

DECEMBER 2025

Exclusively for Newport Coast Residents

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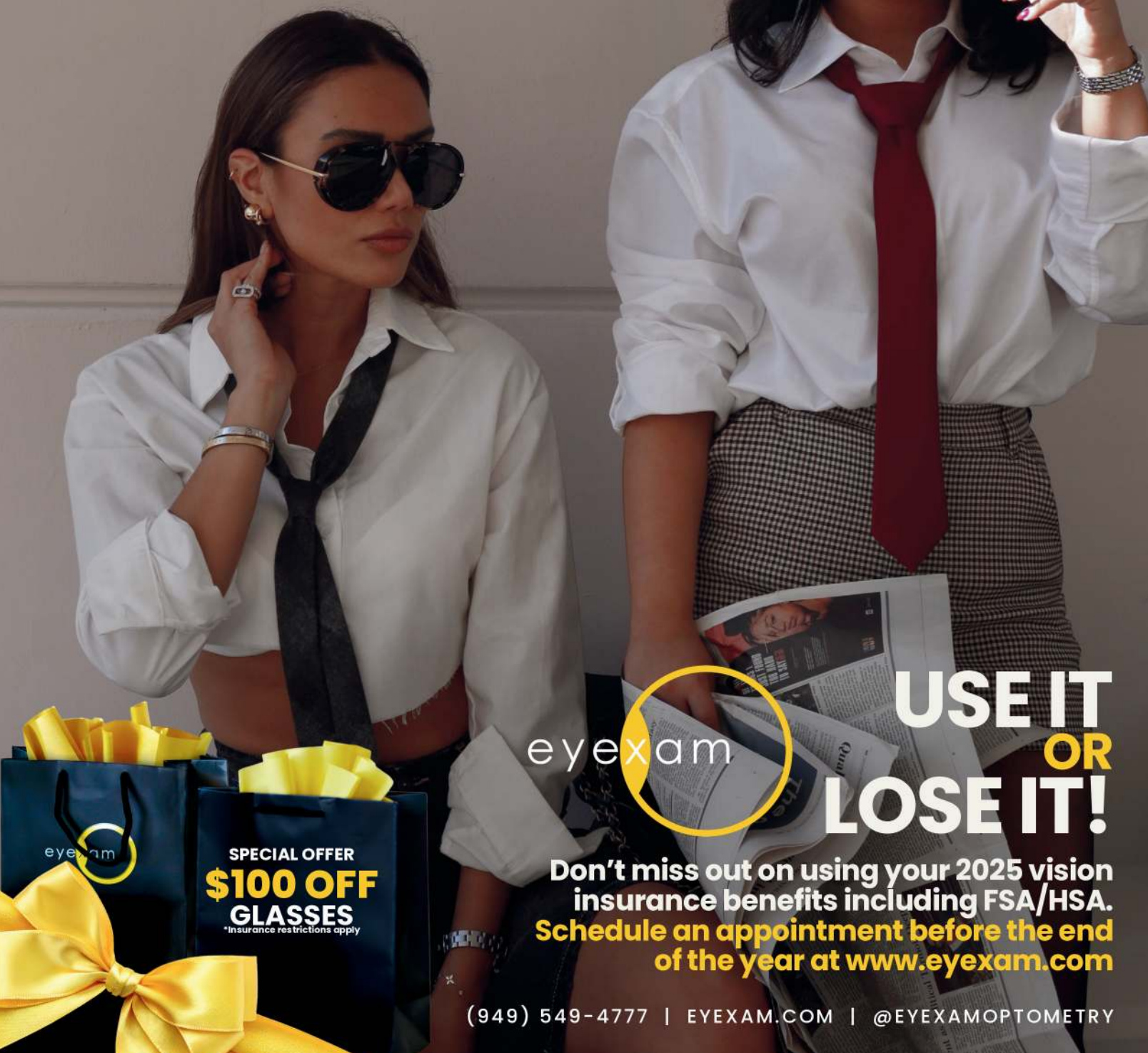
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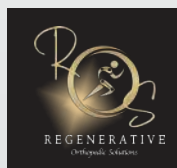
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Have feedback, ideas, or submissions? We are always happy to hear from you! Deadlines for submissions are the 30th of each month for two months out (example: Jan. 30th for March) Go to www.bestversionmedia.com and click "Submit Content." You may also email your thoughts, ideas, and photos to: kwhitney@bestversionmedia.com

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 & Senior Services 949-644-3151
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Dear Newport Coast Residents,

There's something especially enchanting about December along our coast. The glow of lights cascading over the hills, the joy of holiday gatherings with friends and family, and the unmistakable energy of a community coming together to celebrate the season. Whether it's bundling up to watch the **Newport Beach Christmas Boat Parade**, taking an evening stroll around **Balboa Island** to see homes aglow in holiday décor, or catching a performance at the **Segerstrom Center for the Arts**, this time of year reminds us how lucky we are to live where coastal beauty meets heartfelt community spirit.

In our cover story, we feature **Brandon and Jessica Richland**, whose lives beautifully blend family, adventure, and a deep passion for helping others feel their best inside and out. Alongside their son, Cade, and beloved dogs, Callie and Ellie, the Richlands have created a home filled with love, laughter and gratitude. It is a reflection of their values and their commitment to uplifting others.

This month, we're also proud to highlight our valued community partners—**John Cain**, Founder and President of **Cain Group**, specializing in luxury real estate throughout Coastal Orange County; **St. Mary's School**, shaping the next generation of confident, compassionate leaders; and **Care Patrol of Coastal Orange County**, offering trusted guidance and support for families navigating senior care options.

As we close out the year, we hope you find moments to pause, reflect and celebrate the joy that surrounds us, whether that's through family traditions, acts of kindness, or the simple beauty of a Newport Coast sunset.

Wishing you a holiday season filled with peace, laughter, and love.

