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Orlando Family Magazine

OCTOBER 2018



Food for Thought

How colleges are making sure no student has to worry about where their next meal is coming from

plus

GAME SHOW CONFIDENTIAL

Local contestants take us behind the scenes

mandy moore

The Orlando native finds the role of a lifetime on This Is Us

pg. 24: The 2018 Private High School Report Card

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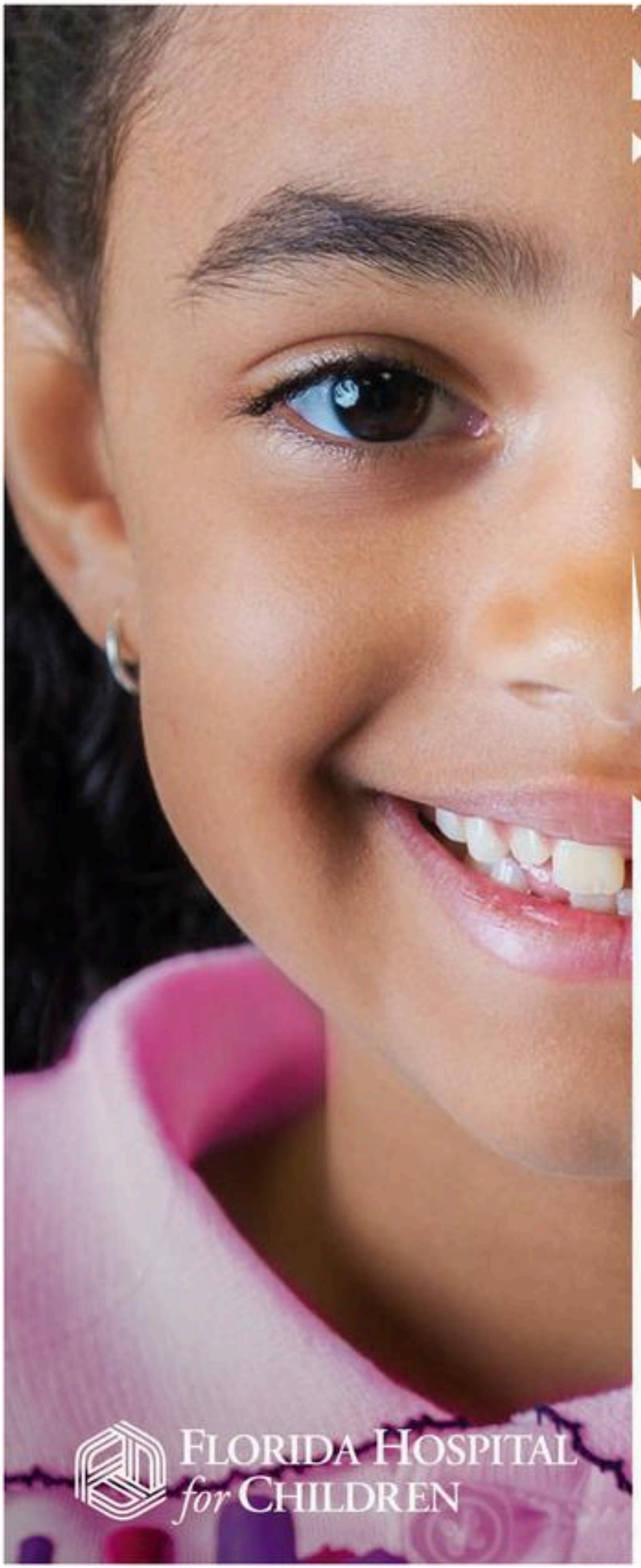
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On the cover: Mandy Moore photograph courtesy by Maarten de Boer / NBC Universal / NBCU photo bank

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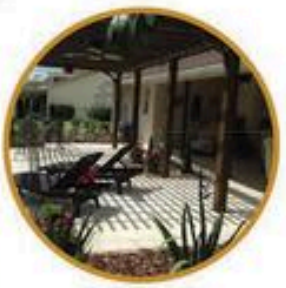
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Home Front

by the Numbers

$100K
The scholarship awarded to an Evans High School student by Beyoncé and Jay-Z as a part of the couple's desire to award college scholarships during stops on their current tour.



FIVE DOLLARS
The amount of money that a Winter Garden man paid for a scratch-off ticket that resulted in him winning $1 million.

2.4 Million
The square footage of Amazon's new Orlando warehouse that recently opened.

$15
The minimum hourly wage that Walt Disney Parks and Resorts agreed to meet by 2019 in a new contract with union workers.

$2 Million
The federal funds that the University of Central Florida will receive to help enroll students from Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands who were displaced by Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

2ND
The ranking Orlando achieved on WalletHub's list of the most fun cities in America.

IMMERSE 2018

FEATURED EVENT

Oct. 19-20

THIS ANNUAL PERFORMING AND INTERACTIVE ARTS EXPERIENCE from The Creative City Project takes over Downtown Orlando's streets once again. This year's event showcases more than 1,000 artists from over 100 organizations performing in the streets and in public spaces along Orange Avenue, Church Street and Pine Street. Onlookers can expect performances from the Orlando Ballet, the Orlando Philharmonic with the Rollins College Choir, and a collaboration between The Mood Designers and the 100-piece Central Florida Community Arts Orchestra. With purchase of experience plus tickets, attendees will gain access to a 3,200-square-foot ball pit and an immersive photo experience. With purchase of dinner party project tickets, attendees can enjoy a four-course meal right in the middle of the action. *5–11 p.m., Downtown Orlando, general admission free, $22.97 for experience plus ticket, $75 for VIP, $150 for dinner party project experience*



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Hit

Disney Springs will be getting a new virtual reality experience centered on Disney's latest animated film, *Ralph Breaks the Internet*.

Local nonprofit Seniors First received a $2,500 grant from Meals on Wheels America. The money will fund the organization's pet-support program that helps senior citizens care for their pets.

Orlando City Stadium has been chosen to host the 2019 MLS All-Star Game.

Two major Rollins College projects set for downtown Winter Park have been halted. The plans included an expansion of The Alfond Inn and the construction of a new parking garage.

The CFO for the University of Central Florida stepped down after admitting he misused $38 million in state funds.

Orlando Magic owner Rick DeVos died at the age of 92. DeVos co-founded Amway and purchased Orlando's basketball team in 1991.

Miss

3 THINGS YOU'LL LEARN

Colleges and universities throughout the state have set up food pantries to help students struggling with food harship. **Page 32**

New affordable housing projects are starting to take shape, but some experts still believe a major problem looms. **Page 36**

Mandy Moore first fell in love with performing as a youth while attending Park Maitland School. **Page 28**



DID YOU HEAR?

"It's time we go back to the moon, friends."

—NASA ADMINISTRATOR JIM BRIDENSTINE AT ORLANDO AIAA SPACE FORUM

DATEBOOK



FALL FESTIVAL & PUMPKIN PATCH

Weekends in October

This annual festival, now in its third year, is the perfect way to kick off the changing of the season. Attendees of all ages are invited to enjoy live music, food trucks, a pumpkin patch, yard games and more. With the additional purchase of individual tickets or an unlimited play kid's zone wristband, children will receive access to the petting zoo, bounce houses, a rock wall and more. *Saturdays and Sundays, 11 a.m. - 8 p.m., Southern Hill Farms, 16651 Schofield Road, Clermont, $10 per vehicle*

THINK PINK BREAST CANCER BIKE RIDE

Oct. 13

This annual cycling event has three supported rides. The 65-mile ride will use open roads and is designed for more advanced riders. The 30-mile trail ride will head to Clermont's Water Front Park and back. And the 10-mile ride follows the West Orange Trail to Killarney Station and is designed for families. Proceeds from this event go toward cancer research. *Registration opens 7 a.m., first ride begins 8 a.m., Winter Garden Wheel Works, 101 W. Plant St., Winter Garden, 10-mile ride $10, 30-mile ride $30, 65-mile ride $40*

OKTOBERFEST

Oct. 5-6 & Oct. 26-27

The German American Society of Central Florida will put on two weekends of celebrations for Oktoberfest. Billed as Orlando's most authentic Oktoberfest, this event will have live entertainment, dancing and stein-holding contests. Beer, bratwursts, potato salad, pretzels and more will be available for purchase. There will be bounce houses and face painting for children. *Fridays, 5-10 p.m., Saturdays, noon-10 p.m., 381 Orange Lane, Casselberry, pre-sale tickets $10, walk-ups $15*


Ribbon Riders

Bringing out the Best

Local efforts to change the lives of those with breast cancer

By Liz Hunter

EVERY OCTOBER THERE IS A NATIONWIDE SURGE in coverage and awareness about breast cancer. But for so many around the country and world, breast cancer research, treatment and support are year round. Whether it's working to detect the disease sooner or volunteering their time to accompany someone to a chemotherapy treatment or raising money to help pay patients' bills, there is a wide net of people dedicating their lives to the cause. *Orlando Family Magazine* is taking a look at what's happening right here in our backyard and how these organizations are making sure no one slips through the cracks.

On a Cellular Level

This much can be said for sure: The earlier cancer is detected, the better outcome for patients. However, the methods for routinely diagnosing cancer are invasive, involving imaging tests with radiation or a tissue sample taken in a biopsy. Annette Khaled, Ph.D., professor and head of the cancer research division at the University of Central Florida (UCF) College of Medicine, says technology exists that can find and detect cancer cells from a single tube of blood. The college now has one of only two machines in Florida.

The CELLSEARCH System has been FDA approved since 2004 and allows researchers to find and detect cancer cells in the blood and find out if the cancer is spreading by looking for a rare group of cells called CTCs (circulating tumor cells). These are cells that have broken off from tumors and are now circulating in the blood stream. Finding these cells may show if the cancer has spread even after the original tumor was removed or treated.

For Khaled, who specializes in breast cancer and has obtained funding from the Breast Cancer Research Foundation, having CELLSEARCH opens new doors for her research. "We can now do experiments we couldn't do before [with this technology]," Khaled says. She recently began using CELLSEARCH to look at blood samples from a group of women with metastatic breast cancer to see the number of CTCs in their blood. From there she hopes to see how their cells respond to a new cancer therapeutic she developed.

Khaled discovered a peptide called CT20 that kills metastatic cancer cells by disrupting a protein called chaperonin. Without this protein, the folding mechanisms inside cancer cells can develop, thereby killing the cell. Khaled hopes CELLSEARCH can show the impact of CT20 on CTCs. "We haven't had a way to assess the impact in finer detail," she says. "If this is effective, before the tumor decreases we should see an immediate impact in the number of circulating tumor cells being produced."

More progress will be made once the new UCF Lake Nona Cancer Center is completed. The project is slated to open in early 2021 and will put cancer research and treatment under one roof. For Khaled, partnering with a working teaching hospital will help move her research to further stages of trials.

"From my perspective, one of the things we're looking forward to is the fact that the doctors trained at this center will have a research mindset," she says. "We're always looking forward and willing to explore new techniques and this will incorporate that mindset with exceptional patient care."

Lifting Spirits

While researchers continue to look for critical breakthroughs, women who are currently undergoing treatment for breast cancer have a community of hope surrounding them. Organizations led by women who have been impacted by the disease personally or through a family member or friend have been inspired to make a difference with action.

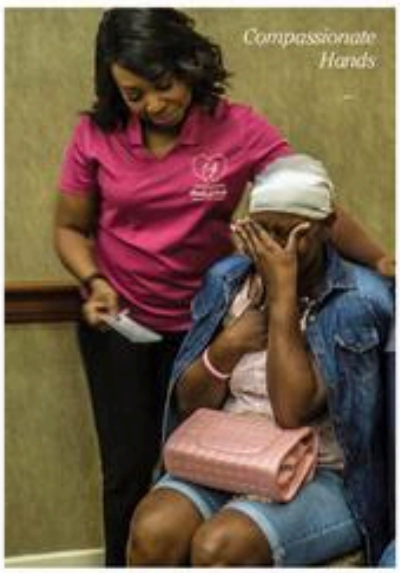
Founded in 2008, Ribbon Riders was started by seven women who witnessed the struggles of breast cancer patients, not just on their bodies, but their daily lives. Ribbon Riders provides direct financial, emotional and physical support to those with breast cancer in Central Florida. In the past 10 years the organization has provided $450,000 in financial assistance.

"We're an all-volunteer organization. One-hundred percent of our funds go to recipients," says Dorothy Haskill, treasurer for Ribbon Riders. Those who receive assistance must fill out an application showing proof of treatment and financial need. "Once we verify their application, we award them $1,000 to use for anything they need. They can apply once a year for three years." The Ribbon Riders will often deliver checks in person, bringing along trinkets or a quilt as well. Haskill says their

recipients are often so grateful that they join the group to give back to others.

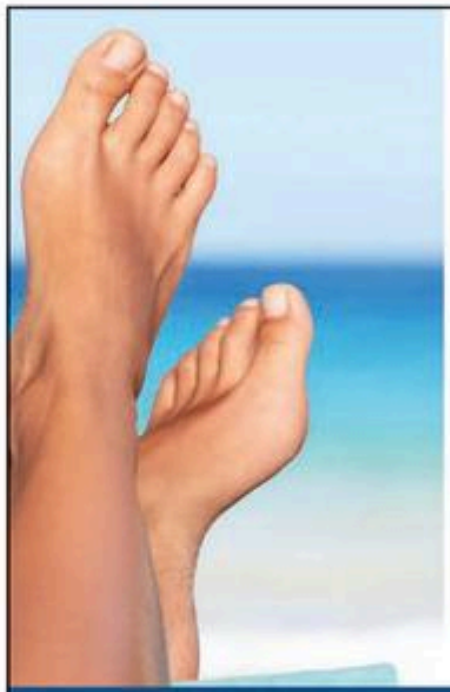
The name Ribbon Riders comes from the founding members' passion for motorcycles, and it's also the foundation for the annual Go Pink escorted motorcycle ride, which took place on Sept. 30. Beginning and ending at The Barn in Sanford, men and women come together for a one-hour ride through town before returning for lunch, auctions, music and games. This annual event funds a majority of Ribbon Riders' donation requests.

