

Ave Maria Sun

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SUMMER 2022

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Proposals call for new school, more acreage

BY Nanci Theoret

Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

Barron Collier Companies continues to meet the evolving needs of a growing town with construction of the first phase of the Anthem Parkway extension to a new elementary school opening in 2025 and a proposal adding 1,000 acres to Ave Maria's developmental footprint. The road project will improve access to the town's eastern fringes and provide a bypass around the busy Town Center, while the additional land will expand the town's total acreage to 5,000, allowing for an increase of homes from 11,000 to 12,000 and condensing development in eastern Collier County.



GENSON

David Genson, president of development for Barron Collier, expects construction of the first 1,500 feet of the Anthem Parkway extension to begin this quarter to accommodate anticipated site development later this year for the new developer-built Collier County public elementary school. Scheduling road and school construction while accommodating Pulte Homes' expansion of its Avalon Park neighborhood pushed back the original timeline.

"It took a lot of coordination to make sure there was proper access for the elementary school as well as a future middle school," says Mr. Genson, noting the elementary school will open for the 2025-2026 school year. Ave Maria has well over 500 children in Collier County Public Schools, he adds.

The 1.5-mile Anthem Parkway extension will eventually connect with Pope John Paul II Boulevard. It will have traffic-calming roundabouts and 12.5-foot-wide paths for pedestrians, golf carts, and bicyclists.

SEE PLANS, A28 ►

"It took a lot of coordination to make sure there was proper access for the elementary school as well as a future middle school. Ave Maria has well over 500 children in Collier County Public Schools."

— David Genson

President of development
Barron Collier Companies

AVE MARIA PACKS BIG summer FUN

FOR A SMALL TOWN



ABOVE RIGHT: Emma Fodi can hardly contain her delight as she dips into a serving of Cookie Monster ice cream at Meltz.

RIGHT: The Ave Maria Water Park is the best place in town to make a splash this summer. This water baby was at the park's "Splash into Summer" party on June 4.

BY SANDRA YEYATI
Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

THRILL SEEKERS REJOICE! Whether you're a child or a child at heart, there are barrels of fun to be had and memories to be made this summer in Ave Maria. Want to make a splash at the Ave Maria Water Park? No problem! Fancy a pinball game at the new Way Out Toys and Games store? Check! How about a chocolate lover's sundae at Meltz? Got it! Would you and your friends like to laugh out loud for hours at Camp Ave Maria or take hip hop lessons at the dance academy? Better sign up quickly! Are you an athlete dreaming of being a college sports star? There's something for you, too.

SEE SUMMER, A24 ►

New at the water park

Safety for all is top of mind for Kellie Powell.

A14 ►



Amenities galore

Del Webb Naples sets the bar for active adults.

A11 ►



Fun around town

Derby Day, softball for veterans, Kidz Biz, and a whole lot more. A6, A10, A29, A32, A33 ►





SANDRA YEYATI / AVE MARIA SUN

Town celebrates its new safety complex

BY CINDY PIERCE

Ave Maria Sun Editor

It was standing room only when the grand opening ceremony and community open house took place for the brand-new Immokalee Fire Control District Ave Maria Public Safety Complex that's home for Fire Station 32 along with EMS personnel and law enforcement from the Collier County Sheriff's Office. The headquarters at 5362 Useppa Drive will also serve as an emergency operations center as needed.

"The new headquarters is a tremendous asset to the community," Fire Chief/District Manager Michael Choate told the crowd of area residents, business leaders, and dignitaries in attendance. As more people discover the

SEE COMPLEX, A30 ►



Immokalee Fire Control District Commission Chair Anne Goodnight and Fire Chief/District Manager Michael Choate preside over the hose uncoupling. See more photos on page A30.



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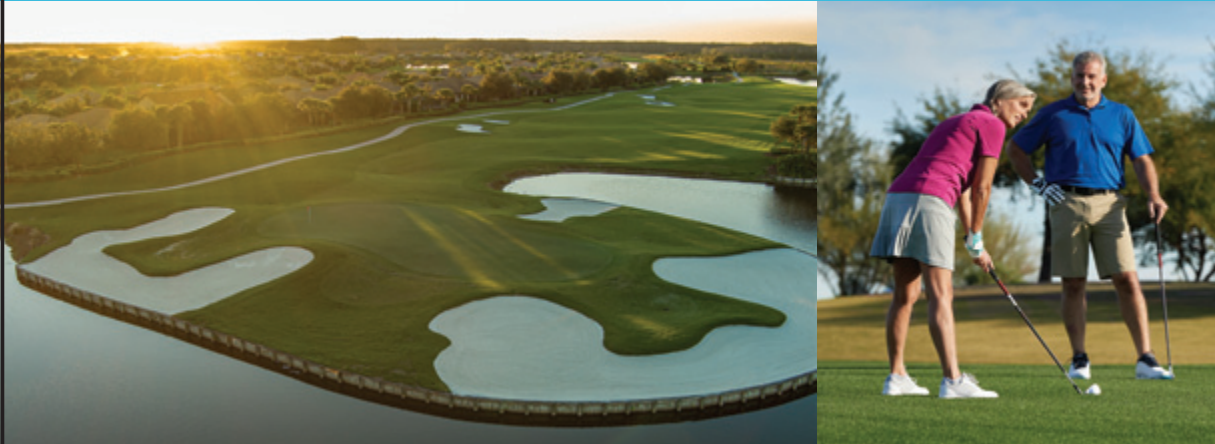
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JD and Kristina Ribali support Ave Maria businesses both big and small

BY MARIA RAKOCZY

Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

JD and Kristina Ribali moved to South Florida from Oregon in 2016 when Kristina began work for a nonprofit organization based in Naples. They soon discovered the town of Ave Maria and fell in love with its warm, welcoming, and family-friendly atmosphere.

The couple purchased the second house to be built in Avalon Park, the Dunwoody design by Pulte Homes, and have been happily making themselves at home here ever since.



JD RIBALI



KRISTINA RIBALI

“We enjoy small-town life,” says Mr. Ribali, “and we love the sunshine and the many friends we have made here.”

They’ve also been making significant contributions to the community through their Top Notch family of businesses, starting with Top Notch Home Pros and Top Notch Living magazine in 2020. Top Notch Home Pros connects homeowners to a network of reliable and helpful home improvement and home maintenance companies. Earlier this year, they extended this concept to entrepreneurs with the launch of Top Notch Connections, a network of Southwest Florida entrepreneurs that is also the umbrella organization for Top Notch Home Pros and Top Notch Living.



CHRIS TILLEY / AVE MARIA SUN

JD Ribali congratulates Israel Gallegos, who won second place in the first-ever Ave Maria Biz Kidz Expo for his Big Boy’s Peanut Butter Treats. See more photos from the expo on page A6.

Mr. Ribali describes Top Notch Connections as “a community of entrepreneurs and small business owners who are driven to grow our businesses, challenge the status quo, and innovate how networking and business development is done.”

Top Notch Connections also includes Top Notch University, a program that teaches business owners practices to improve and sustain their businesses.

“Our mission for Top Notch University is to help entrepreneurs get the education they need to take their business to the next level,”

Mr. Ribali says.

The Ribalis’ latest project is Biz Kidz, an extension of Top Notch University designed to support and assist the next generation of entrepreneurs.

Mr. Ribali says he hopes the Biz Kidz organization provides the same support to the area’s young entrepreneurs that he received as a youngster. “Our mission is to educate kids who have that entrepreneurial spirit,” he says. “I tell the kids at our expos how I got into it: My mom had cucumbers in her garden, and I took those cucumbers and sold them door to door.

I knew I had the entrepreneurial spirit from a young age, and my mom realized it, too. She always encouraged me to get out there, find business ideas, and sell my products.

“That’s what we want to do for today’s kids,” he adds. “We want to show them there are other ways to make an income, other ways to launch a business. And we want to be there to help them realize what potential they have.”

Biz Kidz recruits local business owners through Top Notch Connections to serve as mentors and judges and to sponsor prizes for teams that present their business projects.

The first Biz Kidz Expo was held in Naples this past April. The second took place at Oil Well Craft Beer in Ave Maria in May. More than 25 local businesses sponsored the event that brought together kids ages 7-17 to show off their original products and services. Judges assessed 12 team projects on 30 aspects, including overall business plan, marketing strategy, and sales numbers.

The Ave Maria Kidz Biz Expo drew more than 175 attendees, and some booths reported more than \$100 in sales. A team of six girls from Eden Park Elementary School won the grand prize for their jewelry business called Dazzle. Second place went to Israel Gallegos for his Big Boy’s Peanut Butter Treats, and third place went to Scholastica Niewald, a sophomore at the Donahue Academy, for her Ave Creations line of original artwork.

The Ribalis are planning more Biz Kidz Expos in Fort Myers, Naples, and Immokalee. They also look forward to growing their community of Southwest Florida small business owners through Top Notch Connections and using the Top Notch community to encourage the spirit of entrepreneurship in future generations. 🌻



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FUN AROUND THE TOWN

Community Update and inaugural Ave Maria Biz Kidz Expo



Fire Chief Michael Choate talks to residents during the Community Update that took place the same evening as the Biz Kidz Expo in early May.



Eden Park Elementary School students Camila Guzman, Jazlyn Carrillo, Melina Lopez, and Jayleen Viduarri were part of a six-person team that created jewelry for the Biz Kidz Expo at Ave Maria.



Cee Cee Marinelli, vice president of commercial real estate for the Barron Collier Companies, talks to attendees at the Community Update.

CHRIS TILLEY / AVE MARIA SUN



Budding entrepreneurs Delaine Cheney and Dylan Guam talk with Micah Muffin (holding his son Ruger) at the Kidz Biz Expo about the slime the youngsters concocted to sell at their expo booth.



JD Ribali and the Dazle team that won first place for their jewelry creations in the Biz Kidz Expo. The expo is an extension of Top Notch University, a program for entrepreneurs created and run by Mr. Ribali and his wife.



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MEET A TOWNMAKER:

Thomas Peek keeps a close eye on Ave Maria’s infrastructure

BY SANDRA YEYATI
Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

As chairman of the five-member board of supervisors for the Ave Maria Stewardship Community District (AMSCD), Thomas Peek has played an essential administrative role in the development and maintenance of infrastructure at Ave Maria since 2004, when the district was first created. You can see him in action every month at the public AMSCD meetings in the Town Center.

