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SUMMER TIME FUN!

Photo Credit: Janet Wieczorek

August is a good month to circle back and check off what's left on your summer to do list. Schedule window cleaning. Give the dog a bath. Finish that book. Dip your toes in the lake. Take a walk. Call that old friend and reconnect. I like to take off my watch and eat more dessert. Enjoy!!!



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Katie Hess, Connecting Clarkston Contributor



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AnnaMaryLee Vollick, Guiding Light Doula Services

TABLE OF CONTENTS

JOIN THE TEAM

If you'd like to get involved, let's connect. The more of us we can include in an issue, the better the issue will be, right? You can be as involved as you would like and whether it's photography, writing, reporting or sharing ideas, your voice matters.

DEADLINE FOR OCTOBER CONTENT: AUGUST 20TH

October Stroll is another great issue to share late summer highlights and new school starts. There's room for you!

I CAN ANSWER THAT

If you're wondering about a business owner in Stroll, just reach out and I can tell you all about why I invited them to be a part of the magazine and if you want, I can connect you personally. That's one of my favorite things to do.



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#StrollOakhurst

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Page 6 - Table of Contents
- Page 8 - Preferred Partners
- Page 12 - Partner Profile
- Page 14 - Meet Your Neighbors
- Page 16 - Connecting Clarkston
- Page 20 - Neighborhood News
- Page 22 - Athlete of the Month
- Page 24 - Nutrition Matters
- Page 26 - Peace of Mind
- Page 28 - Smile
- Page 30 - Pawsitive Pets
- Page 32 - Growing up in Oakhurst
- Page 34 - Celebrate Education
- Page 36 - Tutoring & Test Prep
- Page 38 - Your Handyman Connection
- Page 42 - Community Banking
- Page 44 - Resident Business Beat
- Page 46 - Resident Business Guide
- Page 48 - Gratitude

A WORD FROM MY BIGGEST SPONSOR:

"Light is sweet, and it pleases the eye to see the sun."

—ECCLESIASTES 11:7



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REFERRAL/RECOMMENDATION RAFFLE

Take a moment and send me your referral or recommendation and enter my August Raffle! Looking for feel good stories, families for future covers, testimonies about Stroll businesses and more! Send an email to janalee.grainer@strollmag.com or text me at (248) 459-1713!





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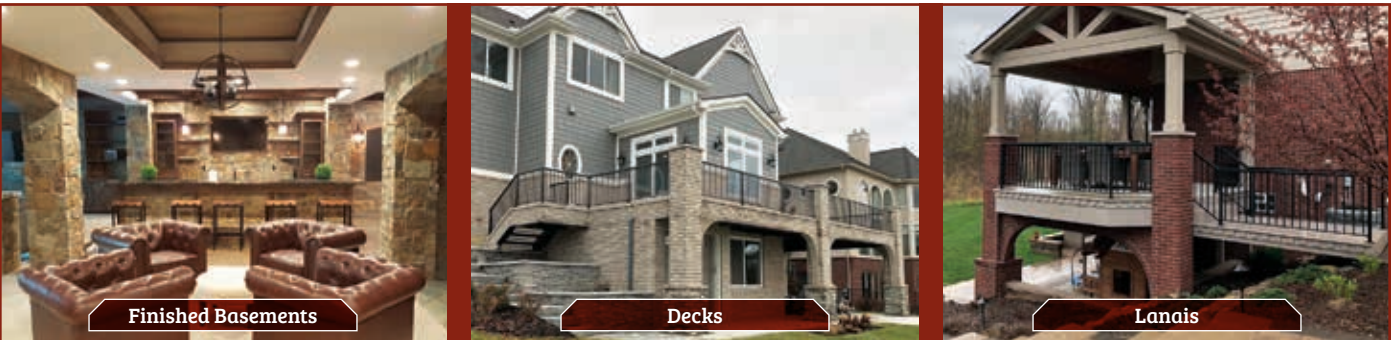
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ABC SERVICES

and Alex Silva-Gomez

I love sharing young business entrepreneurs and Alex shines! He has ambition with a capital “A” and many of you have already seen it in action. Alex is the one to call because “No Jobs Too Small!” Last month you should have read about neighbor Jill Remick’s experience working with Alex.

ALEX SILVA-GOMEZ, ABC SERVICES

Hello Oakhurst,

My name is Alex Silva-Gomez, but you can call me Alex. I grew up nearby in Lake Orion and graduated from Lake Orion High School. Sorry not sorry! I love Clarkston and everyone I meet here so please keep reading.

BUILDING A BUSINESS

I have been doing home improvement work since before I could even drive. I fell in love with using my hands to create and build — there’s nothing like stepping back after finishing a project and admiring the work you brought to life. Taking a customer’s vision and turning it into something real, something they can walk into and be proud of every day, is one of the most rewarding feelings there is. Now, while studying business at MSU and working toward my builder’s license, I’m building the knowledge, experience, and resources needed to create a strong, reliable home improvement company that always puts homeowners first. My goal is to combine quality craftsmanship, honest communication, and long-term

reliability to create spaces that people truly feel at home in.

SPECIALITES

ABC Services specialize in interior and exterior painting, finish carpentry, drywall repair, tile and backsplash installation, exterior trim restoration, property maintenance, and high-end residential improvements. Whether it’s restoring damaged exterior woodwork, modernizing interior spaces, or helping improve curb appeal, our focus is always long-term quality and attention to detail. I understand what it means to doing a job done right. Every project is better than the last. I take pride in work completed by ABC Services. You have my word.

