

Ave Maria Sun

OCTOBER 2024

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Vol. V, No. 5

Joe Lampkin
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Beloved seasonal events return with exciting new additions
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MIDTOWN ON THE MAP

New dining, retail and community growth add to Ave Maria's expanding landscape



BY CARLIE ADMIRE
Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

THE HIGHLY ANTICIPATED Midtown Plaza has started to open its doors, representing a key milestone in Ave Maria's community development. In the coming months, all of the businesses will prepare to open and provide valuable goods and services to the community.

Over the past year, Barron Collier Companies (BCC), developer of Ave Maria has been working on the

construction of a 21,000-square-foot plaza that now includes a blend of retail, dining and medical facilities. The Midtown Plaza is the first commercial building constructed in the area in the last 15 years, complementing the community's notable residential growth.

"If you haven't been out to Ave Maria in a while, you probably wouldn't recognize it," Vice President of Commercial Real Estate at Barron Collier Companies Cee Cee Marinelli said. Midtown Plaza is located at 5360 Ave Maria Boulevard, prominently located on the main road and just south of the Town Center.

Marinelli continued, "It has been

SEE MIDTOWN, A12 ▶

AVE MARIA DEVELOPMENT / COURTESY PHOTOS
Ledo Pizza, known for Maryland-style pies, has partnered with Ave Maria University's athletics and offers a community-focused dining space in Midtown Plaza.

Golf cart awarded in Door to Door Model Home Tour

BY SANDRA YEYATI
Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

Ave Maria is a golf cart community, and this summer's Door to Door Model Home Tour campaign drove that point home in dramatic fashion. From June to August, visitors to the town's four premier home-builder sales centers and 25 designer-decorated homes were invited to register to win a new, premium golf cart valued at \$13,500. This thrilling opportunity was for non-residents only, and there was no obligation to buy a home.

The lucky winners are Diane and Serena Gagne and their family. The Gagnes were very impressed with Ave Maria after being informed by friends about the community's homes and activities, noting that these were suitable for their entire family.

"This was such an exciting surprise, and we are truly grateful for the generosity," the Gagne family said.

"Thank you for making such a positive community impact and for organizing such a fun and exciting event."

Increasingly, Ave Maria residents are selling one of their two cars and replacing it with a golf cart, allowing them to zip around town to visit their neighbors, get a few items at Publix, grab a bite to eat with friends, take their family to Sunday services or hit the pickleball courts with their kids. Some even sit in their golf carts while

SEE GOLF CART, A22 ▶



AVE MARIA DEVELOPMENT / COURTESY PHOTO
The Door to Door Model Home Tour offered visitors a chance to win a premium golf cart.

Ave Maria Sun

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Uniting residents' voices

BY SANDRA YEYATI

Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

The newly formed Ave Maria Civic Association (AMCA) had their first meeting this summer, at which time a board of directors and officers were elected: President John Lanham, Vice President Kevin Schang, Secretary/Treasurer Ronny Lambaste, Director Jose Cortina and Director Holly Powers, all of whom serve on a volunteer basis. The organization is set up as a self-governing nonprofit, and there are no paid positions.

Anyone living in Ave Maria is welcome to attend the quarterly meetings held at the Ave Maria Master Association (AMMA) offices in Town Center. An annual fee of \$10 per person is required to become a voting member. Although no specified agenda has been set, the group's Facebook page asserts that their purpose is to seek improvements in Ave Maria and surrounding areas, serve as a forum for members' concerns and provide information about how the community works.

"Facebook is the best place for residents to post issues, and then the board can take action on issues or refer people to the right entities that can address those issues," District 5 Collier County Commissioner Bill McDaniel said, who conceived of the AMCA, established the bylaws and helped obtain nonprofit certification.



MCDANIEL

"My brainchild was twofold: Let's get



a centralized place where anybody that lives in Ave Maria has a place to go, and then through that, it will help me garner up power from a unified voice of Ave Maria to get things effectuated in District 5," McDaniel explained. "Ave Maria is a wonderful town, but it's fragmented into subdivisions with seven or eight homeowners' associations, and then you have the Ave Maria Stewardship Community District, which builds and maintains the infrastructure. Some assets are owned by the district, some assets are owned by the county and some assets are owned by the individual HOAs, so there's not ever been a unified place for residents to go to seek relief or take care of issues or concerns that they may have going on with the community."

Another benefit of AMCA membership is community building. McDaniel said, "If you live in Del Webb Naples and there's a circumstance going on outside of this particular neighborhood, you don't have any place to go—same with

Maple Ridge or The National and all the other subdivisions that are there—so it's an avenue to stay connected with your neighbors and hear what's going on in the entire community."

McDaniel vows to attend all of the meetings. "It's an avenue for me to learn what's going on in the community and to extend communication with the community. I was in the county commission chambers in 2002 when Ave Maria was passed by the Board of County Commissioners, and I have watched the evolution of the town from that inception, so for me, it's a way of joining the community, creating advocacy, creating a common voice and then accomplishing what the residents are looking for. I will communicate with them as much as they want. It is the civic association of Ave Maria. It can evolve into whatever the community wants it to and I'll be as involved as they want me or as little as they want me. I'm not about big government. I'll help if you want me to; if not, carry on." 🌟

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Joe Lampkin joins as new parks and recreation manager

BY GLENN MILLER

Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

Joe Lampkin brings a unique blend of athleticism, business acumen and organizational expertise to his new role as parks and recreation manager at Ave Maria. His background seamlessly aligns with the needs of this growing community, reflecting a dynamic career path shaped by both sports and business.

Lampkin, 45, has a rich history in athletics. In 2000, he set a 100-meter sprint record at Fordham University, clocking in at 10.54 seconds—a record that still stands nearly 25 years later. Even today, he remains an active competitor, participating in masters track and field events.

Beyond his athletic achievements, Lampkin's business and organizational skills are just as impressive. After moving to Southwest Florida from Stamford, Connecticut in 2022, he and his wife, Taelese, founded Bx4 Fitness LLC in Naples.

Lampkin's business background includes nearly 20 years in the retail buying industry, with eight of those years spent at Citi Trends, a national retail chain. Now, he's applying the knowledge and experience he gained in both fitness and business to improve recreational opportunities in Ave Maria.

His connection to sports runs deep, starting with his upbringing in Cranston, Rhode Island, where he excelled in football, baseball and track. At Bishop Hendricken High School, he was a standout on the track, and later, at Fordham Uni-



Joe Lampkin, his wife Taelese and two of his three children.

COURTESY PHOTOS

versity, he continued to shine as a sprinter and relay runner. He even tried out for Major League Baseball teams, the Atlanta

Braves and Tampa Bay Devil Rays (as they were known then). Although he wasn't signed, Lampkin describes the experience



as "fun."

Now, his extensive sports background is benefiting Ave Maria. Bx4, his fitness business, focuses primarily on youth sports training, and his coaching at First Baptist Academy has further connected him to the community. This, in turn, led to his role in the Ave Maria Master Association.

"I reached out to Ave Maria to learn more and then came out to do some programs," Lampkin said.

Lampkin, his wife Taelese and three young children live in Naples, just a 20-minute drive from Ave Maria. In his new role, he plans to expand and enhance sports, fitness and recreational activities for the community, with a focus on fun, fitness and family.

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fun activities, sports and fitness events here to Ave Maria while utilizing the beautiful parks we have here," he said.

Lampkin has clear goals in mind, such as expanding fitness programs and collaborating with companies to promote healthier food options. He sees untapped potential in the town's parks and wants to increase their usage for various activities.

While no official plans have been announced yet, Lampkin aims to hold monthly events for residents to enjoy. He also wants to create more family-oriented programs that enhance Ave Maria's already strong community atmosphere.

At the moment, Lampkin is based in the Ave Maria Master Association's fitness center.

He's been impressed by the helpfulness of the staff. "Every five minutes, I have a question on how things work and how we get to do this," Lampkin said.

Lampkin is still mastering some of the logistical aspects of his new job, such as bringing in vendors and handling payments, but he's eager to learn and grow in the role. "I've gotten to learn how the systems work here," he said.

He's also been struck by the friendliness of the Ave Maria community.

"It's quite the pleasant surprise as you walk down the street and people say good morning and hello," Lampkin said.

His passion for sports and fitness shines through when discussing working with young athletes. "If you're a middle-schooler and you've never tried soccer, it can be discouraging if you're out there and you're playing with kids that maybe have played for a couple of years," he said.

Lampkin wants to instill confidence in Ave Maria's youth and help them develop both as athletes and individuals.



COURTESY PHOTOS

Joe Lampkin's business Bx4 focuses primarily on youth sports training. His business and coaching at First Baptist Academy has strengthened his connection with the community.

"I'm going to focus on bringing some fun activities, sports and fitness events here to Ave Maria while utilizing the beautiful parks we have here,"

— Joe Lampkin

To further enhance local programs, Lampkin is considering bringing in coaches and former professional athletes to mentor the town's young athletes. However, his vision extends beyond just elite athletes; he wants the programs to be accessible to all.

"The Ave Maria Master Association is open to all," Lampkin said.



His goal is to build a stronger, more connected community through sports and fitness. "We'll be trying a whole lot of new things. We will throw a bunch of things against the wall. A couple of things

are going to stick," he said.

Lampkin plans to survey residents to ensure the programs cater to their needs and interests. "We're really going to try and cater to what the residents want." 🌟



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TreeHouse, Ave Maria's cover band with big dreams

BY JULIANNA PEREZ

Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

Local cover band TreeHouse has been rocking venues across Ave Maria for two years, earning their reputation as a high-energy, family-friendly music group.

The band's origin story dates all the way back to 2008, the year that lead vocalist Marti Fernandez and drummer Fredrick 'Bam' Scott met.

Both accomplished musicians in the Miami music scene, Fernandez and Scott met while performing at the same wedding. Their dynamic soon changed when they became industry collaborators and life partners.

"We started dating and realized that we were tired of the shenanigans of other bands," Scott said. "We could do the same thing on our own, have more control, make the money and be happy as musicians."

The first iteration of TreeHouse came to fruition in 2009, with Fernandez being the group's founding member.

"I booked my first gig at the Hard Rock," Fernandez said. "I put the band together and it was a four-piece. We did the rehearsals, went out there and killed it."

Scott, who was in a different band at the time, expressed hesitancy about forming a new group prior to TreeHouse's first performance. When he arrived at the venue, his expectations were exceeded.

"He came out after his gig. He went to the Hard Rock to see what was going on," Fernandez said. "He saw the whole room freaking out, then he wanted to be in the

band."

However, the version of TreeHouse that fans know, and love today would not hit the stage until 13 years after that initial performance. In 2021, the couple decided to leave Miami's music scene behind, setting their sights on Ave Maria.

