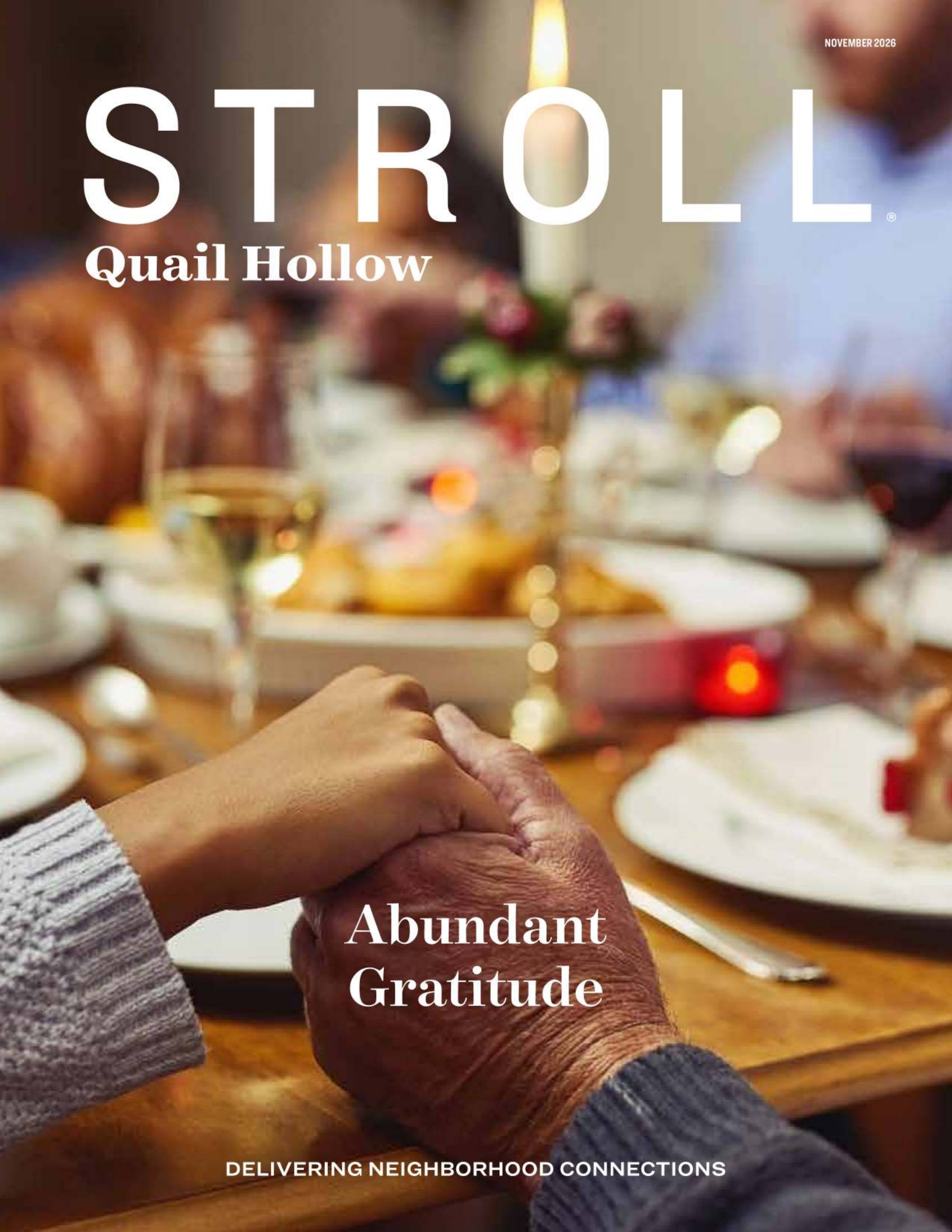
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Before the Rush

November deserves more than being a pass-through to December.

Before the lists grow long and the calendar fills with obligations, November asks us to slow down and mean it. It asks us to be grateful. To notice what is already here, and what we already have. November isn't performative; it's pensive.

That looks different for everyone. For some, it's a Saturday (and Sunday) spent entirely on the couch, a bowl of chili in hand, and football on the television with nowhere else to be. For others, it's pulling out a worn copy of Harry Potter or Little Women and remembering why certain stories feel like home. There is nothing trivial about choosing stillness over activity. In fact, I might argue it takes more discipline to be still than to move on to the next activity.

