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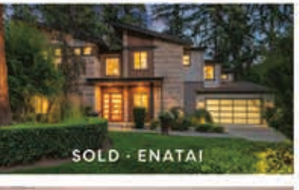










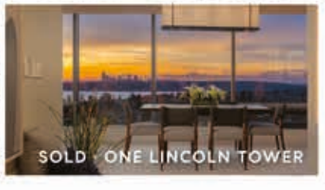
















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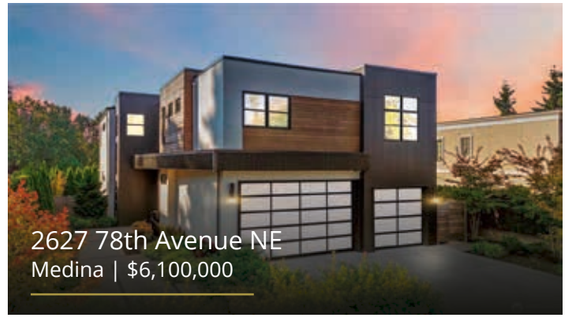
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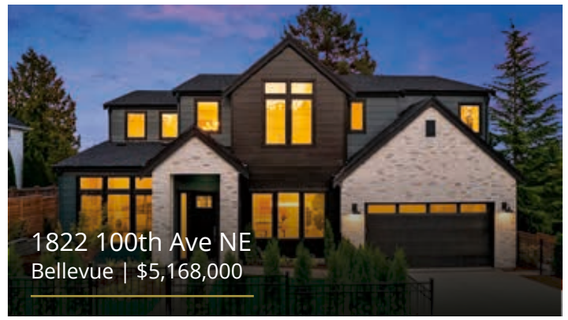
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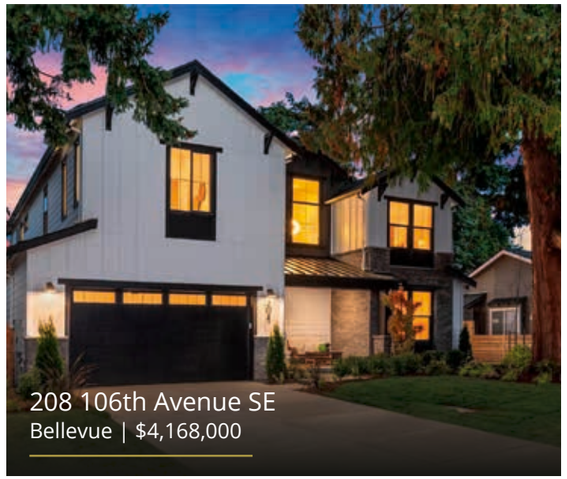
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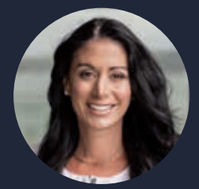




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Carl Roe
Virtual Ad Manager
westbellevue_ads@n2co.com



Jodi Poissant
Executive Assistant & Sales
jodi.poissant@n2co.com



Jenny Hart Danowski
Freelance Writer and Copyeditor



Phil Bailey
Videography



Jackie Phairow
Photography



Krista Fleming
Photography



Allison Frey
Freelance Writer



Barbara Pearson
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Dzenita Musabegovic
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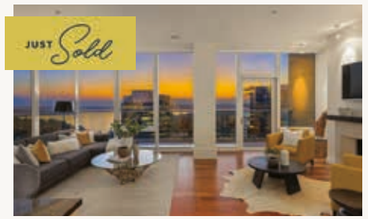
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The Ripple Effect



One of the things I love most about my job in publishing is what I like to call *the ripple effect.* When a new issue of *Greet* hits mailboxes, it's always exciting to hear about the waves of connection that follow. We'll hear from families and businesses who tell us about the texts, calls, and messages they receive from friends and neighbors congratulating them after being featured—it's such a joy to know that our community is reading, engaging, and celebrating one another.

When you flip through the pages, you'll often see people you know: families from down the block, classmates from school, someone you wave to on your morning walk. But the ripple effect goes far beyond that moment of recognition. Sometimes, it leads to something bigger—a new customer for a local business, a renewed friendship, or even a business collaboration that changes someone's path. We've heard about sponsors and angel investors reaching out after reading a feature, creating opportunities no one could have predicted. We've heard about kids who beam with confidence after seeing their story in print, feeling "famous" for the month thanks to the kind words from classmates and community members.

This ripple is also why we regularly feature nonprofits. You never know who might be reading, who it might inspire, or what difference it might make. Sometimes, we hear about these connections right away. Other times, they surface months—or even years—later. In many cases, we will never even know the entire impact, because the ripple often continues.

Our team works hard to keep the content personal and local because there's real joy in seeing people you know in the media. Much like social media in its early days, the magic lies in seeing people from your own circle—the ones who make this community what it is. And that, to me, is the most rewarding ripple of all.

Your Publisher,

Lindsay Rucker

PS. Thank you to Krista Fleming for taking this month's cover photo.

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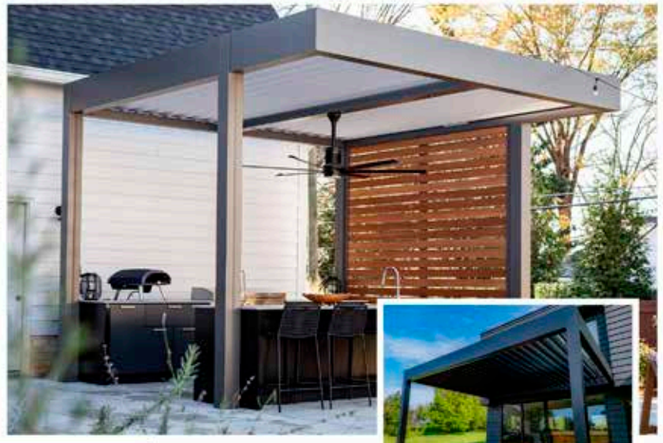


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20 Years of Play and Possibility

This December, KidsQuest Children's Museum celebrates a milestone of 20 years of sparking creativity, curiosity, and connection for families across the Eastside and beyond.

PROVIDED BY KIDSQUEST CHILDREN'S MUSEUM



What began as a grassroots idea among local parents and educators has grown into a nationally recognized destination for hands-on, STEAM-centered learning, welcoming more than 3 million visitors since opening its doors.

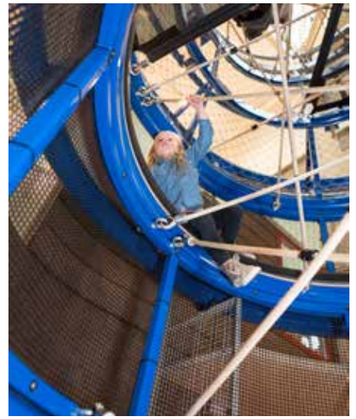
FROM ROOTS TO REACH

KidsQuest Children's Museum, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, first opened in Bellevue's Factoria Mall in 2005, where children could climb a towering treehouse, steer a pirate ship, splash in water or imagine life on the road in a real PACCAR semi-truck cab. Each exhibit was designed to put play at the forefront of discovery, encouraging children to experiment, problem-solve, and create alongside their caregivers. "For children, play is an essential need - it's just as important as food, clothing, or shelter," says Putter Bert, KidsQuest's President and CEO. "As a vital educational resource, our mission is rooted in lifelong learning. We want to give our visitors the toolkit to discover and learn something new every day."

