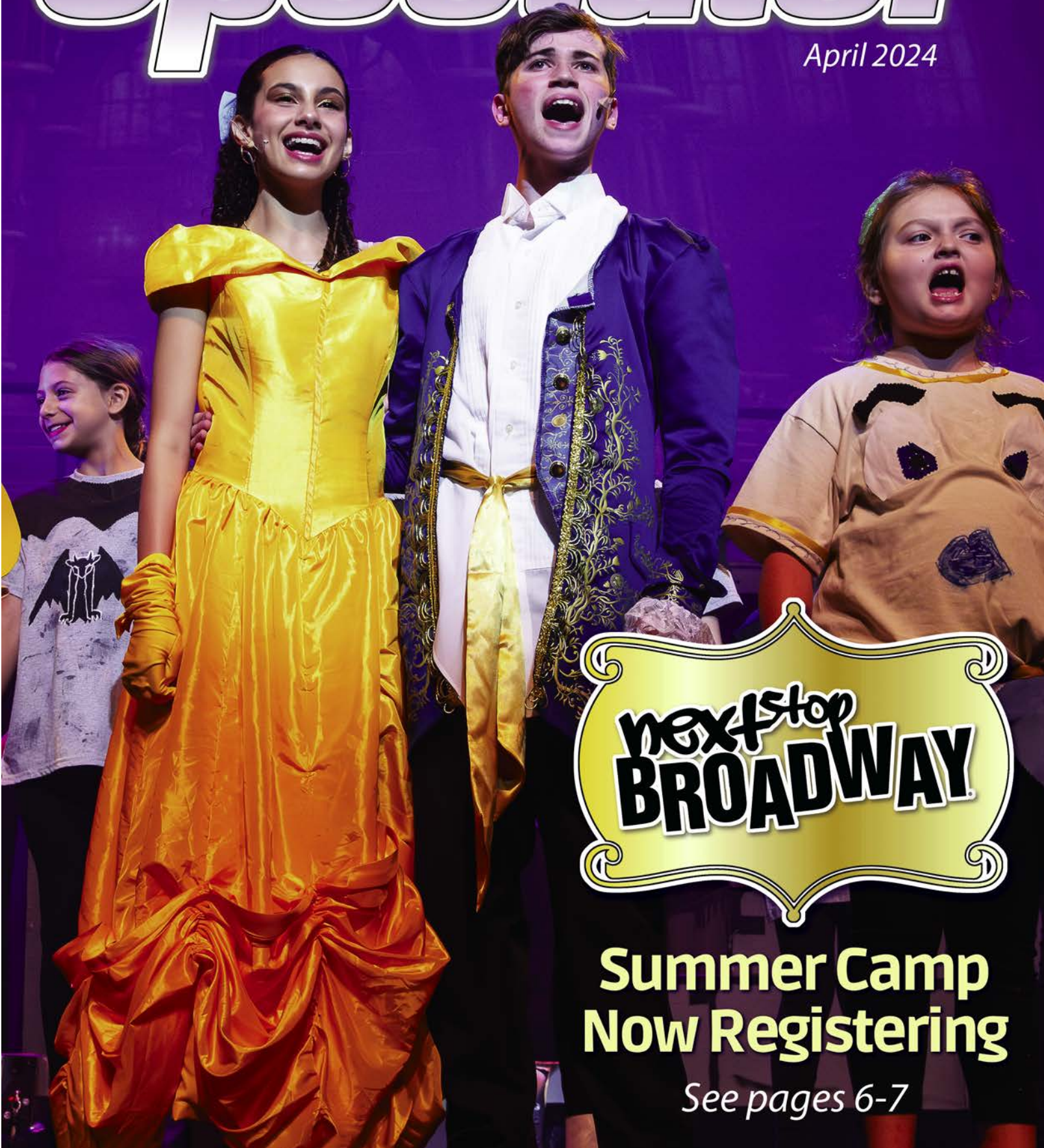


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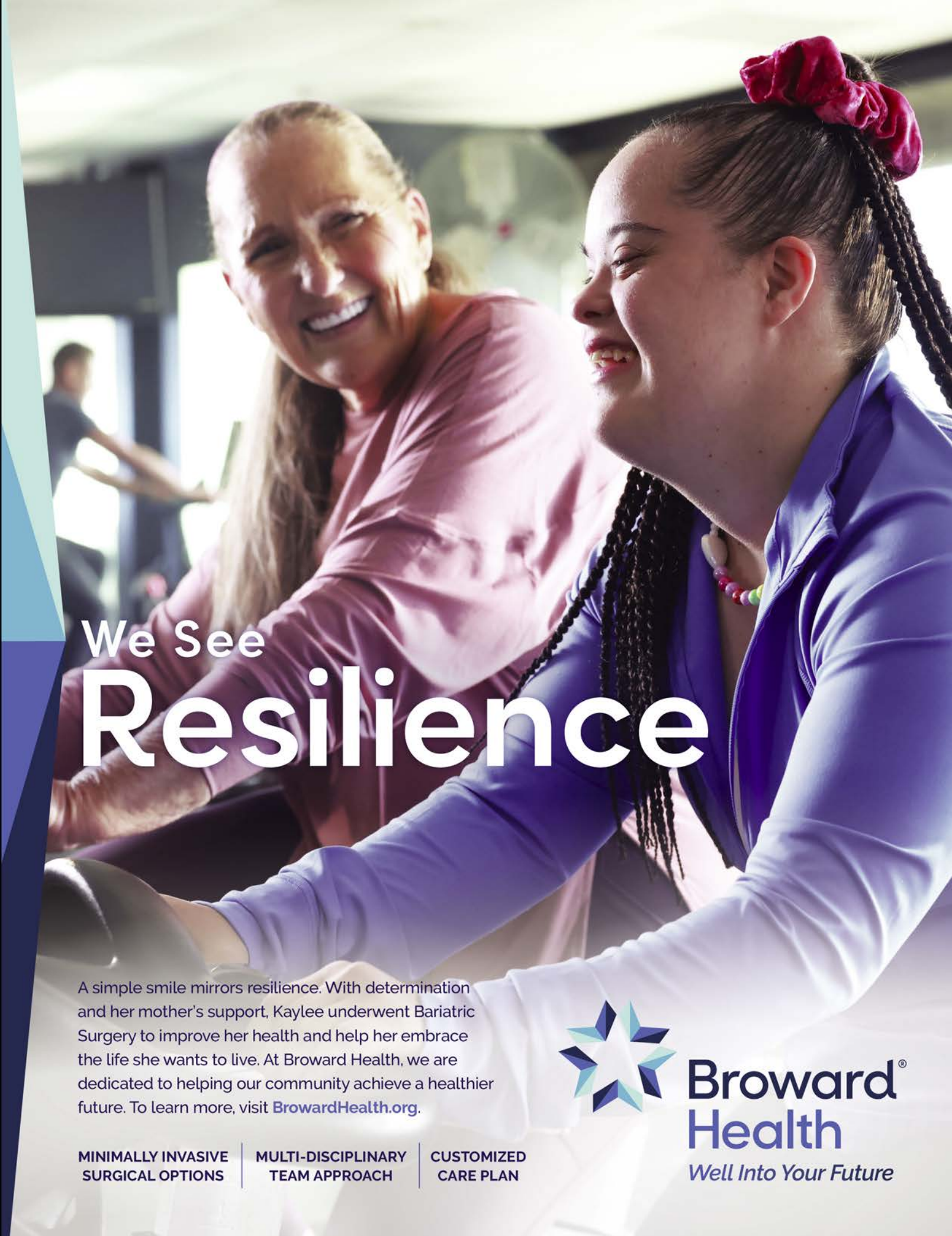


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On the cover: Next Stop Broadway Summer Camp. Now Registering! See pages 6-7 for more details

It's All About

Enjoy Our Community!