Kym Whitney, Julie Means, Amanda Huntsman

We are devoted to sharing stories, events, and news among our neighbors in this wonderful community. If you have something to share, please email: kwhitney@bestversionmedia.com

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 Recipe

December

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SCHOOLS

Newport-Mesa Unified School District

December 22 - January 2
Winter Recess - No School

Corona del Mar High School

December 6; 9am - 3pm
PTA Holiday Boutique
@Corona del Mar High School

Sage Hill High School

December 22 - January 2
Winter Recess - No School

St. Mary's School

December 22 - January 5
Winter Recess - No School

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Through - December 22
Sawdust Art Festival - Winter Fantasy
@935 Laguna Canyon Road, Laguna Beach
Info: www.sawdustartfestival.org/
winter-landing

Through December 30
Irvine Park Railroad - Santa's Village
@Irvine Regional Park
Info: www.irvineparkrailroad.com/events/santas-village

Through December 31; 6pm - 12am
VEA Holiday Hideout
Fridays and Saturdays & Dec 31
@VEA
Info: www.veanewportbeach.ipoolsite.com

Through - January 3
Fire & Lights Festival
@Newport Dunes
Info: www.newportdunes.com/fire-and-lights-festival

Through January 4
Winterfest OC
@OC Fair & Event Center
Info: www.winterfestoc.com

December 6, 13, 20, 27; 9am - 1pm
Corona del Mar Farmer's Market
Every Saturday
@FCH & Marguerite

December 7, 14, 21, 28; 9am - 1pm
Newport Beach Farmer's Market
Every Sunday
@Newport Beach Pier

December 7, 14, 21, 28; 10am - 2pm
Community Day at Back Bay Science Center
@600 Shellmaker Road

December 7; 11am - 5pm
46th Annual CDM Christmas Walk
@Corona del Mar Village
Info: www.cdmchamber.com

December 13; 11am - 4pm
Balboa Island Home Tour
@Balboa Island
Info: www.biia.org/holiday-home-tour

December 13; 10am - 4pm
Holiday at Lido Marina Village
by Female Maker Market
@Lido Marina Village
Info: www.thefemalemakermarket.com

December 17 - 21
117th Newport Beach Christmas Boat Parade
@Newport Beach Harbor
Info: www.christmasboatparade.com

December 20; 11am
Walk With Us
Patrick's Purpose Foundation
@1641 Ford Rd.
Info: www.patrickspurposefoundation.org/events

December 31; 5pm - 10pm
New Year's Eve Prix-Fixe Dinner at VIEW
Info: www.experiencevea.com
@VEA Newport Beach

December 31; 7pm - 12am
New Year's Eve at SET Steak & Sushi
Prix-Fixe Menu, DJ, Champagne, & More
@SET, Pendry Newport Beach
Info: www.setnewport.com/event/new-years-eve-in-newport-beach

December 31; 6pm - 2am
Newport Beach New Year's Eve Pub Crawl
@Stag Bar + Kitchen
Info: www.vipnightlife.com/orange-county/events/new-years

December 31; 9pm
23rd Annual New Year's Eve Yacht Party
@Endless Dreams Yacht,
431 West Coast Hwy
Info/Tickets: www.eventbrite.com

CONCERTS, MUSICALS & SHOWS

Every Thursday, Saturday & Sunday
Live Music on the Lido Deck
@Lido Marina Village
Info: www.lidomarinavillage.com

Through December 7
It's a Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play
@Newport Theatre Arts Center
Info: www.ntactickets.com/season

December 6; 10am & 11:30am
The Nutcracker for Kids
@Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall
Info: www.scfta.org/shows-events

December 6; 7pm - 8:30pm
The Michael Bublé Experience Presents "A Very Bublé Christmas"
@Campus Jax
Info: www.campusjax.com/events

December 6 - 10; 8pm
Carols by Candlelight
@Our Lady Queen of Angels Catholic Church
Info: www.pacificchorale.org/events/carols-by-candlelight-2025

December 11 - 21
American Ballet Theatre's The Nutcracker
@Segerstrom Hall
Info: www.scfta.org/shows-events

December 13; 4pm
Emmanuel! A Concordia Christmas
@Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall
Info: www.scfta.org/shows-events

December 17; 8pm
Jessica Vosk - Sleight
@Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall
Info: www.scfta.org/shows-events

December 19 & 20; 8pm - 9:30pm
Bee Gees Gold
@Campus Jax
Info: www.campusjax.com/events

December 21 - 22
Tis the Season! Pacific Chorale
@Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall
Info: www.scfta.org/shows-events

December 23; 8pm
Fiesta Navidad
@Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall
Info: www.scfta.org/shows-events

December 26; 8pm
Stevie Nicks Illusion
A Tribute to Fleetwood Mac
@Campus Jax
Info: www.campusjax.com/events

December 31; 7:30pm
A New York New Year's Eve
The Tony Guerrero Quintet ft. Lia Booth
@Campus Jax
Info: www.campusjax.com/events

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IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

Safe Toys & Gifts Month
Aids Awareness Month
Human Rights Month
National Impaired Driving Awareness Month

December 1 Cyber Monday
December 2 Giving Tuesday
December 15 Hanukkah (first day)
December 19 National Ugly Sweater Day
December 21 Winter Solstice
December 24 Christmas Eve
December 25 Christmas Day
December 26 Kwanzaa (first day)
December 31 New Year's Eve
January 1 New Year's Day

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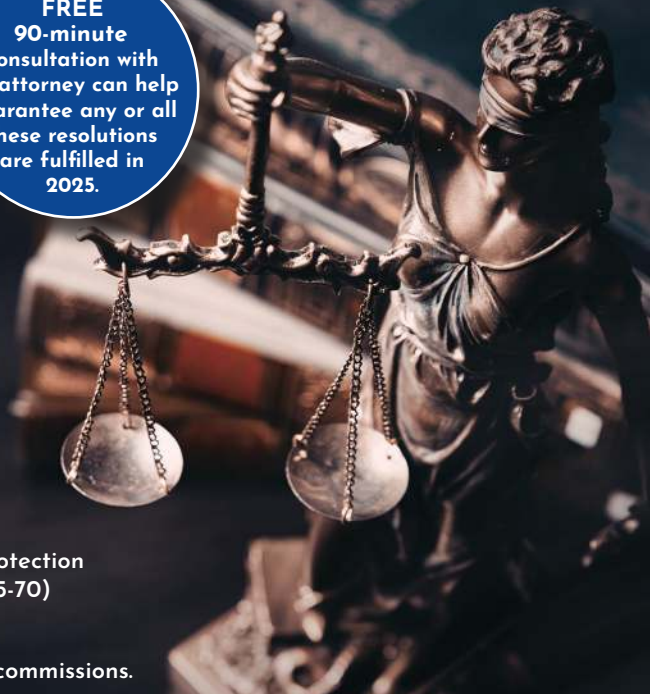
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- 4) Eliminate all taxes on IRA, 401k deferred comp etc in 1-3 years. (Ages 59-80)
- 5) Eliminate RMDs and taxes.
- 6) Add \$10,000 or more per month of chronic and critical illness protection in case of Alzheimer's, dementia, ALS, cancer and more. (Ages 55-70)
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Setting the Standard

John Cain & CAIN Group Real Estate



BY JULIE MEANS

NOVA MEDIA HOUSE & LAUREN SCOTT STUDIOS

For more than two decades, **John Cain**, Founder and President of **CAIN Group**, has set the bar for luxury real estate in Coastal Orange County. John leads one of the region's most recognized teams, delivering consistent, record-setting results backed by integrity, strategic expertise, and an unwavering commitment to clients.