Vanessa Echols is a breast cancer survivor and founder of Compassionate Hands and Hearts Breast Cancer Outreach. She underwent six months of chemotherapy, 30 rounds of radiation and four surgeries. Through all of that she noticed some of the other patients getting treatment didn't have family or friends to accompany them, or transportation, or someone to help with shopping and daily necessities. "This organization was born out of helping people have one less thing to worry about while going through treatment," Echols says.



Compassionate Hands and Hearts is comprised of all volunteers who provide helping hands with chores, transportation, companionship and more. Since 2007, hundreds of patients have been helped by Echols' organization. "Most of [the patients] come to us in desperate situations—they may have an eviction notice, or they don't know whether to buy groceries or put gas in their car to get to the doctor," she says. "We meet everyone we help. We see what impact we have on them." Echols says 100 percent of donations go to patients and the organization operates with no overhead. "We will tell donors who received their money or gift card and how it helped them," she continues.

A cancer diagnosis is life-changing but through their efforts, dedicated professionals and volunteers hope to make patients' quality of life better than expected.



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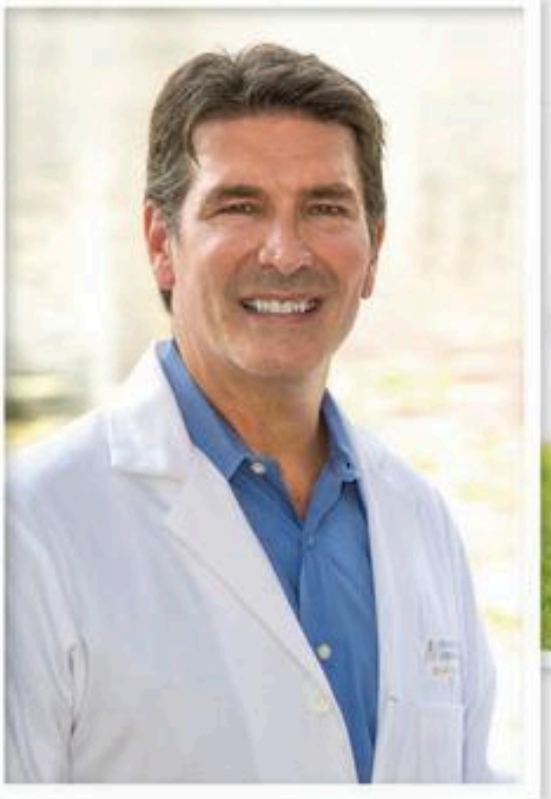
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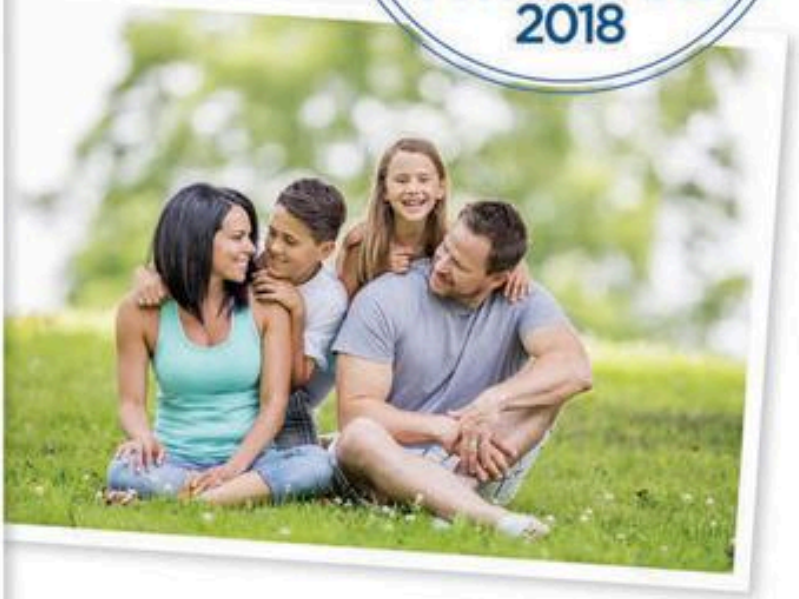
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Unique Nuptials



Central Florida couples tell us about getting hitched in some of the area's most remarkable spots.

By Brittany Ann Morrisey

When the time comes to tie the knot in Greater Orlando, there are plenty of options beyond the traditional church or banquet hall. And that's a good thing because more and more couples are looking to say "I do" in unconventional venues. To find out more about this trend, we caught up with some area couples who gave us the skinny on their memorable wedding ceremonies.

A Cosmic Wedding

When it came time for Brad Farfaglia and Audrey Putney to walk down the aisle, the Winter Haven couple knew they wanted to find a unique venue to share the special day with family and friends, and the Orlando Science Center made perfect sense.

"We both really like science and the discoveries that science makes," Brad says of their choice.

One of the day's more memorable happenings was when members of the wedding party took turns standing inside the Category 1 hurricane simulator in the Our Planet exhibit to cool down while they waited to enter the reception.

An Industrial-looking Wedding inside a Winery

Lake Nona's Adrianne Hauff Houdyschell and her husband Jonathan Houdyschell celebrated their engagement with a trip through Napa Valley's wine country and looked to continue the vino-theme when it came time for their big day.

The couple chose Quantum Leap Winery for their nuptials and instead of having guests leave well wishes in a traditional sign-in book, a wine barrel was used. Once everyone signed the barrel, it was sealed and now sits in the couple's living room.

"The cool part about getting married there is … it's a great place to go hang out, so we get to relive a positive memory every time we go there," Jonathan says. "I think it helps our relationship to go there. … We get to see the people that actually helped us put our wedding together and have a glass of wine and catch up."

A Beachy Wedding at a Theme Park

Sascha Voss and Tom Keller, of Downtown Orlando, combined some of Florida's best elements—the beach and theme parks—into their wedding day. The couple chose Discovery Cove because "it feels like a little oasis in the middle of the city."

Following an early morning ceremony, guests were able to spend the rest of the day relaxing and experiencing the park with the newlyweds.

"Discovery Cove did so many funny things that we kind of got to experience with our guests," Sascha says. "I remember it was later in the afternoon, and all of a sudden they brought in an anteater and we had no idea this anteater would show up, that this animal would be in our cabana."

"There's so many times where you are a guest at a wedding reception and because there are so many people or because of the way it is structured, you don't spend really any quality time with the couple that's gotten married," Tom says. "And this was truly an experience where we were really able to be together with our guests as they were experiencing the day."

A Lakeside Wedding at a Game-Themed Mansion

Jeremiah Claramunt and his bride Michelle wanted to make sure fun was at the center of their wedding day and so the Altamonte Springs couple invited their family and close friends to an unforgettable day at The Great Escape Lakeside.

"We wanted a place that was fun and also fit all



of our friends and family," says Michelle.

Wedding guests were able to stay with the bride and groom for about a week at the 13-bedroom, 11-bathroom venue where each room is themed around a classic game such as Clue or Monopoly.

To commemorate the day, the couple asked their guests to help them.

"We asked all our family members from all over to bring some dirt from wherever they lived because we planted a family tree [and] we used all their dirt," Jeremiah says. "So, every year we can give them some fruit from the family tree."

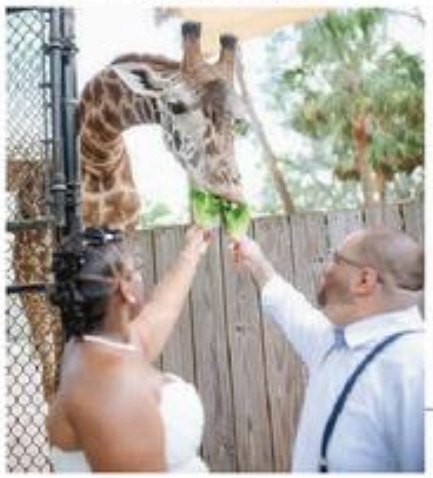
A Zoological Wedding with a Bugged-Out Cocktail Hour

Winter Springs' Jessica Crawford and Elio Vega took their vows at the Central Florida Zoo & Botanical Gardens. Perhaps already wise to the saying, "happy wife, happy life," Elio made sure his bride-to-be would be thrilled with the choice thanks to her love of animals.

"We did get to feed the giraffe, so that was amazing," Jessica says. "We had some really great pictures with the giraffe and Andre the llama—he was amazing as well."

The wedding's cocktail hour was held inside the invertebrates exhibit, so guests could revel among the butterfly displays while viewing live snakes, tarantulas, beetles and more.

"For me, it was the thing where I got to have a moment with the woman I love and to share it with a bunch of people," Elio says.



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Orlando Family Stars



STAR ATHLETES

Orlando PGA Jr. League All Star Team

An all-star team of junior golfers, ages 13 and under from the Orlando area, recently competed in the PGA Jr. League Regional at World Golf Village in St. Augustine, Florida.

STAR VOLUNTEER

Jake Bainter



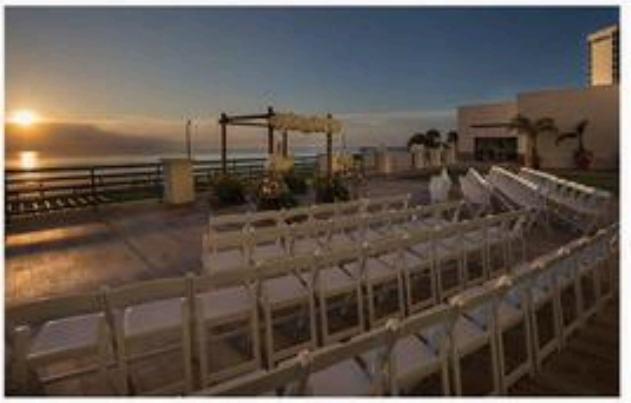
TransLife, a nonprofit organ and tissue donation service, has named their Annual Youth Volunteer Award after Boone High School senior Jake Bainter for his volunteer work on behalf of organ and tissue donation education. Bainter is the first to be given the award and in subsequent years, he will present it to other young outstanding volunteers.



STAR CITIZEN

Summer Schafers

Current Florida State University student Summer Schafers, who hails from Orlando, has been selected to represent the Southwest Orlando area at the Miss Florida USA Competition. Her selection was based on her academic standing, involvement in her community, her passion for the pursuit of excellence and her interest in empowering other young women to follow in her footsteps.



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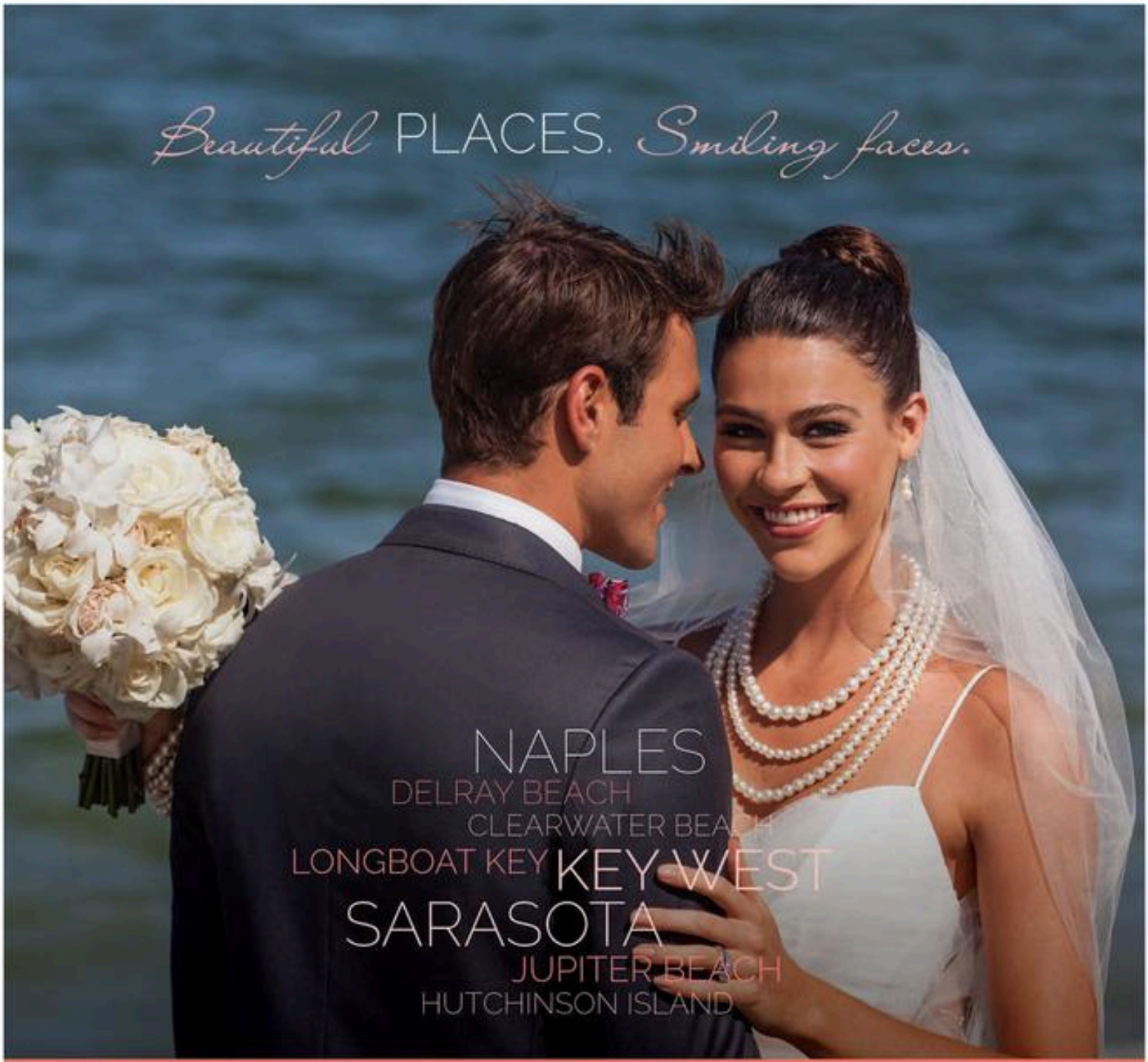
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Contestant Confidential

BY BRITTANY ANN MORRISEY

LOCAL RESIDENTS WHO HAVE APPEARED ON SOME OF THE MOST POPULAR TV GAME SHOWS CLUE US IN ON WHAT IT IS LIKE BEHIND THE SCENES.