We are thrilled to be Ready for Spring, and are praying that you feel the same way! This month's magazine features some sports that are back on track, as well as some causes that are vital to our attention. Autism (ASD) Awareness has always been a cause that we are passionate about, and we want to make certain you are prepped to educate yourself, friends and family. It helps all of us when we are more compassionate and understanding of this unique disorder.

Please see the article on the page 6 for an amazing summer program for every student of the theatre arts! If your child loves acting, singing, dancing, or ALL aspects of stage production, Next Stop Broadway is the perfect place for their creativity to shine!

It's wonderful to share our corner of Paradise with the amazing families who call it home. Enjoy April by offering kindness and assistance to friends and neighbors in our community. Let's appreciate the diversity and viewpoints of each person we encounter in our daily travels.

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God bless you and our troops,

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Community!

Advancing Autism Understanding: Reflecting on Fifteen Years of Progress

By Barbara Gobbi

Fifteen years ago, my son was diagnosed with autism at the tender age of three. Back then, the road ahead seemed daunting, shrouded in uncertainty and a palpable sense of isolation. Autism awareness was in its early stages, and resources, while present, were not as accessible or as tailored to individual needs as they are today. At that time, my pediatrician didn't have enough information to make the diagnosis and we had to visit doctor after doctor just to get the diagnosis. Therapies were equally elusive and our only option was to drive from Coral Springs to the University of Miami for the twelve therapy appointments each week. And none of this was covered by insurance, as our insurance company didn't recognize autism as a condition.

In the early 2000s, autism was a word that carried a heavy load of misconceptions and stigma. The general understanding of autism was limited, often confined to stereotypes and a narrow diagnostic scope. Fast forward to today, and the narrative has shifted dramatically. Through the relentless efforts of advocacy groups, researchers, and families, autism awareness has blossomed into a global movement. The spectrum nature of autism is now recognized, embracing the diversity of experiences and challenges faced by individuals and their families.

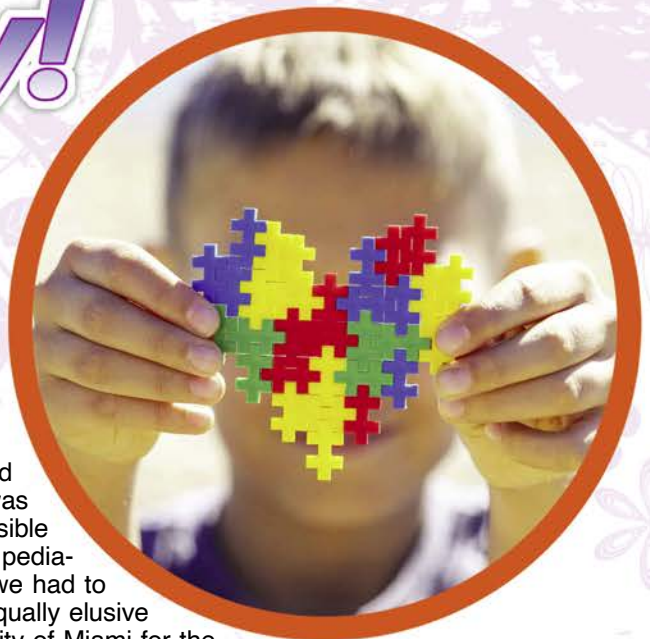
A pivotal development in this journey has been the refinement of diagnostic criteria and a paradigm shift towards the importance of early intervention. This evolution has led to the proliferation of programs designed to foster developmental growth and the acquisition of essential life skills. The Coral Springs and Parkland communities, in particular, have witnessed an expansion in available therapies, a testament to the progress in resource accessibility.

The last decade and a half have also been characterized by an unprecedented expansion in resources for individuals on the autism spectrum. Educational frameworks have undergone significant transformations, with the implementation of specialized programs and inclusive initiatives aimed at accommodating varied learning needs. Simultaneously, technological innovations have introduced a plethora of tools and applications, facilitating enhanced communication, learning, and social interaction for those with autism.

Moreover, the advent of social media and digital platforms has played a crucial role in forging a sense of community and belonging. These platforms have emerged as indispensable resources for sharing experiences, guidance, and support, further eroding the barriers of isolation that once seemed insurmountable.

