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CORNELIUS LAKESIDE LIVING

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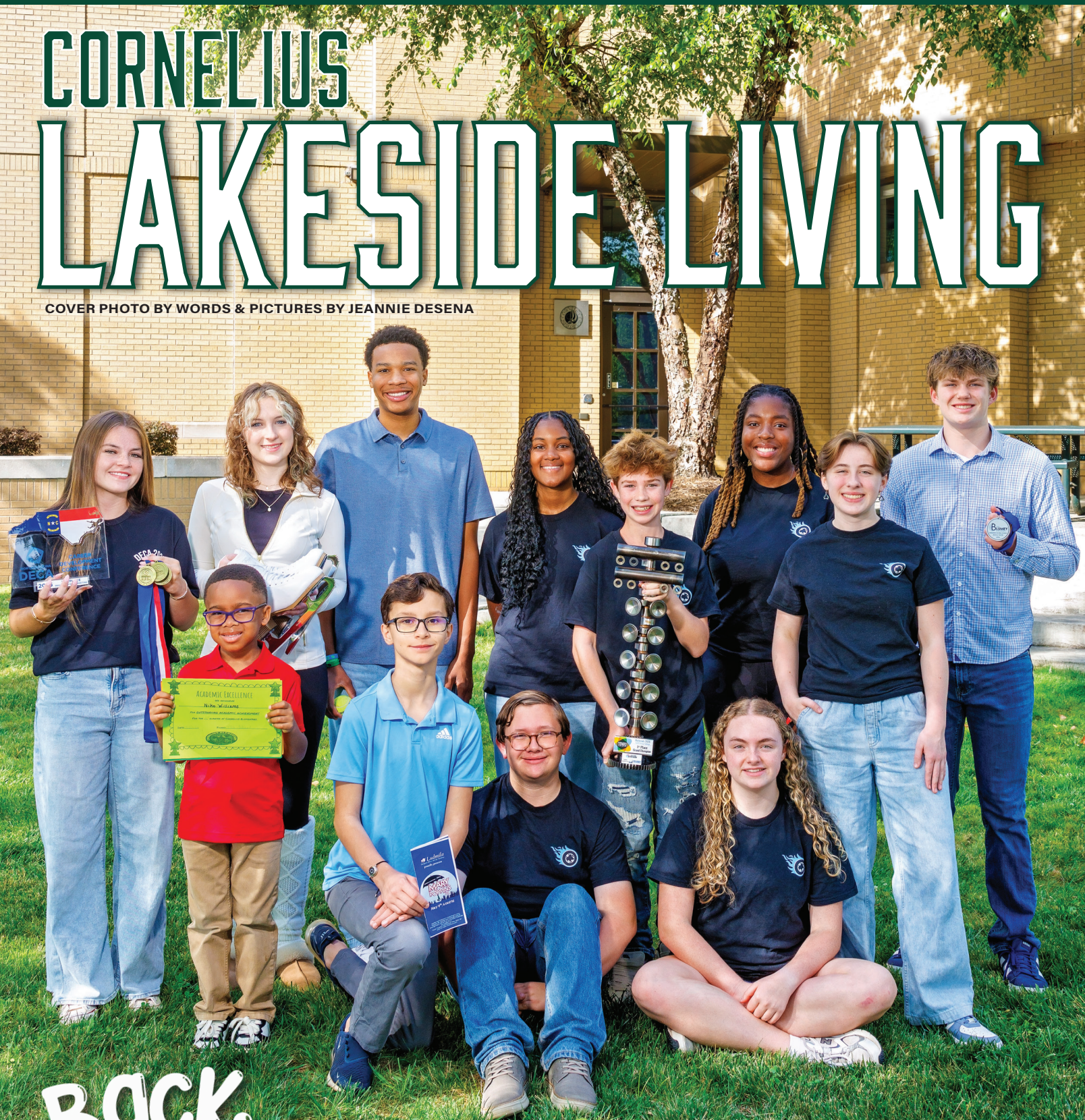

Back to School

AMAZING LAKESIDE KIDS

WHAT'S INSIDE:

More Amazing Kids | School Ratings | Dorm Packing List

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CORENLIUS LAKESIDE LIVING

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Content Due:	Edition Date:
August 25	October
September 25	November
October 25	December
November 25	January
December 25	February
January 25	March
February 25	April
March 25	May
April 25	June
May 25	July
June 25	August
July 25	September

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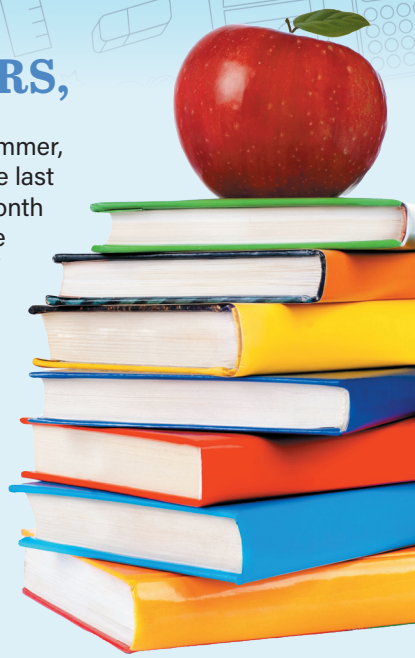

August, the dog days of summer, back-to-school month, the last hurrah... whatever this month means for you and your family, we hope the summer has been full of wonderful memories and time with friends and family.

For us, August means featuring amazing kids in our *Cornelius Lakeside Living* community! These students are hardworking, talented and excited about all their futures hold. Please join us in celebrating their achievements and the hard work of students throughout Cornelius. We can't wait to see what's next!

This issue also brings the latest School Ratings Report for area schools and what this means, as well as the important dorm packing list for those sending students to college. And our Places to Go is a fun, related one—a trip to IKEA for your back-to-school needs (and a snack in its popular cafeteria).

For students heading back to school, best of luck in the year ahead. Please send us any milestones, accomplishments, awards or proud moments. We'd love to show you off!

Your *Lakeside Living* Team



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Content Coordinator



Jeannie DeSena, Words & Pictures (Torrence Chapel)
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AROUND TOWN
with Mayor Bilodeau

Hello Cornelius!

Was it something I said?

One of the most frequent questions I am asked, second only to "When are you going to fix traffic?" has to be "Is there anything that surprises you about being mayor?" Without question, it has to be departures from key town management positions!

Maintaining an Effective Team

Earlier this year, our longtime Public Works Director and Assistant Town Manager, Tyler Beardsley, departed to fill a new management position with the Town of Huntersville. Tyler was my go-to person when it came to addressing all things related to public works. From potholes to cracked sidewalks and tree limbs to trash collection, Tyler was on it! Our Public Works Project Manager, Katie DeMatthew, stepped in admirably until the director's position was filled by Steve Bridges in mid-July. Steve comes to us from the Town of Statesville's management team. He brings many years of management experience working with NCDOT and traffic engineering. These are areas of expertise that will serve us well. Katie has since received a well-deserved promotion to Assistant Public Works Director. We are fortunate to have such a solid team!

Filling Legendary Shoes

Wayne Herron, our longtime Deputy Town Manager, will be retiring later this month. Many of you may know Wayne from the many presentations he has made at coffee chats and HOA meetings. He has a wealth of knowledge regarding the inner workings of NCDOT and other important organizations, such as the Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization. His expertise and gentle but effective way of negotiating will be missed. We certainly wish Wayne all the best in retirement. Effective July 13, Wayne's replacement, Cynthia Broomfield, was named Deputy Town Manager. Cynthia comes to us from Port Huron, Michigan, a diverse city of 28,000 which is near the Canadian border. Her strengths lie in project management and downtown development. These are absolutely key areas of focus for our town.

Say It Ain't So, Todd!

In the category of big surprises, Commissioner Todd Sansbury's resignation from the town board effective June 1 was a shock. Not surprisingly, however, it was a positive career move for a talented and very likeable individual. Commissioner Sansbury was elected three times and served on our town board with distinction for five years. Todd was a pragmatic, even-tempered commissioner who was always willing to hear all sides of an issue. Our loss will be Savannah, Georgia's gain. I will miss Todd dearly and wish he and his wife, Heather, all the best.

Welcome Back, Scott Higgins!

We are so very blessed to have Dr. Scott Higgins filling Todd's commissioner seat for the next 18 months. Scott was a popular elected official and Mayor Pro Tem during his last term on the board. As a top vote getter, Scott was a citizen favorite as someone uber involved in the community. In particular, Scott has a passion for all things related to outdoor recreation. His resume is extremely impressive.

