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Delivering Neighborhood Connections

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SUBMIT YOUR ARTICLES AND PHOTOS BY THE 10TH, TWO MONTHS BEFORE THE PRINT MONTH.

Example: February 10th is the submission deadline for the April issue.

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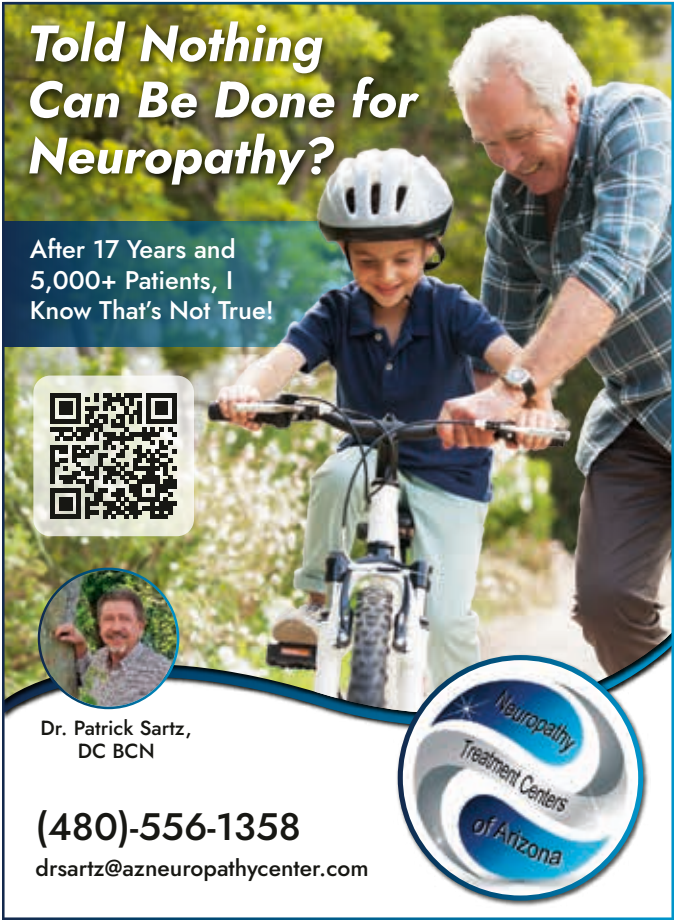
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September Shift

As the season changes, it's time to reset, refocus, and make the most of what's ahead.

There's something about September that sharpens our focus. Maybe it's the return of routine, the subtle shift in the morning air, or the way a summer that once felt endless now seems like a blink. We keep the grill going, enjoy evenings outside without the sweltering heat, and mentally gear up for the fourth quarter. This month is where momentum builds.

We kick it off by honoring Labor Day, a well-earned break that also reminds us of the work ethic woven into this country's DNA. It's a nod to those who show up early, stay late, and put their all into building something that lasts. We also pause to remember Sept. 11th, an unshakable reminder of sacrifice, bravery, and unity.



On that day, and in the days that followed, we saw what it means to show up for one another, even in the toughest moments.

Let's make this September count!



Amanda Blevins
and the Stroll Las Sendas editorial team.
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DE COUS' INSPIRED BY HEIDI'S VILLAGE ARE CHANGING LIVES, ONE PAW & A MEOW AT A TIME

LET'S MEET
DEANNA, MIKE, AND
SHEA DE COU, A
RESIDENT FAMILY
THAT ARE OPENING
THEIR DOOR TO
GENEROSITY.

PROVIDED BY DEANNA DE COU, RESIDENT

Deanna De Cou and her family have long embraced the charm of pet companionship. With two older cats, Bijou and Fredonia, adopted from no-kill shelters and cherished for years, the family has recently added a new twist to their household routine by fostering kittens. Mike, Deanna, and Shea have welcomed three litters, totaling 11 playful kittens, into their home.

The journey into kitten fostering began with a visit to Heidi's Village. Eager to support a 501(c)(3) organization known for its innovative animal welfare model, the De Cou family took a tour that left them inspired. The nursery's expert care for newborn kittens impressed the family, and the idea of fostering became irresistible. At the Smitten Kitten nursery, caretakers assign names to the kittens, adding a personal touch to each bundle of joy.

