

Compliments of Chris Holcomb

AMERICAN LIFESTYLE

THE MAGAZINE CELEBRATING LIFE IN AMERICA

ISSUE 137



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Embrace
FALL
LANDSCAPES

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AMERICAN LIFESTYLE

Dear Reader,

Anne Frank once said, "How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world." This issue of American Lifestyle spotlights inspirational examples of entities that exist to make such a difference, including a profile of a breast cancer charity focused on an overlooked aspect of the fight, a verdant urban oasis with a special Halloween celebration, and an organization that has been supplying basic necessities to people for decades.

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, which inspires increased mindfulness about the disease and those who have it. To that end, read about the work of Pink Fund, a nonprofit that provides financial assistance to breast cancer patients in active treatment.

Southern California's Descanso Gardens is a botanical paradise that has been inviting the public to experience nature since the 1950s. Check out all there is to do and see at its pumpkin-themed autumn event, Carved.

There are many ways to impact lives, and Poverello House embodies this by providing not only assistance but also compassion and dignity to those in need. Learn how it does so, including by offering three hot meals daily for anyone who walks through its doors.

How will you go out of your way to help others this season?

Please join us for our upcoming webinar "Money Matters--But Life Matters More" on Tuesday, October 14 from 6pm-7pm. Please see back inside cover of this magazine for more information. We hope you can join us!

Chris Holcomb



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"It's all about you, your plan, and your life."

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AMERICAN LIFESTYLE CONTENTS

ISSUE 137

02

Debunking Breast Cancer Misconceptions

04

The Magic of Drive-In Theaters

08

From Leaves to Paper

12

An Artist's Woodland Escape

20

Pizza with Pizzazz

28

The Powerful Impact of Pink Fund

34

Providing Hot Meals and Hope

40

Gourds, Gardens, and the Golden State

48

Diet, Exercise, and Cancer

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DEBUNKING BREAST CANCER MISCONCEPTIONS

Written by **Faith Fiorile** / Photography by **Getty Images**

Breast cancer is one of the most widely known and discussed forms of cancer, yet certain myths about it persist—which can not only fuel fear but also prevent individuals from seeking the information and care they need. Here are three of the most common.

MYTH 1: Breast cancer only affects older women.

While it is true that women over age fifty are far more likely to develop breast cancer, 10 percent of all new cases are found in those under forty-five. And it's not just women—per the CDC, one in every one hundred diagnoses is in men. These facts make it essential for everyone to be vigilant about checking for potential symptoms.

Myth 2: A lump in the breast always means cancer.

A prevalent belief is that finding a lump in the breast automatically means cancer, but that is not always the case. Many are benign, meaning they have no cancer cells and may be nothing more than a cyst or fibroadenoma (clump of breast tissue). However, it is still important to have any new lump checked by a professional to determine its nature and whether further investigation is necessary.

Myth 3: Only those with a family history of breast cancer are at risk.

While there's no denying that having family members diagnosed with breast cancer increases a person's odds of getting it as well, the majority of breast cancer cases have no known family history of the disease. Factors like lifestyle, environmental influences, and certain genetic mutations also play a role in increasing the risk.

Awareness is the first step toward combating the myths surrounding breast cancer and becoming empowered to take control of your health. For personalized information and advice about breast cancer risks, screenings, and prevention, consult your health-care provider.

the magic of **DRIVE-IN THEATERS**

Written by **Lauren Kim** / Photography **as noted**

Picture parking your car in front of a massive movie screen with the stars twinkling above. The delicious aroma of fresh popcorn is in the air as the warm evening breeze drifts through your open windows. Eventually, the projector clicks into gear, broadcasting a new summer blockbuster or a nostalgic classic for you and your fellow moviegoers to enjoy.

Once a beloved relic of the past, drive-in movie theaters are experiencing a resurgence across the United States—and it's easy to understand why. "It's a dynamic way

to watch a movie, whether you're relaxing in your car and popping up the back hatch or bringing a portable boom box and sitting outside with friends," says Matthew McClanahan, co-owner of Shankweiler's Drive-In of Orefield, Pennsylvania, the oldest operating theater of its kind in the country. Dive into the history of these unique venues and how to maximize your experience at one near you.

The drive-in journey

Shankweiler's opened in 1934, ten months after the first patented drive-in theater debuted in Camden, New Jersey. The latter ended up closing just three years later, but



Shankweiler's
Drive-In

PHOTO COURTESY OF SHANKWEILER'S DRIVE-IN

only after igniting a nationwide phenomenon. By the 1950s, drive-ins had peaked, with over 4,000 screens across the United States.

However, many of these outdoor theaters closed over the decades as the need for suburban real estate rose, huge indoor multiplex theaters proliferated, and more people grew to enjoy watching movies on their home entertainment systems. Today, around three hundred drive-ins remain in operation, buoyed in recent years by the COVID-19

pandemic. During this time, moviegoers rediscovered the experience's appeal, which provided a fun and socially distanced way to enjoy films on the big screen again.

A new era

Remaining drive-ins faithfully capture the charm of yesteryear by serving classic treats like candy, hot dogs, and soda at their concession stands. At the same time, numerous locations have embraced modern technology, replacing traditional film reels

with state-of-the-art digital projectors to elevate the moviegoing experience. Audio is now delivered in crystal-clear quality via FM radio—a significant improvement over the old-fashioned speakers of the past. And while some theaters only operate seasonally, others are open rain or shine even during winter.

