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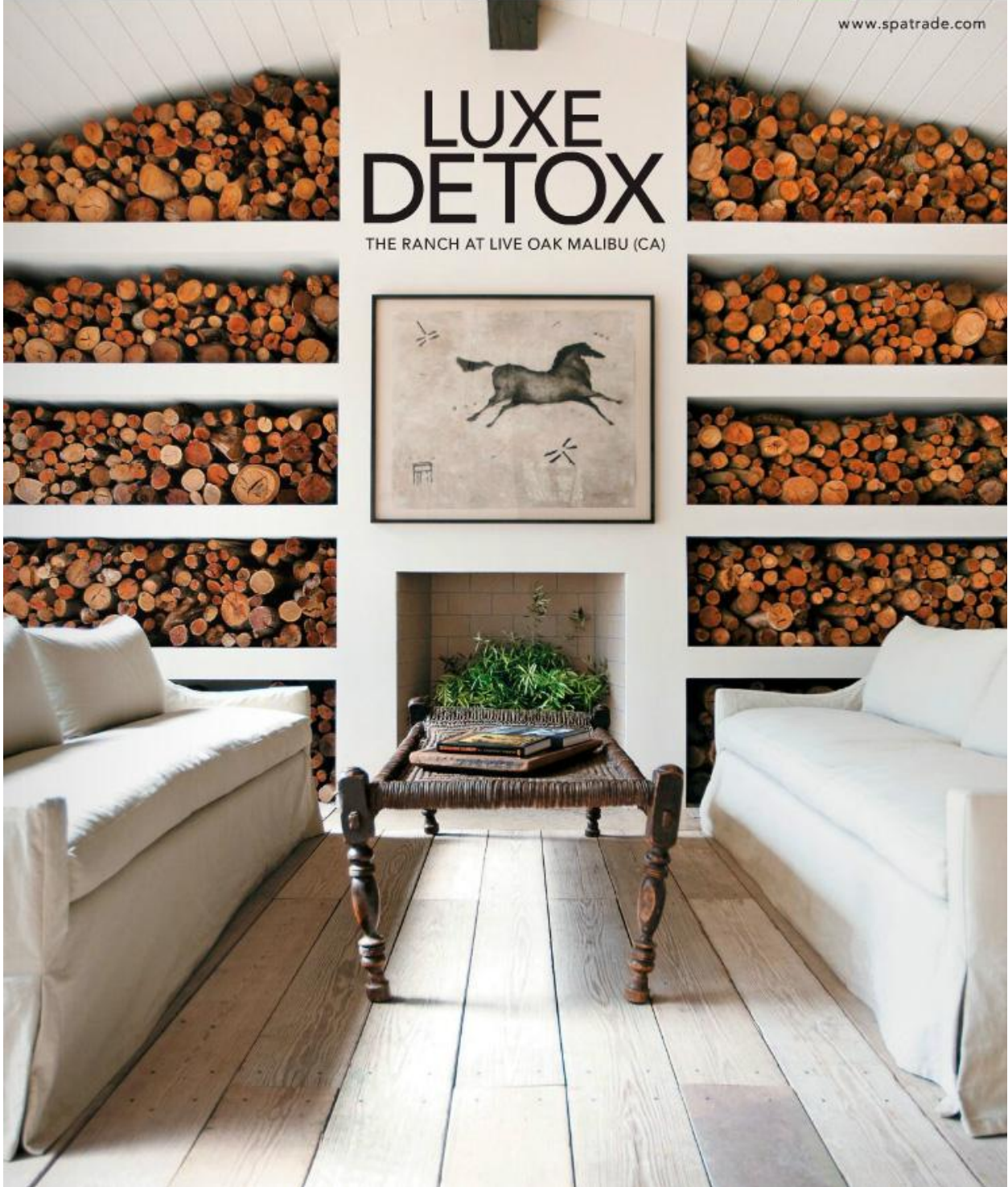
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Pay it Forward

Andrew Jacono, M.D., F.A.C.S., explains how getting involved in philanthropy can positively impact all aspects of your medical spa.

