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the life in
QUAIL HOLLOW



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There's a moment every September when you notice it. It usually happens on the commute. Usually sitting in traffic or waiting on the platform. The light through the window has shifted. It's the same sun, and the same route you've driven a hundred times, but something is different. The world outside looks golden in a way it didn't the week before. Summer is over. Fall is here. And somehow, every single year, it catches you off guard.

Before you know it, the lightning bugs are gone, and the leaves are piling up in the yard. The promise of a weekend of football pulls you through the workweek. The ice-cold summertime cans are traded for smoky brown bottles. The season doesn't just change the scenery. It changes the mindset.

There's an ambition to September that feels earned. Q4 is here, and with it comes a focus that summer, for all its pleasures, rarely allows. We get back to work, heads down, sleeves rolled up, tackling the final quarter of the year with purpose. DIY projects and neglected to-do lists finally get their due, well before the impending holidays. And somewhere in the middle of all that momentum is a quieter pull toward a slower evening, a good meal, and the particular comfort of being home.

This issue of Quail Hollow was made for exactly that mood. We hope it finds you at the beginning of something good.

Andrea Kroger

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OUTDOOR SPACES

Beyond Blooms

Fall offers a rare opportunity to build a garden for all five senses.

BY NICOLE LETTS

Gardens are often planted with eyes in mind, focusing on how colors and height complement each other and please the overall home aesthetic. In 2026, however, there's a trend to take your skills a bit further by creating sensory gardens: spaces that are planted to reflect all five senses. Think the rustle of grass, the scent of lavender, and the texture of shrubbery. As the seasons shift from the sunny days of summer to the shorter ones of fall, now is the time to replant a garden that will sustain the season while giving you a reason to stop and smell (and feel!) the roses.

WHY FALL?

Fall is actually an ideal planting season. Cooler soil temperatures reduce transplant stress, and plants have time to establish roots before the ground freezes. The season also strips away some of summer's showiness, making texture, structure, and scent more noticeable, which is precisely what a sensory garden is designed to celebrate.

WHAT TO PLANT

For sound, Little Bluestem and Switchgrass are about as universal as ornamental grasses get, thriving across most of the country and catching even the lightest breeze with their feathery plumes. For scent, catmint and bee balm are both hardy, low-maintenance choices that release fragrance when brushed. For touch, lamb's ear has famously soft, velvety leaves. For taste, herbs are an obvious choice; chives and thyme are unfussy. And for sight, ornamental kale deepens in color as temperatures drop, making it visually interesting and ever-changing as the season continues.

In a season already inclined towards reflection, sensory gardens offer planters a place to slow down and take in their environment. You can start as simply as a pot of rosemary at your front door, or plant an entire space that captures every sense down to the smallest of details. The next time you are at your local nursery, choose plants that don't just look good; tap into all of your senses and select some that feel, smell, and even sound good too.



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MAKE & BAKE

Sweet Onion Dip

Store-bought is fine, but homemade is better.

BY NICOLE LETTS

Football season is back, as is the promise of tailgating... and all of the delicious food that comes with it. Whether you are planning to party under a tent with a full spread or keep it simple at home, this dip is sure to please any fan.

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 sweet onions (like Vidalia), finely diced
- 2 tbsp butter
- 8 oz cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup sour cream
- ½ cup mayonnaise
- ½ tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp onion powder
- ½ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp black pepper
- 2 tbsp fresh chives, chopped (for garnish)

STEP 1:

Start by caramelizing the onions in butter over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally until soft and golden. This process will take about 30 minutes. Don't rush it; that's where all the flavor comes from. Set aside and let cool for 10 minutes.

STEP 2:

In a large bowl, blend the cream cheese, sour cream, and mayonnaise until smooth. Fold in the cooled onions along with the garlic powder, onion powder, salt, and black pepper.

STEP 3:

Top with fresh chopped chives and serve with kettle chips, toasted baguette slices, or fresh vegetables. Present the dip slightly warm, or refrigerate it overnight for even more flavor.

