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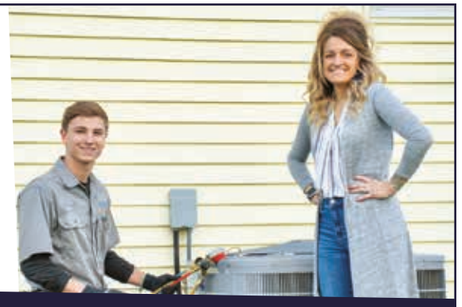
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Justice for November

Do you ever feel like November is overlooked? Everyone is so focused on what comes next that they blow right past one of the best months on the calendar. This year, I'm asking for justice for November.

Think about it like a long game. You don't skip to the fourth quarter because the first three don't matter. You don't fast forward through the first half of *Rudy* to get to the last scene. You stay in it, because the payoff depends on everything that came before it.

November works the same way. Gratitude means more when you've actually sat with it. The meal tastes better when you aren't rushed to get there. For a lot of us, that means a weekend with nowhere to be—football on the television, a pot of chili on the stove, or choosing to play catch instead of raking leaves. It means being present for life's littlest moments before December turns everything into a high-speed event.

And then there's the table. The Thanksgiving dish that nobody requests but everyone notices if it's missing. The pie recipe you've been quietly perfecting for a decade or a new one, Apple-Gingersnap Pie featured on our resident recipe page this month. The traditions that don't need explanation because they've just always been there.

Creating *Stroll New Albany Country Club Communities* month after month relies on a shared spirit of community and a collective effort. We simply couldn't bring these pages to life without our incredible neighborhood contributors, those who share their stories and photos, our talented writers, photographers, content coordinator, and our generous sponsors, whose continued support makes every issue possible.

During this month of Thanksgiving, I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has been part of *Stroll New Albany Country Club Communities*. Whether you shared your story, captured a special moment, contributed your time and talents, supported us as a sponsor, or simply opened these pages and enjoyed getting to know your neighbors, you have helped make Stroll what it is. Thank you for your trust, your generosity, and for allowing us to celebrate the people and stories that make our community so special. It is truly a privilege to bring these pages to you each month, and I am deeply grateful for each and every one of you.



Have a wonderful November,

Lori



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SCAN ME



NEW VISION PERFORMING ARTS DEBUTED WITH ALICE IN WONDERLAND, JR.

BY MADELINE PAGE, ALL FEATURED CHARACTER PHOTOS ARE COMPLIMENTS OF LUKE SMITH PHOTOGRAPHY

Wonderland has come to Columbus - and with it, new opportunities for youth of all ages to engage with the arts. Alice in Wonderland, Jr, presented by New Vision Performing Arts, premiered on September 25 and 26 at the Van Fleet Theater to kick off this nonprofit's inaugural season.

New Vision Performing Arts, a new offshoot of the nonprofit New Vision Dance Company, was founded earlier this year by Artistic Director Melissa Gould. Alice in Wonderland, Jr. is the company's inaugural production.

"What a wild ride this has been!" Gould said. "Launching New Vision Performing Arts has been an incredible leap of faith, and I am so deeply grateful to all of the families who have believed in me, supported this new vision, and trusted me with their children."

New Vision Performing Arts provides a space for youth across Central Ohio to hone their artistic craft through musical theatre. Gould, a former professional dancer and the founder of New Vision Dance Company, brings over 40 years of choreographing, directing, and mentoring experience to the rehearsal room.

"Starting something new is never easy," Gould continued, "but having such an amazing community beside me has made every challenge, late night, unexpected twist, and exciting moment completely worth it."

Along with Gould, the production team is made up of musical director Sean Hooper, costume designer Patty Bennett, lighting designer Nick Eberts, stage manager Ella Proudfoot, and a crew of student leaders. A troupe of dedicated parent volunteers was also crucial to bringing the Wonderland magic to life.

