Reserve neighborhood of The Country Club village, it offered a beautiful lake view and elegant features. Jim and Monika had found their perfect retirement home! Since they enjoy taking trips and going on cruises, having a maintenance-free neighborhood was ideal. Monika was still working when they made their purchase, but had plans to retire the following year. Since their move to The Ranch in 2013, Jim and Monika have been permanent residents and never looked back.

Both Jim and Monika are enamored with the lifestyle of Lakewood Ranch. They volunteered to be part of Lakewood Ranch's marketing campaign. The couple took part in a photo shoot at The Lodge, one of the clubhouses for members of The Lakewood Ranch Golf and Country Club. A photo of them and another couple sitting at a table within The Lodge was often used in promotional materials. A huge poster of that photo is still on display at the University Town Center Mall.

When settled, the couple joined the Lakewood Ranch Golf and Country Club. Jim loves tennis and is an avid sports fan; he enjoys playing men's doubles tennis four times a week at The Club's tennis center. He oversees coordinating Friday tennis for his tennis group. Jim loves being able to play outdoor tennis



year-round, even in the summer heat. Also, for seven years, Jim served on the Mizner Reserve Homeowner's Association landscape committee and safety committee.

With a passion for philanthropy and a desire to make new friends, Monika joined the Lakewood Ranch Women's Club, a non-profit organization with over 300 women. The Club is one of more than 60 for Lakewood Ranch residents. Monika enjoys the fun, friendship, and community service opportunities the Women's Club offers. In 2014, she became the publicity chair for the Women's Club, a position she still holds today. In 2017 she was elected president, serving through 2022. She has chaired over 12 charity fundraisers, including eight fashion shows, for the Club's four adopted charities, HOPE Family Serves, Solve Maternity Homes, SMART Riding Therapy, and Children's Guardian Fund. This year the Women's Club was awarded the prestigious Community Spirit Award by the Manatee Community Foundation, and Monika had the honor of accepting the award, along with the current Women's Club president, on behalf of all their members and former club leaders who made this achievement possible.

Monika is an art enthusiast and enjoys painting in oil and watercolor. She joined the Lakewood Ranch Art League, a group of local artists who meet at Lakewood Ranch Town Hall to paint in the comradery of fellow artists. The group coordinates gallery exhibits, including an annual exhibit at various locations throughout Lakewood Ranch. Monika serves as the Art League's publicity chair and has coordinated two charity art sales at Lakewood Ranch Town Hall that were co-sponsored by the Women's Club and Art League. Members of the Art League donate

paintings for silent auctions to help raise funds for the adopted charities the Women's Club supports. Monika loves being a part of the Art League, where she feels that she learns so much from exceptionally talented artists and has made lifelong friends.

Aside from a sense of community, sports, and social clubs, Jim and Monika are big fans of the beautiful areas for daily walks with Leo, their soft-coated Wheaten terrier. They also enjoy dining out in and near Lakewood Ranch, and having a variety of retailers, an exceptional pet bakery and groomer, as well as several groceries stores close to home. Lakewood Ranch is conveniently located for their evenings out at performance theater, cultural venues, and the Tampa Bay Rays and Buccaneers games – Jim's two favorite teams.

Jim and Monika look forward to spending their retirement years in Lakewood Ranch. While they will travel on adventures abroad, and will visit family in California often, they plan to always call Lakewood Ranch their forever home!

If you are interested in hearing more about Jim and Monika's Lakewood Ranch life, contact: templemanma@gmail.com.

We would like to share Your LWR Story! Include who you are, why you chose Lakewood Ranch, your Lakewood Ranch life now, and what excites you about your Lakewood Ranch future. Send Your LWR Story and photos to yourlwrstory@lakewoodranch.com.

LAKEWOOD RANCH COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

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



The Lakewood Ranch Tribute to Heroes Parade is coming to Lakewood Main Street from 6-8 p.m. May 28th! You won't want to miss this ... join us for a pre-parade block party at 6 p.m., including food trucks and beer, children's activities, vendor booths and musical performances.



Aliye Presley
Events & Marketing
Manager

Join us as we honor our local veterans, active duty, and fallen heroes. Show your support at this free event where all are welcome. Lakewood Ranch Community Activities will be donating all event pro-



ceeds to local veteran organizations Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 12055 and the Del Webb Lakewood Ranch Association of Veterans and Military Supporters.