MAKE IT YOUR OWN

Deliver a dip with pizzazz with these creative twists on our classic recipe.

- 1. Change the base.** Swap the sour cream for Greek yogurt to lighten up the calories without sacrificing creaminess.
- 2. Add bacon.** Doesn't bacon make everything better? Fold in crispy bacon bits to up the ante on savory.
- 3. Turn up the heat.** Fold in a diced jalapeño with the onions while caramelizing, or stir in a dash of hot sauce at the end for a subtle kick.

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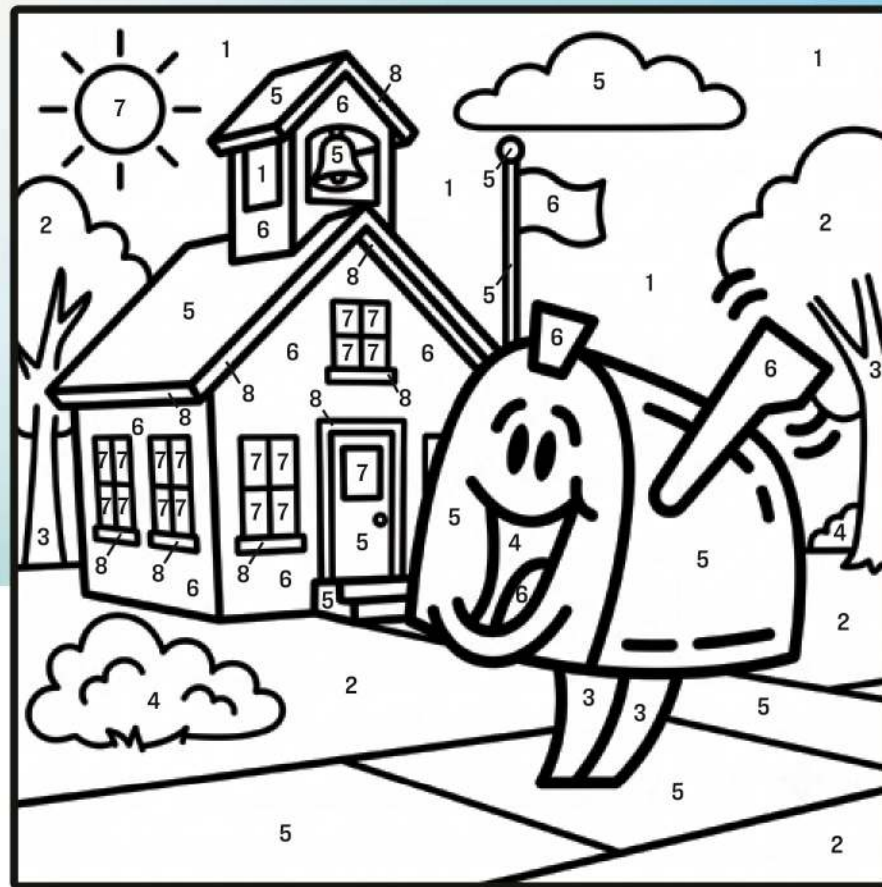
Strolly's FIRST DAY

Our mascot, Strolly, is ready for his first day of school. Color this page to bring the beginning of his school year to life.

BY NICOLE LETTS

- 1: Blue ●
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- 5: Grey ●
6: Red ●
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Once you've finished, take a photo of yourself with your coloring page and send it to us. We can't wait to see your creativity! (We may even publish some!)



Fall Bingo

Use our bingo card to have the ultimate Fall. Use the blanks to fill in your own creative ideas for a bingo space. Then, send us a photo of you crossing off an activity from your card. (You may even land in our pages!)