Next month, my article will feature a profile of Dr. Higgins's professional experience and accomplishments. In addition, I will conduct a Q&A with our new town managers to understand how they plan to keep Cornelius moving forward. It has been said that change is inevitable, but progress depends on what we do with that change. I believe the future of our community is bright!

Your comments and questions are always welcome. You can reach me at dbilodeau@cornelius.org or walk with me at Jetton Park every Monday at 7am. Cheers!

Mayor D



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AMAZING LAKESIDE KIDS

BY CAROLINE CAMPBELL | PHOTOS BY WORDS & PICTURES BY JEANNIE DESENA

Meet this year's amazing lakeside kids, and join us in celebrating them and all the amazing students in our *Lakeside Living* community. We are so proud of all their accomplishments and know they have bright futures ahead.

ZOEY BOUKEDES

Age: 18
School: William Amos Hough High School graduate, attending UNC Chapel Hill this fall
Neighborhood: Island Forest Drive



Photo by Melissa Joy Photography



Photo by Lindsey Romo

Zoey created a 501(c)(3) nonprofit devoted to spreading positivity and helping students learn about the power of a positive mindset. She has raised over $350,000, launched a scholarship program to help support graduating high school students (including a new scholarship at UNC Charlotte), plans annual fundraisers and guest speaks to share her journey with others. Zoey created the Yay!DAY Club at her high school, which became the largest student-created club with over 250 members. She also planned opportunities for students to participate in community service, volunteering and mentorship at local schools. In addition, she finished her last travel club soccer season with Charlotte Independence Soccer Club, where she also coaches at summer camps, volunteers with the winter futsal and TOPSoccer programs, and coached a recreational team. Zoey was involved with the DECA club, where she is a two-time international qualifier with her group, held leadership positions in National Honor Society and National Science Honor Society, and was a part of other honors societies and clubs. Zoey also has previous healthcare shadowing experience at OrthoCarolina and now shadows at Atrium Health Primary Care One Health Family Medicine and Urgent Care.

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ARISTON "NIKO" PARSLEY-WILLIAMS

Age: 6
School: Cornelius Elementary
Neighborhood: Willow Pond





Ariston "Niko" Parsley-Williams is a bright and accomplished 6-year-old young leader and the youngest of six children of Paster Andreas and Tynsley Parsley-Williams, who is being raised in a family deeply committed to faith, education, service and leadership. An active member of The Decision Christian Assembly, Niko participates in Sam's Klub Youth Ministry, occasionally sings during worship services and enjoys growing in his relationship with Jesus Christ. A proud alumnus of Cornelius Early Scholars, Niko is an exceptional student, testing at a 5th-grade reading level at the beginning of 1st grade, has earned multiple academic achievement awards and serves as a Spokeskid for KidSaga, an AI-powered reading and learning platform that reflects his passion for literacy. Niko also enjoys robotics through BrightChamps, studies Taekwondo at King Tiger Taekwondo, competes with the QC Blazers Track Club and is learning to play the piano. Among his many accomplishments, he was selected as the Keynote Speaker for the Ada Jenkins Learnworks Afterschool Graduation Program, where he inspired students and families with his confidence, character and love of learning.



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ELLA GRACE TOLLESON

Age: 17
School: Community School of Davidson
Neighborhood: Captain's Point

After 11 years as a highly competitive gymnast at Enso Elite, Ella transitioned to competitive dance in 2024. She's currently a member of the Senior Competitive Dance team at Studio73 Dance in Huntersville, where she competes in musical theater, jazz, lyrical, hip hop and tap. In addition, Ella carries a double dance concentration at CSD, where she choreographs and performs dances for multiple high school shows each year, while working as an assistant gymnastics coach at Enso Elite. In addition to her athletic prowess, Ella is an outstanding student who's looking forward to her senior year. Most proud of conquering AP Chemistry, Ella is buried in college applications, hoping to pursue a career in medical science.







Photo by Julia Rose Photography

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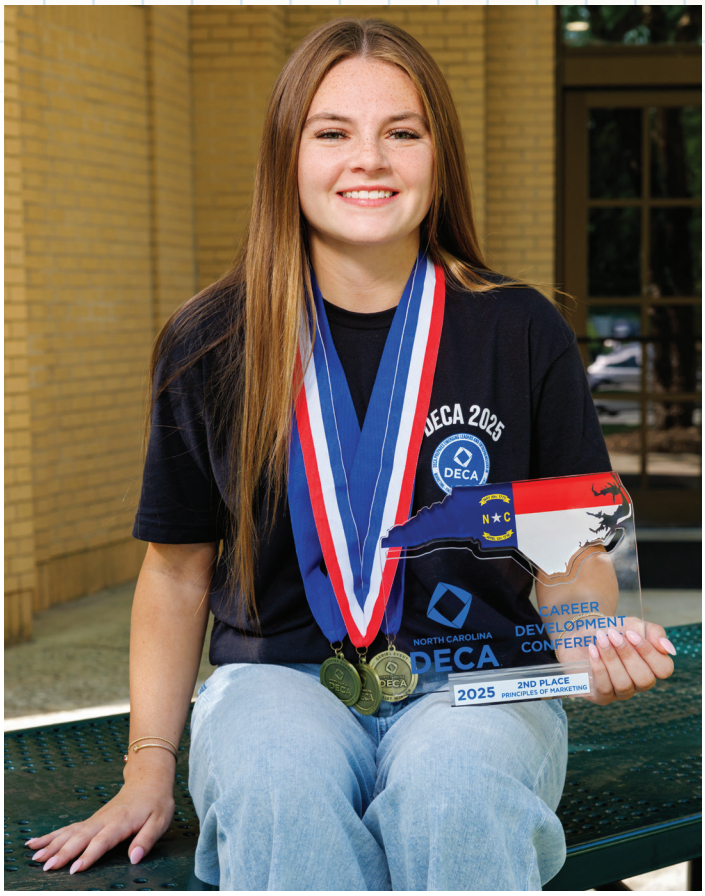

ISLA HAGERMAN

Age: 16
School: William Amos Hough High School
Neighborhood: Cornelius

Isla is the current President of Hough High School DECA chapter and earned 2nd place at the North Carolina DECA State Career Development Conference, representing her school at both the state and international levels. She serves as Junior Class Secretary and is actively involved in student leadership initiatives throughout her school. Isla is also demonstrating dedication both on and off the field. While balancing leadership roles, athletics, volunteering and community involvement, she maintains high academic achievement and a strong commitment to excellence.

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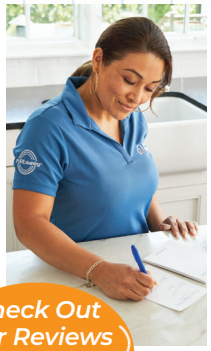



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ELIZABETH BOLDING

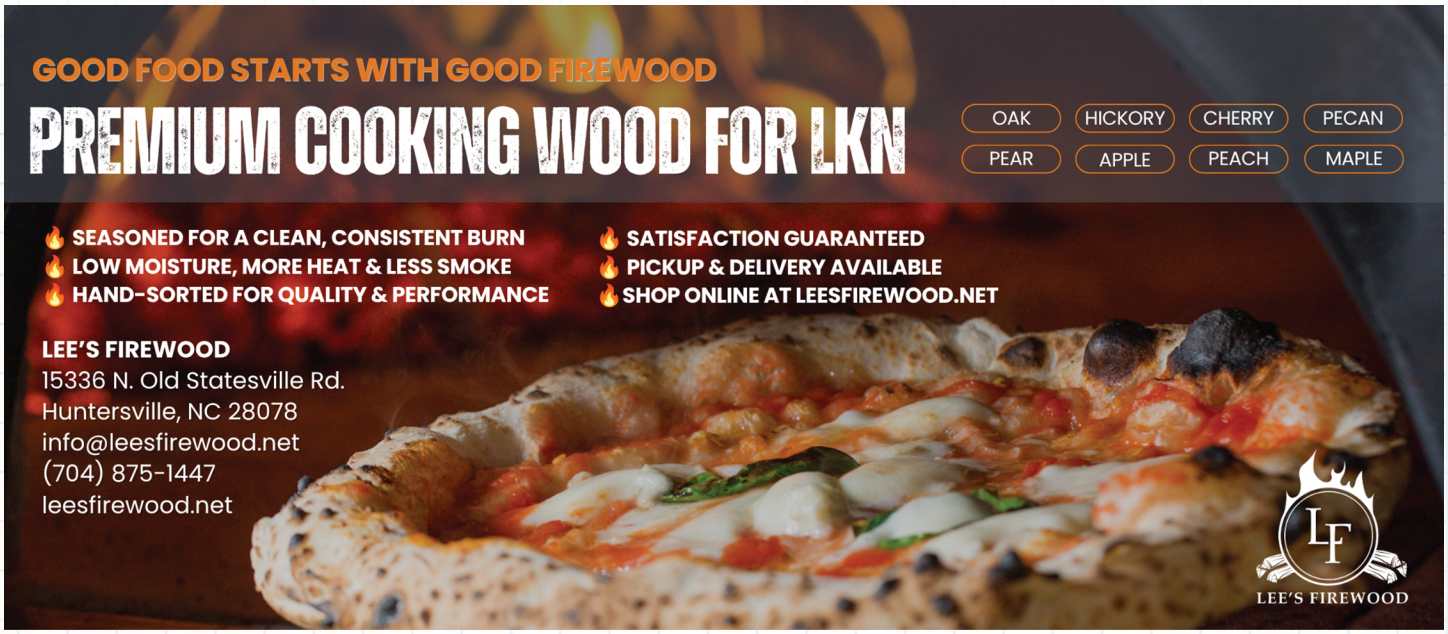
Age: 16
School: William Amos Hough High School
Neighborhood: Caldwell Station