CHALLENGES

Every business faces challenges. One of the bigger

challenges I had to overcome when I first started working for myself was equipment. I had the skills from my apprenticeship but the only equipment I owned was my little sedan and a few Home Depot tools. It was rough that first year, renting or borrowing when needed. But I knew if I kept going and continued reinvesting in my business, it would pay off. And it did! Now I have my big beautiful van and all the equipment I could ask for.

LONG TERM VISION

We’re building ABC Services with a long-term vision: to create a construction company that focuses on more than just building homes. Our mission is to provide personalized services that combine quality craftsmanship, functional design, and healthier building

practices that improve the way people live in their homes every day.

ADVICE FROM ABC SERVICES

My advice to homeowners is to check your exterior trim boards. When penetration happens they turn into a sponge for moisture and an ideal breeding ground for insects - not to mention an easy access point for bigger pests like rodents and birds. Corners and chimneys are also typical problem areas. If you see any discoloration, holes, and or peeling paint, do yourself a big favor and give us a call ASA You and I both know it is better to take care of an issue early before the problem penetrates deeper in to your home. Little problems don’t have to turn into bigger problems.

LAST WORDS

I love to talk, you can give me a call anytime to run home design ideas by a professional or if you’re just looking for guidance on your next project.

My goal is to combine quality craftsmanship, honest communication, and long-term reliability to create spaces that people truly feel at home in.

Last year, earlier this year and in June, Alex has helped us. He is wonderful. He does a great job and cleans up. He is respectful of the plants and trees. He knows what he is doing and I do not say that about many people.

—KAREN RANDALL, OAKHURST RESIDENT

We worked with Alex on a trim repair project and appreciated his efforts. We wish him continued success with his business.

—JESSICA BABAJAN, OAKHURST RESIDENT

My basement flooded over the winter and without Alex, I don’t know how I could have managed the clean up schedule. He is personable, respectable and knows what he is doing. “No Jobs Too Small” is true. Alex loves what he does and it shows!

—JILL REMICK

We had Alex repair part of our roof line where critters had made their way in one too many times. He took time to determine what really needed to be done and he solved our pitter patter problem. We’re having him return to tackle a few more odd jobs. Alex is courteous and seasoned at such a young age.

—FRANK GRAINER

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THE LEWIS FAMILY

Michael and Jaelynn have lived in Oakhurst almost 2 years. They have a beautiful 19 month old daughter, Eliana and very soon now, they'll welcome her sister in September. Their Great Dane appears to watch over all of them, although he really loves to cuddle more than anything. Keep reading!



Photo Credit: Samantha Pavlovski

THE PRELUDE

Before they met, Michael attended Northwood University for his under grad studies, majoring in Business Management and Entrepreneurship. He earned his Master in Business Administration with a concentration on supply chain during graduate school at Wayne State University. Jaelynn attended under grad studies at Oakland university and majored in nursing. She earned her Masters in Nursing and achieved her Family Nurse Practitioner certification attending graduate school at the University of Michigan.

THE STORY BEGINS

Michael and Jaelynn met very early one morning during COVID while working out at The Royal Oak Gym. Three years later they were married in a beautiful ceremony at the Shrine Little Flower Basilica and their wedding reception was one of the very first at Daxton Hotel in Birmingham.

SERVING OTHERS WITH PASSION

Today Jaelynn is a cardiology Nurse Practitioner (NP) based in Birmingham. Michael is an owner of Planted, based out of

Whitmore Lake, Copperwood Advisory Group, a local business brokerage and most recently, Highmark Outdoors, a local lawn & snow service business with his brother-in-law, Jay Beeb. It all started over a bottle of wine one evening when they started talking about Jay's passions. Check out this month's Resident Business Beat feature near the back of the magazine for more information on Highmark Outdoors. They are currently offering a neighborhood discount for new clients.

FAMILY BONDS

Their daughter Eliana is 19 months old and some say she is the boss of the family. With their second daughter due in September, life is about to get even more amazing! Eliana's helper is Hans, the family Great Dane. Be sure to read his story in this month's Pawsitive Pet feature a few pages away. The two are inseparable and there is no doubt love much and sweetness between them.

SOCIALLY ACTIVE

Michael and Jaelynn love networking and sharing similar interests. Both of them play tennis and they are working on their pickleball game. Michael plays golf and like so many of you, looks forward

to watching more football this fall. Go Lions! They make it up north a few times a year to Lake Leelanau and the Traverse City area. Of course, each year they pick out somewhere warm to visit. Here in Oakhurst, Michael and Jaelynn enjoy participating in social activities and events in the neighborhood, especially dining events at the club, the pool and anytime a neighbor extends an invite! Let's connect!

HAPPY PEOPLE

They spend holidays and special occasions with both sides of the family and love sitting on the outdoor Honcho patio, sipping Margaritas on a sunny day, surrounded by happy people. Memory making opportunities abound in downtown Clarkston and along the path at Depot Park. I must add Frank and I found ourselves sitting next to them on the Art & Jake's patio earlier this summer and we were surrounded by happy people! The sun was out and the day was winding down. Eliana smiled and soaking up the afternoon sun and her parents' love and affection.

GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY

Together, Michael and Jaelynn are happy to work with the American Red Cross, Salvation Army and more recently, with the Living and Learning Enrichment Center, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing comprehensive services, vocational training, and community integration for teens and adults with disabilities. Check out their website with the same name. There are so many ways we can all give back to the community and feel the benefits of doing something for others.

FAVORITE OAKHURST MEMORY

Having been here for only a short time, all three, Michael, Jaelynn and Eliana already have a favorite Oakhurst memory: Taking a lap around the neighborhood in their golf cart as part of their nightly routine. It has become something they look forward to as the day winds down so that another one can begin tomorrow.