ACTIVITIES COULD BE:

- Order a pumpkin-flavored treat
- Watch a fall movie
- Visit a farmer's market
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- Carve a pumpkin
- Make soup
- Sit by a fire
- Read a fall book

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BUILDING A GOLFER FROM THE GROUND UP: Your Best Golf Years Aren't Behind You

ROD GREENE

Let's face it — you're probably not in your 20s anymore. But that doesn't mean your best golf years are behind you. In fact, your years of experience on the course might be your biggest competitive edge, if you know how to use your body to back it up.

This month kicks off a series on exactly that: what's really happening in your body when you swing, why certain muscles quietly misfire and cause that hook or slice you can't seem to shake, and how understanding your own body mechanics — not just your grip or your stance — can be the edge that keeps you

playing your best golf, long into your 70s and beyond.

Here's the part most golfers never learn: every swing is a partnership between two types of muscles. Your **gas pedal muscles** are supposed to drive the motion — generating the power and rotation that gets your hips turning through the swing. Your **brake pedal muscles** are supposed to control that motion — slowing and stabilizing it so the movement stays smooth instead of flying apart.

When your gas pedal muscles get weak or lazy, they stop pulling their weight — so your brake pedal muscles

tighten up to compensate, trying to do both jobs at once. Muscles built to control motion are now also being asked to create it. They weren't designed for that, so they do the job poorly, and your hip rotation shortens up without you ever noticing.

Your body still wants to finish the swing, though — so it borrows power from somewhere else. Usually your lower back. Or your shoulder. Muscles that were never meant to drive a golf swing suddenly become your engine, because the muscles that should be doing that job checked out months ago.

The takeaway: it's not your bad back — it's your root-cause muscles. Fix the cause, and the symptom disappears.

Next time in this series: why that slice you can't shake probably isn't a swing flaw at all — it's a muscle asking for attention.

Rod Greene,

The Muscle Engineers —
A Mobile Massage Company

Rod Greene has spent 31 years as a massage therapist and owns The Muscle Engineers, a mobile sports massage company serving Charlotte's active adults. He specializes in outcome-based massage that gets to the root cause of pain and performance issues, not just the symptoms. Every session also gives back — \$10 from each visit supports local Alzheimer's caregivers through Rod's "Massage for The Cause" initiative.



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More Than Dinner: Why Date Night Still Matters

Looking for a fresh date night idea? One evening at Taste Buds Kitchen proved that making memories can be just as satisfying as making dinner.

ANDREA KROGER

20 September 2026

Life has a way of filling every square on the calendar. Between work meetings, kids' activities, sports practices, errands, and everything in between, it's easy for couples to find themselves managing life together instead of simply enjoying each other. That's why my husband and I recently decided to try something different.

Rather than making another dinner reservation, we signed up for a handmade pasta class at Taste Buds Kitchen - Indian Land - Fort Mill. As one of Stroll's newest business partners, they're bringing a fresh and unique experience to our community—one that combines great food with even better memories.

Located just minutes from Charlotte in Indian Land, Taste Buds Kitchen is a chef-led, hands-on cooking studio designed for everyone from young children to seasoned home cooks. Their calendar is packed with experiences including pasta making, sushi rolling, global cuisine classes, kids' camps, birthday parties, corporate team-building events, and fun BYOB date nights. The

studio was created with one goal in mind: **Learn. Laugh. Cook.** And after spending an evening there, I'd say they nailed it.

Armed with aprons and plenty of laughter, we mixed dough, rolled fresh pasta, and transformed a handful of simple ingredients into a delicious meal. There was no pressure to be perfect. The chefs made every step approachable, whether you cook every night or rarely venture beyond takeout.

Was every noodle perfectly shaped? Not even close.

Did we laugh more than we had all week? Absolutely.

There was something refreshing about putting our phones away, working side by side, and learning something new together. The evening wasn't about creating restaurant-quality pasta—it was about creating a memory.

Sometimes the best dates aren't elaborate or expensive. They're simply opportunities to be present with one another.

Whether you've been married for two years or twenty-five, investing in your relationship doesn't require a weekend getaway. Sometimes it just means saying "yes" to a new experience.

