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Orlando Family magazine

JULY 2023



Gloria ESTEFAN

The iconic megastar opens up about her storied career, family life and lots more

plus

FAMILY MATTERS

Our annual parenting guide

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Orlando Family Magazine is a free, trusted resource designed to inform, serve, and enrich local families and parents throughout the Greater Orlando area with parenting ideas, fun family activities, and a wide variety of invaluable resource guides. Please send all Editorial Correspondence for consideration to editorial@OrlandoFamilyMagazine.com or mail to 110 Centre Blvd., Marlton, NJ 08053. All such correspondence is sent on a non-confidential basis and Orlando Family Magazine, LLC shall be free to reproduce, publish, edit, and/or use the content of any such communications, including any ideas, inventions, concepts, techniques or know-how disclosed therein, for any purpose, including developing, and/or marketing of the magazine and/or goods or services identified in the magazine, without compensation to, or acknowledgement of the author. Orlando Family Magazine assumes no liability for any unsolicited materials, including, but not limited to, manuscripts, photographs or artwork. All submitted materials become the property of Orlando Family Magazine, LLC and will not be returned. Please include a daytime telephone number for verification purposes.

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Home Front

EDITED BY KAREN NIMETZ

by the Numbers

1.5 million

The average number of riders, per year, on the I-Ride Trolley, which recently celebrated its 25th anniversary. Consisting of an 18-trolley fleet, 100 stops and two route lines, it has extended its service area to a 14-mile route where trolleys run every day between 8 a.m. and 10:30 p.m.

2,950 The length, in feet, of SeaWorld Orlando's newest roller coaster, Pipeline: The Surf Coaster. The ride reaches speeds of 60 mph and heights of 110 feet.

5th Orlando's ranking in the "housing heat index" for the top 50 large metro areas, according to Bankrate. Rankings were based on appreciation of home values, employment levels, job growth, population trends, homes listed for sale and typical selling times.

$1,000,000

The amount of grant money Wawa recently pledged to Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida toward a new program, "Fly Beyond," which aims to reach more than 53,000 households experiencing food insecurity over a 12-month period through two of the food bank's childhood hunger prevention initiatives: the School Partnerships and Summer Food Service programs.

37,350

The size, in square feet, of Brightline's new train station located next to Terminal C in Orlando International Airport. Later this summer, Brightline will offer high-speed train service between Orlando and Miami. Service will include 16 daily round trips with hourly departures.

67,241

The approximate number of attendees at this year's 32nd Annual Orlando International Fringe Theatre Festival, held in May. Over 1,600 artists traveled from around the world to perform at one of the many venues in Loch Haven Park and partner venues. The 14-day immersive cultural experience featured over 120 shows spanning a variety of genres.

DATEBOOK

FEATURED EVENT



EPCOT INTERNATIONAL Food & Wine Festival

JULY 27 TO NOV. 18



VISITORS TO THE PARK WILL BE ABLE TO TASTE THEIR WAY ACROSS SIX CONTINENTS, SAMPLING AUTHENTIC GLOBAL CUISINE AND BEVERAGES. The annual event also features culinary demonstrations and beverage seminars, as well as fun activities for the whole family. The "Eat to the Beat" concert series also returns with star-studded performances taking place Fridays through Mondays, and an impressive lineup of local bands appearing Tuesdays through Thursdays. *Admission to the festival is included with admission. Valid admission and theme park reservation for same park on same date required.*

ROYWOOD JR.

July 7-8

Widely known for his work as a correspondent on *The Daily Show*, the popular comedian and actor recently headlined this year's White House correspondents' dinner. *For audiences 21 and older, Friday: 7:30 p.m., Saturday: 7 p.m. and 9:30 p.m., Orlando Improv, tickets from $32.*

DREAMGIRLS

July 7-Aug. 6

This musical tells the tale of three friends who embark on a roller coaster through the world of show business as they climb the ranks of the music industry in the '60s and '70s. It features many hit songs, such as "And I Am Telling You, I Am Not Going." *Showtimes vary, Garden Theatre, Winter Garden, ticket prices range from $30-$75.*

STAIND

July 14

The renowned rock band is in town following the release of its latest single, "Lowest in Me" from its upcoming album, *Confessions of the Fallen*. This marks the first new studio album from the band since 2011. *8 p.m., Hard Rock Live Orlando, tickets from $57.50 .*

ATENCIÓN ATENCIÓN

July 15

The Puerto Rican children's music project and television program, *Atención Atención*, integrates play and dance in preschool education to teach values through music. *5 p.m., Walt Disney Theater at the Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts, tickets from $29.50.*

REPTICON

July 29-30

The popular event is back with exotic reptiles, reptile pets, supplies, feeders, cages and merchandise. *Saturday: 9-4 p.m., Sunday: 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Central Florida Fairgrounds, Main Building Halls A, B & C, tickets from $10 for adults, $6 for children ages 5-12, ages 4 and under are free.*



SAM SMITH

July 26

This multi-platinum, Grammy- and Oscar-winning artist/songwriter brings the "Gloria" tour to town for one night, featuring special guest Jessie Reyez, who is featured on Smith's latest album. *7 p.m., Amway Center, tickets from $31.*

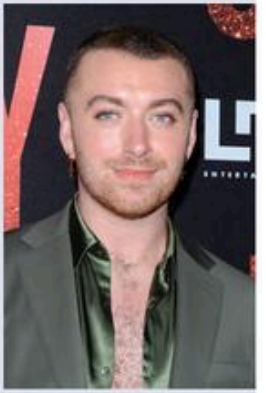


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Hit

This fall, the UCF Rosen College of Hospitality Management will offer a bachelor's degree in theme park and attraction management. Initially, the program will be taught in a hybrid modality with a mix of in-person and online coursework and will offer students a specialized understanding of the complex global tourism industry. UCF is the only institution in Florida to offer a management-focused, undergraduate degree of its kind.



Broccoli, cauliflower and curry lentil soup were recently added to the foods packaged at the Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida as part of the Medically Tailored Meal Program aimed to help food patients with chronic kidney disease at no cost. The new program was funded by a grant from the Davita Giving Foundation.

Last month saw the grand opening of the City Beautiful's newest park, The Grove. The 66-acre park in the Packing District features biking and walking trails and a large outdoor pavilion.

A recent Orange County community crime survey revealed that residents feel less safe in recent years. Many residents believe that violent crime has become more of an issue, and 70% of respondents want to increase the amount of law enforcement in their communities—up from 59% in 2021.

The Florida Department of Children and Families says that there have been 36 reported child drownings so far this year, an increase from 28 at this time last year.

After only 18 months since its opening, Disney recently announced that its most immersive experience—Star Wars: Galactic Starcruiser—will take its last voyage Sept. 28-30.

Miss







JUST ONE QUESTION

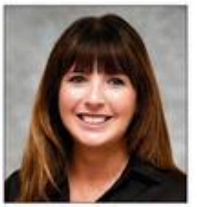
Summertime certainly means fun in Orlando. But with the summer heat upon us, it is important to stay cool and enjoy the next several weeks of the sizzling season. So, we wanted to know: **"What is your favorite way to beat the Orlando summer heat?"** We asked these Central Floridians and here's what they had to say.



Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer
"There is no better way to beat the heat than by visiting one of our neighborhood aquatic centers for some safe, fun, family-friendly activities this summer. Our Families, Parks and Recreation department offers Orlando residents quality recreational and fitness programs, including swim lessons for kids and adults at each of our 11 pool locations."



Bishop Justin S. Holcomb of Episcopal Diocese of Central Florida
"My favorite escape from the sweltering Orlando heat begins with getting smoothies from Grain and Berry with my wife and two daughters before we make our way to a nearby bookstore, where we lose ourselves among the shelves. We cap off our retreat by unwinding in the lazy river of one of Orlando's fantastic water parks."



Stephanie Williams, Zoo Director, Central Florida Zoo & Botanical Gardens
"Our favorite way to beat the heat at the Central Florida Zoo is always the Wharton-Smith Tropical Splash Ground. It's the perfect way for kids of all ages to stay cool and have fun this summer!"



Anthony Adams, Marketing Director at Goodwill Industries of Central Florida
"The best way to beat the heat is to grab a swimsuit from your neighborhood Goodwill and spend the day at the pool!"




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ALL EYES ON THE FUTURE

AS PRESIDENT OF THE DR. PHILLIPS CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, KATHERINE RAMSBERGER IS INVESTED IN HELPING ORLANDO'S ARTS AND CULTURE SCENE REACH NEW HEIGHTS.

It's no secret that Orlando has a vibrant and continuously evolving arts scene that caters to a wide variety of audiences from across the region and beyond. Yet, in some ways, it feels like the city is only just starting to scratch the surface of what's truly possible, and for people like Katherine Ramsberger, that notion raises both excitement and opportunity.

Of course, Ramsberger has long played a direct role in helping build this momentum. Twenty years ago, she was tapped to become the president of the Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts, working with Mayor Buddy Dyer and former chairman Jim Pugh to conceptualize a world-class, state-of-the-art facility that would become a destination for performers and the public alike. Two decades later, it's been a remarkable journey as the center continues to cement its place as a major part of the Orlando community.

"We began with a blank piece of paper, and now the building is alive every day, filled with wonderful colleagues and the hundreds of thousands of people who come here every year. It's hard to believe it's been 20 years," reflects Ramsberger.

To date, the Dr. Phillips Center has welcomed more than 2.9 million guests who have come through the doors to see the entertainment world's top headliners as well as performances spotlighting the regional arts community. With three theaters—including the acoustically perfect Steinmetz Hall, which opened at the beginning of 2022—the stages are constantly buzzing with activity.

And during the pandemic, the center further extended its reach when it introduced The Frontyard Festival, which saw more than 430 outdoor performances take place, attracting 104,000 guests to the venue, 21% of whom experienced the arts center for the very first time. "That [shows] us that our region needs and wants outdoor entertainment venues, like many other major cities in the country," says Ramsberger.

Determined to push for greater growth and expansion to better serve the community, she is eager to continue working with residents and local leaders to further establish Orlando's place as a destination for the arts. We spoke with Ramsberger about her hopes for the future and why the best may be yet to come.

Q&A

In your role, what keeps you motivated to continue to help the Dr. Phillips Center continue to grow and thrive?

A good house is never finished. We have the opportunity to continue building our business, the arts center's campus, educational initiatives and new programming. Later this year, we'll open Judson's, a dynamic music room with cabaret-style seating. It's perfect for intimate events and live entertainment and will be able to seat between 125-175 guests. Additionally, we're focused on

developing the front and back parcels of our nine-acre campus to complete the original design of the project. The success of the Frontyard Festival has influenced the next phase, and we're reimagining our outdoor spaces. We're also exploring producing and programming our own content. It's an exciting time at the arts center, and that motivates me every day.

Taking your CEO hat off for second, what most impresses you about the center? What have your personal experiences been like when you're attending a show?

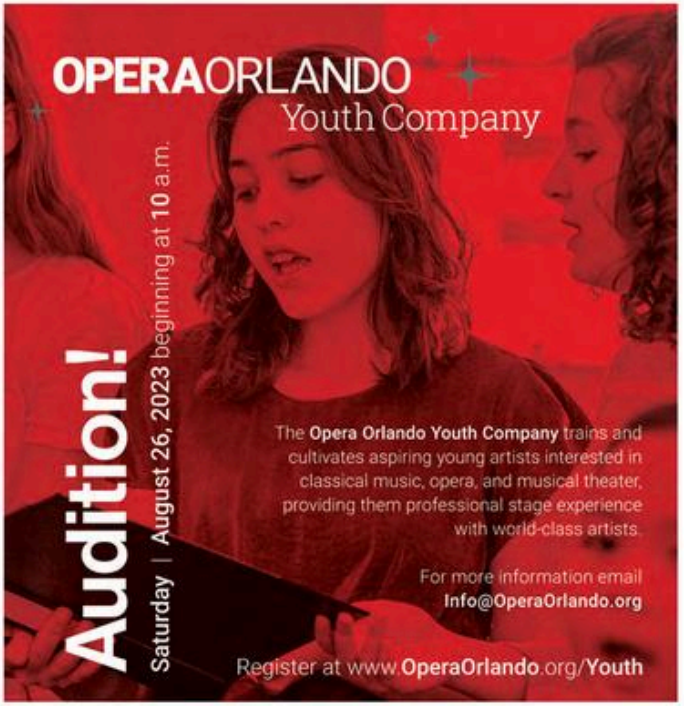
When all three theaters are alive with performances and events, you can feel the energy in the entire building. As leaders, it is very fulfilling to watch guests arrive at the arts center, anticipate what to expect, perhaps a little nervous, and then watch them after a performance—smiling and talking to other guests about a shared experience. You never forget your first performing arts center experience—which is why we started our community giveback initiative. We invite people from all backgrounds, age ranges and economic statuses to the experience of a lifetime—a Broadway performance—complete with free charter bus transportation, catered lunch, an interactive pre-show experience and a swag bag. We have hosted more than 2,500 beneficiaries in the past three seasons and recently hosted our biggest initiative with *Hamilton*, thanks to the generous support from corporate sponsors and private donors who raised $236,000 to bring this initiative to life.

All of the theaters in the center bring their own unique charm and allure, but Steinmetz Hall is truly special and has been lauded for its perfect acoustics. To have one of the world's most advanced theaters in our backyard has to be a real feather in the cap, I would imagine.