A large number of existing drive-ins are also independently owned, allowing owners to imbue their own flair. For instance, the Wellfleet Drive-In Theatre on



GETTY IMAGES

Numerous locations have embraced modern technology, replacing traditional film reels with state-of-the-art digital projectors to elevate the moviegoing experience.

require, without draining your battery. Alternatively, consider bringing a portable radio to tune in to the film's audio easily.

Be sure to dress for the weather and bring along a blanket and a folding chair or two for a cozy way to enjoy the fresh air while watching the movie. Further, arrive early to secure a prime parking spot, set your radio to the correct FM frequency, and purchase your popcorn or snacks from the concession stand before the film begins.

Whether you're looking for a unique outing with your sweetheart, kids, or friends, make plans to visit your nearest drive-in for a truly magical evening this season.

Cape Cod has been a local favorite since 1957, providing a beach-town atmosphere. Visitors can enjoy the drive-in's snack bar after the show, play miniature golf, or visit the Dairy Bar just outside the theater to buy ice cream. In New Braunfels, Texas, the Stars & Stripes Drive-In Theatre features three screens and a nostalgic 1950s-style café serving classic burgers and milkshakes. Meanwhile, Shankweiler's enhances its

accessibility by offering open-caption screenings, making visits more inclusive for all guests.

Moviegoing tips

All but five states boast at least one drive-in, so there's a decent chance you'll find one within reach of your home. To ensure the best experience for everyone, read your car manual beforehand to learn how to operate your radio with both the engine and lights off, as many theaters



GETTY IMAGES

FROM LEAVES

to paper

Written by **Matthew Brady**
Photography courtesy of **Releaf Paper**

Autumn is a time of change, when summer temperatures are replaced by chilly winds, short sleeves are swapped for sweaters, and leaves transform into an array of inspirational colors. But, as it turns out, those very same eye-catching leaves may hold the key to a recycling revolution—one spurred on by the company **Releaf Paper**, the world's first manufacturer of paper from fallen leaves.

Releaf Paper says it's currently the only company in the world that uses leaves to produce packaging materials on an industrial scale.



THE TEEN BEHIND THE TECH

One of the more recent global scientific initiatives has been how to be more responsible with the earth's resources, including the millions of acres that are deforested worldwide for paper production alone. That was the challenge that led then-sixteen-year-old Ukrainian biotechnologist Valentyn Frechka to mull whether sources besides trees could be used to create paper. Eventually, he landed on a unique alternative: fallen leaves.

After some trial and error, he finally experienced his "eureka!" moment in 2018 when he made paper castings from fallen leaf fibers. Inspired, he pushed the concept even further by cofounding Releaf Paper with entrepreneur and company CEO Alexander Sobolenko. (Frechka also serves as chief technology officer.) After six years of research and development, Releaf Paper perfected its scientifically proven, patented, award-winning technology; last year, it opened its first large-scale leaf-processing pilot production near Paris, where Frechka had relocated in 2022.

ITS PRODUCTS

Releaf Paper says it's currently the only company in the world that uses leaves to produce packaging materials on an industrial scale. One of its core products is Releaf kraft paper, which packaging companies use in their own manufacturing. But perhaps most exciting are

the ready-made packaging solutions Releaf offers brands and retailers, including bags and boxes as well as customization; it counts L'Oréal, Samsung, and Chanel among its partners.

THE IMPACT

It's estimated that an average European city collects 8,000 tons of leaves a year; some of this is used in other eco-friendly practices like composting. But thanks to Releaf Paper's innovation, the leaves in these places can reportedly be converted into more than two million tons of pulp annually—saving approximately thirty-four million trees. The company also says that each of its paper and packaging items has no effect on the environment because of its recycling process, which uses significantly less carbon dioxide and water than other manufacturers.

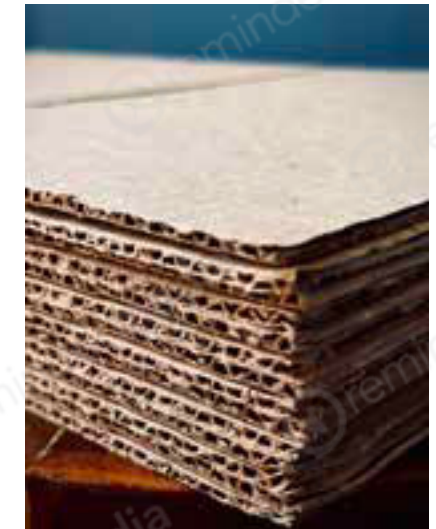


TURNING THE PAGE

Now that this spark has ignited, the possibilities are virtually endless. For instance, the materials Releaf produces can be used for a variety of applications, such as cardboard, containerboard, injection-molded containers, and bioplastics. The company isn't content to rest on its laurels, either, as it continually seeks out-of-the-box ways to use its technology to recycle other readily available raw materials, including grapes and flower stems.

Within the next decade, Releaf Paper aims to expand its production to every continent, including North America. So the next time you're strolling down a tree-lined road admiring the cascading leaves in autumn, remember the possibilities that exist within each one.