Photo Credit: Samantha Pavlovski

THEIR DAUGHTER ELIANA IS 19 MONTHS OLD AND SOME SAY SHE IS THE BOSS OF THE FAMILY.



AUGUST AROUND CLARKSTON

August always feels a little bittersweet. The days are still long, summer schedules are in full swing, and yet the first hints of back-to-school season are beginning to appear.

KATIE HESS, CONNECTING CLARKSTON



With Clarkston Community Schools students returning for a half day on August 24, the countdown to fall is officially underway. Fortunately, there are still plenty of opportunities to get out and enjoy everything our community has to offer before summer slips away.

OptiFest — August 1

The Clarkston Optimist Club's annual OptiFest returns on Saturday, August 1, at the sports field adjacent to Clarkston Renaissance High School. This free community event features youth and family activities from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and offers something for every age. It's a great opportunity to spend time with neighbors while supporting an organization that has invested in local youth for generations.



Sips & Snips at Clarkston Family Farm

Sips & Snips takes place every Thursday evening from 6:00–7:30 p.m. at Clarkston Family Farm. This weekly gathering offers an opportunity to enjoy the Farm, connect with others, and experience a space dedicated to cultivating learning and community. Learn more at www.clarkstonfamilyfarm.com.

Concerts at Pine Knob

August is one of the busiest months at Pine Knob Music Theatre, with more than 11 concerts scheduled throughout the month. Whether you're planning a night out or simply trying to avoid traffic backups around Sashabaw Road, it's worth checking the concert schedule. Event details and ticket links can be found in the Connecting Clarkston app.

Clarkston Area Farmers Market

The Clarkston Area Farmers Market continues every Saturday in August from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at 6558 Waldon Road. Visitors will find fresh produce, flowers, baked goods, specialty foods, handmade items, local artisans, and several vendors offering treats, supplies, and products for pets. It's a great way to support local growers, makers, and small businesses while enjoying a Saturday morning in the community.



Michigan Renaissance Festival Opens — August 22

The Michigan Renaissance Festival returns to nearby Holly beginning August 22 and continues weekends through October 4, plus Labor Day and Friday, October 2. Step back into a 16th-century village filled with costumed characters, artisans, entertainment, themed weekends, shopping, and unique food experiences that have made this event a Michigan tradition for decades.



Kids Day in the Park & Tons of Trucks — August 8

One of the area's favorite family traditions returns on August 8. Kids Day in the Park & Tons of Trucks features free activities, hands-on exhibits, games, bounce houses, and opportunities to climb aboard trucks, construction equipment, emergency vehicles, and more. More than 25 local businesses and organizations will offer interactive activities for families, and the Spray Park will be free all day.



Soggy Doggy Day Aug 25th Bay Court Beach

One of the community's favorite dog-friendly events returns as local pups get one last chance to make a splash before the season ends. Soggy Doggy Day is always a tail-wagging good time and a fun way for pet owners to enjoy an afternoon with their four-legged family members.

Looking for More?

The free Connecting Clarkston app makes it easy to stay connected with everything happening around town. You'll find a local business directory, community resources, links to community calendars from local organizations, and one convenient calendar that brings together events happening throughout Clarkston, Independence Township, and neighboring communities.





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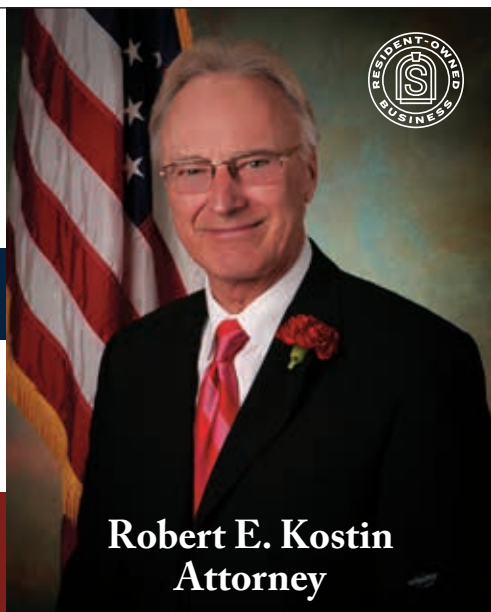
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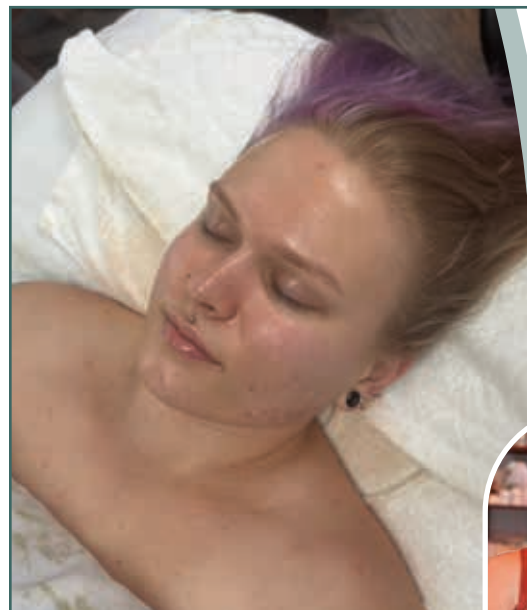
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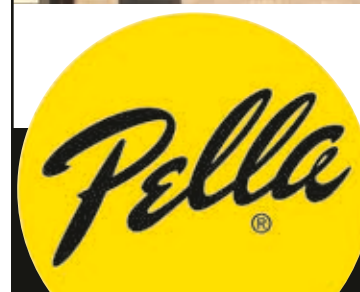


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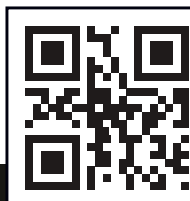
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Frank and Janalee

Celebrating America’s Birthday - Then and Now

Check out how some of your neighbors celebrate. There is certainly more than one way to bring tradition into our lives. I personally love riding my bike with Frank to the parade, spending time in our backyard pool, and of course, spending it year after year with family and friends. What about you?