Opening and successfully operating Steinmetz Hall—our N1-rated, acoustically perfect, multiform hall with the ability to transform into a concert, proscenium and flat floor—has been a dream come true for our region. The architectural structure weighs one million pounds and travels on railroad tracks to form the acoustical shell. It also features 22 rows of transformative seats on the main floor orchestra level, enabling imaginative configurations for any event to take shape in under 15 minutes. We welcomed 139,000 guests across 140-plus performances during its first season, and this season we have hosted eight free events bringing 3,000 people to experience the world-class venue in their neighborhood. We also booked our first orchestra series with the Great American Orchestra Series, which brought









sold-out performances for the Cleveland, Philadelphia and Chicago orchestras to the hall.

How rewarding is the relationship you share with the regional arts community and how has it benefited both them and you?

Central Florida has a rich and talented arts community, and many perform in Steinmetz Hall and the Alexis & Jim Pugh Theater throughout the year. More than 300 regional organizations performed in Steinmetz Hall, which can accommodate both amplified and non-amplified performances. Additionally, the Orlando Ballet, Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra and Opera Orlando had many successes with their first seasons in Steinmetz Hall, and our entire team, from the back-of-house to the front-of-house, got the opportunity to support them in the venue. Fifty-plus arts groups also perform in Alexis & Jim Pugh Theater every year.

> "I'M CONSTANTLY SURPRISED BY PEOPLE'S EAGERNESS TO BE INVOLVED AND JOIN BIG IDEAS AND PHILANTHROPIC EFFORTS. WE ARE CERTAINLY A COLLABORATIVE CITY."
>
> —Katherine Ramsberger

This all started with a grand vision in 2003, so now two decades later, what do you envision and hope for the next 20 years and beyond?

Our goal for reimagining the master plan is to transform the arts center and our region into a global destination, attracting over a million people every year. This is similar to other major cities nationwide with iconic arts and culture attractions that drive tourism, like Millennium Park and The Bean in Chicago.

As a longtime area resident, what do you enjoy most about calling this place home?

The people. I'm constantly surprised by people's eagerness to be involved and join big ideas and philanthropic efforts. We are certainly a collaborative city. Also, our entrepreneurial board of directors, colleagues, donors, partners, community members and guests consistently prove their dedication to our arts community, and this makes me proud to call Orlando home.

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The Perfect MATCH

JEWISH MATCHMAKING ON NETFLIX IS CHANGING MODERN-DAY DATING RITUALS

So how did a nice Jewish woman from Pennsylvania become the host of the global hit *Jewish Matchmaking*, a new reality dating show from Netflix that is helping us reevaluate and recalibrate our dating and mating rituals?

Well, it appears that much like finding the right date or mate, Aleeza Ben Shalom, a matchmaker and dating coach for 16 years, explains that the series found her "in true matchmaking form."

"They contacted one of my matchmaker friends to see if she wanted to audition," Ben Shalom explains. "My friend told the producer that I have the right personality, am engaging and that I tend to speak off the cuff, and Netflix called me."

In the new series, Ben Shalom visits singles from around the U.S. and Israel, who are ready to settle down and get married. And no matter how picky they are, Ben Shalom is dedicated to finding the perfect person for each eligible individual and believes that her previous 200 successful matches and "Jewish values and wisdom" will greatly aid in the process.

We had the chance to speak with Ben Shalom about the excitement surrounding the show and the rewarding aspects of helping others find true love.



A tough job...

Almost anything is easier than finding your person. You want to get a job? You can get a job. You need to find a house? You find a house. If it's not your favorite house you can always move. But finding a human being who you choose to say, "Sure, I'd love to live with you for the rest of my life," is not easy. It's about bringing two completely different worlds together and saying we're going to figure out how to make this work.

The rewarding feeling of making a match...

I'm speechless; it's truly out of this world. There's no greater pleasure than bringing people together. When you know that somebody's world is about to expand exponentially because they have the right partner there's no greater joy than seeing, knowing and feeling that.

I develop a very close relationship with the people that I work with and they send me updates and photos five or 10 years later. This is all about building these relationships that last a lifetime.

The universality of the show...

I say it all the time, we have Jewish wisdom for the world. So, we have rooted in Judaism and Torah, and the deepest learning is that we have very smart, good wisdom to share about love, dating, marriage and the process. I take concepts that I think are high level and I break them down into what I would call plain language so that anybody can take part in this process.

The concept and the advice can be for anybody; it's really not exclusive to Jewish people. I love that we can take extremely deep concepts and make them bite-sized and appropriate.

Helping others break down barriers...

Not getting in our own way involves recognizing where we're putting up roadblocks. It involves recognizing that what we've been doing hasn't been working and having an openness and willingness to try something in a different way and getting the right support along the way. Finding somebody whose advice and wisdom resonate with you and then following it is really smart. I think it's easier when you have a little bit more of a clear path and a guide.

How the show has changed her life...

It helped me to level up and be even more conscious of the messages that I'm sharing. I come to this set completely unscripted, so I come to work and I don't know what is going to happen. I did prepare in terms of thinking, in general, what messages I want to deliver and how I will deliver them.

I shared the wisdom that was most important to me and I wanted those messages delivered because I knew that those things were heartfelt and deeply within people, and that's what I was trying to do.

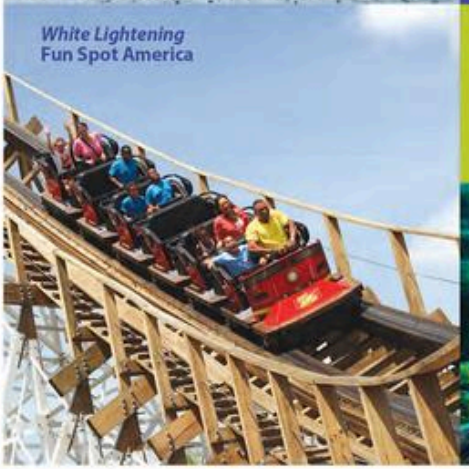




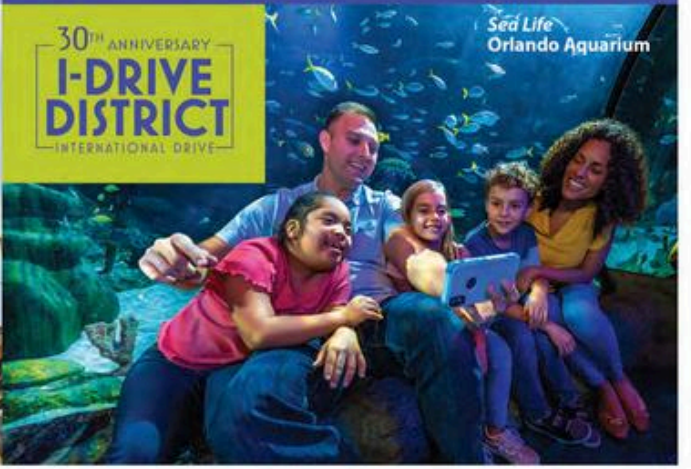


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30TH ANNIVERSARY
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INTERNATIONAL DRIVE





In Perfect Harmony

Whether she's adding to her incredibly impressive music career, strengthening the bond with her family or helping to inspire others, **Gloria Estefan** continues to hit all the right notes.

BY PETER PROKO

EVER SINCE GLORIA ESTEFAN WAS A YOUNG CHILD she claims she "saw" or "knew" things that were going to come to pass at some point in the future. And as time went on and this happened frequently enough, she began to rely more and more on these instinctive feelings whenever they arose.

So it should come as no surprise that after first meeting her now-husband Emilio and joining his band, the Miami Latin Boys, that she envisioned a much brighter future than the small gigs they were playing in local clubs on the weekends. And she had no reservations about sharing her belief, no matter how crazy it may have sounded at the time.

"I told [Emilio] that I had no clue of how or why it was going to happen, but I just saw clearly in my mind that we were somehow going to be successful outside of the U.S., then it would spread here and eventually all over and that I 'felt' it was inevitable, but I couldn't explain to him how," Estefan recalls. "But Emilio has always dreamed big and followed through with hard work so I ➳

Gloria Estefan



think that rather than totally disbelieving me, he found my pronouncement exciting and motivating."

Fast forward decades later and it's easy to see that Estefan's premonition was spot on as the group that would later become the Miami Sound Machine would go on to tremendous success, creating some of the biggest hits in modern music. Meanwhile, she and her husband are the epitome of the power couple, continuing to build upon their empire, which has stretched well beyond the music world.

To her credit, Estefan is one of the most celebrated and recognized artists of all time. She has sold more than 100 million records worldwide, charted 38 No. 1 hit singles, won seven Grammys and has been awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Earlier this year she added to her impressive list of honors when she was inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame. There's even a Broadway show—*On Your Feet!*—based on her and Emilio's lives and the music they created, and which the couple executive produced.

We had the chance to talk with Estefan about her storied career, life away from the spotlight and what drives her to continue to create the soundtrack to our lives.

First off, I wanted to ask you about longevity and what that word means to you. You've had this wonderfully amazing music career that has spanned decades; you've been married to your husband for nearly as long the two of you have been involved in the hospitality business for quite some time and you continue to make lasting impacts in various communities. Do you ever pause to think about longevity or reflect on the legacy you continue to build upon?

As far back as I can remember, whenever I would think about the things that I wanted to do or decisions I needed to make, my second thought would be about the impact of that decision on my long-term future. Perhaps this came from being a first-generation immigrant and being keenly aware of the trauma my parents and grandparents lived by having to leave their successful lives in Cuba, my native land, and come to a new country to start over. It was important for me to take steps forward but try to ensure that it was always on solid ground.

After marrying Emilio and having our son, Nayib, it became important that our decisions take into account the impact they would have on our son or future children in the hopes that we would make them proud.

After our initial success with our music, it became important for us to take into account our culture and the impact our decisions might have on our Cuban people who saw us as an example of what could be achieved in this great country and the world.

It has also always been very important to us to continue to grow and evolve in our careers and not stay stagnant, repeating ourselves musically in order to "play it safe" with what had worked before. We have always wanted our music to grow as our lives and experiences have grown and I believe that our fans have appreciated it.

Can you talk a little bit about the connection you and Emilio have after all this time together? In a world where couples, especially those in the limelight, don't always last, how has your love for one another continued to evolve and get stronger?

I have to say that, despite the fact that we have spent the last 47 years as a couple, 44 of them married, time has literally flown for us both. Emilio and I have very different personalities but it creates a beautiful balance. I always kid that if we were both like me, we'd still be playing guitar on our living room couch, and if we were both like him we'd be dead of heart attacks by now from overworking every possible moment. But that's the beauty of our relationship, we fill each other in. We love a lot of the same things—family, nature, animals—and we rarely differ on music, politics, religion or priorities so we don't have many reasons to argue.

Don't get me wrong, through the years we've learned each other's ins, outs and limits, but from the day we said "I do," our prime motivation has been to get through and enjoy life together and be there for each other, supporting and applauding each other's successes without allowing ego to get in the way.

What are some of your earliest music memories?

I remember my mother singing to me when she would put on my diaper, which was the only way she could get me to be still. I can still recall the song clearly, the lyrics and melody, even though I was only months old. I remember my first crush at 4 years old, Joselito, a then 6-year-old recording and film star from Spain whose movies my grandfather would take me to see when we came to Miami. I would memorize each song and sing them for my family. Then at 6 years old I remember pulling up to a laundromat with my mother in San Antonio, Texas, where my father, then a Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Army, had been stationed, and being

Photographs courtesy of Gloria Estefan

mesmerized by a song playing on the radio. The hair on my arm stood on end and I made my mother leave me in the car so I could listen until the song finished. It was "Ferry Cross The Mersey" by Gerry and the Pacemakers, which began my love for the musical British Invasion that persists to this day. And recently I realized that the magic I felt from that song was because it sounded like a Cuban *bolero*.

After all that you've accomplished, both professionally and personally, what still motivates and drives you?

My motivation has always been driven by my love for my family and the fact that I want to be the best person I can possibly be for them and for me. That has grown to include my fans, who I consider family, and also brings with it the responsibility that comes with being seen as representatives of our culture. I don't like to let people down, especially myself, and I live each day excited to learn new things, try new things, be resourceful and self-sufficient, and continue evolving, growing and becoming stronger.

The music business certainly looks a lot different than when you entered into it. What do you like about the industry these days and conversely what are some of the things you could do without?

I really like that any person that has something to say musically does not have to sit around waiting to be discovered and has tools at their disposal that can help them bring their vision to life in a professional way that can compete on any platform. You see successful musicians coming out of YouTube and social media platforms and not necessarily having to rely on the big multi-national record companies that ruled the airwaves. We can listen to music from all over the world and be exposed to a multitude of global artists anywhere we live.



Gloria and Emilio at Estefan Kitchen Orlando

However, having so many channels has also created the fragmentation of the music listening public where now it's impossible to have the huge numbers of listeners on any one platform, network or radio station. Artists and writers are no longer compensated as they were when physical copies were being sold because the laws have not caught up to the streaming world and it's becoming impossible to make a living wage by solely being a recording artist or a songwriter.

You've talked before about the tragic tour bus accident that took place back in 1990 that left you severely injured and how that was a real turning point for you. How did that experience not only change your life, but allow you to find the ability to try and inspire others?

I always say that I would not want to go through that again but I wouldn't change it either. It didn't so much change my life as it changed my appreciation of my life. When I was 12 years old my father was diagnosed with MS due to Agent Orange poisoning from the Vietnam War and he spent his last years in a wheelchair. Needless to say, when I was paralyzed in that accident my worst fear came true. I had to find a patience and discipline that I never thought possible because I had a very clear picture of what my family, especially my son, would have to endure if I didn't do everything in my power to create the best possible outcome for my situation. So I worked very hard to regain my independence.