For more info, visit releaf-paper.com



An Artist's WOODLAND ESCAPE

Interview with **Yvonne Pepin-Wakefield**
Written by **Andre Rios**
Photography courtesy of **Yvonne Pepin-Wakefield**



At just eighteen years old, **Yvonne Pepin-Wakefield** packed up some survival and building supplies and trekked into the Oregon woods with one goal: building a cabin from the ground up that would become a peaceful retreat and the site for crafting her artwork. Now sixty-eight and an accomplished artist and author with a showcase studio, she shares the fascinating story behind this ambitious project—along with the impact it has had on her career.





What inspired you to construct a cabin by yourself?

I lost both my parents as a kid. The night my mother died, I was fourteen and sleeping in my cousin's basement. I didn't know where I was going to be living the next day, much less the next year, and I just decided that if I made it to adulthood, I was going to get a van, a cat, and a case of wine, go buy some property, and build myself a home where I could write poetry and paint. This idea got me through some pretty tough years. So when I turned eighteen and received my parents' inheritance, I used it to buy eighty acres of property in the wilderness in Oregon.

Was this your first time taking on such a project?

Yep—I had no design experience or background. The only thing I had ever built was a kid's fort, and I broke my finger using the hammer. I found books on how to construct a log cabin



and went up to the property to get started, but when I first tried to cut down a tree, it fell the wrong way. I knew I needed extra help, so I hired a builder named Jim from the nearby town, who basically taught me everything I know.

How did you approach the building process?

I manifested the idea of the structure and diagrammed the plans using rulers to scale the drawing. That

detailed pencil sketch is what guided Jim and me. As for the building, we approached it primitively: the only power tool we had was a chainsaw. Jim would fell the trees and cut them to size, and I would drawknife them to make them smooth and compatible for building. The cabin has a post-and-pier foundation; I hand-dug sixteen post holes about two and a half feet down, poured cement in each one, and put a piece of rebar in the cement. I then drilled a hole into the ends of wooden posts to slide them onto the rebar so they could lift the cabin. From



there, we laid logs for building the cabin floor, followed by the walls. After we finished the structure, I brushed on a wood preservative made from raw linseed oil and turpentine to protect it.

How has the cabin held up since then?

It's about fifty years old now, and it's still in really good shape, mostly because I maintain it very well. It's like an organism; I have to work to keep it alive or it will go back to where it came from.

I make improvements from time to time too. For example, we originally put in only four windows to prevent heat from leaking. But my first winter there, it was too dark. For more light, I ended up adding two more large windows, which was quite a task. I had to chisel out the logs and hacksaw out the rebar that's installed in every foot to hold them before taking a chainsaw and cutting the apertures for the windows. So here's a message to anyone who wants to build a log cabin: plan ahead.

I also put in new steps recently. I'm more cautious now because of two hip replacements, but I'm still doing the same work and using the same tools that I did as a teen.

It sounds like there were many challenges during construction, but what was the biggest one?

During construction, I lived in a shack and later a pup tent without electricity or plumbing. When the road got bad because of the weather, I backpacked in supplies. It was a full-time job to stay warm and fed.

It ultimately took about seven months before I could move in; we had to make sure it was a safe shelter, especially because it was late October and snow was coming soon. Today, when I use it as my studio, I lug water out of the creek with buckets and keep myself warm at night with kerosene lamps. I spent the first winter there and went back every summer for about three months each; now I spend a few days at the cabin twice a month.



I had to chisel out the logs and hacksaw out the rebar that's installed in every foot to hold them before taking a chainsaw and cutting the apertures for the windows.





I use a pit-fire process where I bisque the clay in a kiln and then bury it underground and layer it with sawdust. I light it on fire, and it burns for up to ten days, which develops a beautiful patina on the vessel; it varies based on the heat, smoke, and sawdust I use each time.



How has the cabin helped your art over the years?

At the time I built the cabin, I had taught myself drawing, but once the construction process no longer occupied my time, my paintings started to evolve. I would backpack around the wilderness and set up my French easel to paint scenes like the setting sun or full moon.



I took up ceramics long afterward. I use a pit-fire process where I bisque the clay in a kiln and then bury it underground and layer it with sawdust. I light it on fire, and it burns for up to ten days, which develops a beautiful patina on the vessel; it varies based on the heat, smoke, and sawdust I use each time. I also recently built a studio and gallery in The Dalles, Oregon, where I showcase my work. My cabin is two hundred miles away, but I still go there to maintain it, paint on location, and remind myself of my foundation.

For more info, visit yvonnepepinwakefield.com



PIZZA

with *PIZZAZZ*

Recipes by **DEBORAH KALOPER**
Photography by **EMILY WEAVING**



SCAN THE QR CODE
for the full cookbook.