Parker "Elizabeth" Bolding is already building an impressive resume of accomplishments in academics the arts, athletics and community service. A member of the National Art Honor Society, she has established herself as a talented artist, with work displayed at the Cain Center and third-place honors in her age division at the Mooresville Arts Center for the past two years. While acrylic painting has been her favorite medium, she recently expanded her artistic abilities through charcoal drawing. Elizabeth is also a violinist in the Hough High School Orchestra, a program that has earned top honors in the state.

Service is an important part of Elizabeth's life. As a Girl Scout, she earned her Bronze Award, demonstrating leadership and community impact. She also serves as an after-school tutor at Kumon Learning Center in Huntersville, helping younger students strengthen their academic skills.

Athletics have also played a significant role in Elizabeth's journey. After seven years of competitive travel softball and one year on the Hough High School softball team, she recently embraced the challenge of figure skating.

Academically, Elizabeth maintains a rigorous course load, including several Advanced Placement classes. She hopes to combine her strengths in art and mathematics by pursuing a degree in architecture.



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HOUGH NATIONAL STEM LEAGUE

William Amos Hough High School's STEM team, "Iditarod Motorsports," made the Cornelius community proud by claiming the national championship title at the 2026 Ten80 STEM Challenge National Finals, held at Charlotte Motor Speedway in Concord, North Carolina. The Huskies competed against teams from across the United States in a series of events that challenged students in racing, autonomous vehicle programming, graphic design and data-driven innovation. Bringing the national title home to their own backyard, the team demonstrated exceptional skill, teamwork and STEM expertise on one of motorsports' most iconic stages. Coached by Mr. Brock Shipley, Iditarod Motorsports has built a reputation as one of the premier Ten80 programs in the country, with this championship adding to a legacy of academic and competitive excellence. William Amos Hough High School continues to prove that its students are not just future innovators—they are champions.



Back row (L to R): A. Cox, C. Malcolm, N. Huber, V. Hancock, A. Iota, C. Redmond, H. Prior, M. Hildyard, A. McIntyre, J. Prieto and Mr. Shipley (adviser). Front row (L to R): C. Dunlap, A. Cutcliff, N. Krishnan and P. Hyre. Not pictured: A. Limezs, I. Obregon and C. Youngblood.





KATE BORKOWSKI

Age: 19
School: Appalachian State University
Neighborhood: Lake Norman Island

Kate's life goal is to be a true global citizen. To give you a definition, a global citizen is an individual who sees themselves as part of a wider, interconnected world and takes active responsibility for addressing global challenges, such as poverty, inequality and climate change. As a Sustainable Development/Community and Global Focus major at App State, Kate is truly concerned with the future of our environment and world. This July, Kate traveled to Tanzania, Africa and summited Mt. Kilimanjaro. As part of this trip, she established a GoFundMe to aid the village of Bagamoyo, Tanzania. She also arrived with a suitcase of shoes for the villagers. She plans on finding an international opportunity for next summer to help an impoverished country with irrigation needs. At college, she volunteered at the Appalachian State greenhouse and belongs to the Student Sustainable Business Association. Her mantra is *"If not me, then who?"*

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HUDSON HUGHES

Age: 16
School: Christ the King
Neighborhood: Weatherstone

Hudson has always loved telling stories from a young age, and his preschool teachers nicknamed him "Storyteller". That passion led him to the stage in 6th grade, where he performed in his first musical while also staying active in several basketball leagues. Hudson also spent several years taking drum lessons and performing as the drummer in Learn Music's Legends Band, *Picnic at the Costco*, alongside his sister, Isla, who was the band's lead vocalist. Throughout middle school, Hudson earned lead roles in both 7th and 8th-grade productions, and received his school's Excellence in Musical Theatre Award. In high school, he has continued to excel in both the arts and athletics. As a freshman, Hudson played football and basketball while starring as Harold Hill in *The Music Man*. During his sophomore year, he was named JV Soccer MVP as a goalkeeper and competed on both the JV and Varsity basketball teams. Most recently, Hudson earned a Blumey nomination for Best Actor for his role as Hades in *Hadestown*. Whether performing on stage, competing in sports, supporting school clubs and student government, or volunteering in the community, Hudson works hard to make the most of every opportunity and continues to pursue his goals with persistence, integrity and kindness toward others.



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ISLA HUGHES

Age: 14
School: Northwest School of the Arts
Neighborhood: Weatherstone

Isla has been singing since she was 3 years old, turning just about anything she could find into a microphone. She began voice lessons at age 6 and, a year later, joined her brother in the band *Picnic at the Costco*, where she performed as lead vocalist for nearly six years on stages throughout the Lake Norman area.

In addition to her musical talents, Isla is an Irish dancer. She began dancing at age 7 and recently achieved Open Champion status, the highest competitive level in Irish dance. Her love of performing also led her to the stage, where she made her theatrical debut in 6th grade alongside her brother in his final middle school production. Since then, Isla has earned leading roles, including Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz* and the title role in *Mary Poppins Jr.* Following in her brother's footsteps, she was honored with the Excellence in Musical Theatre Award and the St. Cecilia Music Ministry Award at St. Mark Catholic School. She has also performed with several local theater organizations, appearing in productions such as *Legally Blonde* and *Sister Act*, where she portrayed Sister Mary Robert at the Booth Playhouse. Committed to continuing her growth as a performer, Isla will attend Northwest School of the Arts, where she plans to major in Musical Theatre and further develop her passion for singing, acting and dance.





ETHAN REED

Age: 18
School: Pine Lake Preparatory
Neighborhood: Sawyers Landing

Ethan is originally from New York and moved to the Lake Norman area in 2014, where he recently graduated from Pine Lake Preparatory. He will be attending the Kenan-Flagler Business School at UNC-Chapel Hill this fall. Throughout high school, Ethan maintained a strong academic record while completing honors, AP and dual enrollment coursework. He earned the Presidential Volunteer Service Award for his commitment to community service and was also awarded a highly competitive four-year National Army ROTC Scholarship. Through his dedication to academics, service, athletics and leadership, Ethan has consistently demonstrated a strong work ethic and commitment to excellence.