At first getting back on stage or back to my career was not at all my goal, rather, just being able to walk to the fridge to get my own glass of water. But six months after my accident, when I started to realize that my body was slowly coming back, I knew that I had a very unique opportunity to inspire those people that had generously sent prayers and beautifully inspiring thoughts my way. Fame was never my motivation for making music so I thought perhaps that the purpose for achieving that fame might have been to be able to inspire others to "give it their all" in whatever challenges they might be going through by watching me go through mine and make it back.

Every artist likes to give credit to their fans, and I imagine you are no different. To have such a loyal fan base as well as the newer generations who have become fans over the years, is that one of the more rewarding aspects of living your life for all to see?

The human connection that an artist makes with their fans is the most beautiful and rewarding part of this experience. At this point I consider many of my loyal fans my family and my favorite thing about social media is that it affords me the privilege of being able to communicate directly with them and be there for

them through tough moments above and beyond whatever connection my music may have created with them.

I wanted to ask you about your ties to the Orlando area. There's an obvious connection because you have Estefan Kitchen Orlando and previously operated Bongo's at Disney Springs. And I had the chance to see you last year as a celebrity narrator at Epcot's Candlelight Processional. So, what do you enjoy most about this area and the time you get to spend here?



Orlando is magical for me for obvious reasons … it's our biggest Florida playground! From the opening of Walt Disney World, which I attended when I was a child, to the many wonderful family visits with my own kids and family through the years, every memory we have made there has been special and wonderful and that continues to be the case. Now I can share that with my grandson Sasha as well and we love having so many fun adventures in the Orlando area.

You created the Gloria Estefan Foundation back in 1997. What inspired you to start the organization and how proud are you of the success you've been able to achieve over the years?

After my accident I wanted to be of service and be able to give back even more, so initially, there was a lot of focus on being able to be on the cutting edge of spinal cord research so I could be part of the cure for paralysis since I had been one of the fortunate few that had regained their mobility after such a difficult spinal trauma. But most importantly, I wanted to create something that could be of immediate help to people whose needs might slip through the cracks and not be able to get funding from large organizations, so I also made that my goal. My foundation has raised millions for spinal cord research but also funds wonderful organizations such as Operation Smile and has bought bullet-proof vests for the K-9 unit of the Miami Beach police force because they're too expensive for the police budget. For 15 years now we've organized and funded "Feed A Friend," a yearly Thanksgiving event that supports several local organizations in Miami and also serves a myriad of varied causes. It makes me extremely happy to be of service and my foundation allows me to do that in the most efficient way.

Was it always important for you to find a way to use your platform to make a difference in the lives of others?

It has always been of prime importance to me to use my platform in ways that leave a positive impact on our world beyond entertaining people and being a part of the soundtrack to their lives, and I feel blessed to have been able to do so.

You've received so many honors in your life, from Grammy wins to the Presidential Medal of Freedom and beyond. But a few months back you became the first Hispanic woman to ever be inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame. What did that recognition mean to you?

Other songwriters and their creations have gotten me through the most difficult times of my life with their art, so to be inducted into the Songwriter's Hall of Fame is one of the most meaningful acknowledgements that I could ever receive. It's a privilege to be able to communicate through my music and lyrics with others sharing this ride and it's a responsibility that I don't take lightly.

Your music and career have obviously transcended Latin culture, but do you take a certain pride in being a mentor and an advocate for the other Latin artists who have followed in your footsteps?

It makes Emilio and me very happy to be able to say "yes" to other artists when so many people said "no" to us. It's also a goal to be able to help other Latin artists share their culture with the world and we feel that the more people who know and hear the incredibly diverse music from our different Latin countries, the better they'll understand who we are and how much we have to offer the world.

People have had this glimpse into your life for so long, but what is something that we might be surprised to learn about you?

I make delicious pancakes from scratch that my family stands in line for when I make them. I am the "eyebrow queen" and the women in my life are always asking me to do their eyebrows. I am a certified boat captain and have taken courses in navigation, piloting and seamanship.

How has it been for you to watch your children grow up to become successes and carve their own path?

Our children are Emilio's and my most impor-


Young Gloria and Emilio

tant "production" and we have raised them to be humble, warm humans that we cherish and support in whatever they may find of interest. Having struggled so much in our early lives, Emilio and I wanted to give them every opportunity and comfort. Our only wish for them is that they enjoy their lives as much as we have enjoyed and appreciated ours and that they find their happiness.

How much of your own childhood shaped how you are as a mother?

Every mother and father are molded by the experiences they had with their own parents. Whether you had ideal parents and want to emulate their example or weren't happy with the ways you were raised and want to do things differently, the impact of our upbringing is momentous.

You had the chance recently to work with Dolly Parton, Belinda Carlisle, Cyndi Lauper and Debbie Harry for a song for the *80 for Brady* film. I imagine that was a lot of fun for all of you. How did it all come together?

My friend Diane Warren texted me and said that she had [written] a killer song that was going to be in a movie and that amazing women were the lead characters so she wanted amazing women from '80s fame to sing on her composition. The moment I heard the song I connected to it and loved it. And when she told me that Dolly Parton was already in, I needed no other reason to do it.

So what's next for you, anything on the horizon you can share with us?

Right now I'm very excited to be working on a very special musical project with my daughter, Emily that I can't share the details of yet but can tell you it's a challenge, a first for me, and I have a "feeling" that it will be another milestone.



Focus on Family



Our annual parenting guide examines some of the key issues parents face in today's world and uncovers some expert advice on how to best navigate the road ahead.

BEING A PARENT IS ONE OF LIFE'S GREATEST PLEASURES, but it is certainly not without its fair share of challenges. While there may not be a handbook to show you how to best handle every situation one may encounter, our annual parenting guide provides insight into several areas that are of interest to many households. We tapped numerous local experts to get their tips and advice on these matters to help parents be able to better manage the twists and turns that lie ahead and feel confident on their path forward.

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Family Fun

Whether it's a beautiful, sunny afternoon or a cloudy, rainy day, there is always something fun to do in the Orlando area.

BY KAREN NIMETZ

While out-of-towners may be hitting up all of the major theme parks that Central Florida has to offer, locals know that some of the best things to do and see in the area are often right around the corner or a short drive away. Here are a few of the many area attractions to check out this summer.

OLD TOWN

Since 1986, Old Town has served as a popular, family-fun destination for both tourists and locals alike. The 18-acre shopping and entertainment district features over 70 unique knick-knack and specialty shops. There are also numerous restaurants and bars along the tree-lined brick street. The district offers plenty of attractions and rides for all ages to enjoy, including Old Town's iconic Ferris wheel and weekly classic car show.

FUNTASTIC DEPOT

This brand-new entertainment center is set to open soon. The 30,000-square-foot indoor facility will offer activities for the whole family to enjoy. The center will feature live music, an FX show, karaoke, ninja warrior courses, massive inflatables, climbing walls, an arcade, a playground and a special area just for toddlers. In addition, there will also be a Funtastic food bar.

MCKEE BOTANICAL GARDEN

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, this Florida landmark is a serene place of natural beauty. The 18-acre nonprofit includes one of



Florida's largest collections of water lilies and over 10,000 native and tropical plants. The Children's Garden features a Fairy Forest and Waterlily Fountain. A captivating and relaxing experience for visitors of all ages, it is well worth the hour and a half drive from Orlando.

INTERNATIONAL DRIVE RESORT AREA

Considered a "must-see" destination, this 11.1-mile thoroughfare is bustling with uniquely fun activities. With over 300 restaurants, four entertainment and nightclub hubs and more than 40 attractions, visitors can easily spend days exploring all there is to see and do on I-Drive. Key hot spots include ICON Park, Pointe Orlando, Ripley's Believe It or Not! and WonderWorks, Orlando's only upside-down attraction. All are easily accessed using the convenient I-Ride Trolley.

KIDIVERSE

Whether celebrating a child's birthday or just a fun day out, this climate-controlled indoor playground and gym, geared toward kids up to age 12, is an ideal destination. From a three-level jungle gym, climbing walls, a toddler play area, an interactive games room and a ninja warrior course to a high-tech iWall—a gaming platform that transforms the player's body into a game controller—there is truly something for every activity level.

TWO TAILS RANCH

Since 1984, this privately owned elephant facility provides temporary and permanent homes to Asian and African elephants in need. With the ideal climate of the Florida coast, guests of all ages can interact with, learn about, ride and feed the elephants that reside at Two Tails Ranch on guided tours. Visitors can also enjoy meeting other animals such as zebras, birds and turtles.



Ripley's photo by Sorodoc on Unsplash / Shutterstock.com

The Importance of Traveling for Kids

For many families with young children, traveling outside of the state may seem a bit daunting. However, experts say family vacations often help build stronger bonds and create lasting memories. In addition to the opportunity that vacations allow for families to step out of their normal routine and enjoy each other's company, there are many other benefits to traveling with children.

"Travel not only opens kids up to different cultures, but it brings people around the world closer together by exposing them to citizens with similar hopes and dreams," says Ken Shapiro, board president of Family Travel Association, a nonprofit that aims to increase the quality of family trips. "Travel also makes the kids themselves more confident and better global citizens who then grow up to appreciate the inherent value of people and our natural world."

Visits to historic sites and destinations offer a fun and memorable way for children to learn about history and the world around them. Shapiro says that foreign travel provides benefits for even the youngest of kids but notes that the ideal age for an overseas trip really depends on the child.



"Our advice is to check in with a travel advisor or other expert to find out what the best age is for the particular trip you're interested in," he says. "Some family vacations—a safari, for instance—really are ideal for slightly older kids, while cruise ships and beach resorts may be great options for families with young kids. In any case, it's best to get some advice on this before going."

Regardless of where your travels may take you, experts agree that the benefits of a family vacation far outweigh the challenges involved. "These benefits are evident whether families take long international trips or shorter domestic trips," Shapiro says. "The family bonding potential is there either way, and there is always something new to discover, whether around the corner or around the world. All types of travel provide new opportunities to widen a child's worldview."

Allowing children to participate in the planning of the trip helps build confidence and independence and is a great introduction to both time and money management as well as problem-solving skills. Some people avoid vacations altogether due to costs; however, family travel does not have to be a budget-busting experience. In fact, flexibility and preparation can make for both an affordable and enjoyable excursion.

"With a little research you can always find the perfect trip for your family," Shapiro says. "Just get out there and do it!"



SUMMER FAMILY FUN & GETAWAYS

Attractions

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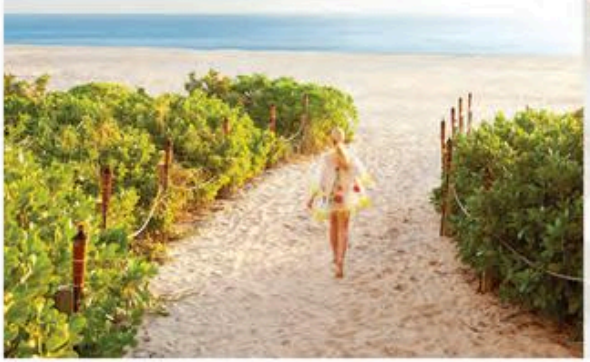
Funtastic Depot is Orlando's one-of-a-kind indoor Family Entertainment Center featuring interactive live music shows complete with dazzling lights and FXs. Other attractions include Climbing Walls, Ninja Obstacle Course, Giant Multi-level Playground, Toddler Area, and an Arcade Area with a Karaoke Booth. Guests can enjoy delicious food and book birthday parties and/or special events. Come to LIVE THE EXPERIENCE! For more information visit FuntasticDepot and follow us on Instagram and Facebook!

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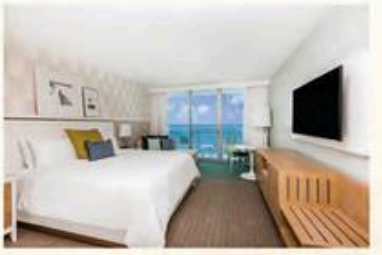
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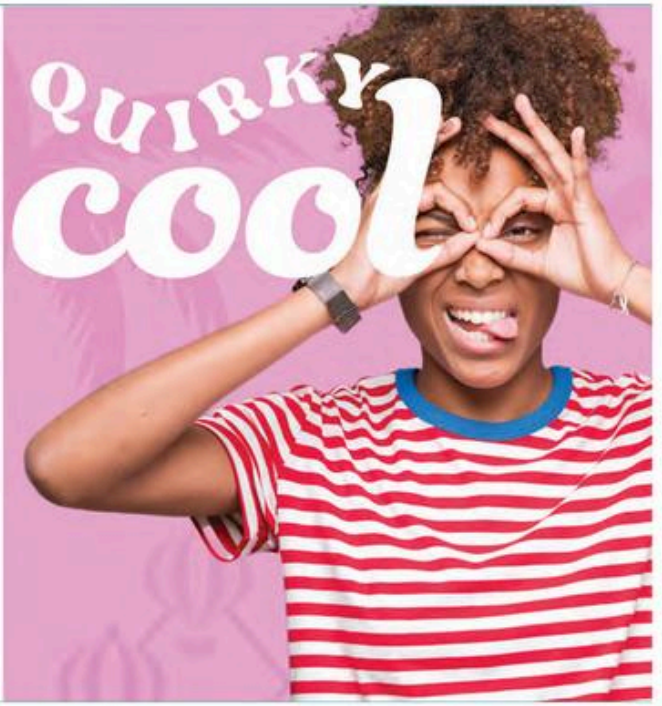
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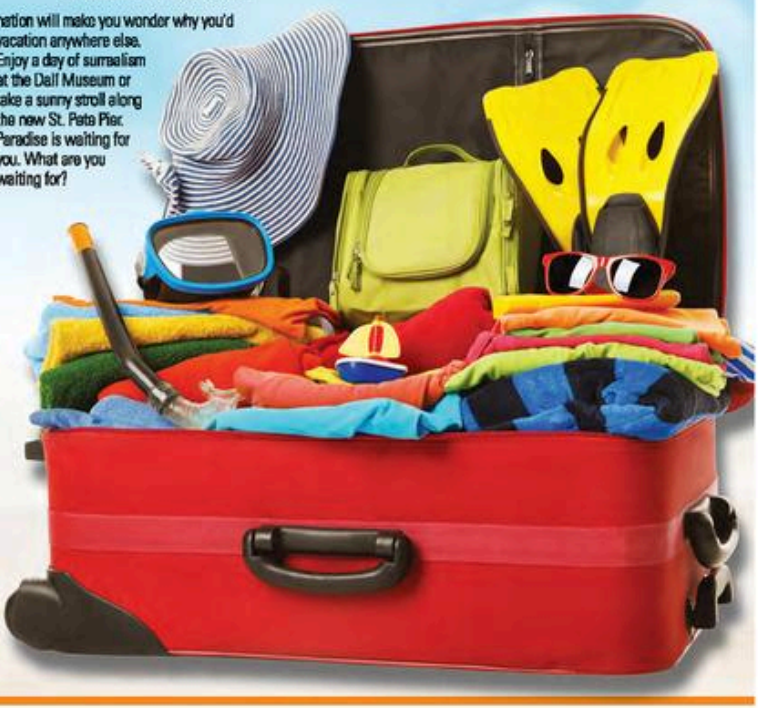
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Off the Beaten Path

Summer fun in an RV has never been easier with the help of the experts at **Giant Recreation World**.

by KRISTEN JORGENSEN

As summer sets in and folks eagerly anticipate their seasonal getaways for some much-needed R&R, many are opting for a different style of vacation this year and instead of hitting the beach, they are hitting the open road in a RV for a one-of-a-kind experience that the entire family will enjoy.