If you're looking for inspiration, consider:

- A cooking class
- A sunset picnic
- A local concert
- Mini golf or pickleball
- A pottery or painting class
- A hike you've never explored
- Volunteering together for a favorite nonprofit

The goal isn't finding the perfect date. It's making time for each other.

As we sat down to enjoy the pasta we'd created, I realized the meal was only part of the experience. The conversations, teamwork, and laughter were what we'd remember long after the last bite. In a season when life moves at full speed, maybe the greatest gift we can give our relationships is simply uninterrupted time together.

So here's your gentle reminder: Put date night on the calendar—and protect it.

You—and your relationship—will be glad you did.

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THE GLOW UP *laser spa*

For Alissa Mariello, beauty and wellness are about much more than appearances—they're about confidence, freedom and helping people feel their best every day.

BY CONTENT COORDINATOR DELIA MCMULLEN,
PHOTOS BY CHARISMA AT A BREW & YOU HEADSHOTS

AS THE FOUNDER and clinician behind The Glow Up Laser Spa in Blakeney Town Center, Alissa specializes in advanced laser hair removal and electrolysis services for both women and men. While her career path may seem unexpected, it was shaped by a combination of personal experience, professional expertise and a passion for helping others.

Alissa's roots in the Ballantyne area run deep. Her family moved to Ballantyne Country Club in 1996 when the neighborhood was still in its early stages. Her father, Ronald Mariello, served as president of Ballantyne Country Club from 2006 to 2012, and her mother was a beloved kindergarten teacher at St. Matthew's for 11 years before her retirement in 2016. Alissa herself graduated from Providence Day School before heading to Boston, where she earned a degree in English, later adding a graduate certificate from Harvard University and an MBA from Boston University.

After building a successful career in marketing and business, raising her daughter Athena and eventually returning to Charlotte in 2024, Alissa decided to pursue a new dream.

"I wanted to create the kind of laser spa I'd want to go to," she says. "Laser hair removal was absolutely life-changing for me, and I wanted to pass that forward."

A Category of One in the Queen City

Today, The Glow Up Laser Spa offers a highly personalized, upscale experience that sets it apart from larger aesthetic chains. Every client works directly with Alissa, a North Carolina Board Certified laser hair practitioner and electrologist, from consultation through treatment completion.

Her boutique studio features the FDA-approved Lumenis SplendorX laser system; Alissa is currently the only practitioner in the entire Charlotte area to offer this revolutionary platform.

Unlike traditional single-wavelength lasers that can run the risk of being too aggressive or too gentle, depending on the skin tone, the SplendorX utilizes a patented, synchronized dual-wavelength system. It fires both Alexandrite and Nd:YAG wavelengths simultaneously, allowing Alissa to customize treatments for all skin tones with mathematical precision. "Because of this exclusive engineering, we are the only spa in the city that can safely and effectively treat all skin tones, all year round—even during peak summer tanning season," Alissa explains. "Our clients don't have to pause

their hair removal journeys just because they got a summer tan. It is a total game-changer for safety and consistency."

Clinical Excellence Meets High-End Hospitality

While the technology is powerfully effective and remarkably gentle, the experience is pure luxury. Located inside Sola Salons in Blakeney Town Center, the combines advanced medical physics with elite clinical standards advanced medical physics with elite clinical standards. The Glow Up Laser Spa operates under strict, physician-supervised safety protocols, including a brief, seamless pre-treatment virtual safety review with Alissa's supervising physician to ensure every client is medically cleared for optimal results.

Treatments themselves are rapid—an underarms session takes five minutes and a Brazilian only takes 15 minutes—and are surprisingly comfortable thanks to the synchronized dual-laser technology and built-in cryo-cooling system. But the bespoke touches are what truly define its boutique space. For example, following every treatment, clients are treated to chilled, lavender-infused aftercare towelettes and a calming spring water mist to instantly soothe the skin and elevate the sensory experience.