“These special-purpose districts signed into law by the Florida legislature permit the people who live within them to have a higher level of development — more landscaping, for instance — than they might have on a typical county street, and to sustain those elements at a level over and above what the norm might be if the county were responsible for maintenance,” Mr. Peek explains, adding that the AMSCD owns those streets and issues tax-exempt bonds to pay for them. Every year, every Ave Maria homeowner is charged an equal (non-ad-valorem) assessment to cover maintenance expenses and pay down those bonds.

Mr. Peek is friendly, relaxed, curious, and keenly interested in looking after the Ave Maria streets, landscaping and other structures that come under the AMSCD. He also happens to be well-qualified to oversee the district after a long and successful career, first as the engineer for Collier County from 1968-1973 and later as a name partner of Wilson, Miller, Barton and Peek (WMBP), the engineering firm of choice for many Southwest Florida developments, with offices in Naples, Fort Myers, Sarasota, and Tampa.

“There’s been a tremendous amount of land development in this area, and we had projects up and down the Florida coast, including Lely Resort, Naples Bath and Tennis Club, Wyndemere, Bonita Bay, and Quail Creek,” Mr. Peek says about his days at the engineering firm. “We did all of the land surveying, roadway design, and roadway work, designed the drainage systems, things like that.”

He designed the first piece of road in Pelican Bay in Naples, and 20 years later was in charge of the last one. “I kind of lived through the entire development,” he says.

After retiring from WMBP in 1998, Mr. Peek was invited by Barron Collier Companies to join the AMSCD board of supervisors. He was more than happy to do it.

“It takes time and work and understanding to keep the business of the district moving forward, but I’ve enjoyed being on the board. I enjoy keeping up with how the town is growing,” he says.

“Having worked in development my whole career, it was exciting to watch this beautiful

“Having worked in development my whole career, it was exciting to watch this beautiful new community come up out of a farm field, and to see the Town Center, the church, and the university being built.”

– Thomas Peek, chairman
The Ave Maria Stewardship Community District



COURTESY PHOTO

Thomas Peek worked as the engineer for Collier County from 1968-1973.

new community come up out of a farm field, and to see the Town Center, the church, and the university being built. And now to see all of the development that’s going on with new housing and the golf courses ... I get excited about things like that.”

Mr. Peek says all five members of the board of supervisors “have a sincere desire to make Ave Maria what the developers originally intended: a super-nice place to live and raise a family. And all of us as supervisors are fully committed to see that it continues to be accomplished, to keep the place maintained to the level that people have come to expect.”

At the age of 82, Mr. Peek leads an active life shared with his wife Nora, a civil engineer. The couple met when both were attending engineering school at the University of Tennessee. They’ve been married for 58 years.

The Peeks both try to live by the saying, “Live ready,” Mr. Peek says.

“You don’t know when it’s going to be your time to be standing there facing the maker, so you better live ready. Be kind to people. Help those that are in need. And just live the way God and Jesus are teaching us to do.”

They have two accomplished daughters and three college-bound granddaughters. The younger daughter is a senior manager at a large engineering firm in Houston. “Our older daughter is the rebel, because she didn’t become an engineer,” Mr. Peek quips, adding she was an elementary school teacher until she became busy raising three daughters.

There are quite a few engineers in the family.

“It’s not just me, Nora, and our daughter,” he says. “I have a brother-in-law who’s an engineer. Nora’s two brothers are engineers, and her father was also an engineer. So, you can understand what the topic of conversation around the dinner table is when the family gathers together. Sometimes it gets kind of technical,” he chuckles.

For Mr. Peek, engineering is a source of joy. “I like to see things being built. I like to see the results that come from designing a new community — the streets and houses, and then the families that start living there.”

Other forms of engineering also fascinate him, he says. “The space program is absolutely spellbinding.”

But perhaps most exciting of all, Mr. Peek’s passion for golf came to a jaw-dropping crescendo when he recently hit two holes-in-one during the same round of golf. “The odds for that happening are like 67 million to one,” he exclaims. “All I could do was stand there, look, and laugh.”

For more information about the AMSCD, visit www.avemariastewardshipcd.org.



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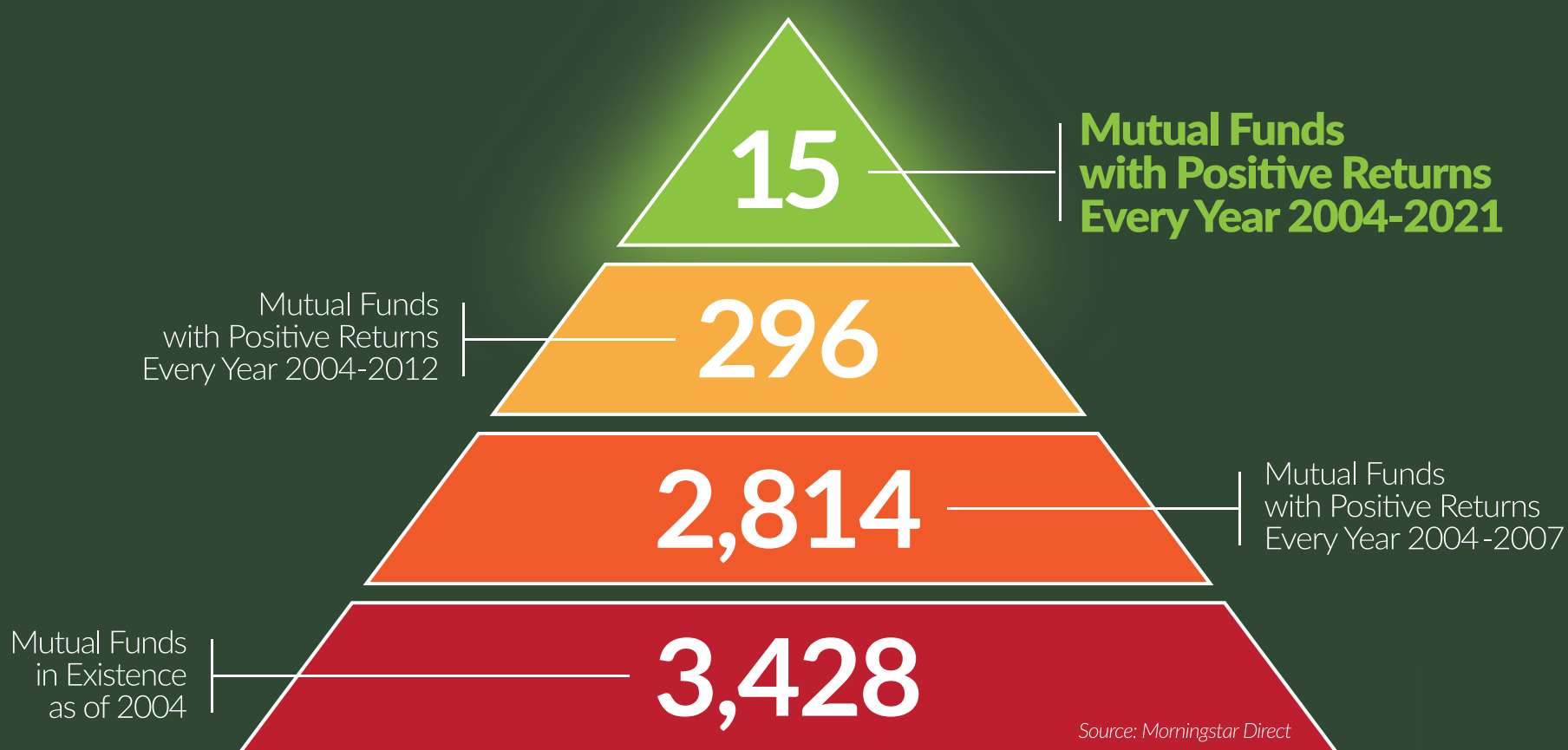


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FUN AROUND THE TOWN

55+ softball at South Park dedicated to veterans



Rick Bachnofer, treasurer of the Del Webb Veterans Club; Ed DeMaio, president of the Del Webb Veterans Club; Ken Belden, Pat Edwards, and Artie Ginsberg in the dugout.



Ray Smith showing off his arm.



Helen Scorsone, secretary of the Del Webb Veterans Club, takes pictures for posterity.



Marshall Bronstein makes a great play.



Alternate Captain Brian Bouyea, third from left, shares some wisdom with his attentive teammates.



Frank Lacove and Kirk Schwan warm up.



Ray Smith proves he still has what it takes, again.



The Del Webb Veterans Club provided a flag for the afternoon of patriotism and camaraderie.



The Pledge of Allegiance before the first pitch.



Captain of Softball Artie Ginsberg, far left, addresses the intrepid players.

JOE DIFLORIO / DELL WEBB PHOTOGRAPHY CLUB

Athletic facility projects underway at Ave Maria University

SPECIAL TO THE AVE MARIA SUN

DEC Contracting Group is completing work on three athletic facilities to enhance student athlete performance and recreational opportunities at Ave Maria University.

The largest project involves demolishing Tom Golisano Field House, a 40,000-square-foot pre-engineered metal building with a stucco exterior, down to its structural steel. It will be rebuilt with new roofing, HVAC, electrical and plumbing fixtures, and DEC Contracting Group will add locker rooms, a new playing surface, and staff offices. The Field House is home to Ave Maria's men's basketball, women's basketball and volleyball teams, as well as the sports medicine and strength and conditioning programs.

Across the street and adjacent to Gyrene Field, DEC Contracting Group is constructing the 5,440-square-foot pre-engineered Quonset Locker Facility, a military hangar-inspired structure that will include locker rooms,

restrooms, and showers for Ave Maria's outdoor sports programs.

The third project is Judi's Gym, a pre-engineered, 12,320-square-foot pavilion that includes three covered basketball courts, which also will be lined for volleyball and pickleball. It will include electricity to provide lighting for evening activities and 83 parking spaces. The facility will be used for recreational sports and will be available for Ave Maria students and local residents.

"Ave Maria University moved from Michigan to Florida in 2007 and it quickly established a reputation for its solid academic programs and variety of intercollegiate sports," says DEC Contracting Group CEO Regina Dunn. "The university's investment in these facilities is an investment in the student athletes who represent the institution. Once completed, Ave Maria University's athletic facilities will rival those of the top institutions in the Sun Conference."