This year, as you're preparing your grandmother's stuffing recipe, or picking up your pumpkin pie from the baker, take time to think about how you're choosing stillness. Are you prepping that dish ahead of time, so you can participate in family game night later? Are you choosing a grab-and-go dinner, so less time is spent in the kitchen, and you have more time for recalling (and making) favorite memories?

This issue is an invitation to inhabit November fully, before December asks everything of you. How will you RSVP?

Andrea Kroger

Publisher
andrea.kroger@n2co.com
@strollquailhollow





Extended Seasons

Stretch outdoor living past its usual endpoint. BY NICOLE LETTS

AS FALL CONTINUES and winter knocks on its door, the instinct is to scurry inside, but changing seasons doesn't mean exterior living goes dormant. Of course, you can add physical warmth like a fire feature and a basket of thick blankets, but much can be improved with ambiance. Encourage gathering outdoors through light, texture, and a break from the wind, and the temperature becomes almost secondary. Get that right, and a backyard or patio can stay in regular use well into those chillier months.



Add heat beyond the flames. Fire features alone won't always cut it once temperatures really drop. Small, freestanding outdoor heaters extend warmth across a wider area and keep a space usable even without the gentle roll of a fire.

Block the wind. Cold air is one thing; wind is what actually drives people indoors. Decorative screens, pergolas, or even well-placed outdoor curtains help cut the wind. They also make a space feel cozier.

Let lighting do the rest. As daylight shortens, a space that looks inviting after dark matters more than ever. String lights, lanterns, and lower, warmer-toned faux candle fixtures layered at different heights create a space that feels intentional rather than dim. Layered light does more to set a mood.





Thanksgiving Parade Differences

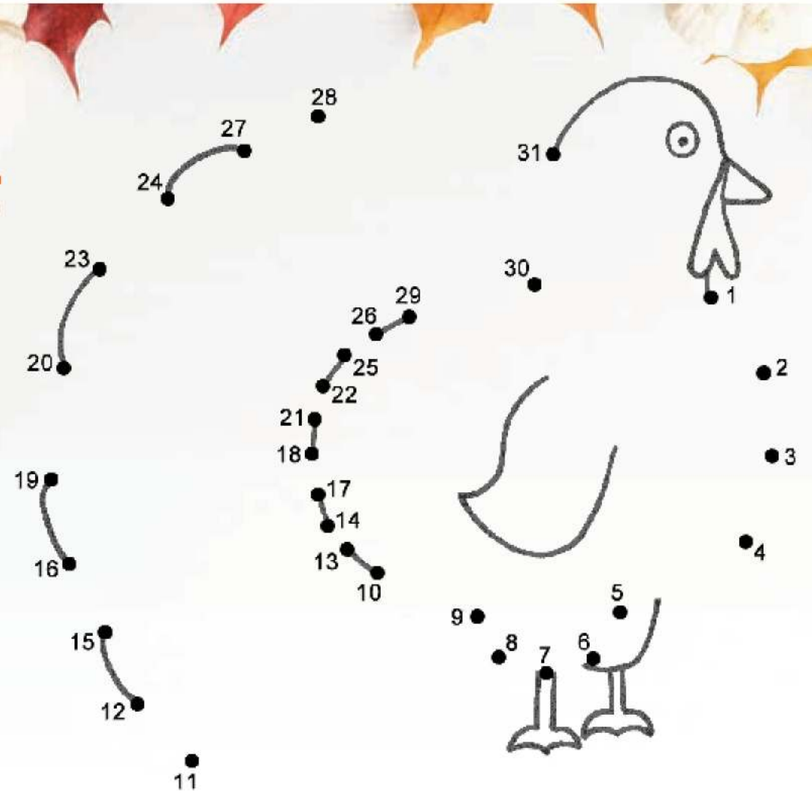
The Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade celebrates its 100th anniversary this year. Can you spot the difference between these two parade route cartoons? There are 15 to find. Can you see them all? BY NICOLE LETTS

Think you cracked it? Scan to check your answers!



Dot to Dot

Starting at dot 1, draw a straight line to dot 2, then 2 to 3, and so on in order all the way through the last number. Once you reach the end, connect it back to dot 1 to close the shape. Don't worry about staying perfectly straight; the picture will still reveal itself. Once your outline is complete, grab your crayons or markers and color in your new fall creation.