Reflecting on our personal journey, the progress in autism awareness and the augmentation of resources has served as a beacon of hope. As my son nears his 18th birthday, the benefits derived from these advancements in support and understanding are palpable. His evolution is a testament to the critical importance of sustained advocacy, research, and resource development.

As we commemorate Autism Awareness Month, let us celebrate the achievements while remaining cognizant of the ongoing challenges. The future is bright for people with autism, with the potential for further advancements in understanding and support, ensuring that individuals with autism receive equitable opportunities to thrive in an increasingly inclusive and empathetic society.



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Next Stop Broadway: Setting the Stage for an Unforgettable Summer

By Ashley Ferraro

Summer is on its way, signaling another exciting season for Next Stop Broadway's summer camp program. Since 2002, Next Stop Broadway has been a cornerstone in the Parkland and Coral Springs communities. Founded by Artistic Director Cynthia O'Brien, the program aims to foster a sense of community, help individuals find their voice, and above all, ensure a fun and memorable experience for students of all ages.

The summer program offers several sessions for various age groups and interests. The Youth Camp is intended for students in grades 1-8, and the Teen Theatre Project is designed for students in grades 9 and up. New for summer 2024 is the Teen Tech Project, which is also available for students in grades 9 and above.

The Youth Camp includes three sessions, Aladdin (June 11-28), Finding Nemo (July 1-July 19), and Annie (July 22nd - August 9th). While Aladdin and Annie are classics, Finding Nemo is a newer production that's gained tremendous popularity since first hitting the stage a few years ago. It will include songs such as "Just Keep Swimming" and "Fish Are Friends Not Food." Plus, Finding Nemo will introduce campers to puppetry, offering a unique opportunity for participants to broaden their performance skills and recreate the beloved story of an unlikely fish duo.

In addition to several Youth Camp programs, Next Stop Broadway has expanded its offerings for teens in 2024. The new Teen Tech Project will introduce students to the technical side of theatre. Participants will be working on creating the puppets used in the Finding Nemo production and will gain exposure to other technical aspects of the performing arts, such as costumes, props, and stage design.

Whether your child is passionate about performing arts or just seeking an unforgettable summer experience, Next Stop Broadway offers something for everyone.

According to Cynthia, "One thing that people really like about our program is the community aspect of it." Many counselors and staff have experienced the program first-hand; their passion for Next Stop Broadway compelled them to return and help foster a similar experience for this younger group. Although Next Stop Broadway offers many programs throughout the year, its summer camp is one of the most sought-after opportunities for young theatre enthusiasts.

Another factor that sets Next Stop Broadway apart is the invaluable developmental skills it provides to its students. "Learning how to speak in front of others is beneficial for any job you're going to pursue," says Cynthia. "People from various fields have participated in the program and credit it for helping them find their voice."

The Teen Theatre Project will run one session from July 1st to August 2nd. Participants will perform Mary Poppins, a must-see show that tells the whimsical tale of everyone's favorite practically perfect nanny. The community is invited to watch the performance at The Coral Springs Center for the Arts on Friday, August 2nd, with shows at 2pm and 7pm.

Registration for all sessions is currently open but expected to fill up quickly. To register or purchase tickets, please visit www.NSBNOW.com.

See ad on opposite page



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SESSION 1
JUNE 11 - JUNE 28



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TEEN PROJECT
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Meet The

Rizzo Family

Photo by
Jenna Martinovic Photography

John and Sarah are a busy Parkland couple with two beautiful children; Vincent, 8, and Aria, 6. The family circle also includes their pet beta fish, Magic.

As for their careers, Sarah is an AP Government teacher with Florida Virtual School, and John owns and operates Rizzo's Holiday Lighting with his partner and is the Director of Charitable Operations and Giving for the Anthony Rizzo Family Foundation.

John, a graduate of Douglas high school, has lived in Parkland since 1991. Sarah moved to Parkland in 2013.

