



# TRIANGLE Downtown MAGAZINE

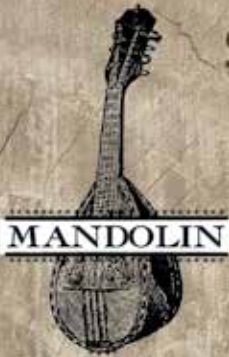
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**ON THE COVER:** Pizza La Stella interior designer Bernadette Eagle, La Stella Group Executive Chef Matt Kepp, and owner Rudy Theale with one of their signature pies upstairs in the hip/urban bar, The Loft at La Stella.

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This is the first of a monthly column highlighting some of the dogs and cats who have called the SPCA of Wake County home for far too long. Since the SPCA is a no-kill shelter, their adoptable pets stay with them as long as it takes them to find a home. This means that when the shelter is full, there's no available space for new pets. Some of these wonderful animals are older or have traits that require special attention or medications but want and need to be loved all the same. We hope you'll consider giving one of these (and the many other) long-timers a place to call home where they can feel safe and be cared for. Visit the SPCA of Wake County for more overlooked pets who could use a new family. You can also visit [www.spcawake.org/longtimers](http://www.spcawake.org/longtimers) or call 919.772.2326.



**Bojangles** is a two-year-old chocolate lab mix. More than anything else, he loves tennis balls. Walks are ok, but playing fetch in a fenced yard is his favorite way to pass the time and get some exercise. He would like to be the only pet in the home, just to be sure he gets all the tennis balls. Not to worry though, BoJangles knows to trade one tennis ball so he can chase a new one. He can even pick up two tennis balls at once, so you'll never know you're only playing with one dog! His foster mom says he is a dream in the house. He can be crated but doesn't need to be. Talk to an adoption counselor at 919-772-2326 if you're interested in meeting him.



**Tommy** If you're looking for an easy-going feline, Tommy is just the cat for you. He doesn't ask for much. Tommy was adopted as a kitten and lived in his home for almost

three and a half years. His adopter had to move across the country and couldn't take Tommy along, so Tommy is back to the SPCA. His family said he's good with men, women, kids, and other cats. They've never seen him around dogs. Tommy is on a diet to make sure he feels his best, so he's hoping his new family will help him play and exercise. Call 919-772-2326 or visit [www.spcawake.org](http://www.spcawake.org) for more information on Tommy.

This space is donated to the SPCA of Wake County by Triangle Downtowner Magazine because we love our furry friends.

# PIZZA LA STELLA

THE CRAFT OF PIZZA & COCKTAILS

By Christy Griffith • Photos by Nancy Thomas

On Fayetteville Street, a new concept has taken over the old Bolt Bistro space: Pizza La Stella, a wood-fired adventure helmed by Rudy Theale with help from Executive Chef Matt Kepp, and interior designer Bernadette Eagle. Wood is the theme here, whether it's of the reclaimed variety adorning the walls, tables, and ceiling, or the logs in the kitchen waiting to be sacrificed to a greater pizza god.



One of two huge handmade wood-fired ovens shipped from Italy.

Everything goes in and out of those two behemoth wood-fired ovens; one reads *Fatto a Mano*, Italian for *Crafted by Hand*, and to its right, *Con il Cuore* (*with heart*). With temperatures that hit the better part of 1000 degrees, your Neapolitan pie will cook in about ninety seconds. Doc Brown could barely get his DeLorean to 88 mph that fast, yet La Stella is doing it without smoke pluming out of the kitchen. (In other news, I can't even turn on the self-clean mode of my oven without the neighbors waking up to a smoke alarm.)

Pizza La Stella offers counter service at lunch and full service at dinner. It's one of those places that can't be pigeonholed. Is it a date night restaurant? Working lunch spot? Family afternoon pizza outing? Yes, it's all these and more. Go upstairs to The Loft at La Stella and you'll discover a bar and lounge that is one part steampunk and two parts *Twin Peaks*. I don't want to spoil anything for you, because it's definitely something you need to experience, but...trigger warning for vegetarians...there may or may not be several animal heads playfully mounted on the walls with party hats and gas masks. It's beautifully weird, and I mean that in a sweet way, like how one would describe Lady Gaga or a Venus flytrap.

The cocktail menu is extensive, so whether or not you prefer to drink in the company of decapitated party animals or downstairs among that jet stream of sweet pizza air



The cool upstairs lounge, Loft at La Stella, is one part steampunk and two parts *Twin Peaks*.



Once your pizza is queued up, it only takes about 90 seconds to cook in the 1000-degree oven.

coming from the kitchen, you'll be able to find a drink to suit your mood. The Stellar (\$12) is La Stella's take on the Old Fashioned, and I enjoyed their replacement of the standard maraschino cherry with cherry liqueur. Cool as a Cucumber (\$11) is the vodka drink for when you're parched from yelling at Greg Fishel for predicting another 90-degree day with 99% humidity. (But don't forget it's vodka. This is a friendly reminder to not chug vodka.) The Kraken Creamsicle (\$9) is a rum and bourbon concoction that kind of makes you want to become a full-time movie pirate, complete with shoulder parrot and peg leg. I have many moods that need suiting and I'm confident that I'll find something suitable no matter which mood I'm in.

On the weekends, the Bloody Mary's Revenge (\$11) is certainly something you should order for brunch. Think eggs in purgatory with a bigger kick; two fried eggs and Italian sausage come swimming in a skillet full of this mind-blowing pepper-laced bloody mary vodka sauce, a sauce so full of umami that you'll be sure to sop it up with the accompanying hunks of focaccia. #cleanplateclub

The Southerner (\$11) is an open-faced [cheddar!] waffle sandwich with pulled pork, fried eggs, BBQ sauce, and a scattering of pickled red onions to cut through all that yolky-porky-cheesy richness. It's definitely a fork-and-knife type deal, although if you want to eat it with your hands, more power to you. You can probably pull off plaid and polka dots, too. Go



*The Pomodoro Stella is sweet and spicy and savory all at once, and is covered with Italian meats and calabrian pepper and tomato jam.*



*The Southerner is an open-faced [cheddar!] waffle sandwich with pulled pork, fried eggs, BBQ sauce, and a scattering of pickled red onions to cut through all that yolky-porky-cheesy richness.*

on with your bad self! You do you. (But seriously, you're going to get runny yolk and barbeque sauce all over your plaid and polka dots if you don't use a fork.)