"After 15 years of steady growth, Ave Maria



COURTESY IMAGE / BSSW ARCHITECTS

The Tom Golisano Field House

University is entering the next phase in its development, and it's exciting to have a role in building a campus for the future," adds DEC Contracting Group President Douglas Masch II. "The university has gone from a blank canvas in an old tomato field to a thriving campus that

draws students from across the country. We're proud to create showcase facilities with a 'wow factor' for the school."

Construction is underway on all three projects, which will be completed in phases from this fall through next spring. 🌻

Del Webb Naples sets the standard for an active adult lifestyle

BY Nanci Theoret

Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

A pool practically flush with a deck that’s so large it meanders, an indoor sea of 250 chairs and tables waiting for the next dinner dance or card game, a velvety green lawn melding into 18 holes of golf on its journey to the horizon, and Adirondack chairs cozied around a fire pit, providing the perfect perch to watch the setting sun.

At Del Webb Naples, amenities are the star of a modern-day “retirement” lifestyle for active adults 55 and older. The amenity campus is larger than those at any other Del Webb community in Southwest Florida. The tropical oasis is the place for residents, where happy hour continues well beyond 60 minutes, folks stomp and spin in synchronicity during a line dancing class, or discover their culinary chops at a cooking demo. Golfers can even get in a few holes on a rainy afternoon by playing at TPC Sawgrass (or another iconic course) on the complementary golf simulator that provides real-time swing analysis and practice suggestions in air-conditioned comfort.

“Del Webb is the most recognized homebuilding brand among active adult consumers in the country,” says Josh Graeve, president of PulteGroup’s Southwest Florida division. “We have a full-time lifestyle coordinator and robust lifestyle programming to meet every interest and hobby an active adult buyer might be looking for. The result is a neighborhood of likeminded individuals seeking social interaction with commonalities and interests.”

“We’re proud of the lifestyle, programs and friendships people make here.”

SEE DEL WEBB, A12 ►



COURTESY PHOTO

Grand Hall and Panther Run Golf Course aglow in the setting sun.

“Del Webb is the most recognized homebuilding brand among active adult consumers in the country.”

— Josh Graeve, president of PulteGroup’s Southwest Florida division

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DEL WEBB

From page 11

With 12 lighted pickleball courts — “more than any other community I know of in Southwest Florida,” Mr. Graeve says — plus two tennis courts, four bocce courts, a separate three-lane lap pool, a jetted spa and the 8,000-square-foot tropical pool with umbrellas and illuminated fountain bubblers in its beach entry.

At Del Webb Naples, it’s never a question of what to do, but what to do next. In addition to a nearby community garden and a tiered amphitheater carved into a grassy area near the pool, Del Webb Naples also offers optional membership at the Gordon Lewis-designed Panther Run Golf Course (fresh off bunker and turf upgrades) with a pro shop and private lessons on-site.

Then there’s the dizzying year-round social calendar of clubs, events, art classes and activities in not one but two clubhouses. Grand Hall and the Oasis Club boast more than 30,000 combined square feet and offer a fitness center, movement studio, activity and art rooms, a card and game room, catering kitchen, café, library, grand ballroom for community-wide



COURTESY PHOTOS

The Oasis Club has 12 lighted pickleball courts, two tennis courts, four bocce courts, a fire pit, and a lap pool in addition to the main 8,000-square-foot pool with fountains and a beach entry.



COURTESY PHOTOS

Grand Hall offers Del Webb Naples residents and their guests a welcoming lobby, left, a state-of-the-art golf simulator room, above, and a meeting room/ballroom for large gatherings, below left. Together with their extensive terraces and outdoor recreation offerings, Grand Hall and the Oasis Club constitute The Club at Del Webb Naples, which is the most extensive amenity campus in PutleGroup’s Del Webb family of 55+ active adult communities in Southwest Florida.



events, and the Rusty Putter Bar & Grill. With views of Panther Run’s signature finishing hole and aqua range, the Rusty Putter is a popular spot offering a lounge and lunch and dinner menus.

“Del Webb Naples is a little city within itself,” says Shirley Jerezano, general sales manager for Pulte’s Southwest Florida division. “Our amenities are up and running. Usually when you buy into a new community you have to wait for amenities. Our residents are always busy, and that’s what makes Del Webb Naples a big destination for buyers.”

From aerobics, yoga and Zumba classes, to clubs for book lovers, oenophiles and gardeners, to happy hour, bingo, bunko, movies, games, and trivia nights, the list of activities, hobbies, and classes goes on.

About the only thing lacking is shuffleboard, the once obligatory amenity of bygone Florida retirement communities, often accompanied by a simple, rectangular community pool. To call Del Webb Naples a “retirement” community conjures up all those clichés from decades ago. It’s probably safe to say most residents here are busier now than when they worked and that they’re healthier and more active than their parents or grandparents were at the same age.

Ms. Jerezano sums up the reaction of first-time visitors when they see the amenity campus: “Wow.”

Voted among the top 20 places to retire, Del Webb Naples offers condominium-style carriage homes, attached villas, and single-family homes with 18 total floor plans spanning 1,400 to 2,800 square feet.

“Del Webb has had remarkable success in knowing and understanding this specific buyer,” Mr. Graeve says. “It’s a name that retiree buyers have come to know and count on for expansive resort-style communities.

“At Del Webb, everything is here. You never have to leave.” 🌻



The Oasis Club, top, is home to the Rusty Putter Bar & Grill, left above and below, where golfers retire for refreshment and friendship following a round at Panther Run.

COURTESY PHOTOS



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Publix Retail Shops & Park of Commerce



SCAN ME

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Summer brings new beginnings to Ave Maria Water Park

BY SANDRA YEYATI

Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

The Ave Maria Water Park is in upgrade mode these days with the installation of trees and shrubs to beautify the amenities, new swimming lessons and water exercise classes, a revamped concession stand now dubbed the Cannonball Café, and a fresh approach to customer care by recently appointed Operations Director Kellie Powell. Amidst these improvements, fun continues to take center stage with planned parties and everyday pool-side merriment all summer long.

A 30-year veteran of the aquatics industry, Ms. Powell has a passion for keeping everyone safe around the water.



POWELL

“With three kids growing up in Saint Petersburg surrounded by water, my mother saw the dangers of living in Florida and made sure that all of us were water rats,” she says. “She knew the statistics are very high for children who drown from the ages of 2 to 15,

and she was determined that her children wouldn’t be one of them.

“We had a home pool, my sister was a junior lifeguard by age 12, and I grew up as a competitive swimmer and springboard diver.”

Ms. Powell married a YMCA aquatic director and has worked in nine different YMCAs as either a certified swim instructor or aquatic director.

Given her robust aquatics background, it’s easy to see why bringing swimming lessons to Ave Maria for children as young as 6 months is her No. 1 priority.

Comprised of eight classes, the park’s American Red Cross Learn-to-Swim program empowers youngsters with swimming skills and safety principles using catchy rhymes that are easy to remember. Think: “Reach or throw, don’t go,” an important tutorial about how to stay safe while rescuing a friend who is struggling in the pool, and “Too much sun is no fun,” a prompt about the importance of UV protection and proper hydration.

Water exercise and more

For anyone over the age of 13, the new water exercise program offers a balanced workout by alternating between cardio and muscle-strengthening routines four to five days a week, depending on the season.

“Anyone can participate, whether they’re a swimmer or non-swimmer,” Ms. Powell stresses. “We teach in chest-deep water, and we don’t go under.

“For people with all kinds of body issues — shoulder surgeries, knee issues, back pain — the water is the best place to exercise because the buoyancy helps to hold you, so you can work out to the best of your ability and at your own pace. The faster you work in the water, the harder and more challenging your workout is.”

Ms. Powell is training her staff to become certified swim instructors and inspiring the park’s lifeguards to be mindful, observant, and proactive when safeguarding the people enjoying the amenities.

“My biggest challenge so far has been getting my lifeguards to blow their whistles at the kids who are running,” she says with a chuckle. “I’m trying to instill in my staff that it’s our job to keep everybody safe. We’re not trying to be bossy or mean, but it’s always safety first, and then fun follows.”

In addition to everyday fun, the water park will host three events for Ave Maria residents this summer: the July Fourth celebration from 11 a.m.-2 p.m., and the Back-to-School Bash from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 13. Both family-friendly events will include a variety of games and competitions in the water, on the pool decks, down the waterslides, and at



SANDRA YEYATI / AVE MARIA SUN

Lifeguards at the Ave Maria Water Park – Back row, from left: Joe Cooper, Aidan Minter, Cameron Millward, Vance Aubert, Jack Byrne, Joe Burke, and Andrew Graham. Middle row: Catherine Graham, Teresa Klucik, Martina Licheri, and Maureen Eads. Front row: Operations Director Kellie Powell.



SANDRA YEYATI / AVE MARIA SUN

Water park lifeguards regularly receive training to maintain and improve their skills.

the volleyball court. Participation is free with admission to the park.

On Monday, Sept. 5, the park’s adults-only Labor Day Luau is set from 6-9 p.m., complete with food and musical entertainment. Cost is \$25 per person.

The Cannonball Café

With an expanding menu that includes popcorn chicken, French fries, hamburgers and pizza, along with tried-and-true favorites like hotdogs, snow cones and ice cream, The Cannonball Café is under new management by the same Ave Maria family that owns Oil Well Craft Beer and The Secret Ingredient: Danee and Matt Williams, along with their

kids, Ave Maria University student Peyton, 20 and Reese, 18. The entire family is excited to add value to the water park experience.

The park offers several pavilions that can be rented for birthday parties, family reunions and other celebrations.

“For \$160 you get four hours, one of the pavilions, and admission for 25 guests,” Ms. Powell says. Patrons are permitted to bring coolers with their own food and non-alcoholic beverages (no glass containers).

Ms. Powell welcomes input and suggestions from all who enjoy the park. The best way to get in touch is by sending an email to powell@fsresidential.com. For more information, call 239-348-8384. 🌻



SANDRA YEYATI / AVE MARIA SUN

Peyton Williams and Reese Williams operate the Cannonball Café.

Make a splash at the water park

» July hours

Lifeguards on duty from 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Wednesday-Friday; 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday-Saturday; noon-5 p.m. Sunday

» August-September hours

Lifeguards on duty 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday; noon-5 p.m. Sunday. Residents can swim at their own risk from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Wednesday-Friday and from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday.

» Special events

Back-to-School Bash: 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 13
Labor Day Luau (adults only): 6-9 p.m. Monday, Sept. 5

ALL AROUND AVE MARIA

Dates and details are subject to change. Visit www.AveMaria.com before venturing out, and also follow Town Center businesses on social media for updates and special promotions.

■ OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

MERCHANT EVENTS

Christmas in July

It's time to get a head start on holiday shopping! Support local businesses and have a jolly old time as merchants in the Town Center and Publix Retail Shops host Christmas in July on Saturday, July 16, from 3-8 p.m. Yuletide spirits will be high with Christmas-themed live music from 4-7 p.m., in-store specials and refreshments, and face painting for the kids. Enter to win a grand prize basket with awesome products, as shoppers will be invited to get their Boutique Crawl bingo cards stamped at each of the participating shops for a drawing at the end of the event.



COURTESY PHOTO

Get a head start on the holidays when Ave Maria merchants hold Christmas in July from 3-8 p.m. Saturday, July 16.

Tax-Free Celebration

Helping shoppers take advantage of Florida's Back-to-School Sales Tax Holiday, participating boutiques in the Town Center and Publix Retail Shops will be open Saturday, Aug. 27 and Sept. 3, from 3-8 p.m. with tax saving deals on clothing and accessories. Live music from 4-7 p.m. will liven up the shopping experience.

Latin Festival

To celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, come to the Town Center and Publix Retail Shops from 3-8 p.m. Friday, Sept. 17, for shopping specials, live Latin music from 4-7 p.m. and more. Updated details will be posted at www.facebook.com/shopthesecretingredient.

OASIS The Kitchen Lounge

All summer long, OASIS is offering \$8 traditional burgers on Monday, \$8 flatbreads on Thursday, and daily happy hour drink specials from 2-5 p.m. For more information, visit: www.oasiskitchenlounge.com.

Tropical Smoothie Cafe (TSC)

TSC serves up two nonalcoholic smoothie twists on the popular cocktails Watermelon Mojito and Mango Berry Cosmo until August. Look forward to poolside delivery during pool hours at Maple Ridge, Del Webb, and the Ave Maria Water Park.

Call 239-867-4492

Stella Rose Way

Stella Rose Way, formerly Maxwell Grace, celebrates its grand opening Saturday, Oct. 1. The purveyor of gift items, packaged teas, home décor and Donahue Academy spirit wear will also be open during Florida's Back-to-School Sales Tax Holiday from 10 a.m.-5 p.m., July 25-Aug. 7, with tax savings on Donahue T-shirts and sweatshirts. Visit www.stellarose-way.com or call 239-207-6560 for updates.



COURTESY PHOTO

Fun and frosty brews are always on tap at Oil Well Craft Beer.

Oil Well Craft Beer (OWCB)

Celebrate **National Thirsty Thursday** with \$1 off drafts from 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Thursday, July 7.

Don't miss the OWCB debut of the **Steinbeck Way Band** from 8-11 p.m. Saturday, July 9.

Celebrate **National Wine and Cheese Day** at 7 p.m. Monday, July 25, with a \$15 per-person gathering that includes four three-ounce wine samples and four cheese samples. Must RSVP to contact@oilwellcraftbeer.com.

On **International Beer Day**, enjoy \$1 off drafts from 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Friday, Aug. 5.

Enjoy **free bingo** from 6-8 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 6.

Celebrate **National Prosecco Day** from 6-10 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 13, with drinks from the prosecco bar.

To celebrate **National Couples Day**, couples receive \$1 off drafts Thursday, Aug. 18.

A bingo fundraiser to honor **National World Alzheimer's Month** from 6-8 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 3.

On **National Eat a Hoagie Day**, enjoy \$1 off hoagies from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 14.

OWCB's **Oktoberfest** features new beers, food, pretzels, meat necklaces, and more from 6-10 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 17.

The Secret Ingredient

Every Monday in July, August and September is **55+ and Fabulous Day**, when shoppers ages 55 and older save 10% off one item.

On **National Fashion Day**, Saturday, July 9, shoppers receive 20% off one item.

On **National Gorgeous Grandma Day**, Saturday, July 23, all grandmothers receive 20% off one item. Must show pictures of the grandkids for proof!

To celebrate **back-to-school** season, **teachers** receive 20% off one item from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 6.

On **National Friendship Day**, Sunday, Aug. 7, friends who shop together in the store each receive 20% off one item.

On **National Prosecco Day**, Wednesday, Aug. 13, enjoy a drink from the prosecco bar while shopping.

On **Labor Day**, Monday, Sept. 5, shoppers wearing red, white, and blue receive 20% off one item.

On **National Coloring Day**, Wednesday, Sept. 14, the store hosts a "Color Me Calm" celebration with light hors d'oeuvres and wine from 6-8 p.m.

On **National Scarf Day**, Tuesday, Sept. 27, all scarves are 20% off, and shoppers who come in wearing a scarf will receive 20% off one item.

AVE MARIA UNIVERSITY ATHLETICS

Schedule is subject to change. Check www.avemariagryrenes.com for information.



COURTESY PHOTO

OASIS The Kitchen Lounge offers respite from the heat with a variety of food and drink specials through the summer.

Tuesday, Aug. 23

Women's Soccer vs. The Master's University (CA) at 8 p.m.

Wednesday, Aug. 31

Women's Soccer vs. Saint Leo at 7 p.m.

Saturday, Sept. 3

Football vs. Lawrence Tech (MI) at 7 p.m.

Saturday, Sept. 3

Men's Soccer vs. Johnson at noon

Tuesday, Sept. 6

Men's Soccer vs. Florida College at 3 p.m.

Saturday, Sept. 10

Women's Soccer vs. Florida College at 7 p.m.

Wednesday, Sept. 14

Volleyball vs. St. Thomas, TBA

Wednesday, Sept. 14

Women's Soccer vs. Florida National at 1 p.m.

Saturday, Sept. 17

Women's Soccer vs. Pikeville (KY) at 7 p.m.

Saturday, Sept. 17

Men's Soccer vs. Florida National at 4 p.m.

Wednesday, Sept. 21

Volleyball vs. Southeastern, TBA

Saturday, Sept. 24

Men's Soccer vs. Florida Memorial at 7 p.m.

Wednesday, Sept. 28

Volleyball vs. Warner, TBA

Saturday, Oct. 1

Football vs. SEU at 7 p.m.

Wednesday, Oct. 5

Men's Soccer vs. St. Thomas at 7 p.m.

Saturday, Oct. 15

Men's Soccer vs. Warner at 7 p.m.

Saturday, Oct. 22

Football (homecoming) at 7 p.m.

Saturday, Oct. 29

Men's Soccer vs. SCAD at noon

■ AVE MARIA RESIDENTS ONLY

Organizers request preregistration for these resident-only events via the Ave Maria Master Association (AMMA) calendar at www.avemariamasterassociation.com. For more information, call 239-867-4322.

Creative Corner

This fun recurring event in the AMMA activities room features art and crafts activities for kids ages 8 and up from 9-11 a.m. every Wednesday in July. The \$4 cost per child

includes all needed supplies.

OnSpot Mobile Dermatology

This state-of-the-art mobile dermatological practice will be in the community serving Ave Maria residents from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. July 6, Aug. 5, and Sept. 13 in the parking lot at the corner of Avila Avenue and Roma Street. To schedule an appointment, call 941-444-0011 or visit www.onspotdermatology.com/avemaria.

Ave Maria Stewardship Community District (AMSCD) Meetings

Monthly AMSCD meetings are open to the public starting 9 a.m. on the first Tuesday of every month in the AMMA meeting room. Upcoming meetings are July 12, Aug. 2, and Sept. 13.

Mosquitoes and Me Educational Day Camp

Helping kids avoid becoming a mosquito's supper, this event in the AMMA activities room includes a look at larvae during different stages of a mosquito's life cycle, tips to protect people, pets, and homes from the pests, and a mosquito-themed craft activity. The 1-2:30 p.m. camp is split as an elementary school session on Wednesday, July 13, and a middle school session on Wednesday, July 27. Admission is free and parents are welcome.

Coffee with a "Twiss"

This casual meeting with AMMA Executive Director Kim Twiss is a time for homeowners to ask questions and get updates about Ave Maria's Master Association and community news. Upcoming meetings are in the AMMA meeting room from 6-7 p.m. Tuesday, July 14, and Thursday, Sept. 8.

Kitchen Chemistry Science Summer Camp

Super Science & Amazing Art brings laughs, amazement and learning to Ave Maria youth with slime, snacks, mad-science mixtures, bubbling potions, color-changing concoctions and more. Kids ages 7-12 will have a blast from 8:30 a.m.-noon Monday-Friday, July 18-22, at North Park.

Luxury Wine Tasting

Join your neighbors for a sophisticated evening of wine tasting and conversation from 6-8 p.m. Friday, Aug. 12, in the AMMA events room. The \$40 per-person cost includes a selection of four wines and a lavish charcuterie board.

ALL AROUND AVE MARIA



COURTESY PHOTO

Head to the Ave Maria Water Park for swim lessons, water exercise classes, and simple summer fun.

From page 15

Back to School Bash

Before school starts, it's time for one last party at the Ave Maria Water Park from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 13. The education-themed, family-friendly entertainment includes book relay races, apple tosses down the slides and other fun games. Admission is free for water park pass holders and \$5 for all others.

Empty Bowls Painting Party

As part of its annual fundraising efforts to fight hunger in Southwest Florida, Empty Bowls Naples (EBN) comes to the AMMA activity room from 3-5 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 17, for a bowl painting party. A \$10 donation entitles each participant to a bowl and painting supplies. A second painting party is

planned for 6-8 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 12. Painted bowls can be sold for \$25 at EBN's annual event in January to benefit food insecure families.

New Homeowners Social and Orientation

New Ave Maria homeowners are invited to a social networking session at 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 25, in the AMMA meeting room. A presentation by the association follows at 6 p.m. will give attendees plenty of helpful information about living in the community and the various organizations operating in town.

Labor Day Luau

This adults-only Labor Day party is at the Ave Maria Water Park from 6-9 p.m. Monday, Sept. 5. The \$25 cost per person includes a delicious feast and live music.

Medicare Seminar

"Medicare Mary" comes to town from 10-11 a.m. Monday, Sept. 12, to offer residents the most current information on Medicare benefits. Light refreshments will be served for this free event in the AMMA meeting room.