Nothing says "active family" more than both kids being involved in fun physical activities. Vincent plays baseball, flag football, soccer and golf. Aria is a gymnast, plays flag football and soccer.

Sarah tells us, "As a family, we all volunteer and raise funds for the Anthony Rizzo Family Foundation. We also volunteer for the Parkland Cubs Challengers Baseball team as a family." She's the President of the PTO at Heron Heights Elementary School. John is on the Parkland Flag Football League Board.

When asked about family time outside of work and school, John tells us, "We enjoy traveling, going to sporting events, doing outdoor activities, and just spending time together." He adds, "We love the family feel of Parkland. We spend so much time at the fields and parks and enjoy seeing our friends and neighbors out in the community. We love the close proximity we have to our kids' school and that we can walk to and from each day."

Vincent is in 2nd grade and Aria is in Kindergarten. Both attend Heron Heights Elementary School. Vincent's favorite subject is art and Aria enjoys reading.

Sarah ends our interview with some further insight and a challenge.

"As a family we always try to live by the golden rule and treat each other and those we interact with respect. We are very active in the community and always encourage others to be the change they wish to see. If there is something you think can be done better or run more efficiently, step up to the plate and volunteer!"

The Rizzos attend services at Mary Help of Christians Catholic Church.



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Hip Pain Got You Down?

By Dr. Brandon C. Maisel

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"What can we do about it?" is the next question we get and depending on the condition we have several treatment options we may offer. In general treatment options may include, but not limited to, anti-inflammatory medications, physical therapy, corticosteroid injections and platelet rich plasma injections. Platelet rich plasma otherwise known as "PRP" is a type of orthobiologic treatment that allows the body to naturally heal itself. Dr. Maisel performs these injections under ultrasound guidance to ensure precision needle placement into the problem area. In addition, here in our office we offer top-notch physical therapy services led by Dr. Jay Itzkowitz, who may assist in your recovery.

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PARKLAND FLAG FOOTBALL
For more info, see www.parklandflag.com
See ad and article on pages 16 & 17.

Lacrosse

PARKLAND REDHAWKS
For more info go to www.parklandlacrosse.com

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Pickleball is a racquet sport that combines elements of badminton, tennis and table tennis. Players use solid paddles to hit a whiffle ball over a net. Yearly fee: Residents \$45/Non-residents \$54. P-REC - 10559 Trails End (located inside Pine Trails Park) For more info please call 954-757-4105.

Special Needs

PARKLAND BUDDY SPORTS
Find out about league offerings and activities.
www.ParklandBuddySports.com See page 19.

CHALLENGER BASEBALL LEAGUE
Open to all special needs kids and their families at no cost. For more info, call (954) 345-9329.

THE FRIENDSHIP JOURNEY
Provides programs & facilities for children and young adults with special needs, while creating awareness and sensitivity. For more info, contact hello@thefriendshipjourney.org or www.thefriendshipjourney.org

Scouting

Scouting offers Year Round Activities for Boys and Girls in K to 12th Grade
Find a local unit at www.beascout.org

Adult Softball

For more info. contact Parkland Parks & Rec. Manager Bruno Battel at 954-757-4103

Important Numbers

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Park Ranger	(954)575-1007
Youth, Teen, & Senior Programs	(954)757-4129
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DIVISIONS FOR ALL BOYS K-12

PARKLANDFLAG.COM
SEASON BEGINS LATE AUGUST

Parkland Flag Football Gears Up For Another Historic Season Ahead



By Ashley Ferraro

Growing faster than ever, Parkland Flag Football is eagerly preparing for its Fall 2024 season. Registration has recently opened, and the organization is already experiencing a tremendous response from the community. The league has a cap of 1,200 kids and more than 900 kids have already registered.

Parkland Flag is proud to offer divisions for all boys and girls from kindergarten through twelfth grade. President Todd Link highlights the massive growth in the girls' divisions in recent years, noting, "We've restructured our two youngest girls divisions to create a home for 6 year old girls. In the past, they either had to play in the 6-7 year old boys division or in an older girls age group."