With its whimsical, nostalgic nature, Alice in Wonderland Jr. seemed like the perfect show to draw audiences of all ages. The show is a revised version from Music Theatre International, featuring songs from both the original animated film and the newer Tim Burton adaptation.

"Watching the kids be silly and whimsical as they tell the story [was my favorite part]," Gould added. "It has been amazing watching kids from all over come together in this new theatre group."











The Van Fleet Theater was packed for all four performances of Alice in Wonderland, Jr. Unique to this production set-up was the thrust stage - a platform surrounded by audience seating on three sides - and the lack of microphones. Gould noted that it took some time to adjust to the space, but that sound didn't end up being an issue, thanks to the cast of talented kids "who can belt through the roof!"

Ruby Stetson is one such performer. A student at New Albany Middle School who played the Dodo Bird in Alice in Wonderland, Jr, Stetson shared that she "loved being able to make new friends and further strengthen existing friendships with kids from New Albany and all around central Ohio" during the production process.

Evie Clark, who played Mathilda, expressed similar sentiments. "My favorite part of performing in Alice in Wonderland Jr was the supportive people and inclusive environment. I loved the feeling of truly being myself with my friends," she said. "I also am happy that I got to meet some new friends in this production. It was a really fun time!"

CONTINUED ▶



In addition to helping students foster their artistic talents, New Vision Performing Arts is also dedicated to serving the greater Columbus area. Each production will partner with another local nonprofit in order to give back to the community. Inspired by the themes of imagination and storytelling within Alice in Wonderland, Jr., Gould chose to work with Read to Succeed, an organization that promotes childhood literacy. Cast members participated in a bookdrive, and over $1000 was raised by audience members to support this initiative.

Big things are in store for the rest of New Vision Performing Arts' inaugural season. Gould will direct Elf, Jr., premiering just in time for Christmas on December 11 and 12th at the Columbus Performing Arts Center. In the spring, students will perform Matilda Jr. at the historic Lincoln Theater.

Furthermore, New Vision Dance Company will present "Retrospective IV - Celebrating 20 Years of Dance" at the Jeanne B. McCoy Center for the Arts on October 17. "This milestone is more than a look back—it's a celebration of where we've been, how far we've come, and the exciting future still ahead," Gould said. "Featuring favorite works, memorable moments, audience favorites and the incredible dancers who have helped shape our journey, this show is going to be bold, beautiful, nostalgic, and completely New Vision!"

Tickets for "Retrospective IV" are available at www.capa.org. More information on New Vision Performing Arts upcoming auditions, workshops, and performances can be found at https://newvisiondanceco.org/performing-arts/.







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Happy Thanksgiving!

It's that time of year again where families will be getting together to share a meal. As part of the New Albany tradition, families can once again also give back by participating in the annual Thanks For Giving 4 Miler and Kids Dash event on Thanksgiving morning.

This event takes place on Thursday, November 26, 2026 at Market Square and the Philip Heit Center. As always, there is **no official race fee**. Participants can choose to donate whatever they want, as 100% of net proceeds go to LifeCare Alliance, the Mid-Ohio Food Collective, and the New Albany Thanksgiving Day Fund. There is an optional donation of **$40 or more** which earns you an event t-shirt; however, a "no shirt" registration option is completely free. Food donations are also collected on-site for the New Albany Food Pantry.







The Kids Dash begins at 8:15 am EST and the 4 Miler begins at 8:30 am EST. For more information about this amazing way to start your Thanksgiving Day and to register go to https://www.narun.org/.

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A TRADITION OF FRIENDSHIP
The Columbus Academy Kindergarten-Senior Buddy Program

BY EMILY VAN HULSE, COLUMBUS ACADEMY HS WRITER

AT COLUMBUS ACADEMY, the Kindergarten-Senior Buddy Program is a longstanding tradition that is anticipated by classes of 12th graders and kindergarteners each year. For the four- and five-year-olds, it's a chance to have an older mentor, to participate in fun activities, and to make memories that they will remember for years to come. For the seniors, it's a chance to become a mentor, to make a positive impact on a younger kid's life, and–of course–to have fun. Some seniors even remember the experience of having their own senior buddy as a kindergartener and know firsthand just how impactful this program really is.