John's journey into real estate began unexpectedly. After graduating from Pepperdine with a degree in economics, he planned to attend law school. But when his parents sold their longtime Upland home and relocated to Huntington Beach, a chance encounter with their real estate agent shifted his career path.

Invited to lunch by the agent after a promising conversation during a home tour, John soon began working as her assistant. Within four months, he earned his real estate license. Over the next two years, he was immersed in hundreds of transactions totaling nearly \$200 million in sales volume, learning the intricacies of the business and building his own client base.

In 2006, John joined the country's top-producing agent, quickly becoming his leading team member. Equipped with invaluable experience, he branched out and created his own group, which evolved into CAIN Group in 2017, laying the foundation for what would become one of Orange County's most distinguished real estate brands.

Philosophy & Approach

Choosing a home shapes every aspect of life, and John believes the role of a real estate professional is both meaningful and transformative. To meet that responsibility, CAIN Group was built around a philosophy of white-glove, expert-driven service.

John models his business on the high-touch precision of private banking or family office services. Each engagement follows a proprietary 260+ step process that ensures no detail is overlooked—from the first conversation to closing and beyond. His vertically integrated team executes this system with precision, freeing John to focus on advising clients, negotiating deals, and navigating complex transactions.

Equally important is accessibility. More than 70% of CAIN Group's business comes from repeat clients and referrals, a testament to the trust and confidence John has earned. To further empower clients, he developed and trademarked two intuitive frameworks—"3-P Approach" and "Presentation, Promotion, and Price"—providing clarity and confidence throughout the listing process.

Commitment to Excellence

CAIN Group stands out through a blend of local expertise and global reach. As a proud affiliate of Sotheby's International Realty, John and his team deliver unparalleled worldwide marketing, positioning properties in front of discerning buyers across the globe.

"Our clients deserve nothing less than our absolute best, every time," John affirms. "We take the responsibility of guiding each client very seriously, and we are committed to leveraging our expertise, resources, and insight to ensure exceptional results."

Successes & Recognition

- Named to **Realtor Magazine's 30 Under 30** in 2010
- Featured on the **Real Trends Top 1000** every year since its inception
- Consistently ranked among the top **agents worldwide** for Sotheby's International Realty (out of nearly 28,000)
- #1 Small Team in Orange County per Real Trends, as advertised in The Wall Street Journal for the past **seven consecutive years**
- #1 agent in Crystal Cove for the past **five years**
- Among the top two agents in Newport Coast for the past **five years**

Life in Coastal Orange County

A resident for 21 years, John treasures the area's scenic beauty, abundant outdoor activities, and unbeatable weather. Away from work, he enjoys time with his family, traveling, fitness, snowboarding, golf, and coaching flag football.

Beyond family and real estate, John is deeply committed to philanthropy and community involvement. He has served as a board member for Make-A-Wish Orange County and Inland Empire and Big Brothers Big Sisters of Orange County. He is also the founder and presenting sponsor of the annual Pickleball Tournament benefiting Make-A-Wish OC/IE in Newport Beach, a proud supporter of the Junior League of Orange County, and actively involved with Mariners Church Irvine and Beachcities Community Church in Huntington Beach.



A Message to the Community

"Many agents boast about being number one or breaking records—don't be swayed by empty claims," John advises. "Take the time to verify, ensure alignment with your goals, and choose representation that genuinely reflects your professional style. We would be honored to demonstrate the integrity, distinction, and effectiveness of our approach."

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Meet The Richland Family

A Life Built on Purpose, Compassion and Connection

BY AMANDA HUNTSMAN | PHOTOS BY KAELEN DAVIS PHOTOGRAPHY & JIM KENNEDY PHOTOGRAPHERS

For Brandon and Jessica Richland, life is a beautiful blend of helping others, family and adventure. Together with their son, Cade, and their beloved dogs, Callie and Ellie, they've created a home filled with love, laughter and a shared mission of helping others feel their best inside and out.

How it Began

Their story began at UC Irvine Medical Center, inside the Burn Intensive Care Unit. Brandon was completing his final day of rotation as a resident doctor, while Jessica, a respiratory therapist, had been floated to the unit from her usual post in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. Amidst the controlled chaos of caring for a critically ill baby, a connection sparked; one that neither of them could ignore.

Jessica recalls running back to the NICU afterward to tell her friends she had just met the person she was going to be with. *"We met on a Wednesday, went out that Friday, and the rest is history,"* she smiles. Over a decade later, their connection remains as strong as it was on that first day.

The couple planned to marry in Italy, but when the pandemic intervened, they found a new dream venue closer to home, the breathtaking Cielo Farms in Malibu. The rustic, Italian-style barn nestled among the canyons set the perfect stage for the beginning of their forever.

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A Journey of Dedication and Excellence

Dr. Brandon Richland's path to becoming one of Orange County's most respected plastic surgeons began with an unwavering passion for medicine. After graduating with honors from UCLA, he earned his M.D. from Saint Louis University School of Medicine in 2013, where he received top academic honors, including the McGraw-Hill/Lange Medical Student Academic Achievement Award, the top surgery student award and graduated top of his class.

His residency in Plastic Surgery at UC Irvine spanned six years, during which he earned multiple Academic Achievement Awards — recognition of his tireless pursuit of mastery. By 2014, he was licensed by the Medical Board of California, and over the years, his reputation has only grown. Today, as a board-certified plastic surgeon and Diplomate of the American Board of Plastic Surgery, Dr. Richland continues to set the bar high, combining artistry and innovation in every procedure.

But for him, success isn't measured by accolades; it's measured by trust. *"Every detail, from consultation to post-op care, reflects our philosophy that outcomes must always exceed expectations,"* he shares. His approach focuses not just on enhancing appearance but on restoring confidence and balance, helping patients feel whole again.

Jessica's background in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit shaped her into a caregiver of rare compassion and skill. For nearly 15 years, she worked with premature and critically ill newborns, managing ventilators and breathing support systems for some of the tiniest, most vulnerable patients imaginable.

"It was a job of equal parts science and heart," she reflects. Leaving the NICU was not an easy decision, but when the opportunity arose to help grow Richland Aesthetics, she saw it as a continuation of her purpose, just in a new form. Today, she brings that same precision and empathy to the aesthetic and wellness side of their practice, helping patients nurture both confidence and self-care.

At the heart of everything Dr. Richland and Jessica do is a shared belief: true beauty begins from within. Their practice philosophy blends advanced medical expertise with genuine compassion, caring for the whole person rather than focusing solely on outward transformation.