Mary and Martin Downey of Kissimmee on the set of *Wheel of Fortune*

Playing along at home with some of the most long-running and popular TV game shows like *Jeopardy!*, *Wheel of Fortune* and *Family Feud* is an American pastime. But what is it like to actually get on stage with the likes of Alex Trebek or tell Pat Sajak that you'd like to solve the puzzle?

Luckily for us, a few Orlandoans know the answers to these questions. These puzzle solvers and trivia fiends shared with *Orlando Family Magazine* what it takes to make it to the big time and what they thought of their time in front of the cameras.

I'LL TAKE GAME SHOWS FOR $200, ALEX.

Erin Matherne of Winter Garden had thrown away her *Jeopardy!* study materials. The 18-month period during which she could be called to be on the show had passed and she was moving, so she decided to toss it all.

"I just kind of forgot about it," she says. "I figured, 'Oh well, I didn't get called.'"

And then her phone rang.

"For me, it was well past the 18 months, when I finally got the phone call," Matherne says. "And I was completely shocked."

Like all guests on the show, to get to this point Matherne first had to complete the 50-question online test. The show doesn't send people their test results, so you may only know that you passed the exam if you are one of the lucky people asked to attend a regional audition.

Matherne's audition was held in Tampa and while there, she and the other contestants took another exam and then played mock *Jeopardy!* games. At the end, everyone was told that they may or may not get a phone call over the next year and a half inviting them on the show.

"You're told that you are all considered in the pool and that they could call you," Matherne says. "So, if you see a Culver City area code come up on your phone, you better answer it."

Matherne's show was taped the Monday after Thanksgiving in 2017, but her episode didn't air until this past February.

Between the taping and the airing of the episode, she couldn't tell anyone how the game went.

"I mean, everyone knew I didn't win because I came back and didn't quit my job," she says.

When her episode premiered, she was able to share the moment with her 4-year-old son.

"I did capture him on video turning around and looking at me from the couch and going,


Erin Matherne of Winter Garden on Jeopardy!

'Mommy, you're on the TV,'" she says. "That was pretty much worth it right there."

Matherne came in third place and took home $1,000. No matter the amount of acquired money a contestant has at the end of the show, only the winner of the episode takes home what they netted in the game, while runner-ups get consolatory cash: $1,000 for third place and $2,000 for second place.

Because *Jeopardy!* does not pay for plane tickets or accommodations for contestants, Matherne says the $1,000 was more like a partial reimbursement for her travel costs.

As far as how she feels about the show, it's a mixed bag.

"I think what bummed me out the most about my episode was as much as I studied and as much as I figured that I would have at least one or two categories that would really be in my wheelhouse, I had nothing," she says. "Every category that came up, I went, 'Oh my God, this is my worst nightmare.'"

She also felt that host Alex Trebek came off aloof on the set.

"You know, it's a big deal when you get to meet him but when he gets to meet you, it's not quite reciprocated," she says.

Although she was once a regular viewer, Matherne doesn't often watch the show today. "I think it would actually hurt me to watch an episode where I feel like I could clean up the board," she says. "Because I would just go, 'Why couldn't that have been my show?'"

But despite some of the less-than-stellar parts of her experience, Matherne would do it all again.

"I don't regret one bit of it," she says. "It was something I had to do."

I'D LIKE TO BUY A VOWEL.

Mary Downey of Kissimmee remembers when she received the email to audition for *Wheel of Fortune* because it was right before Hurricane Irma hit Central Florida. At the time she was packing up to evacuate with her family.

The email was not unsolicited. After sitting through an episode with her sons one night, she had filled out an online form to put her name in the running to be on the show.

"We have three boys and the older two are learning to read, so we were watching [*Wheel of Fortune*] because we like to solve the puzzles together







Contestant Confidential


Rebecca Hines with actress sister Cheryl Hines and their family on Celebrity Family Feud

as a family," she says. "And I was like, 'I could be on this show.'"

The email invited her to come to the Omni Resort in ChampionsGate where she would play with other would-be contestants in front of producers. There was also a note in the email saying that the show was specifically looking for couples, so Mary brought along her husband, Martin.

The couple walked into the casting call about five minutes late, stumbling upon an animated crowd.

"It was like some kind of crazy cult," Martin says. "Because everyone was acting like over-the-top excited, grabbing [and] yelling. [The producers] were trying to pump everyone up so they would appear good on TV and kind of train them on that."

Although, Mary and Martin did solve a puzzle during the mock game they played at the audition, they believe it's mostly their charisma that got them picked to be on the show.

"I think it's more they're looking for 60 percent personality and like 40 percent ability to play," Martin says.

The couple was a part of the show's "Valentine's Week," where instead of competing individually, all the contestants compete with their significant other.

Wheel of Fortune is normally taped at Sony Pictures Studios in Culver City, California, but the Downeys had to go no farther than their own backyard because the show was doing a special run of tapings at Walt Disney Parks and Resorts.

Their episode was shot at Epcot in October 2017 and it aired on Feb. 12, 2018.

Mary and Martin remember the taping of the show as hectic.

"There's so much to concentrate on," Martin says. "And it goes by really fast. Everyone says that and it's true."

"I would say it's like sensory overload," Mary adds.

The couple says the set is also a bit different than it seems on television.

"The wheel looks bigger on TV than it actually is," Mary says. "And it's very heavy and I could not actually give it a good spin. So, Martin did all the spinning."

During the show, Mary and Martin played as a team, which took a bit of strategy to pull off.

"Mary had the buzzer so we had kind of a system of I would squeeze her hand if I knew the answer, so she would ring in for the timed question," Martin says.

As for the host Pat Sajak, the Downeys say he was incredibly kind.

"I got to chat with Pat because I messed up a puzzle," Mary says. "It was a crossword and I added the word 'and' and we didn't get the money and I was super sad. He was very nice about it."

Despite the setback, the couple took home about $5,000 and won a trip to Hawaii.

They didn't tell their sons about the trip, opting to let the boys watch them win it when the show aired. But when it came time for the big reveal, the couple's satellite TV cut out.

"It was kind of anticlimactic," Mary says.

After Mary explained to the boys that they'd won a trip to Disney's Hawaii Resort Aulani, they all perked up.

"They're really excited about the fact that we going to get to go to Aulani," she says.

People who have been on *Wheel of Fortune* once are no longer eligible to play again and Mary says that's fine with her. She enjoyed the game but wouldn't want to go through it all again. However, Martin has a different take on it.



"Oh, I'd do it again," he says. "Because I'd be a lot better at it."

"We would be better. That's true." Mary replies.

SURVEY SAYS ...

Rebecca Hines and her family are not morning people. So, the day she, her brothers, her sister and mother were set to be on *Celebrity Family Feud*, they had an idea for a way to get their blood pumping before stepping on stage.

"We did a little Tabasco shot before we went out," she says. "Just to get our adrenaline going, so we could be a little bit sharper than we might have been otherwise."

Hines is a professor at the University of Central Florida. Her sister is actress Cheryl Hines who is known for shows like HBO's *Curb Your Enthusiasm* and ABC's *Suburgatory*.

The family decided to do the show because they'd grown up watching it and often like to play games together anyway.

In their episode that first aired on July 12, 2015, the Hines' played against comedian Niecy Nash and her family. *Celebrity Family Feud* operates the same as the original *Family Feud* with two families competing against one another to guess what the most popular answers were to a surveyed question. However, in *Celebrity Family Feud*, the money won at the end is given to the triumphant family's preferred charity, not to the contestants.

Because she was a professor, host Steve Harvey had some advice for Rebecca.

"He said, 'You cannot overthink this. There's no rhyme or reason to what people say,'" she says.

Prior to the taping of the show, Rebecca and her family formed a strategy that would allow them to have the most time possible to think about their answers.

"I watched a lot of episodes before we went and I realized that the key was to make sure that you didn't get buzzed for not responding," Rebecca says. "And the way that it appeared to work was when the question is asked, to start immediately talking to give yourself a little placeholder for time."

So, when Harvey would ask the surveyed question, each family member would repeat the question back to him, giving them a couple extra seconds to think it over before the countdown timer started.

The Hines family also made sure to not waste time when the opposing team was playing.

"The trick is also when the other team is answering questions," Rebecca says, "instead of spending your time overly paying attention to what's happening on the other part of the stage where [Harvey] is talking to the other family and getting their answers ... we were trying to think of answers, so if we had the opportunity, we'd be ready with the best response."

In the end, they were victorious, winning $25,000 for United Cerebral Palsy, a charity close to the family's heart.

"We were strategic enough to win," Rebecca says.

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ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

THE 2018 PRIVATE HIGH SCHOOL REPORT CARD

For this year's annual private high school report card we worked directly with several of the area's top institutions to get a better understanding of how their academic approach is providing students with the tools to succeed. We obtained data and information in several key areas from average SAT scores, average class size, the percentage of students attending four-year colleges and much more. (If a school does not appear in a particular chart, it is because they decided to withhold the information.) Additionally, we asked leadership from the schools to tell us what things parents should consider when researching schools, how learning extends beyond the classroom and how prospective students can rise above during the admissions process.



TUITION, PER YEAR

SCHOOL	
Trinity Prep	$22,090
Windermere Prep	$21,975
Lake Highland Prep	$21,450
The First Academy	$18,740*
Montverde Academy	$16,380
Lake Mary Prep	$15,500
The Geneva School	$14,850
The Crenshaw School	$13,000*
Foundation Academy	$12,875
The Master's Academy	$12,755*
Bishop Moore	$11,112+
Faith Christian Academy	$7,790

*Increase for grade 12
+ Increase for non-Catholic students

SAT: TOTAL SCORE

SCHOOL	
Trinity Prep	1370
Windermere Prep	1260
The Geneva School	1235
Lake Mary Prep	1188
The First Academy	1180
Foundation Academy	1101
Faith Christian Academy	1090

SAT BREAKDOWN

SCHOOL	M	EBRW
Faith Christian Academy	540	550
The First Academy	580	600
Foundation Academy	541	560
The Geneva School	615	620
Lake Mary Prep	610	578
Trinity Prep	690	680
Windermere Prep	640	620

M/Math; **EBRW**/Evidence-Based Reading and Writing

AVERAGE CLASS SIZE

SCHOOL	
The Crenshaw School	10
The Geneva School	14
Lake Highland Prep	15
Lake Mary Prep	15
Foundation Academy	16
The Master's Academy	16
Trinity Prep	17
The First Academy	18
Windermere Prep	18
Bishop Moore	25
Faith Christian Academy	25

STUDENT-TO-TEACHER RATIO

SCHOOL	
The Geneva School	8:1
The Master's Academy	11:1
The Crenshaw School	12:1
Trinity Prep	12:1
Foundation Academy	13:1
Lake Highland Prep	13:1
Bishop Moore	15:1
Lake Mary Prep	15:1
The First Academy	18:1
Windermere Prep	18:1
Faith Christian Academy	25:1

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS ATTENDING 4-YEAR COLLEGES

SCHOOL	
The Crenshaw School	100%
The Geneva School	100%
Lake Highland Prep	100%
Lake Mary Prep	100%
Montverde Academy	100%
Trinity Prep	100%
Windermere Prep	100%
The Master's Academy	98%
The First Academy	90%
Foundation Academy	85%



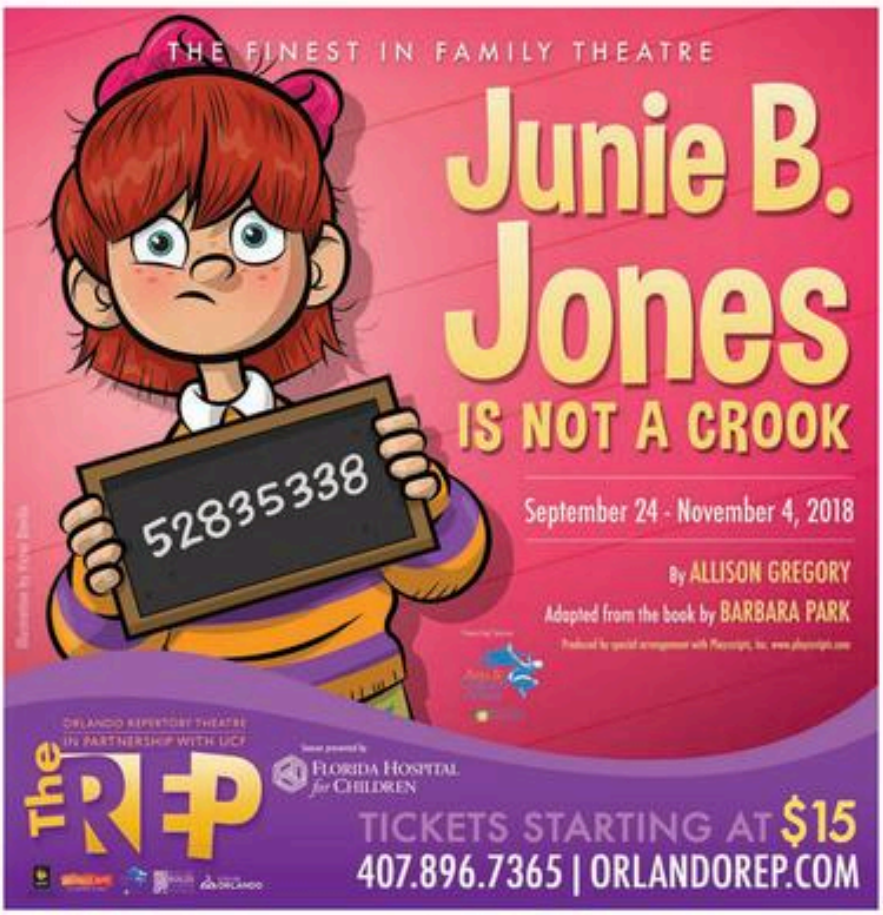
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FAITH CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS

We asked some of the leaders from our area's private high schools what parents should consider when determining which institution is right for their family.