This time-honored tradition, first created around 1990 by former Head of School Chip Mackelcan, kicks off during Convocation, which occurs on the first Friday of each school year. Seniors and kindergarteners alike fidget in their seats during the opening addresses, excitedly anticipating the moment their names are called and they are assigned their buddy–or buddies. As names are called, buddy pairings are enthusiastically introduced, some with one senior and one kindergartener, and some with two seniors and one kindergartener. Walking down the aisle, waving to cheering parents, teachers, and students from other grades, the buddy pairings make their way to the Lower School to get to know each other and spend a carefree morning on the playground. Senior Charlotte K. recalls, "It was so exciting to be assigned my buddy, and I am so glad to help mentor the next generation."

The assigning of buddies during Convocation is only one of the many activities buddy pairings will get to experience throughout the year. Other events for seniors and kindergarteners to look forward to include pep rallies, story readings, pumpkin painting, and math games. Kindergarteners got to attend their first-ever pep rally on September 25th with their senior buddies in tow, able to experience the signature games, cheers, and pep band performances for the first time.



Senior Rosemary J. with her kindergarten buddy during Convocation.



Senior Owen L. with his buddy on the playground.

On September 27th, many seniors and kindergarteners chose to participate in an optional apple picking event at Lynd Fruit Farm. The program's Upper School Coordinator, Ms. Bening, explains, "The Apple Picking event gives kindergarten and senior families a chance to connect." Many families who attended also generously chose to donate bags of apples, which Columbus Academy will deliver to food pantries. Senior Meera S. recalls, "Apple picking was a great event that allowed seniors to take some time away from all the stress. The apples were delicious and seeing our buddies and other friends on such a beautiful day was so fun!"



Senior Izu N. with her kindergarten buddy at the Lynd Apple Picking Event.

These kinds of moments are what make the Kindergarten-Senior Buddy Program so special. Every event, from apple picking to arts and crafts, pep rally cheers to laughter on the playground, deepens intergenerational bonds between students. Kindergarteners gain a sense of community and belonging, knowing they have friendly faces to see around the school and someone to run up to and hug in the hallway. Amidst stress about grades and college, seniors are reminded how it feels to be a kid again, and to slow down and enjoy the small moments. As the school year continues, there are so many more memories to be made. But even after the final event wraps up, the bonds formed will stay with Columbus Academy students for much longer.

Seniors Landen L. and Luke L. with their buddy during a pep rally.





Senior Mimi Z. with her kindergarten buddy on the playground.



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RESIDENT RECIPE

Apple-Gingersnap Pie

RECIPE PROVIDED BY COURTNEY KELLY | HOME AT FOX RUN | @HOME_ATFOXRUN



Apple pie and crushed gingersnaps are one of my favorite fall combinations. The gingersnaps help thicken the apple juices while adding a warm, spiced flavor that makes the whole kitchen smell like autumn. It's a cozy classic that feels just right for November.

Apple-Gingersnap Pie Filling

INGREDIENTS

- 6 tart apples (Granny Smith, Cortland, Mutsu, or Fuji), peeled, cored and sliced ½-inch thick
- Pinch of salt
- 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 cup crushed gingersnaps
- 4–6 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- 1 prepared pie crust

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. Combine the sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg and gingersnap crumbs. Fold in the sliced apples.
3. Pile the filling into the prepared pie crust and drizzle with melted butter.
4. For the optional crumble topping, combine the oatmeal, brown sugar and flour. Cut in the butter until coarse crumbs form, then sprinkle over the pie.
5. Bake for about 1 hour, until golden and bubbly.
6. Serve warm with your favorite ice cream.