Nationwide flag football is experiencing tremendous growth. Women's flag football is now an NCAA college scholarship sport. Several colleges in South Florida offer scholarships for women's flag football. Mens' and Womens' Flag football will also make their Olympic debut in the 2028 Olympics in Los Angeles. Parkland Flag President Todd Link says it's an excellent time for young girls interested in the sport to get involved. Parkland Flag has opportunities available for them.

In addition to fostering a fun and inclusive environment for young athletes, Parkland Flag has become an integral part of the Parkland community. The organization recently participated in the Parkland Day Parade, celebrating the start of registration for the upcoming season. Giving back to the community is a cornerstone of Parkland Flag's mission. They have previously supported and continue to partner with charities like Not My Daughter, the Parkland 17 Memorial Foundation, Safe Schools for Alex, and Make Our Schools Safe.

In another effort to support its community-centric mission, Parkland Flag offers high school students the chance to work as referees. Parents interested in registering their student as a referee can email parklandflagfootball@gmail.com.

Parkland Flag also just finished their first ever NFL FLAG Winter League, which drew nearly 700 players in its inaugural year. Impressively, several teams are attending the NFL Flag regional championship in Jacksonville on April 13th. These teams will have an opportunity to progress to the NFL Flag National Championship this summer at the Pro Football Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio. Parkland Flag plans to continue with its NFL FLAG Winter League in January of 2025, along with its regular fall season that runs late August through early November 2024.

The start of the 2024 season is right around the corner. To accommodate families still on summer break during the first week of school, the season will now officially start on August 19th, during the second week of school. Mandatory evaluations are scheduled for August 17th-18th.

Historically, Parkland Flag started its season during the first week of school. However, when Broward County Schools moved their schedule up a week, it raised concerns among families who might not return from summer vacation in time. As a result, this start date became unfeasible. Fortunately, thanks to a considerate partnership with Parkland Soccer Club, Parkland Flag was able to postpone the start date to better accommodate these families.

Parkland Soccer Club collaborated with Parkland Flag Football to adjust their season's schedule and accommodate Parkland Flag's late start. Todd says, "They were great partners to work with and allowed us to solve this problem."

Spots for the 2024 Parkland Flag Football season are filling quickly! Register your child now at www.parklandflag.com.

www.MySpectatorOnline.com





Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital® Neuroscience Center

Authored by: Pediatric Epilepsy Team at Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital, Neuroscience Center



Cutting-Edge Pediatric Epilepsy Program with ROSA, Visualase, and iMRI

Are you searching for the most advanced and effective solutions for pediatric epilepsy surgery? Look no further than Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital's Epilepsy Program, featuring state of the art technologies including Robotic Stereotactic Assistance (ROSA), Visualase, and intraoperative MRI (iMRI).

At our esteemed freestanding children's hospital, we are proud to offer the latest advancements in pediatric epilepsy surgery providing patients with unparalleled precision, safety, and outcomes. Our team of experienced pediatric neurosurgeons, Dr. Amanda Kwasnicki, Dr. Dean Hertzler, and Dr. Laurence Davidson, backed by these innovative technologies and team of pediatric epileptologists are dedicated to transforming the lives of individuals living with epilepsy.

Epilepsy, a neurological condition marked by recurrent seizures, arises from abnormal electrical activity of the brain. Seizure signs and symptoms vary depending on the type of seizure and the seizure focus location. There are many types of pediatric epilepsy, and each can cause different types of seizures and symptoms. The selection of surgical techniques depends on the patient's specific condition, seizure origin, and the expertise of the pediatric epileptologists. A thorough evaluation by a specialized epilepsy center, like the one found at the Neuroscience Center at Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital, is essential to determine the most appropriate treatment approach. We understand that each patient is unique, and their epilepsy requires personalized attention. That's why our multidisciplinary team, comprised of pediatric epileptologists, neurosurgeons, neuropsychologists, and neuroradiologists, collaborate closely to tailor treatment plans specifically to the individual's needs. Admission to our specially designed Epilepsy Monitoring Unit, which is equipped to care for children undergoing video EEG monitoring, may be necessary. Our experienced board certified pediatric epileptologists, Dr. Syndi Seinfeld (Director), Dr. Stefanie Berry and Dr. Sima Parikh, will perform an evaluation to

determine the best treatment option. The treatment options include medication and dietary therapies, in addition to surgical options. A comprehensive personalized treatment plan is necessary for every pediatric patient.

