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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

Start the Conversation

Dear Neighbors,

Something I've been thinking about often lately is how easy it is to assume that the people around us may not fully understand what we're going through.

But when you really stop and think about it, we live in the same neighborhood, our kids go to the same schools, our families are navigating many of the same stages of life and chances are, we've experienced more of the same highs, lows, worries and joys than we realize.

Sometimes all it takes is a conversation.

A quick hello at the mailbox. Sitting next to someone at a school event. Checking in with a neighbor you haven't seen in a while. What starts as small talk can turn into a real connection.

We may all be in different stages of parenting and different seasons of life, but there is still so much we can relate to. Maybe one neighbor has already walked through something you're just beginning, or maybe you're both figuring it out at the same time.

There's something comforting about realizing that the people living right around us often understand more than we think.

Sometimes we just have to start the conversation.

We may all have different stories, but we share a lot more than just an address.

Warmly,

Ashley and Nathan Grimm
Publishers, *Stroll*

SPECIAL NOTE: We're kicking off the holiday season with a festive *Stroll* Holiday Party on Thursday, November 5, at Zinicola in Ballantyne Village! Join us for an evening of food, music, door prizes and community fun — and be sure to scan the QR code to RSVP.



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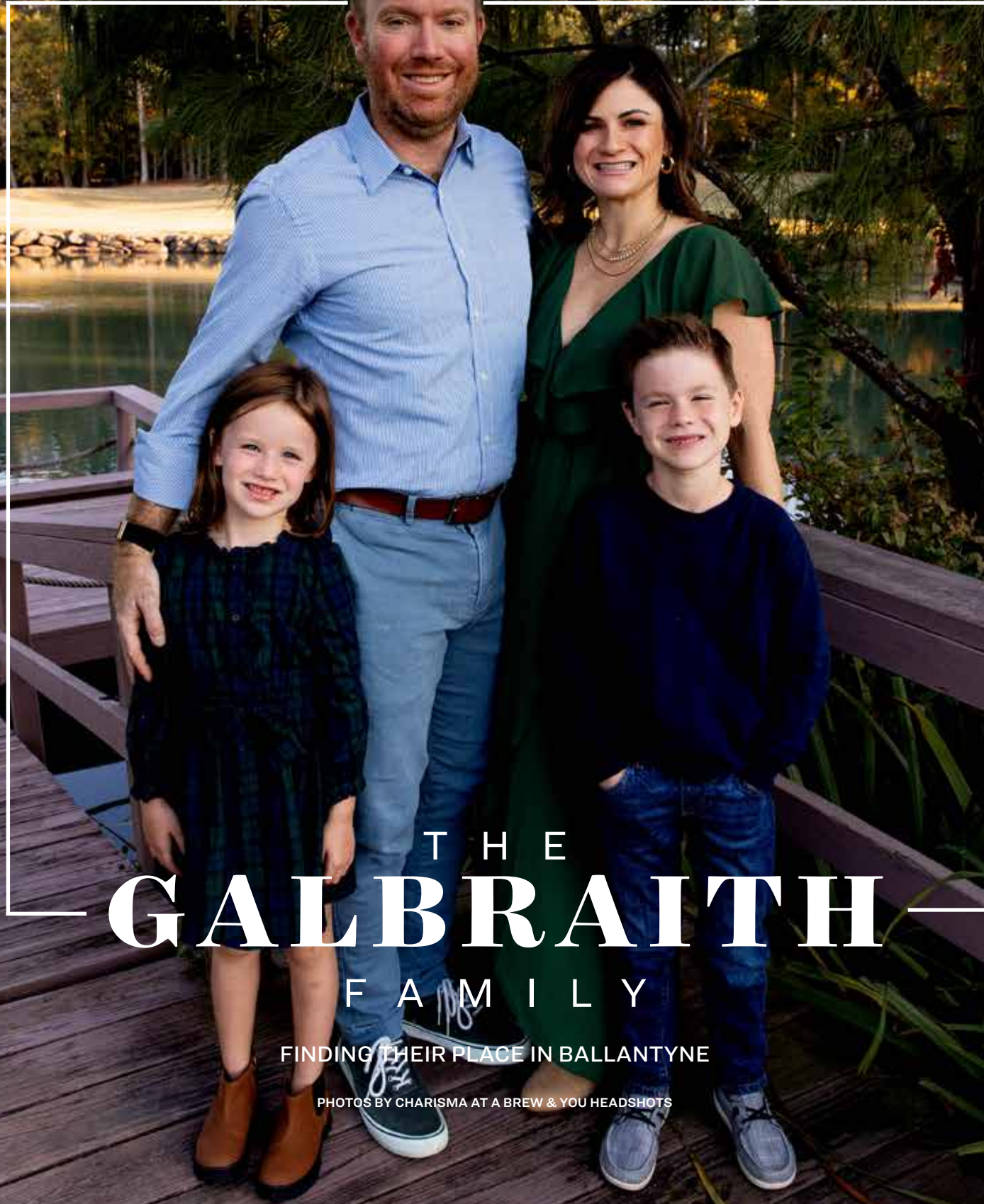


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THE GALBRAITH FAMILY

FINDING THEIR PLACE IN BALLANTYNE

PHOTOS BY CHARISMA AT A BREW & YOU HEADSHOTS



For Brian and Katie Galbraith, moving to Ballantyne Country Club in December 2024 felt a little like arriving at a destination they had been eyeing for years.

The couple had long been drawn to the neighborhood's sense of community, the club and the growth happening throughout the Ballantyne area. Today, they are happily settled on Brem Lane with their two children, Brian Jr., 9, a third grader at St. Matthew, and Reagan, 6, a first grader at St. Matthew, along with Corby, their energetic 10-year-old rescue pup. "Without question, it's the people and the vibrant community," they say of what they love most about their new neighborhood. "We're surrounded by neighbors who are in similar stages of life, share common interests and are just plain fun to be around."

Their path to Ballantyne began well before the move. Katie grew up in Chicago while Brian was raised outside Philadelphia. Their own story started at the University of Notre Dame, where both began MBA programs in 2011.