Beloved programs like the Gingerbread Workshop, Teddy Bear Clinic, and Pysanky Egg Decorating Workshop have brought families of all backgrounds and ages together to learn, connect, and play.

"We've always had a quilt of the community in terms of cultural and economic diversity," Bert adds. "Everyone is welcome here. No matter what. As long as you're kind and joyful, we want to play with you."

As the Museum's audience grew, so did its vision. In 2017, after outgrowing its original home, KidsQuest moved to downtown Bellevue, offering visitors a playfully reimagined space in the former Rosalie Whyel Museum of Doll Art. Popular exhibits now also include a 2.5-story Climber, the Story Tree, the Bellevue Mercantile, outdoor Sticks & Stones, and a dedicated Art Studio, all designed to help children explore STEAM concepts in joyful, organic ways.











A COMMUNITY'S MUSEUM

Today, KidsQuest continues to embody its mission: to create learning through the power of play and exploration that connects children to their communities and the world. Through partnerships with schools, libraries, and family service organizations, KidsQuest brings playful learning opportunities to children of all backgrounds and abilities. From distributing free educational kits during the pandemic to hosting regular sensory-friendly programs and expanding accessibility initiatives, the Museum ensures that every family feels welcome, capable, and curious.

KidsQuest's story is one of persistence, imagination, and shared investment. Volunteers, donors, educators, and families have shaped its evolution every step of the way--proof that when a community invests in play, it's investing in its future. As Bert reflects, "We don't want to just be a museum in the community. We want to be the community's museum."

After two decades of growth, the mission remains the same: to nurture a love of learning that lasts a lifetime. For KidsQuest, this milestone isn't just about celebrating the past. It's about looking ahead to the next 20 years and continuing to be a place where every child, caregiver, and community member can discover something new, together. KidsQuest is thrilled to be visioning for the future and planning its next chapter where arts and science collide in the heart of downtown Bellevue.



HOMECOMING!

Our community's students brought sparkle and style to this year's Homecoming! From elegant dresses to sharp suits, the excitement was building as everyone got ready for the big night. Here's a glimpse at some of the moments captured by proud parents before the dance began.









































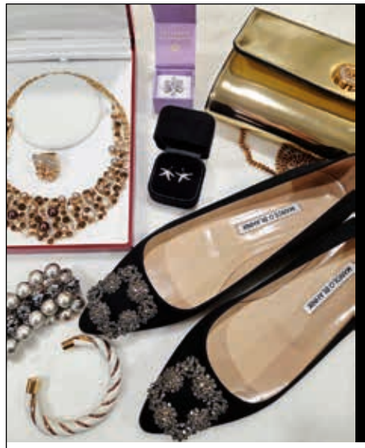
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Building a Community of Strategic Thinkers

When Grand Knights Chess Academy opened its doors in March 2024, its mission was clear: to create a thriving community of thinkers and competitors - built around the timeless game of chess. | WRITTEN BY SUSIE NAFICY

What began as a small idea between two passionate chess advocates has quickly grown into a dynamic chess academy serving hundreds of students. Founded by community leader Gelareh Golanbar, together with longtime coach Sloan Setiadikurnia, Grand Knights was born from a shared vision to make chess more than just a game - it would be a bridge between cultures, generations, and families.

At the heart of Grand Knights is an emphasis on personal connection. Gelareh and her team know every student by name. “Chess is a mental sport,” she says, “and the path to mastery isn’t always smooth. We make sure to be present for our families to guide, encourage, and celebrate every step of the journey.” The academy’s coaches provide personalized feedback, review tournament games, and nurture each child’s confidence and focus.

From humble beginnings, Grand Knights now operates from a larger, purpose-designed location that hosts tournaments, workshops, and classes for hundreds of students each week. They offer one of the region’s most comprehensive multi-level training programs, including advanced national teams that consistently shine at state and national tournaments. Grand Knights hosts a free Family Chess Night on the first Friday of every month at Crossroads Mall, welcoming players of all ages to share in the joy of the game. The event has become a beloved Bellevue tradition, offering proof that chess, in the right environment, brings people together.

For Gelareh, chess has been a lifelong source of connection and growth. Born in San Diego and raised in Iran, she grew up in a culture where chess is revered as both an art and a discipline. Yet, no one in her family played until her grandfather brought home a chess set one day. What began as a simple curiosity turned into a beloved family tradition. “From that moment, chess became our favorite pastime,” Gelareh recalls. She spent countless afternoons playing with cousins and friends, entering local tournaments through elementary and middle school and proudly bringing home medals.

Although her academic journey later shifted her focus, chess remained a constant and a familiar rhythm at family gatherings symbolizing patience, intellect, and joy.

Nine years ago, Gelareh and her family settled in Bellevue, drawn by the city’s commitment to education and community. She never imagined that one day she would help lead one of the largest chess programs in the area. A pharmacist by training, Gelareh found in chess a different kind of medicine: one that heals through connection, creativity, and critical thinking. “For me, chess is more than a game, it’s a bridge,” she explains. “It connects people, just like music or art. I’ve met more people through chess than I ever could have imagined, and those connections have deeply enriched my life.”

That love for chess naturally extended to Gelareh’s daughters, who began learning the game at Medina Elementary School as early as kindergarten. Their first teacher was Coach Wendy Rupple, a beloved educator who spent more than three decades bringing chess to local classrooms. Gelareh watched as chess helped her daughters build focus, confidence, and joy. They began participating in local tournaments, and it soon became clear that one weekly club meeting at school wasn’t enough to feed their growing passion. Through another chess parent, Gelareh met Coach Sloan, a respected instructor already training many top scholastic players. Her daughters began private lessons and advanced quickly, competing in Washington State and U.S. Chess national tournaments.

“Chess has empowered my daughters in profound ways,” Gelareh says. “It’s taught them to be resilient, to think ahead, and to advocate for themselves. The lessons they’ve learned on the board about strategy, patience, and courage translate into every part of their lives.”

The collaboration between Gelareh and Sloan emerged naturally from a shared goal. Sloan had long dreamed of opening a dedicated center where young players could train seriously in a nurturing, community-based environment. Gelareh brought business acumen, organizational leadership, and a deep passion for education. Together, they launched Grand Knights Chess Academy.











Today, Grand Knights serves hundreds of students from kindergarten through middle school offering small group classes, school-based enrichment programs, seasonal camps, and state and national tournament preparation. While the academy’s focus remains on K–8 learners, it also welcomes adults to select events such as tournaments and family nights, emphasizing that chess is for everyone - regardless of age or experience.

Looking to the future, Gelareh envisions Grand Knights as a cornerstone of Bellevue’s educational and cultural landscape. “Our vision is to empower young players to reach their full potential, both on and off the board,” she says. “Chess teaches discipline, creativity, and compassion. If we can nurture those qualities in our students, then we’ve already succeeded.”