Blue Zone Programming

Ave Maria is a Blue Zones Project community. Check the AMMA calendar for upcoming programs, including a purpose workshop, wine tasting, a healthy living speaker series, and other activities designed to promote healthier living. To learn more about the Blue Zones Project, visit www.southwestflorida.bluezonesproject.com or pick up the Blue Zones publications in the AMMA lobby.

Adult Games Group

All summer long, adults looking for a friendly game of cards (Skip-Bo, Sequence, and others) or Mexican Train (dominoes) are welcome to join the group from 1-4 p.m. every Monday and Thursday in the AMMA card room.

Moms and Toddlers Thursdays

Moms and their little ones can gather from 10 a.m. to noon every Thursday for playtime and socialization. Check the AMMA website calendar for the location, which rotates between the AMMA community room and the Ave Maria Water Park.

Swim Lessons

The Ave Maria Water Park offers an eight-lesson program sanctioned by the American Red Cross that teaches kids how to swim and be safe in the water. Morning lessons are Monday-Thursday for two weeks, either July 11-21 or July 25-Aug. 4. Weekend lessons are Saturday mornings and Sunday evenings over a four-week

period from July 9-31. The eight 45-minute lessons are priced at \$65 and grouped by age: water babies (6 months to 3 years old), preschoolers (3-5 years old) and youth (6-12 years old).

**Families must register in person at the water park. For more information, call 239-348-8384 or email kellie.powell@fsresidential.com.

Water Exercise Classes

Thanks to the buoyancy of water, exercising in the pool is a great way for people of all ages and abilities to safely get a good workout. Ave Maria Water Park has one-hour morning classes that alternate between aerobics and muscle-toning routines. In July, classes are held at 8 a.m. Monday-Thursday and Saturday. Starting in August and through May 2023, they will be at 9 a.m. Monday-Wednesday and Saturday. Residents ages 13 and above are welcome. The cost is \$5 per class or \$65 for 20 classes. All necessary equipment is provided, including resistance gloves, noodles, pool buoys and barbells. For more information, call 239-348-8384 or email kellie.powell@fsresidential.com

Men's Pick-up Soccer




Players 16 and older looking for a good workout and team camaraderie are welcome to join these resident-organized games at 6 p.m. every Wednesday and Sunday on soccer field #2 in North Park.

Quest Martial Arts Academy Classes

Led by Kenny Quintero, a 20-year veteran instructor, these martial arts classes at 5 p.m. every Monday and 10 a.m. Saturday teach discipline and self-defense techniques while students hone their focus, have fun, and get fit. Classes are held in the AMMA event room. 🌟

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“ Kathleen has a tremendous knack for understanding exactly what you need and guiding you through the selection process. The final product is even better than what I hoped, staying with in my budget! ~ Penny N. ”

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AVE MARIA COMMUNITIES



AVALON PARK

About the community

From the \$400,000s-\$700,000s

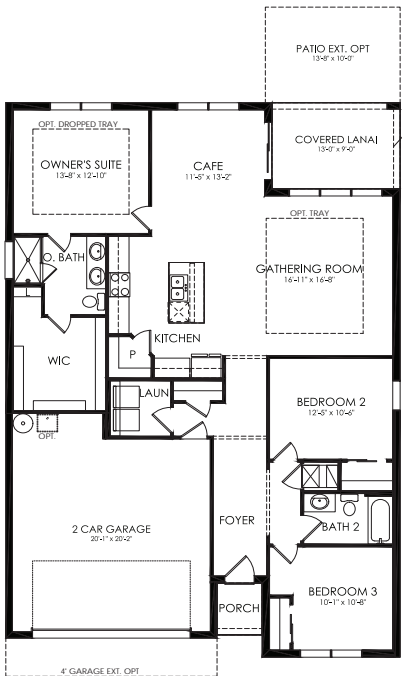
It's easy to stay active and have family fun at Avalon Park. Located within walking or biking distance to downtown Ave Maria, Avalon Park attracts families looking for exceptional schools, close proximity to neighborhood parks, and plenty of living space. Avalon Park offers spacious homesites, unique architectural exteriors, and 11 consumer-inspired one- and

two-story single-family homes that combine Pulte Homes' signature quality construction and personalized design opportunities. With home designs including up to seven bedrooms and 6½ bathrooms in 5,000-plus square feet of living space, you are sure to find your dream new home to fit your family's needs now and in the future.



As one of the nation's largest and most respected homebuilders with more than 70 years of homebuilding experience, Pulte Homes takes pride in putting that experience to work for you. With insightful, consumer-inspired home designs, Pulte houses offer the best in livability, with personalization options

and versatile living spaces to make everyday moments easier and more enjoyable. With a clear focus on quality construction and a simplified buying experience, Pulte Homes will help you get into your dream home easily. That's More Life Built In®, and that's exactly what you'll find at Avalon Park.



- Cedar
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 - 1,662 square feet
 - Three bedrooms
 - Two bathrooms
 - Two-car garage

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239-842-1657



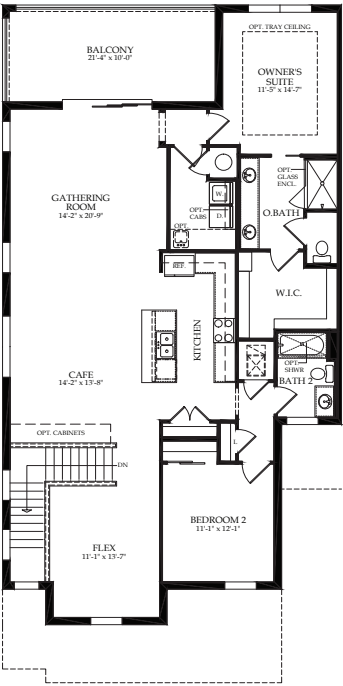
Del Webb[®] NAPLES

About the community

From the \$300,000s-\$600,000s

Del Webb Naples brings premier resort-style amenities and a lifestyle nothing short of extraordinary to Ave Maria. Here, daily possibilities for new adventures await. Where every day is different – and entirely up to you. From a dip in the pool to a friendly game of pickleball, in Del Webb Naples you'll find countless opportunities to grow, thrive, and enjoy those new passions you've been waiting to explore. Del Webb Naples provides amenities, programs, and support needed for health and wellness, conveniently

located right where you live. No matter how full or fulfilling you want your days to be, you'll find a way to energize your mind, body, and spirit the way you've always wanted to. Enjoy golf, bocce ball, bicycling, dance instruction, art, endless ways to socialize, and opportunities to give back to the community that surrounds you. No matter one's stage in life, in Del Webb Naples you'll never cease to be amazed at how rich your days can be. We believe you'll like it here.



Del Webb[®]

No one understands the importance of community like Del Webb. Del Webb communities are an extension of the homeowners who live there – a collection of passions and activities you love to enjoy with others. When you choose to build in a Del Webb 55+ active adult community, you get the benefit of more than six decades

of homebuilding experience. With homes designed for how you live, including the features that matter most to you, all backed by a warranty you can rely on, you'll feel secure now and into the future. Our streamlined process makes it easy for you to build the home you've always wanted in the kind of vibrant community you've been looking for.

Spoonbill

- Carriage home
- Starting from the mid \$300,000s
- 1,815 square feet
- Two to three bedrooms
- Two bathrooms
- One-car garage

Del Webb Naples
6028 Victory Drive, Ave Maria, FL 34142
239-842-9643



About the community

Maple Ridge at Ave Maria is a thoughtfully designed community with a myriad of home designs, all of which combine beautiful curb appeal with impressive interior layouts built for modern lifestyles. CC Homes is the builder behind this community and they are among the many reasons Ave Maria has become such a rapidly growing neighborhood attracting new residents from the Gulf Coast, Southeast Florida and beyond. With more than 75 years of combined experience in South Florida real estate, Mr. Armando Codina and Mr. Jim Carr along with Mr. Andres Miyares have set a new standard for quality new construction homes in desirable communities, with a wide range of pricing from entry-level to prestigious exclusivity. CC Homes

communities throughout Florida have been recognized for their incredible market appeal, outstanding quality, and resident satisfaction time and time again, having built thousands of homes and residences. Homes built by CC Homes are designed to improve people's lives. Modern features, smart floor plans, and upscale amenities combine for the ultimate Florida lifestyle. Homeowners at Maple Ridge are pampered with high-end designer features included in the base price. Maple Ridge neighborhoods include a brand-new clubhouse for residents with resort-style pool and cabanas, fitness center, billiard room, exercise park, concierge, coffee bar, exhibition kitchen, and kids' room.

New contemporary homes available now at Maple Ridge. Tour new models today.



Starting from the low \$400,000s

CC Homes is ranked as one of the top five new home builders in South Florida and Southwest Florida, offering affordable single-family luxury in Ave Maria's Maple Ridge neighborhoods. Homeowners are pampered with high-end designer features included in

the base price. Maple Ridge neighborhoods include a brand-new clubhouse for residents with resort-style pool and cabanas, fitness center, billiard room, exercise park, concierge, coffee bar, exhibition kitchen and kids' room.



Harbour

- 3,522 a/c square feet
- Four to six bedrooms
- 3½ to 5½ bathrooms
- Ground floor owners suite
- Two- or three-car garage

Maple Ridge
5009 Alonza Avenue, Ave Maria, FL 34142
833-729-1783 | www.MapleRidgeFL.com



About the community

As part of the highly sought after new home community, Maple Ridge at Ave Maria-Silverwood offers exciting residential choices to buyers. Silverwood provides homeowners the perfect home at a great value. All of these single-family homes are beautifully designed with Mediterranean-inspired architecture and an inviting array of designer features included as well as some custom options available. Both Silverwood and Maple Ridge have a superb location within Ave Maria, so residents benefit from a great school district and sense of community.

Floor plan spotlight: The Huntington is a new construction, one-story home with three bedrooms, two baths, great room, eat-in kitchen, storage, master suite with walk-in closet and attached garage. Premium features included that are standard include designer brand faucets and fixtures, and tile flooring. Gourmet kitchens have stainless steel appliances, European-style wood cabinetry and quartz countertops. A spa-like master bathroom features double sinks with quartz vanity tops and a spacious shower.



Stay tuned for new phase release announcement.

CC Homes is ranked as one of the top five new home builders in South Florida and Southwest Florida, offering affordable single-family luxury in Ave Maria's Maple Ridge neighborhoods. Homeowners are pampered with high-end designer features included in

the base price. Maple Ridge neighborhoods include a brand-new clubhouse for residents with resort-style pool and cabanas, fitness center, billiard room, exercise park, concierge, coffee bar, exhibition kitchen and kids' room.