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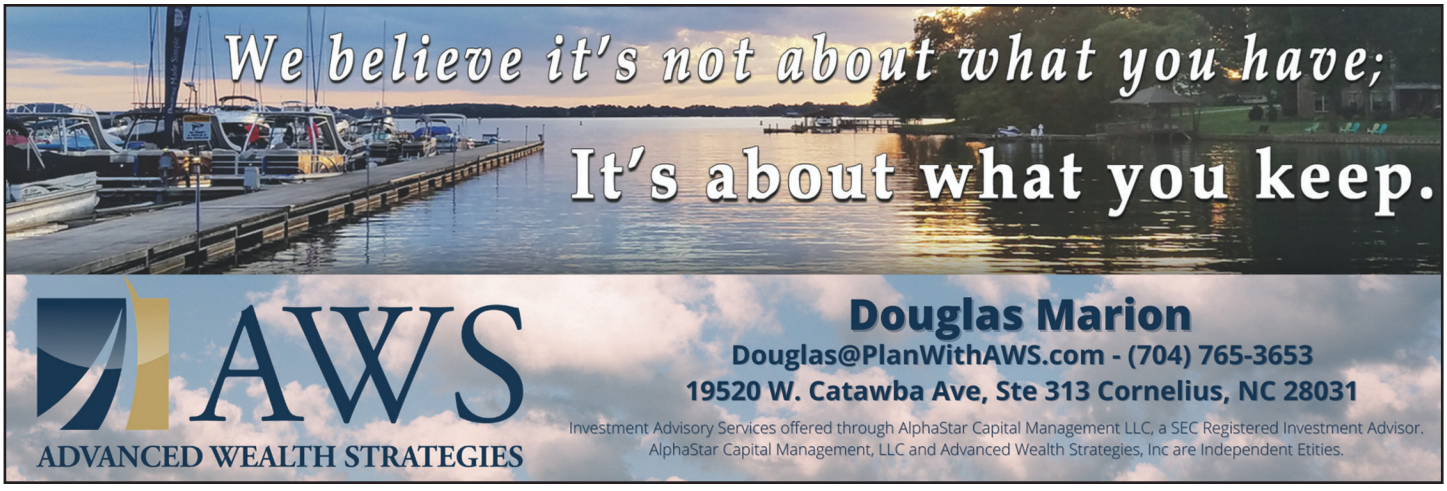
JEREMIAH BROOKS

Age: 16
School: Lake Norman Charter
Neighborhood: Westmoreland

In 2024, Jeremiah, an avid tennis player, faced a life-altering emergency heart transplant, but his resilience and determination never wavered. Instead of stepping back, he triumphantly returned to the tennis courts, earning Best Sportsman of the season while helping lead the Lake Norman Charter HS tennis team to the 2026 state championship. His passion extends far beyond sports; Jeremiah regularly volunteers at Elevation Church Lake Norman and shares his inspiring story to raise vital funds for the Make-A-Wish Foundation. His dedication also earned him the Young Philanthropists Award for his fundraising efforts for Atrium Levine Children's Hospital, all while maintaining a stellar 4.6 GPA throughout his sophomore 2025-2026 academic school year. From his athletic and academic excellence to his massive "new" heart for giving back, Jeremiah is truly nothing less than amazing.



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NOAH CHRESTLER

Age: 11
School: Bailey Middle School
Neighborhood: Patrick's Purchase

Noah is a talented and creative 6th grader at Bailey Middle School with a strong passion for the arts, especially singing classic Frank Sinatra songs. A longtime student at Ludmila European Music and Arts Academy in Cornelius, he has performed in more than eight plays, including *Mary Poppins*, *Annie, Moana,* and *Beauty and the Beast*, just to name a few. He also performed with the Charlotte Youth Ballet in *Alice in Wonderland*, takes voice lessons, studied piano at Ludmila and is actively involved in chorus at Bailey Middle School as part of the Bailey Singers. Outside of the arts, Noah swims for MSA and the Hammerheads summer swim team and enjoys cooking and baking—his favorites include poached eggs and chocolate chip cookies. He is loving, caring and has a natural gift for both performance and creativity.



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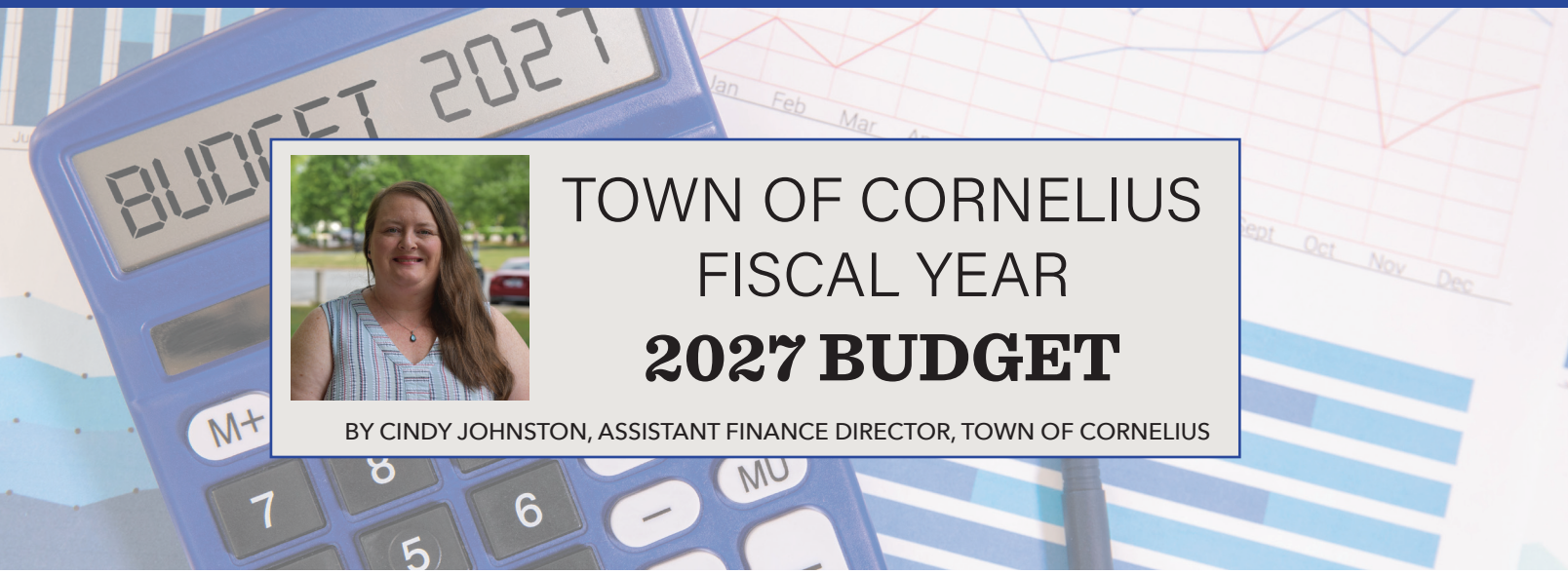

TOWN OF CORNELIUS FISCAL YEAR 2027 BUDGET

BY CINDY JOHNSTON, ASSISTANT FINANCE DIRECTOR, TOWN OF CORNELIUS

The Cornelius Board of Commissioners approved the fiscal year 2027 (FY27) budget on June 1, 2026. The budget is the single most important annual policy document approved by the Board of Commissioners. The annual budget ordinance sets the tax rate levied upon property for the year and describes how those taxes and other revenue will be spent. The General Fund Budget totals $40,762,452 (net of reconciling items such as debt to be issued).



This approved budget sets the tax rate for Cornelius from July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027, at 19.31 cents per $100 of assessed valuation, which is a two-cent property tax rate increase. As identified in the Manager's Recommended Budget, this tax increase is necessary to fund improvements to public safety (salary increases that will allow for market-competitiveness for police officers, firefighters and 911 telecommunicators), and to service the debt on $9.94 million of Park Bonds (primarily for future park land acquisition and capital improvements to existing park facilities, as approved by voters in the 2024 Park Bond Referendum) to be issued in FY27. The rate increase of two pennies is broken down as follows: 1.3 pennies for public safety salaries and 0.7 pennies for Park Bonds. Also funded are important capital projects (such as road projects and public safety equipment) and the continuation of the fire department transition plan (transitioning to a full-time fire department). The tax rate for FY27 continues to remain the lowest tax rate in Mecklenburg County and is the lowest in the state with a population greater than 30,000.

The FY27 budget includes several capital projects. Those projects include street resurfacing, console radio replacements for the 911 center, Fire Engine 2 replacement and Dana's Branch stream restoration (for water quality improvement). The FY27 budget also funds a new transportation planner, three full-time firefighters and a contracted mental health clinician to work alongside our police officers.



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FY27 priorities align to the citizen's priorities identified by the Town's FY27 Citizen Budget Survey. Over 1,100 citizens participated in the survey, and the following are the top three priorities identified in order: 1. Transportation, 2. Public Safety and 3. Parks and Recreation. In addition to the preceding items, the town will have a debt issuance of $650,000 for police vehicles and $10 million of Transportation Bonds to be utilized for costs associated with the US21/Catawba Ave intersection improvements, NC115/Potts St intersection improvements and West Catawba Ave/Torrence Chapel Rd intersection improvements. The bonded debt service will be funded by revenues from the recently approved transportation sales tax (via the PAVE Act). Other transportation and mobility initiatives funded include $1.15 million for street resurfacing of certain town-maintained streets and studying the intersection of NC115/Bailey Rd.

The FY27 budget helps the town achieve its mission statement, "The Cornelius Way." "Consistently striving to reach above and beyond the "high bar," we will uphold the qualities we see and hope to inspire in our citizens to serve Cornelius with loyalty, integrity, innovation, resilience and courage."