The parade procession will start at 7 p.m., and will include floats, all sorts of vehicles, groups on foot, and even a pirate ship! Local businesses, non-profit organizations, community groups, veterans, participants of our "best decorated" bicycle, wheelchair and golf cart contest, and more will be participating in the procession. Make sure you arrive early to get a great viewing spot on Lakewood Main Street.

Feel free to bring yourself a portable chair to get comfortable for the procession viewing. We even welcome you to bring



your four-legged family members, but please be sure to keep them on a leash. No outside coolers or outside food and drink are allowed on Main Street. If you would like to donate to our benefitting veteran groups, you may do so by visiting lwtributetoheroes.org.



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AROUND THE RANCH



PHOTOS BY RYAN ANGELL



Come out to Waterside Place and enjoy the last few Ranch Nite Wednesdays for the Season!

Summer is fast approaching, and Ranch Nite Wednesdays is winding down for the season. The weekly event, which runs 6-9 p.m. at Waterside Place, features food trucks, live music, cocktails, and cornhole.

There are three more dates: May 17, 24, and 31, so come out and take advantage of the beautiful weather, and fun and camaraderie with friends and neighbors.

Ranch Nites will resume later this year, in October! If you can't make it this month, we'll see you in the "fall"!



LWR Women's Club's "Spring in Bloom on The Ranch" Raises \$34,000 for Charity; Wins Recognition

Lakewood Ranch Women's Club (LWRWC) raised \$34,000 to benefit its four adopted nonprofits at its fashion show charity fundraiser, "Spring in Bloom on The Ranch."

Fifteen models wore fashions from Dillard's at University Town Center. Over 200 attendees had the chance to participate in a raffle, silent auction, live auction, and a lunch in the Lakewood Ranch Golf and Country Club ballroom; 100% of net proceeds will benefit Hope Family Services for victims of domestic violence; Solve Maternity Homes, helping pregnant woman in need and their babies for over 46 years; SMART (Sarasota Manatee Association for Riding Therapy) improving the lives of children and adults with physical, mental and emotional challenges through therapeutic horseback riding and carriage driving programs; and Children's Guardian Fund, which immediately responds to the needs of children removed from abusive or neglectful homes.

LWRWC is now in its 26th year and is an award-winning club, receiving three recent recognitions for its philanthropic contributions to the community. Most recently, LWRWC was nominated by its four adopted charities and selected as the recipient of the "Community Spirit Award" from Manatee Community Foundation, which honors the generosity of givers and the resilience of nonprofits serving Manatee County.



A Place Where Business Goes to Connect

This spring has been full of activity for the Lakewood Ranch Business Alliance and our 650+ businesses.

Similar to a chamber of commerce, it's our mission to connect, educate and strengthen the business community in the Lakewood Ranch region. Whether you are looking to grow your business in Lakewood Ranch, or just wanting to connect with other professionals in the area – we have several committees, events and programs to help you do that. Here's what we're focusing on!

- **Events** – We invite you to join us for our variety of events. This is the best way to connect with other businesses in the region. From morning to evening socials, topic-based luncheons or programming for young professionals – we have something for everyone. Head to our website for more information at LWRBA.org/events-calendar

- **Gain leadership** – The 2023 Elevating Leadership Academy, powered by Game On Nation, will start in August. This is a six-week leadership training on everything from conflict management to communications styles and other topics to level up your leadership!

- **Give back** – Are you looking to give back



BRITTANY LAMONT
President/CEO

to non-profits in the region? We recently partnered with the Lakewood Ranch Community Fund to award six non-profit grants. And we aren't done yet! This fall we will host over 200 business professionals for our sixth annual Alliance Gives Back Volunteer Days as they support over 30 member non-profits! Keep an eye out for more details on our website!

- **Visibility** – Do you have a brand-new business? We'd love to celebrate you! We offer ribbon cuttings ... just fill out the form at LWRBA.org and someone from our staff will get in touch with you.

- **Advocacy** – It's important for us to keep a pulse on what is happening in the region. Through our Government Affairs Committee we meet frequently with our leaders at the county and state level to ensure that we are representing business interests. We are currently monitoring issues including transportation, insurance, and affordable housing.

If you are looking to engage with other businesses in the region, we welcome you to visit our website or reach out to our team. For more information on joining the Lakewood Ranch Business Alliance, visit lwrba.org.

May Programs at Chabad of Bradenton & Lakewood Ranch

Please note that all events will take place at the Chabad House at 5712 Lorraine Road, or at the virtual Chabad House at chabad-ofbradenton.com/zoom, unless otherwise noted.

