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SpectatorTM

July 2025



Learn to Fly

Dance  Theatre

See pages 6-7



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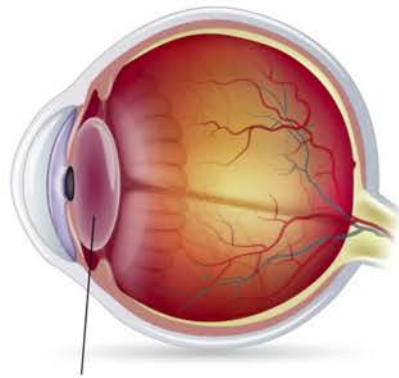
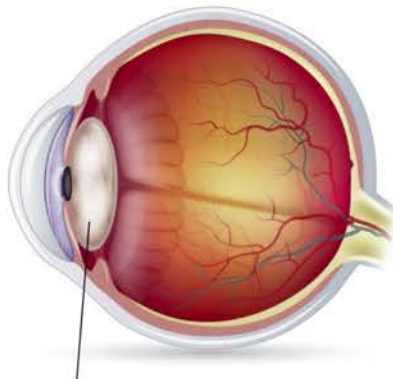
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COMPASS

f City of Parkland Community Page

**HEALTHY LENS****LENS WITH CATARACTS**

Source UCHHealth

What are Cataracts?

By Dr. Ravin Sajnani, MD

We all have a natural lens inside our eyes. This lens focuses the light entering the eye to help us see clearly. The lens is kind of like an onion, and as the years go by, this onion keeps growing new layers. Like this, the lens grows bigger over time and eventually starts to become cloudier. This process affects everyone, and once the lens becomes cloudy, we call it a cataract. Eventually it can become cloudy enough that it starts to affect the vision. You may notice: it's harder to read small letters even with glasses, you need more light when trying to read, and/or very bright lights (like cars on the road) start to bother you. When the cataract is causing problems in your day-to-day life, it may be time to consider cataract surgery.

During cataract surgery, the cloudy lens inside the eye is removed, and a new clear artificial lens is inserted into the eye – it's like replacing the old, cracked windshield of your car with a new windshield. There are many types of artificial lenses. The basic type helps for distance vision, but you will need glasses for reading up-close. There are also newer types of lenses available that help for both distance and reading without glasses. Your eye surgeon can help you figure out what the right lens is for your eye and visual needs.

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This Month's Digital Issue

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On the cover:
Dance Theatre of Coral Springs & Parkland
See Pages 6-7.

It's All About Steamy Summer

This month, we are thrilled to introduce you to a popular Parkland staple, and incredible program that encourages, trains, and nurtures dancers of every talent and style. Families throughout our area have been blessed and impressed with their experiences at Dance Theatre. Please see our cover as well as their ad and article on pages 6 & 7.

Meet an amazing mom and world class athlete who lives right here in Parkland! UFC Bantamweight champion, Kayla Harrison has achieved tremendous things in her life. See her story on pages 10-11.

This year's Fourth of July holiday will definitely be more exciting than last, and is a great time to enjoy loved ones and friends as we celebrate our American lifestyle. This July, enjoy every minute you can with the kids, fly your flag proudly, and be very careful supervising everyone with anything that goes "pop" or "boom."

We are blessed beyond measure and owe it all to those who have gone before us with purpose and vision. Have an incredible day on July 4th and the rest of the month. Keep it cool, Florida friends!

To prepare for the coming school year, please cut out our back cover 2025-26 School calendar sponsored by Icon Realty. Our prayer is for every family touched by the Spectator and every home in between.

Shellie & Scott

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Community!

America's Birthday

By Ashley McCardia

As we head further into the dog days of summer, I am reminded of what Independence Day meant to me as a child. Back in the '90s when the 4th of July rolled around, my entire tiny town in Indiana gathered at the lake for fair food, glow sticks, a swim in the water, and best of all - fireworks. I always held my breath for my favorite kind...a bright burst of white light followed by what looked like dozens of shooting stars. They would fall right over my head, zigging and zagging down until they fell into the water in slow motion. I could look anywhere around me and see the people of my town in awe of the beauty. Everyone was content, joyful and celebrating our collective freedom.