Huntington

- Model home is now open for viewing.
- 1,630 a/c square feet
 - Three bedrooms
 - Two bathrooms
 - His and hers walk-in closets in master bedroom
 - One-car garage

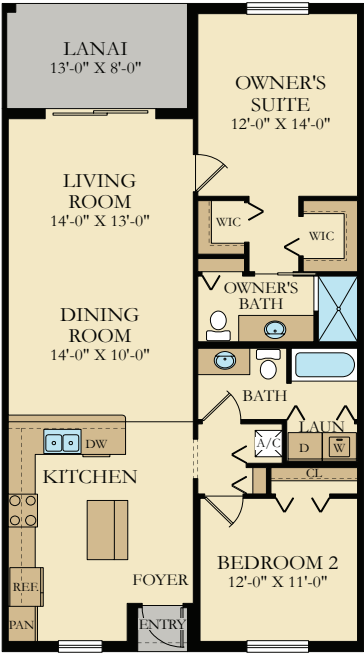
Maple Ridge
5009 Alonza Avenue, Ave Maria, FL 34142
833-729-1783 | www.MapleRidgeFL.com



About the community

Lennar is excited to bring its popular Everything's Included® homes and resort lifestyle amenities to the charm, convenience, and values of Ave Maria. The National Golf & Country Club will offer a fresh coastal aesthetic throughout the home designs and on-site amenities including an 18-hole Gordon Lewis-designed golf course, complimented by world-class amenities for the entire family to enjoy. A variety of floorplans will be offered in Terrace and Veranda condominiums, coach homes, and executive and estate single-family homes. The National Golf & Country Club will feature

its own clubhouse with a pro shop, formal and casual dining, a resort-style pool and spa, fitness center with yoga/aerobics room, spa treatment rooms and beauty salon. Active residents can take advantage of Har-Tru tennis courts, pickle and bocce ball, a putting green, chipping area, and a driving range. This all-encompassing amenity campus is designed to bring the community together, with spaces for friends new and old to gather. Whether you are a seasonal resident or looking to lay down roots, The National Golf & Country Club has the ideal home for you.



Arbor

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Starting from the \$200,000s

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Sales and summer sizzle at Ave Maria with new models and more to explore

BY Nanci Theoret

Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

More buyers continue to make Ave Maria their new hometown with year-to-date home sales in 2022 on pace for another record year, according to the town’s four homebuilders and Barron Collier Companies, developer of the 11,000-home community.

“Sales in Ave Maria have been increasing year over year,” says Michelle Mambuca, marketing and public relations manager for Barron Collier Companies. “We have a variety of homes — single-family, multifamily, multigenerational, and affordable homes starting in the \$200,000s. Really, we have something for everyone.”

By late June, sales were at 357, inching toward a third year for Ave Maria’s inclusion on the annual list of the nation’s top 50 best-selling master-planned communities. The town debuted in the No. 39 spot for 2020 and jumped to No. 24 in 2021, with 506 and 646 sales, respectively.

“Ave Maria’s strong sales and growing Town Center show that families, active adults, and businesses are all attracted to the town,” says Cee Cee Marinelli, director of development for Ave Maria. “We have seen a significant increase in demand for office and retail space due to accelerated residential growth. Entrepreneurs understand the great opportunity they have to open a business in town.”

With 3,100 rooftops, a growing commercial and retail hub, outdoor recreation, new amenities and designer-furnished model homes recently opened or on the horizon, newcomers and visitors this summer can experience the town and lifestyle much like a resident. As summer heats up, they can stop by the Welcome Center for cold refreshments and a treat for children and learn more about the town, its neighborhoods, builders, and homes.

“We have more than 25 model homes and offer so much to do,” Mrs. Mambuca says. “Visitors can shop, grab a bite to eat, enjoy ice cream at Meltz or have a cold beer at Oil Well Craft Beer.” The Town Center has all the conveniences residents want and need, with a Publix, retail shops, restaurants, and



COURTESY PHOTOS

The entrance to The National by Lennar, where construction has started on numerous outdoor amenities.

more coming, she adds.

Visitors are also encouraged to check out Ave Maria’s many amenities. Outdoor fitness opportunities abound at the water park, playground, soccer and baseball fields, amphitheater, dog park, trails, and sports courts. The town also offers an indoor fitness center and is home to Ave Maria University, a K-12 Catholic school, and The Palm preschool for children ages 2-4. A Collier County public elementary school is expected to welcome its first students in 2025.

Golfers can also schedule tee times at The National Golf & Country Club, Lennar’s year-old, Gordon Lewis-designed 18-hole championship golf course and bundled golf community.

At the Welcome Center, town ambassadors offer an insider’s look at life in Ave Maria and are happy to provide lunch, happy hour, and dinner recommendations. Displays introduce guests to the town’s builders, homes, and neighborhoods, and offer peeks into future plans.

Summertime visitors will also be among the first to tour Ave Maria’s newest models, including two coach homes at The National, three consumer-inspired floor plans in Pulte Homes’ Avalon Park neighborhood, CC Homes’ popular selections in Maple Ridge, and homes for active adults in Del Webb Naples.

Model homes are open daily and include condominiums, attached villas, and single-family homes overlooking lakes, preserves, and golf courses. The homes showcase each the builder’s range of options and flexible floor plans that can include three-car garages, home offices, and guest casitas.

“Buyers can customize and design their home to make it exactly what they want,” says Mrs. Mambuca.

As recent homebuyers from South Florida have discovered, homes in Ave Maria are substantially less than the price of their Miami and Fort Lauderdale counterparts.

Maple Ridge

CC Homes’ two-story Harbour in Ave Maria’s Maple Ridge neighborhood is priced from \$600,900, compared to \$1.2 million for the same

home in Broward County, says Chelsea Kimmey, director of marketing for the Coral Gables-based builder. The Harbour’s 3,522-square-foot floor plan offers options for up to six bedrooms, a three-car garage, and a private casita. The casita has a sitting room, small kitchen area, and separate bedroom with full bathroom and walk-in closet, making this a popular choice for multi-generational families.

“Sales have been tremendous at Ave Maria,” says Ms. Kimmey. “People are coming from high-tax states like New York and California to escape the chaos. They want to live in a laid-back neighborhood, have outdoor spaces, and a place to work from home.”

CC Homes has eight models in Maple Ridge with two to five bedrooms, dens and 1,500 to 4,000 square feet. A neighborhood of winding tree-lined streets hugged by water and preserves, Maple Ridge offers private amenities at The Club at Maple Ridge, including a resort-style pool, exercise park, pickleball, a playground, and a 10,000-square-foot clubhouse with a fitness center, exhibition kitchen, party and craft rooms, a card lounge, coffee bar, kid’s room, and massage room.

The National

The National, Lennar’s 1,300-home gated golf community, had recorded 175 year-to-date sales by May 23, up 150 percent from the same period in 2021, according to Christina Traver, director of marketing for the national homebuilder’s Southwest Florida division. Sales of single-family executive and estate homes started in March 2020; condominium terrace and veranda model



The Harbour by CC Homes, one of the builder’s eight models in Maple Ridge, is priced from \$600,900. The same home in Broward County starts at \$1.2 million.



Models of Arrowhead, above, and the Bay Creek, above right, are opening in July in The National. The coach homes by Lennar have three bedrooms, two baths, and three-car garages.

homes opened earlier this year.

Lennar is debuting its first coach homes during a July 16 grand opening of two designer-furnished models. Featuring only four homes per building and two floor plans, the three-bedroom, two-bath residences include the ground-floor Arrowhead with 1,741 square feet and the second-floor Bay Creek unit with 2,110 square feet, a tandem three-car garage, and elevated views of golf course or water.

“The coach homes are right in the middle of our five products at The National in terms of space and pricing,” Ms. Traver says. “They live like a single-family home, have an attached garage, and the low maintenance of multifamily.”

“These are newer floor plans that are open and bright,” adds Scott Schilling, area sales manager for Lennar. “The three-car garage is a big feature, especially in such a golf cart-centric community like Ave Maria. It’s a huge selling point, as is the bundled golf. Golfers rave about the course.”

Lennar has started construction of outdoor and sports amenities that include a pool, chickee bar, tennis center, pickleball and bocce courts, a spa, and fitness center with sauna. With casual and formal dining, a future clubhouse will also have hair and nail salons.

Avalon Park

Pulte Homes’ new floor plans in Avalon Park were designed with input from consumer focus groups. Illustrated by three new decorated models, they address the needs and wants of today’s homebuyers, including flexibility for dens/home offices to accommodate the new work-from-home reality brought on by the global pandemic.

“The models really stand out,” says Shirley Jerezano, general sales manager in Lee and Collier counties for the national homebuilder’s Southwest Florida division. It’s best to experience them in person and see the many ways our homes can be personalized,” she adds.

The 4,272-square-foot Roseland, offering up to six bedroom and six baths, highlights sought-after features like a three-car garage, multipurpose flex room, and the option of converting a two-story overlook to a spacious loft. The Roseland’s ground-floor game room provides space for a couch and a trio of desks. The home also has a walk-in pantry and staging area between kitchen and formal dining room, lots of storage, and a second-floor master suite and laundry room.

The Roseland is one of the largest of Avalon Park’s 11 floor plans, which offer three to seven bedrooms and 1,162 to 5,350-plus square feet under air.

With pocket parks woven into its tapestry of waterfront homes, Ms. Jerezano says Avalon Park appeals to a wide demographic, from first-time homeowners to growing families and empty nesters.

“There’s a lot of demand from move-up buyers who want more bedrooms and space,” she says. “That’s where these new floor plans come in.”

Pulte also offers several inventory homes with designer-selected finishes and a 60- to 90-day move-in window.

Back at Town Center

After exploring Ave Maria’s newest model homes, visitors can cool down at Town Center, now home to 40 businesses.

“The Ave Maria Town Center is a great place to gather,” says Mrs. Mambuca. “We have unique restaurants and shops that are mostly family and locally owned.”

Enjoy a signature cocktail and small bites at OASIS The Kitchen Lounge, which also hosts happy hour from 2-5 p.m. Monday-Friday.

At Meltz, sip a specialty milkshake or dig into the parlor’s famous rolled ice cream concoctions with traditional flavors such as cookies ‘n’ cream as well as the ore exotic Unicorn Explosion with fruity pebble ice cream and sprinkles and the Ferrero Bomb with generous pieces of its namesake Ferrero Rocher chocolate.