Nancy Biehl - When I was a little girl in the 1940’s, my family would picnic at Waterwork Park on Jefferson in Detroit. We would also picnic at Belle Isle Park too. It was a wonderful place for free family fun with a golf course, aquarium, conservatory, and swimming. What a beautiful park. Photo credit: historic detroit.org

Fritz Massouh - For the week of July 4, I rented an eleven bedroom house in Las Vegas for my whole family, 18 of us. I can give you more information about the activities planned for that week to celebrate the 250 year anniversary. “Family man”.

Christina Gramith - Gramith, Beardslee, Jordan, Hollidge and Farnum families celebrate the 4th of July a few hours before dark for the kiddos so they can get to bed on time! They watch a firework’s display put on by the dads a safe distance away.

Cristina Raphael - Our tradition is to spend the 4th of July at The Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island.

McCleary Girls - The three sisters spent the afternoon on the Parke lake cooling off and playing on a raft with friends.



The McCleary Girls. Photo credit: Kristin McCleary



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STROLL Oakhurst 21

The Dance Shoppe's Competition Team Members Shine On and Off the Stage

Oakhurst is home to many talented young athletes, and this month four resident dancers are being recognized for their dedication, discipline, and passion for dance.

KATIE DEMOREST, OAKHURST RESIDENT AND DANCE COACH

Meet Blake Adams, Rilynn Adams, Claire Demorest, and Emily Gerard — all members of The Dance Shoppe's performance and competition teams. Though they range in age from elementary school to high school senior, these four dancers share one thing in common: a lifelong love of dance. Each girl began dancing at just 3 years old and has spent years developing her skills through hard work, commitment, and countless hours in the studio.



The girls. Photo Credit: Katie Demorest



Emily Gerard. Photo Credit: Hall of Fame

and she is a proud member of The Classy Dancers Competition Team. Claire Demorest, age 11, will begin 6th grade at Everest Academy this fall. Claire especially enjoys musical theater and lyrical and also performs with The Classy Dancers Competition Team. Her enthusiasm and stage presence make her shine during performances.

The oldest of the group, Emily Gerard, is a senior at CHS and has become an accomplished dancer. She has previously held the titles of Junior Miss Dance of Michigan 2021 and Miss Dance of Michigan 2025. Emily is a member of both The

Classy Dancers Competition Team and The Dance Shoppe's elite Select Team, a pre-professional training program for high school dancers. Emily hopes to continue dancing in college, possibly as part of a collegiate dance team.

A STUDIO WITH TRADITION AND HEART

For more than 40 years, The Dance Shoppe has helped young dancers grow both technically and personally in a welcoming, family-friendly environment. Rilynn, Claire, and Emily are members of the studio's demonstrator program, which creates a meaningful connection between competition team dancers and younger recreational students. Through the program, they assist with weekly classes, serving as role models while helping younger dancers build confidence, develop skills, and foster a love of dance.



Claire Demorest. Photo Credit: Hall of Fame

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RIISING STARS IN DANCE

At just 8 years old, Blake Adams is already making an impression as a member of The Dazzling Stars performance team. Blake is a third grader at Bailey Lake Elementary and enjoys performing while building confidence and teamwork through dance. Her sister, Rilynn Adams, is a dedicated 13-year-old dancer entering 8th grade at CJHS. Rilynn's favorite styles are jazz and lyrical,



Rilynn Adams. Photo Credit: Imagine



Blake Adams. Photo Credit: Legacy

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SAM KIMBALL, CLINICAL MANAGER AND CERTIFIED HOLISTIC NUTRITION COACH



INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb ground chicken
- 1 (20 oz) bag frozen cauliflower rice
- 1 onion, diced
- 1-2 large carrots, peeled and shredded
- 1/2-1 cup frozen peas
- 1/3 cup coconut aminos
- 3 eggs
- 1 tsp onion powder
- 2 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp white pepper
- 1 tsp Celtic sea salt
- Avocado oil (for cooking)
- Green onions, sliced (for garnish)



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Cook the Chicken. Heat a large skillet over medium heat and add a drizzle of avocado oil. Add the ground chicken and begin breaking it apart as it cooks. When the chicken is about halfway cooked, add the diced onion along with a pinch of salt and pepper. Continue cooking until the chicken is fully cooked and the onions have softened. Transfer the mixture to a bowl and set aside.

2. Cook the Cauliflower Rice. In the same skillet, add another drizzle of avocado oil and pour in the frozen cauliflower rice. Let it cook and heat through. You’ll notice it releases some water. This is normal. Allow that moisture to cook off as it continues to sauté.

A “TRUST ME” RECIPE

This is also one of those “trust me” recipes. My husband, who isn’t exactly reaching for cauliflower on his own, genuinely enjoys this dish...which still surprises me to this day.

Somehow, all the flavors come together in a way that makes you forget you’re eating a veggie-forward, lower-calorie meal. It’s perfect for anyone looking for a more balanced, volume-style meal that’s full of protein and vegetables while still being satisfying. I almost always double the recipe so we have it ready for lunches throughout the week because knowing there’s something this nourishing already made, makes busy days so much easier.