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Bookish Travel



Let your latest read inspire your next itinerary.

BY NICOLE LETTS

Skyscanner reports that 55% of travelers have booked, or would consider booking, a trip inspired by literature. It makes sense. Books have always sparked wanderlust, planting the seed for a destination long before a trip is ever planned. That imaginative pull is now shaping real itineraries, not just reading lists.

It's a trend with range, too. A literary trip can be as loose as wandering a favorite author's hometown or as devoted as retracing a character's exact path through a story. Either way, the destination comes with a built-in tale; what's more inspiring than that?

NANTUCKET, MASSACHUSETTS

The island has become something of a pilgrimage site for Elin Hilderbrand's readers, who have spent summers living vicariously through her characters. Books such as Five Star Weekend, The Perfect Couple, and The Hotel Nantucket have helped the island gain even more popularity than it already had as an East Coast summer destination. There are cobblestone streets, shingle-clad homes, harbor views, and more hydrangeas than can be counted.

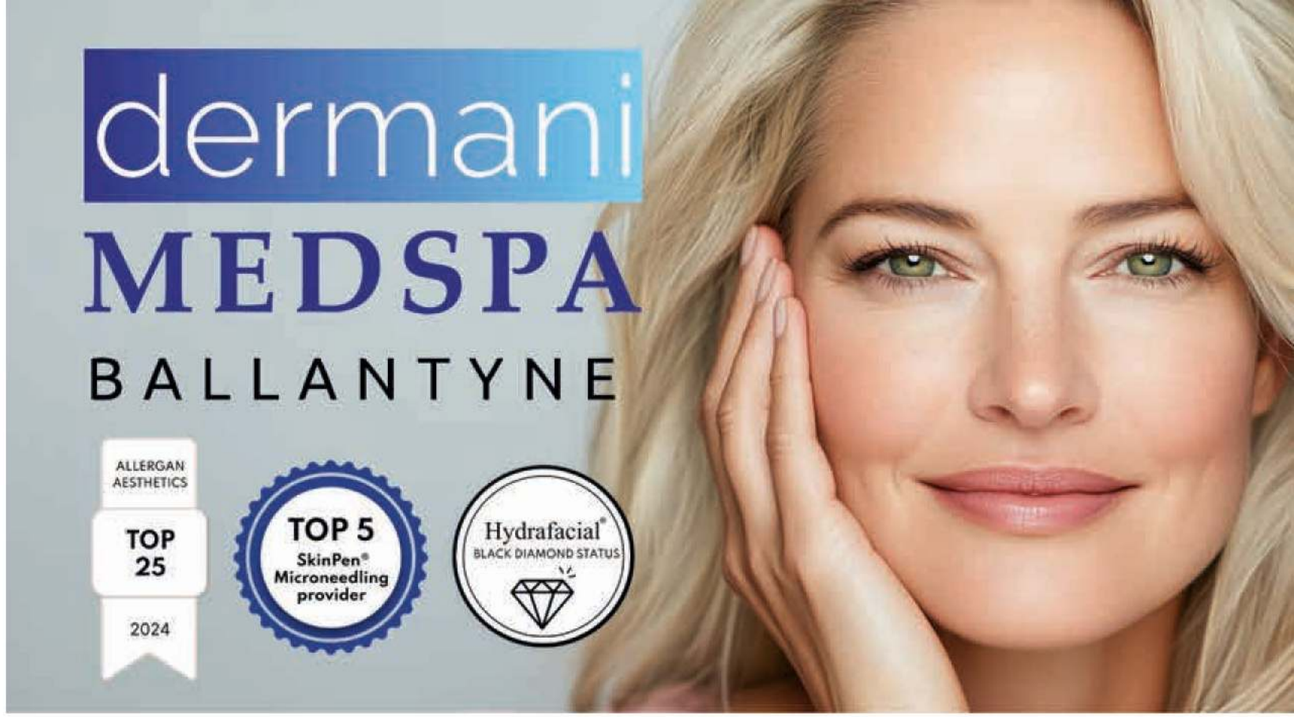
BEAUFORT, SOUTH CAROLINA

This Lowcountry town shaped much of Pat Conroy's fiction, and it still carries the atmosphere he wrote about: moss-draped oaks, tidal marshes, and a sense of history sitting just beneath the surface. Visitors will find walking tours built around his novels, and the town itself remains quietly beautiful and chock full of excellent seafood whether or not you've read a page.