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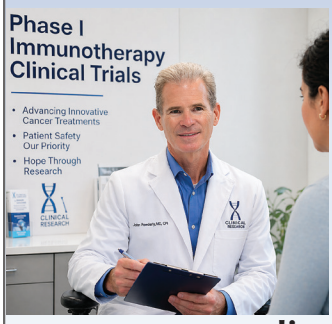

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Do You Know the Latest AREA SCHOOL RATINGS?

CONTRIBUTED BY JOANIE BAKER

This list of schools **does not** encompass all the choices in the Lake Norman area, only schools closest to Cornelius that have public, published ratings and records from which to draw data. Private schools do not have the same testing and reporting requirements as public schools. There are many charter schools, public academic program choices, parochial and private options in surrounding counties and in the city of Charlotte that are not included yet that are worth researching, visiting and attending.

Report Card grades are calculated by combining and weighing 80% achievement and 20% growth. Achievement measures how students performed on EOG and EOC testing, and growth measures the progress students made during the course of the school year. "Growth measures are truer indicators of school quality, since they can control for prior achievement and can ascertain progress over the course of the school year" *(Petrilli & Churchill. EdExcellence. The Fordham Institute, October 2016).*

School	Type	Location	2025 Report Card Grade	Performance Grade	Growth	Carolina School Hub Rating	Great Schools Rating
Cornelius ES	Neighborhood Public	Cornelius	B	81	EXCEEDED 89	10	6
J.V. Washam ES	Neighborhood Public	Cornelius	B	80	MET 84	10	9
Bailey MS	Neighborhood Public	Cornelius	B	82	EXCEEDED 95	10	10
Hough HS	Neighborhood Public	Cornelius	B	84	EXCEEDED 85	10	7
Davidson ES	Neighborhood Public	Davidson	A	88	EXCEEDED 96	10	9
North Academy of World Langs	Magnet Public	Huntersville	B	79	EXCEEDED 92	10	9
NW School of the Arts	Magnet Public, 6 - 12	N. CLT	B	81	EXCEEDED 95	10	7
Community School of Davidson	Public Charter	Davidson	B	77	MET 74	10	8
Pine Lake Preparatory	Public Charter	Mooresville/ Iredell Co.	A	85	MET 73	10	9
Langtree Charter	Public Charter	Mooresville/Iredell Co.	B	70	EXCEEDED 90	8	5
Lakeside Charter	Public Charter	Cornelius	C	56	EXCEEDED 89	5	3
Lake Norman Charter	Public Charter	Huntersville	A	88	EXCEEDED 89	10	9
Corvian Community School	Public Charter	N. CLT	B	78	EXCEEDED 92	9	9
Lincoln Charter School	Public Charter	Denver/Lincoln Co.	B	77	MET 82	10	9
Bonnie Cone Classical	Public Charter, PK-6	N. CLT	C	66	EXCEEDED 85	7	8
Bonnie Cone Leadership	Public Charter, K-12	N. CLT	D	51	NOT MET 58	N/A	3

Data from https://www.dpi.nc.gov/data-reports/school-report-cards; carolinaschoolhub.com; greatschools.org, niche.com (School Year 24-2025)

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— COLLEGE Q&A —

SWIPE RIGHT
COLLEGE MATCHMAKERS

Ultimate Dorm Checklist

COMPILED BY JOANIE BAKER, M.A. SECONDARY ENGLISH EDUCATION & GIFTED EDUCATION (THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY), CERTIFICATE IN COLLEGE ADMISSIONS



SLEEP

- [ ] Mattress topper
- [ ] Comforter + pillows
- [ ] Twin XL sheets
- [ ] Throw blanket

BATHROOM

- [ ] Towels
- [ ] Shower shoes
- [ ] Plastic shower caddy

STORAGE & ORGANIZATION

- [ ] Laundry basket/bag
- [ ] Mini fridge
- [ ] Ottoman/step stool
- [ ] Closet shoe organizer
- [ ] Three-tiered cart/shelves
- [ ] Collapsible storage cubes
- [ ] Large trash can, trash bags
- [ ] Drawer organizers

CLEANING

- [ ] Portable vacuum
- [ ] Swiffer + wet/dry inserts
- [ ] Paper towels
- [ ] Clorox wipes
- [ ] Detergent sheets/pods
- [ ] Stain remover spray
- [ ] Dish brush



MISCELLANEOUS

- [ ] Brita
- [ ] Air purifier + filters
- [ ] First-aid kit
- [ ] Power strips
- [ ] Fan
- [ ] Command hooks
- [ ] Floor lamp & desk lamp
- [ ] Long phone charger cords
- [ ] Keurig/coffee maker/teapot
- [ ] Gallon + quart bags
- [ ] Cold/flu medicine
- [ ] Pain medicine
- [ ] Stomach medicine/antacids
- [ ] Over-the-door hooks
- [ ] Full-length mirror

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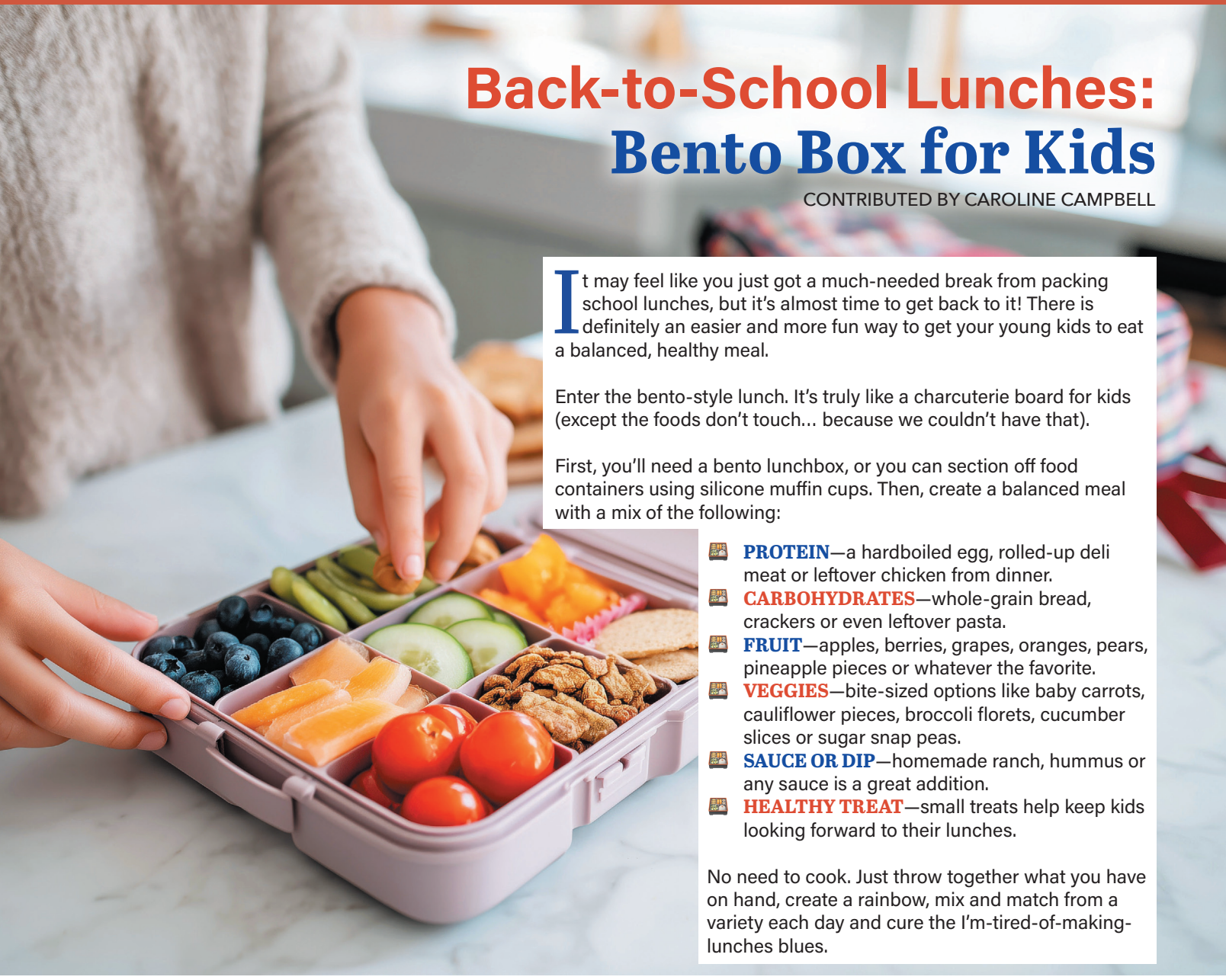
Back-to-School Lunches: Bento Box for Kids

CONTRIBUTED BY CAROLINE CAMPBELL



It may feel like you just got a much-needed break from packing school lunches, but it's almost time to get back to it! There is definitely an easier and more fun way to get your young kids to eat a balanced, healthy meal.