Talmud Classes
Mondays, 7:30 - 8:30 p.m.
At the Chabad House and via Zoom

Explore the Talmud and its laws in its original text. No prior knowledge of the Talmud or Hebrew is necessary. Book fee: \$45.

Torah Studies
Saturday mornings, 9 - 9:30 a.m.

At the Chabad House
Participate in a fascinating class on the Torah portion of the week. Discover the mystical meanings and lessons behind ancient stories. Admission is free.

Weekly Shabbat Services
Friday nights, 7 p.m.; Saturday mornings at 9:30 a.m., Shabbat Kiddush at noon

At the Chabad House
Enjoy warm, family friendly services at The Chabad House. Saturday morning services are followed by a delicious buffet Kiddush.

Tanya Class
Thursdays, 9-9:30 a.m.
At the Chabad House and on Zoom
Delve into the secrets of the soul with Rabbi Mendy at this weekly Tanya class. Admission is free.

Ladies Torah & Tea
Tuesdays, May 23 and 30, 11 a.m.-noon
At the home of Chanie Bukiet and via Zoom
Join Chanie Bukiet for a dose of delicious tea and refreshments and discussion on the 12 principles

of energized living, which has empowered thousands of women to activate transformational goodness in their lives. Admission is free. Sponsor a class in someone's memory or honor for \$36.

JLI – Jewpernatural
Wednesdays, May 17, 24, and 31, 7:30 p.m.

At the Chabad House
As we understand the natural world better, we have only grown more fascinated by mysterious topics like the meaning of dreams; the existence of angels, demons, and extraterrestrials; and the power of the evil eye. With record interest inspiring curiosity, dread, and mockery, this course probes the Talmud, Jewish philosophy, and kabbalah to provide Jewish perspectives and guidance for those curious about these perennial questions. Cost: \$90 (includes textbook).

RCS – To Believe or Not to Believe in Yourself
Thursday, May 18 at noon

At the Chabad House and on Zoom
The Rosh Chodesh Society course introduces the students to Tanya, a 225-year-old text whose portrayal of human psychology in general and our inner spiritual composition in particular, remains as revolutionary – and as refreshing – as ever. This is the final class of a seven-class course, and is entitled "If You Mind, It Matters." Lunch will be served. Course fee: \$85, JWC members \$80 textbooks included, or \$25 per class.

Babyccino
Friday, May 19, 10-10:45 a.m.
At the Chabad House

Our wonderful Babyccino program offers a great opportunity for you to spend quality time with your child while meeting other moms in

a warm and friendly atmosphere. Three months to 2+ years. Bagels and coffee, plus snacks for the babies! Suggested donation: \$10 per child.

CTeen Friday Night Dinner
Friday, May 19, 10 - 10:45 a.m.
At the Chabad House

Join CTeen LWR at the home of Rabbi Mendy and Chanie Bukiet for a Shabbat meal filled with delicious food, games, discussion, and song! \$18, and free for CTeen members. CTeen annual membership is \$180.

Ohel Trip
Sunday, May 21, all day

Experience the trip of a lifetime! Join Rabbi Mendy Bukiet for this inspiring and educational trip to visit the Rebbe's Ohel, tour Chabad world headquarters and the Crown Heights Jewish community, and shop and eat NY style!

Shavuot All Nighter
Thursday, May 25, 9 p.m.

At the home of Rabbi Mendy and Chanie Bukiet
Enjoy a kiddush and buffet holiday meal at this all-night learning event featuring fascinating Torah talks from Rabbi Mendy and Chanie and various community members.

Shavuot Dairy Feast
Friday, May 26, 6 p.m.

At the Chabad House
Join the Chabad family for a Shavuot dairy dinner and grand ice cream party, with a reading of the 10 Commandments. Open to all ages. Free admission. Sponsor \$500.

For more information on any of the ongoing events or to reserve, call Rabbi Mendy Bukiet at (941)752-3030, email rabbim@chabadofbradenton.com, or visit the Chabad website at chabadofbradenton.com.

Supervisors Discuss Staff Salary Issues

By Ernie Soller
Community Correspondent

One of the most difficult issues that has come before the supervisors of the Lakewood Ranch Community Development Districts (CDD) and the Inter-District Authority (IDA) of late has been the topic of employee pay.

It is no secret that inflation has affected paychecks all around. It is also no secret that the cost of living has left an indelible mark on family finances. People once moved here to enjoy the warmth of our climate and “way back when” were willing to accept a somewhat lower wage scale because of the great weather. There was even a name for this: “The Sunshine Factor.”