It was then that Scott would reunite with Terrell Bryant, now the band's bassist.

Bryant, who also made the move from Miami to Ave Maria, had played a few venues with Scott almost 20 years prior to their reunion. As a result, the pair of musicians began working together again, hosting jam sessions in their homes.

"One day, we're like, 'Hey, we need a guitar player,'" Scott said. "So, we go to Guitar Center. He's playing bass. I'm playing drums, then, this guy walks by."

The band found their guitarist in musician Al Becker, who met Scott and Bryant while working at Guitar Center.

In 2022, TreeHouse officially made their debut as a four-piece ensemble at Ave Maria's popular spot Oil Well Craft Beer. Since then, the band has established itself as a local favorite, garnering praise from community members for its lively performances.

"The energy we bring, people can't help but feel like this is that good, 'I want to get up and dance' music," Bryant said. "I've had people say, 'We've come here to see bands, but you guys put on a show.'"

The group's upbeat energy is so infectious that it even radiates within the band. "That's one of the things that's really fun about this band; I'm not always in a great mood all the time, but these guys bring me up," Becker said.

With a versatile setlist that covers everything from the latest chart-toppers to soulful R&B tunes, TreeHouse has curated an entertainment experience that can be enjoyed by all age groups. "We keep it family-oriented so that kids and their grandparents can have fun," Scott said.

According to the band, plans to pro-

duce original music and garner national recognition are in the works. In the meantime, those looking to get their fix of TreeHouse's vibrant sound can do so by attending the group's upcoming performances at Ave Maria's signature festivals Taste of Ave and the Margarita & Taco Festival in 2025. 🌟



COURTESY PHOTO

The TreeHouse band from left to right: Terrell "Bag" Bryant on bass and vocals, Al "Sensei" Becker on lead guitar in the back, Frederick "Bam" Scott as the band leader, drummer and vocalist in the front center and Marti Fernandez on lead vocals.

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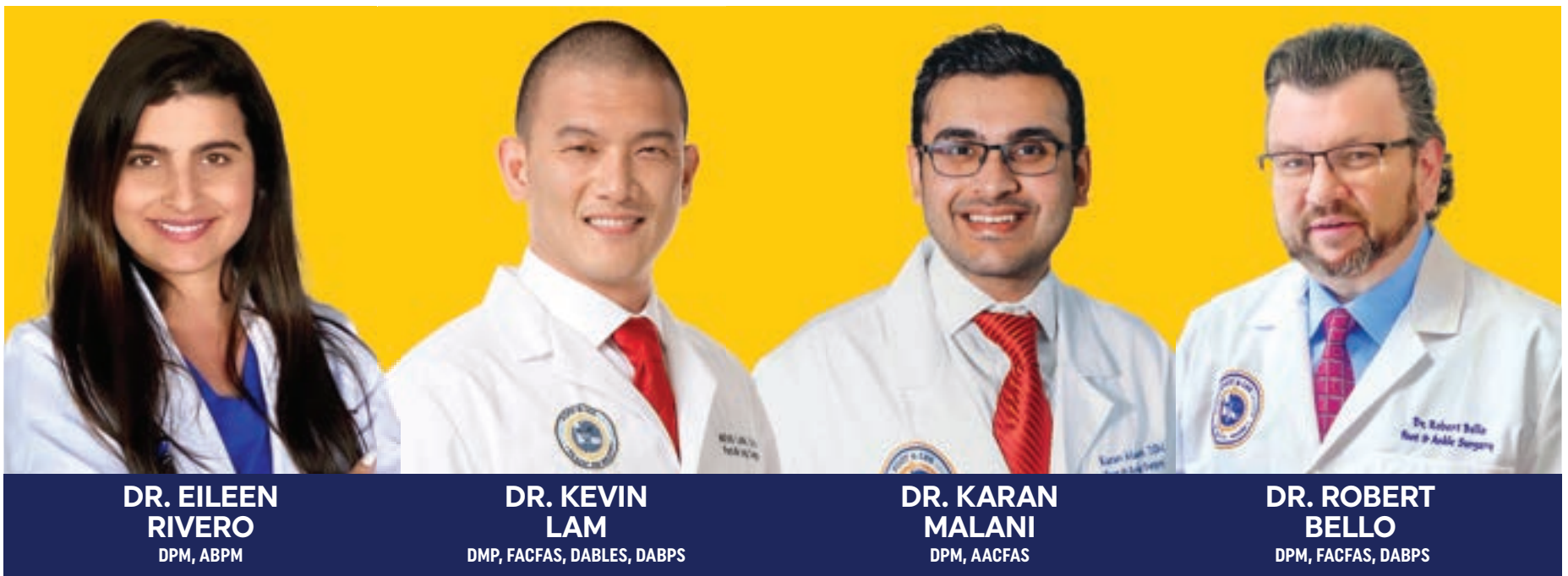


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Bill Grauel spends his retirement helping Habitat for Humanity

BY SANDRA YEYATI

Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

Some people take up golf, photography or pickleball when they retire, but Ave Maria resident Bill Grauel has chosen to dedicate his newfound free time to helping others at Habitat for Humanity—the global nonprofit that builds homes, communities and hope for people living in substandard conditions. Heavily dependent upon volunteer labor, the organization purchases land and materials with donations and builds affordable homes that are sold to qualifying families with no-interest loans.

Every weekday, Grauel spends about four to five hours at the Habitat for Humanity Immokalee office, helping in any way that he can. One of his principal tasks is to interview families that have applied for a Habitat dwelling. He visits their homes to understand their current living situation, asks questions about their employment and then prepares an evaluation that he presents to the board. Grauel’s work represents an important step in choosing the lucky families that will be able to join the Habitat family.

“Most of the people I interview have never owned their own home. They’re hard-working, good people trying to make a life for themselves and their families—very good at saving money—and they just want a place they can call home. A lot of them came from Haiti or Mexico with nothing. They work in the farm fields,” Grauel remarked. “The rental sit-



COURTESY PHOTO

Bill Grauel spends four to five hours every weekday at the Habitat for Humanity Immokalee office.



HABITAT FOR HUMANITY OF COLLIER COUNTY / COURTESY PHOTO

Kaicasa is Habitat for Humanity Immokalee’s latest project.

uation in Immokalee is not ideal. Many families are paying \$1,400 a month rent for substandard situations, and I think, ‘My God, how can they do it?’ You’ll see 10 or 12 of them living in a three-bedroom house and wonder how that happens, but they make it work.”

Habitat for Humanity has completed five projects in Immokalee. Their latest, Kaicasa, is a 280-acre tract of land just south of Farm Workers Village on

State Road 29, which will have about 280 two-story homes in fourplex configurations upon completion. It is the largest Habitat for Humanity project in the country. Two large construction crews work full-time at the site, while volunteers, including church groups on Saturdays, come by to help hammer nails and put up walls under supervision.

According to Grauel, “Each Kaicasa home, which has three or four bedrooms,

two-and-a-half baths and a one-car garage, sells for around \$280,000. People have to put up at least \$1,000 down, but we have subsidies they can apply for so they don’t have to pay anything until they sell the house. There’s no interest on the loan, so we collect only the principal, taxes, insurance and condo association fees. Many times, that payment comes out to be about \$1,110—lower than the rent they are paying for unlivable situations.

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HABITAT FOR HUMANITY OF COLLIER COUNTY / COURTEST PHOTO

Kaicasa will have about 280 two-story homes when completed.

It's a safe community, and they're getting a brand-new unit. Wow!"

One of the most memorable families he met was a widower with four children living in someone's garage with a Port-O-Potty outside as their bathroom. Grauel recalls the faces of those youngsters when they toured their brand-new, four-bedroom Kaicasa home. "The kids were so excited. They each got their own bedroom, and they had not one but two full bathrooms. They were just in heaven," he explained. "You don't know how good it feels to get to know a family, meet the kids and then when they get approved, go out to their new house. They hug you and thank you. Some of these folks don't

understand until you sit down with them and explain to them what they're getting. They can't believe that they can own a place like that in a neighborhood."

Grauel also runs a program called My Free Will at the Immokalee Habitat for Humanity office to help people write their wills using the completely free website FreeWill.com. "It's a very easy process, and I'm there to answer any questions. We've done almost 200 wills since last year, and they're completely legal, approved by the Florida Bar, with all the wording that you would get from an attorney."

Together with his wife Gerry, Grauel lived in Naples from 1984 through 2022

before moving into a two-bedroom condominium in the La Piazza above the Ave Maria Welcome Center. For more than 45 years, he served as a commercial real estate lender for numerous banks and, in that capacity, dealt with Habitat for Humanity in Naples.

"On behalf of the banks I was with, I used to buy mortgages from Habitat for Humanity to replenish their capital," Grauel explained. "They fund their own mortgages, so if you buy one of their homes, they give you an interest-free loan and you pay back the principal. After they close a bunch of mortgages—say a couple million dollars' worth—they'll turn around and sell them or put them

up against a loan with the bank so that they can get the capital back out to build more homes."

Believing strongly in the nonprofit's mission, Grauel also volunteered at the Habitat homesites. "I used to go out on Saturdays and volunteer to build houses for them. I did that for many years until I got a little older, and it got a little hotter," he recalled.

The transition to Ave Maria living has been seamless. "We like it out here," Grauel said. "It's nice and quiet—away from the traffic. We had a single-family home in Naples. One Saturday, a guy came along and said he wanted to buy the house, and my wife and I put some crazy price on it, and he bought it with all the contents—pots, pans, sheets. We got out of there with clothes and some pictures. So, when we found this place in Ave Maria, my wife sat with a laptop and got on the internet and bought whatever she wanted. She always wanted a Florida-style decor, so that's what she got."

Although Grauel suspects that he spends a little too much time at the Habitat for Humanity office, he can't think of a better way to spend his time. "It makes me feel good when I see a family finally move into their new home. And on Celebration Day, when we have a picnic for them, they tell us their heartwarming stories—where they were and where they are now," he said. "Success for me is doing something wholesome that I love and am good at. I've been asked to come back to work at a bank in town, but I'm not going to do that again. I'm 74 years old, my health is great, and I'm just going to keep doing what I'm doing."