QUATTRO *formaggi*



Makes one
9½ inch pizza

INGREDIENTS

SEE PG. 26

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 8 oz. Neapolitan pizza dough ball | 1¾ oz. provolone, sliced or grated |
| 1 teaspoon extra virgin olive oil | Salt flakes |
| 2¼ oz. fior di latte, torn | Pepper |
| 2¼ oz. ricotta, drained | Honey, for drizzling |
| 1¾ oz. gorgonzola, crumbled | |

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1/ Place a pizza stone on the bottom rack of the cold oven. Set the oven to its highest temperature (ideally 500°F fan-forced) and preheat for 1 hour.
- 2/ Following the Neapolitan pizza dough instructions, use your hands to press, pat and stretch the dough ball out to form a 9½ in. circle. Lightly brush the dough with the olive oil and scatter the cheeses evenly over the top.
- 3/ Carefully transfer the pizza to the hot pizza stone and bake for 8–10 minutes, until the crust is golden and cooked through, and the cheese is melted and bubbling.
- 4/ Season the pizza with salt and pepper, and drizzle with a little honey for a delicious, sweet hit.



BBQ *chicken*



Makes one
9½ inch pizza

INGREDIENTS

8 oz. Neapolitan pizza dough ball
½ cup shredded roast chicken
½ cup barbecue sauce of your choice
1½ oz. smoked mozzarella, shredded

SEE PG. 26

1½ oz. gouda, shredded
½ oz. small red onion, sliced
8 slices pickled jalapeños
1–2 tablespoons ranch dressing

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1/ Place a pizza stone on the bottom rack of the cold oven. Set the oven to its highest temperature (ideally 500°F fan-forced) and preheat for 1 hour.
- 2/ Following the Neapolitan pizza dough instructions, use your hands to press, pat and stretch the dough ball out to form a 9½ in. circle.
- 3/ Mix the chicken and ¼ cup of the barbecue sauce together. Spread the remaining barbecue sauce over the dough and top with half the mozzarella, half the gouda, and all of the chicken. Scatter over the red onion, jalapeno and remaining cheese.
- 4/ Carefully transfer the pizza to the hot pizza stone and bake for 8–10 minutes, until the crust is golden and cooked through, and the cheese is melted and bubbling.
- 5/ Remove from the oven, drizzle with the ranch dressing and serve.



FIG, GORGONZOLA & *prosciutto*



Makes one
9½ inch pizza

INGREDIENTS

8 oz. Neapolitan pizza dough ball
1 teaspoon extra virgin olive oil
6 basil leaves
2¾ oz. fior di latte, torn
1¾ oz. gorgonzola, crumbled
2 small figs, quartered

SEE PG. 26

3–4 thin slices prosciutto
Honey, for drizzling
1 tablespoon chopped and
toasted hazelnuts
Black pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

1/ Place a pizza stone on the bottom rack of the cold oven. Set the oven to its highest temperature (ideally 500°F fan-forced) and preheat for 1 hour.

2/ Following the Neapolitan pizza dough instructions, use your hands to press, pat and stretch the dough ball out to form a 9½ in. circle. Drizzle with the oil and top with the basil leaves, fior di latte, gorgonzola and quartered figs.

3/ Carefully transfer the pizza to the hot pizza stone and bake for 8–10 minutes, until the crust is golden and cooked through, and the cheese is melted.

4/ Top the pizza with the prosciutto and drizzle with a little honey. Finish with the hazelnuts and a little black pepper, and serve.



NEAPOLITAN *pizza dough*



Makes 1 pound
15 ounce dough or
four 9½ inch pizzas

Notes:

This is a high hydration dough, so it is wet and sticky compared to a drier bread dough.

Depending on room temperature, proving can take up to 4 hours.

Do not use a rolling pin to shape your pizza dough, as this will deflate it.

INGREDIENTS

1 lb. 2 oz. 00 pizza flour or bread flour, plus extra if needed and for dusting	1 teaspoon instant dried yeast
2 teaspoons caster (superfine) sugar	11 fl. oz. lukewarm water
1¾ teaspoons fine sea salt	3 teaspoons extra virgin olive oil, plus extra for greasing

INSTRUCTIONS

1/ To use a stand mixer, attach the dough hook and combine the flour, sugar, salt and yeast in the bowl. In a separate bowl, combine the water and olive oil. Turn the mixer to low speed, slowly add the water and oil and mix for 2–3 minutes, until the dough forms a rough ball. Rest the dough for 1 minute, then mix for another 1–2 minutes, until a smooth ball forms. If the dough seems too wet and sticky (see Notes), add another tablespoon of flour and mix for a further 1 minute to combine.

2/ To mix the dough using your hands, combine the dry ingredients in a bowl. Combine the wet ingredients in a separate bowl, then use your hands to incorporate the wet and dry ingredients together. Transfer the dough to a lightly floured surface and knead for about 8 minutes, until a soft, smooth dough forms, and shape into a ball.

3/ Place the dough in a lightly oiled bowl, cover tightly and allow it to rest in a warm place for about 2 hours, or until doubled in size (see Notes).

4/ Divide the dough into four equal portions. Using your hands, shape each portion into a ball and place on a lightly oiled tray, then cover and allow to rise for at least 3–4 hours, until doubled in size.

5/ Alternatively, for a slow rise that will increase the flavour of the dough, follow the instructions above, but place the portions of dough in individual lightly oiled airtight containers, with room to rise. Seal and refrigerate overnight, or up to 3 days. Allow the dough to rise for 4–6 hours, until doubled in size.

SHAPING THE DOUGH

Sprinkle a work surface with flour, place a dough ball on top and lightly dust with a little more flour. Place your hands (see Notes) in the centre of the ball and push and stretch the dough out to a 9½ in. circle. Take care to not deflate the air bubbles in the outer ½–¾ in. edge, as these will create a beautifully aerated crust.

