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Firethorne

Happy One-Year  
Anniversary to  
*Stroll Firethorne!*



Precious Pet:  
Jacob the Pug  
Partner Spotlight  
on Einstein Bros  
Bagels  
Community News  
And More!

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## PUBLISHERS' NOTE



## Happy One-Year Anniversary to Stroll Firethorne!

*Fresh starts, full hearts*

Dear Neighbors,

As August arrives and the back-to-school season begins, I always find myself reflecting on how quickly the summer goes and how fast our kids seem to grow. This time of year brings new routines, fresh starts and all the emotions that come with watching our families step into a new season.

This August also marks a special milestone for *Stroll Firethorne* as we celebrate our one-year anniversary. It has been an incredible first year, and I want to sincerely thank our residents, contributors and advertising partners for making this magazine such a success. Your stories, photos, ideas and support have helped us create something that truly reflects the heart of our community. We couldn't do it without you, and I am so grateful for each of you.

Recently, my family was reminded of a lesson that feels especially fitting for this month: gratitude is often found in the small things. It is easy to focus on the big milestones, the busy schedules and the next thing on the calendar. But sometimes the moments that matter most are the quiet ones — a slow morning, a family dinner, a child's excitement over new school supplies, a walk through the neighborhood or a simple conversation at the end of the day.

Back-to-school season can feel full and fast, but it also gives us a chance to pause and appreciate the little pieces of everyday life that make our community and our families so special. The friendships, the familiar faces, the teachers who pour into our children and the neighbors who show up in big and small ways all remind us that there is so much to be thankful for.

As we head into this new school year, I hope we all find a few moments to slow down, notice the good around us and carry a little extra gratitude into the season ahead. Thank you for allowing us to be a small part of your lives this past year. Here's to another year of celebrating the people, places and stories that make Firethorne such a wonderful place to call home.

Warmly,

*Ashley and Nathan Grimm*

Publishers, *Stroll*



Please share your stories and photos with us by scanning the QR code here and tagging us on social media @strollballantynecountryclub.