And, as they jokingly put it, their romance began "like the start of all classic love stories: at a bar!" A friendship quickly became a relationship, and the pair spent their graduate school years traveling, tackling business coursework and attending as many Fighting Irish football games as possible. After graduating in 2013, their careers took them to different cities, with Katie in Charlotte and Brian in Washington, DC. Nearly a year of



“We’re surrounded by neighbors who are in similar stages of life, share common interests and are just plain fun to be around.”



weekly flights up and down the East Coast followed before Katie relocated to DC for a Bank of America assignment in 2014.

They became engaged soon afterward and married in Chicago in August 2015. That same year, Katie’s career brought them to Charlotte, where they first lived in an Uptown high-rise before purchasing a home just north of the Arboretum.

As the years passed, Ballantyne Country Club remained on their radar. When the right opportunity finally came along, they were ready.

Family nearby has made the move even sweeter. Brian’s parents relocated from Philadelphia to Flat Rock, Katie’s sister and her family moved from Chicago to Mint Hill in 2022 and Katie’s parents now live in Fort Mill — and are fellow BCC members. “Having family so close makes the Charlotte area truly feel like home,” they say.

CAREERS AND COMMUNITY

Both Brian and Katie have built careers in the business world. Brian, who earned his undergraduate degree in electrical engineering from Johns Hopkins University before completing his MBA at Notre Dame, is a consulting partner at Deloitte, focusing on corporate strategy and operational design for insurance clients.

Katie is a proud “double Domer,” earning both her undergraduate and graduate degrees in business administration from Notre Dame. She is a senior vice president at Bank of America, where she leads strategic initiatives focused on AI transformation and the future of consumer banking.

Community involvement is important to the family as well. Brian and Katie stay involved with their children’s school and sports through classroom volunteering and coaching, while Katie also leads Bank of America community engagement initiatives supporting Charlotte-area nonprofits.

ALWAYS ON THE GO

With two active kids, the Galbraith calendar rarely stays empty for long. Brian Jr. plays soccer, baseball, basketball and flag football, competes in PGA Jr. League and enjoys BCC sports camps. Reagan participates in soccer and gymnastics and loved her first year of BCC sports camp. Both children have been swimming since they were babies and have learned to ski during family trips to Snowshoe.

Their parents are equally active. Katie is an avid runner who has added skiing and pickleball to the mix and is dusting off her

golf clubs after a 10-year hiatus. Brian stays active on the Peloton and welcomes any opportunity to squeeze in a round of golf. Now new golf members at BCC, they hope to make the sport something the whole family can enjoy together for years to come.

When they aren’t heading to a practice, game or golf course, the Galbraiths enjoy live sporting events, long walks with Corby and relaxing on their back patio, where football, a bonfire and family time make for an ideal afternoon or evening.

Travel is another family favorite. Beach resorts are a hit with the kids, including a recent stay at Moon Palace Resort in Cancun, while an annual ski weekend has become a tradition. Katie learned to ski alongside the children just a few years ago, and the family has returned to the slopes each year since.

At home, simple traditions are often the favorites: Friday pizza nights and Sunday burgers and hot dogs straight from the grill.

And if neighbors hear some spirited cheering coming from the Galbraith house this fall, there’s a good explanation. This North Carolina family still has plenty of Midwest and East Coast sports loyalty. “Between Notre Dame football Saturdays, Philadelphia Eagles games and Chicago sports loyalties, our living room can get pretty competitive during football season!”

For a family that loves sports, activity, friends and being part of a close-knit community, Ballantyne Country Club is proving to be just the place they hoped it would be.

To recommend a family to be featured, please email Delia at ballantyne@strollmag.com.



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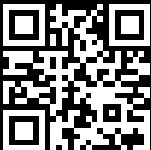
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Stroll Into Wellness at Ballantyne Country Club

PHOTO BY CHARISMA AT A BREW & YOU HEADSHOTS

Stroll Into Wellness was such a great night!
We loved bringing together 25 incredible local wellness and beauty businesses for an evening dedicated to connection, self-care and community.
Residents came out to mingle, discover some amazing local businesses, win fabulous raffle prizes and enjoy the beautiful sounds of Irena Violin throughout the evening.
It was simply a great night out with neighbors, friends and some of the best local businesses in our community.
A huge thank you to everyone who participated, attended and helped make Stroll Into Wellness such a special evening!

To share your photos, please email Delia at ballantyne@strollmag.com.



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- *Volunteer* – Help with adoption events, animal transportation, fundraising and other needs.
- *Donate* – Contributions help cover veterinary care, food, supplies and other expenses associated with caring for rescued animals.

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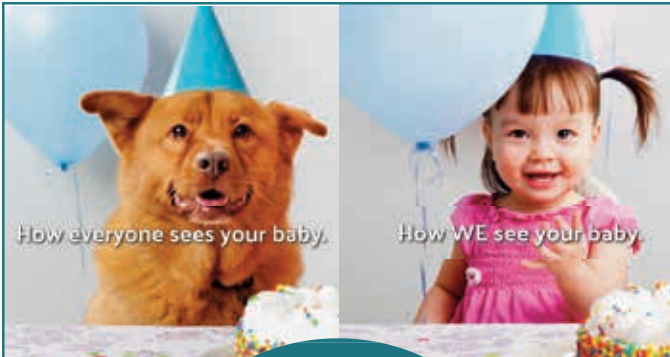
assist with fundraising. Because opening a foster home allows the rescue to take another animal out of a shelter, fostering can quite literally make room to save another life.

Of course, for families who are ready to add four paws to the household, there are plenty of hopeful candidates waiting to meet them – from playful puppies and kittens to adult pets simply looking for a second chance.

Perhaps next month's Precious Pet is already waiting for you.

Note: Pictured pets may not be available for fostering/adopting.

To have your pet featured, please email Delia at ballantyne@strollmag.com.



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This month, instead of introducing you to one neighborhood pet, we're shining the spotlight on dozens of cats and dogs waiting for families of their own.

Catering To Cats & Dogs (C2CND) has been helping homeless animals throughout the greater Charlotte and surrounding areas since 2008. The volunteer-run nonprofit began with just 10 cats and has grown into a foster-based rescue that can have 70 to 80 cats and 90 to 100 dogs in its care at any given time – with even more arriving during busy kitten and puppy season.

Unlike a traditional shelter, C2CND does not have a facility. Instead, its animals live in foster homes, where they receive care, attention and a chance to become comfortable in a home environment while waiting for adoption. Many are pulled from area animal control facilities when they are at risk of euthanasia. C2CND provides necessary medical care and ensures its animals are spayed or neutered before or following adoption at the appropriate age.