Optional Crumble Topping

- 1 cup old-fashioned oatmeal
- ½ cup packed brown sugar
- ¼ cup flour
- ½ stick unsalted butter, cubed

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Vinson Fine Furniture

BY ELIZABETH SEDLOCK

Phil Vinson on family roots, New Albany, and building rooms that last

Phil Vinson will tell you the business did not start as a full-home furniture store. It started with tables.

His father founded Dinette Gallery in 1979, and for decades, the family stayed close to kitchen and dining rooms. Clients kept asking for the same quality in the living room. That demand, Phil pointed out, is what pushed the next chapter. In fall 2022, the company rebranded as Vinson Fine Furniture, a change that felt big at the time and has since given the team room to design entire homes, not just dining spaces.

"The Vinson family is from Columbus," Phil said. "You could say our inspiration came from our desire to fill a void in Central Ohio. We love making homes more beautiful, and now we get to experience it every day."

New Albany sits at the center of that work. It has become one of the company's top communities, in part because the showroom is close enough for designers to visit homes for appointments. "Hardly a week goes by that we aren't either planning or decorating a home in and around New Albany," Phil continued. "It's been a real honor to team up with the community."

The reason to choose Vinson is straightforward: furniture that is high-quality, beautiful, and comfortable, with most pieces made in the USA or Canada. Many pieces carry true lifetime warranties. The company mission, which Phil still quotes, is "To work together in meeting an excellent level of service in order to create a more beautiful home for our guests. To wear a smile, and see that smile reflected on the face of others."

The service model is built for homeowners who want help, not a catalog. The design team will work a single sectional or an entire house, including barstools, rugs, and lamps. "Our approach isn't cookie-cutter," Phil explained. "We offer a wide array of options." Delivery gets as much praise as design. Customers are often surprised by the level of care after the sale.



That shows up in the stories people send back. One recent review from a customer, Mr. Pica, describes driving from Lexington, Kentucky (three hours each way, more than once) after searching for brands he already admired. He found those brands at Vinson, plus a showroom that made it easy to picture the pieces in his home. He was greeted by the owner and then guided by Sree and Andrew through two rooms that needed to feel unified. Sree listened first, then steered fabric, pattern, and scale. Andrew and the rest of the team added suggestions that raised the final result.

"Vinson's Fine Furniture delivered far more than furniture," Mr. Pica wrote. "They provided a truly collaborative and satisfying design experience. If you are within several hours of Columbus, the journey is absolutely worth it."

For New Albany Country Club Communities residents, the drive is shorter. Phil's invitation is the same: come in, talk through a room, and work with a family that cares deeply about the community and your home.

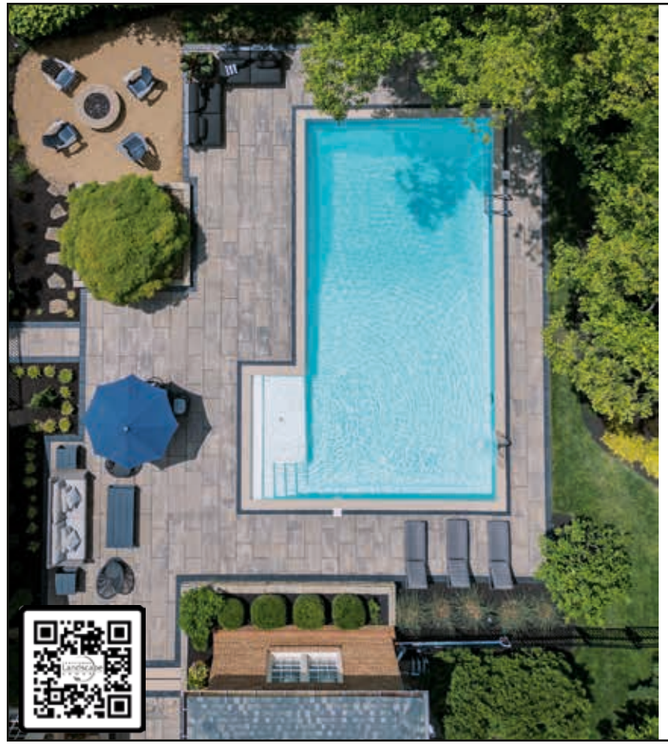
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Phil Vinson and his family