For more information and volunteering opportunities at Habitat for Humanity, visit HabitatCollier.org. 🌟



WEEKLY EVENTS & SIGNATURE FESTIVALS

Farmers Market
Every Saturday, Nov. 2 - Apr. 26 • 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Trolley Tours
Every Tuesday, Jan. 14 - Apr. 22 • 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Live Music in Town Center
Tuesdays & Saturdays, Jan. 14 - Apr. 26 • 11:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Town Center Art Shows
Saturday & Sunday • 10:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Nov. 30 + Dec. 1, Jan. 25 + 26 & Mar. 22 + 23

Sunshine State Steak Cook-Off
Saturday, January 25 • 2:00 PM - 6:30 PM

Taste of Ave
Saturday, February 1 • 12:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Blues, Brews & BBQ Festival
Saturday, February 15 • 12:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Shamrock Festival
Saturday, March 15 • 12:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Margarita & Taco Festival
Saturday, April 5 • 12:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Ave Maria



More Information:
• Scan QR Code
• Visit AveMaria.com Events Calendar
• Follow Socials

Free Parking & Admission | AveMaria.com | 239.352.3903 | Events are subject to change. *

Ave Maria's beloved seasonal events return with exciting new additions

BY ERICA FISH

Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

With an eye for creating unforgettable experiences for residents and visitors, the town's development team has an impressive roster of upcoming events that highlight the best of Ave Maria's cultural and communal spirit. These yearly traditions continue to draw in the thousands with engaging family activities and electrifying performances by local music entertainment, making the Town Center a place for endless smiles and memory-making.

"It's shared time and time again that Ave Maria has so much to offer, and our events are meant to showcase just that," said Donna Marquez, events coordinator of Ave Maria Development. "As the town continues to grow, so do our events. They are bigger and better every year. Our festivals are meant to engage people's interest in this community's reputation turning into a premier destination for visitors and serious homebuyers."

Here are the 2024-25 Ave Maria Signature Events:

Farmers Market & Live Music

Saturdays, Nov. 2 through April 26

The annual Ave Maria Farmers Market was the largest ever last year with more than 60 vendors, and now entering its eighth year, shoppers can anticipate even more booths to line Pope John Paul II Blvd. Every Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., attendees will enjoy convenient access to freshly sourced produce from nearby growers; jams, jellies, oils and sauces; homemade baked goods; handcrafted soaps and beauty products; plants and flowers; pottery and art; new and vintage clothing; and unique jewelry and trinkets by local designers; plus, the presence of service providers continues to grow too with real estate professionals, interior designers, travel agents and the like.

"There's nothing quite like just-picked fruits and veggies straight from the Immokalee farms. This is the ideal place to get to know your farmers," remarked Dennis Strausbaugh of SW Florida Markets. "What brings people to this hometown market is that people come to socialize, walk around, shop and experience Ave Maria."

Parking and admission are free with live music from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. bringing on a little extra pizzazz to the event.



AMELIA CONTE PHOTOGRAPHY / COURTESY PHOTOS

It's the ultimate recipe for fun with a day of soulful music, craft brews and mouthwatering barbecue.

Town Center Art Shows

Saturday, Nov. 30 through March 31

In collaboration with Blue Ribbon Events for a series of three two-day art shows, the Town Center's Roma Street will light up with infinite colors. Art enthusiasts will have the opportunity to peruse a diverse array of handcrafted treasures – from intricately designed jewelry and meticulously shaped pottery to beautifully woven textiles and sophisticated home decor. Each show promises to highlight the distinctive talents of local artists from nearby cities like Marco Island to the northern spars of Charlotte County, providing a platform to showcase their creations and connect with the community.

"Experiencing the originality of craftsmanship is a vital characteristic of our events, and we're excited to present the crowds with live art making like glass blowing and canvas painting," said Danielle Lynch, director of Blue Ribbon Events.

Whether you're a seasoned collector or a curious visitor, these craft fests are meant to deliver an enriching experience filled with inventive imagination. Please contact blueribboneventsllc@gmail.com to become a vendor or call the Ave Maria Welcome Center for additional event information. Save the date for the following weekends:

The Ave Maria Holiday Art & Craft Show is on Saturday, Nov. 30 and Sunday, Dec. 1.

A Big Kind of Small Town Art Show is on Saturday, Jan. 25 and Sunday, Jan. 26.

The Ave Maria Festival of the Arts is on Saturday, March 22 and Sunday, March 23.

Free Music, Trolley Excursions & Church Tours

Tuesdays, Jan. 14 through April 22

Every Tuesday in season through April 23, Ave Maria visitors are treated to 1-hour guided trolley tours running hourly from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. The excursion begins at the Welcome Center on Annunciation Circle and travels to all the neighborhoods and interesting spots around town. Riders will get the full scoop on the latest commercial development, amenities and residential highlights, and will also receive complimentary goodies including coupons from in-town businesses.

A rotating slate of musical entertainment livens up the Town Center from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., with performances by saxophonist Jim Blackburn, the Jeff Hughes interactive band, vocal soloist Wendy Renee, the Mason Williams duo, Latin singers Harmony 2, folk band Patchouli, singer and acoustic guitarist Chris Stultz, and the Caribbean steel drum band Steely Pan.

As a companion activity the same day, the Ave Maria Catholic Church offers free, 30-minute guided tours of its world-renowned parish from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. Visitors learn about and explore this intriguing structure's architectural and historical details. Visitors are also encouraged to check out the United States' one and only Mother Teresa Museum at Ave Maria University and the many wonderful shops and restaurants in Town Center, the Publix Retail Shops, Midtown Plaza and Park of Commerce. Tuesdays are super fun in Ave Maria. Make a day of it!

Sunshine State Steak Cook-Off

Saturday, Jan. 25

Sizzling success defines what the Knights of Columbus' annual charity steak competition is all about. Bringing together grill masters and food enthusiasts for a fun afternoon to raise funds for community programs, makes this event a delicious way to give back.

"This championship gathering is the largest steak competition east of the Mississippi," said council member Joe DiFlorio. "The cook-off isn't just about grilling the perfect cut of meat; it's about coming together as a community to support local causes. Every bite and every cheer help fund essential organizations in our area."

Nearly 2,000 steak dinners were prepared at the 15th annual competition, leading to \$40K raised for local youth charities. DiFlorio and the Knights expect the 2025 turnout to be even bigger, and through collaboration with Marquez, the Town Center will also be hosting an arts and crafts festival. Additional festivities include live music, beer vendors, inflatables for the kids and farmers market.

Tim Schlieff and several of his coworkers from the Ave Maria Utility Company (AMUC) participated as "Smoke Mafia" in last year's competition, and their group came in second. "We've been perfecting our spice blend and changing our cooking method as we intend to take first place in January! Competing in this event with our family and friends in attendance made it more than just a competition for us. There's a real joy to sharing a love for food and serving it to people supporting a great cause."

The Sunshine State Steak Cook-Off is in the Town Center from 2:00 to 6:00 p.m. Participating grill teams will serve from



AVE MARIA DEVELOPMENT / COURTESY PHOTOS



AMELIA CONTE PHOTOGRAPHY / COURTESY PHOTOS

5:00 to 6:00 p.m., with winner announcements following at 6:30 p.m. Admission is free, but dinners are \$30 in advance at www.SunshineStateSteakCookOff.com and \$35 the day of the event.

Taste of Ave Saturday, Feb. 1

Laughter, sizzles, sips and guitar strokes will rule the day at the third annual Taste of Ave. “Taste of Ave isn’t just about tasting our many dining options; it’s about showcasing the entire community – and not just our merchants, but also the people who live here. The energy at this event is always wonderful because people witness the community culture and how it’s a constant rhythm of working together and building ideas,” Marquez said.

The hometown celebration returns to the Town Center from noon to 5 p.m., featuring live music by hometown bands the Back Country Boys and TreeHause. Eventgoers can anticipate small business booths, local charities, Ave Maria University, and the Biz Kidz Expo, which showcases a variety of products and services by emerging entrepreneurs. A plethora of family-friendly activities, exotic animal encounters and other fun will line the streets of the Town Center, too.

There will be lots of guilty pleasures to taste as well. From overstuffed quesadillas at Blue Agave Mexican Restaurant to Vicky Bakery’s guava-infused pastries, the food choices from the eateries in Annunciation Circle will make mouths water. And with the new dining additions from Midtown Plaza, a variety of palettes will be satisfied by welcomed Ledo Pizza, Umami Ave Restaurant and Cold Stone Creamery.

“Taste of Ave is meant to satisfy people’s curiosity and appetites,” said Kevin Joyce, owner of town establishments The Bean and The Pub & Grill. Joyce was the event trailblazer who proposed the event to the Ave Maria Development team in 2022, making this now popular festival a reality that following spring. “Ave Maria has so much to offer, and until people come out to see it, they don’t realize how much the town has grown and how many businesses are here to sustain our growth.”

Blues, Brews & BBQ Festival Saturday, Feb. 15

The popular Blues, Brews & BBQ Festival

is Ave Maria’s largest in-season celebration that draws music lovers, craft beer enthusiasts and barbecue connoisseurs from all over. It’s the ultimate recipe for a day of fun. Eventgoers will enjoy soulful blues performances by bands Deb & The Dynamics and Old School, a grand selection of drinks and eats from Ave Maria’s businesses and beyond. Attendees can savor a variety of smoked meats from food trucks Fat Cowboys BBQ, Smokin’ Crows BBQ and Gator Creek BBQ of Naples.

“We’ve taken a spin on the funfair activities and will have lasso activities and a large-scale cornhole competition,” said Marquez. The fun also includes vintage and high-performance car exhibits by the Cool Cruisers and Bonita Corvette Club, face painters and kids’ activities. The event’s lively atmosphere is further enhanced by a range of family-friendly activities and artisanal vendors, making it a highlight of the year for both locals and visitors. “This annual event is meant to foster a sense of a community, and this is accomplished through the celebration of food, music and good company.”

Shamrock Festival Saturday, March 15

Embody the lively spirit of Ireland at the

inaugural Shamrock Festival! From noon to 5:00 p.m., the festivities kick off with energetic performances by The Crows, an acclaimed Irish band renowned for their traditional tunes. Anticipate a themed golf cart parade at 12 o’clock around the Town Center, a range of kids’ activities, including a petting zoo, plus whiskey tastings and an Irish Soda Bread Contest at The Bean of Ave Maria.

Business owner Kevin Joyce shared his glowing anticipation for the event, “It’s important to celebrate diverse heritages because they enrich our community and foster a deeper appreciation for the unique stories and traditions that shape us. This festival is a perfect opportunity to honor that and bring people together in celebration.”

Annunciation Circle will also host Irish poems and readings, and don’t miss seeing Celtic dance performances by Kellyn Celtic Dance, who will dazzle with their traditional steps. With something for everyone, this emerald festival promises a day full of music, dance and golden fun!

Margarita & Taco Festival Saturday, April 5

Ave Maria takes on a funfair atmosphere for the annual Margarita & Taco

Festival from noon to 5:00 p.m. with live performances by bands TreeHause and Deb & The Dynamics. Everyone is encouraged to bring their lawn chairs and relax while sipping on an array of their favorite salt-rimmed cocktail.