3. Add Vegetables & Seasoning. While the cauliflower rice is cooking, peel and shred your carrots and add them to the skillet. Season with salt, white pepper, onion powder, and garlic powder. Stir well to combine.

4. Scramble the Eggs. Once most of the moisture has evaporated, push the cauliflower mixture to one side of the skillet. Crack the eggs into a separate bowl, then pour them into the empty side of the pan. Scramble them, then mix them into the cauliflower rice.

5. Bring It All Together. Add the coconut aminos and stir to combine. Then add the frozen peas, mixing them in last so they keep their bright color.

6. Return the cooked chicken to the skillet and stir everything together until heated through.

7. Serve & Garnish. Top with sliced green onions and serve warm.

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There For You

Please welcome AnnaMaryLee to Stroll Oakhurst. Each month she'll share information that will encourage peace of mind - something we can all benefit from every day of the year.

BY ANNAMARYLEE VOLLICK, GUIDING LIGHT DOULA SERVICES

ANNAMARYLEE'S NATURAL INCLINATION toward care and understanding led her to this sacred path, where she provides comfort, guidance, and support to those nearing the end of life, helping them navigate their final journey with peace and dignity.

Her calling as an End-of-Life Doula emerged from a lifelong fascination with the unknown, coupled with a strong desire to connect with people in their most vulnerable moments.

Driven by an insatiable curiosity about the mysteries of existence and the great unknown that lies beyond, she fosters an environment of acceptance and reverence, offering space for individuals to explore their emotions, fears, and hopes with unwavering support.



What truly sets AnnaMaryLee apart is her dedication to unity.

What truly sets AnnaMaryLee apart is her dedication to unity. She believes that the end-of-life experience is not just an individual journey but a collective one—where families, communities, and the spirit of togetherness play an essential role in creating a holistic, peaceful transition. She strives to weave these threads together, honoring the interconnectedness of all, and offering not just physical care, but emotional and spiritual support that nurtures the soul.

Through her work, AnnaMaryLee offers a safe space for reflection, healing, and closure, making sure that no one faces the end of life alone. Her approach is rooted in kindness, sensitivity, and a deep respect for each person's unique path, ensuring that each individual's final moments are met with compassion, understanding, and love.

AnnaMaryLee Vollick is a compassionate End-of-Life Doula, deeply dedicated to supporting individuals and families during one of life's most profound transitions. Guided by a profound empathy and love for others, her work stems from a lifelong commitment to the well-being of those around her. She received her certification as an End-of-Life Doula and Life Planning Specialist through The International Life Doula Movement.



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STROLL Oakhurst 27



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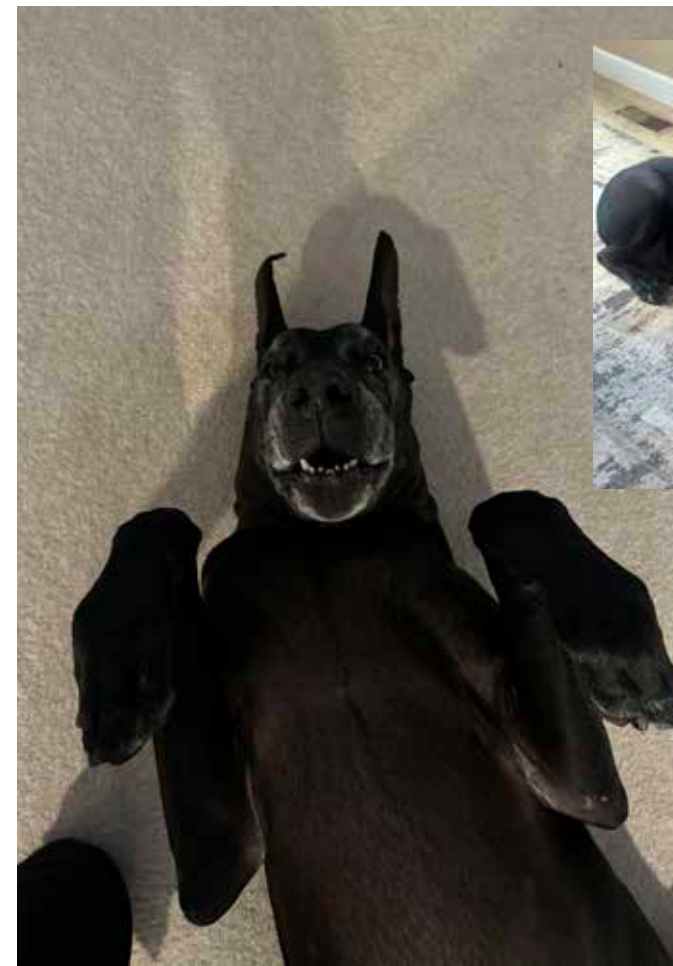
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HELLO FROM HANS

I love living in Oakhurst! I moved in nearly two years ago with my family, Mike, Jaelynn and Eliana Lewis. We all love the secluded setting for long walks, social events and most of all, our amazing neighbors! Yes, me too! Let me introduce myself:



Everyday is a blessing to be with my family and live in a neighborhood with Luna and so many other dogs.