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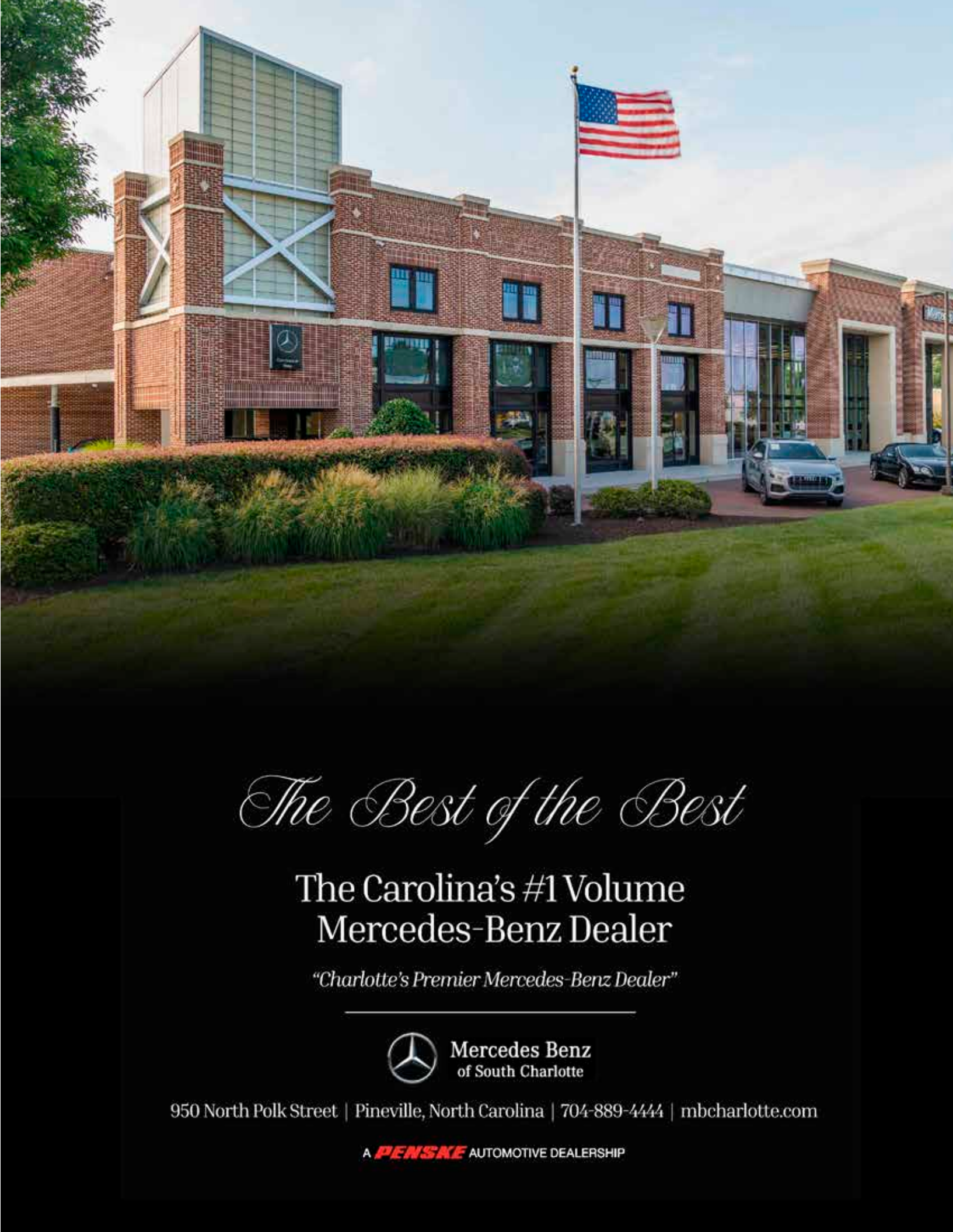
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## Stroll Into Wellness at Ballantyne Country Club

**ALL FIRETHORNE RESIDENTS  
AND MEMBERS ARE INVITED**

*Join us for an evening dedicated to  
wellness, connection and community  
at our Stroll Into Wellness event on  
Thursday, September 3, from 6 until 8 p.m.  
in the Stephenson Room at Ballantyne  
Country Club. All are welcome!*

**T**his special evening will bring together local wellness companies and professionals for a relaxed, engaging experience focused on all things health, beauty, lifestyle and well-being. Guests will have the opportunity to meet local experts, learn about wellness-focused services, discover new resources and connect with neighbors and business owners in a welcoming setting.

The evening will include music, networking, light refreshments, raffles, door prizes and a cash bar, creating the perfect atmosphere to mingle, unwind and explore ways to feel your best from the inside out.

Whether you are interested in fitness, nutrition, self-care, aesthetics, mental wellness and healthy living, or simply want to enjoy a fun night out with the community, this event is designed for you.

Come *Stroll Into Wellness* with us and celebrate the people and businesses helping our community live well.

### EVENT DETAILS

**Date:** Thursday, September 3

**Time:** 6-8 p.m.

**Location:** Ballantyne Country Club,  
Stephenson Room

**Featuring:** Local wellness companies, music,  
networking, light refreshments, raffles, door prizes and a cash bar



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# THE BARTHEL FAMILY



When Angela and Ron Barthel relocated from Sandy Hook, CT, to the Charlotte area in 2016, they were looking for great schools and a welcoming community to raise their family. They found both in Firethorne.

After a short stay in Waverly while house hunting, the Barthels purchased their home on Baltusrol Lane in May 2017 and have spent the past nine years building friendships and making memories that have made Firethorne feel like home. “We feel truly blessed to have such a great neighborhood for our children to grow up in,” they say.