“After attending last year’s festival, I knew that it would become tradition for me to visit Ave Maria every year for Margarita and Taco. The first word that comes to mind every time I think about this event is yumsville! I’m already jonesing to know what food trucks are going to be there so I can plan what to try,” said guest Ariana Greene, who visits from the Tampa Bay area.

Anticipate the Twins & Jungle Friends Primate Show with Meet & Greet from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. and wrestling entertainment from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. Other activities include a farmers market and local artisans, car shows, exotic animal encounters, plus plenty more family-friendly fun. Everyone is sure to have a good time, rain or shine!

All events are subject to change. Questions are encouraged and can be directed to the Ave Maria Welcome Center at 239-352-3903 or info@avemaria.com. Stay in the know about all Ave Maria events through social media @AveMariaFlorida. 🌞



WYETTE FORTE PHOTOGRAPHY / COURTESY PHOTOS

Grill, sizzle and savor. Taste the best steaks Florida has to offer and cheer on the top grill masters.

MIDTOWN

From page 1

busy. We have averaged an estimated 650 home sales annually for the past four years. Since 2020, we have closed about 2,500 homes, bringing our total to over 5,000 home sales in Ave Maria.”

Through this expansion, Ave Maria has attracted the interest of national brands, highlighting that the area’s demographics now justify significant business investments alongside local and family-owned entrepreneurs. Marinelli stated that the region has the essential “rooftops” and “critical mass” to warrant and support big businesses seeking to extend franchises.

“Many of these companies now see Ave Maria as a place to put their business and want to be on the ground level and grow with the community and help serve it,” Marinelli said.

Through this development, Midtown Plaza gained attention from Ledo Pizza, known for their iconic Maryland-style pies. The pizza joint aims to take a slice of involvement by partnering with Ave Maria University’s athletic department as an official sponsor.

“It will be the official pizza of Ave Maria University,” Franchisee Owner of Ledo Pizza Scott Taggart said. “We focus on sports such as football, basketball and soccer. We have a big contract with the University of Maryland along with the Boston Ravens and Washington D.C. Capitals, and we are now taking that to the university here.”

Taggart continued, “We have been marketing for this for the past two years before they were even signing leases. We are excited to get things going and get involved with fundraising and other neat deals.”

Ledo Pizza occupies a 3,000-square-foot space with over 120 seats, including two dining areas and a full bar. The establishment provides online carryout options and operates late-night hours. Ledo Pizza also features a dedicated athletic section adorned with jerseys and multiple television sets that stream the university’s live games.

“It is a place to come with the family, grab food to-go, and for the late-night college kids to hang out at during and after games,” Taggart said. “We will be having family-style dinners for each varsity team.”

Founded in 1955, Ledo Pizza has more than 120 locations. Taggart expressed the brand’s desire to establish a presence in the Florida market and noted that the Ave Maria area perfectly aligned with their vision for expansion.

“When you think of Maryland, you think of crabs, Old Bay, fresh corn, and



AVE MARIA DEVELOPMENT / COURTESY PHOTOS

Midtown Plaza, with its blend of retail, dining and medical facilities, marks a significant milestone in Ave Maria’s expanding community landscape.

Ledo Pizza. In Maryland, people drive two hours to get this pizza. We are excited to bring what we do to this area,” Taggart said.

Taggart explored the locations from Sarasota and southward, settling into Ave Maria, where he purchased a home and began delivering pizzas to neighbors before the official opening of Ledo Pizza.

“I travel between Maryland and Florida, I have two daughters and sister working in the shop up north, and my son has been helping launch the new spot here,” Taggart said. “He has been rolling pizza dough since he was 10.”

“With the increase of homes and the demand for commercial space, we are now catching up with the supply of retail and commercial buildings,” Marinelli said.

Marinelli continued, “A couple of the tenants are finalizing their buildout but we plan to hold an official grand opening celebration once everything is complete and all of the tenants are open.”

Additionally, the completed construc-

tion will feature seven tenants including Cold Stone Creamery, Dunkin’, Ave Maria Nails and Sunshine Ace Hardware. Umami Ave Restaurant and the new NCH Immediate Care Center, both slated to open in January 2025. Umami Ave Restaurant is the final tenant to join the plaza and has two successful locations in

Melbourne. Known for its fresh selection of rare seafood plates, Umami Ave Restaurant brings a unique and specialized twist to the area through traditional Japanese flavors with sushi rolls and sake.

The arrival of established brands like Cold Stone Creamery, Dunkin’, and Sunshine Ace Hardware are a welcomed addition to the community, all guaranteed to provide quality services and offerings to patrons.

We are a local and family-owned business. We have been in Naples for 86 years and serving the community with Sunshine Ace Hardware for 66 years,” President of Sunshine Ace Hardware Michael Wynn said.

Wynn continued, “We have raised over \$150,000 in fundraising campaigns in Southwest Florida and put a guarantee in our brand and product. It is a name you can trust.”

“With the increase of homes and the demand for commercial space, we are now catching up with the supply of retail and commercial buildings.”

— Cee Cee Marinelli, Vice President of Commercial Real Estate at Barron Collier Companies



Sunshine Ace Hardware operates throughout five counties, trailing from Tampa to Marco Island, and is now expanding into eastern Collier County with the opening of its new Midtown Plaza location. This 7,000-square-foot store offers thousands of items and Ace’s core essential services, from Ace Handyman in-home repairs, paint color matching, outdoor power equipment rentals, and commercial support for business owners.

“We went from having nothing in that region in 2023 to having the opportunity to open and plan three locations. It is a growing area that is unique to Southwest Florida. It is a privilege to be in a destination spot and to have customers and residents of Ave Maria able to shop with us more conveniently,” Wynn said.

Wynn explained that retail leasing and population trends form a “delicate balance” and that Ave Maria is now well-equipped to support profitable and successful businesses. Stating this sparked interest and growth in commercial shopfronts, attracting companies to the area and benefiting the local neighborhoods.

“Residents now have several great options to go to without going too far,” Wynn said.

Hundreds of applications were submitted between Ledo Pizza and Sunshine Ace Hardware, resulting in numerous new hires and training opportunities to help grow the local workforce in preparation for the upcoming sports and tourism season.

“It is just in time for the season. About 200 to 300 people come to Ave Maria for day trips. We offer trolley tours, and it is a great place to shop, get lunch, and listen to live music. Plus, many of our residents have families visiting during the holidays or living seasonally here,” Marinelli said.

Through the completion of the Midtown Plaza, the Barron Collier Companies states that Ave Maria is becoming a prime destination for renowned corporations and local entrepreneurs. The new plaza represents the area’s continuous enlargement and future development plans, driven by the surge of residential growth seen in the past years.

With the completion of Midtown Plaza, Barron Collier Companies states that Ave Maria is rapidly becoming a hotspot for top-tier corporations and dynamic local entrepreneurs. This vibrant new plaza is a symbol of the area’s rapid growth, fueled by a wave of residential expansion in recent years.

For future rental spaces, inquiries can be sent to Kelly Kennedy at kkennedy@barroncollier.com. 🌞

AVE MARIA COMMUNITIES



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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 6 1/2 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 offers numerous advantages, including greater efficiency, personalized options, and a world class warranty. With modern designs inspired by consumers, energy-efficient features, greener appliances, low maintenance, a 10-year structural warranty, smart home

technology, and financing perks through Pulte Mortgage Company, buying a new Pulte home tailored to your preferences ensures a convenient and sustainable living experience. Get peace of mind, great financing options and the quality craftsmanship you deserve with a new Pulte home. That's More Life Built In®, and that's exactly what you'll find at Avalon Park."



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239-842-1657



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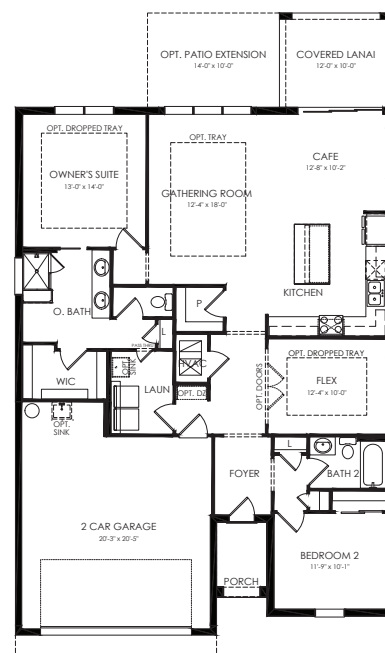
conveniently located right where you live. No matter how full or fulfilling you want your days to be, you’ll find a way to energize your mind, body, and spirit the way you’ve always wanted to. Enjoy golf, bocce ball, bicycling, dance instruction, art, endless ways to socialize, and opportunities to give 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.



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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.



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MAPLE RIDGE
AT AVE MARIA

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.



Fairway

- 2,588 a/c square feet
- Three to Four bedrooms
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- Two Walk-in Closets in Primary Bedroom
- Covered Terrace
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Starting from the mid \$300,000's

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.

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, Coastal or Contemporary 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 primary bedroom features double sinks with quartz vanity tops and a spacious shower.



Now Selling - Silverwood Vista!

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.



First Floor Plan

Second Floor Plan



Cascada

- 1,826 a/c square feet
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833-729-1783 | www.MapleRidgeFL.com

ASK ABOUT OUR SOCIAL MEMBERSHIPS!



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.

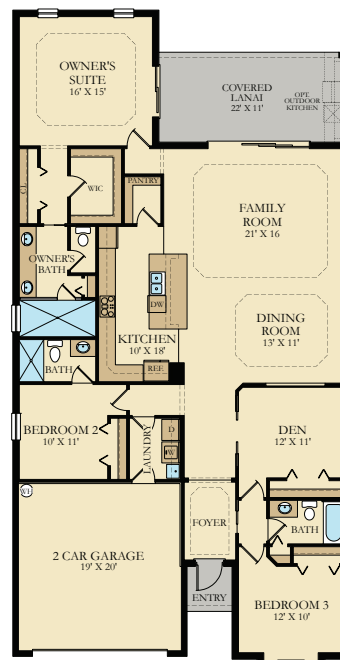


From the upper \$200,000s - \$800,000s+

Lennar is one of America's leading builders of quality homes since 1954, and is one of the biggest homebuilders in Southwest Florida. Experience unprecedented value through Lennar's Everything's Included®, simply including quality features and finishes that homeowners want and need, at no extra charge.

Simplify your home buying experience by including everything you need in a new home and community. And once you find your perfect home, our family of companies are there to assist you every step of the way with your mortgage, title and insurance needs for an enjoyable and hassle-free closing.