Enter the bento-style lunch. It's truly like a charcuterie board for kids (except the foods don't touch... because we couldn't have that).

First, you'll need a bento lunchbox, or you can section off food containers using silicone muffin cups. Then, create a balanced meal with a mix of the following:

- **PROTEIN**—a hardboiled egg, rolled-up deli meat or leftover chicken from dinner.
- **CARBOHYDRATES**—whole-grain bread, crackers or even leftover pasta.
- **FRUIT**—apples, berries, grapes, oranges, pears, pineapple pieces or whatever the favorite.
- **VEGGIES**—bite-sized options like baby carrots, cauliflower pieces, broccoli florets, cucumber slices or sugar snap peas.
- **SAUCE OR DIP**—homemade ranch, hummus or any sauce is a great addition.
- **HEALTHY TREAT**—small treats help keep kids looking forward to their lunches.

No need to cook. Just throw together what you have on hand, create a rainbow, mix and match from a variety each day and cure the I'm-tired-of-making-lunches blues.



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Yay!DAY FOUNDATION: Radiate Positivity



SUBMITTED BY ZOEY BOUKEDES, FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT OF THE YAY!DAY FOUNDATION





Photo by Melissa Joy Photography

In 2017, 9-year-old Zoey Boukedes had an idea for a one-day holiday called "Yay!Day", a day where everyone was encouraged to be positive for 24 hours, no matter what obstacles they were faced with. This message of "radiate positivity" aimed to help people see the benefits of approaching everyday life with a positive mindset. As word about "Yay!Day" started to spread throughout the town of Cornelius and the message started to receive attention from families and businesses in the community, Boukedes realized that the motto of radiate positivity was something that should be practiced year-long. Thanks to the support and encouragement from her community, Boukedes was able to make her idea a reality.



Now, in 2026, the Yay!DAY Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization committed to helping students recognize the power of a positive mindset while spreading positivity in the Lake Norman community and beyond. The foundation has raised nearly $400,000 to support local positive causes and its P.E.E.R.S Scholarship Program. This program, launched in 2024, awards educational funding annually to graduating Charlotte-Mecklenburg high school students to help support them in their post-graduation plans. In addition, a new Yay!DAY scholarship at the University of North Carolina - Charlotte was launched earlier this year.

All funds raised from Yay!DAY go towards the P.E.E.R.S Scholarship Program or towards acts of positivity in the community. These acts of positivity include donations to help support local nonprofits and their efforts or local schools as they make a positive learning environment for their students. These funds are raised from events that Yay!DAY hosts or participates in throughout the year. The largest event Yay!DAY hosts is the annual Comedy Show Fundraiser in the spring.

If you are a middle or high school student, or the family of a student, we encourage you to look into starting a Yay!DAY Club chapter at your school. Boukedes started the Yay!DAY Club at William Amos Hough High School when she was a sophomore there. By the time she graduated, the club had expanded to over 250 members who participated in volunteering, community service events and mentorship opportunities at local elementary and middle school throughout each school year. The motto radiate positivity can be shown in many forms, and students can do so in any way they choose! Whether they help support the environment, tutor at local libraries or spend time towards causes they are passionate about, starting a Yay!DAY Club or participating in the Yay!DAY Club at your school is a wonderful way to make a positive impact on someone else's life!

Boukedes believes in the importance of everyone learning about the power of a positive mindset to approach everyday life. If you would like to read more about the Yay!DAY Foundation, its events and ways to be involved as we radiate positivity, please make sure to check out our website: *yaydaylife.com.*

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Framing & Art in the Heart of a Small Town



BY KIM SARAGONI, FOUR CORNERS GALLERY & FRAMING



In small towns across America, custom frame shops and art galleries are much more than retail businesses—they are places where creativity, craftsmanship and community come together. They preserve history, celebrate local artists, support skilled trades and help create vibrant downtowns that residents are proud to call home.

Custom framing is one of the few remaining trades that combines artistic vision with technical expertise. Every project requires an understanding of design, color, conservation, precision cutting and quality craftsmanship. A professional framer transforms artwork, family photographs, military medals, sports memorabilia, diplomas and treasured heirlooms into lasting displays that both protect and enhance their significance. In a world of mass-produced décor, custom framing remains a true artisan trade where every project is one of a kind.

Art galleries are equally important to small communities. They provide a venue for local artists to exhibit and sell their work, encourage creativity among young people and offer visitors an authentic experience they can't find in chain stores. Galleries often become gathering places for gallery crawls, artist receptions, painting classes, educational opportunities and cultural events that bring people together while supporting neighboring businesses.

For nearly two decades, Four Corners Framing & Gallery in historic Downtown Mooresville has been an example of how a locally owned business can become a cornerstone of its community. Founded by Kim Saragoni, Four Corners combines expert custom framing with an appreciation for fine art and community engagement. The experienced team offers conservation framing, shadowboxes, canvas stretching, custom mirrors and photo restoration, all performed on-site with an emphasis on quality craftsmanship and personalized design. The shop also hosts events such as its popular Canvas & Cab painting experiences, helping introduce more people to the joy of creating art.

Beyond the frame shop, Four Corners actively supports local artists and nonprofits, hosts school art shows, downtown events and civic organizations, demonstrating that successful small businesses can be catalysts for economic development and community pride. Every customer who chooses a local frame shop instead of a national chain helps sustain skilled



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trades, keeps dollars circulating in the local economy and preserves the unique character of Main Street.

A custom frame does more than surround artwork—it preserves memories. An art gallery does more than display paintings—it inspires creativity. Together, they enrich the cultural fabric of small towns, ensuring that both craftsmanship and community continue to flourish for generations to come.

Four Corners Framing & Gallery is where artistry, technology and the community collide.

For more information about Four Corners Framing & Gallery, visit www.fcfgframing.com.





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Kitchen Materials That Stand Up to a Busy Family



BY SARAH FIEL, OWNER, HOME THEORY





A family kitchen is one of the hardest-working spaces in any home. It's where homework gets finished, snacks are grabbed, spills happen and everyone seems to gather at the end of the day. With so much daily activity, material selections have a major impact on how well your kitchen ages over time.

Cabinets: Finish and Hardware

Cabinets take a surprising amount of abuse—from sticky fingers and chair bumps to the occasional toy collision. When selecting cabinetry, both the finish and the hardware play an important role.

Solid wood remains a timeless option, especially when paired with a stained finish. Stains hide small scratches and touch-ups much better than paint, making them a forgiving choice. Painted cabinets are incredibly popular and can look beautiful, but homeowners should know that hairline fractures appear at joints and seams as the wood naturally expands and contracts over time.



Hardware matters just as much. Soft-close hinges reduce wear and tear on cabinets that get opened dozens of times a day. High-quality solid metal pulls and knobs protect cabinet finishes by reducing direct contact with painted or stained surfaces.

Contractor tip: Invest in the things you touch constantly. Spending a little more on quality hardware is money saved in the long term.

Countertops: Balancing Beauty and Practicality

Countertops need to handle spills, meal prep and constant cleaning. For many families, quartz has become a favorite because it's non-porous, stain-resistant and requires very little maintenance. But quartz doesn't love direct heat, so hot pots and pans must be placed on a trivet or silicone mat—and it looks man-made, because it is.

Natural stone can also be a great option when you understand the maintenance requirements. Quartzite offers the beauty of natural stone with good durability, though it requires periodic sealing. We recommend having a professional three-to-five-year sealant applied at fabrication. Marble is often the dream countertop material, but it comes with a different set of expectations. Scratches, etching and staining are all part of the aging process. Marble can be sealed to slow the lived-in character, but its softer density will show some patina.

Backsplashes: Style Meets Maintenance

Backsplashes are selected for their visual appeal, but maintenance deserves equal consideration.

Tile backsplashes offer endless design possibilities, from classic subway tile to bold decorative patterns. However, every grout line creates another surface that collects grease, cooking residue and stains. Even with quality grout and sealers, regular cleaning and occasional maintenance are part of the decision, especially around cooking areas and faucets.

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Solid surface backsplashes, often made from the same material as the countertop, offer a simpler alternative. With few or no grout lines, they're easy to wipe clean in a busy family kitchen.

At the end of the day, the best family kitchens balance style and practicality. Choosing materials that fit your lifestyle can help create a space that stays beautiful, functional and welcoming for years to come.