They find the most fulfillment in connecting with people, listening to their stories, understanding their goals and creating personalized treatment plans that enhance natural beauty while fostering self-assurance. Whether through surgery, aesthetics, or wellness therapies like vitamin shots and rejuvenation programs, their goal is the same — to help each individual feel radiant, confident and authentically themselves.



Family, Adventure, and Giving Back

Outside of work, life centers around their family and a sense of gratitude. Their son, Cade, born in Newport Beach, is an energetic toddler who loves Disneyland, swimming and park days. Callie and Ellie, their dogs (who wear matching pajamas, of course), round out the family with unconditional love and playfulness.

Brandon and Jessica share a passion for adventure, from scuba diving in tropical destinations to skiing in the winter months. They document their travels through videos and even create annual family yearbooks, cherished keepsakes capturing their milestones and memories.

Giving back is also woven into their lives. The couple actively supports Miracles for Kids, a foundation that helps families with critically ill children — a cause close to their hearts, given Jessica's background in neonatal care.



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Their message is simple but powerful: true beauty starts from within, and the most meaningful transformations happen when care, honesty and purpose come together.

Local Shoutouts

When they're not working or traveling, the Richlands enjoy dining at spots such as RH Ocean Grill, Sushi Roku, Nobu, Palmilla and Beachcomber.



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Welcoming Dr. Leslie Bacani to eyeXam Crystal Cove

BY DR. NIKKI IRAVANI, FOUNDER, EYEXAM

As the founder of eyeXam, I'm thrilled to introduce our newest Optometrist, Dr. Leslie Bacani, OD, to the Newport Coast family. From our very first meeting, I knew she would be an incredible addition to our team. Her calm, compassionate presence and genuine dedication to her patients perfectly align with our mission of providing exceptional, personalized care.

Dr. Bacani's passion for Dry Eye and Ocular Aesthetics makes her a natural fit to help expand our eyeSpa services at Crystal Cove. She is deeply committed to helping patients not only achieve clear, comfortable vision but also feel their best through advanced, non-invasive treatments.

We are especially excited to introduce OptiLift, one of our newest technologies in aesthetic eye care. This innovative device uses radio-frequency and DMSt technology to stimulate collagen, tighten eyelids and rejuvenate the under-eye area. The results are instantaneous and remarkable — our team and patients alike have been absolutely amazed by the refreshed, lifted look it delivers without downtime.

Please join me in welcoming Dr. Bacani to the eyeXam family. Whether you visit for a routine exam, a dry eye consultation, or an eyeSpa treatment, you'll quickly see why we're so proud to have her on our team.



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A Message from Dr. Leslie Bacani

Throughout my years in clinical practice, I've recognized what truly sets great care apart — genuine empathy, quality time with patients, and personalized recommendations that address the whole person, not just their eyes.

At eyeXam, I'm excited to bring this philosophy to life. My approach combines cutting-edge technology with a "patient-first" mindset, ensuring each visit is both comfortable and comprehensive. While I provide full-scope Primary Care services, my passion lies in Dry Eye therapy and Ocular Aesthetics — two specialties that allow me to blend science and artistry to enhance comfort and confidence.

Whether you're visiting for a thorough eye exam, seeking relief from dry eye symptoms, or exploring aesthetic options like OptiLift, my goal is to make every patient feel seen, cared for, and confident in their eye health. I look forward to meeting you soon at our beautiful Crystal Cove location!

Dr. Leslie Bacani, OD



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YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD SOLD REPORT

STATUS	ADDRESS	SQUARE FOOTAGE	BEDS	BATHS	ASKING PRICE	SOLD PRICE
SOLD	18 Swimmers	11,494	5	11	\$38,000,000	\$38,000,000
SOLD	50 Timor Sea	4,021	4	5	\$12,345,250	\$11,800,000
SOLD	12 Via Avoria	5,117	5	6	\$9,800,000	\$9,100,000
SOLD	3 Vincennes	3,787	4	4	\$5,780,000	\$5,650,000
SOLD	28 Surfspray Blf	3,767	4	5	\$9,995,000	\$9,250,000
SOLD	3 Observatory	4,117	4	5	\$5,899,800	\$5,550,000
SOLD	31 Harcourt	3,787	4	4	\$5,750,000	\$5,492,000
SOLD	40 Vernon	2,959	4	4	\$5,295,000	\$4,914,500
SOLD	12 Calais	2,473	4	3	\$3,255,000	\$3,200,000
SOLD	45 Chandon	2,400	3	3	\$2,300,000	\$2,300,000
SOLD	41 Chandon	2,301	2	3	\$1,895,000	\$2,000,000
SOLD	52 Anjou	1,720	3	3	\$1,849,000	\$1,849,000
SOLD	6 Teramo Court	1,095	2	2	\$1,299,900	\$1,230,000

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BY EVELYNE MARKS

HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE

Happy holidays to you and your family. It's the season of giving - and what better way to spoil the special people in your life (or yourself!) than with a few of my absolute favorites? From luxury fragrances to skincare must-haves and chic fashion staples, these gifts are sure to impress everyone on your list.

VALENTINO BEAUTY FOR THAT SPECIAL SOMEONE

If you're searching for a timeless fragrance, Born in Roma Donna Extradoze Parfum by Valentino Beauty is one of my go-to scents. It's floral, warm, and slightly addictive — with hints of vanilla, blackcurrant and rum. It's the kind of perfume that makes you feel elegant and confident all at once. And don't forget about the men in your life! The Uomo Born in Roma Eau de Parfum is a modern classic. With notes of vanilla, lavandin and vetiver, it's the perfect gift for that special man in your life. It's sophisticated, masculine and oh-so-sexy. You can find both fragrances on my website by typing in your browser: bit.ly/ValentinoEvelynne. It's the perfect his-and-hers duo for the holidays.

CLARINS FOR THE SKINCARE LOVER

We all have that friend who lives for glowing skin, and this is their season to shine! Clarins has some of my favorite skincare staples, especially the Double Serum, which hydrates, firms and gives the skin a beautiful, youthful glow. The Lift Affine Masque is another must-have. It reduces puffiness and helps define facial contours...holiday photos, anyone? And for those late nights wrapping presents or binge-watching Christmas movies, the Total Eye Lift is an instant refresh. These are everyday luxuries that make skin feel pampered, and they're great gifts that anyone would love to unwrap! Check it out here: bit.ly/Evelynne_Clarins



ZADIG & VOLTAIRE FOR THE FASHIONISTA

If you're looking for something stylish and edgy, Zadig & Voltaire has the perfect holiday pieces. Their leather jackets are some of my all-time favorites; effortlessly cool and versatile enough to pair with everything from jeans to a ruffle skirt. A Zadig & Voltaire jacket makes a statement. It's that timeless wardrobe piece they'll reach for year after year. Add a cute tee or statement necklace, and you've got the perfect gift for the trendsetter in your life.