In recent years, both ownership and rentals of recreational vehicles have grown in popularity thanks to the attractive lure for those who can hit the road to travel, or work, wherever they choose. And thanks to improved technology and capabilities, these vehicles come with all the bells and whistles to make sure your trip will be a memorable one.

Giant Recreation World, located in the heart of Central Florida, is a family-owned and operated RV dealership and supercenter helping the community discover a passion for the perks of owning and renting recreational vehicles since 1976. CEO Larry McNamara says the company takes great pride in helping bring families together as they embark on various journeys.

"We often hear from our customers that the RV lifestyle is all about reconnecting with family and revisiting a time where wholesome fun is at the forefront of their summer agendas," McNamara explains. "And as a local business, we are proud to help support families create those memories and build strong family values."

The fascination with RVs

Remembering the early days of his childhood, McNamara recalls how he has always been around RVs in some fashion. "I've been a part of the RV community for most of my life. Before Recreation World, around 1972, my father used to own rental RVs. I remember washing those and helping the customers when they came in to pick them up at our house. It's a big part of my life."

Fast forward to today and Giant Recreation World has transformed into a company of close-knit individuals who work incredibly hard to create a positive and memorable atmosphere for anyone looking to buy or rent an RV. McNamara goes by the motto of being "big enough to be competitive and small enough to know every team member's name."

He also believes RVs are not just a mode of transportation, but also a culture or lifestyle. "Whether you're a new RVer or have rented one, it allows you to pull into a campground. Next thing you know, you're having shrimp with new friends that turn into lifelong friends. The essence of the RV lifestyle lies in its community. It's fun, stress-free and gives you freedom," explains McNamara.

The best part about RVs, he believes, is that you can go wherever you want on a whim. "You are never stuck in one place or relying on other resources. The cherry on top is the affordability factor in the long run; there are so many more places you can go as a large family that would otherwise be too expensive if staying in a hotel. You never have to take another trip without your family pet again, they can come too! And the community camping trips Giant Recreation World arranges every month are a blast."

Renting an RV for the first time

If owning an RV is a commitment you're not ready to embark on, renting one is always an option. "If you aren't ready to jump in, we understand, it's certainly a financial commitment, so we suggest just getting your feet wet with a rental first," McNamara advises.

For some, renting an RV for the first time can seem like an overwhelming process. *What should I look for? How do I know if I'm renting the right vehicle? What kind of fuel do they run on?* That's when you let Giant Recreation World RV take the wheel to help.



"We are here to help get you on the road to your next family adventure. Our staff is here to get you set up with the best vehicle based on your needs, budget and plans. If you're uncomfortable driving the RV to your final destination, we can even have the vehicle delivered and set up at the location where you intend to stay," says McNamara.

What is next for the company?

Being a loyal believer, admirer and supporter of the RV lifestyle, McNamara has always been proactive about promoting it. Today, he hosts his own podcast called RV Hour, which airs every Sunday from 10-11 a.m. on Florida Man Radio 105.5 FM, Spotify and YouTube. The show encourages and motivates people to join the RV lifestyle and experience comfort and adventure at the same time.

"Whether you are an avid traveler, a novice newcomer or just starting to dive into the RV community, you can learn a lot by simply listening an hour a day on Sunday mornings. We cover a wide array of topics, tips, tricks and advice. The show packs a lot of punch in an hour," McNamara says.

And with three locations, and a large summer sale planned, it's never been a better time for folks to see all that Giant Recreation World can offer in helping make their next adventure one they'll never forget.

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Education

Many families are recognizing the benefits of private education for their children, and Central Florida has plenty of options to meet their needs.

BY MATT COSENTINO

With a career in private education that spans more than two decades and a range of positions at schools in five different states, Dr. Mitchell Salerno is somewhat of an authority on the subject. What most impresses him about Central Florida—an area he first moved to in 2008 and recently returned to after five years in California—is the sheer number of options available to parents who think this type of academic setting would best fit their children.

"I think the positive, and maybe I can even say the amazing thing about Central Florida is there's really something for everyone," says Salerno, the head of school at Windermere Prep since 2021. "There seems to be a school for everybody's preference and choice, whether that's a Christian school, a Jewish school, a Muslim school or an independent, non-sectarian school. The beauty of this area is there are so many choices."

That variety seems to be drawing more and more families toward private education. Certainly, the pandemic has played a role, as private schools experienced rising enrollment as a result of offering more in-person instruction than their public school counterparts were able to. But the qualities that have traditionally set private schools apart, such as smaller class sizes, individualized attention and added amenities, have also been factors.

"I think those are all very valid and very accurate," says Aaron Farrant, head of school at The Christ School. "Also, what we hear a lot is that people want a caring, loving culture where kids are known. That's a big part of it, and also the learning environment. I think parents are losing confidence maybe in some other alternatives and they're seeking a better learning environment for their children. We hear a lot about the alignment with what their beliefs are, what they're feeling and what they're desiring for their children to learn, and what our school teaches."

The Christ School has experienced a 50% growth rate over the past five years, Farrant says, and he adds that many other private schools in the area now have waiting lists. "We've increased our capacity by several hundred children over the last two years, and we're maxing that out again. When there's that kind of demand, you're going to see new schools being opened to meet that demand."

Of course, many families that go down this path are seeking lessons tied to religion for their children. At The Christ School, a non-denominational Christian institution, every day starts at chapel and students attend Bible class.

Choosing a College Major

What do you want to be when you grow up?

That's a question that most students hear for the first time in preschool or kindergarten, and at that point, coming up with an answer like "doctor," "police officer," or "professional baseball player" is usually pretty simple. As they grow older, however, and advance through high school, thinking about college and a possible major often becomes a real issue for many.

Here in Central Florida, students appear to be following the national trends and ultimately focusing on popular majors such as business, health-related fields, social sciences and engineering, according to a spokesperson from Orange County Public Schools (OCPS), who also adds that computer science is growing in interest due to the advancements in artificial intelligence.

"Typically, the driving factors for our students in determining a major tend to be earning potential followed by a particular area of interest," the spokesperson says. "When working with students, school counselors try to educate and provide exposure to students on the various careers that can meet their goals for potential earnings but also align with their interests and strengths."

Andrea Borowczak, who notes that teacher shortages are a major problem not just in Florida but across the country, is hoping more students can see the benefits of a career in education. The director of the School of Teacher Education at UCF and a professor in the university's College of Community Innovation and Education, she says students often underestimate the earning potential and the multiple opportunities that come with the profession.

In addition to changing the narrative about the possibilities that come with teaching, she feels it's important to create different pathways to employment in addition to the traditional four-year college program, and to create partnerships with school districts to fill teaching vacancies, like the one UCF has with OCPS. She is optimistic that if more people can view teaching as a helping profession like nursing, they will follow the calling.

"I have yet to ask someone, 'Can you tell me about a favorite teacher you had growing up?' and have them look at me blankly," Borowczak says. "Everybody will have an answer. It could be kindergarten, it could be second grade, it could be eighth grade, it could be senior year, but everybody has a teacher who made an impact on them, and that's at the heart of what we're doing. We're bringing people together who are interested in teaching and helping them to create the best of themselves to go back and make an impact on the students they work with."

"It's a big part of who we are and something we prioritize," Farrant says.

Salerno is quick to point out that there are also plenty of excellent public schools in the area, which may offer aspects that can't be found at a smaller private school, like the opportunity to participate in a marching band, for example. But one reason he believes private education is appealing is because it is customized to meet specific needs.

"People want to be known, they want to be seen, they want to feel like part of a community," he says. "That's not to say our public schools can't do that, some of them do it very well, but I think there's something to being in a slightly smaller environment that has been tailored to you. That's a real driver for people, and people want their kids to be in those kinds of spaces."

One of the unique facets of Windermere Prep is that it's part of the Nord Anglia family of 82 international schools and welcomes students from all over the world. Children who attend school there get to make friends with kids from a number of different countries, learn about other cultures and develop a global perspective.

"That is one of the things as head of school that I am most happy about, and dare I say, in love with about our community," Salerno says. "We just came through the celebration season with high school graduation and all the promotion ceremonies, and when you dive in you can see the amazing group of people we have here, and they are literally from everywhere around the globe. We don't really have an option to not think globally here. … We see ourselves as Orlando's international school—we are quite diverse and not just in our boarding program, but you can go into our 3-year-old program and you will experience the same incredible international flavor to our school. It's something we take great pride in and we're very thankful for."

Salerno's own twin daughters graduated from Windermere Prep and he is thrilled with the global mindset they are taking with them as they move on to Rollins College in the fall. Farrant, likewise, believes so strongly in his school's mission that he sends his two sons there, one in eighth grade and the other in fifth. At The Christ School, they can experience a holistic education based on spiritual, physical and social development, and when they were younger they also benefited from what Farrant calls "the best reading instruction in Central Florida."

"It's been such a blessing for my family," he says. "I can put the dad hat on and talk to you about how their teachers have invested in them and the kind of people they're becoming. Sometimes I think about how they spend more time with their teachers and their classrooms than they do with me, so the kind of environment you put them in is so important. I consider it genuinely and truly a blessing that my kids have been able to be here and be influenced by some of the great teachers here."





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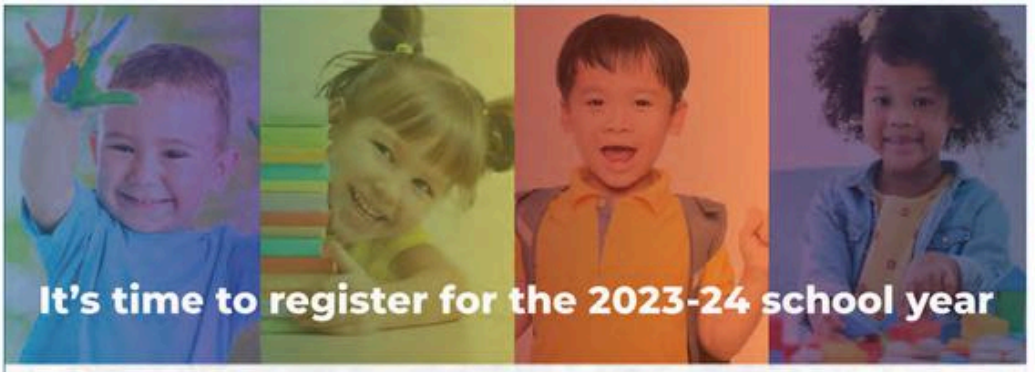
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Parenting Guide 2023

Health & Wellness

Local professionals offer tips for parents whose young children fear a trip to the dentist or orthodontist.

BY MATT COSENTINO

Spend just a few minutes with any pediatric dentist or orthodontist, and it usually becomes quite clear why they got into the field in the first place. Most come off as cheerful, positive people who genuinely take pride in helping patients, and their gentle approach works well with youngsters who may not know what to expect from the experience.

That can be crucial because, while most kids seem to be able to handle a visit to the dentist or orthodontist, there are still those who dread their regular checkups and need help overcoming their anxiety. Thankfully, there are plenty of steps parents can take to ease their concerns, and finding the right professional who understands and embraces working with kids can also go a long way in improving the situation.

We spoke to several dentists and orthodontists from the Central Florida region to find out some helpful tips to alleviate the concerns of children nervous about getting their teeth examined.



STAY POSITIVE

It is recommended that parents bring children in for their first visit with a dentist by age 2 or 3, and making it a successful experience starts at home. That means no filling their little heads with horror stories, especially tales from the parents' own childhood.

"The most important thing that I usually talk to parents about is making sure that whatever they mention to their child at home has to be positive: no negative stories, no threats about us using a huge needle if they get cavities," says Dr. Lissette Bernal, a pediatric dentist at Winter Garden Smiles. "I tell them to keep everything super positive, and even if they've had a bad experience in the past with another dentist, we don't want to discuss that anymore because we don't want them thinking about those things when they come to us for their first visit."