While much time has passed, I remember well the level of camaraderie the 4th of July brought out in the people of my town. Ours, like thousands more across the United States, was a place where you were aware of how lucky you were to reside in a place like America. Not just on this night of celebration, but all of the time. It was a privilege to call yourself an American.

As I'm writing this I realize America when I was a child and America now are different in a lot of ways. It's easy to dwell on those differences, but mostly it is the same. You will still find kindness, togetherness and community at a small town Independence Day celebration.

I have three children today and I often find myself comparing my experiences then to theirs now. On the surface, things are similar - we will spend the day in the small town I was raised in. I will string glow sticks around their necks, we will claim a cozy spot in the grass and devour our fried confections. We will watch the fireworks and pick our favorites. I hope, though, they will look around and see a community celebrating its many freedoms. They will see a place they are proud to call home like I did.

Our great country will always be everchanging. It should be that way. Progress is one of the many things our freedom has afforded us. One thing I hope will always be present is the magic of fireworks on the night of America's birthday and the way a town full of people comes together in celebration and thankfulness.

Happy 249th Birthday, America!

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Dance Theatre

Continues its Tradition of Excellence

If you live in South Florida and have any interest in dance, the odds are pretty good you already know the name. With three Broward locations, including Parkland, Coral Springs, and Davie, Dance Theatre has become an integral part of our community, one fabulous dancer at a time.

Accolades? Of course. Dance Theatre has been awarded the prestigious "Reader's Choice" and "Best in the West" awards multiple times. Trophies? Thousands. Dance Theatre's elite team of competitive dancers, DTX, consistently receives top awards at virtually every competition they attend. Testimonials? You bet. Just ask any mother in the carpool line and they'll tell you that Dance Theatre has been like a home away from home for their children.

So what is it that makes this place so special? "My answer is always the same," says owner and Director Michelle Gerlick, "We build beautiful, safe, clean facilities, hire the best teachers in the business, and treat each child that walks through our doors as if they were our very own." If you think that sounds like a winning formula, you are not alone. Michelle estimates that nearly a hundred thousand families have attended classes at Dance Theatre throughout its history, "and a hundred thousand of moms can't be wrong," she says. Hard to argue with that.



"Awards are nice, and our trophies are beautiful," Michelle continues, "but that's not what we strive for. We shoulder an enormous responsibility with our promise to educate. It is incumbent upon us to do it effectively. We train exceptional dancers, yes, but we also help to raise exceptional young women (and a few men). Our staff is teeming with strong, positive, intelligent role models that are so important to our students as they mature. We work hard, we have passion, and we care deeply about the impact we have on their lives. When a parent tells me their child has flourished since enrolling, I melt. When past graduates return to say we helped them find success in life, as with dance, nothing can compare. That's why we do this."

Michelle certainly has the pedigree to run one of the nation's most successful dance programs. Her mother Joan was a Rockette, June Taylor Dancer, and half of a performance duo, along with her father Bob, which thrilled audiences the world over! Michelle also holds both a degree in Dance from Ohio State University, and a degree in Elementary Education from Nova Southeastern. Her professional credits include performing as a Miami Heat Dancer, a "Fly Girl" on Fox Television's *In Living Color*, and an NFL Super Bowl Choreographer and Dancer...and she's led her Dance Theatre students to The Summer Olympics, The Super Bowl, and The Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, among countless other extraordinary venues.

Still not convinced that Dance Theatre is THE place for your young dancer to train? Consider this...they offer a truly comprehensive program where dancers ages 3 through adult, beginner through advanced, can take classes in every possible discipline including the basics ... like ballet, tap, jazz, lyrical, hip hop, contemporary, acrobatics, and pointe, as well as specialty classes like the wildly popular aerial silks. In addition, dancers who excel and aspire to become dance professionals may join either their performance company, DTC, which specializes in providing entertainment at amazing venues like Miami Heat and Miami Dolphins games, or their elite group of dancers, Team DTX, where they can travel to local, regional and national competitions and hone their skills against the best dancers in the nation!

For those interested in joining the Dance Theatre family, there are several ways. First, you can call any of the studios and speak to someone today. Second, you can visit their web-site, www.dancetheatre.net, view the Fall Schedules, and register online any time by filling out the simple registration form. Finally, if you prefer to register in person, you can stop by the Parkland studio (Publix center on 441 & Holmberg Rd.) any time Monday – Friday from 9:00 - 4:00 until August 8th. Better hurry though, Fall classes begin August 18th and they fill quickly!