The spa also reinforces its clinical integrity through seamless online booking, transparent pricing, flexible financing options and a strict no-tipping policy. "An investment in your outer self is an investment in your inner self, and vice versa," Alissa says. "I want every client who walks through my door to feel deeply cared for by me and by themselves."

Education Over Hype

For neighbors considering permanent hair reduction, Alissa notes that the recent explosion of trendy, at-home IPL (Intense Pulsed Light) or handheld laser devices deserves a major word of caution. "At-home devices are gaining massive popularity online, but they simply lack the power of medical-grade technology," Alissa explains. "Because they emit low-level energy, they often fail to destroy the hair root entirely to deliver permanent results. Even worse, on certain areas like the face or neck, this low-level heat can actually trigger a condition called *paradoxical hypertrichosis*—meaning it accidentally stimulates the fine hair follicles to grow back thicker, longer and darker than before."

To avoid these costly skin setbacks, Alissa encourages consumers to prioritize proper education when choosing their permanent hair reduction solution. "Always ask about the exact technology being used and the credentials of the person operating it," she says. "True clinical results require specialized training and medical-grade engineering. The right technology and a certified practitioner can make all the difference between a frustrating or unsafe experience and a positive, life-changing result."

When she's not helping clients achieve lasting smooth skin, Alissa enjoys spending time with her 14-year-old daughter Athena and reconnecting with the community she has called home for much of her life.

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"Alissa is awesome! She is extremely knowledgeable about her services and makes you feel at home in her studio. Can't recommend enough!"

"After interviewing three businesses in South Charlotte, I quickly concluded that Alissa's knowledge, care and expertise would be the best choice! I had my underarms and bikini done today and I am astonished at how painless the experience was—I barely felt anything and the treatments went so quickly! I cannot recommend Alissa enough—she is so trusting, caring, kind and attentive, and will make you feel totally comfortable and confident in your experience!"

"Alissa is amazing! Very knowledgeable and explains what to expect very well. Also has experience working with women with PCOS, which made me feel so much more comfortable. Can't wait to see her again!"

"Alissa is amazing! I just started my laser journey, and she has made it a breeze. Extremely knowledgeable and makes you feel so comfortable."

CONTACT INFO

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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



Theresa Viera, Founder



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.

At its core, Modern Legal is driven by values that shape every client interaction and every case:

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Raising Awareness – One Pink Bow at a Time

The Impact of The Pink Bow Campaign

There is a special kind of magic that happens when a neighborhood unites for a cause, and that magic is driven entirely by your neighbors. This fall, the streets of over 80 neighborhoods in and around Charlotte will once again be lined with vibrant pink bows—a visual testament to our community's solidarity in the fight against breast cancer.

Recognizing the enduring power of this local symbol, Ballantyne resident Robin Saddler identified a greater need to directly support our local communities. In 2021, she established The Pink Bow Campaign, Inc. as an all-volunteer, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to continuing the fight against breast cancer, honoring her mother, a 26-year breast cancer survivor. Today, the campaign covers an incredible 80 neighborhoods across Charlotte and celebrates 5 years!

More Than Just a Decoration

To the passing driver, the bows are a beautiful neighborhood tradition. But to those impacted by the disease, they are a lifeline. Beyond offering emotional solidarity, the rows of pink serve as a vital visual reminder for the women in our community to schedule their annual screening mammograms.

This reminder is more critical than ever as the medical community experiences unprecedented progress in early breast cancer diagnosis. However, these medical breakthroughs can only save lives if women step forward to get screened—making the visual nudge of a pink bow a potentially life-saving catalyst.