And you don't have to be ready to adopt to make a difference. C2CND relies on volunteers to foster animals, help at weekend adoption events, transport pets to veterinary appointments and



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Lighting the Way Forward CHARLOTTE UNITES FOR LIGHT THE NIGHT



On November 14, Charlotte neighbors will gather in a powerful display of hope, remembrance, and resilience. Through glowing lanterns and shared purpose, Light The Night supports blood cancer patients, families and lifesaving research while reminding survivors they are never alone.

BY CONTRIBUTING WRITER JENNY CROW

On a cool November evening, as the sun sets behind the Charlotte skyline, something powerful begins to take shape. Families gather. Colleagues reconnect outside the office. Friends arrive with purpose. Each person holds a glowing lantern, their faces illuminated with reflection, hope and pride. Survivors stand a little taller. And in that shared moment, under a sky slowly filling with light, a community comes together for something far greater than a walk.

This is Light The Night, a signature event supporting Blood Cancer United, and for many across Charlotte, it has become a meaningful tradition rooted in remembrance, resilience, and progress.

Helping lead this year's effort are *Stroll* neighbors Tracy Kerrins, Andrea Bierce and Jayne Borman, who serve on the executive leadership committee. Through their leadership

and dedication, they are inspiring participation, building momentum and expanding the reach of this important mission across our community.

For those who attend, Light The Night is deeply personal. Each lantern tells a story. White lanterns are carried by survivors, representing strength, courage and the progress made in treatment. Red lanterns shine with the support of family members, friends and colleagues walking in solidarity. Gold lanterns honor loved ones who are no longer with us, their memories continuing to fuel the fight for a cure.

As the walk begins and the lanterns move together, individual stories blend into a powerful collective message: no one faces blood cancer alone.

Beyond the beauty of that evening lies a lasting impact. Funds raised through Light The Night support groundbreaking research,

bringing new therapies and treatment options to patients who need them most. Survival rates for many blood cancers have improved dramatically over time, thanks in part to investment in innovation and discovery driven by events like this.

The impact, however, goes far beyond research. It is felt in the real lives of patients and families. It's the financial support that helps ease the burden of treatment. It's access to trusted information during moments of uncertainty. It's the connection to a community that understands the journey and walks alongside them every step of the way.

In Charlotte, Light The Night is also a reflection of who we are as a city. Companies rally their employees around a shared purpose. Friends and families build teams in honor of loved ones. Community leaders step forward to champion the cause, inviting others to join and take part in something meaningful. Leaders like Tracy, Andrea and Jayne embody that spirit, helping transform individual efforts into a united movement that continues to grow year after year.

There is a defining moment during the evening when the crowd pauses. Lanterns are raised. Stories are shared. Names are remembered. In that stillness, the true meaning of Light The Night becomes clear. It is about love. It is about resilience. It is about showing up for one another in a way that creates lasting impact.

And while we celebrate how far we have come, there is still work to be done. Too many families are still hearing life-changing diagnoses. Too many are navigating uncertainty and challenges no one should face alone. Light The Night ensures that research continues, support remains accessible, and hope continues to grow stronger.

On November 14, the Charlotte community will once again come together to light the way forward. We invite you to be part of this powerful evening. Walk alongside survivors. Honor those we have lost. Stand with families who need support today.

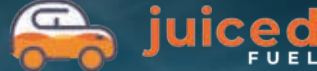
Together, we can make a difference that lasts far beyond one night.

**Blood Cancer
United**
Light The Night

GET INVOLVED

To learn more or to get involved in Light The Night on November 14, visit lightthenight.org or contact **Jenny Crow** at Jenny.Crow@bloodcancerunited.org.





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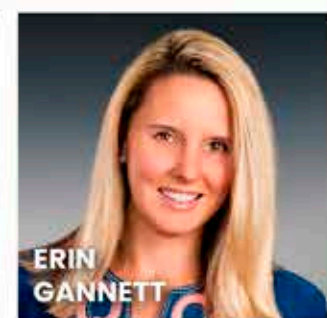
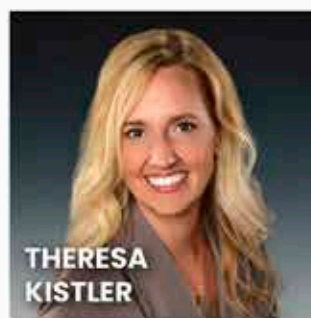
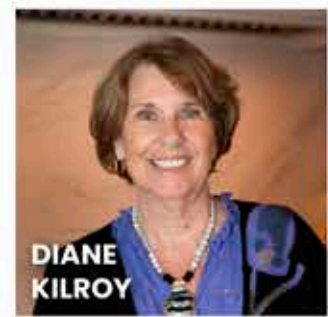
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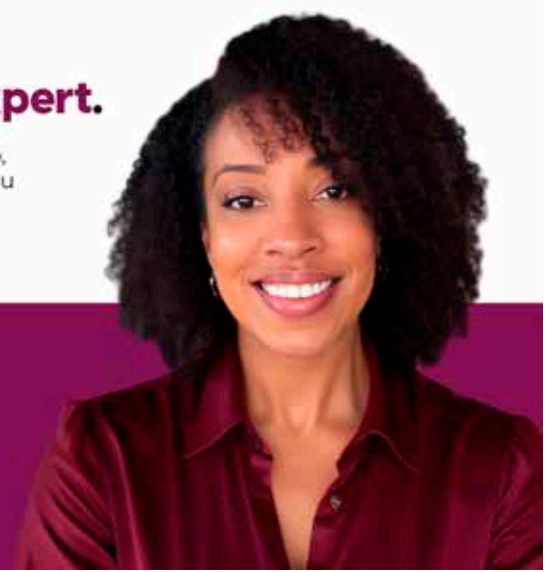
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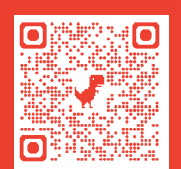


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MODERN LEGAL

Modern Legal believes the best family law solutions begin by seeing the person behind the case—and treating every family’s story with care.

Theresa Viera believes family law should be as compassionate as it is strategic—and that philosophy guides every member of the Modern Legal team. Under her leadership, Modern Legal is redefining what clients can expect from a family law firm by combining innovative legal solutions with a human-first approach that puts people—not just cases—at the center of every decision.