Learn the possibilities of Everything's Included®



Maria

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Back to School Bash



Kids enjoying the Town Center events.



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A future fireman.



A little cutie holding a basketball.



Dunking the ball.



Balloon artist.



Hanging on to her new hat.



Enriquez family with Firefighter John Cherisme.



Corporal Klewicki of the Collier County Sheriff's Office offers safety tips to residents.



Daneé Williams, owner of The Sweet Ingredient, donates school supplies to Patrice Gabower, director of development at The Salvation Army.



Robert Schoenborn, tour organizer of the Ave Maria Catholic Church.



Making art at the Paint & Bake booth.



Corporal James Klewicki of the Collier County Sheriff's Office.



Kids loved interacting with the Immokalee Fire Department.



Lieutenant Adam Davis and Fire Chief Michael Choate of the Immokalee Fire Department.



The Back-to-School Brigade.



The Roseland model.

COURTESY PHOTOS

Significant savings and desirables at Avalon Park

BY JANICE T. PAINE

Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

With a maximum capacity of 251 homes, Pulte's Avalon Park community offers attractive homes designed to satisfy the lifestyle needs of modern families and fit within a wide range of budgets.

"Pulte is a big believer in the future of this town," said Sales Manager Michael Egan. "Pulte is committed to building homes for families in Ave Maria for many years to come."

All-in prices range from the low \$400,000s to over \$1 million, and Pulte has just offered an across-the-board base price reduction of \$30,000 on new construction.

"The most important feature that we highlight is the quality of our homes, which is backed up by the best warranty in the entire industry, coupled with the fact that when you build a home with us you can personalize it, not just with the layout but with all the interior design selections," Egan noted.

Innovative floor plans

Dedicated office spaces, ample storage options and learning areas where kids can stay focused on their educational goals are just some of the ways that interior spaces can be configured in Avalon Park homes. Pulte offers 11 different floor plans and homes ranging in size from 1,600 square feet with three bedrooms to 5,500 square feet and seven bedrooms, all ready to accommodate the space requirements of growing families.

Interior design selections offer seemingly endless opportunities to put your own stamp on a home. Cabinets, countertops, flooring and trims can all be individually chosen. Buyers can also order furniture shown in the model homes to complement or add to what they may already have. And, techies will be happy to know that smart-home features are built into Avalon Park residences. Each new home is pre-wired for

connectivity. Options abound for buyers to add mechanisms such as doorbell cameras and electric car charging stations.

Freshly styled facades

"We always like to prevent monotony in our communities. The way we do that is to offer several different architectural styles," Egan says. "We offer a Florida Mediterranean, Craftsman, Coastal and Modern exterior style. Not only do we offer different architectural styles for the exterior, but we offer different exterior color selections, too. So, people have a number of different colors and styles to choose from to prevent our communities from looking 'cookie cutter.'"

Outdoor spaces and curb appeal are factored into Avalon Park homes. Landscaping packages are included in the home's price. A front porch can be added to some models, contributing to the entryway's welcoming feel. All the lots have backyards large enough to accommodate a pool or plenty of outdoor entertainment and recreation equipment.

The Avalon Park community is close to the Ave Maria town waterpark and within walking distance of the Town Center. "We offer a five-year complimentary water park pass if you purchase a home with us," Egan said.

Ready to leap?

Three model homes are ready to view in Avalon Park now. A series of "quick move-in" homes that are done or almost done are also available for purchase. The build time for new construction is six to eight months. Moreover, Pulte offers attractive interest rates and financing incentives through its in-house lender, Pulte Mortgage.

For more information, go to pulte.com or visit the Avalon Park Sales Center in Ave Maria. 🌟



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Ave Eats delivers food right to your door

BY SANDRA YEYATI

Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

One reason Ave Maria is a big kind of small town is the vitality of its local businesses, many of which are owned and operated by community residents. It is a privilege for entrepreneurs to be able to work just a short walk (or golf cart ride) away from their offices, retail shops and restaurants. Many of Ave Maria's most successful enterprises are powered by husband-and-wife teams.

By launching Ave Eats, two local families hope to improve the lives of their neighbors while adding value to the local economy. With backgrounds in mobile technology, Winston Thomas and Lucas Jaramillo have developed a food delivery service that resembles juggernauts like Uber Eats or DoorDash but is customized to address the unique needs and desires of Ave Maria and Immokalee residents while also providing jobs for people who live there.

"We heard many people complain about those big delivery services—how the deliveries were taking too long, and they were getting orders wrong, and we felt that we could create a better platform," Thomas explained. "By limiting our reach to just Ave Maria and Immokalee, we're able to offer super-fast service within 20 minutes or so, and make sure that it is completely community driven. Ave Eats is made by Ave Maria residents for Ave Maria. Because we created the platform, we're able to do whatever we want and support the local ecosystem, making it easier to live here by providing convenience to all the residents."

The free food delivery app can be downloaded from the Apple and Google Play stores. Users can view menus from local restaurants, choose what they want to eat and pay for their orders, plus a \$4.99 delivery charge that is paid directly to the drivers. Tips are welcome. Ave Eats currently employs eight dedicated drivers, all living in town. After every order, customers, drivers and restaurants are prompted to review their experience to encourage constructive feedback and service transparency.

In August, Ave Eats performed a soft launch that saw more than 350 people download the app, and orders started to stream in consistently. Hours of operation are based on the hours of the participating restaurants: as early as 7 a.m. for Vicky Bakery and Tropical Smoothie Cafe, and as late as 10 p.m. for Blue Agave, or 11 p.m. for Cookie Fortune Chinese food truck. Coming soon is a late-night bites menu for after-hours deliveries from



COURTESY PHOTOS

Left to right: Lucas and Jeniffer Jaramillo, Nicole and Winston Thomas.

10 p.m. to 2 a.m.

Participating restaurants include most of the eateries in Ave Maria, a few select establishments from Immokalee, including fast-food restaurants like Kentucky Fried Chicken and Popeyes, and even a few caterers and food trucks. Other recognizable establishments include OASIS The Kitchen Lounge, Little Caesars Pizza and CJ's Pastelillos.

"The community aspect of our business is huge. We're not just picking up food and delivering it, we're supporting the people that live and work in our town—from the restaurant owners to the drivers and the consumers," Jaramillo re-

marked and noted that a portion of proceeds from every order will be donated to U.S. Hunger, a nonprofit that provides meals for people in need.

Thomas and Jaramillo are planning a series of community events to promote their mission, including tasting parties, educational meetings for restaurant partners and community outreach efforts to help technology-challenged residents download the app and discover how easy it is to operate.

Thomas has lived in Ave Maria with his wife Nicole since 2018. They own Everything Ave Maria, which helps local entrepreneurs market their businesses via social

media and a quarterly magazine. He is also a DJ and music producer and runs an event planning company with his wife. In 2015, he co-created RecordGram, an award-winning mobile app that allowed people to record music from anywhere in the world.

Jaramillo moved to Ave Maria with his wife Jennifer in 2023. He owns and operates a home improvement business focusing on water purification systems, air quality solutions, EMF blockers, and cold and hot therapies for home use. The self-taught programmer has also been developing mobile apps for restaurants, business owners and gaming companies since 2012.

"When I met Lucas [Jaramillo] a year ago, we instantly saw the synergy," Thomas said. "He's from tech. I'm from tech. We brainstorm all the time, and it's all



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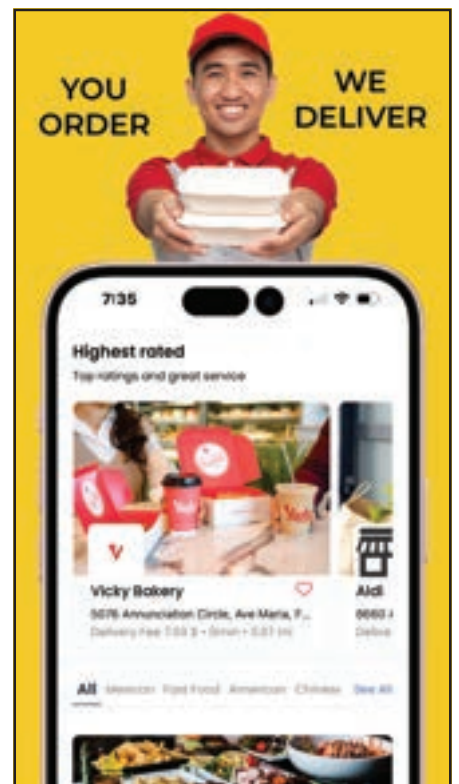
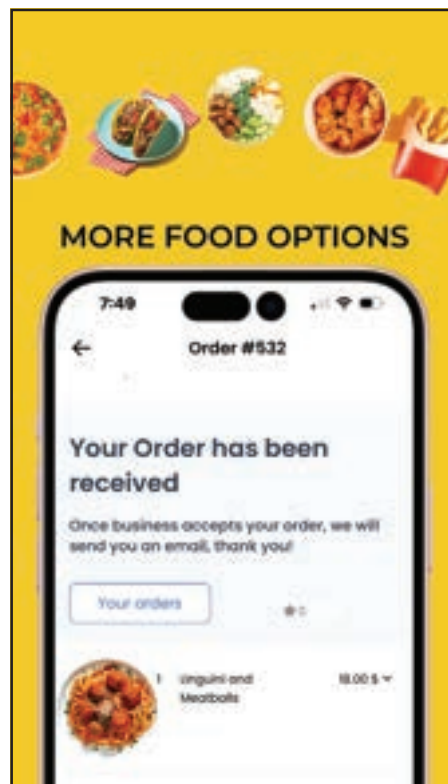
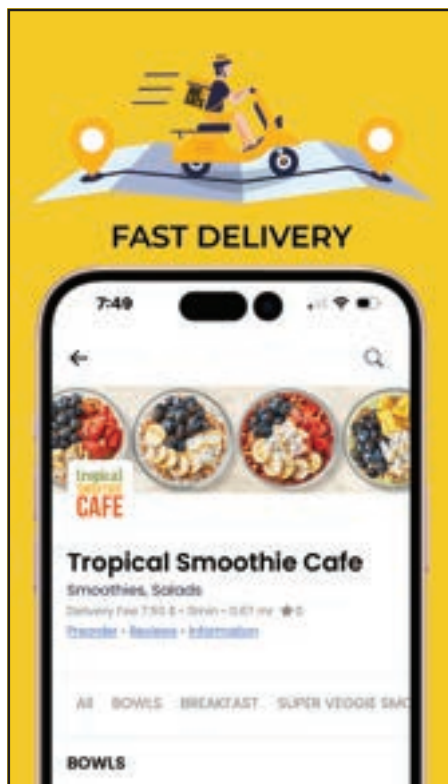
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COURTESY PHOTOS

The free food AVE EATS delivery app can be downloaded from the Apple and Google Play stores.

about finding issues that we can solve, especially in Ave Maria, because this place is full of opportunity. We are both super forward-thinking individuals and like coming up with out-of-the-box solutions. Ave Eats essentially replicates an existing business model that works, but we're making it specific for Ave Maria, and that's just the beginning of what we envision for this platform."