The playful energy of these kittens is infectious. As Deanna observes: the foster kittens sprint, pounce, then suddenly drop into the sweetest, instant naps. Their talent for wrestling, playing, and then instantly dozing off has quickly become a household highlight. Not only do the kittens bring laughter with every leap and tumble, but their antics have also brought unexpected fun, endless energy, and tenderness.

The initiative that has captured the love and enthusiasm of Deanna and her family—Heidi's Village—aims to lead an initiative fundamental to the heart of the community. Their goal is to ensure that every animal is healthy and well-adapted/socialized so that they are adoptable and make the perfect pet. They are equipped to take in just-born kittens and have staff working 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to care for these tiny lives. Constant attention is required, as newborn kittens need to eat every 2 to 3 hours.

Their most relevant and highlighted message is that they are promoting and fighting for these kittens, because newborn kittens are the most euthanized animals, but if the kittens achieve eight weeks, they become the most adoptable pets—and you are saving the lives of these beautiful and joyful creatures.

One memorable time, which is close to Deanna's heart, occurred just



as the family was being introduced—the kittens attacked a simple ball with such gusto that their bounding leaps turned into a coordinated game of tag. Watching the tiny creatures scurry around before collapsing in a fluffy heap never fails to bring a smile to all who witness it. Such moments provide a refreshing break from mundane tasks and remind the family of the pure joy that animals can bring into a home.

Heidi's Village made it really simple for the De Couts to become a foster family. They provided everything needed to get started. Deanna and her family just needed a place for the kittens to eat, sleep, and play, and lots of love to give. Since starting to foster, the De Cou family now spares no expense when it comes to keeping the kittens they have fostered well entertained. Spoiled much like cherished grandchildren, the kittens enjoy cozy beds, specially designed cat-themed placemats, and a series of little tents and tunnels that create a miniature playground. This thoughtful care reflects the family's deep love for animals and commitment to nurturing every pet that comes through their door.

Living in Black Rock has only enhanced this experience. After 21 years in Las Sendas, the De Cou family still counts on neighbors with whom to share wine and watchful care, and they cherish the warm community spirit as much as their beloved pets.



The close-knit neighborhood offers support, shared stories, and impromptu gatherings that further enrich the family's life—this tight-knit community being the perfect background for spreading love and generosity.

Thanks to Deanna De Cou for sharing their heartfelt story of fostering kittens and celebrating the joy that pets bring to their home and community. And as the De Cou household states, "We believe that if everyone had kittens, there would be world peace!"



If you are looking for a pet in your life, want to foster kittens, support this incredible cause, or volunteer with animals in some other way, contact Heidi's Village.

Check out their website for more information and adorable photos. They also have a great Facebook page with photos and videos.

Heidi's
Village Phone
(602) 241-2620
Website
heidisvillage.org
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Champions for Arizona's Children

Meet the volunteers behind CASA, your friendly neighbors making a difference!

When children are removed from their homes and placed into the foster care system, they are surrounded by professionals—lawyers, caseworkers, foster families—but often lack one vital advocate: someone who is solely there for them. That's where CASA comes in.

CASA stands for Court Appointed Special Advocate—a volunteer appointed by a judge to represent the best interests of a child in a dependency case. These trained advocates spend time with their assigned child, gather information from parents, school staff, foster placements, and others involved in the child's life, and write regular reports and court recommendations that hold real weight in a judge's decision-making.

For children ages 3 and under, court hearings take place every three months; for those 4 and older, hearings occur every six months. While advocates do not attend hearings monthly, they often participate in Family Team Meetings (FTM) or Child and Family Team (CFT) meetings, as well as Foster Care Review Boards, which take place quarterly. These meetings, combined with consistent visits and advocacy, ensure that the child's voice is always represented.

Both Bev and Lisa are CASAs with Maricopa County. Sally, although she lives in Maricopa, serves as a CASA for Coconino County, where many foster children are transferred due to a shortage of foster homes. "Judges genuinely look at what CASA volunteers recommend. We are often the one person who has a deep, long-term understanding of the child's situation," she said.