Your dough is now ready for topping and cooking.

THE POWERFUL IMPACT OF PINK FUND

Interview with **Molly MacDonald** / Written by **Andre Rios**
Photography courtesy of **Pink Fund, unless noted**



Molly MacDonald, cofounder and CEO of Pink Fund, explains how her organization provides crucial funds for breast cancer patients and the incredible effect such support can have on them.

GETTY IMAGES

TELL US HOW YOUR ORGANIZATION CAME TO BE:

Pink Fund was born as a result of my early-stage breast cancer diagnosis in 2005. I was left with an insurance responsibility of \$1,350 a month to cover my treatment, had no savings, and had no child support or alimony after a previous divorce. Our home went into foreclosure, and creditors threatened to repossess my car.

I ultimately experienced a side effect of cancer known as financial toxicity. Between the digestive issues, limb numbness, cognitive impairment, and other symptoms of cancer treatment, patients often can't work. And someone who doesn't have access to benefits like federal medical leave might find themselves struggling to pay their basic living expenses, much less treatment. They may be unable to stick to their protocol as prescribed because they can't afford to miss a paycheck, and some even decide to stop it altogether and go back to work just to avoid leaving their families financially bereft.

I spent a lot of time sitting in treatment waiting rooms talking to other working women like me who were on unpaid leave and making life-altering financial decisions. I thought, "Why isn't anybody doing something about this? Maybe someone should start an



organization to help pay these bills and provide patients with a financial bridge." To pursue this vision, my husband and I bootstrapped our cause, made the Pink Fund logo, and created a website. A medical writer at the *Detroit Free Press* then agreed to do a front-page story about our efforts, and we officially launched on October 2, 2006.

HOW DID YOU ACHIEVE NATIONWIDE INFLUENCE?

Pink Fund was an all-volunteer organization until 2012, when it hired a part-time program manager

“ I spent a lot of time sitting in treatment waiting rooms talking to other working women like me who were on unpaid leave and making life-altering financial decisions.



and me as CEO. I knew that the problem we were addressing wasn't relegated to the state of Michigan, where we're physically located, but we needed a major partner to take our efforts further. The Ford Motor Company learned about our mission and was very intrigued; it ended up making a significant investment in a national ad campaign for us. It also funded a national TV launch and manufactured 6,000 T-shirts to sell on its Warriors in Pink website, which provided additional revenue for our cause.

Over a decade later, we now have an incredible board that includes a breast oncologist at the University of Texas and the general counsel of Trinity Health, a



“

We have delivered over \$9 million total in support to patients, paying their creditors for housing, transportation, utilities, and insurance for up to ninety days. In just one month, Pink Fund might cover about \$150,000 of such bills, an amount we would love to be able to double or triple based on the increase in requests we've experienced.

national health provider. And to help serve more patients, we created an online application program; as of December 2024, there were 1,400 applications in process for assistance.

HOW DO PEOPLE QUALIFY FOR ASSISTANCE?

We support everybody who qualifies. They must be in active treatment for breast cancer, meaning they are undergoing chemotherapy, radiation, or a mastectomy or lumpectomy. They also need to prove loss of income

for them or their partner and live at 500 percent or less of the federal poverty level.

WHAT IMPACT HAS PINK FUND HAD?

We have delivered over \$9 million total in support to patients, paying their creditors for housing, transportation, utilities, and insurance for up to ninety days. In just one month, Pink Fund might cover about \$150,000 of such bills, an amount we would love to be able to double or triple based on the increase in requests we've experienced.

We also have a Pink Fund program for women with metastatic cancer. They may be in treatment for the rest of their lives, and many have to go on Social Security Disability Insurance. We will help support them with up to \$6,000 for up to six months. Pink Fund assists men as well—we've served about 1,800 of these patients. The greatest challenge for men is that there's not enough education about male breast cancer, so when they're finally diagnosed, they may be at a later stage and can have a higher mortality rate.

WHY IS YOUR PARTICULAR ORGANIZATION SO CRUCIAL?

Breast cancer charities is a saturated space. What you might see most is awareness or research funding, which are incredibly important efforts. But what makes Pink Fund different is that we offer more direct, concrete help to families.

The power of that can't be overstated. When you find out you have cancer, the tears come, you're scared, and you don't know what's going to happen. But people reach out to us all the time saying we saved them from losing their homes. We get a lot of comments like "Thanks to your support, I'm crying happy tears for the first time in a long time."

For more info, visit pinkfund.org



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pinkfund.org/remindermidia



PROVIDING HOT MEALS **AND HOPE**

Written by **Faith Fiorile**
Photography courtesy of **Poverello House**

For over forty years, Poverello House has been a steadfast source of hope for the homeless and underserved communities in Fresno, California. At its core, the organization's mission is simple yet profound: to offer a sanctuary of dignity and compassion to those on the fringes of society. It achieves this goal by providing hot, nutritious meals, temporary shelter, and various social services, giving individuals the opportunity to rebuild and begin anew.