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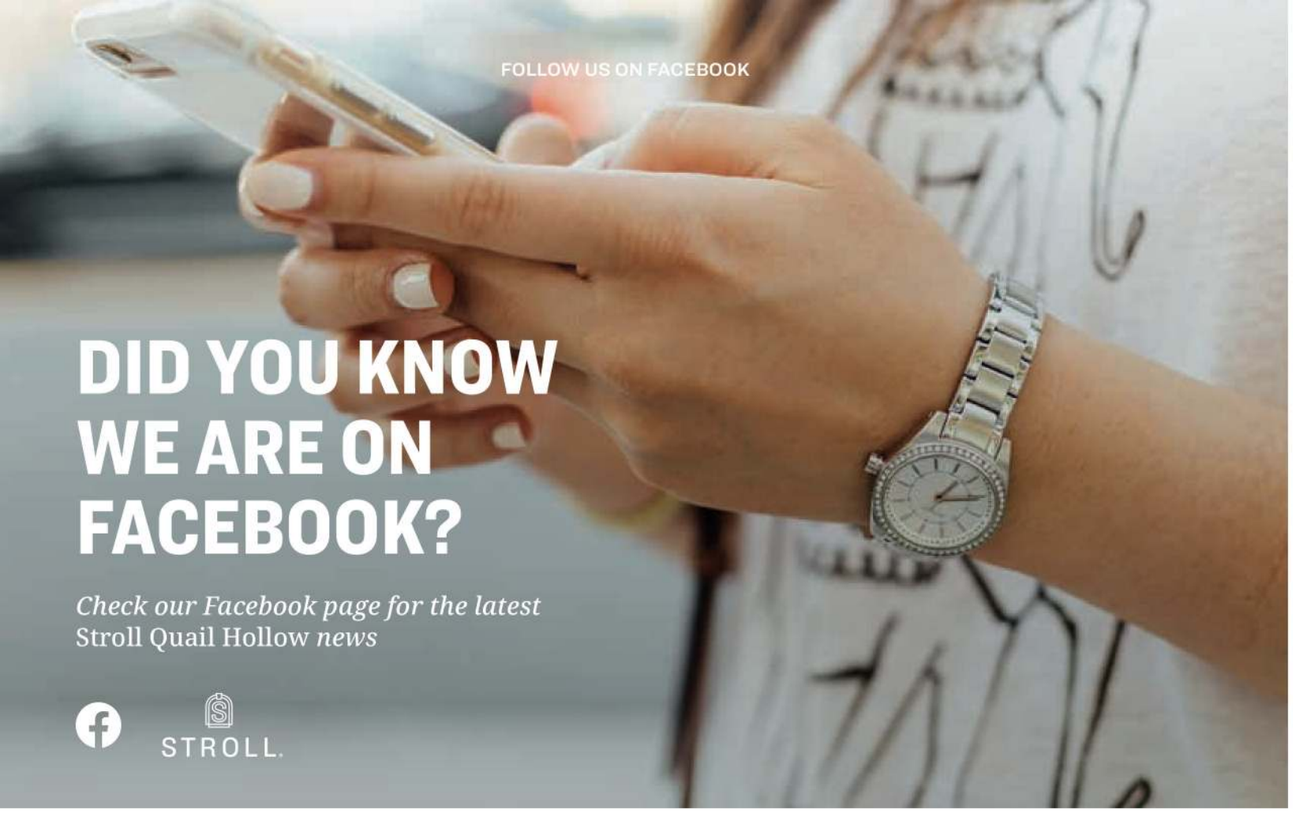
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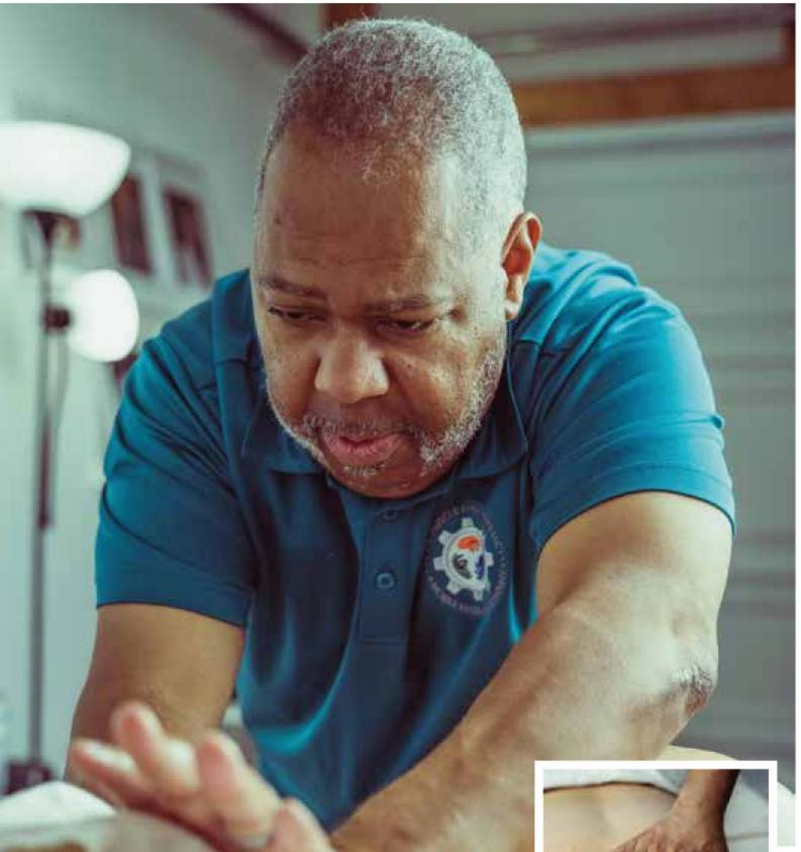
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THE MUSCLE ENGINEERS