Sally was introduced to CASA by her daughter, who learned about the program through her sorority's philanthropy at the University of Arizona. Now a recent graduate, her daughter is going through the process of becoming a CASA herself. With her own children grown, Sally felt called to step in. "I didn't even know CASA existed, and I've lived in Arizona my whole life," she said.

Bev discovered CASA through her husband and a friend who volunteered in California, where she had lived for 28 years. After attending an info meeting and completing the required training—which includes fingerprinting, a polygraph, and three full days of coursework—she joined the program. "It's taken very seriously," she said. "But it feels so good to know you're making a real difference in a child's life."

Lisa, the most experienced of the group, first encountered the foster care system as a foster parent herself. She eventually shifted into CASA work to support children while also being



more available for her own family. "I've had one case, and I've been with that teen for several years," she said. "The deeper you go, the more you know—and often, CASA volunteers learn things caseworkers simply don't have time to uncover."

Volunteers are matched with one child or sibling group and stay with them for the duration of their time in the foster system, which can span months or even years. From simple outings to see Christmas lights or back-to-school shopping, to regular conversations with teachers and caregivers, CASA volunteers offer a steady and caring presence in a child's life.

The need is great. CASA of Arizona reports that only one in six foster children have a CASA volunteer. The program especially encourages men to apply and is working to raise awareness about this vital opportunity to serve. "You don't have to figure it out on your own," Sally said. "Each CASA has a coordinator for support, ongoing education is provided, and you even get your own CASA email address."

If becoming a CASA feels like too much of a time commitment, there's another meaningful option: the Foster Care Review Board (FCRB). These boards meet once every three months to review cases and provide court recommendations. It's a great way to contribute without the monthly responsibilities of a CASA.

"You end up loving your kid and wanting the best for them," Bev said. "They realize you care. And for a child who's experienced so much instability, that means everything."

To learn more about becoming a CASA or joining the Foster Care Review Board, visit casa.azcourts.gov or follow CASA of Arizona and Maricopa CASA on social media.

Cooler Temps, Warmer Memories at Our Park City Summer Escape

Trading the Arizona heat for mountain breezes, our family found adventure, community, and charm in Park City, Utah, our favorite summer tradition.

WRITTEN BY KRISTEN SNOKE,
RESIDENT CONTRIBUTOR

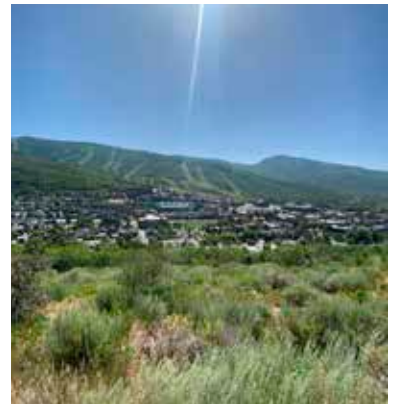
GETTING OUT OF THE BRUTAL Arizona heat and heading up north is a must—especially during the summer. Our family has a new tradition of spending a few weeks in Park City, Utah every summer, and this year we were lucky enough to have some other Las Sendas friends come experience it with us!

You can either make the 11-ish hour drive and turn it into a road trip, or simply fly into Salt Lake City and easily drive over to this adorable mountain town. The city is much quieter in the summer than in the winter, as it's primarily a ski destination. However, it still offers plenty of activities and free events throughout the warmer months.

Our family enjoys a multitude of activities, including shopping and exploring historic downtown Park City, going on hikes and mountain bike rides, golfing, visiting the library, attending free outdoor concerts, and discovering the many parks and play areas around town. We spend as much time outdoors as possible, knowing that when we return home to Mesa, it will be 115 degrees!

Personally, my two favorite things to do in Park City are walking to the lake for paddleboarding and attending the weekly Park Silly Sunday Market, where local vendors sell food and crafts along Main Street. There truly is something for everyone in this town, which is why it has become our family's top summer destination.

And I didn't even mention all the amazing restaurants and coffee shops around town! We always enjoy our time in Park City, and we will definitely be back again next year.