Whether you're shopping for your best friend, your partner, or treating yourself (because you deserve it!), these picks are timeless, thoughtful and oh-so-chic. You can shop all of my favorite holiday finds by visiting EverythingEvelynne.com.

Wishing you love, beauty and a little sparkle this holiday season!

With love,
Everything Evelynne

Evelynne Marks is a lifestyle blogger who lives locally here in sunny California. Visit her website at everythingevelynne.com to shop her fashion finds, discover beauty tips and more. You can watch her reels every week on Instagram @everythingevelynne for even more inspiration

Chalk Talk

BY BRIGID CIANFRANI AND CAROL CRANE

The Newport Mesa Unified School District (NMUSD) looks forward to another productive year in 2026! There are so many wonderful things happening across our district. Here are a few highlights.



Back Bay High School is one of NMUSD's alternative high schools with approximately 200 students attending regularly. Occasionally students fall behind the typical pace due to illness or relocation and Back Bay enables students to complete requirements quickly in a supportive environment. Students are offered a post-graduation plan of action, industry mentors for career exploration, field trips to local colleges and a literacy center filled with resource materials. Back Bay also celebrated a special day on campus recently with the opening of their own retreat space where students can recharge, practice mindfulness and access mental health support. The students have nicknamed it "The Lounge" and it's a testament to the district's commitment to the whole child.



Corona del Mar High School's football team is undefeated at the time of the article and celebrated an exciting win in the annual "Battle of the Bay" game against Newport Harbor High School. The game was played at Orange Coast College and featured not just football but the Drumline, PepSquad, Orchestras, Dance Team and the new Colorguard team too. Winter sports will be starting up soon and the community is welcome to attend events on campus after school. It's a fun way to see students in action and support our local soccer, basketball and water polo teams.



Recent rankings detailed some of our NMUSD successes with 14 of our local schools named to the Educational Results Partnership California Honor Roll. Back Bay High School, along with Andersen, Harbor View Elementary and Newport Coast Elementary were all included on this list of schools with high academic achievement and continuous improvement across all student groups.



The NMUSD Board of Trustees recently welcomed their new student board members. Each high school selects a student to assist in sharing their peers' input across the district. The student board members participate in Board meeting discussions. The CdM High representative is Makenzie Vovan, a senior who is also the ASB President on campus this year.



Carol Crane



Brigid Cianfrani

Our local elementary school students are working hard and enjoyed a variety of fall festivities including Eastbluff's Trunk or Treat evening, the Lincoln Halloween night celebration, the annual Andersen Fall Faire and Pumpkin Patch, the Newport Coast Elementary Reflections Art Gallery featuring student work, "Walk to School Days" across the zone, and the inspirational Harbor View Veterans Day celebration.

We wish you all a safe, peaceful and healthy 2026!

Brigid Cianfrani and Carol Crane are longtime volunteers in the Newport Mesa Unified School District, former PTA presidents at the elementary and high school levels and former Zone Pack chairs. Carol Crane currently serves as a member on the Newport Mesa Unified School District (NMUSD) board, Trustee Area 3. Brigid Cianfrani works as a substitute teacher in the district and is the current chair of the CdM Zone Pack Committee.

For more info: NMUSD.us

IG @ [newportmesausd](https://www.instagram.com/newportmesausd)

Email: Carol Crane: ccrane@nmusd.us

Brigid Cianfrani: brigidcianfrani@gmail.com

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Photo courtesy of CdM Flag Football Boosters
Photo by Diane Torrence

CdM Girls Flag Football Team Wins CIFSS D2 Championship

BY JULIE MEANS

Hitting their stride at just the right time, the Sea Queens Flag Football Team from Corona del Mar High School earned their place in the California Interscholastic Federation Southern Section Division 2 (CIFSS D2) Championship persevering through early season challenges with new personnel, coaches and schemes, hard fought battles and amazing teamwork. Finishing regular season play with a record of 6-6, won-lost in a challenging division, they finished fourth in the Sunset League and made their way to the CIFSS D2 Finals.

"I'm so proud of them. We have a really young team, and they've been working really hard since August," said Coach Theo Rokos. "We have a great group of girls and we have an awesome foundation here."

Comprised mostly of sophomores and freshmen, the squad started coming together towards the end of the season to overcome the ups and downs experienced during the regular season. The young team also has young leadership, with the following captains: one junior, Brooke Morris (#13) and three sophomores; Mia Balabanian (#1), Addi Stern (#8) and AnnaSofia Dickens (#5). Their only senior, Salem Madden (#26) has become an amazing blocker in her first year playing the sport.

A pivotal shift occurred half-way through the season when Addi Stern transitioned from receiver to starting quarterback to lead the offense. She combined hard work and dedication to improve her skills quickly to become a dual-threat passer and rusher. The team gelled into a very well connected group of girls who always know how to work hard to achieve their goals, while having fun playing.

Starting offense for CIFSS playoffs are: Quarterback, Addison (Addi) Stern; Wide Receivers, Mia Balabanian; AnnaSofia Dickens; Brooke Morris and Shannon Parrott; Center, Hudson Rasic and Blocker, Salem Madden.

Starting defense for CIFSS playoffs are (rotations in games):

Rushers/Linebackers, Brynn Boyle; Reese Brighting; AnnaSofia Dickens; Violet Prohaska; Addi Stern; Secondary, Mia Balabanian; Samantha (Sam) Matlaf; Brooke Morris; Shannon Parrott; Mia Paleferri.

Aside from Stern, top performers on the team consist of Balabanian who is one of the leaders on the team in both interceptions on defense and touchdowns on offense. She also became a defensive leader for the team this year in her first year as captain. Dickens is a dominant wide receiver who also stepped up to become a rusher and punter this year. They are both members of the **USA National Select Team**, a top-tier group of only 48 girls who have been invited to join the program. Parrott and Morris have been top performers throughout the season on both sides of the ball as well.





The Coaching Team was also new in the pre-season, and have greatly inspired the girls to work together. Head Coach Theo Rokos moved to the top position after serving as the assistant coach last year. Offensive Coordinator Josh Calvin organized the offense and brought a fresh perspective and new plays to the team, after completing his college football career as a quarterback at Utah/Murray State University (graduated from Murray State). Defensive Coach Joseph Webber elevated play with new sets.

"Addi Stern did an unbelievable job of running the football today," Coach Rokos said after their win at home against Ventura High School in the quarterfinals. "We just have a great group of captains including AnnaSofia Dickens, Brooke Morris and Mia Balabanian on defense are just unbelievable. We work hard and play one day at a time. A standard is a standard around here. It's a football school and we're happy to be here. We appreciate it."