Sample the local flavor by ordering the Glades Haze New England-style IPA or Droim Leathan, an Irish red ale, both brewed on-site at Oil Well Craft Beer, which was named Florida’s best beer bar in 2019 by CraftBeer.com. Located in the Park of Commerce, it’s a favorite among locals.

Mrs. Mambuca also recommends visitors check out the finds at Blue Boutique, one of only two Goodwill Industries designer boutiques in Southwest Florida. 🌻



COURTESY PHOTOS

Golfers are raving about the course at The National.

“Sales have been tremendous at Ave Maria. People are coming from high-tax states like New York and California to escape the chaos.”

— **Chelsea Kimmey**
director of marketing
for CC Homes



One of the largest homes offered by Pulte Homes in the Avalon Park neighborhood, the Roseland has 4,272 square feet and can be configured with up to six bedrooms and six baths. The builder offers 10 other floor plans in Avalon Park as well.



“Everybody is happy when they eat ice cream. We deliver instant satisfaction. I love to see toddlers screaming with excitement, and to watch customers take selfies in front of our giant mural by local artist Manuela Cason. It means a lot that we can provide this opportunity for people to have fun and bond a little bit.”

— Phil Stocton, Maple Ridge resident and Meltz co-owner



Brian Frometa is ready to cool down with a dish of Cookies ’n’ Cream at Meltz, where he stands in front of the ice cream shop’s colorful mural by local artist Manuela Cason.

SANDRA YEYATI / AVE MARIA SUN

SUMMER

From page 1

Meltz in your mouth

Consider yourself lucky to live so close to an awesome, family-owned ice cream emporium where sweet treats can cool you down just about any time. Made to order with fresh ingredients, Meltz desserts are handcrafted to delight the taste buds. Their rolled ice cream starts with a proprietary liquid base that’s blended with customer-selected toppings, poured on a flash-freeze pan and fashioned into rolls using a special spatula. More than 40 toppings stand ready to ramp up the flavor punch.

Also on the menu are small-batch premium ice creams (including sugar-free and vegan options), made-to-order crepes stuffed with goodies like sliced bananas and Nutella, ginormous sundaes served with several spoons for sharing, and chocolate-covered key lime pie shipped directly from Key West.

“For me, the whole environment of sitting down with family and friends to enjoy some ice cream is absolutely nostalgic and one of the best feelings,” says Phil Stocton, a Maple Ridge resident and Meltz co-owner with his wife Patricia, who runs daily operations with their 18-year-old daughter, Amanda, a sophomore at Ave Maria University. The couple’s 20-year-old son, Nick, helps when he’s home from Florida International University in Miami, and Donahue Academy fourth-grader Lucy often stops by with friends to savor the merchandise.

“Everybody is happy when they eat ice

Summer’s here in all its glory
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Top: Amanda Stocton prepares rolled ice cream to order at Meltz. Above: Nick Stocton with a heaping dish of espresso chip.

cream,” Mr. Stocton says. “We deliver instant satisfaction. I love to see toddlers screaming with excitement, and to watch customers take selfies in front of our giant mural by local artist Manuela Cason. It means a lot that we can provide this opportunity for people to have fun and bond a little bit.”

At 5076 Annunciation Circle, Meltz is open from 2-8:30 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 1-9 p.m. Friday, and noon-9 p.m. on weekends.

Games galore

New to Ave Maria Town Center, Way Out Toys & Games has something for everyone. There are Pokemon trading cards and Dungeons & Dragons and Funko Pop collectibles. There are DC and Marvel Silver Age comic books and vintage “Back to the Future” and “Jaws” movie posters. There’s even a room full of pinball machines that local wizards can play for just \$1 per game.

For 25 years, proprietor and Ave Maria resident Shawn Jones has owned and operated similar stores in five states, including one at Coastland Center Mall in Naples. “People have been wanting more entertainment here,” he says. “Ave Maria is now big enough to support this kind of store.”

Watch for news about card game tournaments coming soon.



SANDRA YEYATI / AVE MARIA SUN
Way Out Toys and Games owner Shawn Jones holds an early Ironman action figure and a valuable vintage Marvel comic.



The Ave Maria Water Park is the best place in town to make a splash this summer. This picture was taken at the park's "Splash into Summer" party on June 4.

At 5064 Annunciation Circle, Suite 107, Way Out Toys and Games is open from noon-6 p.m. Friday-Sunday. For updates, visit www.facebook.com/wayouttoysandgames.

Ave Maria Water Park

Nothing says "summer fun" like the Ave Maria Water Park – a poolside wonderland with a remarkable array of amenities and settings. Adventurers seeking speed and splashes gravitate to the two giant waterslides, while sporty types can turn to four 25-meter lap

lanes, a beach volleyball court, and water exercise classes to stay fit and fabulous. Little tykes love to wade and swing and slosh in their very own shallow pool with colorful slides and jungle-gym features, and grownups looking for a spa-style staycation luxuriate in the resort-style pool and cascading spa. There's something for everyone. Read about new additions — including the revamped Cannonball Cafe, a heftier cadre of lifeguards to keep everyone safe, and Amer-

SEE SUMMER, A28 ►

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MINUTES AWAY
FROM MORE



SUMMER

From page 25

ican Red Cross swimming lessons for children as young as 6 months — on page A14. Daily, monthly, quarterly, and annual pricing options make this an affordable summer option for the entire family. The park is at 4015 Anthem Parkway. For more information, call 239-348-8384.



COURTESY PHOTO

Camp Ave Maria — where young campers don't have cell phones, television, or movies — welcomes children ages 6-12 for the 14th year this summer.

Wholesome camp for kids

Now in its 14th year, Camp Ave Maria is popular for children ages 6-12 — as well as their parents — because it provides a safe and supervised setting for loads of fun, making friends, staying physically and mentally active, and learning new skills. Indoor and outdoor activities include relay races, obstacle courses, trivia contests, arts and crafts, talent shows, bingo, skits, scavenger hunts, and puppet shows. To incentivize civility and collaboration, when kids or their team win a game, perform a good deed, or exhibit positive behavior, they receive tickets to redeem for prizes they choose.

"I'm proud of the camp's ability to bring good old-fashioned fun to the children," says camp owner/director Karen Ledesma. "We don't allow any electronics. There are no cell phones, no TV watching, no movies. It's all-day fun, all summer long. The kids have a blast."

At 5068 Annunciation Circle, Suite 103, Camp Ave Maria runs through Aug. 5, and it's easy to jump in at any time throughout the summer. Families can choose from half-day



SANDRA YEYATI / AVE MARIA SUN

The Ave Maria Water Park is the best place in town to make a splash this summer. These pictures were taken at the park's "Splash into Summer" party.

camp (20 hours, morning or afternoon) at \$100 per week, or full-day camp at \$200 per week. Campers can sign up for partial weeks, and before/after care is also available. To register or for more information, call 239-261-2606, email campavemaria@comcast.net, or visit www.campavemaria.com.

Fun on the dance floor

Twice a week through Aug. 5, Ave Maria Dance Academy offers classes for kids ages 3 and older. "Dance classes are great for flexibility, coordination, motor skills, strengthening and conditioning," says Ms. Ledesma, who is also the owner/director of the dance academy.

"The children learn technique, how to follow directions, listening skills, and discipline," she says. "Working together toward an end goal, they feel a real sense of accomplishment while having fun and getting a sense of musicality and rhythm."

Classes offered on Tuesdays are Ballet I for ages 6-10, Jazz for ages 6 and older, and Ballet II for ages 11 and older. On Thursdays, the academy offers Wee Dance for ages 3-4, Ballet-Tap Combo for ages 5-6 and Hip Hop for those 5 and older. Classes are \$15 each. To register or learn more, visit www.avemariadance.com (click on the Summer Dance tab), call 239-261-2606, or email avemariadance@comcast.net. The academy is at 5068 Annunciation Circle, Suite 103.

Wacky wonders with science

Brought to North Park by the folks at Super Science & Amazing Art, this weeklong program promises kids ages 7-12 laughs, amazement, and lots of learning. Using items found in the kitchen and around the house, campers learn how to make goopy slime, bubbling potions, color-changing concoctions, and more. Activities run from 8:30 a.m.-noon Monday-Friday, July 18-22. Register via the Ave Maria Master Association calendar at www.avemariamasterassociation.com.

Sports camps at AMU

Ave Maria University (AMU) summer sports camps offer middle school and high school athletes one-on-one time with experienced coaches, giving them a feel for what it's like to be a team player at the college level. It's also a chance for AMU coaches to identify stars in the making and possibly offer them university scholarships.

This year, 100-150 students are expected to participate. Parents are welcome to watch the action from the stands.

Football Prospect Camp on Saturday, July 16, serves students in grades 9-12. "We put campers through positional drills and combine-style testing like the 40-yard dash, the shuttle run, and the broad jump, which helps us see how quick they are and helps them learn what they need to work on," says Patrick Colligan, director of AMU football

operations and prospect camp coordinator. Registration and check-in begin at 8:15 a.m., followed by a campus tour; camp activities run from 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. The cost is \$35 with preregistration at www.tinyurl.com/AMUprospect or \$40 cash on the day of the event.

AMU's Formula 6 Quarterback Clinic on Sunday, July 17, is for athletes in grades 8-12. During the Signal Caller Clinic from 8 a.m.-noon, campers take to the Gyrene field for coach-led drills and instruction. Cost for the morning is \$75.

After lunch, from 1:30-6 p.m., campers and high school coaches are invited into the classroom for a Chalk Talk, where collegiate coaches and offensive coordinators propose methods to improve footwork, get the most out of signal callers and integrate tempo into offensive maneuvers. The afternoon instruction is \$35. To register for either or both sessions, visit www.tinyurl.com/AMUquarterback.

Softball Prospect Camps for kids in grades 8-12 take place from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Friday-Saturday, July 29-30, and Saturday, Aug. 13.

"Three or four AMU coaches will be on site, providing instant feedback. We're ready to offer scholarships right away if they're good enough," says William Hampton, associate athletic director for AMU. "It's an opportunity to feel like a college athlete for a day and a chance to impress coaches and perhaps move down the road, as far as playing at the next level."

The cost, which includes a campus tour and lunch, is \$250 for both days in July or \$150 for just one day of camp in either July or August.