New Chapters, Sweet Treats, and Graphic Tees

Life After 30 Years in the Classroom

WRITTEN BY JEANNE BOIARSKY, RESIDENT



When I retired from teaching elementary school for 30 years, I don't think I believed Mr. Rogers. People would ask, "What are you going to do now?" and honestly, it was a little scary thinking about "what's next." Teaching was my whole life. If you were my student, you are forever "my kid." But I kept going back to that question: *What do I do now?* Here are the "beginnings" I found...

Reading and using real literature in the classroom was always my passion. Read-aloud time gave me the chance to bring words to life. Now, some of my teacher friends invite me to their classrooms to read to their students. I love bringing fun picture books to kids and sharing the love of literature with them. I've even been asked about "performing" at birthday parties!

Baking has always been a big part of our family (thanks, Mom). Our daughter Hailey and I started pop-up bake sales in our driveway and at events like the Las Sendas Holiday Boutique and the Classic Car event. Boiarsky Bakers has been such a joy for us. We make a variety of delicious cookie bars, breads, and treats galore.

I've always loved graphic t-shirts. When I was teaching, I had a myriad of shirts for every holiday and occasion. People would often say, "What does your shirt say today?" My husband, Dave, encouraged me to get the equipment and start making my own shirts. Now, I love creating shirts for people—for celebrations, travel adventures, and everyday life. Dave nudged me again to start an Etsy shop, which I recently launched. It's been a fun and creative way to help others celebrate meaningful moments.

Mr. Rogers was right. As I was writing this, it hit me that all three of these "beginnings" are things that make me truly happy. I love to celebrate life's everyday events, and each of these passions reflects that love. It brings me so much joy when someone enjoys one of our treats at a party. Seeing kids light up and laugh when I read to them fills my heart. Spotting one of my shirts out in the world always makes me smile big.

One last thing I'll say is that retirement has also given me time to reflect on how blessed I am. We live close to my parents (also Las Sendas residents), and I finally have the time to really

"spoil" Dave and Hailey. I love being able to do things for them that I didn't always have time for before. Family is my greatest joy, and I know how lucky I am to have the most important people in my life so close and so supportive.

If you ever have a baking, shirt, or reading need—hit me up!

Email: jeanneboiarsky@gmail.com

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"Often when you're at the end of something, you're at the beginning of something else."

—FRED ROGERS



Savoring Summer

Moments That Made This Season Unforgettable



LS friends Happy Hour at the LS Grille



Perry Family in Australia



James and Michele Metcalf (parents) and Jeanne, Dave, and Hailey Boiarsky at Disney Paris celebrating the Metcalf's 60th wedding anniversary.



Brenda Perry in Australia



LS luau party



Perry Family in Australia



Perry family in Australia



LS friends visit Napa together



Perry family in Australia



Perry family in Australia



Favorite summer vacation ever - Walt Disney World!



LS ladies pool party



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FROM MESA, ARIZONA, to homes and businesses across the country adorned with stunning custom metalwork, Matt’s journey is anything but ordinary. It’s a story of second chances, hard-earned skills, and the kind of resilience only forged through the hottest fires of adversity.

Born and raised in a family of seven, Matt grew up as the middle child of five. But despite the strong foundation at home, like many teenagers searching for identity, he took a detour into a darker path during high school.

At just 16, he began experimenting with pain pills and alcohol, falling in with the wrong crowd. “What started off as partying turned into a full-blown opiate addiction,” he recalls. “I truly believed I was hopeless.” Failing to get clean on his own despite his many attempts.

But fate had other plans. Through what Matt describes as divine intervention, he found himself in treatment, surrounded by people who not only believed in recovery, but in him. “They showed me a way out, a new way to live,” he says. “From that point on, everything changed.”

With sobriety came clarity. And with clarity came purpose.

After completing treatment, Matt knew he had to stay active and focused. He had always enjoyed design and working with his hands, so he began sketching ideas and tinkering with materials. After saving up from odd jobs, he bought his first welder and a few pieces of steel. With no formal training, he taught himself to weld, building small items like gates, tables, and home decor for friends and family.

“This was recovery for me,” he says. “Every weld, every design was like stitching together the pieces of a new life.”