The Bridge Project Powered by Iggy

WRITTEN BY ANGELA ZOU





The multicultural landscape of King County makes it a melting pot of cultures. For Ignacio (Iggy) Lopez, a senior at Seattle Prep and West Bellevue resident, it means being connected to his mother's Peruvian roots and giving back to his community. In 2019, Iggy traveled the Peruvian Andes and had the chance to visit one of the houses supported by the Sacred Valley Project. There, he met a group of girls whose stories deeply moved him. "I realized I was taking my education for granted because a lot of those girls would have to walk miles every day to go to school or not be able to even go. It is typical for these communities to only send the boys to big cities to pursue education," Iggy remarked.

Through his mom's involvement with the Sacred Valley Project, Iggy had the opportunity to get involved himself. While figuring out a plan for future steps, he started off small by donating to the organization. However, as he contributed more, he realized as the girls from the project started graduating, many of them did not have the resources to enter the workplace or secure outside opportunities. Subsequently, Iggy founded The Bridge Project, a fundraising and mentorship initiative with the mission of helping the graduates enter a professional setting.

The fundraising is helping secure furniture and learning supplies for a new boarding house for girls who have graduated from secondary school. In September the project raised $5.5k, and through the mentorship program, professionals are volunteering to mentor the graduates, helping them to make resumes and LinkedIn profiles in hopes of securing them future job opportunities. "The mentorship program is going well, but it relies on community engagement and outreach. Publicity is necessary for a project like this, and it is word-of-mouth that spreads the fundraiser and the entire initiative around. So, the $5.5k in funding was a big milestone for me," Iggy reflected.

Iggy's current fundraising goal is $10k, and he hopes to achieve this by the end of the year. Additionally, he is hoping the website he built will garner more traffic and that his project can be spread to more communities through the Internet. He would like this project to leave a legacy and continue for several more years and for the mentorship to reach every girl in the graduate house.

Although the idea is still fresh, The Bridge Project has major potential from Iggy's perspective, and he hopes his efforts can bring a sizeable change to the current situation in the Andes Mountains and Peru in general. "The Andes are an impoverished area, and it has been difficult to improve living circumstances due to the lack of resources. The transportation is rough and makes it hard to get around, a reason why the Sacred Valley Project was created in the first place," he adds.

Projects like Iggy's not only directly support Peruvian communities, but also spread awareness in cities like Seattle and Bellevue. It educates his local community about other societal issues like the lack of education for girls, and also promotes interconnectedness with culture, an important characteristic for those living in culturally diverse areas like King County. Furthermore, The Bridge Project is not the only passion project created by a high schooler in the area. There has been an influx in other initiatives founded by teenagers showing an upward trend in not only the involvement in the Bellevue community, but also a greater awareness of the world around us.

Iggy recommends for those wanting to start a project of similar scale to first reflect on ways to give back to your local community. For Iggy, it was being bilingual in English and Spanish, being connected to his heritage, and realizing his privilege when it came to education. As he concludes, "Always be grateful and look for ways to give back. You can always make an impact if you are truly connected to the cause."

For more information on The Bridge Project and mentorship program visit: bridgeprojectcusco.org



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REPRISE BOUTIQUE

Where Style Finds its Second Verse

For Reprise Boutique owner, Bora McAteer, fashion is about more than fabric—its composition, harmony, and renewal played out on the racks of her Old Downtown Bellevue store. | WRITTEN BY REBECCA WILSON, PHOTOS BY KRISTA FLEMING

No stranger to the industry, Bora distinguished herself in New York's luxury fashion scene—working in auditing for both Versace and Fendi and serving as Special Events Marketing Director at Saks Fifth Avenue. "Some of my favorite fashion moments include putting together a personal appearance event with Alexander McQueen or zooming across town to attend fashion shows at Diane Von Furstenberg in the West Village, Diesel at the Guggenheim, and our 10-minute walk to Bryant Park for most of the other shows when fashion week was mostly centralized there," Bora recalled.

After the birth of her first son, Bora returned to Seattle and began working as a marketing manager at Amazon Books before moving onto roles managing the Amazon Home Gift Guide, category management in the Amazon 4-Star physical store, and later leading the Amazon fashion marketing team. "I've always wanted to be a small business owner with involvement in the local community," she shared. "Taking my background in fashion and marketing, I saw a need for a consignment boutique in Bellevue where we felt circular fashion could really thrive."

With that experience, Bora saw an opportunity to bring new life to Bellevue's retail landscape—setting the stage for Reprise Boutique. Bora's inspiration for naming her boutique combines an element of fashion with that of music. "I played several instruments growing up, but recently started playing the oboe again and currently play in a few community orchestras," she explained. "We based our name on the musical definition of 'reprise'—the repetition of a musical phrase that, when played again, takes on a slight twist or variation—evoking the idea that you can take pre-loved apparel, handbags, and shoes, and make them your own."

Opening Reprise Boutique in May 2025, Bora set out to create more than a store. She envisioned a space that would celebrate individuality and sustainability. Each carefully curated piece is like a note waiting to be played again—ready to find a new verse in someone else's wardrobe. "We carry mostly women's apparel, handbags, shoes, accessories, and jewelry, along with a small selection of kids' special occasion clothing," described Bora. "We welcome clientele of every age and lifestyle—striving for an inclusive, warm, and knowledgeable shopping environment."

When browsing through her store, you'll find a variety of items—from contemporary brands to designer luxury—featuring mostly current styles along with some fun, vintage finds. "We accept merchandise from local individuals, and the response has been overwhelming from our neighbors in the Bellevue, Mercer Island, and Seattle areas," Bora shared. "You'll even find pieces that are new with tags or new in the box, and we refresh new items throughout the boutique almost daily. We also strive to either have consignors provide original receipts or we digitally authenticate designer items initially or upon request—helping to build a community of shoppers and consignors who are accountable to each other."

Through Bora's extensive background in fashion, she's learned the importance of accepting and applying customer feedback. "We initially had our inventory organized by style and color for a more aesthetically pleasing look. However, customers quickly pointed out that they'd rather shop by size, so we pivoted to make it easier to find what they are looking for," said Bora. At Reprise, fashion doesn't follow trends; it finds balance—blending sustainability, self-expression, and community connection in perfect harmony.

Though not a Bellevue resident herself, Bora's connection to the community runs deep. Each quarter, Reprise Boutique donates to a different local nonprofit—currently partnering with Vision House, where she'll host a giving tree this season. Reprise also participates in the Old Bellevue Merchants Association, sponsors the Bellevue High School boys' basketball team, and collaborates with local artisans through pop-ups such as ScentiTerra artwork and Ukrainian holiday egg ornaments. "I love the community feel of being a business on Main Street and the support from other women-owned small businesses like Gin and the Banker, Hedge & Vine, Valentina's Wine Bar, and Smith & Main boutique," shared Bora, describing a special and genuine sense of connection and collaboration.

The Reprise Boutique philosophy is to promote shopping with intention—helping customers find pieces that are both beautiful to wear and made to last. "We embrace the joy of serendipitous finds, both in our boutique and on our website," Bora said. Looking ahead, Bora hopes to expand Reprise's online offerings to move inventory faster for consignors while maintaining the personal, locally-owned feel that makes her shop unique. "My vision is for Reprise to be known throughout Bellevue as a boutique you can count on to find designer and contemporary brands at great prices and value," she added. At Reprise Boutique, each visit offers the chance to discover a new note in its ongoing melody of style, community, and mindful fashion.