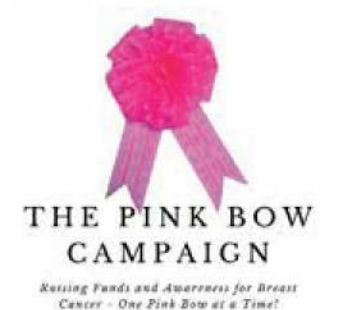
Join The Campaign

Turn your neighborhood into a celebration of hope, strength, and awareness. It's never too late to support The Pink Bow Campaign. Your display reminds our community to prioritize life-saving screenings, helps fund local treatment support, and brings genuine hope to patients navigating their diagnosis.

Please join us at the 2026 Pink Bow Campaign Kick-Off Event on Thursday, August 27th at 6:30 pm at the Aloft Hotel Ballantyne! The event is free and open to everyone.

For more information, to get involved, or to register for the kick-off event, contact Robin Saddler at robin@thepinkbowcampaign.org.

To pre-order pink bows, scan the QR code:



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- MBC Travelers: Helping women with metastatic breast cancer experience bucket-list trips.
- Donate a Pink Bow: Partnering with Novant Health to deliver bows and hope directly to patients.
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PARTNER SPOTLIGHT



For Chris and Kathy Cope, opening dermani MEDSPA was really about continuing to do what they have always enjoyed most: working with people. After nearly 20 years of calling Charlotte home and building careers in customer-focused industries, the Copes found an opportunity to combine their professional experience with a shared passion for helping others feel their best.

Their journey to Charlotte began in different parts of the country. Chris was born in Corning, New York, and moved to Clearwater, Florida, shortly after birth. He attended Furman University before transferring to the University of Florida, where he earned a degree in Finance in 1992. After four years as a Financial Consultant with Merrill Lynch, Chris transitioned into residential real estate, eventually becoming president of a real estate-owned mortgage company before joining Allen Tate Company in 2007. He remained there through 2023.

Kathy grew up in Marion, Indiana, before moving to Daytona Beach, Florida, during her sophomore year of high school. She graduated from Florida State University in 1994 with a degree in Communications and Advertising. Her career included time in the wine and spirits industry with Premier Beverage Company/Johnson Brothers,



followed by six years as a pharmaceutical representative. She later became a certified Pilates instructor and has been teaching for 21 years. Along the way, Kathy also worked intermittently in the skincare industry, an area that had long been a personal passion.

The couple moved to Charlotte in January 2007 and watched the Ballantyne area grow into one of the region's most dynamic communities. After years in residential real estate, Chris had a unique perspective on that growth, making Ballantyne a natural choice when they began considering their next business venture.

After exploring several opportunities, the Copes chose medical aesthetics. Today, dermani MEDSPA offers evidence-based treatments including cosmetic injectables such as Botox and Juvéderm, laser hair removal and skin rejuvenation services.

For Chris and Kathy, however, dermani is about much more than



“We love our team and their passion for what they do, and we love seeing our clients achieve their goals and feel good about themselves.”

—CHRIS AND KATHY COPE

the treatments. They wanted to create an environment where clients feel comfortable, listened to and genuinely cared for. Most importantly, they wanted to build a team of professionals who are passionate about what they do.

“Without sounding like a cliché, it is truly all about our team and the people,” they explain. “It is the knowledge and passion they bring to the clinic each day to help our customers achieve their skincare goals.”

That people-first philosophy is what the Copes believe sets dermani apart. Their team takes time to understand each client's goals rather than taking a one-size-fits-all approach. As part of a larger organization, dermani is also able to provide evidence-based treatments at an accessible price point—what the Copes describe as **affordable luxury**.

For anyone considering a new aesthetic treatment, Chris and Kathy recommend starting with a consultation. A good provider should listen carefully, understand a client's goals and consider individual circumstances before recommending a treatment. Certain medications, for example, can affect outcomes, while pregnancy can change which services are appropriate.

The Copes' commitment to people extends beyond dermani. Over the years, they have been involved with organizations including The Mint Museum Board, MeckEd Board, Charlotte Wine & Food, The Fletcher School Board, The Mint Museum Auxiliary and Dilworth Soup Kitchen.