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BORN FROM LOVE: How EnergizeCare Is Transforming Dementia Care in Central Ohio

BY LORI HAMILTON

When Dr. Kenneth Vitellas received his wife Lisa's diagnosis of early-stage Alzheimer's disease, his world shifted instantly. Standing by the woman he loved as her cognitive health changed, Ken quickly learned what millions of family members face each day: caring for a loved one with dementia is an act of deep devotion, but it can also be exhausting, overwhelming, and deeply isolating.

Even with medical expertise, navigating the day-to-day realities of cognitive decline brought immense challenges. Yet, as Ken looked around, he realized something profound, while he had flexibility and resources, many family caregivers (or "care partners") had no support system at all. They were burning out in silence, desperate for a safe place where their loved ones could be engaged with dignity while they caught their breath.



Energize Care Walkers in front of Lisa's Place

Out of that love, resilience, and personal experience, **EnergizeCare** was born.

"THERE IS ALWAYS MORE TO THE PERSON THAN THE DEMENTIA"

Dr. Vitellas founded EnergizeCare on a single core truth: *"There is always more to the person than the dementia."* Even as cognitive changes occur, the person inside still craves joy, social connection, and purpose.

EnergizeCare isn't an institutional day program; it's a vibrant, heartwarming community. Designed specifically for adults living with early-to-moderate Alzheimer's and related dementias, EnergizeCare hosts regular indoor and outdoor respite and engagement sessions across Central Ohio.

At **Healthy New Albany**, families can take advantage of weekly weekend respite offerings—held Saturdays or Sundays from 10:00 AM to 1:30 PM, with lunch included. Although care partners can enjoy our sessions alongside volunteers and other participants to engage and connect, they can also take time to recharge, run errands, or simply rest. Participants spend their time immersed in structured, uplifting experiences. Through art, music therapy, gentle fitness, rhythmic drumming, and interactive social hours, participants build friendships and spark emotional memories that disease cannot erase. In warmer months, popular Thursday outings to the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium bring participants into nature for shared moments of laughter and connection.

HONORING LISA: EXPANDING COMMUNITY SUPPORT

The heart of EnergizeCare's mission is growing even stronger with **Lisa's Place** in Dublin, Ohio. Named in honor of Ken's wife, Lisa's Place is designed as a free-standing, non-medical respite and engagement center.

Located near Sawmill Road and I-270, the center plans to offer structured respite and engagement monthly memberships operating **Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 10:00 AM to 1:30 PM**. Here, participants will enjoy rich social programming while care partners can engage and connect during the session, relax and recharge in the Care Partner Library or Partner Room, use our kitchen for a meal, engage with Dr. Vitellas and other care partners for tips and support during the dementia journey, or recharge and restore with well-needed respite time. Participants will have access to a beauty salon during sessions, and the public will have access to certified dementia education and training.

Most importantly, Lisa's Place is not simply a place where a care partner drops off a loved one for respite. It is designed as

Thanks to Dr. Vitellas' vision and Lisa's lasting inspiration, local families are discovering that living with dementia can still be filled with warmth, dignity, and light.

CHAMPIONS of CARE
a night to support EnergizeCare of Central Ohio

Facing Alzheimer's and Other Dementias, Together

Join us for an evening of community, connection, and hope.

Saturday, November 14th | 5:30pm-9:30pm
The Estate at New Albany >> 5216 Forest Dr, New Albany

SCAN HERE TO PURCHASE TICKETS.

MC'd by Dino Tripodis and Mindy Drayer.
Enjoy live music throughout the evening featuring JILL MIGLICH during cocktails and dinner, followed by a high-energy evening of dancing and entertainment with the CHUCK STARR BAND

- Premium open bar
- Elevated hors d'oeuvres and a gourmet seated dinner
- Live & silent auctions

Cocktail Attire Recommended

Together, we can provide hope, support, education, and respite for families navigating the challenges of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias.