A humble beginning, a lifelong commitment

The story of Poverello House began in the mid-1960s when founder Mike McGarvin, struggling with addiction and personal loss, found solace at a shelter in San Francisco. He began volunteering there, experiencing firsthand how serving others could heal the soul. Inspired by his own transformation, McGarvin moved to Fresno and started offering peanut butter sandwiches to those living on the streets. As word spread, others began to join him as volunteers, eager to help. What began as a small volunteer-run operation quickly grew, and McGarvin eventually acquired a storefront building to better serve the growing number of people in need, feeding thousands and offering a path toward healing.

Today, the organization features three food programs, two housing facilities, and connective and healing services to help those in the community regain a sense



The organization features three food programs, two housing facilities, and connective and healing services to help those in the community regain a sense of stability in their otherwise unpredictable lives.



of stability in their otherwise unpredictable lives. With its holistic approach combining food security, case management, health care, job training, shelter, and more, Poverello House aims to help as many individuals as possible transition from struggles like homelessness to self-sufficiency.

Food

Given that it began with the mission to provide food, it's no surprise that Poverello House's latest offering is Papa Mike's Café. The first iteration began in 2006 as a restaurant-style monthly dining experience, offering guests a chance to order from a menu and enjoy a three-course meal served with respect. Last year, the dedicated café opened, and it now offers meals until 5:00 p.m. seven days a week. Whether it's the hearty Courtyard Slam—complete with sausage, pancakes, potatoes, toast, and an egg—for breakfast or a savory chicken sandwich or burger for lunch, the food is designed to nourish both the body and the spirit. A special kids' menu complete with crayons and a toy ensures that even the youngest diners feel special.

What makes the café even more impactful is its role in providing job training and employment to those transitioning out of homelessness. It offers valuable experience in the food service industry, equipping individuals with the skills they need for long-term employment. These opportunities give people a chance to regain their independence and build a foundation for a better future.



At its core, the organization's mission is simple yet profound: to offer a sanctuary of dignity and compassion to those on the fringes of society.





Village of Hope is a twenty-four-hour emergency shelter that offers a temporary place for homeless individuals to stay, including a warm bed, meals, and access to various resources to help them transition to more stable housing.



Naomi's House provides safe housing and support services for single women over age eighteen who are experiencing homelessness, where they'll find a nurturing environment that can help them rebuild their lives through counseling, access to education, and job training programs.

Shelters

In addition to its meal services, Poverello House has vital shelter programs that provide safety and support for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. For example, its Village of Hope is a twenty-four-hour emergency shelter that offers a temporary place for homeless individuals to stay, including a warm bed, meals, and access to various resources to help them transition to more stable housing. Another, Naomi's House, provides safe housing

and support services for single women over age eighteen who are experiencing homelessness, where they'll find a nurturing environment that can help them rebuild their lives through counseling, access to education, and job training programs. The common thread: restoring dignity and hope for individuals.

Social services

Poverello House also offers a comprehensive range of social services designed to help people

regain their independence and rebuild their lives. One example is its rehabilitation program for men, which provides those with a substance abuse history six to twelve months of help in a structured environment as well as aftercare.

In addition, it's a MAP Point location, connecting people to critical community resources throughout Fresno, such as housing assistance, employment opportunities, and health-care services that are customized to each person's unique situation.

Whether you're in need of assistance, seeking to volunteer, or simply looking to support a cause that uplifts its community, Poverello House is a place where dignity, compassion, and hope come together to create lasting change and every action taken is a reminder that we are all part of something bigger.

For more info, visit poverellohouse.org



GOURDS, GARDENS, AND THE GOLDEN STATE

Written by **Matthew Brady**
Photography courtesy of **Descanso Gardens**

California is known for many things, including having some of the most idyllic weather and beaches and being the world's mecca for entertainment and tech. But it has another claim to fame that goes a bit under the radar—pumpkins. In fact, the state is one of the country's top producers of the gourd, harvesting over one hundred million annually.



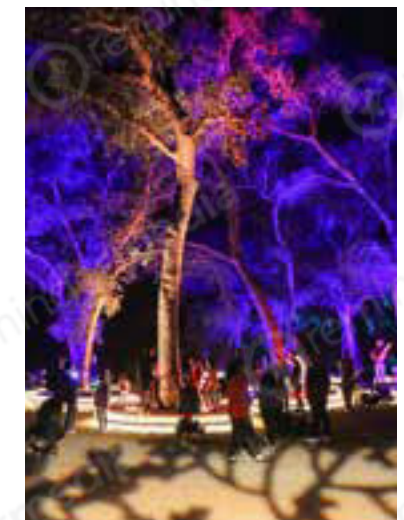
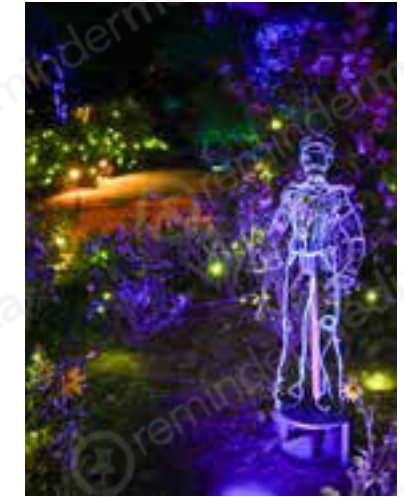
One place in particular goes all-out to honor this heritage by making its grounds a pumpkin paradise: Descanso Gardens in La Cañada Flintridge, located around fifteen miles north of Los Angeles. The popular destination's annual Carved event welcomes both young and old alike to its art-inspired, must-see Halloween spectacular every October.