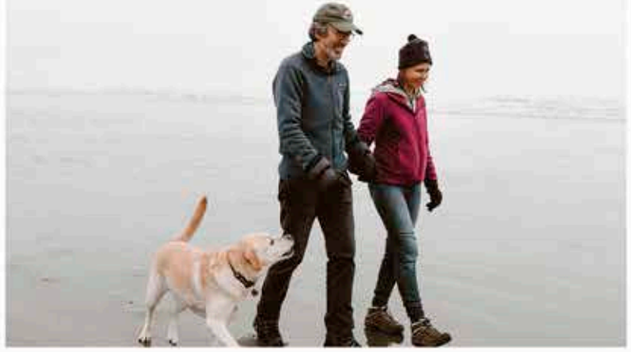












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A Legacy of Service
Jennifer Fischer's Leadership in Action

WRITTEN BY DZENITA MUSABEGOVIC

When Jennifer Fischer walks into a room, her optimistic energy sets the tone. As Executive Director of Bellevue LifeSpring, she has become known for her ability to make an undeniable impact through serving the Bellevue community. As Executive Director of Bellevue LifeSpring, a nonprofit with a mission to break the cycle of poverty for Bellevue children and students and provide them with the resources they need to reach stability, Jennifer has become a trusted leader and advocate for local students and families.

Her story is rooted in Bellevue. Born at Overlake Hospital and raised in Pullman, Washington, she returned to Bellevue and has called the community home ever since. Together with her husband, who was also born in Bellevue, Jennifer has built her life and family here. Both of their daughters, Kirsten and Kylie, were born in Bellevue, making the city the heart of her professional journey and the foundation of her family's life. A proud Washington State University graduate, Jennifer carries with her the values and memories of her college years. "I absolutely loved my college experience," she says enthusiastically. "Everyone who knows me knows I'm a proud Coug, and if I see anyone on the street with Coug gear, I'm the first one to say "Go Cougs!"

After completing her degree in communications from the Edward R. Murrow College of Communication, Jennifer always knew she wanted to serve her community. "I have been in public service and the nonprofit sector my entire career. I really enjoy connecting with my community," she shares. Working various jobs post-graduation from a Human Resources temp to the Vice President of Sales and Marketing at the Bellevue Downtown Association, Jennifer remains appreciative of every role throughout her career. As she says, "I feel that every job I have had up until joining Bellevue LifeSpring has prepared me for this role in one way or another."

Jennifer's Bellevue LifeSpring journey started in June of 2014, as the first Executive Director in the organization's history. For decades prior, Bellevue LifeSpring had been entirely volunteer-led, with dedicated community circle members carrying its mission forward. "I decided I wanted to retire at the Bellevue Downtown Association, and then the next day, Trish Carpenter, who had been a long-time Overlake Service League and then Bellevue LifeSpring President, called me and said, 'We are looking to hire an Executive Director, and we'd like you to apply'," says Jennifer. "So, I did, and here I am 11 years later."

Over the years, there have been many memorable moments, but one stands out above the rest. "In 2016, the Bellevue community came together to preserve Highland Village as an affordable housing complex. Several nonprofits worked with the residents to lobby the city to get involved. Dan Watson from the King County Housing Authority was instrumental in the project, and Mayor Lynn Robinson helped work with the city, county, and state to secure the property purchase from the developer to ensure it remained affordable housing," Jennifer recalls. "All of the families living there would have been forcibly evicted, and there were no other housing options in Bellevue at the time. Seeing our community come together in that way is something I will never forget."

Jennifer remains hopeful for the strides Bellevue LifeSpring will continue to make for the children in our community who need it most. "I am inspired by our board leadership and the team at Bellevue LifeSpring," says Jennifer. "The passion of our Bellevue LifeSpring Circle Members and volunteers is something special, and the organization's impact over the years shows that."

Looking ahead, she acknowledges that awareness is one of the organization's biggest challenges. "The only way to break the cycle of poverty is through awareness and education. Many people in our community do not know the level of need that exists here. But the truth is, one in four of the children who attend the Bellevue School District are living in poverty. That is thousands of children at risk of hunger and homelessness. Tuning into these facts is how our community can support us. Garnering investment support is also key to making a tangible difference. It allows us to fund our critical programs that keep children in their homes, provide them with nutrition support, and ensure that all Bellevue children have the support they need to thrive," Jennifer explains.

For Jennifer, joining Bellevue LifeSpring was a defining moment in her career and life. "I feel in my heart that I was called to serve in this role. I feel so fortunate to have a job where I can give back to my community, and I feel so much purpose when I go to work every day. There hasn't been a day that I haven't loved this job," she shares. Her vision for a future Bellevue is bold and heartfelt. "I've always said my dream for Bellevue LifeSpring would be for us to go out of business, which would mean that no children would need our services anymore, because they would all be fed, housed, and safe," she concludes.

To learn more about Bellevue LifeSpring's mission visit: BellevueLifeSpring.org







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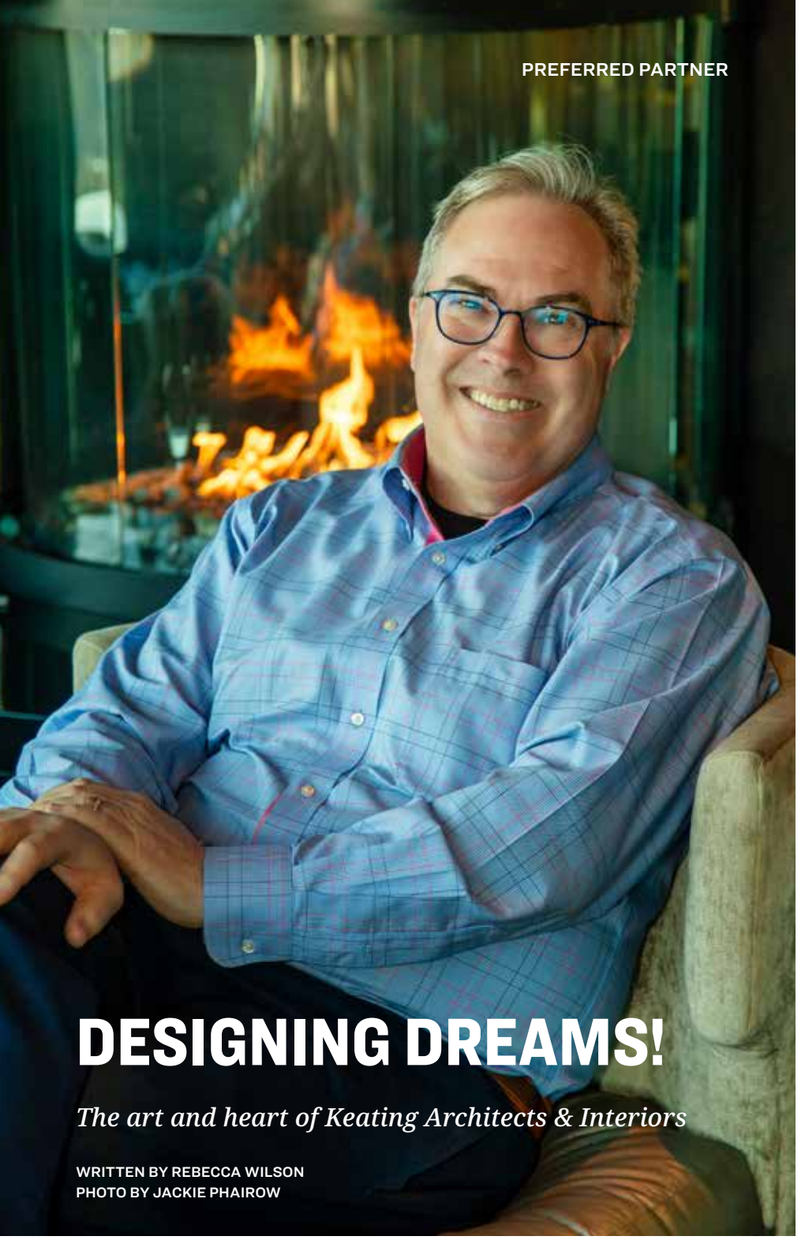
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DESIGNING DREAMS!