A year ago, the staff leadership at the Lakewood Ranch Town Hall found that they were losing employees at a much faster rate than ever before. The main reason – paychecks weren’t keeping up with rising costs. Employees found that they could change employers, often taking the same or a similar job, and get paid more than Town Hall was paying.

Pretty much all the way through 2022, Executive Director Steve Zielinski reported monthly the increasing number of employee vacancies.

Last year, after commissioning a study of comparable jobs and pay levels at similar government entities, the IDA granted Lakewood Ranch’s employees a 5-1/2% pay increase. The report was delivered to the IDA board in mid-summer recommending a 4.4% increase across the board, but the issue wasn’t acted on until the Board’s December meeting. By that time, the Board realized that a 4.4% increase wasn’t going to make Lakewood Ranch anywhere near competitive, and as a result, the board agreed to an across-the-board 5-1/2% pay hike.

Now, with the need for developing budgets for the 2023-2024 fiscal year, the topic of employee pay is again being discussed.

Executive Director Zielinski has recommended to the IDA board that Lakewood Ranch go to a two-part compensation system. In previous years, up until last December, pay increases were granted only on a “merit-basis.” If the employee did a good job, or perhaps an exceptional job, he or she would be given a merit pay increase of up to 3%.

Unfortunately inflation, even though it has slowed a little, isn’t gone, and Zielinski also has

recommended a cost-of-living pay increase to go along with the merit increases, to make sure that Lakewood Ranch’s employees don’t again start falling behind economically – and resulting, once again, in a loss of good staffers.

During the District 1 CDD board meeting, Zielinski polled the members of that District’s board as to their opinions on the pay scale issue.

District 1 IDA representative, supervisor Bob Swiatek, asked that his fellow District 1 board members give him some direction as to how they wanted him to vote on this issue.

Supervisor Preston Olinger noted that after leaving the military, he worked for a defense contractor that had both cost of living and merit pay increases. Supervisor Bob Dapper stated that he had cost of living increases every Jan. 1.

Supervisor Laura Fox commented that Lakewood Ranch needs to “take care of our people, or they’ll leave.”

Other district boards have also expressed support for the two-tiered pay system.

AUDIT CONTRACTS

The District 5 board reversed its earlier move to ask for bids on future auditing contracts. Attorney Andrew Cohen noted that there is no statutory requirement in Florida for CDDs to change auditing firms over a given period of time. Executive director Zielinski is looking at the idea of establishing a policy that would contain specific language relative to bids on audit contracts.

GATE ISSUES – COUNTRY CLUB

The supervisors of the Lakewood Ranch Country Club districts (districts 2, 5, and 6) will hold a joint meeting at 8 a.m. May 18 to discuss how to improve gate service, and possibly move toward eliminating the need for transponders and on-site guards.

EDGEWATER GATEHOUSE

The CDD 2 board is reconsidering the replacement of the overhang at the Edgewater gatehouse. It has not been in place for some time, and the District could save money by not replacing it.

UTILITIES TURNOVER – DISTRICT 2

The District 2 board decided to NOT go ahead with turning over utilities to Manatee County, due to the huge increase in fees requested by the County.

SEE SUPERVISORS, PAGE 16



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SUPERVISORS FROM PAGE 15

SECURITY ISSUES IN DISTRICT 4

Supervisor Keith Davey noted that there have been some issues with their security patrol provider, such as guards not showing up on time.

Davey also commented that criminals from Tampa have been coming to Manatee County. He cited thefts from unlocked cars in driveways, and leaving garage doors open when no one was around. This type of behavior amounts to easy pickings for crooks.

COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION MANAGER REPORTS

The office of Community Association Management is trying to determine whether there are significantly more HOA code violations for properties that are owned by non-resident owners and rented out, versus owner-occupied homes.

This may contribute to a tightening of home rental regulations on the part of HOAs.

DOG PARK

The District 1 board voted to go ahead with a “microforest” project in their portion of the Dog Park. The District 4 board also voted to allow the installation of the microforest in their portion of the park. Both district boards also voted to commit funds to assist in paying for the project.

In other dog park news, Operations Director Tom

Merrell informed the District 4 board that several shade structures in the dog park would be replaced, as they are dilapidated. They will be replaced with structures more suited to the dog park use. One factor in the deterioration of the current structures is the severe rusting of the bases of the current structures, due partially to their being frequently sprayed on by urinating dogs!