What kind of things should every parent consider when researching which private school may be the right fit for their child?

"Every child and family is different and has differing needs. It is important to know that the mission, vision and approach to learning of the school comply with the needs and values of your family. Additionally, parents should consider the learning style of their child, the location of the school, afterschool programs offered, safety, facilities and services, and any other special offerings the school may have."
—Christina Richart,
assistant director, The First Academy

"When considering a private school for their child, parents should inquire about the profile of a graduate. Parents are investing in their whole child and outcomes are an important indicator of the journey their child is likely to have. They should consider the growth their child will experience at an institution. Parents should also consider requesting a shadow day for their child as this is often the best way for an applicant to understand what life at a particular school may be like."
—Byron M. Lawson Jr.,
head of school, Trinity Prep

"Parents should research schools based on the interest and strengths that their child possesses. For instance, knowing that a student has a love of theater but also may need help in academics, would mean finding a private school with both of those aspects to ensure the student has the support necessary to excel at both. Finding the balance of how important academics are with what

NUMBER OF AP CLASSES OFFERED

SCHOOL	
Montverde Academy	33
Trinity Prep	33
Bishop Moore	27
Lake Highland Prep	27
Lake Mary Prep	21
The First Academy	20
The Master's Academy	16
Foundation Academy	14
The Geneva School	12
Faith Christian Academy	9
Windermere Prep	3

NUMBER OF HONORS CLASSES OFFERED

SCHOOL	
Lake Highland Prep	70
Trinity Prep	53
The Geneva School	30
The First Academy	28
Lake Mary Prep	25
The Crenshaw School	20
Windermere Prep	20
Faith Christian Academy	19
The Master's Academy	19
Foundation Academy	16
Montverde Academy	13



other opportunities exist for student growth is a great way to discover the right fit for the entire family."
—**Andrea Colby, director of communications, Montverde Academy**

Besides learning in the classrooms, in what ways do private schools allow for students to get other valuable lessons and experiences?

"An important focus of the Highlander experience is learning to lead by learning to serve. On the first student holiday of each school year, pre-kindergarten through 12th grade students from Lake Highland Prep volunteer at 30-plus charities across Central Florida. During this voluntary day of service, more than 1,000 Highlanders use their skills, talents and passions to improve our community. Annually, Highlanders give more than 45,000 hours of sweat-equity to local charitable organizations."
—**Alfred G. Harms Jr., president, Lake Highland Prep**

"Ranging from sports teams to clubs and societies, there is an abundance of ways for a student to find their fit, expand their horizons and experience a variety of activities. At a school the size of Foundation Academy, students find themselves able to participate in many of those; maybe being a part of the varsity football team, serving in National Honor Society and enjoying robotics. They aren't limited to just one option. Community service is also a requirement which ensures students are getting out in the community and learning through serving and experiencing the rewards it brings."
—**Michelle Campbell, director of admissions and marketing, Foundation Academy**

"Experiential learning is critical at Lake Mary Preparatory School. Students are challenged with hands-on learning and critical thinking development. From international travel opportunities to internships to global problem-solving courses and cross-curricular study, students are challenged to think outside the box. A diverse student body allows students to become culturally aware and prepared for success beyond [high school]."
—**Angel Nguyen, director of admissions and marketing, Lake Mary Prep**

Because admissions can be selective, how can students make sure they stand out from the crowd and present themselves as a good fit for the school?

"Character is huge. It is always impressive to talk with students who are able to look adults in the eye, carry on lengthy dialogues, shake hands and present themselves as genuinely humble. Strong character can overcome deficits in other areas as anyone who is honest and willing to work hard will naturally be inclined toward academic success. Also, a genuine interest in learning is a beautiful thing. Schools love to invite students to join them who have a natural desire to wonder and seek truths."
—**Keira Raesly, director of grammar school, The Geneva School**

"It's always great for a potential student to put his/her best foot forward during the selection process by being respectful and communicating clearly. But above all, be yourself and represent yourself honestly. If one is looking for a good fit, he/she must be sincere so the school makes its selection based on honesty. Students should be upfront about their interests, strengths, weaknesses, and yes, even past mistakes. If the school is willing to work with the student considering all those areas, then it may be the right fit."
—**Brenda Crenshaw, head of school, The Crenshaw School**





GROWING UP IN ORLANDO, ALL **MANDY MOORE** WANTED TO DO TRANSITIONING FROM A SUCCESSFUL MUSIC CAREER INTO ACTING AND

By Debra Wallace

Moore in Store

WAS PERFORM. BUT, EVEN SHE COULDN'T HAVE ENVISIONED A STARRING ROLE ON ONE OF TELEVISION'S BIGGEST HIT SHOWS.

MANDY MOORE HAS LONG CONNECTED with adoring audiences during her heartfelt performances and now that excitement has reached a fevered pitch.

While growing up in Orlando, she had visions of a lengthy career as a musician and film actress, but it wasn't until three years ago when the opportunity to reach a broader prime-time audience in the smash TV hit *This Is Us* came into her life.

After nearly 20 years of making her mark, she never could have predicted her current success as a television matriarch in the role of a lifetime, and the range of emotions that it would evoke from not only her, but also millions of fans.

"What I love about performing is the big thrill, the exhilarating rush of adrenaline," says Moore. "Whether it is on the stage, performing live, or being part of a movie or television show—it's just like that rush of getting to do what I love to do and I feel incredibly lucky just to have that opportunity."

Portraying Rebecca Pearson on *This is Us*, NBC's highly emotional, award-winning drama about the intense trials and tribulations of family life—love, resentment, struggles, tragedy and joy—has given Moore a golden opportunity to stretch and grow, both as a woman and as an actress.

After great anticipation, the third season debuted in late September and offers a prime opportunity for Moore's character to delve deeper into the many surprises in store for her adoring husband Jack and their three children: a unique set of triplets.

"I love our show's depiction of family. It's really about a group of people who love and support each other unendingly," says Moore, "but they're not without flaws. A family doesn't necessarily have to come in the package that you first expected."

Sometimes the unpredictable path can be the best one to travel. When Moore was 2 months old, she and her family moved from Nashua, New Hampshire to Longwood in Seminole County, because of her father Don's job as an airline pilot. Her mother, Stacy, later became a reporter for the *Orlando Sentinel*.

Moore attended Park Maitland School, and it was there during her first grade year that she caught the entertaining bug after seeing a student performance of *Oklahoma*. She decided at that moment she wanted to someday be the one on stage in front of the audience and began taking voice lessons. By the time she had reached sixth grade, she was starring in the lead role of the school's production of *Guys and Dolls*. The school, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, has always been honored by the fact that Moore credits her time there for laying the foundation for her career.

"Mandy has frequently mentioned the school and the fact that the foundation we have given her has helped her to be where she is today," says Lauren Kuharske, the school's mar-



"(THIS IS US) DEFINITELY HAS ME THINKING ABOUT MY OWN LIFE, THE CHOICES THAT I'VE MADE AND HOW FAMILY FACTORS INTO WHERE I SEE MY LIFE GOING."

keting manager and graddaughter of Nell Cohen, Park Maitland's founder.

Kuharske adds that Moore's success was a "great source of pride for my grandmother and has left an indelible mark" on the school and community.

"We are so thrilled and so very proud of Mandy, and not at all surprised that she has had so much success because she has shown such incredible talent from a young age," Kuharske says. "I really feel that it couldn't have happened to a better person."

Soon after the young Moore's talents began to take flight she was performing the national anthem at Orlando Magic games and several other athletic events in and around the area. But her big break came a few years later at the age of 14, while a student at Bishop Moore Catholic High School. While recording at an Orlando music studio, a FedEx worker overheard her singing and offered to deliver her raw demo tape to a friend at Sony Music. Shortly after that fateful day she signed a deal with the company and things began to skyrocket.

At the tender age of 15, Moore's first record *So Real* was released and would eventually go platinum, propelled by the hit song "Candy," which reached No. 41 on Billboard's Hot 100. It wasn't long before she was on tour with fellow Orlando natives the Backstreet Boys and she would go on to release five more albums, ultimately selling more than 10 million records worldwide.

After making an imprint on the music industry, she transferred to acting and made her film debut in the 2001 movie *Dr. Doolittle 2*, and later that year, she appeared as Lana in *The Princess Diaries*. The next year she would land her first starring role in 2002's *A Walk to Remember*, solidifying her new career path. Next month, she'll lend her voice to *Ralph Breaks the Internet*, a sequel to the popular Disney animated film *Wreck-It Ralph*.

And a couple months back she hinted at a return to making music on her Instagram page, teasing a new song she had been working on. And besides the acting and singing, she'll stay busy thanks to a new deal she has inked—a two-year production deal with 20th Century Fox TV, the studio that produces *This Is Us*. As part of the deal, Moore will produce content for both broadcast and cable television.

As the teenager who had hoped for such a long-lasting career, Moore is over the moon about the place she has currently landed. "I think the show has stirred up a lot of emotion for me, and as a result of the recent progression, I feel like my world has been flipped upside down in the best way possible," she says.

"I was definitely trying to break into television for a couple of years. It took the right opportunity like this, so I'd go through the four years of failed pilots to end up right back here again," she says. "I really wouldn't change any of it."

Appreciating success in life—and riding the storm through setbacks—is at the heart and soul of what causes *This Is Us* to evoke such powerful emotions, making viewers alternately laugh and cry as they relate to Rebecca and her family. After all, Rebecca and Jack are well-meaning, caring parents, but they also make mistakes.

"I think Rebecca is flawed, and she's made some really difficult choices that not everyone has made in their lives," says Moore. "She is not a perfect mother, whatever the definition of that is; but I think she is really fantastic. I'm honored to play such a rich and colorful character, who is such a complex woman."

Not only does the charming and witty actress believe that she has personally grown through the tear-jerker drama, but she loves the life lessons that it reveals. "I think the show really reflects that a family doesn't have to necessarily look how you initially imagined it," Moore says.

Throughout her own early journey, Moore had her family at her side, and she can identify with that strong parental support, as well as the family bonds that are depicted in her TV drama. It is one of the reasons that *This Is Us* resonates with television viewers far and wide.

While currently not a mother, although it is something she thinks about for her future, Moore says she has "so much admiration and compassion" for her character of Rebecca. She has also bonded with all of her on-screen children.

"At this point, it's not at all challenging to play a mother to the kids. We truly feel like a family, because we work together so often. Because I don't have as much work with the adult kids, I love digging my heels in it and trying to figure it out."

What makes Rebecca so attractive to Moore is that she sees her character "as a woman who is unsure of her maternal potential, but she ends up really thriving in that role," she explains. "She ends up being like the ultimate matriarch."

The bonds that have been forged during the first two seasons of the show are clear by the way Moore lights up when she talks about her co-stars, especially her TV husband Jack, portrayed by Milo Ventimiglia, best known for *Gilmore Girls* and *Heroes*. "Milo is one of the most giving partners I've ever shared the screen with," Moore says.

And Ventimiglia is quick to return the compliment by saying, "I never ever get tired of Miss Mandy Moore. There is no Jack without Rebecca," he says. "Mandy and I go deeper and deeper with the connection this husband and wife have. It is a true pleasure being on the set with her."

Not only is Moore thrilled to be sharing this pinnacle of her life's work with an extremely talented and supportive cast who feel like a second family, but she is also exploring this role from the ages of 22 to 66, "giving her this unique lens of her life from so many different crossroads, the choices she's made and how it's reflected in the present day. This show definitely has me thinking about my own life, the choices that I've made and how family factors into where I see my life going."

It takes from three-and-a-half to four hours

Previous spread photo and above photo by Maarten De Boer/NBC Universal Photo Bank. Top right photo by Ron Batdorff/NBC. Guys and Dolls photo from Moore's Instagram.



Moore with Milo Ventamiglia in This is Us

Moore in Store

to transform Mandy into a grandmother, and about an hour to remove the aging makeup—a process at the end of the day in which she finds herself sitting with a pile of hot towels on her face.

"I've done it so many times at this point," she says, "but initially it felt like *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*; first it was too old, then it was too young and the last time it was just right."

When she initially studied herself in the mirror she wondered if she would resemble her mother or her grandmother. "I don't really think I look like either of them. But if this is an indication, I wouldn't be mad at that because their skincare regimen is out of this world, and they both look really good."



Moore in her sixth-grade production of Guys and Dolls

This Is Us creator Dan Fogelman, (*Life Itself, Crazy, Stupid, Love* and *The Guilt Trip*), says that he can always count on Moore to go the extra mile.

"Mandy is a trouper. Once in a while a scene won't turn out, or we realize in the course of shooting that we need something else," he says. "When I recently asked her to go back in the age makeup for one more shot, and I apologized for it, she replied, 'Why would you be sorry; this is the job.'"

Watching *This Is Us* with a box of tissues nearby is the norm because the dynamics between husband and wife, siblings and the world around them strikes a chord with those who can relate to the family's struggles.

"In general, I'm not someone who carries things around with me. But every time I talk about the show, my eyes well up," Moore explains. "I'm a super sensitive person, and I feel like the show has ratcheted that up. Everyone on the show is pretty emotional, but literally, I cry when I read the scripts. All of us are pretty drained at the end of the day."