At home, family remains at the center of their lives. Their sons, Collin and Brendan, are both students, and the family also includes Henry, their eight-year-old red Australian Labradoodle, affectionately known as “Kathy's boyfriend.”

So what gets Chris and Kathy excited about their work each day?

“We love our team and their passion for what they do, and we love seeing our clients achieve their goals and feel good about themselves.”

For the Copes, that's what dermani MEDSPA is ultimately about: helping people feel confident, cared for and good about themselves—one client and one relationship at a time.



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What began with a group of Charlotte business leaders praying for the next generation has grown into a ministry equipping hundreds of schools—and Tanner Girdwood has had the extraordinary privilege of witnessing God’s work firsthand.

Some stories come full circle in unexpected ways. For Tanner Girdwood, her connection to Youth Commission International (YCI) began long before she ever imagined she would lead the organization.

In April 1997, Tanner’s father, Greg Keith, was one of the Charlotte business leaders who helped launch what would become Youth Commission International. The group came together with a desire to pray for the next generation and find ways to reach young people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Nearly three decades later, Tanner would find herself carrying that same vision forward.

Tanner began working at YCI in 2012, shortly after graduating from the University of Southern California’s Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism with a degree in Broadcast Journalism. At the time, she had landed what she describes as her dream

job—working as an on-camera reporter and co-host of Canada’s longest-running television program, *100 Huntley Street*. Although she was living in Charlotte, her television career had her traveling back and forth to Canada.

During one of the weeks she was home, her dad encouraged her to meet one of his friends, Dennis Williams, who was then the Executive Director of YCI. Tanner agreed to the meeting, expecting little more than a conversation. Instead, it changed the course of her life.

Dennis shared with Tanner about YCI’s ministry and the work being done on middle and high school campuses to share the Gospel. She was encouraged to learn about a ministry intentionally reaching students in what she describes as one of the hardest, yet ripest, environments for discipleship. At the end of their meeting, Dennis offered her a job. Her response? **“Thank you, but no thank you. I already**

have a job.” Dennis then removed his office key from his key ring, placed it in Tanner’s hand, and simply told her, **“I’ll see you on Monday.”** Tanner showed up at the YCI office that Monday—and she has been there ever since.

Looking back, Tanner has no doubt that the conversation and that key represented God redirecting her steps and aligning them with His will for her life. In 2015, she stepped into the role of Executive Director, beginning a new chapter in the organization her father had helped launch. Since then, Tanner has watched YCI grow from just two employees to more than 20 and from a handful of clubs to 241 schools equipped for YCI ministry at the end of the 2025-2026 school year. An estimated 4,635 students participate in YCI ministry each week.

But while those numbers are exciting, there is one number Tanner is especially



passionate about: 1,465 students who have accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior in the last five years. YCI reports that when a decision for Christ is recorded, its team provides the student with a free Bible and helps connect them with a local church.

For Tanner, those numbers aren’t simply statistics. They represent individual students, families, schools, and stories. “I am convinced I have one of the best jobs in the world,” Tanner says. “I get to witness first-hand God at work.”

She has watched God provide for the ministry when tangible needs seemed impossible to meet. She has seen doors close that, in hindsight, protected the organization, even when they were doors the team desperately wanted to walk through. She has witnessed hundreds of students gather in public school gyms to pray and worship together. And she has seen an entire family come to faith because their high

school daughter attended a YCI club. But perhaps what moves her most is watching the Gospel spread across middle and high school campuses.

Tanner believes today’s students are navigating an environment that can often feel increasingly unwelcoming to their faith, yet she continues to see young people courageously stand up and proclaim what they believe. And YCI is seeing that hunger firsthand. In June 2026 alone, the organization received 1,315 YCI Club Interest Form submissions from students, parents, teachers, and youth leaders interested in starting or supporting a YCI club.