Bernal adds that reading children a book, showing them videos about going to the dentist or even role-playing can all be beneficial. Orthodontists usually see children who are a little bit older, but Dr. Lauris Johnson of My Family Orthodontics says the same rules apply.

"Most kids are young and very impressionable, so if you tell them that it's going to be a good experience, the doctor is just going to look at their smile and talk about how to fix their teeth, you can do that," she says. "But don't tell them negative stories about what's going to happen or how bad it's going to hurt. I don't think parents mean to, but they don't realize how much pressure that puts on me as a doctor and even my staff to have to try to manage the kids."

Dr. Breck Brewer of Fravel Brewer Orthodontics agrees and says it's best to let children have their own experiences and make up their own minds. He also stresses that it's important to bring them in before any problems arise.

"They can get used to the office and find out it's not so bad if they just have to go in for a regular checkup and cleaning," he says. "If you wait until they're already in pain, there are more procedures to get them out of that pain and they're going to associate it with pain. So it's always helpful to go in when the stakes are low and the child can get used to the situation."

BE INFORMATIVE

Once the child arrives for the appointment, it's important for the dentist or orthodontist to be upfront and honest about everything they'll be doing, so that nothing takes them by surprise.

"Tell-show-do is a technique we learn as dentists in school to use with the younger kids or even patients with special needs to show them what we're going to do before we do anything, and to do it in a friendly way," Johnson says. "For instance, we call the suction machine Mr. Thirsty, and we'll show them that. Or the drill, which is the main thing patients get upset about, I will let them touch it and hold it and then I might show them how it spins and explain that it just has a little bit of a vibration."

For Brewer, because most of his patients are not yet ready for braces or other appliances when he first sees them, he spends the first meeting mostly getting to know them and explaining what he does.

"The only thing we're really going to do that day is capture some X-rays, take some photos of their teeth, perhaps take a scan of their mouth, which is a very simple process, and then we're going to talk and I'm going to a quick exam of their teeth," he says. "This is going to provide lots of great information about where they are in their development: how many baby teeth they have, how their jaw and their bite look. The kids get to come in and see our office and get used to everything without having anything happen that day."

Because establishing good habits at a young age is critical, Bernal will spend time reinforcing what the kids can do at home.

"We go over preventive stuff, like how long they should be brushing, the amount of fluoride toothpaste they should use, their diet—things to help prevent them from getting cavities in the future," she says. "We also want them to get used to coming to the dentist every six months, so that way they know they're not just coming for an emergency or if something is hurting."

MAKE IT FUN

Bright colors in the office, video game systems in the waiting room and TVs in the exam rooms are staples at most offices geared toward children, and Bernal also encourages families to bring in a favorite stuffed animal or blanket to make the child more comfortable.

Fravel Brewer Orthodontics has a Future Smiles Club in which kids receive a T-shirt and spin a prize wheel where they can win gift cards to local restaurants or ice cream parlors, and they also get rewarded for good hygiene.

"We try very to make the atmosphere in our office enjoyable and fun," Brewer says. "It instills the mentality that this place isn't so bad. We want the kids to come in and want to come back."

EARN THEIR TRUST

Familiarity with a certain doctor can be key to children overcoming fear of the dentist or orthodontist, so it helps to build that rapport.

"Many of the kids have been with me since starting when they were little," Bernal says. "It's good if you can stick with the same provider, because you get to know how they are, especially the ones who are little more anxious, and you know what to expect and how to prepare."

That is why Johnson always likes getting to know her patients on a personal level and ultimately building a relationship that will last.

"Usually what I do before I even look at their mouth is just talk to them, find out what they like to do, if they play sports, if they've seen a certain movie," she says. "For instance, right now during the summer I'll say, 'School is out, what are you doing?' They get excited and it's kind of a positive distraction. I just want them to know that I care about them as a person and it's not just me going in there and fixing their teeth. Usually, if you can gain their trust, they're a lot more at ease throughout the process."

Hope for the Fight Against Alzheimer's

About 10 years ago, as Amanda Harris' father was losing his battle with Alzheimer's disease and there was nothing she could do to help him, she decided to focus her energy in a positive way by joining the Alzheimer's Association Central and North Florida Chapter. Now, after five years as a volunteer and five more as a staff member, she is finally starting to see a light at the end of the tunnel for the many families, like hers, that have been impacted by the irreversible, progressive brain disorder.

While there is clearly much more work to be done in finding a cure for Alzheimer's, recent breakthroughs in research have led to medications that can target the plaque buildup in the brain associated with the disease.

"For a long time, there was no hope," Harris says. "You kind of hoped to hope, and now we actually do have hope. We've got new FDA-approved treatments for the first time ever that help slow the progression of the disease, so we're giving families a little more time with their loved ones, and that's the first time we can say that. So it's very exciting. These new treatments remove plaque in the brain, and with their success they can help us better understand the disease and what causes it."

Drugs such as aducanumab and lecanemab have already been approved, while others like donanemab "are in the pipeline," according to Harris.

"One of our amazing doctors who works with us, Dr. Maria Carrillo, likes to say that we could see treatment cocktails in the future that impact different areas of the brain as they're figuring out what works best," she continues. "We know that plaque in the brain is a strong indicator of what causes Alzheimer's. We still don't know what actually causes it, but we know that the plaques are part of it. Since clearing the plaque slows the progress of the disease through these new treatments, it gets us closer to understanding the biology of Alzheimer's and other dementia, and that's huge."

One problem is the costs associated with these treatments. As part of the advocacy team at the Alzheimer's Association, Harris and her colleagues are leaning on the federal agency known as the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to make it easier for people to access the medication.

In the meantime, she shares that significant risk factors for Alzheimer's include age, family history and previous head injuries, and encourages those at risk to take part in any type of educational class that will stimulate the brain, do activities like brain teasers and to take care of themselves physically. For those who suspect a loved one of developing the disease, there are a number of warning signs to look for, including memory loss that disrupts their daily life, difficulty completing familiar tasks, changes in mood or personality, and confusion with time or place.

The local chapter of the Alzheimer's Association will be holding its annual Walk to End Alzheimer's event on Oct. 7 at Lake Eola, and has a helpline that people can call 24/7 at (800) 272-3900.

"There is always someone there to answer the phone if you need to find a doctor, if you just have a random question or you just need to cry to somebody because you're stressed out," Harris says. "They're there for you and if they don't know the answer to your question, they will find it for you. That's one of the most important things we offer: care and support."

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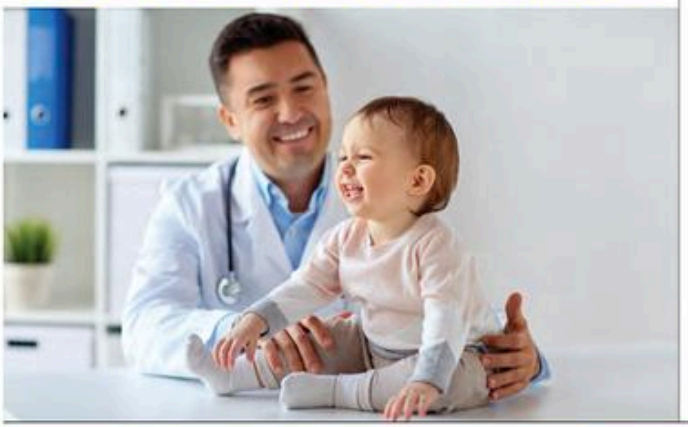
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Parenting Guide 2023

Senior Living

Having one's affairs in order can make it easier on family members in the event of a medical emergency or death.

BY MATT COSENTINO

Conversations about getting older and death are never easy to have, which is why so many people put off estate planning or making arrangements for if and when they suffer a medical emergency. But it is critical to address these issues not only to protect certain assets, but also to ensure that loved ones are not dealt a difficult hand.

"We say to our clients that you're basically giving a gift to your family by making things easier on them when you pass away," says Pamela G. Martini, an attorney who specializes in elder law, estate planning, probate, guardianship and special needs. "You don't want to leave them with a huge mess and trying to figure out where things are."

The earlier these decisions are made, the better, and an experienced attorney like Martini can be a valuable guide along the way. She spoke to us about the primary concerns for her senior clients and the documents they should have in place.

A WILL OR TRUST

Having a will or trust in place not only ensures that one can control how and to whom his or her property and assets are distributed, but also can save headaches for family members and friends down the road. It also should be revisited over time and kept up to date.

"A will in Florida makes probate easier, but it doesn't avoid probate, so that's part of the conversation we always have with our clients," Martini says. "Yes, you need to have a will that says who's in charge of your estate and how you want your estate distributed, but let's discuss ways that you can avoid probate completely because that's an added expense for your family that you might be able to avoid, and there are different ways to do that."



A POWER OF ATTORNEY

A medical crisis can soon become a financial crisis as well, Martini notes, if a power of attorney is not in place. This document designates someone to make financial decisions on the person's behalf, granting access to records and the ability to make transactions.

"A power of attorney is often the most important document during your life, because if you need somebody to take over and help you with your finances, there's nobody who can step in if there's not a power of attorney without going to court and getting a court-ordered guardianship, which is very expensive and time-consuming," she says. "I tell clients that keeping the power of attorney up to date can be the most important tool in your estate planning toolbox. But power of attorney is only good during your life—the way we put it is, power of attorney ends at the moment of death and the will kicks in at the moment of death. They're both important documents to have and they both have different roles to play in protecting you and your family."

A LIVING WILL

Also known as an advanced health care directive, this document will spell out a person's wishes in the event of a medical emergency or serious illness, and often includes instructions related to resuscitation, life support and organ donation, for example.

"That's just to name who they would want to be the decision-maker for health care decisions if they can no longer make decisions for themselves, either temporarily because of a medical emergency or a permanent incapacity situation," Martini says. "We try to look at the big picture, so we'll also have the discussion about long-term care insurance."

Martini will also talk to clients about protecting assets for the spouse of the sick individual and break down the misconceptions about applying for Medicaid.

In addition to obtaining these documents, it is also recommended that seniors keep them safely stored.

"I encourage my clients to buy a simple fireproof safe and make sure their family members know how to access it, or there are even fireproof and waterproof document sleeves that you can buy on Amazon to put your most important documents in," Martini says. "The most important thing is that your family members know where they are or know the contact information for your attorney if they need to find out that information."



Housing Options as You Age

Retirement should be a relaxing time for one to put the stress of work in the past and focus on favorite hobbies and spending time with loved ones. There are still key decisions to make, however, and choosing the right living situation is chief among them, especially when assistance with daily activities or even medical attention may be needed.

Fortunately, Florida has plenty of options, including Sonata Windermere, which offers assisted living with supportive care services, independent living and award-winning Alzheimer's and dementia care.

Perhaps the type of care provided at an assisted living facility is not necessary just yet. In that case, a 55-plus apartment community like Overture Dr. Phillips is worth a look. Here, residents can take advantage of resort-style amenities and maintenance-free living while building new friendships.

Then there is the newest opportunity to reach the area from Vibrant Living at Home, a division of Orlando Senior Health Network, which offers the best of both worlds.

"Continuing care at home has been around for several years but we're the first in Central Florida to be doing this for seniors," says Lynne Atkinson, executive director. "It's a comprehensive, membership-based program that lets a person stay in their own home and receive services.

"The backbone of our program is that they receive a personal care navigator, and that person coordinates whatever type of services they need. All they would have to do is pick up the phone and make one phone call to their personal care navigator to receive services. That personal care navigator gets to know them, their likes and dislikes, gets to know their family and will even speak to their doctor. It's kind of a middle person to help them through the maze of long-term care services and whatever they need."

Vibrant Living at Home has all the best features of long-term care alternatives, including assisted living, skilled nursing and even 24/7 home care if necessary. Services can also be accessed at Orlando Senior Health Network's three downtown facilities, where members are welcome at any time to socialize with residents, take part in activities, join day trips and use the dining options. The program is especially appealing to those who have retired to Florida and have concerned family members living in other states.

"Some people don't want to leave their homes," Atkinson says. "They want to maintain their independence and they also want to protect their finances, because long-term care is expensive and it's rising every year. They can still get the socialization by coming to our communities, and they can have peace of mind knowing that the 'what-ifs' are covered."





Senior Living



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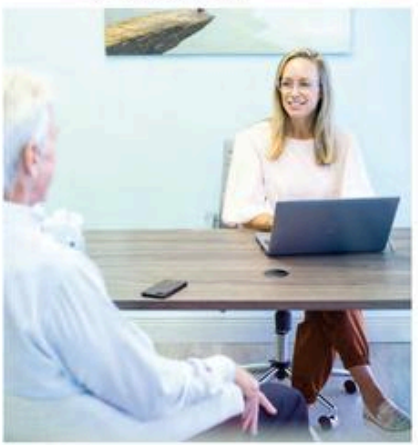
BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT

A Promising Approach

With a focus on preventive testing, **K2 Medical Research** is utilizing the latest advancements to unlock the potential for early detection of Alzheimer's. by KRISTEN JORGENSEN

Alzheimer's disease, a progressive neurodegenerative disorder, affects millions of people worldwide and poses a significant public health challenge. As the global population ages, the burden of Alzheimer's is expected to increase exponentially. While no cure for the disease exists, there has been growing interest in preventive testing to identify individuals at high risk of developing Alzheimer's before symptoms manifest.

K2 Medical Research, located here in central Florida, is leading the way in this proactive approach. The privately-owned clinical research facility is home to a medical team of accomplished specialists in their respective fields, who are passionate about making a difference in the community. It's at K2 Medical Research that they believe their studies hold great promise for early intervention and the potential to slow down or even prevent the onset of the disease.