At Modern Legal, the team understands that no two families are alike. Family law doesn’t fit neatly into black-and-white answers, which is why every legal strategy is thoughtfully crafted to meet each client’s unique circumstances and goals. Whether guiding someone through divorce, child custody, financial support matters, or protective orders, the firm’s attorneys deliver practical, no-nonsense advice while seeking solutions that minimize conflict whenever possible. In fact, one of the biggest misconceptions about family law is that every case ends in a courtroom battle. The Modern Legal team works diligently to help families resolve disputes through negotiation, mediation, and creative problem-solving whenever appropriate, empowering clients to shape their own futures rather than leaving life’s most important decisions to a judge. Where appropriate and necessary, however, the Modern Legal team is ready to zealously advocate in the courtroom.



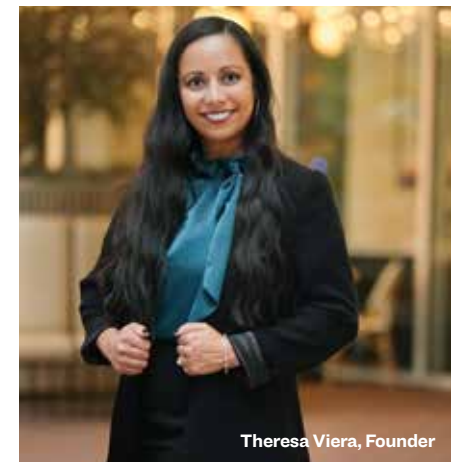
What truly sets Modern Legal apart is its people. Theresa has built a team of highly skilled attorneys and legal professionals who share a passion for genuine advocacy and an unwavering commitment to serving clients with empathy, respect, and excellence. Every member of the firm believes that legal representation extends beyond documents and court filings—it is about helping people navigate some of life’s most difficult moments with clarity, confidence, and trusted support.

As the legal profession continues to evolve, Modern Legal remains at the forefront of innovation. By embracing technology, expanding access to legal services, and leveraging tools like North Carolina’s eCourts system, the firm makes family law more accessible and efficient for clients across the Carolinas. Whether meeting clients virtually or advocating in the courtroom, the team is committed to meeting people where they are—both physically and emotionally.



At its core, Modern Legal is driven by values that shape every client interaction and every case: **Genuine Advocacy. Perseverance. Innovation. Awesome Without Exception. Empowerment.** These principles define the firm’s culture and its commitment to empowering clients, strengthening communities, and continuously building the legal expertise of its team.

For Theresa and the entire Modern Legal team, success is not measured simply by legal outcomes. It is measured by the positive ripple effect they create when families find stability, children are protected, and clients discover the confidence to move forward with their lives.



Theresa Viera, Founder

CONTACT MODERN LEGAL TODAY!

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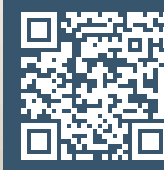
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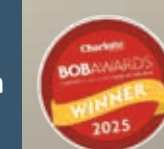
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For Cranston Blanks, dog training has never been just about teaching dogs to sit, stay or come when called. It's about creating stronger relationships between people and their pets so they can enjoy life together with confidence.

After spending several years in careers that didn't fulfill him following college, Blanks decided in 2008 to pursue the work he truly loved. That decision led him into the professional dog training industry, where he quickly discovered both a passion and a talent for helping dogs and their owners succeed.

Over the next 15 years, Blanks helped build a local dog training company into a nationwide franchise with more than 100 locations. Along the way, he trained dogs, coached owners, mentored trainers and managers and helped launch multiple locations throughout the Southeast and Midwest. Most recently, he spent six years in Cincinnati operating the company's top-performing location.

But life has a way of changing priorities. After the passing of his mother earlier this year, Blanks made the decision to return home to the Charlotte area to be closer to his father and family. That move also gave him the opportunity to take everything he had learned over the past decade and a half and build something of his own. "I wanted to bring my years of experience back home in a much more personal and intimate way," he says.

Today, Blanks is the owner of **Balanced Life K9**, a Matthews-based, appointment-only dog training business that focuses on customized training programs rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.

A Charlotte resident since he was just 6 months old, Blanks grew up off Providence Road with his parents and twin sister before attending NC State University and later graduating from Appalachian State University with a degree in health promotion and a minor in psychology. Looking back, he says that psychology has proven surprisingly valuable in his current career. "I focus on not only training the dog but also the owners — mostly the owners," he says with a laugh. "I emphasize the human-dog relationship through training to create a balanced, peaceful life regardless of the dog's issues or the family's lifestyle."

That philosophy is at the heart of every program he offers. Balanced Life K9 works with dogs of all ages and abilities, from basic obedience to more challenging behavioral issues including reactivity, aggression and reliable off-leash training. Blanks believes that successful training isn't about quick fixes. Instead, it's about teaching both the dog and the owner how to communicate effectively so the results last long after the lessons are over. "Training is a lifestyle that includes work, rest and play," he says. "I can help you achieve all three to get the balanced life you and your dog deserve."

One of his signature offerings is a personalized, limited-enrollment board-and-train program conducted in his own home. Rather than housing large numbers of dogs in a commercial facility, Blanks intentionally keeps his program small, so each dog receives individualized attention.

The training extends far beyond the home. Dogs participate in carefully planned real-world outings where they learn to remain

calm and responsive amid everyday distractions. Mid-program lessons with owners, a comprehensive take-home session and continued follow-up ensure that families understand how to maintain their dog's progress.

Perhaps most importantly, every client receives free lifetime support. "Life changes," Blanks says. "Dogs change, families change and new situations come up. I want people to know they always have someone they can call."

Some of his proudest moments come from seeing families stay together because of the work they put in. One success story that still stands out involved an older couple in Columbia, SC and their adopted bully breed, Maya. Although Maya was affectionate with people, she struggled around other dogs and had difficulty regulating her emotions. The family feared they might have to give her up if things didn't improve.

After completing a three-week board-and-train program, working closely with the owners through lessons and follow-up coaching, Maya transformed. "Their dedication and consistency on the back end is what made my work stick," Blanks says. "They created the relationship and understanding with Maya that allowed her to become a permanent member of their family."

Those are the stories that continue to motivate him.

Currently operating as a one-person business, Blanks says staying small allows him to focus on quality over quantity. In the future, he plans to possibly grow alongside his longtime partner, Teresa, and their two young daughters while maintaining the personalized approach that defines Balanced Life K9.