EnergizeCare
SUPPORTING CAREGIVERS AND INDIVIDUALS WITH EARLY ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Serving Our Wonderful People



Ken and Lisa attending one of the Columbus Zoo Outings

a community resource for the participant, the care partner, the entire family and the broader dementia community—bringing respite, engagement, connection, support and education together in one welcoming space. They also welcome other organizations with missions similar to theirs to use the space, collaborate and help strengthen the dementia community.

Through initiatives like Lisa's Place, EnergizeCare is actively dismantling the social stigma surrounding memory loss, creating spaces where families feel seen, supported, and celebrated.

HOW YOU CAN JOIN THE MISSION

No family should have to walk the journey of dementia alone. EnergizeCare relies on community support to keep programs accessible to everyone.

On **November 14**, we will come together at **The Estate at New Albany** for our inaugural **Champions of Care celebration**, and I am asking our friends, supporters and the entire Central Ohio community to be part of it.

Thanks to Dr. Vitellas' vision and Lisa's lasting inspiration, local families are discovering that living with dementia can still be filled with warmth, dignity, and light.



Dr. Kenneth Vitellas with his wife, Lisa

*To learn more about upcoming respite sessions, register a loved one, or support the cause, visit **EnergizeCareOH.org**.*





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The Beauty of What Comes Next: RENOUVEAU Arrives in New Albany

BY LORI HAMILTON


Vicki and Alan

FOR NEW ALBANY RESIDENTS Vicki Commeans and her supportive husband, Alan Wasserstrom, starting a new venture close to home is a passion project rooted in community, style, and second chances. As the creative force behind RENOUVEAU Luxury Consignment, Vicki is bringing her vision for elevated, sustainable fashion to New Albany.

In French, RENOUVEAU means "renewal" or "revival," capturing the heart of the boutique: giving beautiful pieces new life, reflecting Vicki's own second chapter, and celebrating the beauty of what comes next. After a fulfilling 40-year career in commercial interiors, including two years in the Middle East creating a private-label brand for architectural firm Innerspace Interior Design, retirement was supposed to mean slowing down, but inspiration struck again. Proving that creativity has no expiration date, RENOUVEAU was born from Vicki's lifelong love of fashion, timeless design, and meaningful storytelling.

RENOUVEAU offers a refreshed take on luxury consignment, where sustainability meets elevated style, guided by the philosophy, "Where Every Piece Has a Story. The Next Begins with You." Inclusivity is central to the boutique's mission. Its opening collection of approximately 1,300 pieces is thoughtfully curated into three collections: Essential, offering timeless, accessible style; Signature, featuring elevated designer pieces; and Vault, reserved for exceptional luxury finds. Together, they offer a range of styles and price points, creating a boutique where everyone who walks through the door feels welcome.



Beginning in January, RENOUVEAU will introduce a concierge approach to consignment, available by appointment in the boutique or in the comfort of a client's home, making the process personal, thoughtful, and convenient from the start.

Beyond fashion, giving back is at the heart of why Vicki created RENOUVEAU. She feels deeply about supporting those facing hunger in her own community and honoring veterans and first responders who have sacrificed so much. The boutique proudly partners with the **New Albany Food Pantry and Save A Warrior**, donating 10% of sales to these organizations, along with 100% of proceeds from its exclusive candle collection.







At its core, RENOUVEAU is about renewal. Giving beautiful fashion new life, giving back to the community Vicki proudly calls home, and proving that sometimes the most meaningful beginnings come when you least expect them.

RENOUVEAU is opening in New Albany this fall! Follow the journey on Instagram at @Renouveau.LuxuryConsignment and stop by to discover your next favorite piece.