ROAD TO THE CHAMPIONSHIP

ROUND 1: Beat Agoura High School in a close away game, 20-18

Highlights - Mia Balabanian scored 2 touchdowns and a PAT (Point After Touchdown). Hudson Rasic scored one touchdown. Brooke Morris put points on the board with a PAT. Big plays from freshmen Brynn Boyle and Samantha Matlaf.

ROUND 2: Beat Linfield Christian High School at CdM, 7-6

Highlights - Intense game with excellent defense stopping big drives. Shannon Parrot scored the touchdown. Hudson Rasic scored the PAT.

QUARTERFINALS: Ventura High School at CdM, 27-20

Highlights - Addi Stern, 3 rushing touchdowns and 2 rushing PATs. AnnaSofia Dickens, 1 receiving touchdown. Hudson Rasic, one PAT. Mia Balabanian and Brynn Boyle each got one interception.

SEMI FINALS: at Newbury Park High School, CdM won 27-18

Highlights - Another intense game, well-played by the Sea Queens. Addi Stern, 2 touchdowns and a safety (rusher). Mia Balabanian: 1 touchdown. Brooke Morris: 1 touchdown. Shannon Parrott: 1 PAT. Defense: 3 interceptions from Brooke Morris, Sam Matlaf, Shannon Parrott

CHAMPIONSHIP: Coach Rokos wins D2 SS Championship in his first year at the helm with an amazing team of coaches and players. CdM won against Westlake HS, 26-14, Addi Stern scored 3 TDs, Brooke Morris 1, Addi scored 2 PAT and Shannon Parrot scored 1. Brooke got an interception. Defense led by Mia Balabanian and Anna Sofia Dickens throughout the game. It is a driven young team! All but one starter return to next year's team.

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Local Shoutouts

BY AMANDA HUNTSMAN

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DOLCE BY TINA

Dolce by Tina is a small-batch bakery in Irvine specializing in decadent New York-style cookies with a modern twist. Six signature flavors are available

year-round, while a Cookie of the Month adds seasonal variety and surprise. Every order is made to be as memorable as the moments it's enjoyed in. Every order is carefully packaged to match the elevated yet playful spirit of the brand, making Dolce by Tina a favorite for celebrations, client gifts, or simply a well-deserved indulgence. Pre-order boxes are available in four, six, or twelve cookies for pickup and local delivery each week.

As a thank-you to Newport Beach Living readers, enjoy 10% off your first order with code DOLCE10.

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ICONIC ORNAMENTS

Iconic Ornaments, founded by Laguna Beach teens Jackson and Sawyer, brings hometown pride to the holidays with beautifully crafted glass ornaments featuring beloved landmarks in Laguna Beach and Newport Beach. Each piece is both a keepsake and a celebration of community spirit, with a portion of every sale supporting the Pacific Marine Mammal Center. Newport Beach ornaments include the Balboa Pavilion and the Balboa Dad's Frozen Banana sign. Last year, they partnered with the Beek family to create a Balboa Ferry sign ornament and with the Duffield family to design a Duffy Boat ornament.



They also produced a Laguna Beach Sawdust Festival ornament. This year, they worked with the Beek family again to make ornaments of all three of their ferries and are currently collaborating with the Merritt family to create an ornament of their iconic Hotel Laguna. Iconic Ornaments is the perfect way to add local charm to your tree this season..

www.iconicornaments.com | IG @iconicornaments

HEROES BEAUTY

Founded by Newport Beach resident and Hollywood makeup artist Stephani Reuter, Heroes Beauty is a clean cosmetic, skincare, and wellness line that combines professional quality with everyday ease. All products are cruelty-free, paraben-free, mineral and botanically based—many are vegan, gluten-free, and proudly made in the USA.

December Product Picks: Our hydrating Luxe Lip Glosses, Lip Crayons & Lip Oils to get you mistletoe ready! Travel-Size Spa Sprays, Lip Remedy & Eye Masks for Your Stocking! Add Organic Coco Rose Perfume, paired with our new matching Luxury Body Oil & Silk Peptide Body Lotion, for that special someone!

Shop online or locally at Seaside Gallery and Fleur De Lys.

www.heroesbeauty.com
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TROPEZ BOUTIQUE

Tropez Boutique brings the charm of Balboa Island to life with hand-selected pieces by owner Monir Ghanian—chic styles perfect for both everyday wear and unforgettable parties. This season, it's also the perfect spot to discover your holiday looks, whether you're dressing for festive gatherings, the Christmas Boat Parade, or New Year's celebrations. With its curated collection and stylish flair, Tropez Boutique makes holiday shopping on the Island a little more special.

www.tropezboutiques.com | IG @tropez_boutique



SIDE DOOR

Cozy and festive, SideDoor in Corona del Mar offers the perfect gathering spot this holiday season. From the warm glow of its fireplaces to the handcrafted charcuterie station and ever-changing craft beer and cocktail list, SideDoor brings a relaxed yet refined energy to your friends' night out. Nestled beneath the iconic red key entrance, it's a neighborhood gem that combines seasonal small plates, carefully curated drinks and a cheerful ambiance. Ideal for celebrating the holidays while staying close to home. It's also a fun spot to end the Corona del Mar Christmas Walk festivities.

www.lawrysonline.com/sidedoor-corona-del-mar



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Healing Chronic Tendinitis with PRP & Peptides

A Modern, Natural Approach to Long-Term Pain Relief

BY DR. GREGORY TENNANT, DR. JUSTIN SHERFEY, & DR. THOMAS NASSER

If you've ever struggled with ongoing tendon pain—like tennis elbow, jumper's knee, or Achilles tendinitis—you know how frustrating it can be. The pain lingers for months, sometimes years, and simple movements that used to feel easy suddenly become difficult. Chronic tendinitis happens when a tendon (the strong cord that connects muscle to bone) becomes irritated or damaged over time and the body can't fully repair it.

Traditional treatments such as rest, ice, therapy, or cortisone shots can help temporarily—but often they don't fix the underlying problem. That's where Platelet-Rich Plasma (PRP) and peptide therapy come in. These advanced, regenerative treatments aim to stimulate your body's natural healing process rather than just cover up symptoms.

What is PRP?

PRP stands for Platelet-Rich Plasma, a concentrated portion of your own blood that's full of growth factors and healing proteins.

Here's how it works:

1. A small sample of your blood is drawn.
2. It's spun in a centrifuge to separate out the platelet layer.
3. That concentrated plasma is then carefully injected into the injured tendon under ultrasound guidance.

Platelets act like tiny "first responders." They release powerful natural growth factors that attract stem cells, reduce inflammation and help rebuild collagen—the main structural protein in tendons. Because PRP comes from your own body, there's very little risk of allergic reaction or rejection. Most people experience gradual improvement in pain, strength and function over several weeks to months, as the tendon tissue slowly repairs itself.