Brussels sprouts generally elicit one of two reactions: 1) These taste like mushy cabbage that my mom made me eat as a kid, except they taste worse than cabbage. 2) These do not taste like mushy cabbage that my mom made me eat as a kid! Order the Fire-Roasted Brussels Sprouts (\$7) and discover why adults have been rediscovering this brassica and wondering why mom insisted on boiling them to a sad, soggy death back when we were too young to know there was a better way. There IS a better way and it involves charring those suckers and hitting them with things like bacon and bourbon and honey and ARE YOU NOT EXCITED TO BE LIVING IN A TIME WHEN BRUSSELS SPROUTS HAVE FINALLY COME OF AGE? In fact, you could make a whole meal of the Brussels sprouts and the Reggiano Meatballs (\$10), tender and deeply flavored with aged cheese and garlic, bursting with brightness from fresh herbs and tomatoes. Or you could just make it a part of your meal.

Like the part you eat before you move on to the chicken wings. The Honey Habanero (\$14) are obviously sweet and hot, but I didn't find myself reaching for a dipping sauce to tamp down the heat. Which is good, because there is no sauce for the wings here. You honestly don't need any – the wings at Pizza La Stella are somehow both juicy and charred, packed full of dynamite flavor. (Doesn't work that way on my grill unless you like your charred and juicy chicken medium-rare.)



*The Reggiano Meatballs are tender and deeply flavored with aged cheese and garlic, bursting with brightness from fresh herbs and tomatoes.*

The Old-Fashioned (\$14) are even more incredible, flavored with apple cider bourbon, cinnamon, and a charred orange that is just begging to be squeezed all over. I 100% regret sharing my leftover wings. If I had a DeLorean, you better believe I would go back in time and change things. I might even go farther back and alter the path of Brussels sprouts forever. Maybe before this article goes to print, I'll already be there and you may be saying to yourself, "I've just always really loved Brussels sprouts."

You can get traditional side, Caesar, and Caprese salads with your dinner, or you can go the Craft Your Salad route (\$9) and start with a giant bowl of spinach, arugula, and red leaf lettuces. This option comes with your choice of two

toppings, focaccia breadcrumbs, and a dressing. You can build on by buying more toppings piecemeal (cheese and vegetables \$1 each, meats \$2) but don't go overboard unless you are prepared to pay big bucks. The salad is large enough to share with a dining mate if you're having it in addition to...

PIZZA! Because I really hope you aren't the type of person that goes to a pizza place and eats a bowl of lettuce for dinner. Theale estimates Pizza La Stella goes through about three and a half cords of wood a month. That is a lot of pizza fire. By my calculations, that's about 450 square feet of wood just waiting to make me some pizza. I'm seriously doubtful you're going to be disappointed by any of the options – they are all expertly executed – so I'll just throw some pizzas out that we sampled and let you vicariously eat through the *Downtowner*. All pizzas come with fresh mozzarella, romano, and fontina cheese, making these pies anything but one-dimensional. (Word of warning: your face and hands are going to get black stuff all over them. It's a 1000-degree oven. There will be tasty black singed stuff. Don't debut your white dress at Pizza La Stella.) From the Pomodoro (red sauce) side, we had the Ratatouille (\$16), an especially delicious pizza topped with Brussels sprouts, roasted artichokes and red peppers, and an unctuous pistachio pesto. I thoroughly enjoyed it on their gluten-free crust (\$2 upcharge). By far the best gluten-free pizza crust I've had, it's delightfully crunchy and holds up well against the toppings. From the Bianca (white) side, we devoured the Sweet Cheesus (\$16), a simple pie that comes topped with fontina, mozzarella di bufala, parmigiano >>>

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The Ratatouille is an especially delicious pizza topped with Brussels sprouts, roasted artichokes and red peppers, and an unctuous pistachio pesto.



The Bourbon Caramel S'mores is a pizza stromboli with local Videri chocolate, Nutella, melted marshmallow, and graham cracker crumble.

reggiano, and a sweet, mellow garlic confit that serves as the backbone of the dish. And if there were a band called Sweet Cheesus, I would definitely buy that t-shirt.

Further down the menu, you'll find a handful of specialty pies, such as the Carolina Classic (\$17) that comes scattered with pulled pork and a Brussels sprouts slaw. I'm not into sports but I feel like this would be a good pizza to eat while you watch all the sports on the big screens around the restaurant and root for your team to sports harder than the other team. My favorite pizza of them all, however, would be the Pomodoro Stella (\$18). It's sweet and spicy and savory all at once and I can't think of anything else I would rather eat while your team is doing the sports. The lovely Italian meats studded throughout pair perfectly with the Calabrian pepper tomato jam and by the end of it, you won't even care who is

sportsing. TL;DR: order the Pomodoro Stella.

Neat idea alert: Pizza La Stella features a brewery every month to showcase in a pizza pie. Last month's was Fullsteam, and their Pale Ale Humidity was used in the pizza dough instead of traditional yeast to leaven the bread. The 3-Pepper Jelly Chicky Bacon pizza featured fontina and mozzarella, apple cider-soaked chicken, pancetta, red onion, and a Fullsteam 3-pepper beer jelly. Expect equally inspired creations each month.

If you have room for dessert, the Nutty Italian (\$9) is plenty big enough to share. This dessert pizza comes topped with peanut butter whipped cream, a Nutella swirl, and candied pistachios. It's surprisingly lighter than you'd expect, especially after a belly full of pizza. If your stomach has room (and I strongly suggest you make sure it does), please get the

Bourbon Caramel S'mores (\$9). It's a dessert stromboli filled with Videri chocolate, Nutella, gooey marshmallow, and a graham cracker crumble. The top is dripping in a honey-like bourbon caramel and I know for certain that you must be dead inside if this dessert does not elicit inappropriate sounds of pleasure from deep within. Designed to share, but I won't judge if you don't want to. (You won't want to but you'll need to. It's LARGE.) My motto when coming here: Always wear stretchy pants!

Visit on Mondays from 5pm to close for buy-one-get-one-free pizzas; Tuesdays are trivia nights and \$4 craft drafts; Wednesdays offer half-priced bottles of wine; Thursdays are Sips and Songs for St. Jude, with live music and drink specials. Are you one of those wandering aimlessly downtown at all hours, trying to figure out what's next? Stop in for a late-night special of \$5 for a small pizza and bottle of water.



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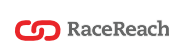


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# Around Town News in the Triangle

**W**e love hearing about local growth and sharing it with our readers. Overhear juicy news about a new locally owned restaurant, bar, retail shop, or business opening in downtown Raleigh or across the Triangle? Send us your news@welovedowntown.com and clue us in. To say “Thanks Ya’ll,” we’ll pick a couple of random tipsters each month to win a free t-shirt.