MORE THAN MASSAGE
A MISSION TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE



Rod Greene has spent 31 years as a massage therapist, and today owns The Muscle Engineers, a mobile sports massage company serving Charlotte's active adults. But The Muscle Engineers isn't a typical for-profit business — Rod built it as a For-Purpose company, one that gives back with every single session. And the reason behind that decision didn't start on a massage table. It started in his own family.

Rod's father had Alzheimer's. So did his grandmother. So did seven of her nine children. Rod watched his mom pour everything she had into caring for his dad — her sleep, her health, her peace of mind — with no breaks and no relief in sight. Just love, doing its best against something relentless.

"They're all gone now," Rod says. "But Alzheimer's doesn't just live in my past. It could show up in my wife's future, or my children's. So when I decided to build a company with a real cause behind it, I didn't have to look far. It found me first."

That's the origin of Massage for The Cause — the giving initiative behind The Muscle Engineers. For every session booked, $10 goes toward micro-grants that give exhausted Alzheimer's caregivers real, tangible relief: a few hours to sleep, to breathe, to remember who they are outside of caregiving. The grants are distributed locally through Home Instead Charlotte, so the help stays close to home — Charlotte families, helping Charlotte families.









Rod and his family

"MOST MASSAGE WORKS ON WHERE IT HURTS, WE WORK ON WHY IT HURTS."

Rod calls the underlying model Build Big to Give Big. "We picked one cause and we're staying with it," he says. "The bigger this company gets, the more grants we fund, and the more families get a call saying someone's coming. That's the business model — grow the company, serve more clients, help more families. It compounds every year."

It's a fitting mission for a company built on the idea that real relief matters — whether that's a caregiver finally getting a break, or a client finally understanding why their body's been hurting instead of just being told to "rest it." The Muscle Engineers specializes in outcome-based mobile massage: 100-minute sessions (40% more hands-on time than the industry standard), delivered right to a client's home. No commute, no waiting room — just table to their couch.

"Most massage works on where it hurts," Rod says. "We work on why it hurts. And every session moves both things forward — the client's recovery, and a family's relief."







THE GIVING TUESDAY GUIDE

Your practical reminders for charitable donations ahead of the holiday season. BY NICOLE LETTS

This year, Giving Tuesday falls on December 1. Since it's after the frenzy of Black Friday and the fury of Cyber Monday, it can become an afterthought. Instead of making lists and checking them twice, Giving Tuesday allows us a moment to think about those who need a pinch more assistance to make the season extra bright. With a little planning, you can make the most of your contribution, stretching your gift further.