Before the show came into her life, Moore was feeling stressed, confused and her career and home life were floundering. It was at a time when her six-year marriage to rocker Ryan Adams was ending in divorce.

She is now engaged to Taylor Goldsmith, the front man for the indie band Dawes, and is drawing on both the raw emotions and great joy for her work on the show. "I feel like there's enough catharsis through doing the scenes and working them out and talking about it," she says.

When she is not working, Moore wakes up to a fragrant cup of coffee, catches up on the news, checks her emails and likes to nest in her house. A well-known animal lover, she enjoys feeding and bonding with her dogs and cats. Part of her routine is going to the gym to work out or do yoga but she is also known for going on hikes in the Southern California hills with her dogs.

"Once I became an adult, I realized that I needed to ground myself in the day before I start to tackle anything," says Moore. "My idea of wellness is constantly shifting, but I think it's about having a comprehensive view of taking care of myself, whether it's about my health, nutrition or fitness."

Her future appears very bright. She would love to do a musical, on Broadway or otherwise, because she loves both singing and acting. "I feel more like an actress now than a singer; this is my job," she says. "This is my first priority."

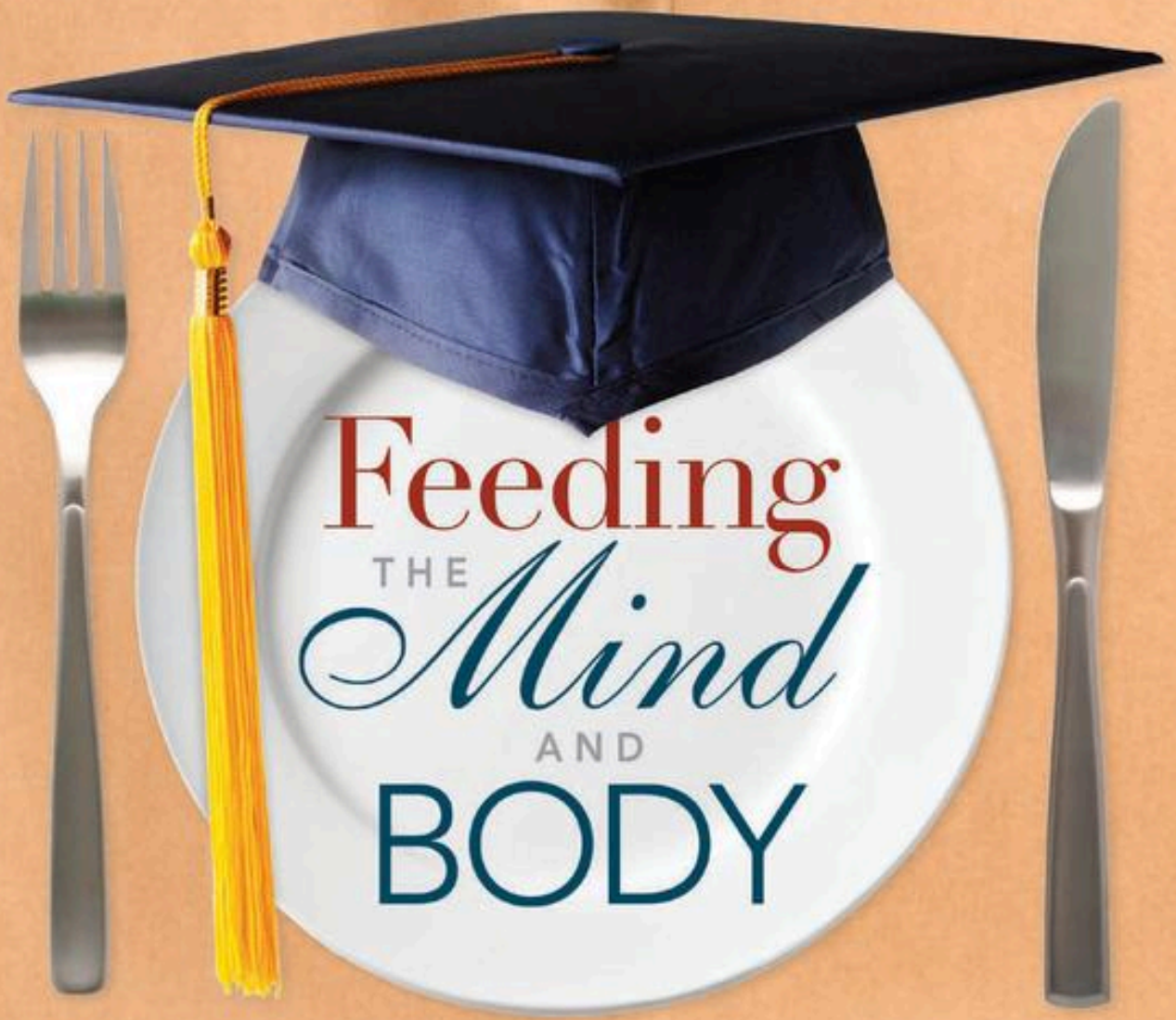
While other fans talk to their favorite actresses about lighter subjects, the viewers she meets are all about the drama surrounding Rebecca and the Pearson family.

"The show has made me examine things in my life. It makes me want to talk to my family more," Moore says. "It's funny how people continue to come up and have conversations with me about their own lives. It's crazy how personal people want to get about death and divorce and their estranged relationship with their child or their sister," she says.

So what other life lessons have her enduring career taught her? "I feel like I've learned over time to be a better listener," she reveals. "I find it hard to watch myself on the screen because I feel like if I see my work from 10 to 15 years ago, I will be supercritical."

Moore has also learned not to shy away from difficulties. "I know that life is about the challenges. With every episode, I ask myself, 'How am I going to do this?' But it's a dream to remind myself that I've got to climb this mountain and figure out how I'm going to get there, and then I give everything I have to make it happen."

Some college students are faced with a difficult decision:
FOOD OR TEXTBOOKS.



Feeding THE *Mind* AND BODY

BY LAUREN KUBIAK

Colleges and universities are combating food hardship by providing students with pantries to satisfy their cravings and help them succeed in the classroom.

THE CLOCK IS TICKING. SHAWN LIVERMORE SITS IN HER FINAL CLASS OF THE DAY AND HAS BEEN EAGERLY WAITING FOR THIS MOMENT. AS THE PROFESSOR RELEASES THE STUDENTS, LIVERMORE'S PRIMARY REACTION IS TO SATISFY HER STOMACH BY STOPPING AT THE KNIGHTS HELPING KNIGHTS PANTRY LOCATED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA'S (UCF) MAIN CAMPUS.

That's exactly where she goes and has been going every day since her first semester.

Livermore is in her third semester, equivalent to the amount of time she's been living in a tent, and prior to college, she was in search of food at local churches—a daily meal of bread and peanut butter. It was a dramatic change for her when she went to the UCF pantry for the first time, which resembles a grocery store providing students with nonperishable food items as well as fresh fruit and vegetables, baked goods and more—all at no cost to the student.



"We have so many homeless college students, and even if they're not homeless, they spent all of their money on books and on their [tuition] and they struggle and it's really hard," Livermore explains.

Between the cost of tuition, food, textbooks, car upkeep and other necessary purchases, some students are struggling to get by even in the first week of school. It isn't uncommon for college students to be short on change or living paycheck to paycheck.

For some students, the last thing on their mind is putting money toward a meal that they can use for a more important matter. However, administrators and staff at colleges and universities in the area are learning of this struggle students are facing and eliminating the need to make a choice.

For some students, the last thing on their mind is putting money toward a meal that they can use for a more important matter.

The Knights Helping Knights pantry at UCF was started by the LEAD Scholars Academy, a two-year academic development program for students, in 2009. What was once a small space has expanded throughout the years to be a prosperous program.

The Knights pantry on the main campus (having four additional yet smaller, regional locations) not only offers food, but also items such as silverware, textbooks, clothing and even a professional-wear program so students can sign out a suit or blazer for job interviews. Although the pantry offers a vast amount of utilities for students, it isn't the only college campus that offers these items. Other institutions such as Valencia College, Florida State University (FSU) and the University of Florida (UF) are also supporting the movement to end food insecurity among students.

To use the pantry, students typically walk in, show their student ID and can grab either a premade bag or select any item they choose (some pantries have item count restrictions). Although details vary at each college, no questions are asked and students go on their way.

All pantries stock the shelves through monetary or food donations from volunteers. Some of the bigger universities, such as UF and UCF, have affiliations with food banks, but remain grateful for any volunteer donations.

CREATING A SAFE PLACE

Food insecurity can mean something different from student to student, whether it's one missed meal or barely scraping together one meal a day.

"It could be a student who only utilizes the pantry one time because financial aid hasn't hit and they need something to get by, or it could be a student whose parents are doing their best to support them but also have a lot of expenses to pay at home," Ambre Hobson, assistant director in the care area at the dean of students office at UF, says.



The Knights Helping Knights pantry photograpy courtesy of the University of Central Florida

A STUDENT PERUSES THE SHELVES AT POOKY'S PANTRY ON VALENCIA COLLEGE'S CAMPUS.

LEFT AND BELOW: STUDENTS INSIDE THE KNIGHTS HELPING KNIGHTS PANTRY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA





The Knights Helping Knights pantry photography courtesy of the University of Central Florida

ABOVE: INSIDE THE KNIGHTS HELPING KNIGHTS PANTRY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

The biggest stigma lies in the thoughts of the students' peers and family members. Colleen Eagan, coordinator of student development at Valencia College, says it's difficult for students to admit to staff members and peers their financial strain and their limitations on necessities. The college, which has Pooky's Pantry on all six campus locations, is trying to rid the stigmas through raising awareness of food hardship and providing a place where students don't feel judged.

> *"Our student staff are trained in customer service so that whenever people enter the pantry, they feel welcomed."*
>
> —AMBRE HOBSON, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR IN THE CARE AREA AT THE DEAN OF STUDENTS OFFICE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

To combat these perceptions, UCF's Knights pantry upholds a friendly environment and doesn't place logos on any of their food distribution bags. "If you walk into our facility, there are a lot of decorations and it's meant to feel like you're shopping at a grocery store like you get to pick and choose what food you want as opposed to having the bag predesigned for you," says Jeannie Kiriwas, associate director of the Student Union at UCF.

FSU's Food for Thought pantry, which opened in 2006, works hard at terminating the bad rap food pantries get by using bags typically associated with something else, such as an orientation bag, so it isn't obvious what the student is carrying, says Vicki Dobiyanski, dean of students.

"We do all what we possibly can to lessen that stigma so our pantry has some chalkboards and signage inside the pantry that are really colorful and bright and have some pictures," Hobson says. "Our student staff are trained in customer service so that whenever people enter the pantry, they feel welcomed."

A LASTING IMPRINT

UF's Alan and Cathy Hitchcock Pantry as part of the Field and Fork campus food program opened its doors a little over three years ago and has had over 27,000 visits since then. The university gets its departments involved through food drives and uses the Field and Fork farm and garden to supply the pantry with fresh organic produce during growing season. UF doesn't stop at its students; the university invites school staff who are also struggling with food insecurity to use the pantry.

"The reason why this food is on our campus is



so that [students] can get a great education and perform to their maximum potential in their classes," Hobson says. "Studying for a biology exam on an empty stomach is really hard, and so we hope to remove that obstacle of food insecurity as much as possible from the lives of [the] students so they can focus on doing what they're here to do."

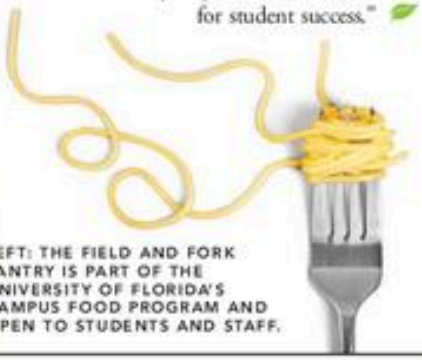
Campus food pantries serve as a way for not only students to get involved but the community surrounding it. A connection between local food banks and campus food pantries creates the support students need. "I know a lot of the larger universities work with food banks," Eagan says. "They're with certain suppliers to bring in food items, but you're building that relationship between the campus and between the community around them."

The Knights pantry at UCF was able to create its own scholarships for students impacted by Hurricane Irma. "They need this money to just rebuild their lives, rebuilding so much stuff that they lost during the hurricane," says Eli Valentin, assistant manager at the pantry. "I think it's really important that there's something on campus that is stable for them because right now, even still to this day, they're kind of still in a state of limbo."

Whether pantries award scholarships, supply food or act as an amenity to fall back on, they are shaping students' lives in college with a greater potential to succeed and graduate.

"We can't focus on student success if a student is hungry, they can't learn, they can't yearn, they can't succeed in the classroom if they're worried about hunger and where their next meal is coming from," Dobiyanski says. "So anything we can do to make sure that the student is nourished and has access to meals and some of the basics taken care of, we automatically help them in their endeavor for student success."





LEFT: THE FIELD AND FORK PANTRY IS PART OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA'S CAMPUS FOOD PROGRAM AND OPEN TO STUDENTS AND STAFF.

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PRICED
OUT



Central Florida has found itself amid an affordable housing crisis that may only get worse before it gets better.

BY BRITTANY ANN MORRISEY

Recently, Shelley Lauten, CEO of the Central Florida Commission on Homelessness, received an email from a local woman who works at a major hospital. It was one of many emails she receives from people who are at the end of their rope, wondering what else it is they need to do to survive.

The woman said she is working as much overtime as possible but is barely able to afford a place to live. Each year at the hospital, she receives a 2 percent raise. But over the past five years, her rent has increased more than 5 percent every year.

"She's just on this losing treadmill," Lauten says.

For a lot of Orlando workers, this story rings all too true.