What Are Peptides and How Do They Help?

Peptides are short chains of amino acids—essentially small proteins—that tell your body how to heal, grow, and recover. Think of them as biological messengers. In cases of chronic tendinitis, specific peptides can:

- Decrease inflammation
- Improve blood flow to the damaged tissue
- Stimulate collagen and tendon repair
- Accelerate overall recovery and reduce downtime

Commonly used peptides for tendon and joint recovery include BPC-157 (known for healing muscles, tendons and ligaments) and TB-500 (which promotes flexibility and tissue repair). These are typically given as small injections under the skin or near the affected area and can be used alongside PRP to boost the regenerative process.

Why Combine PRP and Peptides?

When used together, PRP and peptides can provide a powerful one-two punch for chronic tendon injuries:

- PRP jump-starts healing by delivering growth factors directly to the site of injury.
- Peptides sustain and enhance that healing by supporting cellular repair, improving circulation and reducing inflammation system-wide.

Patients often report faster recovery, less pain and better long-term results compared to standard treatments alone. These therapies can also reduce the need for repeated cortisone shots or surgery.

The Bottom Line

PRP and peptide therapy are part of a new era in orthopedic and sports medicine—one focused on healing, not just symptom relief. For people with stubborn tendinitis that hasn't improved with rest, therapy, or injections, these regenerative options offer new hope. Every case is unique, so it's important to be evaluated by a physician experienced in these treatments, to determine the right combination and protocol for you. The Doctors at Regenerative Orthopedic Specialists (ROS) are here to help you recover and perform. With the right care plan, your body can often repair what once felt "unfixable"—and get you back to the activities you love, pain-free.

Written by our fellowship trained physicians at Regenerative Orthopedic Solutions; **Dr. Tennant, Dr. Sherfey, & Dr. Nasser**. With over 60 years of combined experience in orthopedic trauma, joint replacement, sports medicine, pain management and regenerative therapies.

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What If Book

Be Ready for the Unexpected

BY LISA DELUNA

Life can change in a moment. I learned this firsthand after the sudden and unexpected loss of my mom, Kathleene. She wasn't just the heart of our family—she was also the organizer, the planner, the one who quietly held the details of our lives together. She paid the bills, coordinated family gatherings, and preserved our family history. Because of her, we've always been a close-knit family.

But when she passed, we were left not only with overwhelming grief, but also with the realization that so much of her knowledge, wisdom, and personal wishes were undocumented.

There were the little things that made her unique—her famous recipes, her obsession with a spotless home, her ingenious cleaning solutions. None of these were written down. Then there were the bigger things: I didn't even know she had a life insurance policy until we happened to find it sitting on her desk.

One of the most heartbreaking oversights came in honoring her final wish. For as long as I can remember, my mom had told us that when she died, she wanted to be buried with the love letters my dad wrote her while stationed in Hawaii during their early marriage. We all knew this, yet in the fog of shock and grief, her request slipped our minds. Afterward, we were devastated to realize we had forgotten.

This experience was a wake-up call. It showed me just how important it is to have conversations about wishes, memories, and details—big and small—before it's too late.



A month before my mom passed, someone gave me a little end-of-life planning book. I flipped through it and thought it was a good idea, but I didn't bring it up. I didn't want to "jinx" anything. I assumed we had plenty of time. But the very next month, she was gone, and I was left with so many unanswered questions.

That's why I now share *The What If Book: Be Ready for the Unexpected*. It's a resource born from my own story, designed to help families prepare in ways that go far beyond wills and financial planning. It's about capturing the personal details that define a life—the special recipes, the quirky habits, the cleaning tricks, the family stories, even the requests that might otherwise get lost in the shuffle of grief.

Think of it this way: if something happened to me and my husband tomorrow, my kids wouldn't even know what dog food to buy for our pugs—or where I buy it. To me, that's second nature. But to them, it would be just another stressful mystery on top of an already overwhelming situation.

My hope is that by sharing my story, families will see the value in documenting the details that truly matter. Whether it's traditions, personal wishes, or even those little "only mom knows" things, write them down. Share them. Talk about them.

Because in the end, *The What If Book* isn't just about preparing for the unexpected—it's about preserving love, memory, and connection for the generations that come after us.

To receive a PDF copy of *The What If Book*, you may email me at ldeluna@carepatrol.com. To schedule a presentation about this important resource, call me at 951-438-0427.



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St. Mary's Unveils Innovative Campus Spaces to Inspire Learning and Community

By Heather Wilkins

St. Mary's School is proud to announce the opening of several transformative new spaces on campus, designed to foster creativity, collaboration, and connection for students, families, and faculty alike. Central to these exciting additions is The Sillers Center, a two-story, 28,400-square-foot facility honoring the school's visionary founder, Father Ernest D. Sillers.

"The Sillers Center represents the heart of our campus and our mission," said Doug Patterson, Head of School. "Every space—from our early education classrooms to the Design Center—was created to inspire curiosity, hands-on learning, and the joy of discovery for every St. Mary's student."

The Sillers Center: A Hub for Learning and Innovation

On the first floor, the Thompson Family Early Education Center welcomes our youngest learners with bright, flexible classrooms and imaginative play areas that seamlessly connect indoor and outdoor environments. The adjacent Liu Family Playground provides purposeful outdoor spaces that support physical development, social-emotional growth, and creative exploration.

Visitors are greeted by the Vlok Family Lobby, home to the Design The Future donor wall, and can enjoy a morning coffee in the Welcome Café, a space designed for adult connection and community.

The Design Center: A Hub for Creativity and Innovation

Located on the second floor of The Sillers Center, the Design Center is a nearly 16,000-square-foot hub where imagination meets hands-on learning. The space combines administrative offices, collaborative studios, and specialized labs with an expansive outdoor terrace, offering students the freedom to explore ideas both indoors and in the open air.

Within the Design Center, students engage with a variety of creative and technical tools, from hand and power tools to digital fabrication machines, 3D printers, and subtractive manufacturing equipment. This diverse toolkit allows learners to move seamlessly from concept to prototype, building both skill and confidence.



Key spaces include:

- **Arman Family Empathy Lab** – A flexible, distraction-free environment for meaningful conversations, interviews, and problem discovery.
- **Tavakoli Kadar Idea Lab** – A creative space for brainstorming, sketching, and visualizing ideas, turning possibilities into actionable plans.
- **Tang Family Falcon Workshop** – A hands-on workshop for low- to mid-fidelity prototypes and models using everyday tools and materials.
- **Keif Family Tool Shed** – A maker space equipped for larger-scale construction with durable materials such as wood.
- **The Garage** – A precision fabrication area for high-fidelity prototypes and detailed projects.