Check for employee matching.
Many companies will match employee donations dollar-for-dollar, and some even match volunteer hours with a cash contribution. It costs nothing to ask your HR department, and it can effectively double your gift to a cause you already care about. Matching programs often have deadlines or annual caps, so now is a smart time to check whether you've used yours for the year.

Consider fewer, larger gifts.
While it's tempting to spread a giving budget across several organizations, concentrating your donation can have more impact. Smaller nonprofits, in particular, spend real time and money processing each gift, so a single larger donation reduces overhead, sending more toward actual programs. Pick one or two organizations to support meaningfully this year and rotate to others in future years.

Do your homework.
A quick look at a charity's annual report or a nonprofit evaluator site can tell you how funds are used. Look for clarity about where donations go, not just a compelling appeal. For any gift you plan to deduct, save the receipt or acknowledgment letter from the organization. Most send one automatically for donations over $250. Keep a simple folder (digital or paper) for the year's giving so nothing gets lost by tax season.

Think beyond cash.
Some organizations need volunteer time, supplies, or in-kind donations just as much as money. A few hours of your time may go just as far as your dollar.





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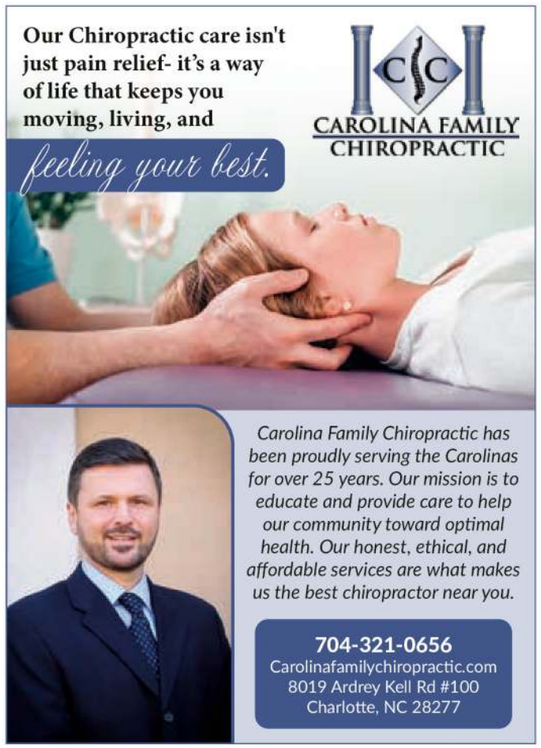
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Crisis Assistance Ministry

Neighbors helping neighbors

BY CONTRIBUTING WRITER NICOLE AYERS, DIRECTOR OF MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Most in this community have never had to wonder whether a single surprise expense or one missed paycheck could cost us our home. For thousands of families across Charlotte-Mecklenburg, that worry is a daily companion.

Consider Nikki. She was thrilled to start a new job, but a short gap between paychecks left a hole in her budget, and landlords rarely make exceptions. Nervous and a little scared, she walked into Crisis Assistance Ministry not knowing what to expect. A caseworker listened with compassion, arranged an emergency rent payment to stop her eviction and connected her to additional resources. Nikki left with her home stabilized and with her confidence restored.

Stories like hers are repeated every day, and the numbers explain why. Since 2010, average rent in Charlotte has climbed 61%, while wages have barely moved. A minimum-wage worker would need to log 125 hours a week to afford a one-bedroom apartment at $1,180. Last fiscal year, Crisis Assistance Ministry helped 44,000 people with $5.6 million in emergency housing assistance, keeping families in their homes and their lights on.

Founded in 1975 by local faith leaders, Crisis Assistance Ministry has been the community's basic-needs safety net for half a century. Its focus is families who are not yet homeless but are one setback away. Beyond rent and utility help, it offers financial empowerment coaching and a Free Store stocked with donated clothing, shoes, coats, school uniforms and household essentials, all at no charge.



For neighbors who want to help, the path is simple. Give a financial gift, which goes directly toward keeping families stably housed. Provide a winter coat. Donate new or gently used items to the Free Store. Volunteer your time. Or share what you've learned with a friend.

A stable home changes everything for a family and for a community. Join us in making sure Nikki's story is the rule rather than the exception.



Carol Hardison and Katie Weeks of Armstrong Maguire

SEARCH FOR A NEW LEADER

Carol Hardison, CEO of Crisis Assistance Ministry, will be retiring soon after leading the agency for 26 years. Armstrong Maguire's Katie Weeks, a Stroll neighbor, is leading the search for a new CEO.