“

Dogs change, families change and new situations come up. I want people to know they always have someone they can call.”

Whether helping a new puppy build good habits or giving owners the confidence to enjoy reliable off-leash adventures with an older dog, Blanks' goal remains the same: helping people and their dogs build a relationship that lasts a lifetime.

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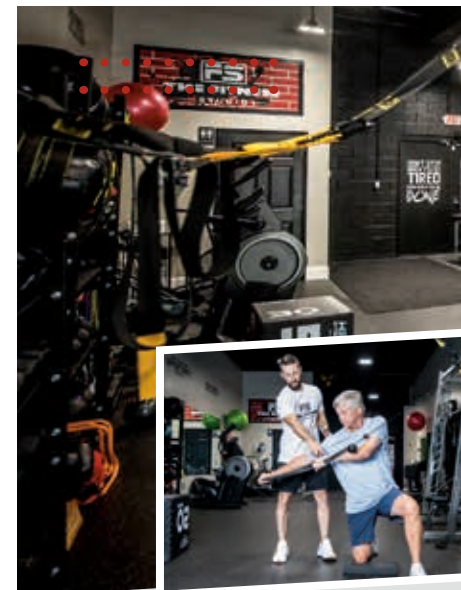
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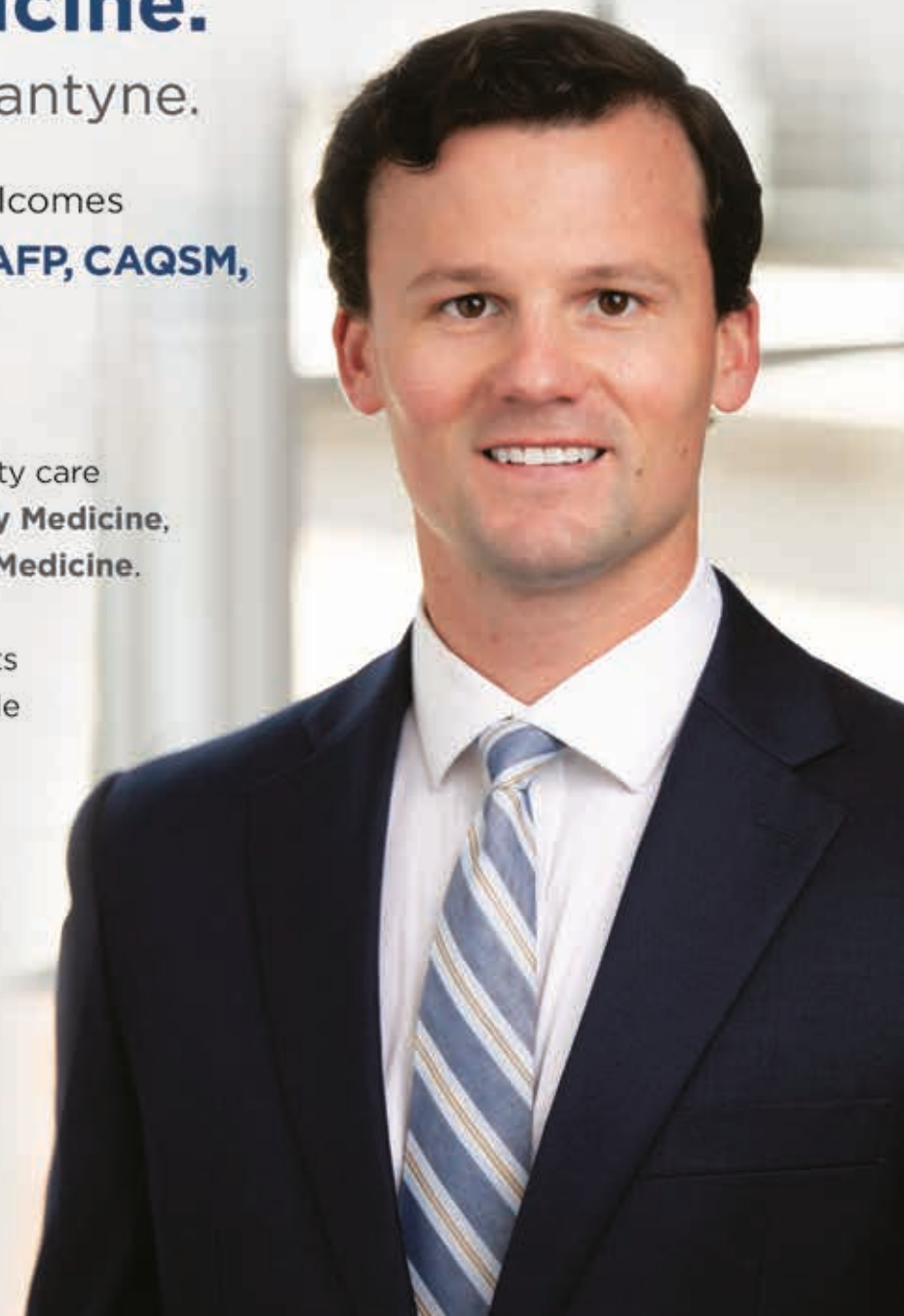
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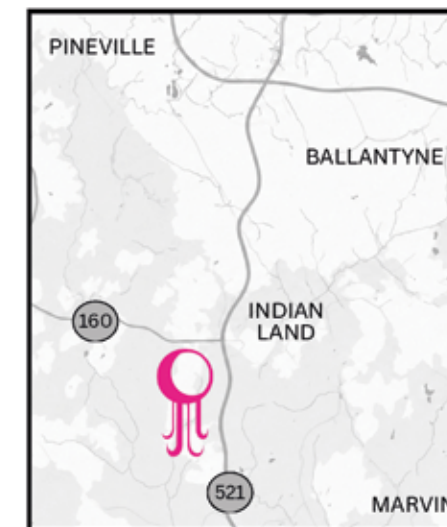


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Our *Athlete of the Month/Young Achiever* section is dedicated to highlighting the incredible talents and accomplishments of local kids and teens.