Growing botanical gardens

A botanical garden and living museum, Descanso Gardens existed long before it began its seasonal showcase. It actually started out in the 1930s as the 165-acre private property and residence of newspaper publisher Elias Manchester Boddy, who

named the land *Rancho del Descanso*, the latter word meaning "rest" in Spanish. He also loved horticulture, especially camellia plants—he reportedly planted 100,000, forming the largest collection in the world. Boddy eventually made his property available to visitors and later sold it to Los Angeles County, which converted it from a private estate to a public garden in 1953. In 2007, Boddy's home was restored and opened for touring.

Through the years, Descanso increased in both space and influence, adding a Japanese garden, rose garden, and other amenities while also officially becoming an accredited museum;



Through the years, Descanso increased in both space and influence, adding a Japanese garden, rose garden, and other amenities while also officially becoming an accredited museum; today, it welcomes around one million visitors per year.

Perhaps the biggest surprise within all the fun: the touching *Día de los Muertos ofrenda*, a brightly adorned remembrance altar erected in the weeks leading up to the Day of the Dead on November 1–2.

today, it welcomes around one million visitors per year. Whether you walk among its approximately 1,600 roses, see its famed camellia collection, or wander through its oak and ancient forests, you're sure to be enthralled by its sheer dedication to nature.

Carved: an autumn adventure

As engaging as its typical offerings are, Descanso Gardens amps up the visitor experience even more soon after fall arrives thanks to Carved—an approximately one-mile stroll along the generously wide walkways weaving through the gardens, which are aglow with Halloween creativity.

Be sure to have your camera handy since there's something unique to see at every turn. Enjoy gazing at the thousands of jack-o'-lanterns placed about, including 200-pound behemoths, and dazzling light shows, such as interactive ones that allow you to change the lights'

colors shooting up to the treetops. In the rose garden, you'll meander past a vast meadow of bushes that mimic dancing fireflies—not to be outdone, the stylish gazebo nearby is similarly lit up for an enchanting rest stop. But watch out for the pumpkin-laden sea dragon lurking in the waters! Plus, there is a seemingly endless array of sculptures and scarecrows made specially for Carved as well as a much-beloved pumpkin house you can enter and a hay bale maze for kids to enjoy navigating, both of which are conveniently located near the food-and-drink garden. You may even be able to catch one of Descanso's talented pumpkin-carving artists plying their trade.

Perhaps the biggest surprise within all the fun: the touching *Día de los Muertos ofrenda*, a brightly adorned remembrance altar erected in the weeks leading up to the Day of the Dead on November 1–2. Since it's a dedicated memorial to



loved ones who have passed, you can either simply observe its beauty and solemnity or add your own message or photo of a loved one to it.

Even with these incredible features, Descanso is always looking to up the ante, and 2024 was no exception. Last year's event included a family of life-sized wooden "spirits" handcrafted by noted wood artist Chainsaw Jenna and an intricate installation called *Rhizome* hung above guests' heads in the rose garden, evoking the feel of a flashing laser spiderweb. In addition, both new and regular visitors were thrilled to find an all-new model train display along with the fabled Descanso Railroad ride. The multistory setup was decked out for Carved, as the little locomotives made their way past all-natural, hand-carved bridges, wooden depots, and other buildings awash in an eerie glow.

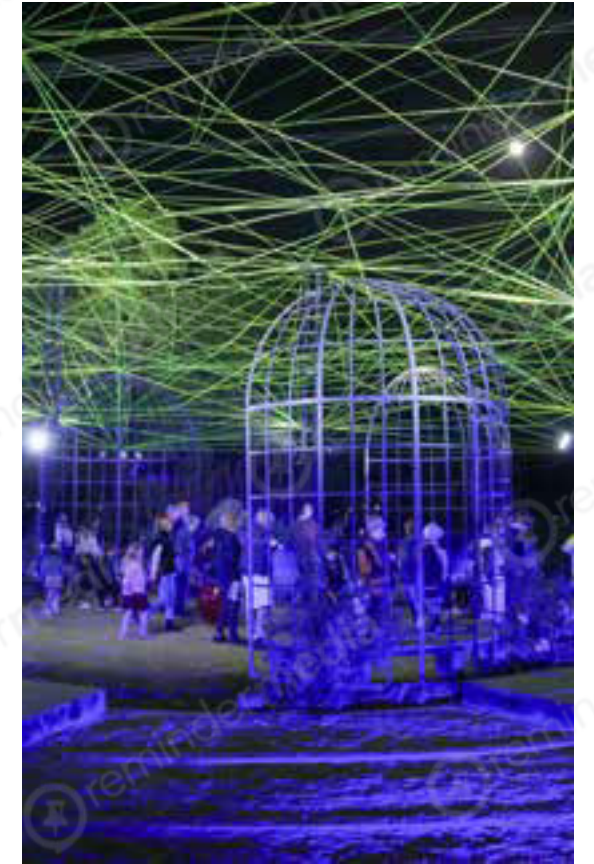
In all, Carved is a mesmerizing display of fall wonder that will keep kids and kids at heart enraptured. Juliann Rooke, CEO of Descanso Gardens, perhaps succinctly described it best when she exclaimed, "It's not just a Halloween celebration; it's a celebration of artistry, community, and the joy of being outdoors."