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Meet The Longo Family



Nestled in the heart of Parkland, the Longo household is a vibrant mix of love, energy, and entrepreneurial focus. Michael and Ashley are proud parents of four spirited children—Aiden Longo, 15, Kaylee Longo, 13, Zane Longo, 10, and Kylie Foley, 7. We can't forget to mention their beloved Toy Poodle, Honey.

Raised around the corner in nearby Coral Springs, Michael has built an impressive business empire. As Broker/Owner of Icon Realty Advisors, LLC, he recently launched a luxury brand that is turning heads across South Florida. He also founded Blue Realty, established Skyline Staging, and owns two AirBnB properties, Tiki Las Olas and Tiki On The River. Michael's intense focus and boundless inertia are the driving forces behind each of his ventures.

By his side at every step is Ashley, his cherished sweetheart and indispensable partner. As Michael's assistant and Director of Operations for the Michael Longo Team, she manages his schedule, ensures everything runs smoothly, and brings precision to every detail. The combination of Michael's vision and Ashley's execution forms a dynamic team, achieving through shared purpose.

At home, the Longos thrive in a whirlwind of fitness, fun, and family activity. Aiden channels his energy into boxing and weightlifting alongside his father, while Kaylee and Kylie shine in cheerleading under Ashley's coaching. Zane thrives on the basketball court, honing his skills and confidence with guidance from his dad. Throughout the week there are early-morning training sessions, weekend tournaments, and loud, joyful post-game celebrations. Honey thrives in the family, always greeting the busy household with enthusiastic tail wags.

Family is the Longo mantra. Michael's Coral Springs upbringing instilled values of hard work, loyalty, and community service. He mentors young entrepreneurs in the Parkland area, while Ashley supports the cheer community through coaching and event involvement. Their professional achievements fuel their capacity to give back, and they are regularly seen fundraising for local causes, organizing craft drives, supporting PTA events and contributing to community sports leagues.

Michael and Ashley's marriage is both a partnership and a powerhouse grounded in love, respect and shared ambition. Their relationship has flourished in business, in parenting, in volunteerism, and in the rhythm of household life. Their secret is simple: Michael envisions and Ashley executes, and together they excel. In their busy, joy-filled Parkland home, they embody what strong family bonds, shared dreams and unified purpose can achieve. A loving marriage, thriving businesses, active children, a sweet pup, and roots firmly planted in community—that is the Longo legacy.



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Kyle Hannon



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Bantamweight World Champion 8

By Shellie Miller-Farrugia

When asked what she was thinking, when she realized she'd won the title, Kayla tells us, "Well, my opponent tapped out five seconds before the end of the second round, and" she pauses thoughtfully. "I think I was just grateful. Lots of overwhelming gratitude and disbelief and joy. It's hard to put it into words... and then I've got Dana White putting a belt on me, the President of the United States kissing my cheek, and Mike Tyson is there sitting in a corner." One gets the impression that it was somewhat surreal, and certainly Kayla was overwhelmed, and reflecting on her personal priorities:

1. God 2. Family, 3. Fighting

Faith is a very big part of her life, and she attributes her successes to her beliefs, and the tribe of people that have helped to make her overwhelming success possible. Kayla's favorite Bible verses are "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight." Proverbs 3:5-6 NIV

Before her second Olympic Games, she knew that she was getting burned out with Judo, because she had been doing it for decades and conquered it. She tells us, "I had won everything there was to win, most of them twice, and I just knew I was done." She tells us she was suffering a little bit of post-Olympic depression, and then a friend of hers invited her to a MMA striking class. It felt good to her to be "back in her body," and she continued the classes until a sparring match where she got kicked in the face. "I thought, whoa! This feels good! This is hard! It just excited me! I felt like I still had something athletic left in the tank."

Raised in Middletown, Ohio, she lived and trained with the Pedro family in the Boston area for an extended period

before she started shopping for gyms for her MMA career and settled on American Top Team (ATT) right here in Coconut Creek. She decided that it was where she wanted to do her training and become great at MMA. In searching for a new home gym, she tells us, "It was like Goldilocks and the three bears. One was too hot, one was too cold, and one was just right."