TRAIL BRIDGE

The trail bridge decking in District 4 will be replaced in June. The current decking is still considered safe to walk on but is not in good condition. A more weather-resistant material will be used to replace the decking. The underlying structure of the bridge is still sturdy, per Operations Director Merrell.

COMMUNITY GARDEN

Work on the Community Garden is progressing, and it should be ready to go around the first week in May.

RAINFALL

Lakewood Ranch received almost NO rainfall during the month of March. Even so, irrigation water usage has so far not been a big problem.

SUPERVISOR RESIGNATION

Longtime District 6 supervisor Wayne Turnblom has informed the District 6 board that he would be leaving the board, effective the May 1.

SHACK yoga + fitness Opens at Waterside Place

ONE OF SARASOTA'S PRIME YOGA STUDIOS OPENS A SECOND LOCATION

SHACK yoga + fitness, a Sarasota staple in the Rosemary District, has opened a new location in Lakewood Ranch. SHACK has served the Sarasota community for over 10 years and will now bring their “sweat” style of yoga, as well as their sculpt and circuit fitness classes to Waterside Place.

SHACK's signature power flow style class moves you in a sweaty, music-vibing, collective-energy kind of way, according to Nikka Colorado and Courtenay Smith, SHACK yoga + fitness co-owners. Each teacher will offer their own individuality while guiding clients through a yoga flow, they said. All levels of experience are welcome.

“We are known for our teaching team and staff,” Colorado and Smith said. “SHACK teachers all came to teaching for different reasons; yoga + fitness have brought many wonderful things to their lives, including healing, fitness, balance, and peace – just to name a few. One thing our teachers all have in common is that yoga isn't just a job to them, it's a gift, and it's one they want to share with you.”

Download the SHACK app in the app store to schedule your first class. View the class schedule and pricing at www.shackyogafitness.com. Pre-registration is required for all classes. Studio doors open 15 minutes prior to class and the doors close at class start time.

SHACK yoga + fitness is located at 1561 Lakefront Drive, Ste. 210, Lakewood Ranch, 34240. For more information visit shackyogafitness.com, email hi@theyogashack.com, or call (941)203-5146.



CORNHOLE - CONCERTS - COCKTAILS



RANCH NITE

Wednesdays

Waterside Place
1561 LAKEFRONT DRIVE
LAKEWOOD RANCH, FL 34240

6:00 PM to 9:00 PM

NIGHT MARKET

RETURNING WEEKLY WITH ROTATING VENDORS

Thru MAY 31ST



FOOD TRUCKS *Live Music*

COCKTAILS and CORNHOLE







Our Sincere Thanks

The Lakewood Ranch Community Fund, LWRCF, is excited to announce the Builders Give Back program. For every new home closing, participating builders make a donation to the LWRCF in the new homeowner's name. The developer of Lakewood Ranch then matches each contribution.

With a 'live here, give here' approach, the work of the LWRCF is to support the non-profits making an impact in Lakewood Ranch, as well as Manatee and Sarasota counties. And the Builders Give Back program allows new residents to experience the giving culture of Lakewood Ranch right when they move in, while also benefiting the Fund. By introducing new homeowners to local philanthropy through this program, we hope to ensure support for LWRCF in the future.



Learn more at lwrfund.org



Builders Give Back

ANCHOR HOMES

WILD BLUE AT WATERSIDE

PULTE HOMES

SAPPHIRE POINT
& AVANTI AT WATERSIDE

HOMES BY TOWNE

LAKEHOUSE COVE
AT WATERSIDE

AR HOMES

WILD BLUE AT WATERSIDE

STOCK LUXURY

WILD BLUE AT WATERSIDE
& THE LAKE CLUB

JOHN CANNON

WILD BLUE AT WATERSIDE,
MONARCH ACRES, STAR FARMS
& KINGFISHER ESTATES
AT WATERSIDE

LEE WETHERINGTON

WILD BLUE AT WATERSIDE
& STAR FARMS



THE UNASSUMING WINE BROS.



Wine, Food, Art, Fun.

Experiencing the Sarasota Forks and Corks Festival

After living in the Lakewood Ranch area for over six years, I finally scored one of the hottest tickets in town: VIP for the Sarasota “Forks and Corks” Food and Wine Festival. Yes, much like getting Adele or Taylor Swift concert tickets, Sarasota’s Forks and Corks Food and Wine Festival tickets sell out fast, and after my experience, I know why.