The art and heart of Keating Architects & Interiors

WRITTEN BY REBECCA WILSON
PHOTO BY JACKIE PHAIROW

INSPIRED BY PEOPLE

Even at age 5, a love for architecture was already taking shape in Dan Keating's heart. Layer by layer, the guidance of teachers, mentors, and clients helped that passion rise into a lifelong practice built on creativity, connections, and care. Dan's father was a physician in the US Army, so frequent moves were part of the family blueprint. "I was born in Washington, DC, and have lived in Maine, Massachusetts, Maryland, Louisiana, Indiana, and Hawaii," Dan recalled. "I also attended a British boarding school from age 10 to 12."

"I always wanted to be an architect. I loved drawing and would interview my siblings about their fantasy houses—complete with firefighter poles, Tarzan swings, and secret passageways," says Dan. Those early designs eventually led Dan to study architecture in Rome and earn his Bachelor of Architecture degree from the University of Notre Dame. After graduation, he joined Herbert S. Newman & Associates in New Haven, Connecticut, working on institutional and civic projects. "I built many models and was trained to use AutoCAD when it was just appearing on the scene," he continued.

Four years later, Dan settled in Seattle, joining Becker Architects in Kirkland, where he helped renovate and expand Sacred Heart Church on Clyde Hill. What began as another move soon became a foundation for his career. "In 1993, I joined Peter D. Swindley Architects and Interiors—a firm specializing in custom single-family homes—and I loved it," said Dan. "I loved the scale of the projects, the intimate relationship with the clients, and the speed with which the projects came to fruition."

What Dan loved most was working alongside Peter Swindley. "He was my mentor, a very talented architect, and a lovely man," he said. "I worked for Peter for 27 years until his passing, then I began running the business—eventually buying it from his widow in 2021."
Dan rebranded the business in 2022 as Keating Architects & Interiors, preserving Peter's hallmarks of promptness, professionalism, and client dedication.

DEFINED BY PLACE

As Keating Architects and Interiors took shape, Dan refined his own architectural language. "Design is largely an exploration of ideas born from conversations with each client, fused with the designer's experience and knowledge," he defined. "I like to think of myself as a good listener, which helps me craft designs that respond to each client's needs," Dan added. "I crave not only order but also fun and beauty, so I try to imbue my designs with those qualities."

Dan and his team specialize in custom residential projects—new builds, renovations, and additions. "We understand the intricate building codes and processes unique to each local jurisdiction," Dan said. "Through vast experience, we've developed both the knowledge to design and the team of engineers and tradespeople to execute every project efficiently." Believing the best projects integrate architecture and interior design, Dan combines both professions under one roof—working with various consultants, engineers, and other design professionals.

Through extensive conversation, they get to know each client's ideas, dreams, and inspiration. From initial sketches to 3D models, Dan guides clients through a transparent, collaborative process, aligning design goals and budget—ensuring they're aware of the cost of building in their desired area and timeframe. "Though we're based in Bellevue and most of our work is within 10 miles, we do work significantly further away as opportunities arise," Dan shared.

Over time, Dan has developed expertise in designing homes that adapt to life changes—whether through thoughtful "aging in place" renovations or the creation of inviting outdoor "rooms" that blur the line between home and nature. His work ranges from grand waterfront estates to deeply personal transformations, like a recent Mirrormont remodel that added accessibility for aging homeowners. For Dan, those moments—when design genuinely enhances how people live—are what make projects memorable.

ENRICHED BY PURPOSE

"Bellevue is not only where my business is located, it's my home," Dan said proudly. "I'm a member of the American Institute of Architects, which has a local chapter focusing on regional building issues, and a member of the Bellevue Rotary Club, committed to 'service above self'—which is both a sentiment that resonates with me and acts as a call to action." Keeping with that motto, Dan keeps his team up to date on the region's evolving design needs. "We have an ongoing continuing education program—staying informed on trends, products, and suppliers. My interior designers attend local showroom openings, and I attend the AIA's national convention."

Their experience enables them to perform at a high level for clients, prioritizing everyone's unique wishes. "The feedback I most appreciate is when clients say they felt taken care of and that we exceeded their expectations," said Dan. "When a project wraps up and the jobsite becomes a home, I get a little emotional. By then, the entire team—homeowners, architect, interior designer, builder, and craftspeople—has created something unique and meaningful."


Photo by Mike Nakamura


Photo by Dan Farmer


Photo by Mike Nakamura

For Dan, the true measure of success isn't just in the blueprints, but in the satisfaction of homeowners and the enduring beauty of the spaces they inhabit.

KEATING
ARCHITECTS & INTERIORS


Dan and Kay Keating

How One Wedding Inspired a Company

A Medina mom's mission to simplify wedding planning.



Photo by Sarah Peterson

When Hannah Roze thinks back on her childhood, Bellevue feels like the constant backdrop. Born in Seattle, she moved with her parents to Bellevue at just three years old, settling next door to her grandparents. "I lived in Bellevue until I graduated from high school in 2011," she shares. After heading east for college, she came back in 2015, returning to the place that always felt like home.

Today, Hannah lives in Medina with her husband and their one-year-old daughter — and from her home office, she's running a company that's transforming how couples across the country plan their weddings.

Her venture, Plannerd.com, started in the most personal way: with her own wedding. Like so many brides-to-be, Hannah imagined the process would be nothing but fun and excitement. Instead, she found herself overwhelmed by the sheer number of details. "Like many brides, I expected wedding planning to be joyful — but instead, I found myself buried in spreadsheets and endless checklists," she recalls. "That frustration became the spark for Plannerd.com, the modern wedding planning platform I built to help couples feel less overwhelmed and more excited about their big day."

The idea for Plannerd came from one very relatable moment: the first attempt at creating a guest list. "The first step my husband and I took into wedding planning was listing out all possible guests in the Notes section of his iPhone. We listed every single person we could think of and had no thought for any organizational 'system'," she says. What began as an



exciting engagement quickly became an exercise in project management. "We soon realized the adventure we had embarked on was, in fact, a wholly complex exercise in coordination, communication, and patience. Yet, the tools out in the world didn't seem to cut it," she continues. Hannah knew there had to be a better way.