According to a survey conducted by the Regional Affordable Housing Initiative, a partnership among Orange, Seminole and Osceola counties and the city of Orlando, one in every three homes in Central Florida is cost-burdened, meaning the residents spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing.

Nationally and in Central Florida, a home is considered "affordable" if it eats up only 30 percent or less of the resident's income.

The reasons for this disparity between the cost of housing and what people can actually afford are manifold.

But it all starts with the simple fact that there is just not enough housing for the number of people who live here.

"We just flat out don't have enough units," Lauten says. "That's first and foremost."

A Schism between Supply and Demand

For anyone who's taken a drive outside city limits to the subdivisions that have taken over every inch of space in Central Florida, it's hard not to see how much of the area is full of homogenous houses in the same palate of colors on the same lot sizes.

Before this style of building was adopted, families would instead buy a customized lot of land themselves and then build a house that fit their family and their budget, instead of developers buying the land and then selling identical lot sizes and pre-designed homes as a bundle.

One outcome of this latter 20th-century way of building is houses have substantially increased in size.

Today the average new-build house is 2,630 square feet and houses just 2.54 people. In 1973, the average size of a newly built house was about 1,660 square feet and housed 3.01 family members, according to 2017 data from the U.S. Census Bureau.

"So, we've grown bigger houses and housed fewer people in them," Lauten says. "And the costs just keep going up and up and up. … That's where we've caused this real gap between suburban housing and options for people who can't afford that much space or can't afford the kind of housing we're building."

This mismatch means that people with less money to spend on housing have an even smaller pool of choices because not many developers are building smaller homes to fit lower incomes.

Eddy Moratin, executive director of Lift Orlando, has noticed this trend as well.

"There is almost no one, I would dare to say, no one developing starter

home communities anymore," Moratin says. "There's too much to be made in sort of the second [and] third upgrade homes."

Lift Orlando is a nonprofit run by business leaders who are working to revitalize neighborhoods by partnering with residents and local stakeholders.

The nonprofit has been on the forefront of addressing the affordable housing problem. This year it opened Pendana at West Lakes, a new apartment complex that was built to offer residents affordable homes and to help revive the neighborhoods next to Camping World Stadium.

Moratin and his team were overwhelmed by the response they received for a complex that has just 200 units.

"In the end, it was about 10,000 people that inquired about living there," he says, "which really was not something any of us expected or were ready for."

Segregated by Gated Communities

Pendana was not solely designed as a low-income housing development. In fact, only 70 percent of the units are being made affordable by low-income housing tax credits. Twenty percent of the units were rented out at market rate, while 10 percent were prioritized for people who are extremely low income or who are using Section 8 housing vouchers.

This mixed-income housing was Lift Orlando's intention.

"It used to be that our neighborhoods were integrated economically," Moratin says. "We've become segregated by the gated communities that we can afford."

By having a mix of people of various incomes, Pendana can hopefully stave off the disinvestment and neglect that happens over time for a lot of low-income apartments.

Moratin cites an anecdote from Alzo Reddick, director of Defense Transition Services at the University of Central Florida and a former state house representative, as an example of what economically integrated neighborhoods can do. Reddick grew up in the same neighborhood that Pendana is located in now when the area was still thriving. He had a diversity of neighbors from working class to lawyers and teachers.

"Something about that environment as a child told him he could be any of those things, seeing the diversity of achievement on professional levels," Moratin says.

As Downtown Orlando's redevelopment stretches to the west, complexes like Pendana are a life preserver thrown to the most vulnerable among us.

"If you just let unbridled development move westward, all these families end up vulnerably displaced out of the inner city," Moratin says. "They can't afford the suburbs either. So, in Orlando, most end up in the weekly-monthly motels outside of town."

"If you just let unbridled development move westward, all these families end up vulnerably displaced out of the inner city. They can't afford the suburbs either."

EDDY MORATIN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF LIFT ORLANDO

The Gap Widens

It's not just that Central Florida has a lack of appropriately sized and centrally located housing.

In America, despite the strong labor market, wage growth has been mostly flat, after adjusting for inflation. Furthermore, wage gains that have been made have largely gone to the highest earners, according to data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Even with these numbers at hand, many people still believe affordable housing isn't about them. Moratin says part of the issue is the term "affordable housing" has a connotation to it that makes most people believe it applies to only a certain class and color.

"We have improper definition of who affordable housing is for because we only think it's people of a certain color or an extremely low income," he says. "The reality is, where is the server, the cook, the teacher starting out supposed to live? Where is the college student or the recent grad supposed to live? … So, it's really thinking about the broader spectrum of people—often with an education."

Beyond wages, Lauten says the rising costs of health care, child care and transportation have made it so what gains workers have made in wages are being immediately expunged.

"We have a complicated interrelationship with cost," she says. "And the gap associated with those costs is getting wider and wider."

It becomes an impossible puzzle for people to solve. If they can't afford to live here, then maybe they could move farther away from Central Orlando? But then they're commuting longer to work and spending more and more on transportation.

For workers who are receiving subsidies for child care or housing, it's an even more complicated game of balance where trying to move up can actually set them back.

"We've had anecdotes of people having to turn down a $1 an hour raise because it moves them in to a category where they just lost a benefit they can't make up with $1 [more] an hour," Lauten says. "So, we are penalizing people for wanting to move ahead."

To fix this problem, advocates have lobbied for state legislators to dole out benefits based on a sliding scale, instead of cutting people off at a certain number.



Wayne Densch Center groundbreaking



Lift Orlando's new Pendana at West Lakes apartment complex

Not an Overnight Solution

The solutions to Greater Orlando's affordable housing problem are systematic and complex, a tangled mess of multiple issues that need to be solved before we'll see housing costs go down.

"This is one of those issues that can seem so big that it might seem daunting," Shannon Nazworth, executive director of Ability Housing, says.

Ability Housing, a Jacksonville-based nonprofit, works to provides quality, affordable housing for those who need it. The organization first came to the Orlando market after being solicited by the Central Florida Commission on Homelessness.

In April, the group broke ground on its first Orlando property called Village on Mercy, which will have 166 units restricted to residents who are earning 60 percent or less of the area's median income.

The nonprofit is also renovating an existing housing complex located on the edge of Maitland, changing it from transitional housing to 77 high-quality apartments. Fifty percent of those units will be reserved to be used as permanent supportive housing for the homeless.

These projects are a part of Orange County Mayor Teresa Jacobs' Invest in Our Home Life initiative, which dedicated $5 million in funding toward establishing additional affordable family housing.

Additionally, the city of Orlando is working to revise city codes that could allow the private sector to add more housing including updating the standards for small apartment buildings and laxing the rules around the building of accessory dwelling units, which are sometimes called "granny flats." Accessory dwelling units are small apartments that are built atop detached garages or in homeowners' backyards that in the past many families would use to house a grandparent but today are often rented out.

On a state level, there are two affordable housing funds that are supported by a tax on real estate transactions.

These trust funds are used to pay developers to build subsidized apartments. Some of the money is also given to local governments to use on housing incentives such as down payment assistance.

But the Florida Legislature has continually raided those funds to pay for other things for 14 of the last 18 years, totaling nearly $2.2 billion since 2001.

All the while, things have only gotten worse and worse.

"Real estate is getting more expensive and wages just aren't keeping up," Nazworth says. "I know that many of the jurisdictions are really focusing on this and working hard to address the challenge but it's not going to be able to turn around overnight."

Although it's an enormous and complicated problem, Nazworth is optimistic.

"Every little piece of action helps get you to the finish line," she says. "The sooner we get working on it, the sooner we're going to see positive outcomes."



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www.drugfreecoalition.org

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Orange County Drug Free Coalition

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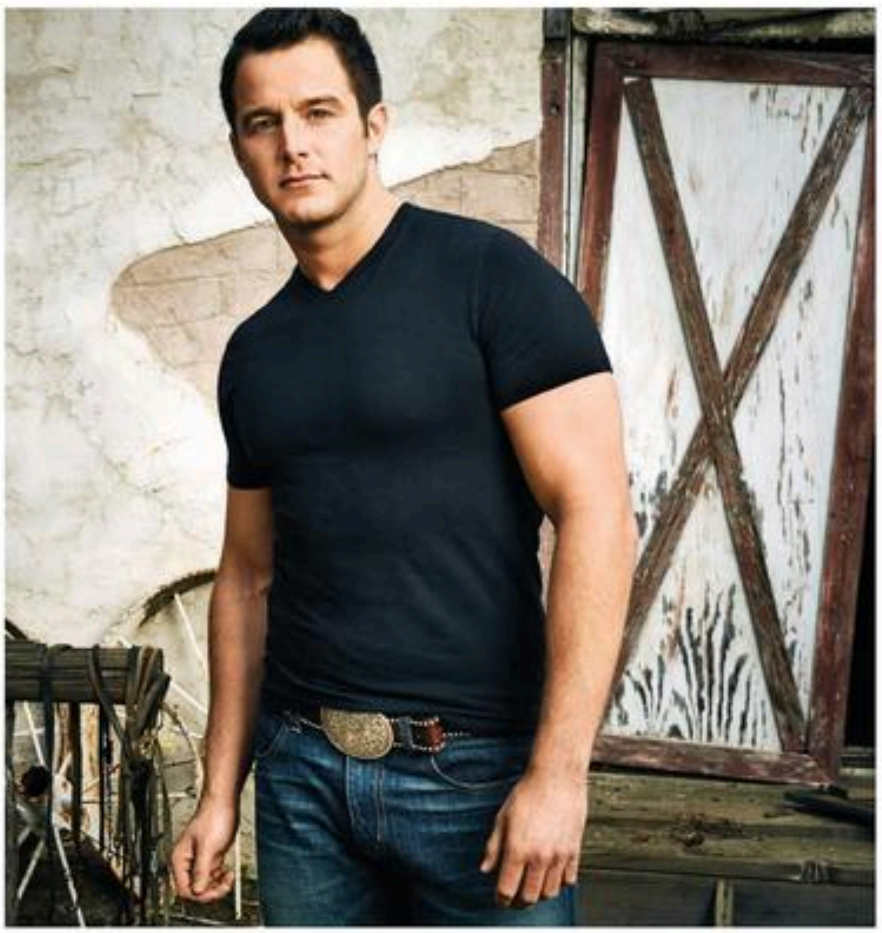
Country music star Easton Corbin is set to return to Central Florida to perform at the Ocoee Founders Day Festival.

By Brittany Ann Morrisey

Although he is now three albums deep into his career, Easton Corbin is still a country farm boy at heart, albeit one with serious musical chops. The 36-year-old Corbin first found success in country music with his debut single "A Little More Country Than That," which received widespread radio play and subsequently peaked at No. 1 on the country charts. When his second single, "Roll with It" also reached No. 1 on the country charts, it was clear that Corbin had not just arrived but would be sticking around.

A Florida native, he grew up just an hour outside of Gainesville on his grandparents' farm. He took guitar lessons as a kid and was always interested in pursuing music. After graduating from the University of Florida with a degree in agribusiness, he decided to pack up and move to the center of the country music business: Nashville, Tennessee. Once there, he got a job at an Ace Hardware store to make ends meet, but soon he was able to play for a major label and everything fell into place.

He took a break from recording in the studio to talk to us about growing up in a small town, touring with Carrie Underwood and why being true to yourself is so important to him.



What was it like growing up in the small town of Trenton, Florida?

You know, it was a great community. Knowing a lot of your neighbors and things like that. I wouldn't trade it for anything in the world. My family has been there for a long time. … You've got your friends and you all went to the same school and everything from kindergarten all the way through 12th grade. You've got that sense of home there; it's a good way to grow up.

What drew you to country music?

I grew up around my grandparents. They always loved country music. And my dad and my whole family loved country music, so it was kind of a natural fit. And, you know, [Merle] Haggard and [George] Jones, just listening to that stuff and really respecting it. It really resonated with me and who I was.

In 2016, you were a part of Carrie Underwood's *Storyteller* tour. What was it like working with her?

Man, she's great. She's very accommodating and just did a really great job out there. … She's got a huge following, not just country, but also other genres. She had a lot of those fans come out … so it was a good opportunity to get out there in front of those other audience members that may generally not listen to country music.

I heard that she surprised you on your birthday. Can you tell us what happened?

It was a pretty good joke. … [The Swon Brothers and I] actually went and sang with her up in the middle of her set. We did "Mountain Music" and something else, "Fishin' In The Dark," something like that. It was my birthday, and I came up, and she actually stopped the whole thing, and I'm like, "What's going on?" And they sang "Happy Birthday." It was pretty cool.

Last year you released the song "A Girl Like You." Are you working on an album now?

I've been working on a new record. In fact, I'm in the studio today working on it, and I'm really excited about it. … We've almost got a whole record done. We ain't quite there yet, but we're working on it.

When it comes to writing music, how do you usually approach it? Do you start off with an idea in your head of lyrics or do you start on the guitar with a melody?

It comes different ways. It might start with the



title; it might start with the melody or something. Or maybe a lick on the guitar. And sometimes you get there and there's nothing, and you don't really have an idea until you start talking about it.

Can you give me a song that you've done that you feel is very representative of who you are as an artist?
It wasn't a song I wrote but "A Little More Country Than That." For me, I didn't really have many fans out there as a new artist, because nobody really knew who I was and "A Little More Country Than That" really spoke to who I was and where I came from. That really gave me an identity.

When it comes to choosing songs for your albums, what do you look for in a song that makes you want to put your name on it?
It's got to be a country song; that's for sure. Again, it's just something I can relate to, something that resonates with me.

You have a degree in agribusiness from the University of Florida. If you weren't in music, do you think you'd be working on a farm?
Probably something in the agriculture industry, for sure.

Who are some of your influences?
I love Merle Haggard, George Jones, Keith Whitley, George Strait, and all those things like that.

You have a 4-year-old son. Does he know what you do?
He knows a little bit; I don't think he's old enough to really know much about it.

How did becoming a father affect you?
I think it definitely makes you look at things a little different, for sure.