Always wanting to have a little more space than a standard-sized home, when she adopted her kids, she started looking around the area and found a great spot in Parkland where she could attain some room to garden and have lots of animals. "My aunt had a horse farm in Ohio and I loved spending time there. I thought I would have to wait until I retired, but then I realized, with two kids, why not do it now? Me finding this house was totally a God thing." She goes on to remind us of what many parents feel when they are first raising a small family. She talks about being terrified of doing something wrong, and says she was "white knuckling" her way for the first year. Today, Kayla says she realizes that all her children need is unconditional love, and that she is blessed beyond measure to have a full family life surrounded by her kids, faithful friends, and animals.

Caught now and again in the neighborhood running with her dog, Acts, she says that running is both for her and him. He is an interesting combination of Boerboel (a large African mastiff) and Belgian Malinois (known for their high-energy action). Named for a book in the Bible, we joke that his name SOUNDS tough, like an axe, but he's just a big baby. She says, "He's scared to death of thunder, but my Chihuahua is a killer!"

Claiming that she has no social life outside of the gym,



Photo Credit
Kyle Hannon



Photo Credit
Kyle Hannon

& Parkland Resident, Kayla Harrison!

Kayla jokes that all of her friends are always trying to fix her up with somebody. Being a parent is her focus, and she feels so blessed to have been able to adopt her niece and nephew when they were still very young. Her sister was having trouble with drug addiction, and their mom, who was watching the kids, had had a stroke and experienced the loss of her partner. Kayla realized that this was a God-ordained moment, and an opportunity for her to have family around her all of the time. She also says that being a mom grounds her.

"Yes, I won the UFC bantamweight championship, and then came home the next day to my son, yelling, 'Mom! Where's my toothpaste?!'"

When asked about some of the funniest moments of parenting, she shares some bathroom humor about potty training, and then talks about a time when one of the kids didn't want to eat meat protein, the other one didn't want to eat vegetables, and meanwhile she's trying to maintain a fighting weight ... and that concluded with all of them crying at the table at the same time. Given a couple of emus by a former boyfriend, they wreak a lot of havoc around her little farm. She tells us, "Oh my goodness! They will get out, I don't know how, and then the next thing I know, me and the neighbors are all trying to round them up and get them back into the yard."

The church that she and her family attend is Parkridge in Coral Springs. She really enjoys worshiping there, and learning in small groups. Both Kayla and her children are happy to call them their church family.

Since she began working with ATT, she has assembled

an amazing tribe of coaches, sparring partners, friends, and what she calls, "the team behind the team." She goes on effusively about how wonderful the people are that she is surrounded by. From her neighbors to her dietitian to her chef and many others, she feels humbled and generously blessed.

When asked about her world champion belts, gold medals, and other prestigious awards, Kayla says, "My gold medals are in my sock drawer. It's not about the belts or the trophies, it's about the woman that I've become through this process."



Aside from being a mother and a fighter, Kayla feels strongly that God has put her in a position in life where she can make a huge difference for others. She encourages everyone to **visit www.fearlessfoundation.org**, an organization she founded to shed a light on child sexual abuse and support fellow survivors.

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Knee Injuries: The ACL

By Dr. Howard Gelb

Anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) injuries are increasingly common in younger athletes, especially in female athletes. The ACL is one of four major ligaments that stabilize the knee. Its main function is to prevent injury to the knee cartilage (meniscus-cushions and articular surface). Without an ACL, the knee becomes unstable with twisting turning sports. Injury to the ACL is usually associated with a non-contact twisting injury. ACL tears are usually diagnosed by a combination of history and physical exam. In a majority of the cases, the patient reports planting the foot while twisting the knee and falling to the ground. Most people recall hearing a pop in the knee at the time of injury. Usually the patient cannot return to the sport the same day as the initial injury and the knee swells within the first 24 hours. The Lachman test is the most important physical exam finding that aids in the diagnosis of a tear. There can be associated injuries to other ligaments as well, such as the MCL. An orthopedic surgeon trained specifically in sports medicine is usually more experienced and accurate in this diagnosis. MRI can be useful to confirm the diagnosis and assess the meniscal cartilage. The meniscus is damaged almost 50% of the time in association with an acute ACL tear. Treatment of an ACL tear is patient specific but includes reconstruction of the injured ligament using one of several arthroscopic surgical techniques. It is essential that the meniscus be repaired if possible in the young athletic patient in order to prevent future damage to the knee. Certified in Sports Medicine, Dr. Gelb specializes in the treatment of ACL injuries in both adult and pediatric patients.