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PET OF THE MONTH

BY CAROLINE CAMPBELL



Squiggy Schaefer

(The Peninsula)

Meet **Squiggy**! She is 6 years old and lives in the Peninsula with the Schaefer family, who found her when she was a kitten during peak Covid times! She was in an electrical box with her five other siblings (all of whom found loving homes) when she was two weeks old. The Schaefers had to bottle-feed her and teach her to do almost everything!

Squiggy is the cuddliest cat you'll ever meet, loving all forms of affection. She will meow and "pet" you when she does not get the affection she requires. She is also afraid of closed doors, despite being an inside cat, and will meow when she cannot get into a room she has no business in. She loves ice cream and will do anything to get her hands on it. Squiggy is a true joy in their lives!

Is Rescued Your Favorite Breed?

Skipper





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A senior dog shouldn't be spending his golden years in a shelter. He should be curled up in a cozy home with a family to love. Stop by the shelter during opening hours to meet Skipper. We think you'll fall in love with him just as quickly as we did!

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Back to School!
Helping Pets Adjust to a New Routine



BY ANNA M. AUSTIN, VMD, HUNTERSVILLE VETERINARY CLINIC

As children head back to school this month, many families and their pets will be adjusting to a new routine. The school year often brings earlier mornings, busier schedules and fewer people at home during the day to keep pets active and entertained.

Just like people, pets thrive on consistency. Predictable routines help reduce stress and create a sense of security, leading to calmer behavior and a happier household. The good news is that a few simple changes can help make the transition easier.

#1 Start gradually

Any adjustment takes time. Rather than changing your pet's routine overnight, begin making small shifts in the days leading up to the first day of school. Move breakfast a little earlier, adjust walk times or gradually introduce longer periods of alone time so the transition feels less abrupt.

#2 Prioritize physical exercise

If your pet is used to activity and attention throughout the day, a suddenly quiet house can lead to boredom and excess energy. This can result in chewing, scratching, getting into trash or other unwanted behaviors. Schedule time for exercise, especially in the morning, before pets are left alone for several hours. Regular activity also helps reduce anxiety and maintain a healthy weight.

#3 Add mental enrichment

Physical exercise is important, but mental stimulation matters too. Enrichment activities engage a pet's natural instincts and help prevent boredom.

For dogs, try "sniffaris" (slow walks focused on exploring and sniffing), puzzle feeders, lick mats, food toys or short obedience and trick-training sessions.

For cats, enrichment can include puzzle feeders, lick mats, interactive toys, bird feeders viewed safely through a window and cat-safe grasses or plants to explore.

#4 Watch for signs of anxiety

Some pets struggle more than others with routine changes. Signs of stress may include excessive panting, clinginess, vocalizing when family members leave, destructive behavior or accidents in the house. In addition to exercise and enrichment, consider soft background noise or calming pheromone products. If anxiety becomes severe or persistent, talk with your veterinarian to rule out medical concerns and discuss treatment options.

#5 Update preventive care

The start of the school year brings busy calendars and long to-do lists. Scheduling wellness visits ahead of time and making sure preventive care is current can help keep pets healthy and give families one less thing to manage during a hectic season.

A little preparation now can help everyone, both two-legged and four-legged, settle into the school year smoothly.

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SHALLOW WATER SUMMER— BE CAREFUL!

BY CAPTAIN JOHN JOHNSON

The lack of rain seems to be continuing this summer, and water levels on Lake Norman are quite low. That does not mean you can't get out and enjoy the lake, but you will need to be extra careful. Areas that you could safely pass through last year may be too shallow this year! And it gets very expensive when you hit a rock or a log with the engine or propeller.

Getting Around in Low Water

The number one thing everyone should know is to "stay in the channel!" Lake Norman is the best-marked lake in North Carolina for channels, and staying in the channel will generally keep you safe. Channels on Lake Norman are marked with shapes and colors from the Cowans Ford dam up to the Buffalo Shoals bridge. The channel is not marked above Buffalo Shoals, and special caution is needed when navigating the upper end of the lake. Red triangles and green rectangles mark the channel. You should keep red to your right when going upstream (away from the dam) and green to your left. Markers also help you know where you are, as the markers in creeks off the main channel have letters that identify the creek. For example, marker "M1" is in Mountain Creek, "D4" is in Davidson Creek, "R2" is in Ramsey Creek, etc. A good map or GPS will help you know where you are and help keep you out of trouble.

Even though channel markers are in place, remember the markers were put in place for about five feet of water under "normal' conditions. Give some additional leeway now when the water is low around the markers, as there may not be a lot of depth at the marker. And please respect the "shoal" markers, as shoal markers identify known hazardous rocks and stumps—give them plenty of room!

How Deep Is It?

Knowing the water depth under your boat is essential to safety. A depth finder should be installed on all boats so the captain can avoid shallow water and expensive mistakes. Depth finders come in all sizes and price ranges, but most of them cost less than a new propeller! Many depth finders also include a GPS map to help you navigate around the lake and avoid shallows or rocks. You can get a depth finder with built-in GPS for about $150—that's good insurance.

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Places to Avoid?

Here are some of the places that have been known to get boaters in trouble:





- **Marker 1 and 1A:** Rocks go almost ¼ mile into lake
- **Islands southeast of R2:** No channel between islands – shallow/rocky
- **Marker D4 just northeast:** Shallow area in "middle" of lake
- **Marker D3:** Many try to "cut the corner" rocks nearby!
- **Marker T4 near North Harbor:** Rock ledge runs out into lake
- **Marker 10, narrow, shallow channel:** River channel goes around island – deep!
- **Markers 12 and 13:** Main channel turns left – many go up into Mountain Creek
- **Stumpy Creek entry (north of 150 bridge):** Rocky ledges in shallow areas

Maybe by the end of summer, we will get rain, and Lake Norman will get back up to normal levels. But you can still "Love Where You Lake" with lower lake levels. Just be more careful, pay attention to navigation markers and water depth, wear your life preserver and have a great summer on Lake Norman!

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Fun IN A FURNITURE STORE

BY TESSA ROSENBERG, TEEN REPORTER

Happy back-to-school season! Whether this time of year excites or depresses you, most can agree that a great way to prepare for the upcoming school year is shopping for supplies. Although the Target run for writing utensils and notebooks never gets old, as a rising college freshman, I had to turn to another store to get ready to move out for my first semester away.

My family has always had a strange fascination with IKEA. Aside from it being our go-to store for furniture shopping, we visit the Charlotte location for the pure intention of walking around without making any large purchases several times a year, especially to combat summer or weekend boredom. We trek over to the two-story building and walk around the designated path while browsing the furniture displays and convincing ourselves that we don't need a miniature wooden mannequin for our desks. The best part of it all, you can reward yourself at the end of the stroll with pizza and ice cream to make up for the calories you burned on your walk!

Despite our frequent visits with no intention of buying, my mom and I did have a few goals for the trip we took to IKEA over the summer. Looking for dorm supplies and furniture is no easy feat, and Amazon can only get you so far if you need to look for in-person items. We gathered our collection of iconic blue plastic bags and drove to one of our favorite spots. After taking the nostalgic escalator upstairs and past the delicious cafeteria, we immediately spotted a perfect low-height shelf for the TV that will be under one of the lofted beds in my dorm. After my roommate excitedly gave her approval, we marked the stand's information to collect at the end of our trip. We walked through the rest of the upstairs furniture setups, having fun looking at the mock apartment/bedroom setups for any future living arrangements after next year.

After going through the upper floor, we went through the vast selection of home accessories and smaller accents that would function fabulously in our dorm room and bathroom. We got some extra towels and other supplies/decorations before making it to the end-of-the-road warehouse where you collect the large furniture items you want to take home. We easily found the TV shelf, thrilled that we were able to find something that perfectly fit our needs (which we would have never found elsewhere). *Pro tip: any college student can receive a discount as long as you verify your student email, which takes a few quick minutes in the checkout line.* After knocking some dollars off, we brought our purchases to the best spot in the whole store: the snack bar. My childhood consists of several core memories, and IKEA's delicious vanilla ice cream is a key part of it (though they also sell fabulous fresh food items such as pizza, hot dogs and, of course, Swedish meatballs).

As usual, we left IKEA happier than we were going in. Although it seems like a strange excursion for the purpose of entertainment, IKEA really is a great place to visit to get some steps away from grueling temperatures or ugly weather. If you do plan to shop for furniture, it will obviously serve that desire, but don't just consider IKEA a Swedish store that only sells beds and couches. It's a unique walking trail with several food options and room displays sprinkled throughout.