You've played the Ocoee Founders' Day Festival before. Are you excited to be back?
Yeah, it's going to be fun. It's close enough that a lot of my family will come out.

You talk a lot about being real and true to who you are. Why is that so important to you?
Well, I think that speaks to who you are. I think country music is generally about real life and relating to what you're singing about. And I think, if you relate to it, you can really sing about it and really emote it and people know you're being sincere. I think that's what it's about: being sincere. And I think that's generally what country music is about.

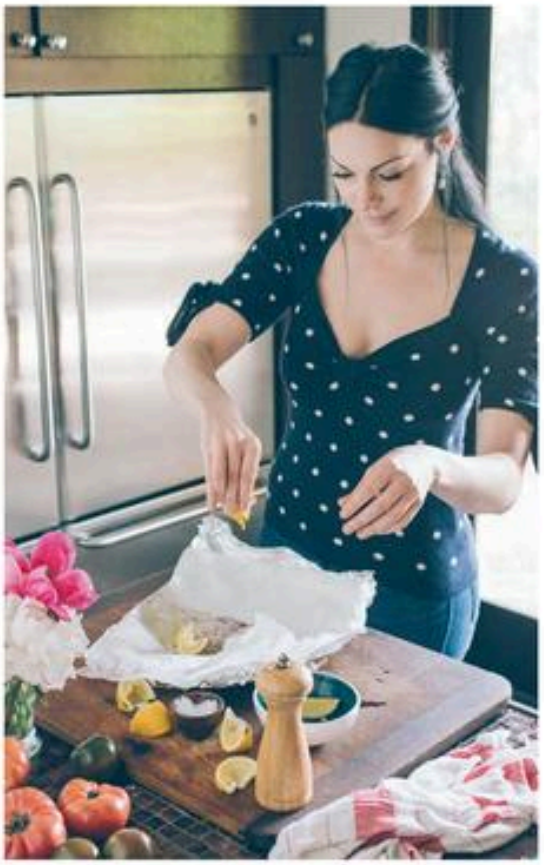






Recipes *for* Success

As Laura Prepon gears up for another season of *Orange is the New Black*, she shares how she balances life at home with life on the set and why she was inspired to author a bestselling cookbook. *By Debra Wallace*



Laura Prepon has figured out that the recipe for success is being both tough and tender, finding a balance between the two.

The 38-year-old portrays a tough convicted drug smuggler on the riveting Netflix series *Orange Is the New Black*, but off-screen this tender new mother and inspired cookbook author helps others develop a healthy lifestyle.

Yet, a common thread emerges. There is always something that runs just a bit deeper when it comes to this remarkable modern-day Renaissance woman.

Most of us first became familiar with Prepon from her eight seasons in the teen role of Donna Pinciotti, a sweet-but-sassy redhead, on television's *That '70s Show*, opposite Topher Grace, Mila Kunis and Ashton Kutcher; a show that provided major career breaks for each of them.

Prepon is the youngest child of Marjorie, a gourmet chef, and Michael, an orthopedic surgeon, who died during heart surgery at age 49, when she was 13. She did not pursue drama in high school; instead she moved to Milan to pursue a modeling career at the age of 15, and performed in an Italian commercial which got her hooked on acting. Two years later, she moved to New York to attend the Total Theatre Lab, a professional acting school, which led to her role on *That '70s Show* when she was 18. Her mother was on board with her early life and career choices, "because she always treated us as adults and respected our decisions," Prepon says.

Finding her tender emotional compass appears to be much easier since Prepon became the mother of 1-year-old Ella, with her actor-husband Ben Foster, best known for *Six Feet Under*, *3:10 to Yuma* and an award-winning role in the film *Hell or High Water*.

Prepon has three major passions: new motherhood, her acting career and keeping herself, and others, as healthy as possible. The Stash Plan, a cookbook and 21-day guide to losing weight, is her most recent project.

An avid reader and writer, she says that she always wanted to write a cookbook that "was more than just about food— this was a great marriage of science and food and Eastern philosophy."

The New York Times bestseller, co-written with Elizabeth Troy (an integrative nutritionist and well-being coach) is dedicated to Prepon's mother and evokes happy family memories. "My mother inspired me to never fit into any mold, in life, or in the kitchen. My mother was an advocate of organic food, so we always had amazing meals growing up."

Prepon recalls her mother gathering large groups of friends in the kitchen. "I loved the warm comforting feeling of cooking for people and bonding over food, and I've been hooked on cooking and entertaining ever since—so much so that my friends teasingly call me Martha Stewart."

As a self-taught chef, Prepon says she likes to cook "at least 80 percent of my food at home, so I can bring meals to work and not stress about food during the day. I've taught friends how to cook healthy foods in simple ways, so now they bring their own meals to work with them."

Simply put: "It's all about knowing what's going into the food we're eating and the preparation, so that you're not just grabbing something on the run."

Figuring out motherhood since Ella was born, while juggling a high-profile television career is no easy feat. Prepon leaves home for the set of *Orange Is the New Black* at 4:30 a.m. and Season 6 started filming the day she gave birth to her daughter. "I had to get back to work pretty quickly," she explains. "My writers and the crew of the show were awesome and everyone was so supportive; it was amazing."

But she was back at work when her daughter was 6 weeks old, and she directed an episode when her daughter was 4 months old, which is something that she loves, but also finds difficult.

Directing is about "running the show, which for me is like being a fish in water; I love it. It's incredible," says Prepon. "But the hours are longer because when you are directing you are always there. You are there before everybody and you leave after everybody."

She says that her husband took paternity leave so that they could switch off doing film versus TV projects, leaving one of them home to care for their daughter. Like most working mothers, she says that the "mom guilt" still rears its ugly head.

"I do feel guilty, but I also know that she'd be proud if she knew what I do. Being a mom," she says, "is my toughest and the most rewarding role so far. It truly makes me better at all of the other things that I do. Being a mom is the most incredible gift in the world, and it's also one of the hardest things, so we just have to help each other through it."

For the past six years, the tall raven-haired actress has seen her career sky-rocket, by starring in the award-winning prison drama on Netflix, in which she portrays Alex Vause, who has an extremely complicated, intimate relationship with her former girlfriend, Piper Chapman (Taylor Schilling), and is responsible for Piper's initial arrest on drug charges.

Based on the 2010 bestselling book by Piper Kerman, the two do a love-hate dance in a women's prison, amid the group of memorable federal inmates who have emotionally driven, compelling back stories that reveal how they landed in prison, further drawing us into the episodes.

Authenticity has been a key ingredient to *Orange Is the New Black* since the show first aired in June 2013, Prepon says. The actresses wear actual prison issue jumpsuits that don't quite fit right and minimal makeup. In fact, there is a storyline on how her character barters for her signature black eyeliner. Getting into the heart and soul of Alex required Prepon to find that common thread for this complex character.

"I just tried to find things within myself that relate to this woman, so then I could humanize her. Alex has a really tough exterior, but you see that she's actually really very vulnerable; she has her insecurities, and she's really loving," says Prepon. "Piper is the love of this girl's life, and Piper ripped her heart out. So, everybody, on some level, can relate to these heartaches and insecurities that you put on a front for."

It appears that marching to her own beat, and using both her tender and tough sides of her personality at home—and at work—are keeping Prepon happy and healthy.

Out and About IN ORLANDO

OCTOBER EVENTS EDITED BY BRITTANY ANN MORRISEY

A PETRIFIED FOREST
1360 E. Altamonte Drive
Select nights in October through Nov. 3
Central Florida's popular haunted interactive trail returns with a revamped layout and all new scares. Gates open at 7:30 p.m. each night and tickets start at $15. For a more family friendly experience, the haunted trail will have a special Kids Day on Oct. 13 from 9 a.m. to noon. *APetrifiedForest.com*

MOVIE NIGHT: *POLTERGEIST*
Leu Gardens | Oct. 5
Enjoy a movie in Orlando's 50-acre botanical oasis. Attendees may bring a dinner picnic basket and alcohol is permitted. Children under 13 years of age must be accompanied by an adult. Admission is $6 for adults and $3 for children ages 4 to 17. Gardens open at 6 p.m. and the movie starts at 7:30 p.m. *LeuGardens.org*

DISNEY JUNIOR DANCE PARTY! ON TOUR
Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts
Oct. 6
Sing and dance along to Disney Junior's greatest hits with your favorite characters. The party will feature live appearances from Mickey, Minnie, Goofy, Vampirina, Elena of Avalor, Sofia the First and Doc McStuffins. Tickets start at $29.50. *DrPhillipsCenter.org*

WINTER PARK AUTUMN ART FESTIVAL
Downtown Winter Park | Oct. 13-14
This annual community-oriented sidewalk show, now in its 45th year, presents quality visual art and live entertainment the whole family can enjoy. Artists from across the state will be exhibiting everything from paintings to ceramics to photography and more. Festival runs 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. both days. Admission is free. *WinterPark.org*



ORLANDO MAGIC VS. MIAMI HEAT
Amway Center
Oct. 17
With home-court advantage, the Orlando Magic open up the 2018-19 season against the Heat. Doors open at 7 p.m. Tickets start at $16.
AmwayCenter.com

BRETT ELDREDGE: THE LONG WAY TOUR
Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts
Oct. 18
On the heels of his wildly successful debut run, platinum-selling recording artist and critically praised live performer Brett Eldredge stops in Orlando to play some tunes. Tickets start at $45. *DrPhillipsCenter.org*

ZOO BOO BASH
Central Florida Zoo and Botanical Gardens
Oct. 20-28
Trick or treat at this not-too-scary event for young and old alike. Guests are encouraged to wear costumes and bring a bag for trick-or-treating. This event is included in general zoo admission. *CentralFloridaZoo.org*



SOUTHERN WOMEN'S SHOW
Orange County Convention Center
Oct. 25-28
Discover hundreds of boutiques filled with the latest fashions, trendy jewelry, gourmet treats, health and beauty, and so much more at Orlando's dedicated event for women. Special guests this year include Savannah Chrisley from the hit reality TV show *Chrisley Knows Best* and actor Keegan Allen who will be signing copies of his recently released book. *SouthernShows.com*

BOB DYLAN AND HIS BAND
Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts
Oct. 26
Having sold 100 million records worldwide, Bob Dylan is one of the best-selling music artists of all time. Dylan comes to Orlando to perform a compilation of classic American songs along with old favorites for this special one-night engagement. Tickets start at $59.50. *DrPhillipsCenter.org*

SPOOKY EMPIRE
Caribe Royale Hotel Orlando
Oct. 26-28
Horror fans will find much to enjoy at this annual gathering of aficionados and stars. Special guests this year include Gillian Anderson and David Duchovny from *The X-Files* and Cassandra Peterson, the woman behind the one-and-only Elvira. Three-day passes are $60, while single-day tickets are $30 to $35. Kids under 10 receive free admission. *SpookyEmpire.com*

ADVERTISEMENT

Offering a Safe Haven for Children

Meet the Halls

Providing Hope to Children in Need

After retiring from the banking industry and experiencing life as an 'empty nester,' Barbara Hall saw a commercial on television about becoming a foster parent and thought "why not?" Barbara and her husband, Hopeton Hall, always felt compelled to help children and after giving the idea considerable thought, they decided to open their home to children in need. They soon completed their training and became foster parents.

"It is a pleasure for us to be foster parents. To see a child saved from what turmoil is going on, to help them and to watch them grow, is like watching a flower grow. Every day gets better, and they grow more and more," stated Barbara.

The number of children in need of foster care is staggering and foster parents are in short supply. Each year, there are 18,000 to 20,000 children in Florida who are unable to live at home or with relatives, these children are placed with a foster family. Drug abuse is the number one reason for children entering state care, and this trend has grown significantly over the past few years in Florida as a result of opioid-specific cases.

Far too many families have missed the opportunity to foster because of misconceptions. Foster parents are just as unique and diverse as the youth in their care – single, married or living in a committed relationship with someone. There is a great need here in the Central Florida community and Devereux Advanced Behavioral Health helps make those family connections in partnership with the Department of Children and Families and Community Based Care of Central Florida.

Making Transitions

For over seven years, the Halls have fostered several children and have learned that children just want to be noticed. "They want to know someone cares for them," says Barbara. To make each child feel welcome, they find out what they like and identify ways to build upon their strengths and interests. The Halls also let each child know they are safe in their home, and that as a parent it is their "job" to take care of them. Barbara expressed they tell each child, "You can only be a kid once in your life. You can be one here, and you are safe."

Support for Foster Families

Providing support for foster parents is important in order to ensure successful placements. "You cannot do it on your own," expressed Barbara. "If you are having a problem, get in touch with your licensing agency." Devereux foster parents receive ongoing support from a variety of resources to prevent and reduce foster parent stress and family crisis, including ongoing training and assistance.

What Can You Do

If you want to expand your family or want to make a difference in the life of a child, consider becoming a foster parent!

Devereux Florida is currently seeking potential foster parents to provide a stable and caring home for children in need, including survivors of sexual exploitation. If you are unable to foster a child, encourage others to consider providing the opportunity to change a child's life. For more information, or to get involved to support foster families, email FLFosterCare@devereux.org.



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

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STAR MUSICIANS

Yilin "Selina" Xu, Yanbo "Frank" Guo, Mariana Valderrama Alvarez

Montverde Academy junior Yilin "Selina" Xu and sophomores Yanbo "Frank" Guo and Mariana Valderrama Alvarez have been selected to perform at Carnegie Hall as a part of the Winner's Circle Gala Concert. The students were selected based on their video submissions to the Florida Keys International Competition for Young Talent. At the concert, Xu will perform a Francoeur sonata in E major for cello and piano, Guo will perform Brahms Rhapsody Op. 79 No. 2 in G minor on piano and Alvarez will perform Dmitri Kabalevsky concerto Op. 48 in C major on violin.