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We’re looking for writers who want to help us report on all the news, so drop us an email if you’re interested to writers@welovedowntown.com. Follow us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/triangledowntowner](http://www.facebook.com/triangledowntowner), Instagram at [www.instagram.com/triangledowntowner](http://www.instagram.com/triangledowntowner) or Twitter for updates on openings and closings in the area. We’ll be posting all these stories and more on our new, completely redesigned website, launching February 1st. Much thanks to some of our blogger friends for helping to spread the news on all the great new businesses, restaurants and bars in the area: Triangle Food Guy, Ashton Smith, and the wonderfully tongue-in-cheek WFIV.

To keep up with news between issues as well as lots of event and food photos, be sure to follow us on an or all of our social media pages. Facebook [www.facebook.com/triangledowntowner](http://www.facebook.com/triangledowntowner) • Instagram [www.instagram.com/triangledowntowner](http://www.instagram.com/triangledowntowner) • Twitter [www.twitter.com/welovedowntown](http://www.twitter.com/welovedowntown)



Raleigh’s upcoming food halls both added new tenants to their list of vendors. **Transfer Company**, located at 500 East Davie Street, is partially owned by Jason Queen of Monarch Properties and has listed Videri Chocolate, Boulted Bread, Locals Seafood, Gallo Pelón, Saxapahaw General Store, Che Empanadas, The 42,000+ square foot Transfer Co. will also feature a market, townhomes, and retail. [www.transferoldeast.com](http://www.transferoldeast.com)



On the west side of town, Hibernian Hospitality Co./Nial Hanley’s **Morgan Street Food Hall** is located at 411 W Morgan St, across from Citrix in the old Jillian’s space. Their list of dining tenants signed up so far include Wicked Taco, Raleigh Raw, Ginger + Soy, Cousins Maine Lobster, Cow Bar, City Sushi, Makus Empanada, Raleigh Rolls, Oak City Fish & Chips, Carroll’s Kitchen, Bella’s Wood Fired Pizza & Taps, Boba Brew, Morgan Street Java & Crêperie, and Sassool. Retail merchants include Huntington Provision Co., Five Points Baking Co., Fogwood Foods, Avenue des Chocolats, Yo Mamma’s Style, Western Dragon Tea, Two Brothers Jerky, The Soaperie, That’s Good Chocolate!, Root Source’s Pure Ceylon Cinnamon, Quintessential Candles, Mike D’s BBQ, Hail Mary Mix, Durham Toffee, and Carolina Fancy Foods. Keep up with their progress at [www.morgan-foodhall.com](http://www.morgan-foodhall.com).



**Brewery Bhavana** is now open for lunch. Bhavana is open Thurs-Sat 11:30am-2pm and Tues-Thurs 5pm-10pm, Fri & Sat 5pm-

Midnight, and Sun 5pm-10pm. [www.brewerybhavana.com](http://www.brewerybhavana.com)

Glenwood South is now home to four Mexican restaurants with the new **Cortez Seafood & Cocktail** and **La Santa Mexican**. The Ibarra brothers of Jose & Sons own Cortez with Oscar Diaz as



Executive Chef and La Santa is part of a locally-driven national chain. Cortez will feature a seafood driven menu and La Santa’s menu is comprised of traditional Mexican fare, “made from recipes from the owner’s mother, who is from Guadalajara.” [www.cortez.com](http://www.cortez.com) • [www.lasantanc.com](http://www.lasantanc.com)

208 Fayetteville Street was recently purchased by **MDO Holdings**, helmed by Michael Olander, for \$3.75M. The three-story building – previously owned by the North Carolina State Bar Association – occupies 28,000 square foot and is planned to house new downtown retail on the first floor and office space above. [www.mdoholdings.com](http://www.mdoholdings.com)

**Bocci Trattoria and Pizzeria** will open its third location in the Triangle at 2412 Hillsborough Street, directly across from the NC State campus. [www.bocciitalian.com](http://www.bocciitalian.com)

Also opening across the State campus later this fall is **Smash Waffles**, the wildly popular Greenville-based Belgian waffle company, now partially owned by the same folks as La Stella Pizza. They’ll occupy a spot in a new six-story building located at 2304 Hillsborough Street. [www.smashwaffles.com](http://www.smashwaffles.com)



Downtown Raleigh finally has a bike-sharing company chosen, the team of **Bewegen Technologies and Corps Logisticise**. They already have bike share systems in place in other cities including Baltimore,



Richmond, Birmingham, and Portugal. Some of their bike systems feature electric-assisted bicycles, phone apps for reservations and tracking, keeping a record of ride times and routes, sharing rides, and billing. Learn more about them at [www.bewegen.com](http://www.bewegen.com).



We bid a sad goodbye to long-time drycleaners extraordinaire **Rollins Cleaners**, who have shut their doors on Peace Street after more than 70 years in business. All the surrounding businesses have relocated or moved to make way for the new Capital Boulevard corridor expansion. Rollins’ owners plan on taking the time to travel and work on their home. Cheers to you guys. Pictured in the photo are the owners and several employees that have been with Rollins for more than 20 years: Hugh Rollings, Christy, Guillermina, Marcelina, Mary Rollins, Roselia, Dalila, and Ramona.

Our friends Lionel and Missy Vatinet, owners of **La Farm Bakery**, have opened a production bakery in downtown Cary at 220 W. Chatham Street next to Bond Brothers Brewing. It will be open Monday-Saturday 7am to 5pm and offer freshly baked breads and pastries. In a few months, they plan to add coffee, lattes, cappuccinos, and sandwiches to their offerings. The La Farm bread truck will also stop by the production spot Monday-Saturday from 10:30am-2:30pm with breakfast and lunch items. [www.lafarmbakery.com](http://www.lafarmbakery.com)

Pizza anyone? The “Virginia-slice” pizza chain **Benny’s** is opening a Raleigh location in the old Crema spot at 121 Fayetteville Street, Suite 110. They’re slated to open this summer and offer \$4 slices of cheese pizza, \$5 slices of pepperoni and other specialty pizzas, and 28” pizzas starting at \$30. There are no current plans for delivery and their hours are set to be Sun-Wed 11am-12pm, Thu 11am-2am, and Fri/Sat 11am-3am. • [www.bennysva.com](http://www.bennysva.com)



# M&L MOON & LOLA

BY CHIKA GUJARATHI • PHOTOS BY NANCY THOMAS

Most Triangle residents are no stranger to the jewelry boutique chain, Moon & Lola. With its iconic bright white walls, and pops of pink and gold, it is the happy place that beckons those who are in need of a jewelry-fix. Recently, I met with the company's founder and designer, Kelly Shatat, at their headquarters in Apex to find out about her serendipitous start and just how a local girl made her way onto the national retail stage.