Crisis Assistance Ministry is entering this transition from a position of organizational strength. The agency has an exceptional leadership team, dedicated staff, committed volunteers, strong governance and a clear vision for the future.





Carol Hardison joined the Ballantyne Country Club Book Club to discuss Brian Goldstone's "There Is No Place for Us: Working and Homeless in America."

meet Aimee

from Simply Styled CLT

SIMPLY STYLED, BEAUTIFULLY ORGANIZED
HELPING CHARLOTTE FAMILIES
LOVE THEIR HOMES





For Aimee, owner and founder of SimplyStyledCLT, creating beautiful, organized spaces has always been more than just a hobby. It's a passion that combines her love of design, creativity, and helping others. In February 2025, she turned that passion into a business dedicated to helping Charlotte-area families create homes that are not only beautiful but also functional, comfortable, and stress-free.

SimplyStyledCLT is a woman-owned home organizing, move management, and home styling business serving Charlotte and surrounding communities, including South Charlotte, Ballantyne, Fort Mill, and Lake Norman. Whether a family is overwhelmed by clutter, preparing for a move, downsizing, or simply looking to make their home function better, Aimee and her team provide personalized, hands-on support to make the process easier.



For Aimee, the journey to entrepreneurship was a natural extension of her personal and professional experiences. Originally from New Rochelle, New York, she attended the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City, where she developed an appreciation for fashion, design, and creative spaces. She later worked as a Visual/Merchandise Manager at Anthropologie, an experience that helped shape her eye for creating inviting environments that balance beauty with functionality.

After leaving the retail world, Aimee spent 11 years at home raising her two daughters, who are now in seventh and tenth grades. During those years, she gained an even greater appreciation for the importance of having a home that works for the people living in it.

"Being a mom has influenced the way I work with my clients," Aimee shares. "I understand how quickly life can get busy and how easy it is for a home to become overwhelming when you're juggling work, school, activities, schedules, and everything else that comes with family life."

Having called Charlotte home for the past 10 years, Aimee knew she wanted to build a business that would allow her to combine her creative background with her desire to help local families. SimplyStyledCLT was born from that vision.

Today, the business offers a wide range of services tailored to each client's needs. Home organizing and decluttering are at the heart of what Aimee does, helping families sort through belongings, eliminate unnecessary clutter, and establish practical systems that work for their everyday lives. But her services extend well beyond organizing closets and pantries.

SimplyStyledCLT also provides packing, unpacking, and comprehensive move management, helping clients navigate everything from preparing for a move to getting settled into a new home. For those facing major life transitions, Aimee offers compassionate assistance with downsizing and estate cleanouts, recognizing that sorting through years of belongings can be both physically and emotionally overwhelming.

Her background in visual merchandising is especially valuable when it comes to soft staging and pre-listing home styling. Rather than relying on expensive furniture rentals, Aimee works with homeowners to make the most of what they already own. Through thoughtful editing, rearranging, and styling, she helps create inviting, market-ready spaces that photograph beautifully and make a lasting first impression.

The business also offers renovation preparation and post-renovation organization, along with holiday decorating, setup, and takedown services. Whatever the project, Aimee's approach remains the same: provide practical solutions while making the experience as seamless and enjoyable as possible.

While Aimee works directly with her clients, she also has a trusted team of independent contractors who assist with larger projects. This allows SimplyStyledCLT to handle everything from a single-room refresh to a whole-home transformation while maintaining the personal attention that is so important to her.

One of Aimee's favorite parts of her work is seeing the difference a transformation can make in someone's everyday life.

"I love the moment when a client goes from feeling overwhelmed by their space to feeling like they can finally breathe and enjoy their home again," she says. "Those are the projects that remind me why I love what I do."



Outside of work, Aimee enjoys spending time with her husband and two daughters. She especially

CONTINUED ▸

treasures the slower moments when the family can step away from busy schedules and enjoy time together. Exploring charming towns, discovering new restaurants, shopping, and finding new places around Charlotte are among her favorite activities. When she has a little quiet time to herself, she enjoys puzzles and adult coloring books.

Her husband has been a constant source of encouragement throughout her entrepreneurial journey, and Aimee is grateful for the opportunity to build a business around something she genuinely loves.