Understanding Alzheimer's

To better understand Alzheimer's disease, and the key research taking place at K2, we spoke with leading neurology specialist, Dr. Sheila Baez-Torres. "Alzheimer's disease is characterized by the accumulation of beta-amyloid plaques and tau protein tangles in the brain, leading to the progressive loss of cognitive function. Often by the time symptoms appear, significant damage has already occurred, making it difficult to reverse the disease's course," she explains. "This has prompted much of our researchers to focus on early detection methods, with the aim of intervening before irreversible damage takes place."

Of course, there are many diseases that mankind continues to face but most doctors, patients and families of those suffering from the diagnosis would agree that the ramifications of living with this particular disease are extremely difficult to navigate and painful to accept.

"It doesn't matter what nationality, religion, or background we come from, we all want to age with grace. We want to be able to share old memories, whilst making new ones with the people we love, throughout our entire lives, not just a portion of it" continues Baez-Torres.

Preventive Testing as a Strategy

At K2 Medical Research, people come first. "Clinical research has often been stigmatized as invasive, impersonal and cold. But we have made it our mission to change the stigma and begin a new standard for how clinical trials are delivered: one founded in respect, compassion, and warmth," says Baez-Torres. "We aim to give our patients a sense of autonomy, equity and dignity. We want to provide the tools that will allow them to advocate for their own health using the latest advancements the industry has to offer."

According to Baez-Torres, preventive testing involves assessing individuals for genetic and biomarkers associated with Alzheimer's disease through blood work. While genetic testing can identify specific gene mutations linked to familial Alzheimer's, it is less effective in detecting sporadic cases. However, advancements in biomarker research, like the research work they are doing at K2, have opened new avenues for early detection.

"With this type of technology, we can detect the risk for Alzheimer's disease in a person 10-20 years before the onset of any symptoms," Baez-Torres says.

Biomarkers for Alzheimer's

Researchers have identified several blood biomarkers that can provide valuable insights into the pre-symptom stages of Alzheimer's disease. With a simple blood test, we can identify the abnormal proteins amyloid beta and p-tau biomarkers associated with the disease decades before the onset of the symptoms. Additionally, imaging techniques can measure brain volume and assess neuronal activity, providing further clues about disease progression.

Promising Results and Potential Benefits

Early detection through preventive testing allows for timely intervention, which could significantly impact disease progression. "It provides an opportunity for individuals to make lifestyle modifications, such as adopting a brain-healthy diet, engaging in regular exercise and maintaining social connections, all of which have been linked to a reduced risk of Alzheimer's," explains Baez-Torres. "Additionally, it enables health care professionals to closely monitor at-risk individuals, offering personalized care plans and potential participation in our clinical trials.



Alzheimer's preventive testing holds immense potential for early intervention and the development of effective preventive strategies.

"We encourage the community to be as proactive in testing for this disease, as they would diabetes, colon or breast cancer. The goal for us is to eventually live in a world where we no longer have patients suffering from this debilitating disease," Baez-Torres says. "We also want to encourage the community to continually strive to live a healthy lifestyle, so you can often find our Wanda the Mobile Clinic in the community and at local health fairs."

The identification of biomarkers associated with the disease provides a valuable window of opportunity for intervention before irreversible damage occurs. Through continued research, improved diagnostic tools, and comprehensive support systems, K2 Medical Research strives to mitigate the devastating impact of Alzheimer's disease and improve the quality of life for individuals at risk.

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Special Needs

Transitioning to adulthood is a big step for individuals with special needs, but there are local organizations that can help lead them to a secure future.

BY MATT COSENTINO

Of the many challenges that parents of special needs children face, one that keeps many mothers and fathers up at night regards their child's transition into adulthood. While school can provide a safe haven, much-needed services and socialization opportunities, when they start to age out, the next step is often unknown and the cause for concern.

"They get so much support in school from the teachers and aides, and they also may benefit from ABA therapy, speech therapy or physical therapy," says Brittany Pilcher, development director at the Center for Independent Living (CIL). "But all of those services drop off because they're connected to school, and there aren't a lot of programs that are built in for transition. The parents have to go seek it out."

That's where organizations like CIL can step in. Serving eight counties in Central Florida, including Orange, Osceola and Seminole, CIL offers a Step Ahead program for students between the ages of 14 and 22 to assist with the transition from school to adult life. Utilizing a holistic ap-

Play Ball

Participation in athletics has long been lauded for the many benefits it brings to able-bodied children. Along with lessons about teamwork, sports also give kids the chance to spend time with their friends and to learn the value of physical activity and competition.

The same is true, and perhaps even more so, for children or young adults with either an intellectual, developmental or physical disability. In addition to the aforementioned advantages, the special needs population may also learn to feel comfortable around others, boost their self-esteem and build relationships they otherwise would not have had a chance to.

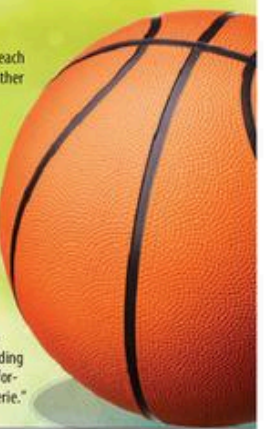
Fortunately for local residents, opportunities abound at Central Florida Dreamplex, which offers a variety of activities, athletic clinics and adaptive sports for all ages.

"There are other programs for sports, obviously Special Olympics and things like that, but what we found is [families] wanted something a little more recreational," says Cameron Gomes, chief executive officer of Central Florida Dreamplex. "There's a competition piece to Special Olympics and we have plenty who are involved in both, but there are some who just want to have fun with the activities. None of ours are competitive based; it's more just about staying active and being with friends and peers. The families enjoy it because they're connecting with each other and going through a lot of the same things together rather than in isolation."

Popular classes at Dreamplex are karate, judo, gymnastics, Zumba, arts and crafts, and cardio boxing. There are also athletic clinics for basketball, soccer, flag football, kickball, volleyball and more that teach the fundamentals of each sport. Adaptive sports get a little more competitive and include wheelchair basketball, track and field, and sled hockey.

The classes and clinics rotate about every month or six weeks to keep things fresh, and as soon as a new schedule is released, there is a rush to sign up.

"They definitely look forward to these days," Gomes says of the participants. "Maybe it's a new volunteer group each time so they're meeting new friends that way. Depending on the sport, that might not even be what they're looking forward to most, they're just looking forward to the camaraderie."



proach, the program helps them prepare for their future by exposing them to opportunities and developing necessary skills.

"It's a big need because once you're done with school, what's next?" Pilcher says. "Is it college? Is it learning a trade or going into the workforce? What are you doing to be as independent as possible? We help through our youth transition services with guidance, identifying their skills and what they like to do, and then we have programs that can help them get into the workforce."

One of those programs is Aspire to Hire, which helps participants leverage their unique abilities into meaningful employment. In addition to teaching social skills and pre-employment skills like how to write a résumé or what to wear on an interview, it also involves insight into different fields in which they might thrive.

"It's very holistic, very supported and very career-driven, because we want this person to be a long-term fit, which is good not only for that individual but also the company," Pilcher says.

Project Search is another option in which CIL and similar organizations partner with local hospitals. Students about to age out of school can engage in a program that runs the full academic year, where they do three job rotations: facilities/environmental services, central supply and nutrition/food services. It's similar to an internship and after graduating from the program, students are encouraged to apply for a job at the hospital or to use the skills they learned to seek a position elsewhere.

"These students don't have a lot of experience, they might be shy and they might not have confidence," Pilcher says. "To see that on day one and then fast forward to May and see where they end up is the best part. They walk across the stage confidently and the supervisors talk about how they're the best team member, are always on time and so dedicated, and then you hear that they got a job in that department or we helped find them a job with another community partner. These are jobs that are paying well over minimum wage, they're full time with benefits. We've been doing this program for seven years, and there are still people from year one who are employed at the hospitals and they now have leadership roles."

CIL holds career camps as well, where students can pursue their different interests, find out more about certain industries and learn about their disabilities and how to advocate for themselves in the workplace.

The ultimate goal for all of these programs is to ensure a secure future for each individual who comes through CIL.

"We don't want them to fall off," Pilcher says. "We want to help them figure out what they would like to do and what supports they need and guide them. We don't want them to hit 25 and not know what's going on, because there aren't a lot of services then. So let's get them during this in-between period when they get out of high school and into adulthood."

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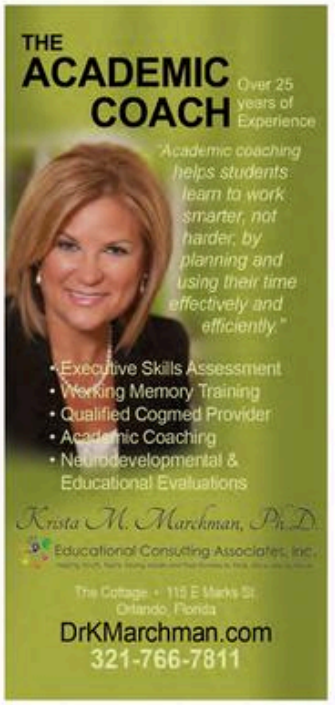


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Special Needs



ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS

Digital Arts for Autism
3107 Edgewater Dr., Suite 3, Orlando
(407) 459-7959 | DigitalArtsforAutism.org
Digital Arts for Autism is a 501© nonprofit organization that specializes in preparing high functioning PRE/POST High School Students by training them in digital media and animation.

PRIVATE SCHOOLS (Special Needs)

Center Academy
Maitland: (407) 772-8727
Waterford Lakes: (407) 270-4444
Hunter's Creek: (407) 286-1673
CenterAcademy.com
Center Academy serves 5th-12th grade students with ADHD, ASD and learning differences in a small, safe setting and offers tuition scholarships. Since 1968. Fully accredited.

The First Hope of The First Academy
3000 South John Young Parkway, Orlando
(407) 206-8801 | TheFirstAcademy.org/academics/first-hope
At **The First Hope** our vision is to create a Christ-centered environment of learning and development for students with unique abilities. The First Hope offers a unique approach to teaching students with various learning needs academically, cognitively and spiritually. Classes provide a small student-to-teacher ratio in order to promote student achievement. First Hope Specialized Education K-12 Program assists

students who are performing significantly below grade level, need social and life skills support, and are able to provide self-care and communicate verbally.

Florida School for the Deaf & Blind
207 San Marco Ave., St. Augustine
(904) 827-2200 | FSDBK12.org
The **Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind** (FSDB) was established in 1885 in St. Augustine and is a fully accredited, tuition-free state public school for eligible students who are deaf/hard of hearing, blind/visually impaired or deafblind. FSDB serves approximately 1,000+ students each year through statewide parent-infant/family programs as well as a Montessori Pre-K early learning center and K-12 elementary, middle and high schools on its campus.

RECREATION, SPORTS, THERAPY

Central Florida Dreamplex
400 S. Hwy. 27, Clermont
5165 Adanson Street, Orlando
(352) 394-0212 | CFLDreamPlex.com
Central Florida Dreamplex offers therapy, fitness, recreation and sports designed specifically for individuals with physical and/or intellectual disabilities.

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST

Educational Consulting Associates, Inc.
115 E Marks Street., Orlando
(321) 766-7811 | DrKMarchman.com
Krista M Marchman, Ph.D., licensed school psychologist, specializes in neurodevelopmental, psychoeducational and diagnostic evaluations for children, teens and young adults.

THERAPY SERVICES

Beckman & Associates, Inc.
(Speech / Occupational / Oral Motor Therapy)
620 W. Wymore Rd., Suite 230, Maitland
(407) 647-4740
BeckmanandAssociates.com
Beckman & Associate's goal is to provide treatment that meets high professional standards in an environment that is designed to enhance each child's functional abilities.

Collaborative Function, Inc.
(Occupational & Speech)
726 West Colonial Dr., Orlando
(407) 540-1937
Collaborative-Function.com

Quest Kids Therapy
(Occupational, Physical, Speech, ABA Therapy)
758 N Sun Dr., Suite 112, Lake Mary
500 E. Colonial Dr., Orlando
1200 E Plant St., Suite 120, Winter Garden
(407) 218-4340 | QuestKids.org
Quest Kids Therapy specializes in ABA therapy for children with autism and other intellectual disabilities in the Orlando region.

Digital Arts for Autism
3107 Edgewater Drive Orlando, Florida 32804
BUILDING PATHWAYS FOR THE FUTURE
DigitalArtsforAutism.org
407 459 7959
NOW ENROLLING 501(c) organization

Digital Arts for Autism specializes in preparing High Functioning PRE/POST High School Students by training them in Digital Media and Animation.

We offer a comprehensive digital media training program. Students will receive a Certificate of Completion in graphic or animation. The goal of the program is to give our students employable skills and prepare them for real-world application.