Ron, who grew up in Woodbridge, CT, and Angela, who grew up between southern Michigan and the Miami, FL area, first met in 1999 while they were college students in New York City. Their chance meeting took place over dinner at the iconic Italian restaurant La Mela in Little Italy, and the rest is history.

Both earned undergraduate degrees from Fordham University. Angela later completed graduate studies at Fairfield University, and Ron earned his graduate degree from New York University. Today, Ron serves as chief of staff for cybersecurity at TIAA, while Angela is a registered nurse whose career has included ICU, emergency and trauma care as well as virtual healthcare.

Their three sons keep the family busy year-round. Rhys, 15, will begin his freshman year at Marvin Ridge High School this fall. A competitive swimmer with SwimMAC, he first discovered his love of the sport on Firethorne’s summer swim team before joining SwimMAC in 2021. He’s also part of the Mandarin language immersion program and enjoys fishing, beach trips and spending time with friends.

Sebastian, 13, is entering eighth grade at Marvin Ridge Middle School, where he competes in cross country and track. He enjoys middle-distance running, golf, math and puzzles and has also been part of the Mandarin immersion program since kindergarten.

The youngest, Nico, 6, recently completed kindergarten at Rea View Elementary, where he is enrolled in the Spanish language immersion program. Whether he’s swimming, golfing, playing tennis or talking about his favorite birds, Nico approaches everything with enthusiasm. His parents say he’s especially fascinated by birds and numbers.

The family’s household also includes two unique pets: Nala, a snow lynx Bengal cat, and Sasha, a pet tarantula.

“THE MANY FRIENDS WE HAVE MET LIVING IN THE CHARLOTTE AREA HAVE BECOME FAMILY TO US, AND WE ENJOY SPENDING TIME WITH THEM ANY CHANCE WE GET, ESPECIALLY ON HOLIDAYS.”

—THE BARTHEL

Outside of work, Ron enjoys spending time in the yard, while Angela loves playing mahjong and gathering with friends. Entertaining has become a favorite pastime, especially since many of the friends they’ve made in Charlotte are fellow transplants who have become like extended family.

Angela is passionate about encouraging others to prioritize their health. After being diagnosed with breast cancer through a routine mammogram in 2025, she is now cancer-free and dedicated to raising awareness of the importance of annual screenings and preventive care within her community.

That sense of community is also reflected in the Barthels’ holiday traditions. Christmas, Halloween, St. Patrick’s Day and other celebrations are often spent together with neighbors and close friends, creating traditions their children have grown up cherishing.

Travel is another family passion. This year has included trips to the Bahamas, Kiawah Island, Amelia Island, Florida’s scenic 30A and other favorite beach destinations throughout the Southeast.

When they’re not traveling, you’ll often find the Barthels enjoying concerts, sporting events, local restaurants or spending time at the Country Club of the Carolinas. They appreciate being just a short drive from both Charlotte and downtown Waxhaw while still enjoying the beauty, outdoor lifestyle and strong sense of community that first drew them to Firethorne.

And if you ask Ron about his favorite recent discovery? He’ll happily tell you the new Costco is exactly six minutes from his front door.

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START YOUR DAY WITH  
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BY CONTENT ASSISTANT ANDREA POWELL

Residents in Ballantyne and South End neighborhoods have a distinct advantage over other Charlotteans. They live close enough to an Einstein Bros Bagels that they can start their mornings with a warm, chewy bagel and decadent shmear and wash it down with a delicious, piping hot (you’ve been warned!) cup of coffee. If only every day could start that way!

While the South Boulevard location originally opened more than 20 years ago, Franchisee owner Phillip Rice (and his business partner) purchased it in 2011, shortly after he moved to the Queen City. The Ballantyne store (his first build) at 13736 Conlan Circle followed soon thereafter. With the success of Einstein’s, he continued to expand his map; he currently owns and operates 36

Einstein Bros Bagels and Moe’s Southwest franchises across the country.