RENOUVEAU

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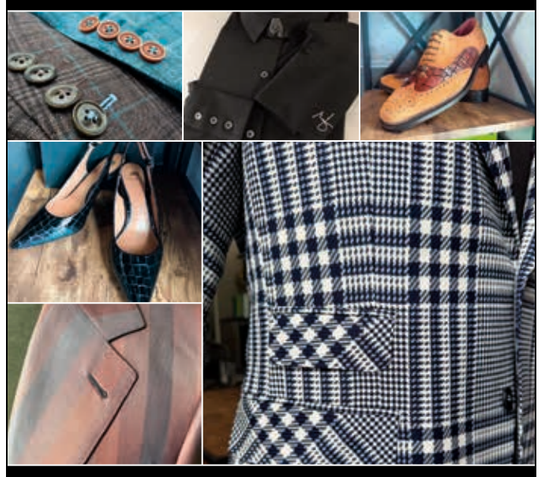
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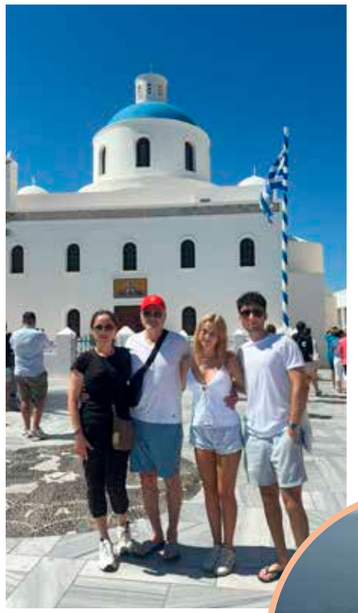
BY ELIZABETH SEDLOCK

Alex Khvalsky's path to New Albany started a long way from Central Ohio. Born in St. Petersburg, Russia, he moved to Brookline, Massachusetts, in 1980 and then to Columbus in 1987 when his mother's job brought the family west. The local Russian community was still small then, that closeness made for friendships that have lasted until this day. One particular friendship started 25 years ago and eventually became the center of his entire life: Yelena, now his wife.

They both earned undergraduate degrees at The Ohio State University. Alex later added an MBA there, too. Like many do after graduation, Alex considered moving to a different city. His gut told him to stay. Looking back, he calls remaining in Central Ohio one of the best choices of his career and his life.

New Albany Country Club Communities became home for two reasons. The first was simple convenience: Jacob and Anna were at Columbus Academy and the daily drive had become a grind. The second was just as clear. New Albany's civic pride and welcoming spirit won them over. The Khvalskys simply fell in love with New Albany itself, and it just felt like a community where they wanted to raise their kids.









The same instinct to put down roots shaped Alex's business. Alexander's Jewelers began nearly 30 years ago out of Alex's love for high-end timepieces and jewelry that marks something real in a client's life. "What most people do not realize about jewelry," he said, "is that the piece is not just the size, carat weight or price. It is what that piece represents, how truly personal and meaningful it is to the client and the knowledge that they will cherish it for years to come." Over the last

CONTINUED ▶

three decades that passion hasn't faded, it has only grown.

Alexander's Jewelers' first chapter started with six years at Easton. Those early years focused on learning and growth: building a reputation, refining the customer experience, and discovering





> "The piece is not just the size, carat weight or price. It is what that piece represents, how truly personal and meaningful it is to the client and the knowledge that they will cherish it for years to come."

what kind of jewelry house they wanted to become. The company then moved to the Short North, choosing a more intimate boutique for the clients they wanted to serve. The new space allowed for closer conversations, more personal service, and a warmer atmosphere than a high-traffic shopping destination could offer.

Today, Alex describes the business as a dream manifested: beside Yelena and a long-time team, he has built a business that treats every visitor as more than a transaction. Alex explained, "every single day I am incredibly grateful for the amazing clients who have walked through our doors and for the many that have turned into lifelong friends."

Alex and Yelena are very proud parents of two children, Jacob and Anna. Jacob, 20, is currently in the honors program at their alma mater, The Ohio State University. Anna, 17, is a junior at Columbus Academy. Both share a passion for competitive tennis and love to travel and explore new places. Their parents still talk about Columbus, New Albany, and the store the same way: as places that became the cornerstones of their amazing life.