For more information about the football programs, email Patrick.colligan@avemaria.edu.

If you have questions about the softball camps, email william.hampton@avemaria.edu. 🌸



COURTESY PHOTO

Tiny dancers are proud of their summer accomplishments at Ave Maria Dance Academy.

PLANS

From page 1

Barron Collier Companies is also petitioning local and state lawmakers to amend

the boundaries of the Ave Maria Stewardship Community District to incorporate 1,000 acres of land recently purchased on Camp Keais Road to the east. Comprised of a developer- and publicly elected board of supervisors, the stewardship district was the first in Florida, approved by Collier County commissioners to address smart growth and estab-

lished in 2004 by a special act of the Florida Legislature to provide core infrastructure like roads and water management to support the developing community.

"We had the opportunity to buy land to the east at a reasonable price," Mr. Genson says. "We see a lot of growth potential and it makes more sense to bring the acreage into

Ave Maria, which will condense development in eastern Collier."

The extra acreage would also include additional amenities, parks, and retail and commercial development, says Mr. Genson.

The amendment will be presented during the 2023 legislative session and, if approved, take effect in July 2023. 🌸

FUN AROUND THE TOWN

Welcoming summer with Memorial Day festivities



Clara Fulkerson concentrates on a patriotic coloring project.



Josh Proctor and Chris Wasko entertain the crowd.



Chris Wasko



Onlookers seek shade wherever they can find it.



An engine from the Immokalee Fire Control District, above, delivers a much-welcomed spray to cool off revelers, top.



Kids of all ages are drawn to the inflatable water slide.



Josh Proctor



A float representing the local chapter of the United States Submarine Veterans waits for the parade.



Headed to the parade

CHRIS TILLEY / AVE MARIA SUN



COMPLEX

From page 2

benefits of living in Ave Maria and move to the town, it will help ensure prompt response to calls and provide other community services for all residents to enjoy.

The main 22,000-square-foot building has three bays that can hold six vehicles, including the ladder truck, medic unit, brushfire unit, and water tender. One wing has offices and a meeting/training room. The other wing provides living quarters for four firefighters and two medics who are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The support services captain works out of the 5,400-square-foot logistics building in the back of the complex. This building also houses the reserve fire engine (for use when the main engine is out for maintenance), hurricane and brushfire materials, and supplies such as hoses, boots, helmets, gloves, and air packs.

Energy-efficient elements such as light sensors and low-flow water were used in the construction, as well as smart technology to control features through an iPad.

The station is the first new facility in the Immokalee Fire Control District, which covers 234 square miles in Collier County, since its inception in 1953.

Funding for the \$10 million complex came from impact fees, not taxes.



The new emergency command center.



Cindy Esposito, Tony Esposito, Plainfield, Ill., Fire Chief Jon Stratton, and Karla Stratton, all homeowners in Del Webb Naples



Fire Chief Michael Choate and Collier County Sheriff Kevin Rambosk



Misty Patterson and Battalion Chief David Patterson



Pipe Sgt. Dave McDougall, a 24-year veteran who is stationed at the Estero fire department



State Rep. Lauren Melo, Florida Sen. Kathleen Passidomo, and Immokalee Fire Control District Commission Chair Anne Goodnight

A buy-a-brick program has already raised thousands of dollars to help purchase kitchen equipment such as a toaster oven and air fryer and remains in place for future needs and to support holiday parties and other appreciation events for first responders.

The 8-by-8-inch and 4-by-8-inch bricks surround the new complex's three flag poles and line the walkway to the main entrance. They range in price from \$75 to \$250 and can be ordered at www.immfire.com (click on Operations).



Fire Station 32 Capt. Jason Burr and Collier County EMS Chief Noemi Garcia



An SRO crowd turned out for the grand opening ceremony and celebration.





Fire Chief Michael Choate accepts a flag presented by Anderson Richardson, president of the Ave Maria Veterans Association.








Rev. John Andem of Ave Maria Parish blesses the new headquarters.



Retired Immokalee Deputy Chief Rita Greenberg, Fire Station 32 administrative assistant Alma Valladares, and Fire Station 32 Chief Financial Officer Becky Bronsdon








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FUN AROUND THE TOWN

Celebrating Derby Day at Oil Well Craft Beer



Kiara Gonzalez and Kelly Parker



Chris Bucheri, James Westerhouse, and David Altomare



Cindy Esposito and Tony Esposito



Becky Bestul



Nancy McGowan



Kathy Pike



Debbie Fornwall, chair and volunteer coordinator of the Ave Maria Master Association Social Committee



Chris Wasko



Nathan Morris and his children, Simon and Maggie



Alex and Veronica Alvarez with their children, Penelope, Jorge, and Blake



Dance Williams, owner of Oil Well Craft Beer, holding prizes for the Kentucky Derby hat contest

SANDRA YEYATI / AVE MARIA SUN

Loving the luau vibes at The Pub & Grill Ave Maria



Michael Cartamil strums his ukulele and sings Hawaiian love songs.



Madaline Joyce waits patiently to have her face painted.



Eric Morgan and friends play a game of cup pong.



CHRIS TILLEY / AVE MARIA SUN

FUN AROUND THE TOWN

Hopping to the 2022 Ave Maria Easter Egg Hunt



ANNA FULKERSON / AVE MARIA SUN

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For Maple Ridge residents, there’s no place like home

BY **ERICA FISH**
Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

Belonging is a fundamental human need, and being part of something where there’s new life and new opportunity is significant to any person and their family. Ave Maria, the fastest growing residential oasis in Southwest Florida, is no “cookie-cutter” community with limited lifestyle choices. People from all over have gravitated to this special place where the quality of living stems from the momentous abilities of strangers befriending each other, families establishing their roots, and business owners supporting one another.

That is the dream we can hope for when seeking residential satisfaction and sense of belonging.

“It feels like home coming here,” says Regi-

na Stano, lifestyle director at Maple Ridge. “A sense of community is a blessing and a luxury. We all have an influence over our well-being and that of others, and being able to serve such a place brings an immediate feeling of happiness ... It’s just different here, a beautiful different.”

From planning events to scheduling fitness classes, coordinating activities, and addressing community members’ needs, Ms. Stano goes above and beyond when connecting her residents and resonating with their life experiences.

“The joy of any situation is to go out and be with people,” she says. “Doing things and interacting is who we are here. Ave Maria residents don’t want to just sit in their homes.”

Many families migrate to Ave Maria because of its affordability and location. After Rachelle Gucwa-Christiansen settled in Maple Ridge with her husband and two kids, she left her corporate job and earned her health and wellness certifications. Then she started teaching yoga fitness classes at the Club at Maple Ridge, where her classes range from sessions for children as young as 3 to her popular GLAAM (glutes, legs, arms, abs and mind) workout series.

“My success here has been teaching people to embrace life as it comes,” Ms. Gucwa-Christiansen says. “Struggles can take a lot from you, but it is the people who work with such challenges who can make living again happen.”

Countless Ave Maria residents agree sense of place is no better affirmation when finding their purpose and next familial dreams. For the Martinez family, repairing was created by the kind efforts of neighbors who proved compassion, empathy, and loyalty could revive any weak spirit.

Sandy Martinez never expected that after living an active life with her husband and two daughters, she would fall ill with a rare immu-



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Rachelle Gucwa-Christiansen and Blake Christiansen, their daughter, Maya, and son, Blake

nocompromised disease. When Maple Ridge residents learned of the devastating news, they did not hesitate to step up and offer help. Neighbors took shifts cooking and cleaning. They drove Ms. Martinez to appointments and formed a support system for her daughters.

“Selflessness is something hard to come by these days,” Ms. Martinez says. “Every time I tell my story I try to say it without crying. The overwhelming gratefulness I have for this community is something I will always carry with me. Before I became ill, I was involved and wanted to support Ave Maria in any way I could. I wanted to show off this town, and I still do,” she adds. “All the support I gave my community came back in triple, even qua-

druple!”
As the town continues to grow, so do the generations that make Ave Maria a wonderful place to call home.

Racquel Cervera immigrated from Mexico to Miami. Even though she adjusted to the busyness of the city, she felt there was something missing from her life.

Then luck led Ms. Cervera and her husband to visit Ave Maria. They fell in love with the area and soon moved here. Their family followed shortly after.

Residing several houses and streets away are in-laws, grandparents, nieces, and nephews — all part of the “Cervera Clan” who have weekly gatherings and regular home and block



Regina Stano, left, and Maple Ridge resident Racquel Cervera



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Racquel Cervera, second from left, with members of the “Cervera Clan” who have also made the move to Ave Maria



Sandy Martinez, center, with her daughters, Natalie and Katherine

parties. They also collaborate with Ms. Stano on clubhouse events for the entire Maple Ridge community.

“Having family who live so close happened because of the safety and opportunities in this town,” Ms. Cervera says. “We support each other, we care for each other, and we continue to grow as this place grows with us.”

Restaurant owner and Ave Maria resident JD Damas followed in his father’s footsteps and became a chef. He’s cooked at The Ritz-Carlton, operated a food truck business, and recently opened a restaurant called the Food Rock Café in Estero near Florida Gulf Coast University. The food truck and restaurant operations are a family affair, involving both Mr. Damas’ wife, Jennifer, and their daughter, Cassidy.

The family was living in Golden Gate Estates when they realized they wanted more: a larger home with a yard for the kids to play in, top-rated schools, and a place where they could give back to others. They found all that — and more — in Ave Maria.

“People here look out for each other,” Mr. Damas says. “We give back. It’s not like this everywhere anymore.”

Always striving to put smiles on the faces of people in uniform, Mr. Damas regularly hosts lunches for Collier County service personnel. He recently brought his Food Rock food truck to the Maple Ridge clubhouse and provided meals to the first responders who serve Ave Maria.

“Food is my passion,” he says. “It’s made connections and has created many memories for me and my family. I don’t need to know you to help you,” he adds. “As long as I’m involved and engaged with this community, I’m succeeding.”

Belonging is a fundamental aspect in this town, and Ave Maria’s conveniences and connections have created unforgettable moments for many. Support, courtesy, and service — just three words, but also impactful actions making a difference for those who call this community home. 🌻



JD Damas, fourth from left, in front of his Food Rock food truck with Fire Chief Michael Choate, third from left, and first responders from the Immokalee Fire Control District, who had just enjoyed a complimentary meal. The food truck was parked at the Maple Ridge clubhouse.

COURTESY PHOTOS



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