AS A FACIAL PLASTIC AND RECONSTRUCTIVE surgeon, I've long been grateful to specialize in a field where I can offer my skills and services to the benefit of others. Whether you're a facial, plastic, and reconstructive surgeon or a medical spa owner, you speak to the very basic human need of being comfortable with one's appearance. From aesthetic patients looking for a confidence boost to a domestic violence victim, cancer patient, or accident victim looking to rebuild his or her life, I have found that it is both rewarding and impactful to satisfy a patient's need to feel whole and confident in the face he or she is showing the world. From the satisfaction of helping those in need to the morale boost, sense of community, and team building it instills in your staff and patients, the reasons to get involved and offer your skills in pro bono work or a charitable alliance of some kind are countless. Even further, studies have shown that charitable alliances seriously sway the American consumer's opinion of a product or company. According to a Cone/Duke study, 85 percent of Americans have a more positive image of a product or company when it supports a cause they care about, and 79 percent said they would be likely to switch from one brand to an equivalent brand if it was associated with a good cause.

There are a number of ways to integrate charitable alliances with your medical spa, from the local to the national level. The first step is deciding what's important to you and how you can make the biggest impact. This could be anything from domestic violence to skin cancer to children's charities. Whether it's offering free screenings during Skin Cancer Awareness Month (May) or donating water bottles to a charitable 5K race, there are a million ways to give back. You just need to decide what you're passionate about, and go for it. For my practice, the cause is domestic violence awareness



on both the local and national levels. I became aware of this issue early in my career from a patient who returned with a shattered nose months after I had performed reconstructive rhinoplasty. Her husband was responsible for her injury. It was at this point I became involved in FACE TO FACE: The National Domestic Violence Project. This program was started by The American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery and the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence and offers complimentary consultations, surgery, counseling, and support to victims of domestic abuse who otherwise would not be able to afford reconstructive or facial plastic surgery treatment.

After a decade of involvement with this program, these patients have become like my
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"You just need to decide what you're passionate about, and go for it."

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extended family and give me a renewed energy that I bring to all of the patients in my practice. On the local level, my regular patients are also involved through an annual gala I hold to raise money on behalf of domestic violence victims in Long Island, NY, through the Nassau County Coalition Against Domestic Violence. Not only does this raise awareness of this pervasive problem but it also helps my aesthetic patients identify more with the core ideals of my practice.

In addition to domestic violence awareness, I also donate my time and services to Healing the Children, an organization whose mission is to heal children with burn injuries, cleft palates, and other deformities, and whose families don't have access to or cannot afford treatment. This kind of involvement means leaving my practice several times a year to travel to areas around the U.S. and abroad. My regular patients are aware of what I'm doing and never seem to mind my absence because it's for a great cause.

There are many ways to get involved in charitable causes. Perhaps you could consider donating a portion of retail sales or services to charities you align with for a month. Another option is to donate what services you do offer to those who need them but cannot afford them—from a complimentary psoriasis treatment during National Psoriasis Month (August) to nurturing spa services for patients suffering from illness, the options are endless. Many of our patients have schedules that don't allow them to be as involved as they'd like to be in charity work, so this lets them share in that rewarding feeling knowing that a portion of their procedure fee is donated to charity. If treatment isn't something you can afford to offer, education is a great gift—from proper skin protection to identifying skin damage. I also give large-scale seminars to the public on cosmetic procedures, but I charge a nominal ticket fee that translates into thousands of dollars to the organizations I support.

When it comes down to it, how and why you decide to get involved in a charitable partnership is completely up to you. As a facial plastic and reconstructive surgeon and medical spa owner, I can tell you that however you decide to go about it, giving back to your community and offering your skills and knowledge to those who need them will

not only impact those who you're directly helping but your clients, your practice, your community, and yourself. To find a charity you're passionate about, visit www.charitynavigator.org.—**Andrew Jacono, M.D., F.A.C.S.**

Andrew Jacono, M.D., F.A.C.S., has a thriving practice on Long Island and in Manhattan. He is the author of the book *Face the Facts: The Truth About Facial Plastic Surgery Procedures That Do and Don't Work* (BookSurge Publishing, 2006) and the creator of J PAK Systems, homeopathic remedies to help optimize healing after aesthetic procedures. For more information, visit www.newyorkfacialplasticsurgery.com.

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