Several advanced technologies are being used in epilepsy surgery, including ROSA, Visualase, and intraoperative MRI (iMRI). ROSA, a groundbreaking surgical assistance system, guides our pediatric neurosurgeons with unmatched precision. ROSA enables highly accurate targeting and minimally invasive procedures, maximizing patient safety and significantly reducing surgical time. Our pediatric Epilepsy Program also harnesses the power of Visualase, a minimally invasive laser ablation system. By employing a laser probe, we can precisely heat and destroy abnormal brain tissue responsible for seizures. Furthermore, our utilization of intraoperative MRI (iMRI) elevates the quality and precision of epilepsy surgeries. Real-time imaging during the procedure allows our pediatric neurosurgeons to assess the extent of tissue removal, verify electrode placement accuracy and identify any residual abnormal tissue that may require further resection. This cutting-edge technology empowers our team to optimize outcomes and provide the best possible care.

Join us in revolutionizing pediatric epilepsy surgery. Experience the future of care by entrusting your epilepsy treatment to our Pediatric Epilepsy Program. Our regionally recognized Pediatric Neuroscience Center and our expanding pediatric Epilepsy Program at Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital are invaluable in providing the highest and safest care to all of our patients. We are very proud to be a leader in pediatric epilepsy care in South Florida.

Call 954-265-2423 to learn more about our Epilepsy Program and schedule a consultation. Also please visit JDCH.com/epilepsy. Don't miss out on this remarkable opportunity' to transform your epilepsy journey.





Kyle, who had surgery for seizures, and Syndi Seinfeld, DO

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Kyle wanted a normal life, doing the things kids do, but his seizures were getting worse and medicine wasn't helping. His family sought a second opinion from the team of experts at Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital Neuroscience Center.

The team found an abnormal tissue on his brain, and sent Kyle for an evaluation in the epilepsy monitoring unit. It was determined he was a candidate for neurosurgery. Now, more than a year out from that surgery, he has not had any seizures.

Families like Kyle's trust Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital in the moments that count. And now, Kyle gets to enjoy just being a kid.



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Addiction and Justice; the Disparity

The CDC reports that in 2023 the US has entered an overdose epidemic. Police and first responders are horrified and heartbroken at the situations they come across on a daily basis. One south Florida firefighter described, "It's horrible watching these families see their loved ones suffer through this."

Some experts observe that we are treating these addicts as criminals, instead of treating their issue as a disease, which it is. Addiction is a disease. Professionals have pointed out that we are spending far more dollars on incarcerating the "criminals" (drug users) than we are for treating the disease called addiction.

Heather Palacios is a Coral Springs resident and wife of a local pastor. She and her younger brother, Chris, battled thoughts of suicide throughout their lives. Heather likens their relationship as a relay race, where they both passed the baton back-and-forth as they battled their thoughts of self harm. When Chris was younger, he started doing a lot of drugs, and his parents asked him to leave their home. Through that experience, he ended up living with a charitable (or so he thought) man that ended up raping him at knife point, and the spiral down continued from there.

Heather and Chris both continued their battles, but Chris' was complicated more by his drug use. She tells us, "We both wanted to make it to the finish line! We had been doing this together for so long. When I was weak, I would pass the baton to him, and he would be strong; and, vice versa." She takes a pensive breath before she continues, "October 2022... It was a normal day, and I saw that a chaplain was trying to reach me.



I figured he was going to tell me about someone in the halfway house program who had died, because we would do the funeral together." The person who had died was her 39-year-old brother Chris, and Heather was despondent.