Howard J. Gelb, MD

A board certified orthopedic surgeon specializing in adult and pediatric sports medicine and arthroscopic surgery. He has been in private practice since 1995.

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Summer Safety:

Lightning Strikes More Likely in Florida

By Broward County Office of Public Communications.

Lightning strikes north of Florida typically peak in the spring, but the danger of lightning strikes in South Florida are more likely throughout the summer months. In fact, lightning killed one Florida man and injured nine other Floridians earlier in June.

In fact, we live in the state that is known as the lightning capital of the United States. On average, the state receives nearly 1.45 million cloud-to-ground lightning strikes per year. This averages out to 25 flashes per square mile but the National Weather Service reports that Broward County's average is even higher – between 20 and 30 cloud-to-ground lightning strikes.

Although lightning is a year-round threat in Florida, most victims are injured or killed during the summer months of June through August. This is due to the combination of Florida's nearly daily thunderstorm activity and the plethora of outdoor activities held during this time in which children are out of school and families are vacationing. To stay safe this summer, it's good to understand facts from the myths.

Lightning Myths

Perhaps one of the greatest contributors to lightning fatalities is the misconception that if it is not raining, lightning can't strike. In fact, lightning has been known to strike up to 10 miles or more away from the main thunderstorm core, almost appearing from "clear blue sky," and frequently occurs more than three miles from the center of the thunderstorm.

Myth: Rubber tires on a car protect you from lightning by insulating you from the ground.

Fact: Most cars are safe from lightning, but it is the metal roof and metal sides that protect you, NOT the rubber tires. Convertibles, motorcycles, bicycles, open-shelled outdoor recreational vehicles and cars with fiberglass shells offer no protection from lightning. When lightning strikes a vehicle, it goes through the metal frame into the ground.

Myth: Structures with metal, or metal on the body (jewelry, cell phones, Mp3 players, watches, etc.), attract lightning.

Fact: Height, pointy shape, and isolation are the dominant factors controlling where a lightning bolt will strike. The presence of metal makes absolutely no difference on where lightning strikes. Mountains are made of stone but get struck by lightning many times a year.

Myth: If trapped outside and lightning is about to strike, you should lie flat on the ground.

Fact: Lightning can spread out some 60 feet after striking

Earth. Lying flat increases your chance of being affected by potentially deadly ground current. If you are caught outside in a thunderstorm, you keep moving toward a safe shelter.

Lightning: What You Need to Know

- No place outside is safe when thunderstorms are in the area.
- If you hear thunder, lightning is close enough to strike you.
- When you hear thunder, immediately move to safe shelter: a substantial building with electricity or plumbing or an enclosed, metal-topped vehicle with windows up.
- Stay in safe shelter at least 30 minutes after you hear the last sound of thunder.

Protect Yourself and Your Loved Ones

The Broward County Emergency Management Division offers the following safety tips:

Outdoor Lightning Safety

If you are caught outside with no safe shelter anywhere nearby, the following actions may reduce your risk:

- Never lie flat on the ground.
- Never seek shelter under an isolated tree.
- Immediately get out and away from pools, ponds, lakes and other bodies of water. If at the beach, head to shelter immediately. If no immediate shelter is available, head to your car.
- Many Broward County Parks have Lightning Prediction Systems in place. In the event of a warning being sounded (one long 15-second blast), you have between eight to 15 minutes to take shelter, depending on the speed of the storm.
- Stay away from objects that conduct electricity such as chain link or metal fences and power lines.
- If you are in a group, spread out to avoid the electric current traveling between group members.

Indoor Lightning Safety

- Stay off corded phones, computers and other electrical equipment that put you in direct contact with electricity.
- Avoid plumbing, including sinks, baths and faucets.
- Stay away from windows and doors, and stay off porches.
- Do not lie on concrete floors, and do not lean against concrete walls.