A graduate of the University of Washington Foster School of Business's Technology Management MBA program, Hannah had both the technical skills and the entrepreneurial spirit to build something new. By combining her background in tech with firsthand wedding experience, she created Plannerd — a platform that's rooted here in Bellevue but designed to help couples nationwide. What makes Plannerd unique, Hannah explains, is its ability to merge the efficiency of technology with the warmth of human connection. The platform incorporates AI to simplify decisions and keep couples organized, while also providing easy ways for fiancés, families, and vendors to collaborate. "It's not just about digital checklists," she says. "It's about making planning feel personal again — keeping the joy and connection while taking away the stress."

Though Plannerd is being used by couples across the country, Hannah is quick to emphasize her ties to the community where it all began. "I would be honored to share my story with my local community here in Bellevue," she says. "This is where my roots are, and it means so much to show how a personal challenge sparked a solution that's helping couples nationwide." For Hannah, the heart of the company is about empowerment. Plannerd is the tool she wishes she and her husband had when they first started planning — and now she's thrilled to bring it to others. "We're honored and excited to bring it to all couples, families, and wedding planners who want an intuitive, effective, and empowering place to bring their visions to life," she explains.

From her childhood days in Bellevue to raising her own family in Medina,



Photo by John Bang

Hannah's story is one of coming full circle — building something innovative while staying rooted in the place that shaped her. What began as frustration has grown into a business that's redefining how people plan one of the biggest days of their lives. And while the scope of her platform is national, Hannah's inspiration remains close to home. "This community has always been a part of me," she reflects. "It's where I started, where I came back to, and where I'm raising my daughter. Being able to create something here that reaches far beyond is incredibly special."

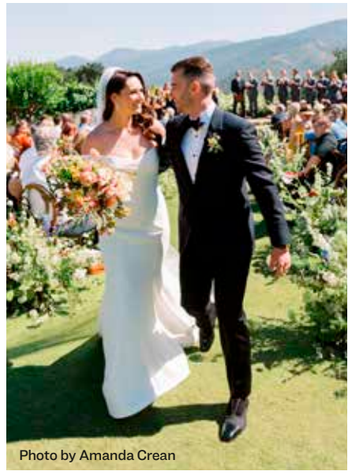


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Steeping in Kindness

Cozy teacups, colorful beads on the table, and a community dedicated to care, the Emerald City Chapter of the National Charity League recently hosted its annual Mother-Daughter Tea event. | WRITTEN BY SEIN KIM, PHOTOS BY PAN FERNANDO























A GROUP OF MOTHERS and daughters came together to socialize and inspire one another to make a positive difference in their community. One of the impacts they already made during the event was through leading a Kindness Campaign, where they made friendship bracelets for themselves and children experiencing mental health challenges. The bracelets with creative patterns and empowering messages like “Smile,” “You got this,” and “You matter,” became reminders that everyone is enough and capable of achieving what they believe. That afternoon, they not only put smiles on the faces of 148 children but also strengthened their bond by having meaningful conversations and sharing laughs. The bracelets they crafted will soon be sent to a nonprofit called The Kindness Campaign (TKC), which provides mental health resources for children.

The event became even more memorable with an inspiring guest speaker, Claire Sumadiwirya, from our local Bellden Cafe. As an owner and founder of Bellden Cafe, she is well known for serving her community through her business. She donates a portion of the income for local causes and supports various community-driven initiatives through hosting fundraiser nights at her cafe and sponsoring local nonprofits. She shared with the attendees how every single

CONTINUED ▶








individual can make a difference in their community through small acts of service, which is what NCL strives to do.

Mothers and daughters walked away feeling inspired and grateful, expressing how they appreciate the opportunity to connect and spend more time with one another while doing meaningful work for others. Cheryl, this year's Tea Chair, shared, "It has been a great pleasure to work with girls and their mothers from other areas like Redmond, Kirkland, and Seattle, and I was able to push myself outside of my bubble each time." Emerald City Chapter's Tea event is a reminder for all of us that if we all do a little for our community, we can do so much.





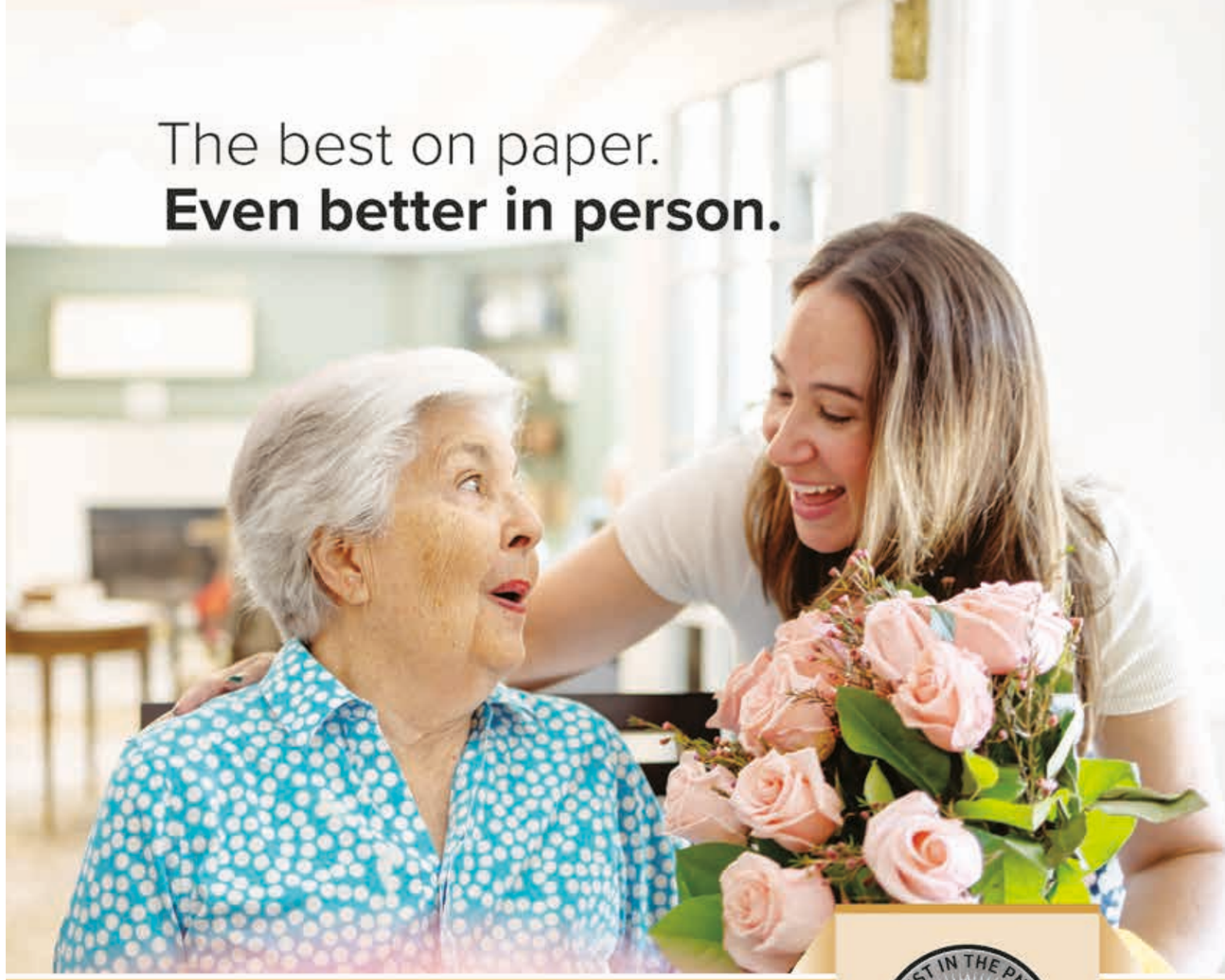



A BIG THANKS!