STAR STUDENTS

Seminole Science Charter School's History Club

Fifth- through eighth-grade students in Seminole Science Charter School's history club recently researched and digitized documents for the Museum of Seminole County History for its exhibit that opened on Sept. 4.

STAR COMPETITOR

Michael Jenkins



Michael Jenkins took first place at the Tony Roma's local rib eating competition, winning free ribs from the eatery for a year. The annual event supports Make-A-Wish Central and Northern Florida.

STAR STUDENTS

OCFL LEADS Program Graduates

Nearly 30 high school students from across Orange County were honored in a special graduation ceremony for their completion of Mayor Jacobs' Leadership, Employment and Development Success Program (LEADS). The OCFL LEADS Program offers area high school students the opportunity to engage firsthand with Orange County's growing vocational workforce.





STAR TEACHER

Debra Egan

Holy Family Catholic School teacher Debra Egan has been awarded the very prestigious Distinguished Teacher Award from The Diocese of Orlando. Egan has been teaching for 24 years, with 17 of those years at Holy Family. She currently teaches first grade.

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Palate

By Brittany Ann Morrisey


Photo courtesy of Loews Portofino Bay Hotel

TOP FIVE:

GNOCCHI

A quintet of tasty things to try this month

GNOCCHI AT MAMA DELLA'S RISTORANTE, LOEWS PORTOFINO BAY HOTEL ↔
Handmade with parsley, the gnocchi at this hotel restaurant does not disappoint. With a fresh tomato sauce, along with basil and dry ricotta, this menu item deserves to be consumed with one of the establishment's top-notch, Old World wines.


Photo courtesy of Rocco's Italian Grille

↔ **GNOCCHI ALLA TRENTINA** AT ROCCO'S ITALIAN GRILLE, WINTER PARK
Lighter and fluffier than traditional potato gnocchi, these tasty offerings are made with ricotta and served with a creamy aurora sauce that is flavored with smoked prosciutto. Wild mushrooms are mixed in for an earthy touch.

POTATO GNOCCHI AT TREVI PASTA RESTAURANT, COLLEGE PARK
Because the gnocchi is made fresh here, it is melt-in-your-mouth good. Dress it up with one of the shop's rotating signature sauces such as tomato basil or a rich Bolognese. Diners can also add a protein like meatballs or grilled chicken. It's all topped with shaved parmesan cheese.

GNOCCHI AL PESTO GENOVESE AT IL PESCATORE, COLONIAL TOWN
The gnocchi at this old-school Italian eatery are fluffy and tender and arrive bathed in the restaurant's homemade pesto sauce. Each bite has just the right amount of creaminess and herbal brightness.

GNOCCHI CAPRESE AT FRESCO CUCINA ITALIANA, DR. PHILLIPS
These light potato dumplings are baked in a vibrant tomato sauce and served with dollops of fresh mozzarella. Don't let the simplicity fool you, this dish is perfectly delicious and will leave you savoring every bit of it.

RAISE A GLASS: CHOCOLATE COCKTAILS

Libations you're sure to love


Photo courtesy of Sideshow

↔ **OLD CHOCOLATE FASHIONED** AT TOOTHSOME CHOCOLATE EMPORIUM AND SAVORY FEAST KITCHEN, UNIVERSAL ORLANDO
This restaurant and confectionery has incorporated chocolate into its alcoholic beverages in just about every way possible. Although there's a lot for a sweet tooth to choose here, we suggest the Old Chocolate Fashioned, which is made with Bird Dog chocolate whiskey, Heering cherry liqueur, sugar, chocolate and orange bitters.

↔ **CHOCOLATE COVERED PRETZEL** AT SIDESHOW, DOWNTOWN
This whimsical drink is inspired by the flavors you'd find at a vintage carnival. It is made with whipped cream vodka and hazelnut liqueur and garnished with a salted rim. The clever combination will fool your taste buds into thinking you just bit into a chocolate covered pretzel.

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Photo courtesy of Universal Orlando

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Pork belly with a sticky bourbon glaze, bacon and Brussels sprouts

The New Kid ON THE Block

Despite some mixed results, STIR Restaurant & Bar has the potential to make a lasting impression.

By Michael Lit

STIR, which stands for "Sip, Taste, Indulge & Relax" is the new venture taking its turn at the space formerly occupied by the successful and sorely missed Brian's Diner. This will be the third time this gorgeous Lake Ivanhoe landmark has reimagined itself as another hopeful mainstay. Will the third time be a charm or just another brief excursion before we get to something that hits us on all cylinders?

The restaurant is owned by NFL lineman Kadeem Edwards, along with restaurateurs Blake Levison, Michael Thompson and Eric Winsor. According to them, "The menu at STIR is designed to be creative yet practical. With this, STIR wishes to maintain an approachable menu. STIR will introduce exciting menu options, including a brunch, appetizer, lunch, full dinner menu, desserts, and signature cocktails that draw in new and local guests in our city of Orlando."

This sounds like a great mission statement from the owners and tagging executive chef Chastity Harvey (formerly at The Alfond Inn) at the kitchen's helm could surely execute it. Unfortunately for STIR, she departed for another opportunity in July and it can be felt throughout the kitchen's execution.

On this particular Friday evening the restaurant had a guitarist and singer entertaining the dining room and the vibe was cool and relaxed as the duo belted out some powerful ballads to please the crowd. I ordered up one of their signature cocktails, The Kentucky Bramble ($12), and settled in. The drink was concocted of 1792 Bourbon, black raspberry liqueur and lemon juice and while it was a tad sweet, it was nonetheless very drinkable. However, round two tasted nothing like the first, in fact, it was even sweeter with less bourbon. My wife's Pineapple Margarita ($12) was also overly sweet and arrived without any garnish. When it came time for a refill, she opted for a Classic Margarita with 1800 Anejo ($12). Again the drink arrived without any garnish or a salted rim. If STIR is going to draw in the cocktail crowd, they might want to tighten the screws behind the bar.

We started our meal off with some of their signature appetizers. The Pork Belly ($10) had a sticky bourbon glaze with caramelized onion, bacon and Brussels sprouts. This was a standout dish—the nice and meaty square of pork belly paired nicely with the tender sprouts and it was plated absolutely beautifully.

Meanwhile, the Pork Puff Pastry ($8) was made with shredded pork cheeks and shallots, wrapped in a puff pastry and rested in pork cheek *jus*. It was another solid dish and I was pleased that the pastry maintained its crispiness after being sat in the *jus*. The pork filling was lost a bit in the dish, but nothing some more seasoning to help elevate its flavor couldn't fix.

The Maryland Crab Cakes ($10) would disappoint anyone who calls the Old Line State home as they were quite possibly the thinnest crab cakes I have ever seen. Maybe if it were all lump crab, but half filler, half crab and flat as a pancake is not a true representation in my book.

I was still hopeful for our entrées, including the Six-Hour Short Rib ($23), which was braised in a porter from Sarasota brewing company JDub's and served with mashed potato and crowned with an onion haystack. All the components of the dish were tasty and it was tender as baby fat, but if it was braised in the aforementioned beer, I couldn't help but wonder why it was so dry? And where was the advertised demi glaze?

My wife had the Shrimp and Grits ($18). Luckily, she was willing to share and let me taste this because it was one of the better representations of the dish I have had. The bacon, red peppers and the gastrique had such tremendous flavor when combined with the shrimp and grits. My only criticism would be that I wished the grits were a bit tighter to counter the loose gastrique, but overall, I have to give it credit, this one was a real winner.

When I asked our server for a dessert menu, I was intrigued to learn they didn't have one. Instead our server simply informed us that they "only have one dessert of the day." One would think with such a limited offering, that the dessert du jour would be one memorable sendoff. However, the Peach Bread Pudding ($6) was anything but. It was more like pureed white bread with canned peaches. For them to put all their efforts into this one dessert felt like a letdown after an evening of hits and misses.



Shrimp and grits

STIR has potential to be a staple in the Ivanhoe Village scene, but it has to get through some tough hurdles first. There were mishaps and inconsistencies behind the bar and inside the kitchen. Some attention to detail would help the execution of a menu that should really hit on all cylinders. I'm rooting for this place and I look forward to coming back to see if things have started to move in the right direction.

STIR Restaurant and Bar

1409 N. Orange Ave. | Orlando
(407) 723-8976
FollowStir.com

Side Dish

By Brittany Ann Morrisey

Restaurant news from throughout Greater Orlando

• One of Orlando's most beloved dives has closed after 64 years in business. The owners of **Wally's Mills Avenue Liquors** posted a notice on the bar's entrance saying it was "with great regret that we have decided to close our doors."

• Country star Blake Shelton is bringing his **Ole Red** concept to Icon Orlando 360. Slated to open in 2020, the restaurant will serve up Southern food and hospitality with live country music. This will be the fourth restaurant for the brand.

• **Bolay**, a fast-casual, build-your-own-bowl restaurant opened in Lake Nona. The restaurant has six other locations in Florida and offers nutrient-rich and savory-flavored bowls with ingredients such as kale, black rice, carrot-ginger sauce, barbecue chicken, ahi tuna, smoky cauliflower, balsamic mushrooms and more.

• After dissing Orlando's food scene back in June, Andrew Zimmern made good on his promise to revisit the city's culinary offerings. Zimmern was spotted filming at **East End Market**. On Twitter he wrote "I'm loving this city for its food, but honestly the people doing it are the bigger story."

• A new wine bar is set to open in Winter Park in the next few months. **Vinia Wine Bar** will have a variety of European and Mediterranean wines, along with a selection of cheeses, meats and appetizers.



Andrew Zimmern is a four-time James Beard Award-winning chef and the host of the Travel Channel's *The Zimmern List*.

Photograph courtesy of Travel Channel





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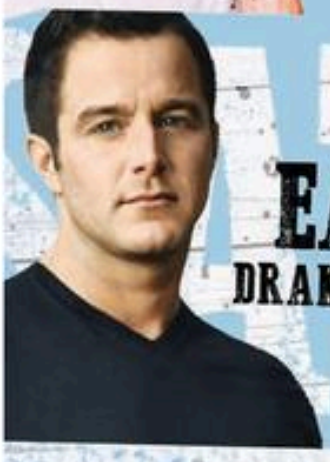
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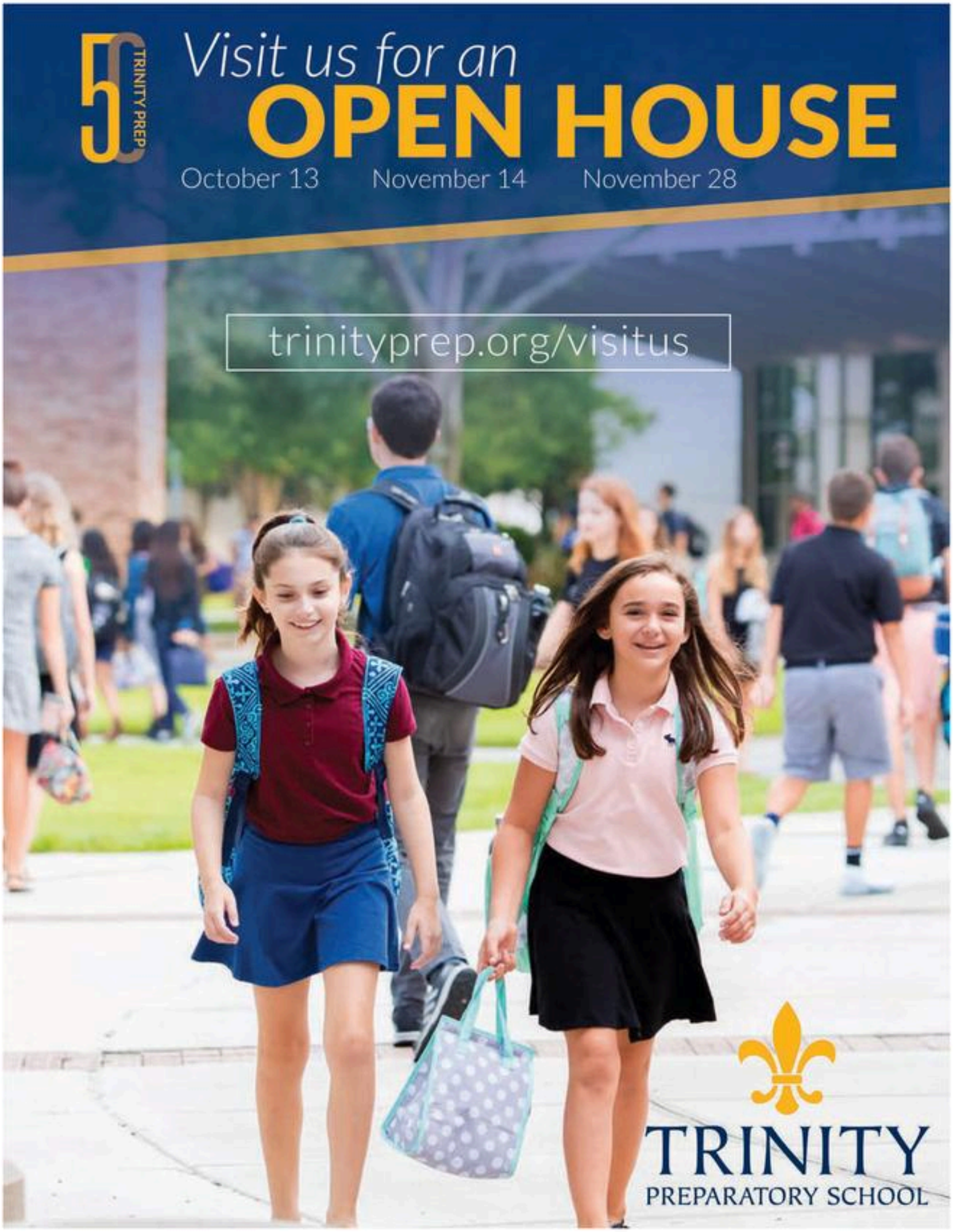
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