Located in the historic Tobacco and Mule Exchange building in downtown Apex, the loft which houses Moon & Lola's offices and production facility seem right out of New York or San Francisco with exposed beams, big windows, and creative folks milling about. Given that the majority of Moon & Lola's product line is produced by hand here, it also seemed no less wondrous and magical than Santa's workshop.

A pharmacist by schooling, Kelly's early career in medicine was her way to help people, but also a choice based on her values of independence and self-reliance instilled by her mom. She describes pharmacy as being "black and white" with very little room for interpretation



or creativity, and also a field where being on the job meant constantly being around life and death decisions. Jewelry making provided a quiet respite even though she said it was never a childhood dream or hobby.

Soon friends started noticing pieces she had made and asked if they could be purchased. Kelly was happy to oblige but still refusing to believe that she was on to something big. Slowly, it was evident that this side hobby had the potential to become a financially viable career. She strategically began scaling back from her day job

while expanding the jewelry line until finally, in 2003, Moon & Lola was officially established as a business. For those wondering, the name is a combination of nicknames that Kelly (Lola) and her best friend (Moon) had in college.

The first flagship retail store for Moon & Lola opened in Downtown Raleigh, and as of today there are four others in Apex, Cameron Village, Crabtree Valley mall, and Charleston, SC. Additionally, over 1000 other shops around the nation carry her products including big names like Neiman Marcus and Nordstrom. Their online store is also getting international attention with orders from as far as France, Germany, and England.

Kelly, like any new entrepreneur, dove into this venture with many unknowns, but the risks were clearly paying off. Then in 2014, the unexpected happened. Oprah Winfrey chose one of Kelly's cufflinks as part of her "Favorite Things" list. Then it happened again in 2015. This time with their pet ornaments making the list, dramatically expanding the number of people that knew about their unique and trendy jewelry. Needless to say, Moon and Lola had received the Midas Touch, making it not just a Carolina thing anymore, but instead something that people – including celebrities – recognized and wanted nationally.





Kelly Shatat

Photo Credit Pink Owl Photography



I asked Kelly where she finds her inspiration and how she manages to stay focused in an industry that thrives on guessing what customers want. While a lot of it is magic and alchemy of Kelly's own making, she says that inspiration also comes from her frequent travels around the world, and taking time to decompress, be alone to think and dream (many of those moment on the "fainting couch" she keeps in her office) until that good feeling hits. She explains, "I almost get this vibration when I create something or see something that gives me an idea that I know our customers will respond to. It almost

feels like creating a hit record. That's one of my favorite things. And I tell people thank goodness we're not one hit wonders!"

Although her line is very successful, Kelly remains very humble and insists there's still a lot of work that needs to be done. She has embraced the mission of being an advocate for shopping local and helping small businesses in the area thrive. Moon & Lola could be easily relocated and expanded in a bigger city like NYC or LA, but Kelly would rather stay close to her roots. She also enjoys supporting the local fashion, arts, and non-profit

community, including the Green Chair Project, Shop Local Raleigh, and the area chapter of Make-A-Wish to name a few. "I love downtown Raleigh," Kelly explains. "I played on Fayetteville Street as a kid. Downtown is where people live, work, eat, and drink. But I feel like shopping is still a struggle down there. We need all of these things to make it a great community."

When I ask how she sees her business growing, Kelly mentions continuing to make beautiful jewelry, but also trying her hands at expanding into a new product line of home goods. Additionally, she wants to explore >>>

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ways in which to create unique and creative shopping experiences for her customers that will provide an additional wow factor.

We're just about to wrap up the interview when I thank Kelly for her generous time and hospitality. She gives me a big hug ("because I am a hugger" she says with a smile) and gives me a list of names, ideas, and thoughts to help with some of my own interests that we had discussed. I realize in that moment that behind her Southern accent and joyful spirit, Kelly is above all a witty, smart, and creative businesswoman who is happy to share. Her bright and colorful stores are indeed an extension of her brain and her heart. It's evident that she sees both her past and current life as an extension of helping people. If I were to guess, however, I'm sure she's had much more fun dispensing colorful jewelry than pills! 📷



[www.moonandlola.com](http://www.moonandlola.com)

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## From the Publisher



We at the *Downtowner* have always been big supporters of all things Raleigh and are truly vested in its growth and success. I myself serve on several boards for local non-profits and am honored to volunteer my time to do what I can to help those around me. Upon the recommendation of several friends and colleagues, as well as others who have served in city and state government, I've decided to get even more involved in the future of our community by running for Raleigh City Council this fall. I'm very proud to officially announce it here in the *Downtowner* to our readers throughout Raleigh and the Triangle.

I live in Southeast Raleigh, which means I will be running for the City Council seat in District C, so that I can better represent the people in the surrounding neighborhoods and those throughout my district. The goal for my campaign is actually not winning but merely to learn more about our city and its government, how it runs, and how I can help. If I happen to win and am able to do more for our citizens "from the inside,"

then all the better. If not, I will continue to support the Triangle area through the *Downtowner*, my volunteer work, and the boards on which I serve.

My campaign website, [www.Crash4Raleigh.com](http://www.Crash4Raleigh.com), is still a work in progress, but for now, you'll find information on my background, the issues I believe are important, District C, and of course the ever-important Contribute button. I would be extremely grateful for contributions of any amount to help fund my campaign. If anyone is interested in helping with a fundraiser, volunteering, or has any questions, please use the contact form on the website, and I'll reply asap.

I'm very much looking forward to learning more about what matters most to the residents who live in our great city. I hope you'll join me on this journey and I would be honored to have your assistance, support, and the opportunity to earn your vote!