Postpumpkin festiveness

If you can't make it to Descanso Gardens in October, don't fret—it observes the holiday season with equal enthusiasm shortly after its Carved run finishes. From mid-November through early January, various sections of the grounds are transformed to create the winter-themed Enchanted Forest of Light. This extravaganza is similar to Carved with its jaw-dropping array of sights and sounds, which in 2024 included a vast field of tulip lights, 3D geometric sculptures by noted local artists Serge Beaulieu and Yelena Filipchuk of HYBYCOZO, and a series of lit stained-glass houses by contemporary sculptor Tom Fruin.

The palpable excitement of autumn and Halloween go hand in hand, and Descanso Gardens personifies this mindset to a T when it lights up the Southern California nights with Carved. As you make your plans, keep in mind that timed-entry tickets must be bought in advance and the event is held rain or shine. No matter the conditions, though, it's an experience you simply must carve out time for.

For more info, visit descansogardens.org



Both new and regular visitors were thrilled to find an all-new model train display along with the fabled Descanso Railroad ride.



DIET, EXERCISE, and cancer

Written by **Faith Fiorile** / Photography by **Getty Images**

Given the impact of lifestyle choices on general health, it's no surprise that they can also help with cancer prevention. While genetics plays a role, your likelihood of getting the disease can be greatly reduced by your diet and degree of physical exercise. Here are a few ways in which even small changes to your daily activities may have a big influence on your cancer risk.

Eat healthy

Of the several strategies you could employ, dietary modifications come first, namely increasing your intake of fruits and vegetables. These foods offer a mix of antioxidants, vitamins, and fiber that fights against cell damage, lower inflammation, and regulate hormones, all keys to helping

prevent cancer growth. Particularly well-known are the powerful components found in broccoli and other cruciferous veggies—including glucosinolates, which may inhibit cancer enzymes.

Just as vital is cutting back on processed meals, red meat, and sugary drinks. Many of these have been shown to increase the odds of cancer, particularly colorectal cancer. Rather, consider including more plant-based foods, lean proteins, and whole grains into your daily diet to make sure that your body gets the nutrients it needs to remain robust and resilient.

Get active

Regular physical activity is essential for safeguarding your long-term health, including

minimizing your cancer risk. Aim to exercise for a minimum of 150 minutes of moderate-intensity activity a week to help reduce inflammation, boost your immune system, and control your weight, among other cancer-fighting benefits. If you're not interested in running or lifting weights, seek an alternative workout method such as yoga, water aerobics, or even dance classes—whatever you enjoy that gets you moving!

Taking such steps may seem overly simple, but don't discount their effectiveness. Focus on these two areas of your daily life, and you may just help safeguard your health from cancer.

**For personalized advice, consult your health-care provider.*

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6pm - 7pm

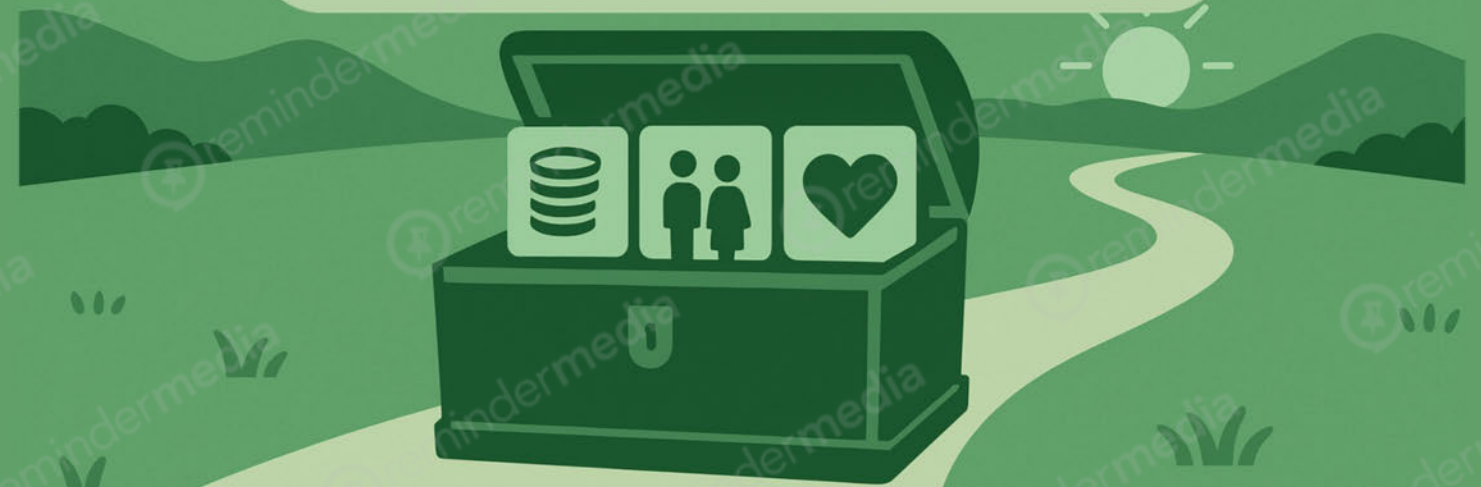
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