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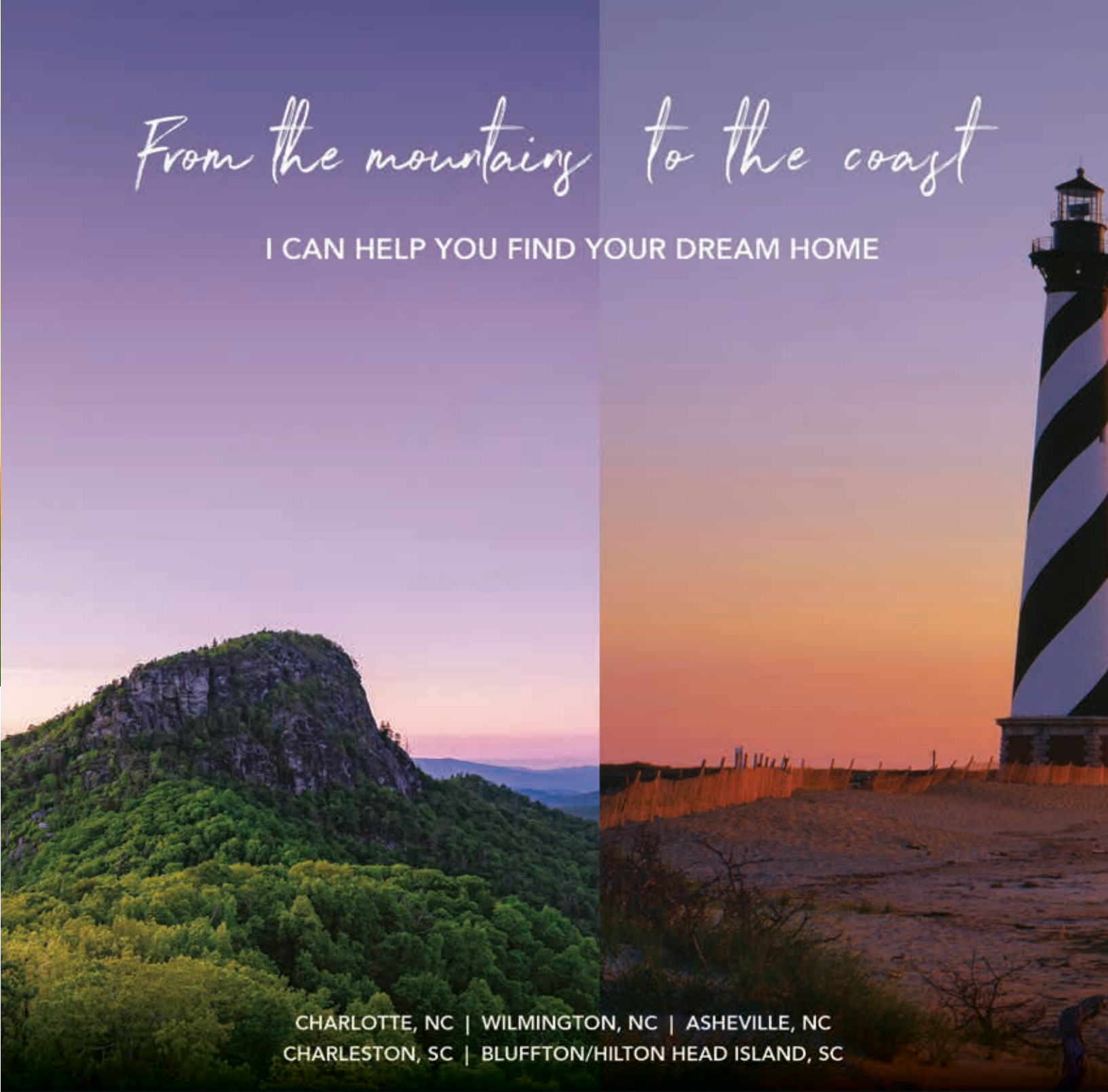
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Peyton Ding has been a certified Kumon Instructor since 2008, when he opened the Carmel West center on Johnston Road. Raised in a family of educators—his father was a school principal and his mother a teacher—Peyton developed an early appreciation for mathematics, reading and education.

His path to Kumon was also personal. Peyton and his family moved to Charlotte from Canada 26 years ago through his corporate career. He later discovered Kumon when his own children, Megan and Michael, enrolled at a young age. Watching their progress convinced him of the value of the method and eventually inspired him to bring that experience to other Charlotte families.

Today, both of Peyton's children are physicians, and they credit Kumon with helping them develop the academic foundation, self-discipline and study habits that served them throughout their education. For Peyton, their experience reinforced something he continues to see in students every day: Kumon can teach much more than math and reading.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT



Mr. Peyton Ding, instructor, Kumon of Charlotte Carmel West.



THE INSTRUCTOR MAKES THE DIFFERENCE

While Kumon is a global learning method, Peyton believes the relationship between instructor, student and family matters enormously at the local level.

At Carmel West, he makes a point of being approachable and accessible to parents and of understanding the individual needs of each student. The center maintains open communication with families and works with parents to determine strategies that can best support a child's academic progress.

That personal involvement is a defining part of the Carmel West experience.

Peyton's goal isn't simply to help a child complete a worksheet or improve a grade. He wants students to develop

confidence, discipline, independence and resilience—the qualities that allow them to tackle increasingly difficult work on their own.

Some of his favorite moments happen when a student suddenly realizes exactly that.

The center describes it as the "light bulb" moment: a child masters a concept that had been difficult and realizes, "I can do this on my own!" Peyton sees the change not only in the student's work but in the way the child carries himself or herself afterward—with a new sense of accomplishment and confidence.

That independence is central to the Kumon Method. Rather than focusing solely on getting ahead academically, the program is designed to build lifelong learning habits, including goal setting,

time management, perseverance and the ability to work independently.

For Peyton, those skills are ultimately as important as math and reading proficiency. "Since 2008, Mr. Peyton has dedicated himself to helping students from pre-K through high school achieve excellence in math and reading," the center shares. "His passion for the Kumon Method goes far beyond academic achievement; he strives to help every student become confident, disciplined, independent and resilient."

After 18 years, Peyton still finds his greatest satisfaction in watching students recognize what they are capable of achieving. And that may be what distinguishes Kumon of Charlotte Carmel West most: a proven educational method paired with an instructor who has made helping individual students succeed his life's work.



Kumon of Charlotte Carmel West is often ranked as the top learning center in Charlotte.