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Cheryl Evanson, Amy Bacon, Meredith Groseclose, Liz Quinn, Brittany Martinez, Pan Fernando, Mikayla Hagan-Emmin, Mina Lee Yoo, Carla Legg, Collette McMullen, Amy Pellegrini, Karin Mital, Liz Repass, Lauren Brumett, Hailey Andersen, Hannah Asher, Katy Howard, Sophia Apathy, Azryn Lawrence, and Amy Severson.

Cheers!
The Jennys



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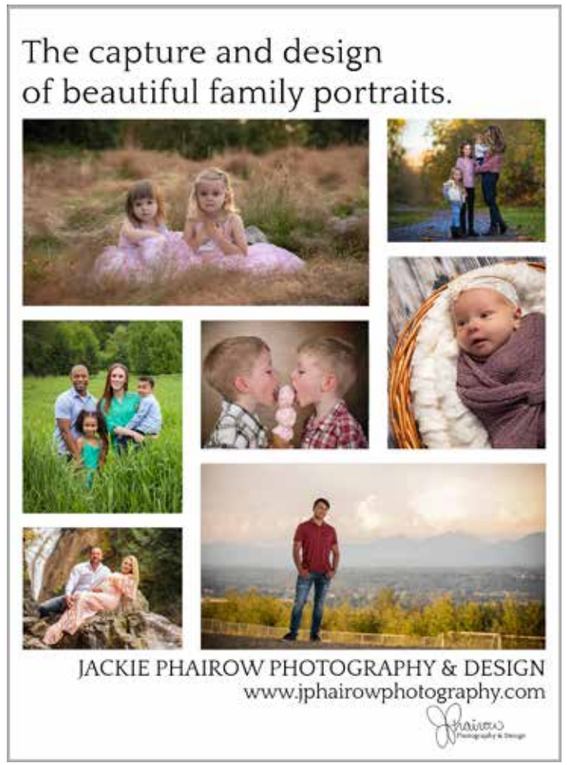
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Jason Weese, CFP®
Managing Director
Private Wealth Advisor

425.990.2212
jason.weese@ml.com

Merrill Private Wealth Management
10400 Northeast 4th Street
Suite 2500
Bellevue, WA 98004

555 California Street
18th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94104

425.990.2208

advisor.ml.com/sites/az/scottsdale-pwm/weeseharrishanovergroup

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Twisted Shroud

This cocktail delivers a mysterious, aromatic experience, where each sip unfolds like a journey through a shadowy forest. | RECIPE BY DAMON RICHARDS, BAR MANAGER AT CENTRAL BAR + RESTAURANT

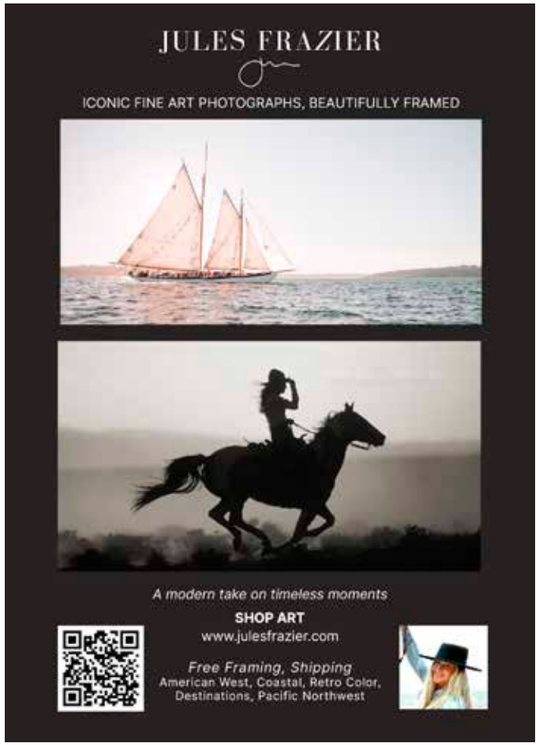


INGREDIENTS:

- 1.5 oz Lalo Blanco Tequila
- 0.5 oz Cointreau (or other orange liqueur)
- 0.5 oz Bordeaux cherry juice
- 0.25 oz Bénédictine liqueur
- Smoked cherry wood (for aroma)

METHOD:

1. Combine all the liquid ingredients in a cocktail shaker with ice and shake well until chilled, about 10–15 seconds.
Fine strain the mixture into a rocks glass, garnish with a trimmed orange peel.
On the base of a glass cloche, flame some cherry wood chips. Place the drink on the base, and then place the cloche.
2. Once the flames go out, it will fill with smoke. Lift the cloche to release the aromatic smoke and enjoy the experience.
3. Be sure to savor each sip as the flavors unfold. Cheers!





Elevated Living on Clyde Hill

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Discover an Elevated Vision on Clyde Hill. Behind the gate, this incredible collaboration of the owner and an extraordinary design team awaits. This estate home was completely renovated in 2022 by Lucas Design and Lockhart Suver. Clean, modern lines frame the 50-yard-line view of the Seattle skyline, Lake Washington and the Olympic Mountains.

Black steel and organic textures juxtaposed with a light palette create a perfect balance of drama and calm. Beyond the incredible design execution, the floor plan was curated for entertaining and gathering. The epicurean view kitchen boasts top-shelf appliances, a catering kitchen, walk-in pantry and a massive island with spectacular lighting. This is truly the heart of the home.

From intimate gatherings or grand galas, the home's spaces flow from indoors to out on a lush half-acre lot that includes a pickleball court. Artful landscaping by BYLA creates unparalleled privacy.

No detail was overlooked for everyday living: Five bedroom suites, two offices, a dramatic speakeasy, media room, gym, and wine cellar—nothing is missing here. A rare offering in one of the Eastside's most cherished communities. This is the one you've waited for.





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BUILDING VALUE BUILT ON VALUES


From left, Nick Anderson and Jeff Rogers. Photo by Krista Fleming

When Jeff Rogers moved to Bellevue in 1999, the city was beginning to emerge as a regional business hub. Major companies like Microsoft were establishing a strong corporate presence, shaping Bellevue's identity as the center for commerce on the Eastside. During this time, local visionaries such as Kemper Freeman were transforming the landscape through retail developments, restaurants, and community events like Snowflake Lane. Amid this growth, Jeff founded OneAccord with a small team focused on a mission: Building Value, Built on Values.

From the start, OneAccord prioritized growing through relationships over trendy marketing or national ad campaigns. Opportunities came through relationships, word-of-mouth, and partnerships with people who shared their values. That approach has fueled steady, organic growth, with trust and compassion forming the backbone of the company's culture. The firm recently celebrated its 25-year milestone with a special event at the Bellevue Club.

"Whenever we bring in new people, the conversation starts with our three foundational core values: truth, compassion, and service," Jeff explains. "If someone doesn't genuinely align with those values, they're simply not the right fit, regardless of how impressive their résumé might be. Experience like owning a business, managing a full P&L, leading teams, or going through an exit is valuable, but those are skills and milestones, not values."