MY NAME IS HANS and I am an 8-1/2 years old, male European Great Dane. Don't be alarmed, but I tip the scales at 170lbs and come from a long line of highly decorated show danes out of Chicago Illinois, the Kat Crew Great Danes. My friends call me Hans but my AKC name is "Sofa King Hans - Ome". Don't worry about my size, I am a giant baby. I love kids (especially Eliana) and I consider dogs of all sizes and types my friends. We're all dogs, right? The only thing that may set me apart from the other dogs is my bed. I bet your dog doesn't have a twin mattress - all to himself? Or does he? It's the best place to cuddle with my blanky and nobody bothers me when I put my entire stuffy in my mouth and sleep with it like a pacifier. Cozy!

I have been loved by my family since I was 8 weeks old! That's when Mike went to Chicago to visit his friend who lives with my aunt and uncle. With my European bloodline deriving from Germany, Mike and Jaelynn wanted to make sure my name fit my lineage and my personality. I may not ever get to go to Germany, but Chicago, that's not too far.

Everyday is a blessing to be with my family and live in a neighborhood with Luna and so many other dogs. If we have a chance to run into each other during a walk, stop and say hello. Besides walks, another favorite thing I like to do is sit on the back deck and sun bathe. I know! People like to do that too! I consider myself pretty chill and I love giving and receiving affection on an ongoing daily basis. Bring it on!

Other favorites of mine include my stuffed monkey, and if we're talking food, well, "Hans" down it has to be steak! I'm built like a statute and I love to be social. The best way to spend an afternoon is to run in the woods. Anywhere. Any woods. Let's go!

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CLARKSTON FAMILY OWNED AND OPERATED

My Amazing Trip to Mackinac Island

In June, I went on an amazing trip to Mackinac Island with my Girl Scout troop. It was one of the best trips I have ever been on! The drive there was about four hours long and it was worth it!

BY VALENTINA MONTANO, JUNIOR RESIDENT WRITER



Jennifer Montano

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After visiting the Mystery Spot, we went to our hotel, which was right by beautiful Lake Huron! The next day, we took a ferry to Mackinac Island. One thing I love about the island is that there are no cars there. Instead, people ride bikes and horse-drawn carriages. It's so cool!

While we were on the island, we visited a butterfly conservatory and saw lots of beautiful butterflies flying all around us. I also went horseback riding, which was one of my favorite parts of the trip! Later, we spent some time shopping and looking at all of the fun stores. Before taking the ferry back, we bought some fudge (A must!) and I got pretzel bites for a snack too. They were delicious!

When we returned to the hotel, we went swimming in the pool and then had s'mores on the beach. Later, my sisters, friends and I all played on the playground at our hotel.

The whole trip was so much fun and I am VERY thankful to my mom for making it happen. It is a trip I will never forget!



Monday, September 21, 2026

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Clarkston Community Schools Academic Service Learning 2025-2026

CHRISTINE ROGERS, RESIDENT, 10TH GRADE WORLD HISTORY, AND ACADEMIC SERVICE LEARNING COORDINATOR

In 2025-2026, the Clarkston Community Schools Academic Service Learning continues to have an impact that matters: Over 6,000 students participated in learning and serving by completing 71 projects with 114 teacher leaders and 43 unique community partners.

There were 7 schoolwide projects at the elementary school level including Gifts of Words and Pollinator Palooza at Bailey Lake Elementary. The kindergarteners were involved with Words of the Pledge, Operation Kindness Heroes and Bucket Filling. Additionally the kindergarten/first graders invested in Hats for Hurricanes while the fourth graders fell in love with Fur-action Fractions.



At Sashabaw Elementary, sixth grade social studies students learned about A Fresh Water Perspective, while the sixth grade science students buzzed about Mason Bees: Endangered Species Rescue. A Catalyst Project: Literacy and Leadership was the sixth and seventh grader focus, and Tomatosphere captured the seventh grade science students.

Clarkston Junior High students in eighth and ninth grade rallied with Traveling Trunk, Yearbook for Seniors, and Humans of Clarkston. Additionally, ninth graders had the opportunity to learn through Connecting Michigan History, Rooted in Time: Growing plants from the past, Farm to Farm, and Coffee and Kindness.

A PROUD TRADITION IN CLARKSTON

For decades, Academic Service Learning has been a proud tradition in Clarkston, built on the idea that students can make a real difference through authentic learning opportunities, service, and leadership. This year, we continued that mission with 71 projects designed to strengthen connections across our schools and community. 7 of these projects came from Bailey Lake Elementary, where the program continues to grow and inspire more students to become involved in learning and serving others from an early age.

Let's not forget there were so many other projects in the other elementary school buildings to shed light on so many ways to teach our students how to learn about ways we have served in the past and continue to serve others today and into the future.

Renaissance High School science students learned about Save the Salmon, and Drawing Hands of Hope, art students focused on Joy Through Art, and FLAG: Free Little Art Gallery.

At Clarkston High School, the students also participated in projects too. The tech students chose Children's Hospital Coloring Worksheets and the history students chose Voices of Independence: Connecting Clarkston to America's 250th. World history students spent time learning about History in Action: Hygiene for All and ELA (Language Arts) students chose Friend in Deed. For World Languages, Un Libro / Un Livre was the project while Sowing Stewardship and The Liberty Groves were the two projects for Ecology students. Students studying Careers chose the Tea Party project.

Let's not forget there were so many other projects in the other elementary school buildings to shed light on so many ways to teach our students how to learn about ways we have served in the past and continue to serve others today and into the future.