For more information, visit www.broward.org



At the Kaseya Center in Miami August 14th to 17th and the Amerant Bank Arena in Sunrise August 20th to 24th

Get ready to find out what the buzz is all about! Created 15 years ago, the famous show OVO ("egg" in Portuguese) by Cirque du Soleil will be making a stop in town with a renewed version! After several months of work, the OVO team will be presenting the new iteration of the show: a reimagined set design, new acrobatic acts, original characters, reimagined costumes, and reinvented music. OVO dazzles more than ever with its fascinating insect colony, bringing together 53 acrobats and musicians in a show that delights both adults and children!

After captivating audiences in 40 countries and enchanting crowds in the Europe, the Middle East and Egypt, OVO is returning to North America and will be presented at Kaseya Center in Miami from August 14th to 17th and at Amerant Bank Arena in Sunrise from August 20th to 24th. Tickets are available at www.cirquedusoleil.com/OVO.

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE

OVO will perform in Miami at Kaseya Center from August 14th to 17th

Thursday, August 14th at 7pm

Friday, August 15th at 7pm

Saturday, August 16th at 11am, 3pm and 7pm

Sunday, August 17th at 1pm and 5pm

OVO will perform in Sunrise at Amerant Bank Arena from August 20th to 24th

Wednesday, August 20th at 7pm

Thursday, August 21st at 7pm

Friday, August 22nd at 3pm and 7pm

Saturday, August 23rd at 11am, 3pm and 7pm

Sunday, August 24th at 1pm and 5pm

ABOUT OVO

From mighty crickets bouncing off trampolines to a hypnotic spider contorting inside her web, OVO exudes extraordinary showmanship to tickle the imagination. Funny and chaotic, yet adorable and wonderful, OVO charms our inner child with its sweet exuberance. Comprised of 100 people from 25 different countries, including 53 artists, OVO ("egg" in Portuguese) brings to the stage high-level acrobatic acts redefining the limits of the human body. Since its opening in Montreal in 2009, OVO has thrilled more than 7 million people in 40 different countries.

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- Athletic Training



L to R: Stanley Szybinski, MD; Stephen Plachta, MD; Michael Dressing, MD; Eric Eisner, MD; Matthew Fazekas, MD; Michael Jofe, MD; Neal McNerney, MD; Randolph Cohen, MD; Stephen Storer, MD; Jeremy Frank, MD



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Pediatrician-Approved Ways to Keep Kids Safe This Summer

By Michelle Snyder, DO - Sawgrass Pediatrics

As the days grow longer and the temperatures rise, summer becomes a season full of adventure for children—whether it's running through sprinklers, biking around the neighborhood, or enjoying a day at the pool. While these activities bring joy and lasting memories, they also come with risks. Here are some important tips to keep in mind.

1. Hydration

Staying hydrated is essential for kids, especially during our Florida hot summer months when children are more active and lose fluids quickly through sweat. Make sure your child drinks plenty of water throughout the day—even before they feel thirsty. Pack a refillable water bottle whenever you're on the go or a frozen water bottle for a cool drink during activities. Signs of dehydration can include dry mouth, fatigue, dizziness, and fewer wet diapers or bathroom trips, so keep an eye out and remind kids to take regular water breaks.

2. Burn Prevention

Summer fun can sometimes come with hidden burn risks. Fireworks, even small sparklers, can cause serious injuries and should always be handled by adults. Hot sidewalks, sand, and pool surfaces can burn bare feet quickly—so encourage kids to wear shoes or sandals when walking outside. Remind them to test surfaces with their hand before sitting or playing, and always keep an eye on younger children around grills, fire pits, and other hot objects. A little caution goes a long way in preventing painful burns.

3. Water Safety

Water naturally draws kids in, making it crucial to stay extra alert whenever they're near it—even in shallow areas. To keep your child safe, consider these key tips: start swim lessons early and monitor their progress and ensure no one swims alone. Young children should remain an arms length distant from a reliable adult while learning to swim. Don't forget to stay aware of weather changes and steer clear of rip currents while visiting the beach.



4. Sun Protection

While the summer sun can feel great, it can also cause harmful sunburns—especially in children, who are more vulnerable to UV damage. Protect their skin with UPF 50 clothing, hats, and sunglasses, and apply broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen with at least SPF 30 to exposed areas. Reapply every two hours, and after swimming or sweating.