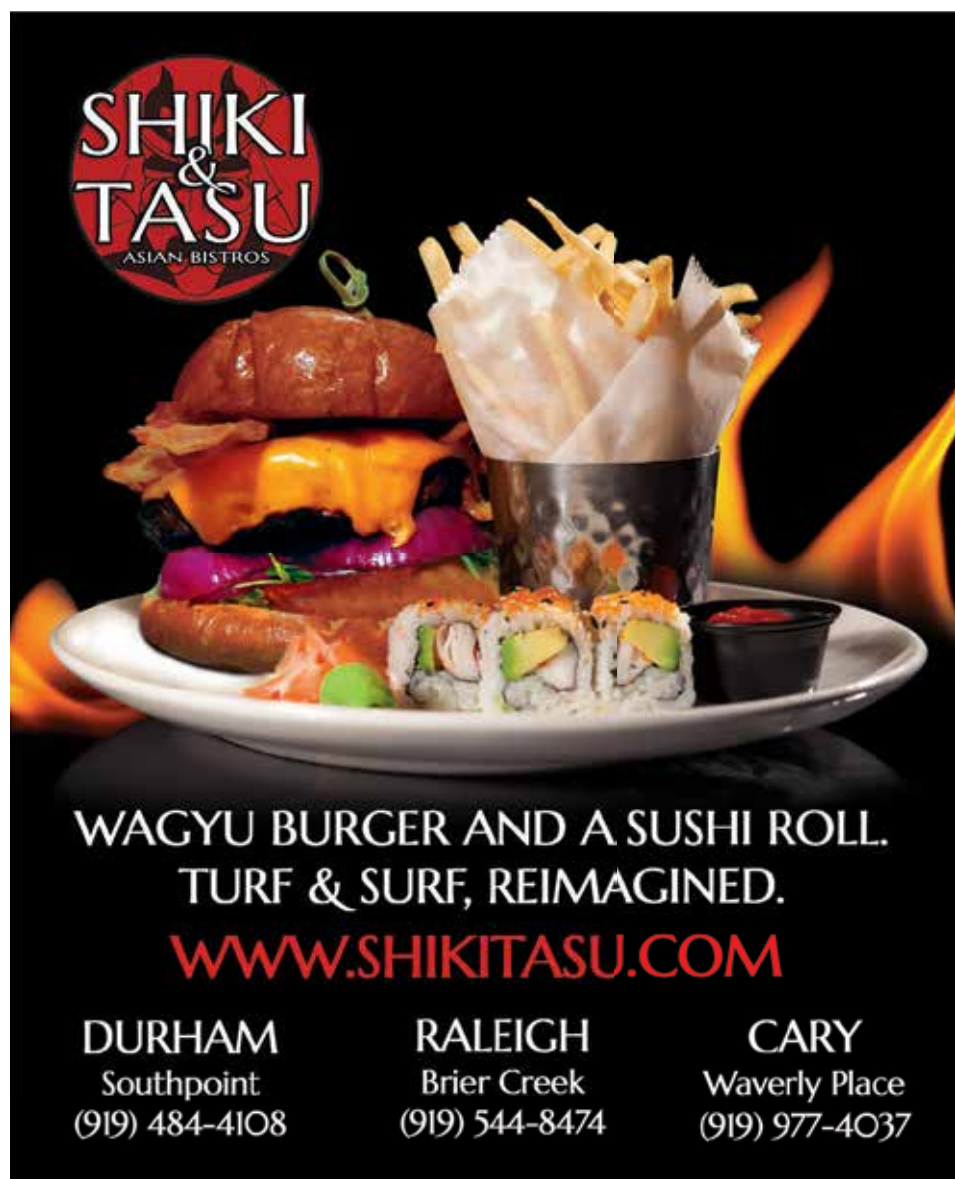
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# Bull City Buzz



What's Happening in and around  
Downtown Durham and the  
American Tobacco Campus  
**By Allan Maurer and Renee Wright**

Summer is hot in more ways than one in Durham. The Bull City comes alive with free concerts, a vibrant Farmer's Market in Central Park near downtown, assorted festivals, and fun events. The events include the world class American Dance Festival, Eno River July 4 weekend of music by the river, and more than we can actually list here. By the way, Durham was named the hippest city in North Carolina by Vogue Magazine a month ago. Take that, Asheville!



*Pilobolus at the American Dance Festival*

## DANCE: American Dance Festival

Durham's back on the world stage this month with the annual return of the American Dance Festival, the country's longest running and most prestigious gathering of innovative dance companies from around the world. It's certainly one of our favorites and we haven't missed a season in 17 years.

The ADF, which launched back in 1934 at Bennington College in Vermont, celebrates its 40th season in the Bull City this summer, with six weeks of classes and performances from mid-June through the end of July.

Big names, including Pilobolus, Paul Taylor, Mark Morris and Bill T. Jones, return each year to present their newest works, but the majority of companies are cutting edge, exploring the always-fascinating fringes of human movement.

Pilobolus is our favorite troupe. It's always different, and frequently amazingly athletic. In past years, nudity has not been uncommon, but it's often so pristine you think of sculpture, not sex.

Don't-miss moments for 2017 include the world premiere of Pilobolus' collaborative work with Grammy-winning banjo legend Bela Fleck and Abigail

Washburn; the ADF-commissioned "Elvis Everywhere" by dandy/donovan; the Mark Morris Dance Group's revival of their 1981 masterwork "Gloria" performed to live music by the Durham Symphony; and the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company's first full presentation of their multi-night epic on war, "Analogy: A Trilogy." In addition to ticketed performances, ADF includes many free community events, plus free screenings of Movies by Movers and free tours of the ADF classes on the East Durham Campus.

[www.americandancefestival.org](http://www.americandancefestival.org)



## PARTY: Festival For The Eno

Durham's favorite Independence Day event returns on July 1 and July 4 for a two-day engagement on the banks of the beloved Eno River. Presented by the Eno River Association, an organization formed back in the 1960s to prevent the damming of the river, the fest at West Point on the Eno Park celebrates all things Durham, with 70 bands on four stages playing every kind of music, regional artisans demonstrating crafts, and foods from more than 20 different food trucks and vendors.

The shady banks of the Eno provide a backyard vibe, with kids wading in the stream while adults drink a cold one, join in a ukulele jam, or just hang out with friends. The event is hugely popular, so get your tickets early online. Parking at Durham County Stadium is free, with complimentary shuttles running to the gate.

[www.enofest.org](http://www.enofest.org)



Photo courtesy of WUNC - John Howie Jr.

## MUSIC:

### Free Back Porch Concert Series

The American Tobacco Campus, once home to the world's largest cigarette company, now repurposed as a community center housing retail, galleries, offices, restaurants and the Full Frame Theater, hosts a series of free Back Porch Concerts on Thursday evenings this summer.