I’m Vigo, your Unassuming Wine Bro (UWB). I’m a regular guy who loves everything about wine, including writing about it. I aim to explore the nuances of wine, share our adventures with you, and have a little fun along the way.

I know you’re asking yourself, “But Vigo, I thought you were unassuming, so what’s up with VIP?” Yes, when it comes to wines, I try to stay “unassuming,” but VIP is the only way to go when it comes to any food and wine festival. I have first crack at the wine and food vendors, and I have a lovely, shaded area to sit in while others are scrambling to find a sliver of shade while trying to enjoy a chilled South African rosé. So, with my VIP access badge securely hung around my neck, I hit the Forks and Corks festival like Augustus Gloop in Willy Wonka’s Chocolate Factory.

SO, WHAT MAKES THE SARASOTA FORKS AND CORKS FOOD AND WINE FESTIVE SO UNIQUE?

The Ringling Museum is one of many jewels in Sarasota. The museum’s interior grounds make you think you’ve just entered a lovely French chateau. I’ve been to many food and wine festivals, and there’s no more perfect place to enjoy the pleasures of food and wine than on the grounds of the Ringling Museum. Along with beautiful grounds, the festival attracts top-flight wineries and wine sellers worldwide. As I toured each wine booth, it was a “who’s who” of wine-producing countries and regions. Surprisingly, even small but scrappy Sicily was represented with a couple of solid whites and reds.

HOW WAS THE QUALITY OF FOOD PROVIDED BY LOCAL RESTAURANTS AND VENDERS?

I was delighted with the type and quality of food served by local restaurants and vendors at the festival. From tacos to barbecue brisket, it was almost impossible not to find something delicious to pair with a wine you had just selected from a wine vendor apart. If anything, it was too much. Much like going to Disney World for the first time, there’s too much to see in one day. That would be my only criticism of Forks and Corks; there’s just too much to drink and taste in one afternoon. So having a plan before entering the grounds will serve you well when you attend.

WAS PURCHASING VIP TICKETS WORTH THE PRICE?

The short answer is “yes.” You get a lot for paying a bit more. First, you enter the festival area an hour before the general admission festival goers, which means no lines and no waiting



PHOTOS BY ERIK ONSTAD



for the wine or food you want to sample. Next, you’re greeted with a flute of delicious French Champagne when you enter the festival. Within the event area, you have several shaded sitting areas in which to drink, eat or rest while the general admission guest is scrambling around for a bench or open chair to sit on. So, just having a place to rest in the shade while you gain your composure from all the wine and food you consumed is reason enough to go VIP.

Vigo’s overall impression: With beautiful grounds, top-flight food and wine, and a sunny but breezy day, the experience of the Sarasota Forks and Corks Food and Wine Festival couldn’t be more pleasurable. No one or event is perfect but

given the amount of food and wine vendors and the crowd that attends Forks and Corks, this festival almost gets it perfect. As my southern wife would say, “I’ll be sitting on ready” to get my tickets for this event again next year. Could there be improvements? I guess we’ll see next year.

Vigo rating: UWB UWB UWB UWB UWB

FANS AND READERS:

Like our Facebook page “The Unassuming Wine Bros,” follow us on Instagram @theunassumingwinebros, or email us at vigoloveswine@gmail.com. Let us know what you think about this article, these bottles, or suggestions for upcoming articles.



Meals on Wheels **PLUS**
OF MANATEE

Drive Away Hunger

Golf Classic

Saturday, June 10, 2023

Legacy Golf Club At Lakewood Ranch
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\$130

One Player

\$500

Foursome

*The event is a scramble tournament.
Price includes greens fee, cart, driving range, food, and beverages.*

To learn more or register online, visit:

MealsOnWheelsPLUS.org

Sponsorships Available

All proceeds benefit the programs of Meals on Wheels PLUS of Manatee and stay right here in our local community.



Meals on Wheels PLUS of Manatee is a 501 (c)3 organization. The Florida Registration Number for Meals on Wheels PLUS of Manatee is #CH1420. A COPY OF THE OFFICIAL REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MAY BE OBTAINED FROM THE DIVISION OF CONSUMER SERVICES BY CALLING TOLL FREE 800-435-7352 OR AT WWW.800HELPFLA.COM WITHIN THE STATE. REGISTRATION DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT, APPROVAL, OR RECOMMENDATION BY THE STATE.

THE (PET) DOCTOR IS IN!