Phillip may like burritos, but breakfast food is his first love. “I’m a morning person. I’ve always been an early riser, and I got my start washing dishes at a Tim Horton’s,” he explains. Born and raised in Columbus, OH, he went to Ohio State University before eventually moving to Charlotte to purchase Einstein Bros Bagels on South Boulevard.

In case you’ve been living under a rock and are not familiar, Einstein’s bagels are delicate, chewy and delicious. They offer traditional flavors but also play around with seasonal offerings: apple cinnamon, cheddar jalapeño, cheesy hashbrown, country sausage, maple French toast and spinach Florentine, to name a few. Shmear flavors include both familiar (plain, garden veggie, onion and chive) and non-traditional (honey almond, country pepper, jalapeño salsa and strawberry). If you’re in the mood for a sandwich, Einstein’s offers endless classic combinations of eggs, various cheeses and breakfast meats but you can find both healthy and indulgent “signature” sandwiches on the menu. A few standouts: try the Maplehouse Egg Sandwich which features cage-free eggs with pork sausage, bacon, cheddar cheese, honey almond cream cheese shmear and syrup on a fresh-baked maple French toast bagel. Or order the Chorizo Sunrise Egg Sandwich with cage-free eggs, chorizo sausage, cheddar cheese, smashed avocado and jalapeño salsa cream cheese shmear on a fresh-baked green chile bagel.

Looking for something a bit lighter? You might like the Santa Fe Egg White Sandwich – cage-free egg whites with turkey sausage, cheddar cheese, salsa and jalapeño salsa cream cheese shmear on a fresh-baked asiago bagel thin. Einstein’s coffee (drip, lattes, mochas and more) is fresh and stays hot until the last drop. But don’t think that breakfast is your only option. They have cold cuts, cheeses, veggies and lox to load onto bagels in winning combinations as well.

Everything is completely fresh: the bagels are baked in-house after being proofed and steamed and they get multiple deliveries of ingredients per week. “We have no preservatives in our bagels. And though a bagel might have more carbs, it’s way healthier than fast food!” Phillip declares.

Phillip has managed to build a community with his two Einstein Bros Bagels locations. He has regular customers, but he also has at least a dozen employees who’ve been with him for the 14 years he’s lived in Charlotte. He recognizes that

working the “morning shift” has its perks. “It’s an early start but you get to finish early because we close at 2pm. My team can make sure they have dinner with their family every night,” he says. Phillip extends that family approach by generously supporting the city that has given so much to him. “We give churches and other non-profits a lot of discounts and donations. We try to be out and about in the community as much as possible, especially when people reach out and ask for help,” he says.

The years following Covid have seen a rise in both drive-through orders and catering. “Giving customers an option to stay in their cars has become extremely important for business,” he acknowledges. And catering now generates around a quarter of his business. “Ordering is so easy through ebcatering.com. We can deliver because we have dedicated drivers. And you can have your order as early as 6 a.m.!”

With bagels at his fingertips at all hours of the morning and afternoon, you’re probably wondering if Phillip could possibly be sick of them yet. “Not a chance,” he laughs. “Lox on an everything bagel. I probably eat one five days a week.”



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## PRECIOUS PET

# JACOB

*A boy and his dog*

BY CONTRIBUTING WRITERS  
DAVID FARROW AND  
ELISABETH FARROW



You know about pugs, right? Smushie-face dogs and ours has tons of folds around his neck and down his back. He's tan and people who know pugs call his coloring buff, with black shading on his face to show off the wrinkles. (Although he's not old; he's only 8.)

Our pug's name is Jacob. He's named after the werewolf Jake in *Twilight*, the popular YA novels and blockbuster movies. His pug mom (my mom) knows all the movies by heart, and the family had an Edward, another pug, before Jake. Jacob the pug, like his namesake, is all male. The family even has plans to adopt a Bella pug soon, and if Jacob and Bella want to have puppies, the more the merrier, the pug's human mom says. You can never have too many pugs. A gaggle of pugs flapping around the yard, turning pug circles when a happy pug tucks his tail and runs in tight rotations, is the goal.