By 2010, Matt had built enough of a reputation to venture out on his own. Working a full-time job during the day and welding at night, he slowly carved



out a space in the local metalworking community. “I learned a lot from watching other business owners, asking questions, making mistakes, and just showing up day after day.”

What started in a modest garage has grown into Steel & Stone, a full-fledged design and fabrication company. Today, Steel & Stone creates handcrafted, functional works of art including steel and glass doors, custom designed range hoods, and architectural features that elevate spaces from Arizona to the East Coast.

But no matter how far the business has come, one thing remains non-negotiable: sobriety.

“I’m still active in recovery,” Matt says. “That comes before anything. Without it, none of this exists.”

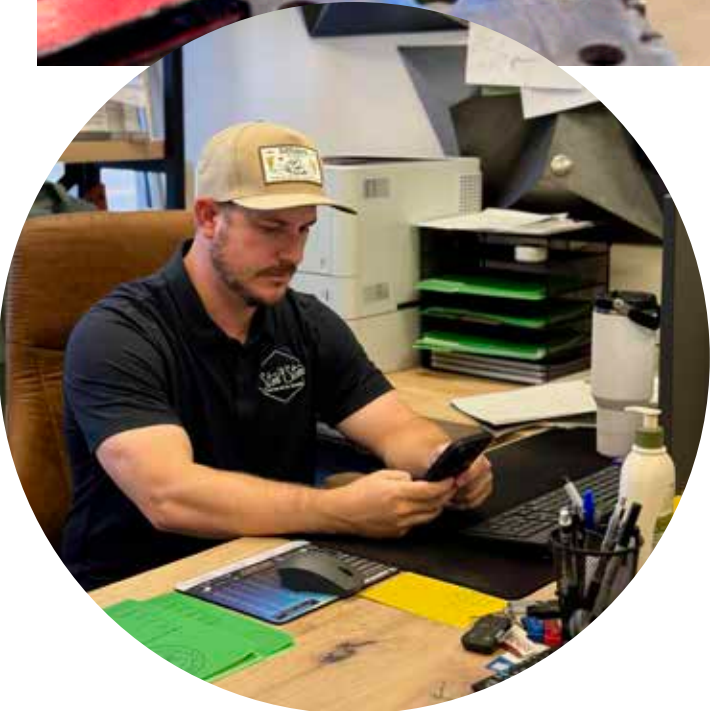
His story isn’t just one of business success. It speaks to what can happen when someone chooses to change, trusts God, puts in the work, and never stops believing, even when belief seems impossible.

“I was lost,” Matt says. “Now, I get to wake up every day and do what I love. And if sharing my story helps someone else find their path, that’s the greatest reward of all.”



STEEL RESOLVE

A Story of Recovery, Redemption, and Remarkable Design



Why I Love Freezer Meals

There are so many reasons to love a good freezer meal, so read along as your neighbor Julie shows you how she utilizes these meals to camp and bless others!

BY JULIE JOHNSON, LAS SENDAS RESIDENT

Before a camping trip, I make several so I can enjoy the outdoors instead of being stuck in the tiny camper kitchen. They’re also a lifesaver during busy weeks packed with sports, music lessons, or late workdays—just thaw, heat, and dinner is ready. Whether you’re feeding a family or just trying to get ahead, these two recipes are tried-and-true favorites in our home.

Freezer meals also make it easy to bless others. When someone’s had a baby, is recovering from surgery, or just going through a rough patch, a homemade meal ready to go in their freezer can be a small but meaningful gift. I always double the recipe—one for us and one to share. If you’ve never stocked your freezer this way, these two dishes are a great place to start. They’re simple, hearty, and hold up beautifully in the freezer.

Asian Turkey Lettuce Wraps

Yields: 6 servings

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 pounds ground turkey (you can also use chicken or beef)
- 1 medium red bell pepper, diced
- 2 large carrots, grated (about 1 cup)
- 4 cloves garlic, minced or garlic paste
- ¼ cup low-sodium soy sauce
- ¼ cup ketchup
- 1 tablespoon honey
- ¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes

MATERIALS:

- 1 gallon-sized plastic freezer bag



PREP:

To make preparation easy, I leave the ingredients out on the counter after grocery shopping and assemble everything at once.