In 2024, OneAccord acquired Eighth Avenue Advisors, a growth and operations consulting firm founded by Nick Anderson in 2022. Following the transition, Nick became CEO and 50% partner of OneAccord, bringing 25 years of banking and consulting experience along with a natural alignment of values, the partnership felt seamless.

"Nick brings a particular strength in cutting through complexity and distilling information down to what's essential, making it clear and actionable for the people who need to hear it," Jeff says. "Having truth alone isn't enough. The truth must be delivered in a way that someone can hear it, which is where compassion comes in. From there, we can begin to form a plan." Jeff explains.


Jeff and Nick at the 25th anniversary celebration for OneAccord.


Nick with his beautifully blended family.


Jeff with his family on vacation at Lake Como

"And service means we're always asking, 'Are we truly serving all stakeholders well?'" Nick adds.

Nick's story is marked not only by leadership and vision, but also by resilience. Widowed in 2016 after the sudden loss of his first wife, Darlynn, he remarried Ariana in August 2023, blending their families of two boys and two girls.

Jeff reflects, "There's been difficulty in Nick's life that far surpasses what most people would perceive. If they saw the beauty of his family today, they'd see how intentional he and Ariana have been in building their businesses together and bringing their kids into the learning process. That's one of the attributes I admire most about him."

A Seattle transplant, Nick proposed to Ariana on the dock at Meydenbauer Bay, and their kids are involved in sports and school programs like Running Start through Bellevue College. Their daughters have both been involved with community traditions such as Snowflake Lane and one daughter recently earned her real estate license, continuing a legacy of entrepreneurial spirit. Ariana runs her own interior design firm, Ariana Designs & Interiors (ariid.com), which is also based on the Eastside.

Entrepreneurship runs in Nick's family. He recalls his mother and aunt running a successful Northgate salon for 20 years, growing it into a thriving business with 20 chairs. When they decided to close in the mid-1990s, they simply shut the doors, walking away from something that could have been sold for a significant value. "She spent two decades building it, and then it was just gone," Nick recalls.

That memory fuels his commitment today, especially amid the "great generational wealth transfer," often referred to as the silver tsunami.

He sees firsthand how many businesses, whether small or large, risk losing the value they've created if they aren't thoughtfully prepared for transition. While OneAccord's clients are typically larger than his mom's salon, Nick and his team are passionate about serving all entrepreneurs. Even when a business isn't the right fit for their services, they make a point to offer guidance or connect owners to trusted resources in their network.

"Deals will come and go, but it's the relationships that matter most. There are thousands of incredible businesses in this region, with many owned by baby boomers who are looking to exit themselves. The challenge here is that there aren't enough qualified buyers to take over and effectively run these companies. Whether by design – or default - an exit or

CONTINUED ▶



Nick's Meydenbauer Bay proposal. Photo by Nica Alameda



Nick and Ariana. Photo by Krista Fleming

I just love this community so much, and I want to feel proud and happy when I see a client out to dinner and when they invite us to sit at their table and do life with them.

—NICK ANDERSON

Deals will come and go, but it's the relationships that matter most.

—JEFF ROGERS

transition will eventually happen, so business owners might as well be in the driver's seat and design it. Most privately owned companies weren't built with an exit in mind, so thoughtful planning is essential to protect employees, customers, and the legacy owners have created," Jeff explains.

At OneAccord, the team guides owners through this process relationally, working alongside businesses to help them stay locally owned, preserve their culture, and prepare the next generation to carry them forward, turning areas of uncertainty into opportunities for lasting value.

A frequent challenge they encounter is owner dependency, which is when the daily operations and key relationships rely so heavily on its owner that performance drops if they step away. Through strengthening people, processes, and systems, OneAccord crafts a strategic roadmap that allows companies to achieve their goals, which in turn readies them for an eventual transition.

When speaking with them, it's apparent that their warmth and empathy extend into their work, fostering an environment where business owners feel supported while navigating complex transitions.

One area that Nick really lights up is talking about their future goals. "It's important and exciting that OneAccord becomes partner owned, like law firms and CPA firms tend to have many partners in those firms who own some equity in the company. That excites me! Our goal is to be there in three years. When Jeff talked about those first 25 years being organic relationally driven growth, I see the next 25 years as being equally relational but also very strategic. There's a growth plan, and the first destination for that is partner ownership. In fact, a few of our partners live in and around Bellevue already," he says.

Nick is equally passionate about the ability to serve local companies, organizations and business owners. "Oftentimes these are owned by families who are living right here in our community. To be able to help them pass their companies down from generation to generation in ownership and with leadership in their company - It excites me to continue to be able to do that over the next 25 years," he says with a smile.

Jeff and Nick both have big hearts for the next generation. Nick imagines OneAccord to be a place where local college graduates who are looking to go into a career of consulting, business strategy, or business operations would really love to work as their first job right out of college.

"I'd love to be a steppingstone for those young folks even if they want to go build a crew of their own after a few years. I've watched Jeff give so much of himself over the years to the next generation and that's a very admirable quality," Nick says.

"And on the other end of the demographic spectrum, we'd also like to be a place for those who are successfully retired or have left their careers but are still looking for meaningful work and have so much wisdom and experience left to give," he adds.

OneAccord is now proudly headquartered in Kirkland and is affectionately dubbed their "Intergalactic Headquarters." They are very intentional about keeping their business rooted on the Eastside. Even with Nick leading the way, Jeff's influence will always remain a defining part of OneAccord's foundation.

Their connection to Bellevue runs deep. Jeff's daughters all grew up in Bellevue, and he spent years coaching youth sports through Bellevue Boys & Girls Clubs and Lake Hills Soccer, exposing his kids to diverse experiences and instilling a sense of community. Spurred by Amy's vision, they have taken their family to Uganda for mission trips to help build schools and expand their own perspectives beyond the Bellevue bubble.

Nick, a Seattle native, has made Bellevue his home. As Nick reflects, "I just love this community so much, and I want to feel proud and happy when I see a client out to dinner and when they invite us to sit at their table and do life with them. That's what makes all of this worthwhile."

For Nick and Jeff, the work is never just about the numbers, it's about the people they serve.

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PARTNER & FOUNDER
Galya Kirstine
galya@realresidential.com
206.853.5995



PARTNER & FOUNDER
Jason Foss
jason@realresidential.com
425.890.9909



PARTNER & FOUNDER
Steve Curran
steve@realresidential.com
425.241.3583



MANAGING PARTNER & FOUNDER
Nick Glant
nick@realresidential.com
206.910.4221



FOUNDING MEMBER
Dicker Cahill
dicker@realresidential.com
425.466.2919



FOUNDING MEMBER
Will Cahill
will@realresidential.com
425.233.9540



PARTNER & FOUNDER
Brad Cahill
brad@realresidential.com
206.930.4503



FOUNDING MEMBER
Nathanael Hasselbeck
hasselbeck@realresidential.com
206.769.2435

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A Publication for the Residents of
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May your home be filled with the warmth of family and friends this holiday season!

Denise Niles
425.301.1769
denise@westbellevue.com

Anna Riley
425.761.8836
anna@westbellevue.com

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