COMING NEXT MONTH:

TOP PHYSICIANS
Our annual list of Central Florida's leading doctors as chose by their peers and our readers

MATT LAURIA
The CSI star and Orlando native on his local roots, show business and more

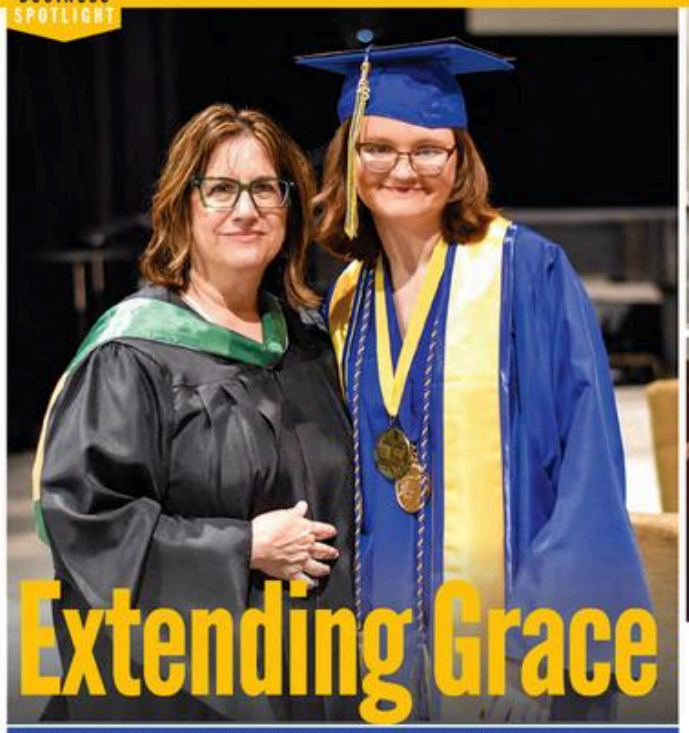
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BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT



Extending Grace

Uniquely-abled students find the support they need to succeed at **The First Hope.** by AMANDA HAMM HENGEL





One of the first lessons we learn in life is that change is inevitable. While consistency is comfortable, change promotes growth. Unfortunately, over the last few years our boundaries of change have been challenged, and we've all been asked to take on more than our share.

While we've all been affected, our children have been especially burdened. Our lives have changed drastically and although it seems in many ways we have returned to "normal," our normal must be re-evaluated. This is especially true in the classroom, where students have not had the same educational experiences their peers did just four years ago.

"There are students in a gray area as a result of COVID, learning differently and also as a result of how students learn these days," says Angel Alexander, director of The First Hope, a Christian alternative to unique abilities education. "They're in an in-between place where they might not be on grade-level, require a little more time to figure things out and most importantly have the ability to get there."

As one of three schools at The First Academy—Central Florida's best private Christian school—The First Hope understands how differently students are learning these days, and offers a place where these students with unique abilities can have the time they need to learn and grow.

"We meet them where they are," Alexander says. Rather than trying to tailor to the mold of a typical student, the teachers at The First Hope give students the grace, along with the resources, they need to be successful in their own place and at their own pace. "The pace of our world now is so fast that there's no time to say, 'I need a little extra time.' We give them that time."

There are two programs in which students may be placed at The First Hope. One is The First Hope K-12 Program, which offers small class sizes with a student-to-teacher ratio of roughly 6:1. This program is designed for students who have the cognitive ability to meet grade-level expectations, but may be a little behind academically or may need various accommodations and/or modifications. K-12 classes include reading and math intervention programs, physical education, Christian teaching, biblical worldview immersion, art and chapel.

The second program, The First Hope Specialized Education Program, also offers small class sizes and is for students who are working toward functional academics and independent life skills. In addition to math and reading interventions, students participate in social and job skills training, physical education, art, Christian teaching and chapel.

"On the Christian side of things, God made everyone in his image, and if a student is made in his image not at grade level, that student is still worthy of being in school and given a fair chance," Alexander adds. "Students shouldn't just be written off, and we give them a place here to succeed."

Alexander says most students qualify for tuition assistance or scholarships to attend the programs, and notes tuition has been reduced to help accommodate the needs of more students.

"We understand there is a large population of students who have been affected by COVID and that's the student we're targeting," she says. "Students who entered school in kindergarten that year—which is a crucial foundation year—were given no grace, and they were not allowed a do-over year. They're needing some more time developmentally, and we're here to give them that time."

Because there can be a level of uncertainty about considering a private school, Alexander also encourages parents who are not sure if The First Hope is a good fit for their child to visit the school's campus and take a tour.

"Come see the school, it speaks volumes on its own," Alexander concludes.

The First Hope at The First Academy

Orlando
(407) 206-8801 | TheFirstAcademy.org

Florida School for the Deaf & the Blind

Do More. Be More. Achieve More.



BECOME Yourself & BELONG For Life

DO MORE

FSDB educates the whole child. Students engage in all aspects of their learning with educational experiences designed for their unique communication and accessibility needs.

BE MORE

At FSDB, students can belong. Students enjoy wide range of opportunities within the safety and security of a beautiful 80+ acre campus, where they can learn, live and play.

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2021

www.fsdbk12.org

DISCOVER MORE!

Far From Finished

Seven years after the tragic shooting at **Pulse** nightclub, **plans to honor the victims** remain a work in progress.

By Carly Murray

IN THE EPIDEMIC OF MASS VIOLENCE ACROSS THE NATION, it is important to remember and to honor the victims and survivors who have been impacted. It is difficult to hear about, to understand and, most importantly, to ignore. It is common for Americans to personally know someone or somewhere that has been affected by gun violence. Within that horror, there have been increased efforts to focus on the victims and survivors.

June 12 marked seven years since the massacre at Pulse nightclub, and it is the second deadliest mass shooting in America with 49 lives taken and at least 53 people seriously injured. A memorial and a museum were proposed by onePulse Foundation in 2016 to honor the victims with educational and reflective implements. However, those plans have yet to come to fruition, as several setbacks including the pandemic have initiated a complicated controversy.

The project was initially expected to cost $49 million, and rose to an estimate of $100 million. This month, with objections to the use of tax dollars without an end result in sight, onePulse announced new changes to the memorial and museum plans, as well as changes within the organization. Deborah Bowie was appointed as executive director in June last year, just as the revised plans were announced. Bowie was personally affected by gun violence when her sister was killed in a home-invasion robbery in 1994, and was drawn to the opportunity to make a difference with her experience in executive positions with other nonprofits and organizations.

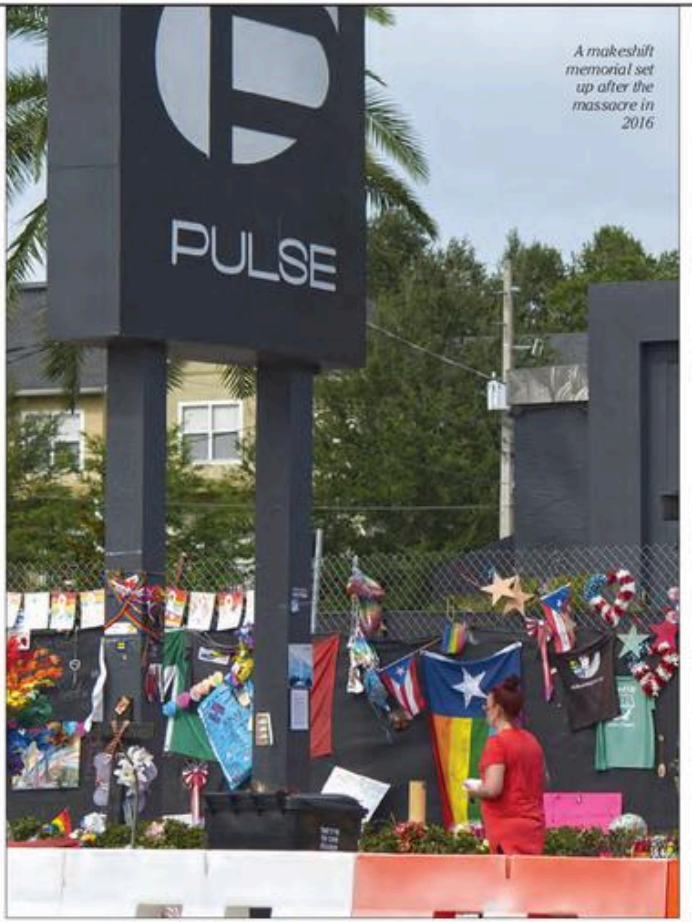
"The plan is different in that it includes more opportunities to connect with the local nonprofit community in meeting the needs of the groups serving the LGBTQIA+ public. That's the most significant change—a smaller footprint with more community-facing opportunities," says Bowie.

The majorly scaled down budget of $15 million, funded by an Orange County tourist development tax grant, hopes to accomplish a



The interim memorial, much as it appears today

Photo courtesy of Anthony Constantine / Shutterstock.com
Opposite: Photo courtesy of John Panella / Shutterstock.com



A makeshift memorial set up after the massacre in 2016

focus on education, remembrance and acceptance. However, onePulse was given a deadline of 2026—which will mark 10 years since the tragedy.

President Joe Biden signed a law to make the site of Pulse a national memorial in 2021, but it is still undetermined where onePulse's memorial will be located. The foundation claims that it will survey the public and those personally affected by the shooting. Regardless of whether the memorial is placed on-site, near the future museum on Kaley Street, or somewhere else entirely, Bowie says deciding upon a location "deserves a thoughtful, inclusive approach."

"We are also in the process of determining a new site for the national memorial, beginning underground utility work for the Orlando Health Survivors Walk and hoping to expand our board and committees to include family members, first responders and survivors of the tragedy," says Bowie.

In the time that has passed since the horrific act of terror upon the LGBTQIA+ club, many survivors and victims' family members have taken to creating their own nonprofits in remembrance. Tiara Parker, who sustained gunshot wounds that night, also lost her cousin, Akyra Monet Murray. Murray was 18 years old, and the youngest victim.

Parker and Murray were on vacation with a friend when they were looking for things to do, and stumbled upon Pulse. They decided to go, as Pulse didn't have a 21+ age restriction, and was therefore able to accommodate Murray. Instead of a night of excitement and celebration—for Murray had just graduated third in her class and intended to play basketball on a full scholarship the upcoming fall—the three became trapped in a bathroom stall with the gunman on the other side.

In what she prefers to call a "remembrance" instead of "anniversary" (which has a more celebratory connotation), Parker takes the day to reflect each year. She also thinks about what she can do to ignite positive change. She launched the Global Activists Awards with her sister, aiming to recognize activists in the community and to advocate for gun reform. Rays of light in times of darkness, such as Parker's initiative, can be a reminder that kindness exists, too—not just hatred and fear.

"My mission is to honor those who are often unseen and unnoticed. My goal is to expand to be something that the world needs to see and understand that this is a real thing. I put my heart and soul into this … that every piece of pain that I experienced, every positive outcome that I've experienced, all wins," says Parker.

Although Parker is on an email and call list for updates about the progress of the memorial and museum, she has not been consulted directly. Ultimately, she would like to see a memorial for families to visit, which could serve as a location to place mementos. She also wants something created to protect it. In the current state of onePulse's plans, Parker claimed that it will be difficult for the organization to win her trust back.

"There were millions of dollars raised and nothing's been done with it—but all the money is spent. So where did it go? If it was supposed to be dedicated to specifically building a memorial/museum, where did that money go? Because that's my biggest concern. That's a lot of money for something we cannot see … or doesn't exist," says Parker.

One thing, however, is certain: The strength of survivors like Parker to turn a horrific stain upon our nation's history into a mission to give back to her community is both virtuous and inspiring. Her work was galvanized by what she witnessed from the Orlando community after Pulse. It worked to support the victims and survivors with fundraising initiatives and waiving medical expenses.

"[Global Activists Awards'] slogan is 'The fight is global,' and it is. That statement came from the fact that when Pulse happened to me, I watched the entire world stand up in solidarity and I was so amazed … and I will never forget that. So I'm paying it forward," says Parker.

At the time, national acceptance of the LGBTQIA+ community was growing, particularly with the then-recent legalization of gay marriage. The gunman who cut so many lives short demonstrated not only that there was actively life-threatening hostility toward LGBTQIA+ individuals, but that it could be acted upon in what was intended to be a safe space. With the museum's new goal to promote tolerance and unity, Bowie says that a "communal space for the many LGBTQIA+ organizations that formed after the tragedy" will be a pivotal factor.

In the years since such unprecedented violence, the world remains affected. The creation of a memorial and museum are intended to be a cathartic experience for the local community, as well as for out-of-state visitors. Until the project is completed, education and kindness have been proven to contribute to the healing process.



Asking the Right Questions

ICONIC SPORTS BROADCASTER DAN PATRICK BRINGS *THE ART OF INTERVIEWING* TO FULL SAIL UNIVERSITY WITH NEW SHORT-FORM COURSE.

Whether on TV, radio or in print, few have interviewed as many distinguished individuals as Dan Patrick. Now, the legendary sportscaster is taking his decades of experience and sharing his in-depth knowledge on the finer points of being a great interviewer as part of a new partnership with Full Sail University, where he helped establish the Dan Patrick School of Sportscasting in 2017.

The Art of Interviewing is a new six-week online course led by Patrick in which students will learn the tools of the trade to help them with research and preparation, develop high-quality interview questions, apply effective questioning techniques and execute meaningful interviews.

"This is for everybody. You can be 20, you can be 40, you can be 60, you can be 80. *The Art of Interviewing* is for everybody, and everybody can learn from it. It's just the ability to be curious and ask the right question at the right time," he says.

We spoke to Patrick about the idea behind the course, the interviewers who have had an influence on him and find out the one person he'd like to reconnect with for another one-on-one conversation.

Q&A

How did this new partnership with Full Sail University come about and what attracted you to the idea?

I love teaching interviewing. I am fascinated by it; and it goes back to my days at ESPN when I took a seminar for five days, eight hours a day on just interviewing. It changed my approach and changed my career, because now I have the ability to get the right answer out of somebody, or how you get the right answer.

This course isn't just for students, the new partnership is really for anybody. It could be somebody who's a salesman, someone who is in management, anywhere where you have to communicate with people. … And the approach to that is a step-by-step of teaching you how to interview. People think all you do is ask questions. Well, you do ask questions, but there is a strategy behind it. How are you phrasing your questions? Are they open-ended questions?