Although I am not very familiar with the Swedish language, the familiar "Hej!" at the beginning of the store is one of my all-time favorite greetings.









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A Community That Raises Children: Why We Chose Lake Norman

BY NIKKI CALDEN, ALLEN TATE – BROKER/REALTOR©

When families decide where to put down roots, they rarely choose just a house. They're choosing a community.

For many of us, that's exactly why we chose Cornelius and the Lake Norman area.

Of course, beautiful homes and waterfront views are a big draw, but what truly sets our community apart are the experiences that happen beyond our front doors. From top-rated schools and youth sports to parks, farmers markets and community events, Lake Norman offers the kind of lifestyle that families actively seek—and that demand helps support home values.

Schools continue to be one of the strongest drivers of housing demand. According to the National Association of REALTORS®, more than half of homebuyers with children under 18 consider the quality of schools a deciding factor when choosing where to live. Even for homeowners without school-aged children, strong schools often contribute to higher resale values and a larger pool of future buyers.

Beyond the classroom, Cornelius offers an abundance of parks, greenways and outdoor recreation opportunities. Research from the National Recreation and Park Association has found that homes located near parks and green spaces can command premiums of up to 20% compared to similar homes farther away. Whether it's walking the trails, spending time at neighborhood parks or enjoying Lake Norman, access to outdoor amenities remains a priority for today's buyers.

Youth sports and recreational programs also play a significant role in community appeal. Families often prioritize neighborhoods that provide convenient access to athletic fields, recreation centers and organized activities. These amenities create opportunities for children to build friendships while helping parents establish meaningful community connections.

Speaking of connections, one of the things residents love most about Cornelius is its small-town feel despite being part of a rapidly growing region. Events like community festivals, holiday celebrations, concerts and local gatherings bring neighbors together and create a sense of belonging that buyers increasingly value.

The same can be said for local farmers markets and small businesses. Studies have shown that walkable communities with access to local shopping, dining and gathering spaces are highly desirable. In fact, a National Association of REALTORS® survey found that many buyers are willing to pay a premium for neighborhoods that offer walkability and convenient access to amenities.

As homeowners, it's easy to focus on square footage, upgrades and market conditions when thinking about property values. But often, the features that matter most are the ones that can't be found on a property report: the quality of the schools, the strength of the community, the nearby parks and the relationships built over years of living here.

Those are the things that make Cornelius special. They're also the reasons so many families continue to choose Lake Norman as the place they call home.

Nikki Calden is a REALTOR® and owner of Calden Real Estate Inc. In partnership with her daughter Molly Calden and the team at Calden Home Connections, they are proudly serving families throughout the Lake Norman area while staying true to their mission of *Connecting People to HOME.*



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AUGUST NORTH CAROLINA Festivals

COMPILED BY JOANIE BAKER

FESTIVAL	DATES (2026)	LOCATION	WEBSITE / CONTACT
AVL Fest	Aug. 6–9	Asheville	https://avlfest.com
Outer Banks Watermelon Festival	Aug. 6	Nags Head	Kitty Hawk Kites – https://kittyhawk.com
Trop Rock in the Mountains	Aug. 7–9	West Jefferson	https://carolinamusicfests.com
National Lighthouse Day Weekend	Aug. 7–9	Bald Head Island	Old Baldy Foundation – https://www.oldbaldy.org
Shindig on the Green	Aug. 8, 15, 22, 29	Asheville	https://folkheritage.org
Highlands-Cashiers Chamber Music Festival	Through Aug. 9	Highlands & Cashiers	https://h-cmusicfestival.org
OutSouth Queer Film Festival	Aug. 13–16	Durham	https://carolinatheatre.org
Doc & Rosa Lee Watson MusicFest	Aug. 17	Boone	https://www.docwatson.org
Party on the Mountain	Aug. 17–18	Beech Mountain	https://beechmountainresort.com
Brevard Summer Institute & Festival	Through Aug. 23	Brevard	https://brevardmusic.org
Ashe County Bluegrass & Old Time Fiddlers Convention	Aug. 23–25	Jefferson	https://ashecountyarts.org
DownEast Music Festival	Aug. 24–25	Rocky Mount	https://downeastmusicfestival.com
Hillbilly Jam	Aug. 24–25	Maggie Valley	https://hillbillyjam.com

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AUGUST
CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FARMERS MARKETS

NORTH MECK COMMUNITY FARMER'S MARKET
Every Wed. in August
@Cornelius Town Hall
You'll find a variety of high-quality produce, meats, dairy and other goods from over 20 local farmers and growers, plus cooking demonstrations and recipes.
Time: 9am-12pm, rain or shine (5-7pm on last Wednesday of month)
www.charlottefoodpolicy.com/nmcfm

DAVIDSON FARMERS' MARKET
Every Sat. in August
@Downtown Davidson near Town Hall
Come out and support local with the Davidson Farmers' Market. No pets allowed.
Time: 9am-12pm
www.davidsonfarmersmarket.org

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Every Thurs., Fri. and Sat. in August
RIVER JAM
@U.S. National Whitewater Center
A talented line up of national musical acts provides the perfect backdrop for a fun summer evening outdoors each Thurs., Fri. and Sat.
Time: 7-10pm
Cost: $13 parking
whitewater.org

Now through Sat., August 29
CAIN CENTER FOR THE ARTS LIVE PERFORMANCES
July 28–August 1: Rock of Ages
August 8-9, 12-16, 19-20 & 22-23: Million Dollar Quartet
August 21: Are You Ready for It? A Taylor Experience
August 27: Charlotte Jesters
August 28: The Casey Kasem Experience
August 29: Stand-Up for Good
For showtimes and tickets, visit *cainarts.org.*

Sat., August 1 & Sat., August 15
CONCERTS AT THE CIRCLES
@Jetton Street near Clean Juice in Davidson
Enjoy local fare, drinks and live music at Concerts at the Circles. Fun for the whole family!
August 1: Rock the 90s (90s Tribute)
August 15: Chasing Phoenix (Rock/Variety)
Time: Acoustic artist from 5-6:30pm; headliner from 7-9pm
Cost: Free
concertsonthegreen.com

Sat., August 8 & Sun., August 23
CONCERTS ON THE GREEN
@Davidson Town Green
Bring your family, friends, picnics and chairs, and join the community for the spring, summer and fall concert series. Dancing optional!
August 8: Sail On (Beach Boys Tribute)
August 23: Gospelfest (Gospel)
Time: 6-8pm
Cost: Free
concertsonthegreen.com

Sat., August 8
ON MY 6 COMMUNITY GATHERING
@Baily Road Recreation Center
In partnership with Cornelius Parks & Recreation, you're invited to be part of our community that stands together in support of our active military, veterans and first responders. Join us the second Saturday of each month to be part of something meaningful. We're open to everyone in the community
Time: 10-11am
Cost: Free

Fri., August 21
LOST AT THE LAKE SUMMER CONCERT SERIES: JOHN WAITE
@Lost Worlds Brewing
Cain Center for the Arts and Lost World present John Waite, whose catalogue of hits features some of the most loved songs of the 80s and 90s – the #1 Worldwide hit "Missing You", The Baby's "Isn't It Time" and Bad English "When I See You Smile" rank amongst some of his biggest international hits and are still heard on radio today. All ages. No outside food, beverages or pets allowed.
Time: Doors at 5:30pm, Show at 7:30pm
Cost: $52.73
cainarts.org/lost-at-the-lake

Sat., August 29
BARNYARD BASH!
@Rescue Ranch, Statesville
Join Rescue Rance for a casual night for a cause. This memorable evening will be filed with BBQ, drinks, live music, line dancing and up-close animal meet 'n greets, all in support of Rescue Ranch's mission of animal rescue and humane education.
Time: 7pm
Cost: $150/ticket and up
www.rescueranch.com



We Want to Feature Your Family

BY CAROLINE CAMPBELL

Do you or does your family have an interesting story you would like to share with our *Cornelius Lakeside Living* community? Or do you know a neighbor with a great story to tell? We would love to feature you and your neighbors in an upcoming issue!

Please email Joanie Baker at jbaker@bestversionmedia.com.

We can't wait to hear from you!



SCHOOL CALENDAR

CMS: 8/25, First Day of School

Cannon: 8/13, First Day of School

Community School of Davidson: 8/12, First Day of School

Davidson Day: 8/19, First Day of School

Lake Norman Charter: 8/13, First Day of School

Langtree Charter: 8/10, First Day of School

Pine Lake Prep: 8/13, First Day of School

Woodlawn: 8/19, First Day of School

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