Sponsor Mercedes-Benz is popping for some top talent, including Alice Gerrard and the Piedmont Melody Makers (June 29), Rob Ickes and Trey Hensley (Aug. 3), the legendary Acoustic Syndicate (Aug. 17), bluegrass innovators Seldom Scene (Aug. 31), and rising star Billy Strings, the winner of last year's International Bluegrass Music Association Momentum Award (Sept. 14).

From the odd Durham fact department: Disney designed the American Tobacco Campus waterfall and

rushing stream. ATC is also year-round home to the Full Frame Theatre.

Pick up a picnic from one of American Tobacco's many restaurants and settle in with a local brew on the spacious lawn under the shadow of the landmark Lucky Strike Tower for some old-time music and bluegrass grooves.

[www.americantobaccocampus.com](http://www.americantobaccocampus.com)



### FAMILY: Rock The Park

Saturday nights rock in Durham's parks this summer where films and bands alternate for free during the long summer twilights. The family friendly series includes

8:30 p.m. screenings of "Who Gets The Dog" (July 22) and "Trolls" (Aug. 19), both at Durham's Central Park.

Bands include Reggae group Sahara (July 8) at Forest Hills Park and Latin sounds from Jazziendo (Aug. 5) at Southern Boundaries Park, both kicking off at 6pm. Food trucks will offer an amazing variety of dishes, so no need to cook. Keep cool and make a night of it!

[www.durhamnc.gov](http://www.durhamnc.gov)

### FIREWORKS:

#### Durham Bulls Athletic Park

Durham's annual Independence Day fireworks display follows immediately after the Durham Bulls game vs. traditional foes, the Charlotte Knights. Although the fireworks are visible throughout the American Tobacco and Downtown area, the best views are from inside the stadium. The ballgame begins at 6:05pm on July 4, with fireworks estimated to begin between 9:15 and 10:15. If weather causes the fireworks to be cancelled, they'll launch the following night with ticket holders getting a voucher to return on July 5.

Bulls games provide a close-up seat to watch professional baseball, have a brew and a hot dog, and enjoy time with family or friends.

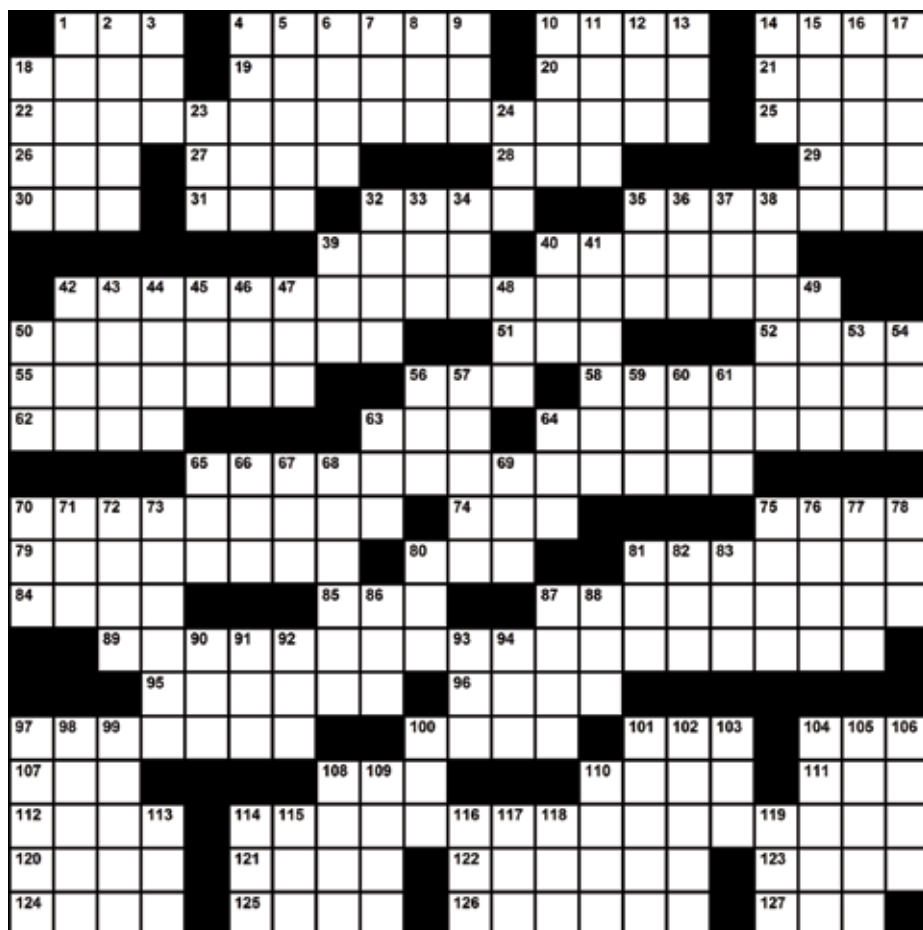
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### "You what?"

#### ACROSS

1. Time out?
4. Many New Zealanders
10. Hemingway title pronoun
14. Phish
18. Utah lily
19. Seductiveness
20. Gold
21. Official language of Pakistan
22. What \_\_\_\_\_, song line
25. Sign of secrecy
26. Vase
27. Extends
28. "To \_\_\_\_\_ their golden eyes" Shakespeare
29. Moray, e.g.
30. Zealot
31. "What \_\_\_\_\_ is it?"
32. \_\_\_\_\_ on earth?
35. Seafood dish
39. Slant
40. Guru residence
42. What \_\_\_\_\_ (transparency)
50. Enchant
51. Haw partner
52. Vintners' valley
55. Bigger
56. Grassy area
58. Beat
62. Ruler unit
63. Airport on the west coast of the US
64. Naive types, sometimes
65. What \_\_\_\_\_ (why so late?)
70. Transaction
74. Lakers' local rivals, on the scoreboard
75. Aroma
79. Cuban dance
80. Farm area

81. "Bravo!"
84. Textile worker
85. Alien craft
87. Put in hot water, but only for a little bit
89. What \_\_\_\_\_ Tina Turner song
95. Fried-chicken part
96. Do damage to
97. Suit of armor
100. Ilk
101. Jay follower
104. Measure of the speed the shaft spins
107. Power to inspire fear
108. Jeer
110. "Data quality determines result quality" acronym
111. Retirement account
112. Run producer
114. What \_\_\_\_\_ (Nickelback song)
120. Period
121. Medieval accompaniment
122. Reddish-brown
123. One way to turn a ship
124. Formerly
125. Nectar source
126. Make secret
127. Emerald, for one

#### DOWN

1. 1940s-60s world leader
2. Broker
3. Superhero punch sound
4. Santana song
5. Stray cat milieu
6. Ford contemporary
7. Gallop
8. Rage
9. Examine
10. Pesky insect
11. Use a grindstone
12. Married John
13. Garfield's cry
14. Ford Explorer, e.g.