CLARKSON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS ACADEMIC SERVICE LEARNING 2025-26

- 71 Projects
- 7 Schoolwide Projects
- Andersonville Elementary: Growing together: Young Hearts and Wise Hands
- Independence Elementary: SOCKS
- Clarkston Elementary: Dragons Lead with a Giving Heart
- Pine Knob Elementary: Buckets of Hope
- Bailey Lake Elementary: Pollinato Palooza
- Bailey Lake Elementary: Gift of Words
- North Sashabaw Elementary: Open Door Outreach
- 6,000+ Students learning and serving
- 43 Unique community partners
- 114 Teacher leaders
- 7 Projects tied to America 250



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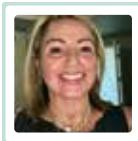
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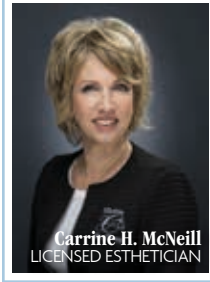
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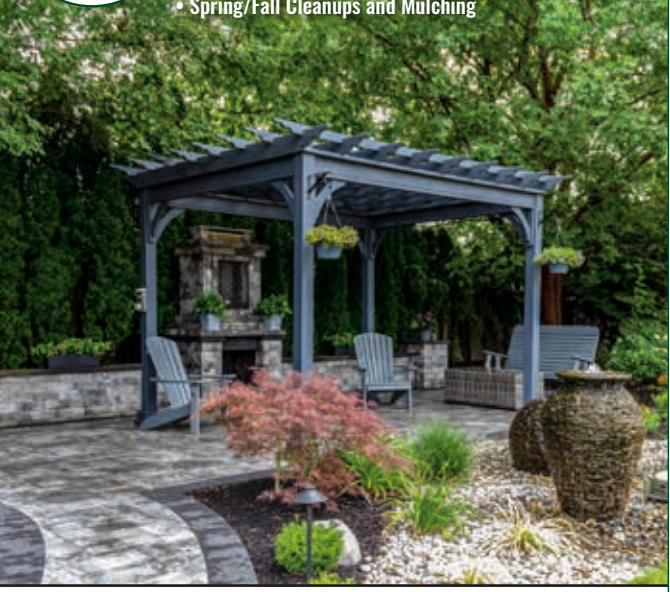
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BY JAIME PENNINGTON, HELP HANDYMAN
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

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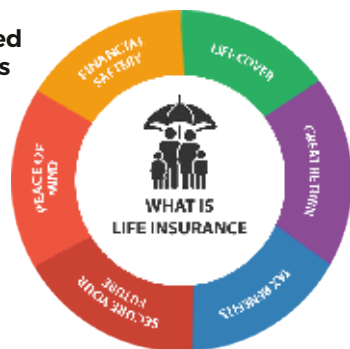
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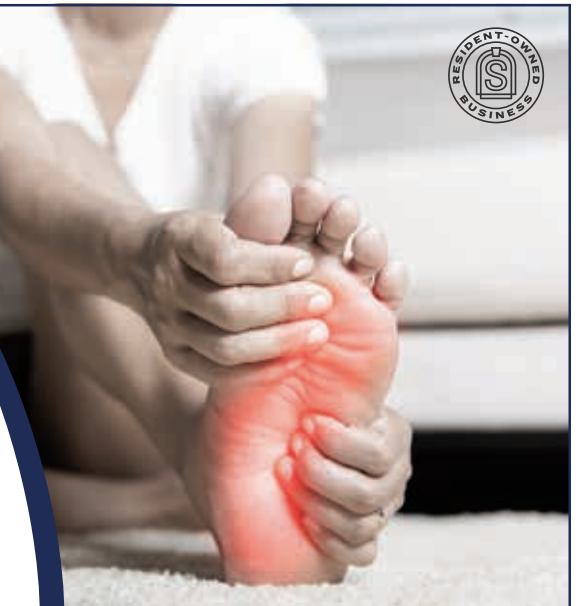


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Legacy Through Generosity: Giving Back to the Communities We Call Home

BY MATTHEW DEFINIS, SENIOR MARKETING SPECIALIST, OXFORD BANK

For generations, wealth has symbolized not only prosperity but also responsibility. At Oxford Bank, we've had the privilege of walking alongside families who understand that true legacy isn't measured solely by what is accumulated—but by what is given, nurtured, and left behind for others.

In today's world, the call to give back is louder—and more important—than ever. As stewards of capital, our clients are uniquely positioned to make a profound and lasting impact on the communities they care about. Whether through philanthropy, volunteer leadership, or strategic community investments, giving back is more than charity. It's legacy-building.

WHY COMMUNITY INVESTMENT MATTERS

Communities shape us: our values, our relationships, our opportunities. Investing in them strengthens not just local economies, but the social fabric that allows all individuals to thrive. Education, healthcare, affordable housing, and cultural institutions all depend on visionary donors and engaged community members.

At Oxford Bank, we believe giving back is both a moral calling and a strategic opportunity. Philanthropic giving can offer tax advantages, strengthen family bonds, and build a legacy that transcends generations.

WAYS TO GIVE BACK — MEANINGFULLY

1. Family Foundations

Establishing a private foundation offers a structured, enduring way to manage charitable giving. Many Oxford Bank clients use foundations to involve their children and grandchildren in the grant making process, teaching stewardship and values along the way.

2. Donor-Advised Funds (DAFs)

For those seeking flexibility, DAFs provide an immediate tax benefit while allowing donors to recommend grants



over time. They're a powerful tool for those who wish to make a difference now while planning for the future.

3. Local Partnerships

Supporting community organizations, sponsoring local events, or funding small businesses through micro-loans or investment funds are meaningful ways to directly support the neighborhoods that matter most to you. Our very own Jeni Sherby, Branch Manager at the Clarkston branch, is a board member of the Clarkston Area Youth Assistance. This is one of many Oxford Bank engages with the communities we serve.