Jaramillo said, "What we can do with this platform is going to be amazing. The best is yet to come. Eventually, we'll be integrating Publix, Aldi's, Walmart—plac-

es like that—because it's all about convenience and making living in Ave Maria easier."

"We want to build relationships with the people that need delivery services," Thomas pointed out. "Our customers are going to know the drivers coming to their doors. Everybody will know everybody, and everything is better when you know the people that are helping you out." 🌻

For the app and more information, visit AveEats.app.

"The community aspect of our business is huge. We're not just picking up food and delivering it, we're supporting the people that live and work in our town—from the restaurant owners to the drivers and the consumers."

— Lucas Jaramillo, Ave Eats co-owner



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AVE MARIA DEVELOPMENT / COURTESY PHOTOS

The Gagne family was the lucky winner of a premium golf cart valued at \$13,500 during Ave Maria's Door to Door Model Home Tour.

GOLF CART

From page 1

listening to a concert at South Park's outdoor amphitheater or on the lawn at one of the Town Center festivals. It's an enjoyable and convenient aspect of the resort lifestyle that young families, retirees and sports enthusiasts love about Ave Maria.

"It's fun to drive a golf cart on the streets of Ave Maria, especially with our beautiful weather. There are golf cart pads everywhere, so you can park all over town, making it super-convenient," said Events Coordinator of Ave Maria Development Donna Marquez. "Our Door to Door campaign was a great conversation starter at the Welcome Center this summer. When someone passed by, we would say, 'Do you want to win a golf cart?' That got people listening, which allowed us to encourage them to visit the model homes at Del Webb Naples, Maple Ridge by CC Homes, Avalon Park by Pulte Homes and The National by Lennar."

According to Marketing & Public Relations Manager Michelle Mambuca, "Ave Maria Development creates different opportunities throughout the year to showcase the builders and their beautiful homes. A lot of what we do is lifestyle-focused such as the big festivals during season, but for the slower summer months, the Door



to Door Model Home Tour was a way to encourage people to visit with the builders and understand what types of homes we have here because it's hard to believe until you see it. The community is incredible, the homes are really dream homes, so getting there is what opens people's eyes to what could be and how attainable it is when you compare it to areas nearby."

Ave Maria Development purchased

the golf cart prize from Caleb Polhill, co-owner of Action Power Equipment, an authorized golf cart dealer and committed supporter of the Ave Maria community. "The developer is always looking for ways to support local businesses, and Caleb has been very generous, donating a golf cart for Donahue Academy, which was auctioned off to raise money for the school's expansion, and he's going to be donating

a second golf cart for our Welcome Center renovations, which will have a mini-putting green and be a great place for visitors to take a fun selfie," Marquez said.

According to Polhill, golf cart ownership offers numerous benefits: "If you're replacing one of your cars, you're getting rid of a car payment, car insurance and expensive tires. It uses lithium batteries, which means you're never going to have to buy gas again. There's the convenience of getting in and out of places, and maintenance is minimal. You have to rotate your tires periodically, but some of the tires are so cheap no one even bothers."

Action Power Equipment has a five-acre facility at 950 State Road 29 North, in LaBelle, featuring a 10,000-square-foot shop where certified mechanics can service the vehicles, as well as a 2,000-square-foot showroom for customers to see and test drive the different models "We're a full-service, customer-friendly, competitively priced concierge operation, with pickup and delivery," Polhill said. "We have mechanics, a certified technician and financing. We have a dedicated mechanic that can come out to Ave Maria to service golf carts onsite. I can also come out to Ave Maria and let customers test drive the golf carts in their neighborhood. The golf cart industry is moving at the speed of light, and we're excited to be bringing in a new golf cart line that will be even more economical, with all the latest bells and whistles." 🌟

"It's fun to drive a golf cart on the streets of Ave Maria, especially with our beautiful weather. There are golf cart pads everywhere, so you can park all over town, making it super-convenient."

— Donna Marquez, Events Coordinator of Ave Maria Development

Everyone's gathering place

BY JANICE T. PAINE

Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

At the edge of Ave Maria University, excitement is building alongside the foundation of what promises to be an iconic new landmark - the Rosary Wall. This evolving structure manifests not just long-held dreams but also a beacon of community, spirituality and architectural beauty for everyone visiting.

Between Dolan and Donahue streets along Ave Maria Boulevard, a 624-foot-long wall dubbed the Rosary Wall is now under construction. It is the first of four contiguous sections stretching almost half a mile long.

That's the vision for a new brick-and-mortar feature rising on the edge of the campus this fall, with an anticipated completion date of January 2025.

This masonry structure is the brainchild of AMU founder Thomas Monaghan, who envisioned this wall over 25 years ago as the university was being planned. "This was a vision that Monaghan had back when Ave Maria was



a tomato field," AMU's Vice President of Advancement Jim Thomas said.

He drew inspiration from Frank Lloyd Wright's architecture, particularly his low-slung Prairie-style houses, which were sometimes enclosed by exterior brick walls of a similar style.

This distinctive structure is a zig-zag brick wall with a light-colored precast concrete coping on top. It will have multiple entry points and resting places, including six screened and lit pavilion-type gazebos on the university side. There will be an elegant main gate, and open latticed areas along its walled length.

Victor J. Latavish, from Naples, is the architect in charge. He has an impressive portfolio, including work on churches and religious facilities, and many commercial and governmental buildings in Collier County. Wright Construction Group, based in Fort Myers, is handling

the construction.

"It is not a straight wall, deliberately," Latavish explained. "The corners create a rhythm which matches the curve of the road." Segments of the wall are planned on a 24-foot grid that creates a sense of rhythmic repetition along its length.

"The Rosary Wall really came from a tradition that we have here at Ave Maria University of a rosary walk. Every night, our students gather after evening mass, and they walk the campus and say a rosary. Now, this is not unique to Ave Maria University. I know that there's other Newman Guide schools that do that. But it's a big deal here. So, the idea was to merge the two, this wall with our rosary walk tradition. And, also, to make the wall, basically, a place of gathering," Thomas pointed out.

He noted that the wall will serve as a memorial for donors who have left AMU

in their estate plans. It's also a location where donors may wish to endow a statue, a flagpole, an urn for flowers or even one of the gazebos. The wall will be beautifully landscaped with native plants, giving it a garden feel, interspersed with elements that provide natural resting points for the eye.

Most of all, though, the Rosary Wall is meant to be a focal point for students, a gathering spot and a destination for visitors to Ave Maria. It will be a place that invites reflection, prayer and reminiscence about the people who have contributed to the formation and growth of the campus.

"It will be something fairly unique attached to our campus and attached to our town," Thomas explained. "It's not just a wall. We merged a lot of very spiritual elements into this special feature that is poised to become a treasured part of University's visual signature." 🌿



COURTESY IMAGES

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The Rotary Club of Ave Maria empowers business owners and youth

BY JULIANNA PEREZ

Ave Maria Sun Correspondent

The Rotary Club of Ave Maria held their Charter Night Celebration on Monday, Aug. 26, inducting several new members into the organization. The night featured various guest speakers, including Rotarian leaders from across the South-west Florida region.

JD Ribali, president of the Rotary Club of Ave Maria, said the chapter began in 2016 as a networking group for local business owners.

“That’s what it was created for in the first place, to connect the local businesses so we can help them promote each other. Now, we’re wrapping in that Rotary portion of giving back,” Ribali said.

Members of Rotary International, a humanitarian service organization, approached the local group, hoping to establish a new chapter in Ave Maria.

Jason Kurek, co-owner of Ave Maria Jiu Jitsu and the chapter’s president-elect, said that the decision to join the organization will serve the community beyond the networking opportunities it offers to local business owners.

“With all of the ways that Rotary can positively impact the community, we wanted to be a part of it, and knew it would be historic,” Kurek said. “Not only can we meet to network with one another and discuss the best business practices, but we are also able to connect as a community so that we can help individuals in need through the gift of service.”

Rotary International places a large emphasis on their youth programs, which aim to develop the next generation of Rotarians.

“They concentrate a lot of their programs on education for kids; we are aligning ourselves with that,” Ribali said. “In our first year, our goal is to focus on kids’ programs and how we can better the community through our children.”

One way that the Rotary Club of Ave Maria is planning to enact change in the community is through the Josh the Otter Water Safety & Awareness Project.

“Recently, there was a tragic drowning that happened at the water park that so many people in this community are still very heartbroken over. So, our Rotary group is looking to address water safety through the ‘Josh the Otter’ book, which we’re currently raising money to fund,” said Kurek.

The goal of the project is to raise awareness about the importance of water safety through “Josh the Baby Otter,” a children’s book that teaches readers how to swim like an otter.

The Josh the Otter Water Safety & Awareness Project, endorsed by the Michael Phelps Foundation, instructs children on how to float on their backs if they encounter a body of water, they are unable to swim in safely.

“We’re going to be providing as many books as we can to kids and families so parents can start having that conversation,” Ribali said. “Our next step will be to actually have water safety programs where we team up with a professional instructor, so kids can actually see how it works and learn the system.”

In addition to tackling water safety, the Rotary Club of Ave Maria aims to cultivate entrepreneurial skills in the local youth.

“What we want to do is teach kids about business entrepreneurship, get them involved in the community, and give them an outlet where they can actually sell their products, sell their service, and become the next Rotarians,” Ribali said.

With commercial and residential development expanding rapidly in Ave Maria, local business owners can now look forward to the potential networking opportunities and community engagement that the Rotary Club offers.

“As more individuals move to this area, so will businesses,” Kurek said. “There’s so much opportunity as we look at this growing landscape, and if we can support one another and help each other to connect to a broader audience of customers and constituents, then we all win.” 🌻



President of the Rotary Club of Ave Maria JD Ribali speaking at the event.



Area Governor Priya Ahluwalia and JD Ribali.



Members of the Rotary Club of Ave Maria beam with gratitude as they accept a generous check donation.



District Governor Alfred Current, JD Ribali and District Governor Don Thomas.



District Governor Kelsey Mitchell, JD Ribali and District Governor Gerald Sola.



The Rotary inducted several new members into the organization.

BIG KINDS OF SMALL TOWN FUN

Labor Day Luau at Ave Maria Water Park



Kids enjoyed a sweet moment as they were given candy while splashing in the shallow end.