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WHAT SETS KUMON CARMEL WEST APART

Kumon of Charlotte Carmel West is often ranked as the top learning center in Charlotte. Kumon of Charlotte Carmel West combines the established Kumon Math and Reading program with services designed around the needs of local families. The center offers:

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The center serves students from pre-K through high school and offers classes Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.

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For Emily, estate and financial planning is personal.

Her path into the industry began after completing her own estate and financial plan and experiencing firsthand the peace of mind that came with knowing her daughter, Olivia, was protected. “That moment shifted everything for me,” Emily says. “I realized how many families delay planning simply because they don’t understand it or don’t know where to start. I knew I wanted to change that.”

Since 2022, Emily Ryon – Estate & Financial Planning has helped individuals, families and business owners navigate decisions surrounding estate planning, retirement, wealth building, insurance, 401(k)s and other financial needs. Working remotely, Emily serves clients in all 50 states.

A PERSONAL APPROACH

Emily describes her process as “peeling back the layers like an onion.”

“Every person, family and business is different, so I don’t believe in a one-size-fits-all approach,” she says. “I take the time to understand what matters to my clients, what they already have in place and what may be missing before we talk about solutions.”

That emphasis on listening and education is at the heart of her business. “My standard is one I won’t compromise on: my clients should leave a conversation feeling more informed — not more confused.”

Emily begins with a **free** discovery call to understand each client’s goals, needs and unique circumstances. She helps clients navigate the estate planning and financial planning

“I take the time to understand what matters to my clients, what they already have in place and what may be missing before we talk about solutions.”

processes, providing education, guidance and access to professional platforms. As an independent financial services broker, Emily has access to more than 200 financial and insurance providers, allowing her to explore a variety of options that may be suited to each client’s individual needs.

Emily’s team consists of a network of estate planning and financial professionals serving clients nationwide, with professionals licensed to serve clients across all 50 states.

FROM EDUCATOR TO PLANNER

Originally from Lakeland, FL, Emily came to the Carolinas after high school, attending Winthrop University and York Technical College. She earned an associate degree in early care and education and began her career as a preschool teacher. She later worked in the mental health field as a care coordinator and manager before discovering her passion for estate and financial planning. Looking back, she sees a common thread throughout those careers: helping people understand their circumstances and find a path forward.

Today, Emily lives near Ballantyne with Olivia, now a fifth grader, and has become increasingly involved in the surrounding community. She joined the *Stroll Ballantyne Country Club* partner community in February 2026. “I’m excited to continue building relationships, supporting local families and businesses and being a resource to the community around me,” she says.

EDUCATION FIRST

Emily is particularly proud of the free educational workshops she offers on estate and financial planning. They are designed to give people an opportunity to learn and ask questions without pressure or an expectation that they become clients. “I love creating an environment where people can simply learn, ask questions and understand their options,” she says. Her website follows the same philosophy, with *Learn* and *Resources* pages, educational articles and digital brochures visitors can view, download and share.

For Emily, some of the most rewarding feedback comes when clients tell her, “I’m so thankful you came into my life.” Referrals from those clients are especially meaningful. “At the end of the day, one of my biggest wins is knowing that I’ve helped someone feel a little less overwhelmed and a lot more informed,” she says. “That’s what makes this work so rewarding for me.”

“HOPE IS NOT A PLAN”

Emily’s advice to families is straightforward: don’t wait for a crisis to begin learning about estate and financial planning. “I’ve heard more real-life horror stories than I can count, and if there’s one thing I’ve learned, it’s this: hope is not a plan,” she says.

She encourages people — particularly parents of minor children and property owners — to educate themselves

about wills, trusts, probate and other planning tools and to seek appropriate professional guidance for their individual circumstances. “You don’t have to wait until you’re older or have significant assets to start planning,” Emily says. “There’s value in understanding your options at every stage of life.”

Her goal is not for clients to arrive with all the answers. In fact, she says uncertainty is often the perfect place to begin. “You don’t have to have everything figured out before you reach out. That’s what I’m here for.”

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Planning an extraordinary vacation involves far more than choosing a beautiful destination or reserving an impressive hotel. It requires trusted relationships, firsthand knowledge, thoughtful research and careful attention to the details that can transform a vacation into a truly memorable experience.

At The Elegance of Travel, we are passionate about designing one-of-a-kind journeys that cannot simply be found through an online search. To do that well, we continually invest our own resources in discovering new experiences, developing relationships with exceptional travel partners and evaluating whether both new and established partners continue to meet our portfolio standards.

This past September, Shelley Benitez, Co-Founder and Chief Detail Officer of The Elegance of Travel, spent a week in Las Vegas attending Virtuoso Travel Week, one of the luxury travel industry's most important global gatherings. During the week, Shelley held 92 individual meetings with current and prospective partners.

Our attendance was an investment made by The Elegance of Travel—not only in our company, but also in the quality of the experiences we design for our clients. We believe we cannot continue

introducing our clients to exceptional destinations and opportunities unless we dedicate the time and resources necessary to discover them, understand them and personally develop relationships with the people responsible for delivering them.

Shelley met directly with directors of sales, general managers and destination specialists representing distinguished properties and travel companies around the world. These included Ashford Castle in Ireland; Mamula Island by Banyan Tree in Montenegro—the mysterious resort featured on our table at the *Stroll BCC*



Sip & Stroll—as well as Waldorf Astoria Monarch Beach; Mauna Kea Beach Hotel; Mandarin Oriental, New York; Abercrombie & Kent Kenya; Fairmont Scottsdale Princess; The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection; Castelfalfi and Golf Traveller, among others.

These conversations are about much more than viewing beautiful photographs or reviewing lists of amenities. Shelley's responsibility as Chief Detail Officer is to ensure our partners understand the individual requirements, preferences and expectations of each client.

Those details might include identifying a genuinely accessible room with a step-free walk-in shower and properly positioned grab bars. They could involve determining which suite is the quietest, where bedrooms are located within a private villa, how far the accommodations are from the beach or golf course, or whether the resort can oblige a dietary request late at night. If a partner cannot confidently meet an important requirement—or provide the level of service our clients deserve—we will not move forward with the reservation.

This dedication to detail is also why The Elegance of Travel charges a professional planning fee beginning at \$800 for the first week of travel.

Designing a personalized family vacation typically requires between 10 and 20 hours of research, consultation and coordination. We study resort and villa layouts; evaluate room configurations; review accessibility; consider proximity to beaches, golf, shopping and restaurants and



communicate directly with our partners. Once the information has been carefully reviewed, we create a customized proposal presenting the options we believe best match the client's vision.