4. Strategic Volunteering

Time is one of the most precious gifts you can give. Many of our clients choose to serve on nonprofit boards, offer pro bono services, or mentor aspiring entrepreneurs. These contributions often prove just as impactful—and rewarding—as financial donations.

BUILDING A LEGACY TOGETHER

At Oxford Bank, we understand that wealth management and finances extends beyond portfolios and balance sheets. We help families define what wealth means to them—and how it can serve a larger purpose.

Whether you're looking to create a philanthropic plan, start a family foundation, or explore community-focused investment opportunities, our Wealth Advisory team is here to help you align your financial goals with your values.

Because at the end of the day, legacy is not just about what we leave to our communities—but what we leave in them.

Thank you for being part of our community. Thank you for banking with Oxford.

— Oxford Bank

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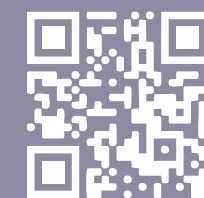
OUR COMMUNITY COMMITMENT

In 2024, Oxford Bank commemorated its 140th anniversary by donating \$150,000 and contributing 750 volunteer hours to local non-profits. These efforts benefited numerous organizations, including Food Gatherers, Habitat for Humanity Michigan, and Covenant House Michigan. The bank's team members participated in activities such as food collection drives and fundraising events to combat homelessness.



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HIGHMARK OUTDOORS

This month's featured family has a business that can help many of you all year long. Please take a moment to read about Michael Lewis and his brother-in-law Jay Bemb's venture to provide dependable and high quality lawn care and yes, snow removal services when the snow begins to fly!



My wife Jaelynn and I moved to Oakhurst in November of 2024 and we love the setting and our neighbors!

My brother-in-law Jay Bemb and I own and operate Highmark Outdoors, a local outdoor services company specializing in weekly lawn maintenance, seasonal cleanups, and snow removal. Our goal is simple: provide reliable, high-quality service

that homeowners can count on throughout the year.

Highmark Outdoors was built by combining two different skill sets. I come from a business and operations background, helping companies grow and improve processes. Jay has spent years working outdoors and takes pride in delivering quality work and building relationships with customers.

Together, we combined those strengths to create a company focused on dependable service and long-term customer relationships.

The most fulfilling part of our job is helping homeowners maintain properties they are proud of. Whether it's a freshly cut lawn or helping clear snow after a storm, it's rewarding knowing our work makes life a little

easier for our customers. The biggest challenge is managing Michigan's unpredictable weather while maintaining a consistent level of service.

We stay up-to-date on the latest trends and developments through industry publications, equipment manufacturers, suppliers, and other professionals in the outdoor services industry. We're

Our goal is simple: provide reliable, high-quality service that homeowners can count on throughout the year.

always looking for better equipment, more efficient processes, and new ways to improve the customer experience.

As a local business, we're proud to help homeowners maintain and improve the appearance of their properties. Well-maintained homes contribute to stronger neighborhoods, and we enjoy playing a small role in helping our community look its best. Jay and I are also excited about continuing to grow Highmark Outdoors and expand our service offerings over time. Our current focus is building a strong foundation through lawn maintenance, cleanups, and snow removal while continuing to provide excellent service to our customers.

Working directly with Oakhurst neighbors and their homes gives us a unique appreciation for community pride. We see how much people care about their homes, families, and neighborhoods, and it reinforces the importance of showing up, doing quality

work, and treating people fairly. Consistency matters. Whether you're maintaining a lawn, growing a business, or building relationships, small efforts made consistently over time usually produce the best results.

There are many outstanding locally owned businesses and

trades people in our area who work hard every day to serve their customers. We always encourage people to support local businesses whenever possible because they are an important part of what makes our community special.

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resident business guide

If you are a business owner living in Oakhurst, you may list your business here. While the listing is free for all resident business owners, we encourage supporting Stroll Oakhurst as a valuable resource guide. Reach out at janalee.grainer@strollmag.com. Thank you.

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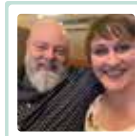


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Renewal

As summer moseys on into August, I invite you to welcome this month with a sense of renewal.

BY BRANDON AND KATHLYN BOUCHER, HEALING PRACTITIONERS



August is the space between the bustle of July and the start of school, where the days are long, the memories are sweet; where the Farmers Markets are filled with another round of fresh produce and the weekend fairs and festivals

slow down.

This is also a time to reflect on the rhythms in your life- from how your day flows, your week, the month, and how it aligns with your personal mission and values. Our time is precious because it is our life and our attention that we focus on what matters to us, consciously or unconsciously. Are you balanced in how you want to invest your time?

Something that is significant in the work we do is coaching people through beginning and



Are you balanced in how you want to invest your time?

expanding their meditation practice. This also includes quiet contemplation or mindfulness (maybe more like heart-full-ness).

Pick one to do each day for a week:

Take 5 minutes to count while you breathe...

breathe in while counting to 4, hold while counting to 4, exhale for 4, and hold empty for 4. Repeat up to three times.

For the 10 minute practice... contemplate one of the following words: Sun, Joy, Heart, or Life. You'll experience thoughts coming and going and, like a river running by, let the thoughts float by while you focus on the word.

For the 15 minute practice... walk around your home or neighborhood, and with everything you see - think of what you're grateful for about what you see. Do this for at least 10 things.

And as always, I'm here if you'd like to share how your practice went, would like more ideas, or have questions. Email me at Katlyn@UnityHealingMI.com





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Tom Valade



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-Scott & Dana Judge, Oakhurst Parents



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