In 2017, the U.S. spent more than \$3 1/2 billion treating addiction, and spent more than five times that amount paying for the criminal justice of addicts. Heather and other leaders would like to see that change. She says, "Locally, I'd like to see us help addicts with the same dignity we help citizens with other diseases. The caveat with addicts is, we need boundaries. Yes, they are sick with addiction AND they still have the same value, and the same hope as all of us." She continues, "We don't need to enable them, we don't need to stereotype them, we don't need to lose our own lives trying to save them, yet we DO need to dignify the environments of their treatment, and treat them through the lens of 'I believe in you.'"

Still out there fighting for others, Heather reflects on life after loss.

She says, "As for me, losing Chris has been yet another battle for suicide, myself. The notions of failure and helplessness have been my biggest tests. But by faith, I am choosing to live one day at a time, and sometimes one hour at a time. Living my life, sharing our story to encourage others to keep living theirs. Because one more suicide is one too many."

To sponsor a LifeBox for someone or to make a LifeBox donation in honor of someone, see www.Wondherful.com

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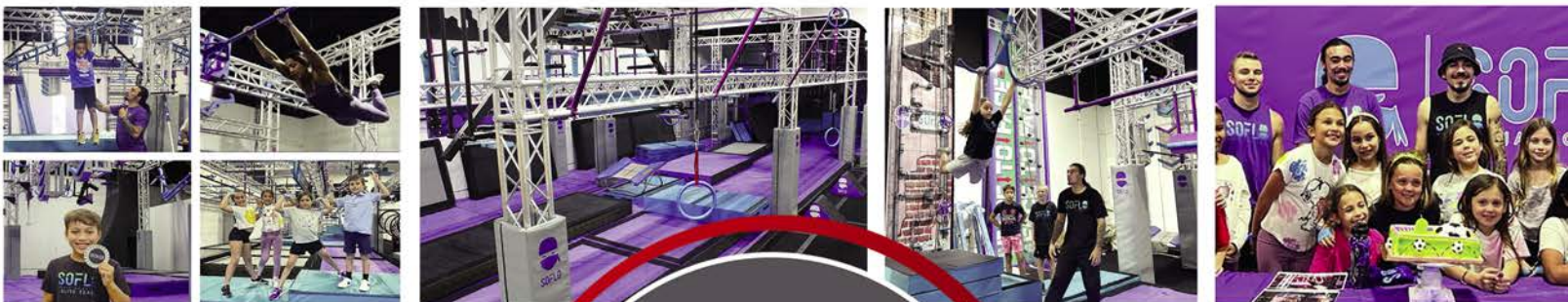
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• 7.50% APR is a fixed rate for 60 month term. Maximum term available 60 Months (35 month maturity option available in the state of Georgia). APR quoted is accurate as of October 23, 2023 and is subject to change at any time. Interest only payments with outstanding interest, principal and any applicable fees due as a final balloon payment at maturity.

5. We may pay some or all of the third party fees you must pay in connection with opening this Credit Line (collectively "Closing Costs") based on creditworthiness, the amount and term of the Credit Line, and the property location. Closing costs vary by state. In Georgia, for Credit Lines of \$250,000 or less with a 35 month term, we will pay all Closing Costs; otherwise, we will pay Closing Costs up to \$750. For Credit Lines of \$250,000 or less in AL, FL, NC, SC and VA, we will pay all Closing Costs. However, for all Credit Lines of \$250,000 or less, if the appraisal cost exceeds \$160, you are responsible for paying all amounts over \$160 for the appraisal. For Credit Lines greater than \$250,000, we will pay Closing Costs up to \$1,800 in Florida, up to \$1,300 in Virginia, up to \$800 in Alabama, and up to \$750 in Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina. Should you close your Credit Line within 30 months from the anniversary date of the Credit Line closing, you must reimburse us for all Closing Costs paid by us on your behalf. The requirement to reimburse us for any Closing Costs paid by us on your behalf shall be waived if you keep your Credit Line opened for at least 30 months. The reimbursement of Closing Costs provision does not apply to Credit Lines originated by North Carolina residents. We will not pay any amounts towards Closing Costs for any renewal, extension or refinancing of the Credit Line. Member FDIC. Equal Housing Lender.

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