Our planning fee includes up to two rounds of changes. Additional revisions may require a separate fee because each significant change can involve renewed research, further partner conversations, updated availability and a revised proposal. This process is intentionally thorough because our clients are making a substantial investment in their vacations; we want them to feel confident that the important details have been considered before they travel.

Now imagine planning a vacation for your own family. Even a trip for four people can easily require 15 hours of comparing accommodations, coordinating schedules, reviewing transportation and making reservations. If you value your personal time at just \$75 per hour, that represents \$1,125 of your time devoted to planning.

Then imagine coordinating a multigenerational journey for 10, 20 or even 30 family members. Suddenly, you are managing names, ages, flight schedules, bedroom arrangements, mobility considerations, food preferences, activities and countless



individual requests. Do you have the time—or the desire—to oversee every one of those details?

When you work with The Elegance of Travel, you are not simply paying someone to make reservations. You are investing in professional guidance, carefully vetted relationships, personalized advocacy and the confidence of knowing that someone is protecting both your valuable time and your travel investment.

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Know Your Risk

When Should You Start Breast Cancer Screening?

BY STANLEY MADU NWABUDIKE, M.D.,
DIVISION OF HEMATOLOGY & ONCOLOGY,
MUSC HEALTH LANCASTER MEDICAL CENTER



Breast cancer is the most common cancer affecting women in the United States. About one in eight women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime. The encouraging news is that when breast cancer is detected early, it is often treatable. Knowing your personal risk and understanding when to begin screening are important parts of your healthcare. As a medical oncologist, one of the questions I frequently get asked is, “When should I start getting mammograms?” The answer is not the same for everyone; it depends on your individual risk.

FOR WOMEN AT AVERAGE RISK

Many current guidelines recommend starting routine mammography at age 40 for women at average risk. How often you should be screened may vary based on the guideline, your age, your personal preferences and risk factors. Importantly, you do not have to wait until you develop symptoms or feel a lump. Screening mammograms are designed to find breast cancer before it causes symptoms.

KNOW IF YOU ARE AT HIGHER RISK

Some women have a higher-than-average risk and may need to begin screening earlier or have additional testing such as breast MRI and genetic counseling/testing.

Some risk factors include:

- A mother, sister, daughter or other close relative with breast cancer
- A known inherited gene mutation such as *BRCA1* or *BRCA2*
- A strong family history of breast, ovarian cancer or prostate cancer
- Previous radiation treatment to the chest at a young age
- Certain personal, medical or reproductive factors



Having a family member with breast cancer does not mean that you will develop breast cancer. However, it is important to discuss your risks with your healthcare provider. For some individuals, genetic testing may help clarify inherited cancer risk. MUSC Health offers free genetic health screenings through the In Our DNA SC initiative, including screening for genetic variants such as *BRCA1* and *BRCA2*. Learn more at [musc.edu/community/in-our-dna-sc](https://www.musc.edu/community/in-our-dna-sc).

WHAT ABOUT BREAST SYMPTOMS?

A mammogram is an important screening tool, but you should also pay attention to changes in your breasts.

Contact your healthcare provider if you notice a new lump, a change in breast size or shape, skin changes such as dimpling or thickening, nipple inversion or discharge or persistent changes that are unusual for you.

Most breast changes are not cancer, but new or concerning changes should be evaluated.

DON'T LET FEAR KEEP YOU FROM SCREENING

It is understandable to feel anxious about getting a mammogram. Some people worry about discomfort; others are afraid of what the test might find. It is important to remember that an abnormal mammogram does not mean you have cancer. Additional imaging or a biopsy may be recommended, and many abnormal screening results ultimately turn out not to be cancer.

THE BOTTOM LINE

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to breast cancer screening. If you are 40 or older, talk with your healthcare provider about beginning or continuing regular mammography. If you have a strong family history or other risk factors, don't

wait for a routine screening appointment to bring it up. You may benefit from a personalized assessment of your breast cancer risk.

Know your risks. Get screened and don't wait for symptoms to act.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Stanley Nwabudike, MD, is a board-certified hematologist and medical oncologist with MUSC Health who specializes in diagnosis and treatment of cancer and blood disorders. He is committed to providing compassionate, patient-centered care and helping patients navigate every stage of their cancer journey, from diagnosis through survivorship. Dr. Nwabudike sees patients in Lancaster and will begin seeing patients at the MUSC Health Indian Land Medical Office Pavilion this spring. To learn more or schedule an appointment, call 803-313-3004 or visit [muschealth.org](https://www.muschealth.org).



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Recommend a neighbor, pet, nonprofit, student, Veteran or other story for *Stroll Ballantyne Country Club*. We also welcome your favorite neighborhood photos—family gatherings, celebrations, travel adventures, sports, holidays and everyday moments.



Email: ballantyne@strollmag.com

NEW TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD?

Welcome! We'd love to get to know you.

Email ballantyne@strollmag.com to be added to our invitation list and receive calls for content, events and magazine updates.

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STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES

We're looking for Resident Reporters! High school students can build their resumes by writing stories and taking photos for *Stroll Ballantyne Country Club*. Email us to learn more.

FOR ADVERTISING INFORMATION

Ashley Grimm, Publisher

407-435-8611

ashley.grimm@n2pub.com

SHARE YOUR PHOTOS

What We'd Love to See

Email: ballantyne@strollmag.com



WHAT WE'D LOVE TO SEE

- **Labor Day/Fall Break** – Long weekends are great for getting out of town for a few days. Whether an exotic getaway or a quick trip to our nearby mountains, lakes and beaches, we'd love to see how you made the most of these long weekends.
- **Panthers Pride** – Panthers home games are great for tailgating and connecting with friends. Send us your game day photos.
- **Breast Cancer Awareness** – October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. We'd like to see how you showed your pink ribbon support.
- **Halloween** – Haunted houses, block parties and costume parades... Please share your spookiest and kookiest Halloween photos with us.
- **Fall Sports** – Share your favorite fall action shots with us.
- **Milestone Celebrations** – Do you or a loved one have a milestone birthday or anniversary coming up? Send us a memorable photo!
- **Weddings** – We'd love to share photos from summer and fall weddings in our community. Share the love by sending your wedding day pictures to us!



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resident business guide

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