JOSETTE'S STORY

MY MEMORIES ARE PRECIOUS, I WANT TO KEEP THEM

To look at Josette, you would never know that her mind has been betraying her. It started with forgetful whispers that grew louder: opening the utility drawer in the kitchen instead of the freezer door - or leaving an empty pot on the hot burner on the stove - or having panic attacks during a simple car ride. Josette says the mental "mishaps" concerned her deeply. She has a family history of dementia that has always loomed over her but never touched her. Now, though, Josette was very worried. She says, "It was a deep knowing that this feels very different."

Josette decided to get proactive. She reached out to NeuroAnimation, based in New Albany, OH, and she threw herself into the only therapy in the world proven to actually grow the brain, create new neurons and bring the brain back into neuroplasticity. NeuroAnimation's revolutionary and immersive technology helps people with a myriad of neurological conditions see gains they otherwise thought were out of reach. According to Josette, "My life changed in a matter of days. My brain fog lifted, and I experienced a sense of joy and calm I never had before. NeuroAnimation isn't just stopping something in its tracks-it's changing it and making it better. I am so grateful to NeuroAnimation."

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CONNESSO: Creating Luxury Smart-Homes

BY ELIZABETH SEDLOCK



Connesso is a luxury smart-home firm. They plan, install, and service the technology that runs a house: lighting and motorized shades, whole-home audio and home theater, climate and automation, security, Wi-Fi and wiring, and outdoor sound and lighting. The point is not a pile of gadgets. The point is a house that is easy to live in, with the equipment hidden in the architecture.

New Albany residents care about how a house is made. Connesso applies that same standard to how the house is used. They work with the architect, interior designer, and builder so lighting, shades, sound, and controls are designed into the rooms instead of added after the fact.

Tim Schilling, co-founder and president, and Ryan Prestel, co-founder and North Carolina market leader, started Connesso in 2024 with offices in Columbus and Raleigh. In two just years, the firm reached CE Pro's Top 100. The systems they install include Lutron lighting and shades, Control4 and Josh.ai for whole-home control, Alarm.com for security, and CoreOS, software they built in-house to tie it together.

"The proportions of a room, the craftsmanship in the millwork, the relationship between the house and its outdoor spaces: those decisions are intentional," Prestel said. "We believe the experience of living in that home deserves the same attention."

They design backward from specific moments. For example, a dinner party is layered light over the table, a wash on a textured wall, glow inside the cabinetry, all in one touch. Movie night is picture, sound, seating, lighting, and shades as one system. Outside, music that reaches the seating without killing





conversation or a golf simulator for after work or a winter afternoon with friends.

"When we collaborate early with the architect, interior designer, and builder, the lighting, sound, shades, and controls become part of the home's design," Prestel continued. "The finished spaces look considered and feel comfortable to use."

For Connesso clients, that starts with how people want to feel in a space. The same great room can read bright in the morning, open for the game, and intimate by dinner. Equipment disappears into millwork. Existing homes get the same respect for the finishes that were already there. The team stays after the install: they listen first, engineer what you will never see, and remain the ones who answer when the house needs the next chapter.

"We start with what people want to do in their home and how they want to feel doing it," Prestel expanded. "That conversation tells us much more than a list of equipment ever will."

They also plan for a house that can grow, including lighting that responds to daylight and what you are doing. Ohio operations expanded this year when Connesso brought McPherson Connected Systems onto the platform, with local leadership still in the market.

"The value is in the time people enjoy in those spaces," Prestel said. "Our job is to handle the complexity behind it."

Clients put it simply.

"Thank you for helping us make our home exactly what we wanted and more."

"Working with Connesso on our complex project was a highlight and we are grateful."

"I didn't have to do the research because they knew what would work best and gave us options to choose from as we went."

"Our home finally feels like it was designed for how we actually live. We never touch a thing."

The complexity is handled by Connesso and stays in the background. The moments are what clients remember.

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