SANDRA YEYATI / AVE MARIA SUN



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Kiss Cancer Goodbye Golf Tournament

An annual event at Panther Run Golf Club to raise funds for the Cancer Alliance of Naples. It takes place on Wednesday, Oct. 23, from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., offering live entertainment and local vendors.

Trunk or Treat

Scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 26, from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., this family-friendly gathering promises an abundance of treats. Participants can expect DJ entertainment, face painting, pumpkin carving, costume contests, and the opportunity to showcase their creativity in the best-decorated trunk competition.

Farmers Market & Live Music

Browse through a variety of locally sourced goods and handmade creations from different vendors. These include organic produce, flowers, honey, specialty foods, baked goods, home décor, accessories, ceramics and more. The market is open from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. every Saturday, from Nov. 2 to April 26.

Ave Maria Stewardship Community District (AMSCD) Meetings

The next meetings are tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, Nov. 12 at 6:00 p.m. Please visit avemariastewardshipcd.org for meeting location, more information, monthly meeting books and schedule updates.

Town Center Christmas Crawl

On Saturday, Nov. 16, from 12:00 to 5:00 PM at the Ave Maria Town Center, enjoy live music, refreshments, bites, raffles, and a variety of happy hour deals and menu specials from participating restaurants.

Ave Maria Holiday Art & Craft Show

Local artists will showcase their unique creations at each booth, featuring boutique art, artisanal crafts, jewelry, pottery, hand-woven textiles, home décor and more on Saturday and Sunday, Nov. 30 and Dec. 1 from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. If you're interested in becoming a vendor, please contact blueribboneventsllc@gmail.com.

MERCHANT EVENTS

The Bean at Ave Maria

Check out their **drive-thru coffee cart** in front every day from 6:30 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. to purchase muffins, bagels, hot and iced coffee and more!

Discover the weekly special drink announcements, expertly crafted by their talented baristas, at facebook.com/thebeanatave.

Join their **Coffee Club**. After buying 10 hot or iced drip coffees, get the eleventh one free.

Taco Tuesday happens weekly from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. in the Bean Courtyard and features \$3 beef tacos, beer, \$4 chicken fajitas, chips and salsa, margaritas and \$5 pork tacos. Indoor seating is available in case of bad weather.

MELTZ

Founded by residents living in Ave Maria since 2021, MELTZ offers a variety of deli-



icious ice cream, toppings, specialty and traditional sundaes, along with themed creations inspired by the youngest family members. Now, they offer customizable 100% organic Açaí bowls, boba teas, rolled ice cream and smoothies. Their new hours of operation are Monday to Thursday from 2:00 to 8:00 p.m., Friday from 1:00 to 9:00 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from 12:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Bring your furry friend for a complimentary pup cup.

On Wednesdays, AMU students and faculty get a 10% discount.

Mercato at Ave

mercatoatave.net

Revel in the atmosphere with free Wi-Fi, savor handcrafted coffee beverages, or unwind with a glass of wine or beer. Lounge areas invite you to relax, while live music creates a delightful ambiance. Don't miss the opportunity to capture memories at the specially designed mural, perfect for striking photo moments. Explore more about their diverse range and upcoming activities on their Facebook page and Instagram.

OASIS The Kitchen Lounge

oasiskitchenlounge.com

Customers can now expect a new addition to the OASIS culinary experience - a smaller portions menu with more fun small bites. Experience the chef's monthly specials, indulge in American and Latin brunch on weekends and anticipate the return of beloved comedy nights, Wine and Jazz evenings, live bands and monthly Latin Socials. Happy hour is from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Oil Well Craft Beer

oilwellcraftbeer.com

Indulge in sub sandwiches available daily from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Every Monday to Saturday from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m., at least one food truck at the Park of Commerce.

To-go Tuesdays: \$1 off crowlers and \$2 off growlers.

Wine Wednesdays: \$1 off wine.

Ladies Drink Specials on Thursdays: \$1 off drafts and wine for ladies.

BINGO for the Cancer Alliance Network is on Saturday, Oct. 5 from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., with all proceeds from bingo card sales supporting the organization and fantastic prizes up for grabs.

SpeedQuizzing Trivia with hosts Carol and Tom DiFlorio is set for **Monday, Oct. 7, Nov. 4 and Dec. 2**, starting sharply at 7:00 p.m.

Glorified Vision Art's Brew and Paint Party is on Tuesday, Oct. 8 and Nov. 12. Tickets are \$35 a seat, and you can reserve quickly by RSVPing to glorifiedvisionart@gmail.com.

The Oil Well Chili Competition celebrates **National Chili Month on Saturday, Oct. 19**, at 3:00 p.m. Entrants are invited to cook a large batch of chili for judges and food enthusiasts.

Join Carol and Tom DiFlorio for incredibly fun and free **Music Bingo on Monday, Oct. 21** and Nov. 18, at 7:00 p.m.

Cruise Planners Jackie and Dan Rategan are hosting an **Adult Bingo** with free prizes on **Wednesday, Oct. 23 and Nov. 13**, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

From **Friday, Nov. 1 to Nov. 11**, if you purchase a beer in honor of a military

hero, Oil Well Craft Beer will ensure it is delivered to a deserving veteran on Veterans Day.

Join Sara Callahan, a Southwest Florida realtor, for **Family Friendly Bingo** from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. on **Saturday, Nov. 2**.

Enjoy a beer flight paired with candy at the **Leftover Halloween Candy** event. Available while supplies last on **Tuesday, Nov. 5** at 7:00 p.m.

Stop by on **Thursday, Nov. 7 for International Stout Day** and receive \$1 off any stouts on draft.

Donate old towels, pet food, and toys on Sat., Nov. 9, 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and get \$1 off drafts during Barks and Brews. Leashed dogs are welcome outside; only service dogs with ID are allowed inside.

On **Monday, Nov. 11 for Veterans Day**, all veterans will receive a free beer donated by our community.

Stop by on **Saturday, Nov. 16** to pick up a Christmas Angel and help a local child in need.

Monday, Nov. 18 celebrates National Apple Cider Day with \$1 off all draft ciders.

80s Night is back with DJ DiFlo on **Saturday, Nov. 23**; dress in your best 80s outfit and dance from 8:00 to 11:00 p.m.

The Pub & Grill at Ave Maria

thepubofave.com

The Pub's new happy hour, running Monday through Friday from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m., features \$5 well drinks, \$4 house wines, \$3 domestic drafts, \$2 pretzel bites and \$1 chips and salsa. Make sure to keep an eye out for live music events.

The Secret Ingredient

shophesecretingredient.com

Celebrate your birthday and enjoy a 20% discount on your favorite regularly priced item with a valid ID.

Active duty and retired members receive 20% off one regular-priced item with military ID.

Every Monday is 55+ and Fabulous Day! Shoppers aged 55 and up save 10% off one regularly priced item.

Every Tuesday, "Twosday" shopping allows you and a friend to each receive 20% off one regularly priced item when shopping together.

Discover the excitement of their **Weekly Wednesday Sale**, where a special item is offered at a discounted price. Stop in or stay tuned on their social media channels to see the featured item each week.

Retail Therapy Day happens every Thursday, where spending \$50 gets you a free pair of sunglasses.

Every Friday, first-time shoppers receive a 20% discount on one regularly priced item. This discount is available to each new customer once.

On **Sunday, Oct. 6, National Plus Size Appreciation Day**, all plus sizes will be 25% off.

Thursday, Oct. 10 is National Handbags Day, offering a 25% discount on all handbags.

On **Saturday, Oct. 12**, shop to support a cause, where 10% of the day's proceeds will directly benefit the Cancer Alliance Network (CAN) in Naples.

All scented candles will be 20% off on **Friday, Nov. 1 for National Scented Candle Day**.

On **Monday, Nov. 11**, all veterans will receive 35% off one regularly priced item.

Enjoy music, shopping specials and a huge basket raffle at the fun **Christmas Boutique Crawl** in the Town Center on **Saturday, Nov. 16** from 12:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Stop by on **Saturday, Nov. 16** to pick up a Christmas Angel and help a local child in need.

For **Black Friday on Nov. 29**, they're opening at 6:00 a.m., offering shoppers the

chance to kickstart their Christmas shopping with a 40% discount on one regularly priced item from 6:00 to 10:00 a.m., plus a free coffee bar while supplies last.

Small Business Saturday falls on Saturday, Nov. 30. To celebrate, The Secret Ingredient is offering a 25% discount on a regularly priced item on Nov. 30 and Dec. 1. Customers must show a receipt from a local Ave Maria business dated Nov. 30 to qualify. This offer is limited to one per customer per day and requires one receipt for each discount.

Stella Rose Way

stellaroseway.com

A boutique featuring a curated mix of local gifts, artisanal items, children's products and home decor.

Celebrate their second anniversary on Oct. 17, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., with a new brand launch, meet Amanda Hodge, and enjoy giveaways, including a chance to win Brighton jewelry.

On **Thursday, Nov. 7**, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m., there will be an exclusive signing event featuring Nora Napientek, the founder and creative force behind the beloved nora fleming collection.

Tropical Smoothie Café

tropicalsmoothiecafe.com

With fresh, made-to-order smoothies, wraps, sandwiches and flatbreads that instantly boost your mood, treat yourself to an experience that makes eating better and easy breezy. Be sure to try the fan-favorite Tropic Bowls.

Vicky Bakery

vickybakery.com

Promising a delectable assortment of light, flavorful pastries, from crispy croissants to decadent cakes, each meticulously crafted for an exhilarating culinary experience, now including an expanded selection of party, wedding, and special occasion custom cakes, along with a comprehensive catering service for schools, businesses and community events.

Way Out Toys & Games

wayouttoys.com

On Tuesdays, a Pokémon Pack Wars runs from 6:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., offering participants 3 rounds of play with 3 card packs for \$20, including round prizes and a grand prize.

On Thursdays, open play Lorcana from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. All ages are welcome, and starter decks are available for purchase in-store.

AVE MARIA UNIVERSITY ATHLETICS

For the latest updates and more information on away games, visit avemariagyrenes.com/calendar.

October:

4: Intrasquad Swimming, TBD

5: Cross Country (Ave Maria Invitational), TBD; W. Soccer vs. Warner, 11:00 a.m.; Volleyball vs. Webber, 2:00 p.m.; Football vs. Thomas, 7:00 p.m.

9: M. Soccer vs. New College, 7:00 p.m.

12: Volleyball vs. New College of Florida, 2:00 p.m.; M. Soccer vs. Southeastern, 7:00 p.m.

14 & 15: M. & W. Golf Gyrene Invitational, TBD

16: W. Soccer vs. #8 Keiser, 7:00 p.m.