5. Head injury/ Trauma Prevention

Wearing a helmet during activities such as riding a bicycle, skateboard or electric scooter can prevent head and brain injuries in children. Golf cart-related injuries occur at double the rate in children as they do in adults, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics. To prevent injuries, children should wear seat belts in golf carts, helmets on bicycles, skateboards, electric scooters and all terrain vehicles and the driver must be legally licensed and not under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

With a few simple precautions, you can help your child enjoy all summer has to offer while staying healthy and protected. As a pediatrician, I encourage families to stay informed, stay prepared, and most of all, stay present. Here's to a safe, active, and joy-filled summer

Michelle Snyder, DO

A pediatrician who is passionate about childhood development and preventative care. She empowers parents and children to understand and optimize their own health. Michelle joined Sawgrass Pediatrics in 2022.

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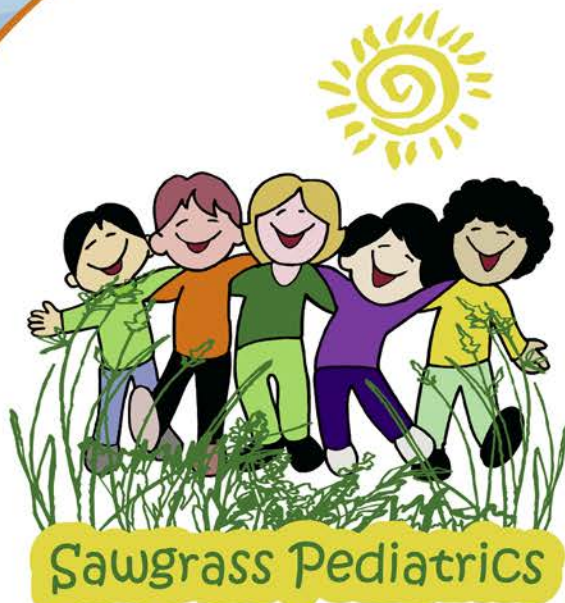
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Whatever Happened to Thank You Notes?

By Shellie Miller-Farrugia

At the risk of sounding like I'm about to lecture someone from a rocking chair while sipping chamomile tea, I have a serious question: Whatever happened to thank you notes?

Now, I don't mean embossed stationery with a wax seal and a spritz of Chanel No. 5. I mean anything. A card. A text. A meme with a thumbs-up. Smoke signals. Just some indication that the wedding gift made it to you and didn't vanish into a black hole of unacknowledged generosity.

Lately, I've heard the same thing from more than a few friends: they flew across the country for a destination wedding, shelled out a generous gift (cash, no less—arguably the most useful and flattering of presents), danced in high heels until their arches cried, and... nothing. Not even a “Hey, got your gift. Appreciate you.” Just silence. As if the love train hit the honeymoon and forgot to circle back for common courtesy.

I'm not trying to be dramatic, but when did “thank you” become optional?

When I was growing up, saying thank you wasn't a suggestion—it was practically law. If you got a gift and didn't send a thank you note, you were risking being left out of future wills. Your mom would physically haunt you. You wrote the note, you addressed the envelope, you licked the stamp (yes, we used our actual tongues back then), and you sent it off like a decent human being.

And here's the kicker: it wasn't about etiquette for etiquette's sake. It was about acknowledgment. Someone thought of you. They spent time or money (or both), and you took ten seconds to say, “Wow, thank you.” Not complicated. Not burdensome. Just good manners.

Now? We've got phones glued to our hands 24/7, and somehow saying thanks has become... retro? A

throwback? Do we need to start calling it “gratitude-core” and put it on TikTok for it to catch on?

Some argue that younger generations express appreciation differently. And sure, I get that. Maybe the thank you lives in a heart emoji on Instagram, or a vague “Love you guys!” group post. But there's a difference between broadcasting vibes and actually acknowledging someone directly.

And look, we're not asking for a Shakespearean sonnet. Just something. An “OMG thanks!” goes a long way.

This isn't about being old-fashioned. It's about not letting common courtesy die a slow, silent death in the group chat abyss. Gratitude shouldn't be optional—or invisible. It's one of the few traditions that actually makes people feel good.

So, to the newlyweds, birthday celebrants, and gift receivers everywhere: if someone gave you something, said something kind, or showed up for you—say thank you. Not because it's required, but because it's nice.

And really, if our generation could write 50 thank you notes after a graduation party in the '90s with nothing but ballpoint pens and hand cramps, I promise you can manage a text.

Gratitude isn't canceled.



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