For neighbors who may be feeling overwhelmed by clutter or unsure where to begin, Aimee offers some reassuring advice.







"Don't feel like you have to organize your entire house at once. Start with the space that is causing you the most stress and take it one step at a time," she encourages. "And don't be embarrassed to ask for help. There is absolutely no judgment in what I do."

That judgment-free philosophy is central to the SimplyStyledCLT experience. Aimee understands that every household is different, and her goal isn't to create picture-perfect spaces that are impossible to maintain. Instead, she focuses on creating beautiful, realistic systems that support the way each family lives.

For Aimee, owning a local business is about much more than organizing homes. It's about building relationships, supporting neighbors, and helping families navigate life's transitions with greater ease and confidence.

"At the end of the day, I want my clients to feel less overwhelmed, more organized, and truly happy in their homes," she shares.

And with SimplyStyledCLT, that's exactly what she hopes to deliver—one beautifully organized space at a time.

To learn more about SimplyStyledCLT or schedule a consultation, visit www.simplystyledclt.com, follow @simplystyledclt on Instagram, or email Aimee@SimplyStyledCLT.com.





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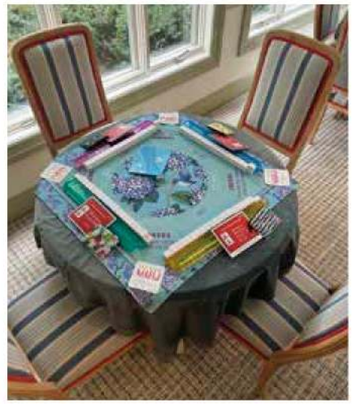
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Building Community, One Hand at a Time

Bridge and Mahjong courses coming in January 2027







There is something truly special about the way games bring people together. Whether tiles are clicked or bridge cards are dealt across a table, these classic pastimes have served as the heartbeat of community connection. They invite us to slow down, share a laugh, exercise our minds, and, most importantly, build lasting bonds with the people around us.

When I left Bank of America and moved to a new neighborhood, I experienced this magic firsthand. I joined a bridge group with 12 other wonderful women, and we have been playing together on Tuesday afternoons since the fall of 2013. We rotate houses, and it has been such a joy meeting one another's friends and family as they have stepped in to sub over the years. It is endlessly fun to stay deeply connected to people I raised my children with and sat alongside on playing field bleachers cheering on our kids. If you peek into the PCC Ladies Card Room, you will regularly see lively groups of friends gathered over bridge and mahjong, sharing that exact same spirit of camaraderie. I watched my parents plug into their new snowbird community and later, their senior living community by joining bridge groups. A few years ago, I formed a mahjong group of my own. Initially, it was something to do when I couldn't play golf or tennis, but it has grown into one of my favorite afternoons.

Having spent my career in Learning and Development, I am thrilled to channel my lifelong passion for teaching into something for our neighborhood. I am excited to announce that I will be offering two brand-new courses at my home: **Introduction to Bridge** and **Introduction to Mahjong**.

Whether you are completely new to these games or looking to brush up your skills, there is an option that fits your style:

- Group sessions for up to 16 people
- Small group sessions for groups of 4
- Personalized private lessons

If you have ever wanted to learn the ropes, enjoy some friendly quality time, and meet more neighbors, I would love to have you join a class. Please reach out via the number below. Psst... need a gift for someone? There will be holiday specials on gift cards. Let's keep our community connected, one hand at a time.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

Nancy at (704) 516 -1802.









Share Your Stories & Photos With Us

Stroll Quail Hollow is your neighborhood publication. Break out your cameras and share your pictures with us for our May 2026 issues. Please send pictures to us at strollquailhollow@gmail.com for our upcoming issues. Pictures must be 1 MB or larger to be of good print quality.

NEW TO THE NEIGHBORHOOD?
Are you and your family new to Quail Hollow? If so, welcome! Please send your contact info to Andrea at andrea.kroger@n2co.com to be added to our monthly sneak peek email and event invitation list. To submit an idea, photo or article, please email us at andrea.kroger@n2co.com

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.

Graduation - we will be celebrating our graduates all summer long.

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

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

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.





SEEKING A COMMUNITY REPORTER

Would you like to get more involved in the community? We are looking for a community reporter. This would be great any resident that loves their community and would like to get to know more families in the area. Reach out to us at Andrea.kroger@n2co.com

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