- **Lisa Argyros and Family Studio** – A finishing studio for applying surface treatments, paint, and polish to completed projects.
- **Zhang Family Gallery** – A presentation and exhibition space where student work is showcased, celebrated, and shared with the broader community.

Together, these spaces form an ecosystem of innovation, empowering students to dream boldly, design creatively, and bring their ideas to life in meaningful, tangible ways.

"The Design Center is more than a space—it's a learning ecosystem where students imagine boldly, create collaboratively, and see their ideas come to life," Patterson added.

Floriani Family Park and Community Spaces

From the creative energy of the Design Center, students and families can step outdoors into the expansive Floriani Family Park, a 40,000-square-foot landscaped environment designed for recreation, relaxation, and community connection. The park features lush greenery, shade trees, and drought-tolerant plantings, creating a welcoming environment year-round. Thoughtfully designed zones encourage play, conversation, and reflection, while collaborative seating areas provide spaces for students, families, and faculty to gather and engage in shared activities. Modern lighting, comfortable benches, and a state-of-the-art speaker system make the park ideal for both daily enjoyment and larger community events.



At the heart of The Sillers Center, the Grand Staircase serves as both a striking architectural centerpiece and a daily reminder of St. Mary's values, etched with the International Baccalaureate learner profiles.

These spaces collectively embody St. Mary's dedication to cultivating an intellectually rich and engaging campus environment, one that advances student learning, fosters meaningful community engagement, and promotes enduring connections.



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When December Becomes Your Strategic Advantage

Exquisitely Aligned.com

by Gina Maier Vincent

December's real gift isn't found in perfect holiday execution — it's in the strategic opportunity this month offers while others are distracted by seasonal chaos.

You're standing at a crossroads most people rush past: the ability to assess an entire year's data and make informed decisions about what comes next.

Last week, I worked with an executive who'd just completed her most financially successful year yet. But as we reviewed her wins, she paused: "I achieved everything I set out to do, but I feel like I've been executing someone else's business plan for my life."

Her success was undeniable — yet she felt disconnected from her own choices.

Here's what I've discovered working with high-profile individuals: December offers something January doesn't — *complete cycle analysis*. You have twelve months of performance data showing what energized you versus what merely looked impressive on paper.

Most people treat their careers like portfolios but their personal lives like accidents. You conduct quarterly business reviews but rarely assess whether your daily choices align with your deepest values. You optimize systems professionally while accepting relationships and commitments that underperform.

The opportunity? December's natural completion invites you to apply the same analytical rigor to your life architecture that you use for major investments. When you audit not just what you accomplished but how those accomplishments felt, *you reveal which directions deserve more investment* — and which require strategic divestiture.

This approach applies whether you're optimizing an existing partnership or positioning yourself to attract your ideal one. Many accomplished individuals treat their love lives like luck rather than design.

For couples, December's data review reveals patterns: Which interactions energized you versus which felt like obligation management? When did you shift from life partners to efficient roommates? That information becomes your roadmap for reconnection.

For successful singles, December offers clarity about what you *truly* want in a partner beyond credentials. The same executives who conduct due diligence on investments often accept dating situations that wouldn't pass their professional standards. December helps you define relationship criteria with that same precision.

Whether optimizing a relationship or attracting one, the methodology remains: *strategic assessment, intentional design, systematic implementation*.

This week, conduct your own "Year-End Performance Review" for life. Ask: What gave me energy this year versus what drained it? Notice the patterns.

Then make one strategic December decision instead of waiting for January resolutions. Choose one relationship dynamic to shift, one professional boundary to establish, or one personal priority to protect — and plan your first concrete action for January.

If you're ready to approach next year with the same strategic thinking you apply to major business decisions, I work with select individuals who understand that personal transformation requires professional-level planning and execution.

This isn't life coaching — it's strategic consulting for your most important project: designing a life that energizes rather than depletes you. Limited December strategy sessions available.

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A Year to Celebrate Newport

BY MAYOR JOE STAPLETON



As we look back on an extraordinary year in Newport Beach, I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to serve as Mayor during a time when our community continues to thrive. My theme for 2025, "Celebrate Newport," centers on honoring our unique history and recognizing today's accomplishments, while preparing the next generation to carry this remarkable city into the future.

One of my favorite expressions of this year's mayoral theme has been the historical presentations that start each City Council meeting. We've celebrated local pioneers who helped build our early economy, highlighted civic leaders who protected open space and preserved our quality of life, and learned more about the fascinating history of some of our most beloved community institutions. Each presentation reminded us that Newport Beach has always been defined by people who care deeply about their community and dream boldly about what comes next.



It has been a year of major progress on many fronts, including public safety. Focused operations along the Oceanfront Boardwalk have significantly reduced unsafe behavior and improved the Peninsula experience for residents and visitors. At the same time, the Newport Beach Police Department has expanded new technology tools — from FLOCK cameras to the City's first drone program — helping keep our neighborhoods safe and our response times strong. Successful enforcement of a stronger homeless ordinance enacted in late 2024 has resulted in a significant drop in homelessness throughout Newport Beach.

We've continued to deliver strategic investments that preserve our quality of life. The City Council adopted a balanced budget that protects essential services, strengthens long-term fiscal reserves, and pays down pension obligations to help maintain Newport Beach's prestigious AAA credit rating.

Work is underway on important infrastructure projects across the city, including the new Witte Hall lecture facility at the Central Library, upgrades to our Peninsula fire station and library branch, and the ongoing undergrounding of utilities on Balboa Island — all advancing toward completion. This year marked the opening of the City's first accessible playground for children of all abilities, at San Miguel Park, prompted by a heartfelt request from the sister of a disabled resident.

Stewardship of Newport Beach's natural beauty remains a cornerstone of our work. This year marked a major milestone with the launch of the Newport Bay Trash Interceptor, an innovative system that is capturing trash and debris before it can enter our



ecological treasure, the Upper Newport Bay Nature Preserve. This fall, the City began construction on the final phase of a significant environmental restoration project at Big Canyon Nature Park. This work will be the last piece of a decade-long restoration effort to transform degraded land along Back Bay Drive into a healthier, natural estuary that supports native species and enhances trails for all to enjoy.

Most importantly, we continue to invest in our future leaders. Programs like the Mayor's Youth Council give young people the opportunity to learn, volunteer and gain hands-on civic experience.

As my term as Mayor winds down, I'd like to express what an honor and privilege it has been to serve this wonderful community and to celebrate Newport through its history, achievements, and incredible people who make this city so special.

Mayor Joe Stapleton is finishing his first term as Mayor of Newport Beach.

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