So what does a YCI club actually look like? At its heart, it is a student-led gathering designed to be welcoming, relational, and centered on the Gospel. Students come together on their school campus to connect with one another, spend time in prayer, and study God’s Word. YCI provides

student leaders with curriculum and resources to help them lead their classmates, with lessons designed to help students not only grow in their faith but also put that faith into action.

The goal isn’t to create another class or lecture during the school day. It’s to create a place where students can invite their friends, ask questions, build relationships, pray together, and explore what it means to follow Jesus. Because the clubs are student-led, the students themselves take ownership of creating that environment and reaching their classmates.

YCI also gives students a clear framework for launching and sustaining a club. Student leaders work to build a team, secure school approval, find a meeting location and time, invite their classmates, plan their meetings, and continue growing the club with support from YCI staff. The organization provides ongoing resources, monthly training



opportunities, encouragement through its “YCI Weekly” messages, and personal support from YCI staff.

That structure is intentional. YCI isn’t simply asking students to attend a Bible study; it is teaching them how to **lead one**. Students learn that they can be the ones to invite a friend, open God’s Word, lead a discussion, pray with a classmate, and create a place where other students feel known and welcomed.

The organization is also looking beyond its current reach through its **50 by 30 initiative**. YCI’s goal is to facilitate in-person ministry training in all 50 states before its 30th annual Sporting Clays Shoot & Auction in September 2027. Since April 2026, YCI has already trained students in four new states—New Mexico, Michigan, Ohio, and Mississippi—with plans to continue expanding into additional states.

At the heart of the ministry, however, the process remains personal. YCI helps students identify three to five student leaders, find a teacher sponsor and campus mentor, complete training, and work through the steps necessary to launch a club at their school. YCI staff continue to provide encouragement, resources, and support along the way.

For Tanner, that student-led approach is what makes the ministry so powerful.

She believes the mission field isn’t limited to a church building or a ministry setting. It is wherever you are. Her hope is that YCI will encourage people in every season of life—from a middle or high school student to an adult working in a corporate office or a mom raising children at home—to recognize the opportunities they have to make a difference. “Our mission field is between our feet,” Tanner says. If middle and high school students can boldly proclaim their faith in environments where they may not always feel welcomed, Tanner believes the rest of us can exercise that same courage in our own everyday lives.

Nearly 30 years after Tanner’s father and other Charlotte business leaders first gathered to pray for the next generation, Tanner now finds herself helping lead that vision into its next chapter.

She doesn’t take the opportunity lightly.

In fact, Tanner admits she often feels undeserving of the privilege.

But perhaps that is part of what makes her story—and YCI’s story—so compelling. A key placed unexpectedly in her hand in 2012 opened a door she never intended to walk through. Fourteen years later, she is still walking through it, watching students lead, watching lives change, and believing that God is just getting started with Youth Commission International.



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HERE ARE A FEW SUGGESTIONS FOR PHOTO SUBMISSIONS:

Holiday - We want to see all your photos of decor, events and family.

Milestone Celebrations - Do you or a loved one have a milestone birthday or anniversary coming up? Send us some photos!

Weddings - We'd love to share photos from spring weddings in our community. Share the love by sending your special wedding day pictures to us!

Family and Neighborhood Gatherings - *Stroll Quail Hollow* is all about family and community. Our favorite photos are those of kids playing, birthday parties and neighborly gatherings.

First Day of School photos - Send us photos celebrating the return to school

Travels - We would love to see all the exciting places you visited over the summer.

Pets - We would love to see your fur babies or feather babies

Cool kids - Do you have a "cool kid" in your house?



Athletes- Are you running a marathon? Do you have an athlete in your family? Are you a dancer?

Neighborhood Events - Any parties or events happening in the neighborhood

Local Nonprofits- Local nonprofits are changing the lives of Charlotte residents. Do you volunteer for a great organization? Are you a board member of an awesome organization making a difference?

Resident Business Guide - Do you own a business? We have guide. Email us to have your business listed.





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