15. Cad
16. "Farewell, mon ami"
17. Cogitates, with "over"
18. Render open-mouthed
23. Getting on
24. Flyspeck
32. Knowing
33. Part of a bray
34. Flue residue
35. "Look here!"
36. French vineyard
37. Children's game
38. Portended
39. Snippet
40. Tucked away
41. Logo for example
42. Tall tale
43. Crude group?
44. 45th admitted state
45. Look after a baby
46. Role in Haydn's "The Creation"
47. Cup handle
48. I get it!
49. Container weight
50. Special effects, abbr.
53. Diem or cent preceder
54. Google income sources
56. Thai language
57. Jump for joy
59. It may be easily bruised
60. Lot
61. Dress (up)
63. Caustic stuff
64. Wyatt's Holiday
65. British P.M.'s house number
66. Poem of praise
67. Yours and mine
68. "Hogan's Heroes" epithet
69. Declare
70. College degree
71. Beam of light

72. Comply with
73. Pea family trees
75. Miss in a Cole Porter hit
76. Senator, Bob
77. Arch with a double-S shape
78. Part of a nuclear reactor
80. Help request
81. Not straight
82. Blood typing letters
83. One to thank
86. Strong and healthy
87. Whittle
88. Automated teller
90. Modern address
91. "Is that so!"
92. Chow down or gobble up
93. "\_\_\_\_\_ me?"
94. WWII general Arnold
97. Brahman, e.g.
98. Proprietor
99. Fosters
100. Even more
101. Passed illegally for financial gain
102. Active
103. Hither's partner
104. Sort (through)
105. Introduction
106. Foal's mother
108. Kind of blocker
109. \_\_\_\_\_ and terminer (criminal court)
110. Helicopter's predecessor, briefly
113. Clock standard, for short
114. Austrian peak
115. Morgue, for one
116. Milk
117. Took
118. Arrow trajectory
119. Muzzle



The ice cream carts that started it all.

# Mama Bird's cookies+cream

BY CHRISTY GRIFFITH • PHOTOS BY TONYA PALUMBO

While everyone on my Facebook feed seems to be posting screenshots of their latest “Map My Run” workouts or greenish-colored meal replacement shakes, I found myself at a crossroads – more specifically, between two pants sizes. My husband told me I had to make a decision: what size pants do I want to fit in (i.e., did I want to give up carbs)? I wish I could say I had to deliberate, but I immediately chose all the carbs. As long as elastic-waisted bands continue to exist, I will merrily not run (unless there is a bear behind me or a taco stand in front of me), enthusiastically not replace the joy of mastication by slurping down a chartreuse smoothie (please stop trying to ruin strawberry milkshakes with the addition of kale), and will not try to be a new and improved version of the perfectly okay version of myself that I’m already running on this operating system. And you know I mean “running” in a computer programming-way because we’ve already established that I’m never going to add a 5K to a bucket list that includes items like “eat all the mayonnaise.”

If you find yourself at a similar crossroads, I’d like to remind that you that the next size pants cost the same as the ones you’re already thinking of abandoning. Now, if you find yourself at the literal crossroads of Main Street and Holly Springs Road, you’re going to be so very happy that stretchy pants are still a thing.

Mama Bird’s Cookies + Cream opened its first brick and mortar store in Holly Springs last November to meet the demand of an enthusiastic fan base generated from catering private events and selling ice cream from their cart at local farmers’ markets and area festivals.



Owners Lesley and Nick Richmond are probably two of the hardest working people you’ll meet in southwest Wake County. Lesley is the Senior Outreach Coordinator for Meals on Wheels and Nick is a Holly Springs firefighter. The Richmonds seem to have more hours in

the day than the rest of us, managing to not only hold full-time jobs along with full-time restaurant ownership, but coaching and cheering for their daughters on and off the field. While there is no actual Mama Bird, there are Taylor and Averi, the Richmond daughters whose respective nicknames “Bird” and “Mama” served as the inspiration for the ice cream shop’s name.

Nick Richmond spends his days at the shop making Mama Bird’s signature small-batch handcrafted ice cream. The custard base is as rich as they come, resulting in an extra smooth and creamy mouthfeel that will forever ruin you from supermarket ice cream. Seasonal fresh fruit from local farmers makes its way into the shop all the time, so don’t miss out on the peak of strawberry season by not trying the indulgent strawberry ice cream, featuring berries from Barnes Farm & Produce of Willow Spring.

I won’t bother trying to list all of Mama Bird’s ice creams as there are over one hundred flavors and counting. Part of the charm of a rotating menu is the anticipation of discovering a new favorite that you didn’t even know existed. With over twenty flavors in the case at any given time, you could ask to sample, but I suspect sampling may confuse you even further. The ice creams are so universally amazing that you’d do just as well to walk in blindfolded and let the monkeys that talked you into letting them blindfold you point aggressively at the case on your behalf. (Although pets are generally frowned upon where food is served, I’d be willing to dine with these monkeys. They seem resourceful and have good taste.)

It’s hard to keep up with what the most popular flavors are because each pan of ice cream that is released gains



an immediate cult-like following. You can usually find classics like Vanilla Malt and Chocolate Milk on hand at any given time, but flavors like Salted Crackamel (salted caramel ice cream rippled with chocolate-covered saltine toffee pieces), Banana Cream Pie (fresh banana ice cream with marshmallows and graham cracker pie pieces), and Buckeye (vanilla ice cream with a peanut butter swirl and buckeye candies) are a few flavors among many that keep the phone ringing as customers plan their day around ice cream acquisitions. What makes all these ice creams extra-special? Every addition to the ice cream is made in-house. You read that right – from marshmallows to toffee to cheesecake and beyond, it's all painstakingly made by hand to ensure you taste just how much Lesley Richmond loves you.

You know what else is made by hand? Mama Bird's Waffle Cones (\$1.50). They go through so many cones that the kitchen has to make several large tubs of batter each week just to keep up with demand. (And by large tubs, I mean the kind that you need to lift with your knees, not with your back.) You'll immediately know when the waffle iron is on because the aroma of freshly pressed waffle cones turns people into Bloodhounds. They seem to smell them from the parking lot and come barreling in.