Your goal is not to be the smartest person in the room. Your goal is to make your subject reveal things—to tell you something. That could be asking questions to your kids as I have done around the dinner table. It could be somebody who sells cars and wants to get people talking to them. All walks of life, this could be helpful to you—and all ages as well. I don't want people to think this is just for students, it is for everybody. And that's how the partnership sort of developed into *The Art of Interviewing*.

The world of journalism is so vastly different these days. From your experience do you think the art of interviewing has been lost a bit?

I think what happens in interviewing is the person who is asking the question wants to sound like they know what the answer is going to be. Even if you know the answer, the goal is to ask the question, so the interviewee gives the answer to the audience.

You'll find a lot of hosts, people doing interviews, who will ask, answer and ask. And that's one of the biggest no-no's that we have in the business. Don't ask a question, answer the question and then ask the question. That's basically out of insecurity. "Hey, I want to let you know that I know what I'm asking you."

The audience wants to hear the answer and you need to get out of the way. There is nothing wrong with asking who, why, where, how, when—those are great questions to ask, but people will feel like the audience is going to say, "Oh wow, you don't even know what you're talking about." No, that is why I am asking these questions so the interviewee can tell you—the audience—the story, not me. I might know the answer, but my audience doesn't, and I think that's what happens now.

And I don't do "gotcha journalism." I try to be respectful. You ask questions. You do your research. Do your homework. You can't go in and just let it fly. But if you really want to get an interview that is standing out, then you have to go step-by-step and do your homework. Know how to ask the question and when to ask the question.

People will often say, "You ask great questions." And I will say, "Well, yeah but did I get great answers?" That's the key because then I asked great questions.

When did you feel like you had mastered the art of interviewing? And even now, are you still learning new things and fine tuning your approach?

I haven't mastered the art of interviewing. I am constantly tweaking, second guessing, analyzing. I could have done something better. Sometimes when I'll listen to an interview, it's what I didn't ask that stands out to me, not what I did ask. But to be able to have that perfect interview, that's the thing that keeps me going every single day. When you have somebody on are you asking the right questions? Are you being fair to them? What are you getting in return from them? What is your audience getting?

That's the most important part of this. It's not about me looking good, it's about did my audience get entertained by this? Did they learn something about this? And you never master it, you just don't, because you can always do it better.

Who are some of the great interviewers that influenced you?

I've been influenced by a variety of people. Howard Stern is so good at having background information. And having that information is great when you're going in. I always view it as a competition. If I'm interviewing someone—in particular an athlete—they're used to competition. I have to compete with you to get an answer from you. I feel like when you have that information, you might have a nugget there, you might have something that you can throw your subject off a little bit there. Many athletes are interviewed regularly. Every game, before a game, after a game. So when you get the opportunity to talk to someone, what are you asking them? What is different? What makes you different? I always thought that Howard had so much information in there, maybe too much information, but the ability to bring up something that maybe they didn't know about, forgot about. Then you get that, "Wow, that was a great question" or "that was really interesting there."

Graham Norton, who is in London, whenever he has celebrities on, he somehow gets something out of them that's different than anybody else. To put your subject at ease, the person you're interviewing, you want them to be comfortable, because ultimately this has to do with letting your audience eavesdrop on your conversation. That's it, it's a conversation. When you're interviewing you don't want to sound like you're interrogating anybody, you want it to be natural, as if you're just talking and the audience gets to listen to this.

Those are two people—one with a sheer volume of information/research, and the other with the ability to put the person you're talking to at ease.

You've spoken with so many big names, but is there anyone that you haven't interviewed yet that is on your bucket list?

The last time I interviewed Michael Jordan was when he first retired from the Chicago Bulls. But to be able to have a full sit-down interview with Michael, you know, that is still something I would love to have. And it could be reflecting back on basketball, but also on being a businessman, a brand ambassador and how he changed the athlete's approach to endorsements. Just to talk to him as a businessperson, while also reminiscing on all the great performances he has had, that would be top on the list.

With all that you've accomplished over the years, what have been some of the more rewarding aspects of your career?

Well, I think to prove that you can do it because I did not have a textbook. There was no map saying this is how you do it. And I almost gave up on getting into TV. I got turned down for the weekend job in Dayton, Ohio, and I think I was just turning 27, and that was ancient in the business to get into TV then. I thought I was just going to be on radio.

But I tell my students within the Dan Patrick School of Sportscasting degree program: right place, right time—you've got to be ready; you might only get one shot. And if you do, you got to make good on it because if not, the next person will. I tell my students all the time, you've got to stand out, what are you doing that's different? The rewarding part of this is to see them get jobs. It's the most rewarding thing I've ever done in my career, because of the impact that we're able to have on them. They're getting jobs, you're changing lives. I always say I can get you over the wall, you've got to be able to run once you get over the wall, it's up to you and that's just the start of your career. But that's been rewarding to get to this point where it's not necessarily about what I am doing in my regular job, but it's this ability and opportunity to have people succeed with their dreams. I would love to have had this opportunity like these students have. I tell them, you're 10 years ahead of where I was.



Orlando Family Stars

Each month, Stars features exceptional students, student-athletes, educators and all-around boons to the Greater Orlando area.

? KNOW SOMEONE WHO DESERVES STAR TREATMENT?

Submit your nominees to Karen@OrlandoFamilyMagazine.com

GARBY GILOT

Four years ago, this 2006 Edgewater High School graduate joined the Navy, and today, Petty Officer 3rd Class Gilot serves as a damage controlman aboard USS Robert Smalls, a forward-deployed U.S. Navy warship. Gilot serves in Japan as part of the Forward Deployed Naval Forces, which operate with allies and partners to preserve a free and open Indo-Pacific region. Service members in this region are part of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, which has the largest area of responsibility in the world. "Being in the Navy means I am able to represent America in a positive way overseas," Gilot says. "I am very happy to be stationed in Yokosuka, Japan. I was blessed to meet my wife here and we are starting a family soon."



DR. MICHAEL STEPPIE

Dr. Steppie, the medical director at Associates in Dermatology, recently served as the volunteer dermatologist for the Skin Cancer Foundation's "Destination Healthy Skin" free screening and education program in Orlando. The program brings free, full body skin cancer screenings, educational materials, sun protection, skin care and giveaways to people around the country. To date, the volunteer dermatologists have provided more than 27,000 free skin cancer screenings and identified more than 11,000 skin cancers and pre-cancers.





LAKE HIGHLAND PREP

Middle school students Ajay Sawant, Pranav Mahendran, Sree Shakhamoori and Mohid Hassan recently placed first in the prestigious National Science Bowl hosted by the U.S. Department of Education. Their performance will be recognized by the U.S. Department of Education with $1,000 in prize money.

DR. TARA WILLIAMS

The Florida Department of Health in Orange County (DOH-Orange) recently honored Dr. Williams as this year's Alfred L. Bookhardt, M.D. Award recipient for her contributions to health care in Orange County. Established by the Florida Department of Health in Orange County in 2015, the annual Bookhardt Award pays homage to Dr. Alfred L. Bookhardt and recognizes an Orange County physician for their dedication and commitment to increasing access to health care. Dr. Williams is a clinical associate professor of pediatrics at the University of Central Florida's College of Medicine. She's been a practicing general academic pediatrician and breastfeeding medicine specialist for over a decade. She is passionate about training the next generation of pediatricians to be competent at encouraging, supporting and advocating for breastfeeding equity in all clinical settings.



ORLANDO MUSEUM OF ART

The Orlando Museum of Art recently announced it will once again join museums nationwide in the Blue Star Museums initiative, a program that provides free admission to currently serving U.S. military personnel and their families. The 2023 program began on Armed Forces Day, May 20, and will end on Labor Day, Sept. 4. Blue Star Museums is a partnership between the National Endowment for the Arts and Blue Star Families in collaboration with the Department of Defense and participating museums across America. Free admission is available for those currently serving in the United States Military—Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, Navy, and Space Force, members of the Reserves, National Guard, U.S. Public Health Commissioned Corps, NOAA Commissioned Corps, and up to five family members.

Palate

By Karen Nimetz

TOP FIVE:

SHRIMP

A quintet of tasty things to try this month

BLACKENED SHRIMP BURRITO
AT AGAVE AZUL,
WINDERMERE, WINTER PARK
AND KIRKMAN
A tasty variation of a traditional Mexican dish, this burrito consists of blackened citrus shrimp, cilantro rice, corn salsa, *chihuahua* cheese, black beans, bell peppers, onions, tomatoes, smoky chipotle cream sauce, avocado *crema* and *queso*.

SHRIMP BURGER
AT HAPPY SNAPPER SEAFOOD RESTAURANT,
PINE CASTLE
A creative combination of flavors, this seafood "burger" is topped with lettuce, tomatoes, onions and pickles, and served with french fries.

SHRIMP SALAD
AT TOOJAY'S, MULTIPLE LOCATIONS
Both healthy and hearty, this dish features whole shrimp, diced celery, lemon juice, mayonnaise and bread crumbs.

GAMBERI PARMIGIANA
AT IL PESCATORE,
COLONIAL TOWN CENTER
This unique platter consisting of breaded jumbo shrimp oven baked in tomato sauce is topped with mozzarella cheese.



THE ANGRY SHRIMP
AT BRICK & FIRE,
SOUTH ORANGE AVE. & INTERNATIONAL DRIVE
This specialty pizza dish is crafted with extra virgin olive oil, garlic, fresh mozzarella, Sriracha shrimp, Roma tomatoes, bacon, scallions and fresh cilantro.



RAISE A GLASS: TOM COLLINS

Libations you're sure to love

LIMONCELLO COLLINS
VIVO ITALIAN KITCHEN,
UNIVERSAL CITYWALK
Both fizzy and refreshing, this drink is made with Caravella Limoncello, Martin Miller's London dry gin, simple syrup and lemon juice.

BARNIBUS COLLINS
AT COCKTAILS & SCREAMS,
DOWNTOWN ORLANDO
A bloody good Tom Collins consisting of Gin Lane 1751, fresh lemon and sour, and topped with a house skeleton malbec.

SEASONAL COLLINS
AT THE MATADOR,
IVANHOE VILLAGE
As the name suggests, this drink changes flavors every few months but is crafted with vodka or gin, rotating syrup, soda and lemon.

Side Dish

EDITED BY KAREN NIMETZ

IN THE KITCHEN

A CULINARY QUESTION OF THE MONTH

We polled 20 Central Florida residents and asked them: **"Which cheese do you prefer in a grilled cheese sandwich?"**

The results are in:

American: 7 votes



Cheddar: 10 votes



Mozzarella: 3 votes



You cheddar believe that our winner is the cheese that makes most people melt with delight. Here's what one of our respondents had to say:



Alex Marin,
Managing partner, Hungry Pants
"I've always been a cheddar guy when it comes to cheese. I love a super sharp aged cheddar—whether it's on a charcuterie [board] or grilled cheese. That's my cheese of choice!"

GOOD EATS

The best thing we've tasted recently...

LOADED BIRRIA FRIES
at **Kavas Tacos + Tequila**

WE RECENTLY TRIED THIS flavorful and shareable appetizer. With a base of crispy french fries, the dish is topped with shredded cheese and tender braised brisket. The addition of guacamole, crema, salsa roja and Kavas' queso left our taste buds wanting more.



QUICK BITES

What's new and notable on the local dining scene

The Cake Bake Shop is set to open a location at the Disney Boardwalk, anticipated for this summer, though there is no official opening date yet. This will be the first Florida location, with two others in Indiana, and will serve baked goods, afternoon tea, cocktails, and more.

In line with Epcot's focus on international cuisine, a new sushi restaurant with traditional Japanese decorations, will open at the Japan Pavilion this summer. **Shiki-Sai: Sushi Izakaya** will offer an array of sushi dishes and include an open sushi bar and grill.

At the Maitland City Center, a food hall called **Maitland Social** is expected to open this year. Businesses will include **Foxtail Coffee**, **Wave Asian Bistro** and a fitness boutique, **Urban Body Works**.



Valhalla Bakery has found a new home at the Cheney Collective.



Chayote Barrio Kitchen, will soon open in Winter Park Village, offering Latin-forward dishes created by celebrity chef Mario Pagán.

Set to open this summer is Brew Theory's new, 12,000-square-foot **Brew Theory Marketplace** at Apopka City Center. It will include restaurants, a bar, a taproom and a beer garden.

RESERVATIONS

Foodie events to fill your calendar

July 11
ORLANDO TIKI FEST 2023
at Gozamba Restaurant & Lounge, Orlando
This nearly 17-hour event includes seminars, competitions, tastings and prizes. There will be rum tastings in addition to other distillates, as well as live music and entertainment. *9:30 a.m.-2 a.m., ticket prices and packaging range from $20-$125.*



July 15
LITTLE CHEF'S COOKING CLASS
at Maggiano's Little Italy, Pointe Orlando
Kids will have fun decorating their own chef hat and learning basic cooking skills from one of Maggiano's very own chefs. Young junior chefs will create their version of a Maggiano's classic to enjoy with their family at home. Children 3 years and older are welcome. Adult supervision is required. The restaurant will also be serving a breakfast buffet for all participants to enjoy. *9-11 a.m., cost is $40 for adult and child, $20 for each additional adult.*

July 28-Sept 4
CRAFT BEER FESTIVAL
at SeaWorld Orlando
This festival features more than 100 crafts brews, wines, seltzers and cocktails. Guests can sample an unbeatable mix of domestic and local Florida favorites and savor more than 15 food items paired to match their preferred brew. *Fridays-Sundays, noon until one hour prior to park close, included with park admission. Sample pricing varies.*





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