By Erin Siems, DVM



In the early stages, there are typically no outward signs of heartworm disease. It is not until the worms cause irreversible damage that the pet starts to show signs. At this point they will start to cough and may show exercise intolerance, which can progress to being fatal if not treated. Treatment is expensive and difficult on our pets. This

why is it so important to PREVENT heartworm disease rather than wait to TREAT it.

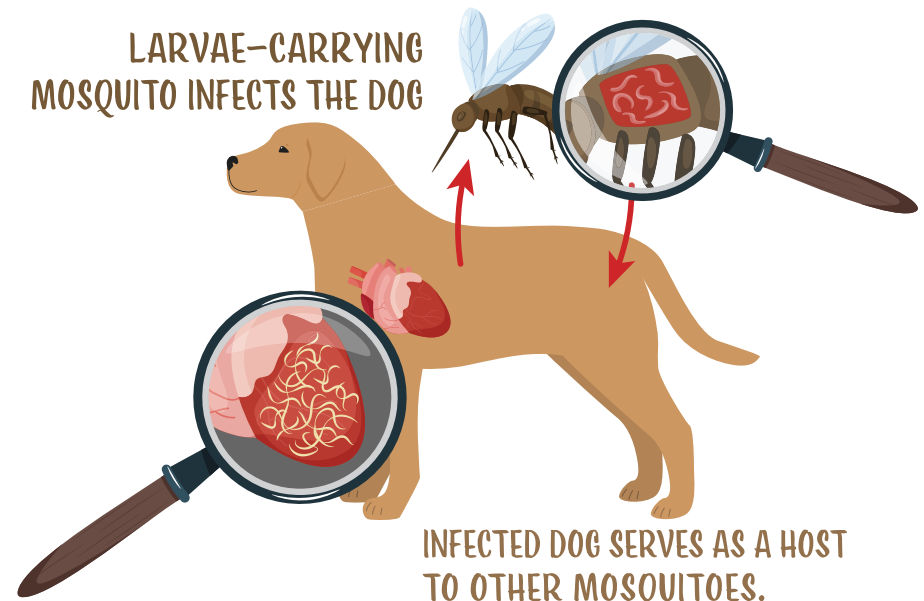
The good news is there are many effective preventions out there. The products range from chewable monthly or quarterly treats to topical medications given monthly, or a six-month or a yearly injection. All tend to be effective and safe and effective for most pets. Of course, not every product works for every pet, which is why it is important to discuss which product is best for your pet's needs with your veterinarian.

Dr. Erin Siems graduated from Ross University School of Veterinary Medicine in 2010, and has enjoyed working in both general practice and emergency care. She has been practicing in the Lakewood Ranch/Bradenton area for the past seven years. She enjoys general prac-

Things are heating up in Florida. While some of the country is still dealing with frost, our humidity is starting to creep up, nights are starting to get steamier, and we are coming upon full-fledged bug season. The worst for me: the mosquitoes. While I detest those little flying blood suckers, the whine in my ear, the slight sting of a bite, the incessant itch that follows, I should feel lucky. At least I am not susceptible to heartworms like my dogs and cats are.

While mosquitoes are annoying to me, they can be deadly to my four-legged companions. You see, mosquitoes carry microscopic heartworm babies which they can deposit into a dog or cat's blood stream. These baby heartworms, also known as microfilaria, then develop into adult worms that live in the heart and lungs. They can live 5-7 years and grow to be 4 to 12 inches long, continually producing more heartworms during this time. Resembling strands of cooked spaghetti, these worms can bundle up in the heart and lungs and cause permanent damage.

LARVAE-CARRYING
MOSQUITO INFECTS THE DOG



INFECTED DOG SERVES AS A HOST
TO OTHER MOSQUITOES.

— HEARTWORM DISEASE IN DOGS —

tice because it gives her the ability to build relationships with her patients and their families. Dr. Siems opened her own practice, Big Paws

Animal Hospital in Lakewood Ranch, in May 2020. Email pet questions to reception@BigPawsAnimalHospital.com.

Lakewood Ranch Reports Robust First Quarter Sales

Lakewood Ranch closed the first quarter of 2023 with 580 sales, a 17% increase over the same quarter in 2022. In March alone, builders reported 236 sales, which was a 33% increase over the same month in 2022, as well as a 33% gain over the previous month (February of 2023).

Sales have been climbing month over month since September of 2022, but March represented the largest jump in sales since the pandemic housing boom occurred, in late 2020/early 2021.