I love pugs and so does my family. When our Edward crossed the Rainbow Bridge, Mom was super sad. She scoured the breeder sites. When she found one in South Carolina with puppies on the way, we visited. Jakey had just been born but he was too young to come home with us. He had one brother and one sister who were both promised to other families, although my brother Miller wanted the girl pug (the breeder had named her Bubbles) instead.

Jacob sleeps with Mom but he usually starts panting in the middle of the night because he is always hot; if he wakes Mom, she puts him in the bathroom on the cold hardwoods to cool down. He also has his bed between the toilet and the tub. Dad sleeps through every kind of snorting and snoring.

Our Jake eats people food — chicken and veggies twice a day. Other additions include scrambled egg and sweet potato. Human grade treats (meaning you or I can eat them), are his go-to snack of choice. Jake prefers duck, chicken or meat flavor.

My mom's work friend adopted an Australian shepherd named Austin. He's Jake's best friend. When we are in the SUV and we ask Jacob if he wants to go see Austin, he will practically scratch the door off to get to Austin. Jacob is that excited.

I'd say Jacob is not spoiled but just the right amount of "doted-on." I learned that saying from my Pop, on my dad's side. And Jake gives all that love back because he loves to cuddle. We watch movies and read books, and he sleeps on the sofa, stuck to me like Velcro.

Favorite things: The little guy loves the beach and the waves. We enjoy our nature walks and bike riding through the neighborhood, the wind buzzing back his fur as he views the world, a bright green blur, from his specially designed Nantucket basket seat.

Jacob the pug has been to the Met and ridden the subway in NYC. He's traveled to Universal Studios in Florida and visited the islands courtesy of the Polynesian Resort at Disney, so you could say he's worldly.

In fact, Jacob's my soulmate, and my brother and my parents (the Farrow clan) feel this same way about him too. Once you have a pug in the family, no other breed can compare. Hey, so now that you know how awesome they are, don't you want a pug too?

To have your pet featured, please email Delia at [ballantyne@strollmag.com](mailto:ballantyne@strollmag.com).



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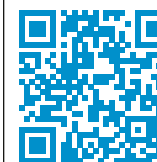
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*As America celebrates its 250th anniversary this year, we'd love to honor the Veterans in our neighborhood.*

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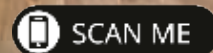
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Students and teachers gather in the school's open-air "palenque" for their morning meeting.

#### IN A WORLD INCREASINGLY SHAPED

by division and rapid change, one nonprofit is proving that education can be a powerful force for connection. La Paz Global, founded in 2007, supports learning communities that value and promote our shared humanity.

The organization grew from a grassroots effort to help US donors support the scholarship program at La Paz Community School, a bilingual K-12 International Baccalaureate school in Guanacaste, Costa Rica. Today, La Paz Global pursues two core priorities: providing scholarships for students from underserved communities and promoting the school's human-centered educational practices for replication across the world.

The scholarship program's results speak for themselves; among 96 current recipients and 36 graduates, 100% have earned their diplomas and gone on to universities, professional careers and lives of impact. One of those students is Yaritza Villegas. Growing up in rural Guanacaste with limited access to higher education, Yaritza's trajectory changed when she entered La Paz on scholarship. She went on to earn degrees from Marymount Manhattan College and a master's from Columbia University's Teachers College, later serving as Director of Advancement for La Paz Global itself. Today, she has returned to her hometown to help run her family's construction company, driving economic growth in the very community that shaped her. Her story embodies La Paz Global's core belief: that expanding access to human-centered education creates a ripple

effect, cultivating leadership, compassion and cross-cultural understanding that reaches far beyond the classroom.