19: W. Soccer vs. Florida Memorial, 11:00 a.m.; Football vs. #12 St. Thomas, 7:00 p.m.

24: M. Soccer vs. SCAD, 4:00 p.m.

26: Swimming vs. Thomas, TBD; Volleyball vs. Warner, 2:00 p.m.

30: M. Soccer vs. Webber, 4:00 p.m.; Volleyball vs. Keiser, 7:00 p.m.; W. Soccer vs. RV St. Thomas, 7:00 p.m.

ALL AROUND AVE MARIA

November:

- 1: W. Basketball vs. Kuyper (Mich.), 1:00 p.m.
- 2: W. Basketball vs. Covenant (Ga.), 11:00 a.m.; Football vs. Warner, 7:00 p.m.
- 9: Swimming vs. Barry, TBD; W. Basketball vs. LSU Alexandria, 12:30 p.m.; Football vs. Southeastern, 7:00 p.m.
- 11: DEV MBB - BLUE vs. Bay Area Sports Academy, 7:00 p.m.; WHITE vs. Fort Lauderdale Prep, 8:30 p.m.
- 12: M. Basketball vs. Florida National, 7:30 p.m.
- 13: Swimming vs. Keiser in Fort Myers, TBD
- 19: DEV MBB - WHITE vs. Pasco-Hernando CC, 6:00 p.m.; BLUE vs. Atlantis University, 7:30 p.m.
- 20: W. Basketball vs. New College, 5:30 p.m.; M. Basketball vs. New College, 7:30 p.m.
- 23: W. & M. Basketball vs. Coastal Georgia, 2:00 p.m. & 4:00 p.m.
- 25: M. Basketball vs. Trinity Baptist (Fla.), 7:30 p.m.
- 26: W. Basketball vs. Florida National, 5:00 p.m.

■ AVE MARIA RESIDENTS ONLY

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

First Fridays

On Oct. 4, the Town Center will feature children's activities, a mini parade, costume contest, and music from DJ DiFlo for a family-friendly evening. While the Nov. 1 event at the Park of Commerce offers an adult atmosphere with Kaila Love performing at the Oil Well Craft Beer Brewery and a food drive for Catholic Charities Guadalupe Social Services, complemented by food from Dynamite Street Eats.

Onspot Dermatology

OnSpot provides various dermatological services in their state-of-the-art mobile office. Services will be available from 7:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. Walk-ins are currently available, appointments are recommended. Please go to onspotdermatology.com to book an appointment. Upcoming dates are Saturday, Oct. 5; Saturday, Oct. 19; Thursday, Oct. 31; Thursday, Nov. 7; and Saturday, Nov. 16.

Sunday Football in the Park

On Sunday, Oct. 6, from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., the South Park Amphitheater will host a pre-game with food trucks, music, and a big screen showing of the Miami Dolphins vs. New England Patriots game, alongside an opportunity to meet NFL Super Fans and Parks & Recreation Manager, Joe Lampkin.

Coffee With a Twiss

Join AMMA Executive Director Kim Twiss for a casual gathering every second Thursday of the month. This is an opportunity for homeowners to ask questions and get updates regarding the Master Association and community news. The upcoming dates are Thursday, Oct. 10 and Nov. 14 at 10:00 a.m.

Creative You! Adult Art & Craft Classes

Betsy Banes offers monthly art and crafts classes for adults every second Thursday from 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., with themes like Fall on Oct. 10, Thanksgiving on Nov. 7 and Paint & Sip with Wine Bottle Decor on Dec. 12.

Swimming Classes

The Ave Maria Water Park provides Aqua Aerobics classes from Tuesday to Saturday at 9 a.m. in the Fitness Pool, along with American Red Cross swim lesson programs for all ages. Youth swim lessons are from Oct. 15 through 25. Offerings include Water Babies (6 months-3 years), Pre-school, Youth Classes, Progressive Swim Team (6-12 years old) and Adult Class.

Ave Maria Fall Festival

This year's annual festival, featuring a carnival, games, activities, food trucks and more, will be held on Saturday, Oct. 19 from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at North Park. Tickets are \$10 per person. Please register and pay online in advance to avoid long lines and the waiver signing process. On the day, entry wristbands can be purchased through the app or with cash only, and for those paying in cash, exact change is required or you can choose to donate the difference.

New Homeowners Social and Orientation

New Ave Maria homeowners and homeowners who have not attended one before are invited to a welcome meet-and-greet, followed by an informational presentation in AMMA meeting room. Residents will learn about living in this community and the various organizations in Ave Maria. The next orientation is scheduled for Thursday, Oct. 24. The meet and greet is at 5:30 p.m., orientation starts at 6 p.m.

Forest Bathing Presentation

Join Robin DeMattia, a certified forest therapy guide, for a session on guided relaxation and reconnection with nature at the AMMA office on Thursday, Oct. 24, from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. This event in Ave Maria is free, details and registration for the Forest Bathing at South Park on Saturday, Nov. 23 from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. can be found at goforestbathing.com.

Dim Swim at Ave Maria Water Park

Enjoy water park fun exclusively for residents and their guests on Saturday, Oct. 26 from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Entry is free with a Water Park pass or \$5 without. A photo ID is required for resident verification. Special treats are available at CJ's Café. Glass and alcohol are prohibited; coolers will be inspected.

Cozy Fall & Thankful Pottery Painting

Embrace the cozy vibes of fall and create beautiful personalized pottery pieces on Nov. 9 from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. in the AMMA community room. Registration is available at paintandbakestudio.com with a \$15 fee, and pottery selection is done at the event.

Scams & Fraud Seminar with CCSO

Lt. Sawyer from the Collier County Sheriff's Office will host a free seminar on scams and fraud awareness on Thursday, Nov. 14 at 6:30 p.m., highlighting the dangers of online scammers. Register online at avemariamasterassociation.com.

Del Webb Craft Show

The holiday festivities kick off early this year at The Club at Del Webb Naples Grand Hall on Saturday, Nov. 16, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., showcasing arts, crafts, and holiday decor by local artisans, complemented by food trucks, raffles, and live entertainment, open to all Ave Maria residents. Del Webb artisans interested in participating can obtain application and registration forms at the Oasis Club; for additional information, please contact the



Del Webb Naples lifestyle/events team.

Forest Bathing

Experience the serenity and rejuvenation of Forest Bathing at South Park on Saturday, Nov. 23, from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., to connect with nature and improve your well-being. For event details and registration, please visit goforestbathing.com.

Adult Games Group

Adults are invited to join a friendly group for card games and Rummikub on Mondays and Thursdays from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. in the AMMA card room.

Ave Maria Veterans Association High School Senior Scholarship

The Ave Maria Veterans Association is accepting scholarship applications beginning Wednesday, Jan. 1, 2025, for seniors enrolled in JROTC at Immokalee and Palmetto Ridge High School. Any senior who is a child or grandchild of an honorable discharged veteran, who both reside in Ave Maria, can apply. Scholarships will be awarded in May. Seniors should contact their school counselors and/or the JROTC Leadership. Scholarship applications are due no later than Tuesday, April 1. For detailed instructions and to apply, go to avemariavets.org/scholarshipapplication.

SPORTS AND FITNESS (RESIDENTS ONLY)

INDOOR AT THE AMMA COMMUNITY ROOM

Quest Martial Arts Academy Classes

Veteran instructor Kenny Quintero offers martial arts classes for both kids and adults on Mondays at 5 p.m. and Saturdays at 9:30 a.m. in the AMMA event room, focusing on discipline, self-defense, focus improvement, fitness, and fun. For more details, contact Crystal at 239-371-6037 or explore questmartialartsacademy.com.

Zumba

Tuesday evenings at 5:00 p.m., join instructor Vanesa for this upbeat and fun type of cardio exercise. For more information, cost and schedule updates, please contact vanezumba@gmail.com.

Tai Chi Fitness

Experience a meditative workout that increases strength, mobility and much more in these classes. Classes are now on Tuesday evenings at 6:00 p.m. in the community room. For more information, and to register for classes, contact instructor Mylyn Vedel at myvedel@gmail.com or 239-220-4181.

Yoga Fitness

These specialized, smaller-sized classes with yoga instructor Alexandra Salazar are designed for senior adults and adults. If you want to learn more about how these classes can benefit you or to register, please send an email to salex2009@gmail.com. Please note that walk-ins are not allowed for this type of class.

Sound Bathing

Experience relaxation and tranquility by attending Andrea's Sound Bath class featuring crystal bowls. Unwind your body and ease your mind. For registration and additional information about this unique and beneficial experience, please contact Andrea at 845-742-1525. Each class is \$10.

Yoga & Sound Bathing

Residents Alexandra and Andrea invite you to a session dedicated to deep relaxation and stress relief through yoga stretches. Accompanied by a live soundscape of crystal singing bowls and chimes, this experience facilitates a deeper relaxation of mind and body. Please contact Andrea at 845-742-1525 to book summer dates, reservations and payments. The cost is \$20 per person.

OUTDOOR AT THE AMMA PARKS

The following are the current fitness classes and sports activities approved by the Master Association in our amenities as of the date this is written.

Zumba Classes

Join instructor Genesis North for an energetic and enjoyable cardio exercise on Saturday mornings at 9:30 a.m. at the South Park Amphitheater. For more information, including cost and updates, please contact Genesis North via her website at genesiszumba.as.me.

Group Fitness Classes

Bodyweight training sessions are perfect for all fitness levels. Expect a full-body workout that will challenge your muscles, burn calories and improve your overall fitness. These classes are on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. in the South Park at the Amphitheater.

For more information, cost and updates, please contact certified trainer Victor at 305-606-6045 and victortorres@gmail.com.

SPORTS LEAGUES & ORGANIZATIONS

Ave Maria Little League

Ave Maria's first official, home-based little league recently completed another successful Spring season. The league offers baseball, tee ball and softball for kids aged 4 to 14. For detailed information about the current season's program and registration instructions, please visit avemariabaseball@gmail.com or contact avemariabaseball@gmail.com.

Soccer

Olfos Sports Academy has relaunched their Soccer Training Program, with sessions every Tuesday and Thursday from 2:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at North Park Fields for boys and girls ages 3 to 17. The program features certified coaches and is designed to develop young players' skills. Contact 305-244-2426 or visit olfosportsacademy.com for more information.

MLS Go Soccer

Ave Maria Youth Sports offers a recreational youth soccer program through MLS Go in North Park this Fall. For enrollment and schedule details, please visit avemariayouthsports.org.

Resident Pick-Up Sports

There are also resident pick-up gatherings, like co-ed softball at South Park and men's pick-up soccer at North Park. These are informal gatherings, not official clubs. 🌟

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