The growth in sales was attributable, in part, to builders doing a good job in "finding the market" in the more challenging entry-level and family move-up villages, by offering special financing, flex cash and closing cost contributions.

The luxury market also saw increases, including the opening of Wild Blue, a new luxury home neighborhood in Waterside.

Laura Cole, senior vice president of LWR

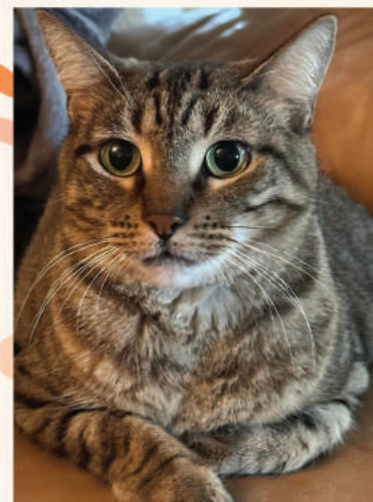
Communities, LLC, said that Florida is still seeing a great deal of in-migration from other states, but more recently, the Ranch has been experiencing increasing moves from within Florida, mostly from high-priced, congested regions. The Ranch's ongoing sales successes are due to the variety of neighborhoods, home styles, and price points that continue to be offered to various buying segments. The introduction of neighborhoods with more attainable price points in 2023 will round-out and drive additional sales.

Also, rentals have become a major source of new home buyers – a number of new apartment and build-for-rent communities have opened or are nearing completion. "Many people want to move to Lakewood Ranch but haven't made a final purchase decision," Cole said, "or want to give Lakewood Ranch living a test drive. We are able to offer options for potential buyers, no matter where they are in their decision making."

Bella

Please
Adopt Me

i need home, not just a place



Bella is a sweet female, about 2 1/2 years old. She likes to be brushed and likes to play. She would do well as a single cat in the house but is okay with dogs.

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Duette Animal Rescue Team

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HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Her OB/GYN team's collaborative, warm approach made all the difference

ANJELICA'S STORY

In her profession as a pelvic floor physical therapist, Anjelica Yoder spends a great deal of time helping women understand their bodies – especially in pregnancy and postpartum. As someone who has spoken to countless women about their childbirth experiences and teaches birth preparation, Anjelica knew what she wanted when the time came for her to have a baby.

Many women are left feeling pressured into certain methods of birth or feel rushed. After speaking to two friends who assist women during childbirth – called doulas – about what she did and didn't want, they recommended Dr. Joel Hallam at Lakewood Ranch.

"My friends told me he was friendly and that as long as mom and baby stayed safe, he honored the birthing plans of his patients. I found this to be true," said Anjelica.

Dr. Hallam, DO, FACOOG, is a board-certified

obstetrician and gynecologist with the Lakewood Ranch Medical Group OB/GYN team. The team delivers babies at the Women's Center at Lakewood Ranch Medical Center.

A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE FROM PRENATAL TO POSTNATAL CARE

"From the beginning, I had a wonderful experience with the Lakewood Ranch Medical Group," Anjelica said. "I never had to wait in the waiting room for more than a few minutes. The receptionists and nurses were very friendly and attentive to my questions, and Dr. Hallam and Dr. [Terrell] Martin always took their time when responding to my concerns. I never felt rushed. I also loved when Dr. Hallam shared real-life experiences of his wife's story from the births of their two boys. It made him very relatable and easy to connect with."

Along with Dr. Hallam, midwife Angie Scarpa, CNM, ARNP, also of Lakewood Ranch

Medical Group, was an integral part of her birth experience. Anjelica credits her birth doula, Laura Meyer with Sarasota Birth, as a key part of her support system, from start to finish.

Anjelica gave birth to a baby boy named Silas Kai Yoder. Being born three weeks early, his stay was extended. Both Dr. Hallam and Dr. Martin checked in on her and baby Silas each day of their stay until they were ready to go home.

"It was a huge perk that I got to have the same doctors in the birthing room

with me that I worked with during my time in prenatal care. I felt comfortable because I



Dr. Joel Hallam

already trusted them, and they were already familiar with my birthing concerns and desires," Anjelica said.

To view patient testimonial videos and learn more about the Women's Center at Lakewood Ranch Medical Center, visit lakewoodranchmedicalcenter.com/services/womens-services.

Physicians are on the medical staff of Lakewood Ranch Medical Center, but, with limited exceptions, are independent practitioners who are not employees or agents of Lakewood Ranch

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