You can either freeze the meat raw or cook it first. I’ve used both methods, but I find that raw ground turkey maintains its flavor and texture beautifully.

If you prefer to cook it first: Fry the ground turkey in a frying pan until fully cooked. Let it cool.

1. In a large bowl, combine the meat (cooked or raw) with all remaining ingredients.
2. Transfer everything to a freezer ziplock bag.
3. Remove as much air as possible, seal, and lay flat in the freezer. Label with the meal name, date, and cooking instructions.

COOK:

1. Thaw in the refrigerator overnight.
2. Add contents to a slow cooker.
3. Cook on **low** for 4–6 hours, until everything is tender and heated through.
4. Serve on large pieces of iceberg, Boston, or Bibb lettuce.

Apricot BBQ Chicken Wings

Yields: 8 servings

INGREDIENTS:

- 4 pounds frozen chicken wing drumettes
- 1 (18 oz) bottle BBQ sauce (about 2 cups)
- 1 cup apricot preserves
- 1 teaspoon ginger powder or ginger paste
- 1 tablespoon garlic powder
- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce

MATERIALS:

- 1 gallon-sized plastic freezer bag

PREP:

Label freezer bag with the meal name, cooking instructions, and “use by” date. Add all ingredients to the bag. (No need to cook the meat—keep it frozen.) Remove as much air as possible, seal, and lay flat in the freezer.

COOK:

1. Thaw in the refrigerator overnight.
2. Add contents to slow cooker.

3. Cook on **low** for 6–8 hours or **high** for 3–4 hours.

4. Optional: For crispy, caramelized wings:

- Preheat oven to broil and line a baking sheet with foil.
- Transfer wings to the baking sheet, drizzle with slow cooker sauce, and broil for 2 minutes.
- Flip wings, brush with more sauce, and broil an additional 3–5 minutes until the sauce begins to caramelize.

TO SERVE:

Serve warm with a big salad.

Tip: Use a non-sweet BBQ sauce to balance the apricot preserves.

Freezer Meal Tips

- Use within **1 month** for best taste and texture.
- Label clearly with meal name and cook time.
- Always **double-bag** to prevent freezer burn.
- Freeze flat to save space and speed up thawing.



ABOUT THE COOK

Julie was an executive for 15 years before moving to Las Sendas in 2022 with her husband, Craig. They have two adult children, one grandchild and one dog. Since moving to the area, she has enjoyed messing around in the kitchen with the 1000s of recipes she has collected over the years. Having the time to try them out on family and friends is a dream come true.



resident business guide

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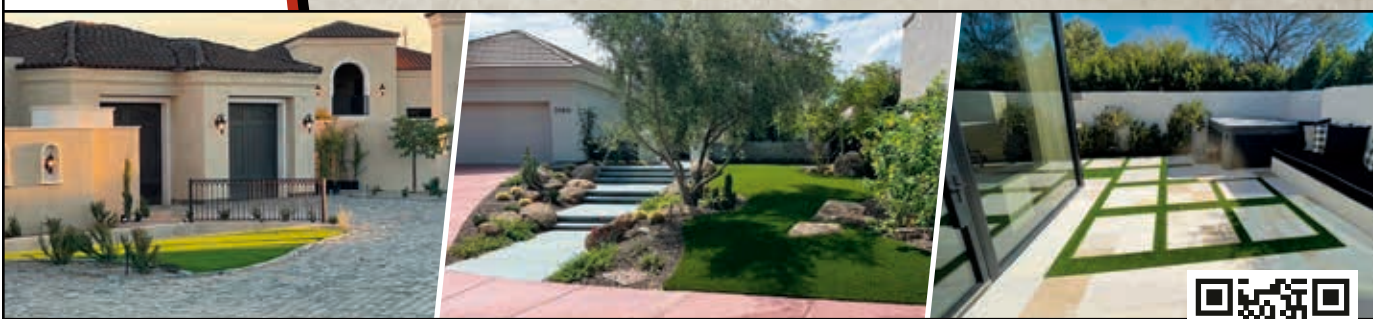
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