That mission has found a vibrant champion in Charlotte. After her family spent the 2022-2023 school year in Costa Rica — where her four children attended La Paz Community School — Charlotte resident and La Paz Global board president Anna Anglemeyer returned home inspired to stay involved with La Paz. She founded *Let's Rock*, a Charlotte-based fundraiser featuring an evening when she and her husband Brad open their home to friends, neighbors and community leaders for music and connection. The entertainment comes courtesy of The Boat Dogs, the Anglemeyers' twin sons' band, performing alongside their Charlotte Latin classmates. Local businesses contribute through

## Building Bridges Through Education

*La Paz Global's mission to connect and inspire*

BY LINDSAY LOSASSO, MANAGING DIRECTOR, LA PAZ GLOBAL



Abel McClellenn, co-founder and General Director of La Paz Community School, shares how La Paz Global is expanding access to human-centered education during the Let's Rock fundraiser.

in-kind donations, and an online auction features Costa Rican vacation packages. This year, the event raised more than \$22,000 for La Paz Global, a remarkable reflection of what community-driven philanthropy can accomplish.

At its heart, *Let's Rock* represents something larger: two communities — Charlotte, NC and coastal Guanacaste, Costa Rica — united by a shared commitment to education and human connection.

To learn more, sign up for the newsletter or support the endowment fund, visit [lapazglobal.org](http://lapazglobal.org) or email [donations@lapazglobal.org](mailto:donations@lapazglobal.org). Follow along on Instagram at [@lapaz\\_global](https://www.instagram.com/lapaz_global).



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# SHINE A SPOTLIGHT ON YOUNG ACHIEVERS!

*Do you know a young neighbor who deserves to be celebrated? Whether it's sports, the arts, academics or giving back through community service, we want to hear about it!*

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

This is your chance to showcase their hard work, inspire others and give them the recognition they deserve. Submit your nominations, story ideas or even a quick note about your child's achievements—we'll take it from there!

Share your ideas with us today and help us feature standout kids and teens in our community.

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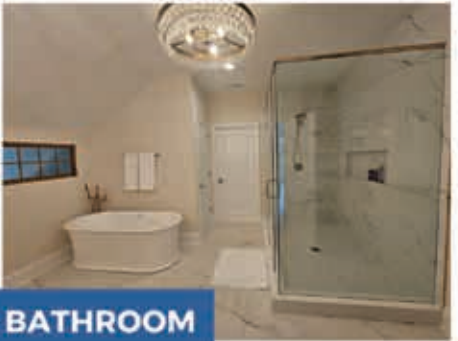
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## MONTHLY MEETUP

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**Date:** 3rd Wednesday of each month

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# Coffee With a Cop

*Building relationships,  
one cup at a time*

Each month, *Stroll* joins **Coffee with a Cop**, and we'd love for more of our residents and community partners to come along. These gatherings offer a simple yet meaningful way to connect—sharing a cup of coffee while building trust and understanding between Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department (CMPD) officers and the neighbors they serve.

*Coffee with a Cop* creates space for open dialogue in a relaxed setting, where residents can ask questions, voice concerns and get to know the officers who help keep our community safe. Events aren't on a fixed schedule, but updates are regularly shared via *Stroll*, CMPD Facebook page, the City of Charlotte website and the official Coffee with a Cop page.

Together, we're building stronger communities—one cup at a time.

To share your photos, please email Delia at [ballantyne@strollmag.com](mailto:ballantyne@strollmag.com).

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- **Summer Camps and Vacations** – Share photos of your favorite summer memories.
- **Late Summer/Fall Sports** – Whatever sport you enjoy this time of year, we invite you to share your best action shots with us.
- **Back to School** – Whether you are heading to graduate school or preschool, we'd like to see how you are preparing for the new school year.
- **Labor Day** – A great weekend to get out of town one last time before the routine of another school year sets in. Show us how you made the most of this work-free weekend.
- **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 weddings in our community. Share the love by sending your special wedding day pictures to us!



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