It has been established that their ice cream is beyond incredible, but for those looking for dairy-free options, Mama Bird's will always have at least one flavor of sorbet in the ice cream case. (One of the best things I've ever put in my mouth would be their Peach Sorbet.) Vegans can surely appreciate a delicious sorbet just like the rest of us, but they'll be extra-appreciative of the experimentation into dairy-free ice creams, such as the Piña Colada Ice Cream made with coconut milk, which has the same mouthfeel and texture as their regular ice creams. Basically, the only people who can't find something to eat here are the ones with bad taste.

Lil' birds can get a kid's cup of one flavor for \$2, a small gets you up to two flavors for \$3.50, and a medium will score you up to three flavors for just \$5.50. But what if you can't decide between three flavors? GO FOR THE ICE CREAM FLIGHT (\$8). You'll get to choose up to



*12-inch sugar cookie base covered by a vanilla bean ice cream layer topped with whipped cream, caramel, heath bits, & sprinkles*

six flavors and just because it's a flight doesn't mean you have to share. You were prepared. You wore your stretchy pants. Pints are \$8.50 and will guarantee your continued invites to dinner parties when you show up with one (or five) to share.

It's not just ice cream at Mama Bird's; Lesley's freshly baked goods complement their frozen counterparts. Every day, five different flavors of scratch-made cookies are on display including Chocolate Chip, Sugar, Oatmeal Raisin, Peanut Butter, White Chocolate Macadamia Nut, Heath, Chocolate Peanut Butter, and Oreo Overload (\$1/ea, \$5.50/half-dozen, \$10.50/dozen). While these cookies are special enough to enjoy on their own, make sure to try one of Mama Bird's signature desserts: the Ice Cream Cookie Sandwich (\$4.25). There will often be some pre-made sandwiches in the to-go freezer, but you can get as creative as you'd like with any two cookies and any flavor ice cream that is in the case. While the sky's the limit with how you personalize your sandwich, I'll always be a sucker for two chocolate chip cookies sandwiched around a scoop of vanilla bean ice cream. It's the little black dress of the place – classic for a reason. (Of course, my dress will be

made out of stretchy spandex.)

You can treat yourself to the fudgiest brownie on earth (\$2.75/ea, \$16/half-dozen, \$25/dozen). You can eat it plain, but you're in an ice cream shop, so go all out; ask for it heated and top it with ice cream! Feeling hungrier than that? Order a Brownie Sundae (\$8) with two scoops of ice cream, fudge, caramel, or peanut butter sauce, a topping of your choice, and fresh whipped cream. (A regular Sundae can be had for \$5.50 and a Cookie Sundae is available for \$7.) Going Paleo and only eating with your hands like the cavemen did? Have them split your brownie in half and you've got yourself an Ice Cream Brownie Sandwich (\$5).

You didn't think the baked goodness stopped at cookies and brownies, did you? On Sunday mornings, the smell of homemade Cinnamon Rolls (\$3) permeates the shop. Made with a classic brioche dough (enriched with copious amounts of eggs and butter), these rolls are so delectable that they don't even serve icing with them. Instead, Lesley glazes the underside of the roll with a secret mixture before baking and poof! Magic happens. They look unassuming. They taste very assuming... assuming you like very, very delicious cinnamon rolls. (Pro tip: add a scoop of ice cream for \$1.75 and call it Brunch.) If you want to surprise your guests and family with freshly baked cinnamon rolls from your own oven, you can get these rolls prepped and frozen in the to-go freezer with baking instructions by the half-dozen (\$17.50) and dozen (\$33).

Although the cinnamon rolls only make an appearance once a week, on Tuesdays through Saturdays you can find the highly-addictive Cinnamon Roll Bread Pudding (\$4.50). It's one of the more filling options at Mama Bird's and will not disappoint. Another sinfully good offering is the Fruit Cobbler (\$3.25, \$5 with ice cream), and what could be a better way to usher in the summer than a hot bowl of cobbler topped with a cold scoop of ice cream? I love the melty-melty action when the two kiss and the ice cream slowly pools into the buttery crust. The fruit in the cobbler varies depending on the time of year, but the Peach and Blueberry Cobbler coupled with Vanilla Bean ice cream will always be >>>



Nick, Averi (Mama), Lesley, and Taylor (Bird) Richmond

my go-to comfort dessert. It screams Americana louder than Bruce Springsteen at a 4th of July concert.

I'm glad to see that Mama Bird's is on a mission to make Soda Floats (\$6.50) cool again. You can pick your bottle of soda from the fridge along with two scoops of ice cream to pour it over. Because deep-down I'm ten years old, that magical foam that appears when my root beer hits my ice cream gets me giddy to no end. The Milkshakes (\$7.25) are the richest I've had and you can further gild the lily by throwing in a couple

of cookies to make it a Cookie Shake (\$8.75). Any way you do it, you'll be winning. Sorry (not sorry), no kale smoothies at Mama Bird's.

If a special occasion is coming your way, you can call a week ahead to order a custom Ice Cream Cake (\$35/6" which serves 6-8 or \$45/9", serving 10-12). You get to pick your base - cookie or brownie - and then two flavors of ice cream. In between each ice cream layer, you'll get to choose fudge, caramel, or peanut butter sauce. The cake comes topped with whipped cream, sprinkles, and a special message on a cookie if desired. (My message would say, "The Happiest of Birthdays to the Inventor of Stretchy Spandex!"). Another popular treat is the Ice Cream Pizza (\$35). This behemoth is a 12" cookie topped with ice cream, whipped cream, your choice of sauce and toppings, all packaged up in a cardboard pizza box. (The novelty factor is high with this one.) Believe it or not, there are other special order options available but I think I might need to take extra insulin just to write about them. You can call, email, or visit the shop for more information on special orders as well as reserving one of the adorable ice cream carts for your wedding or special event.

"Money can't buy happiness, but it can buy cows, and cows make milk, and milk makes ice cream, and ice cream makes you happy." 🐄

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# A S C

## Alliance of AIDS Services · Carolina

BY CHIKA GUJARATHI

In September 2015, Hector Salgado found himself packing up his life in the Midwest to move south to Raleigh, to be closer to his family, and to assume the position of Executive Director with Alliance of AIDS Services - Carolina (AAS-C). The Chicago native who has a Masters in Public Service Management and over 10 years of experience working in HIV prevention and awareness, was trusted with rescuing the AAS-C – which despite its existence since the late 80s – had come upon some hard times.

Loss of several grants and funding had left AAS-C with a budget that was a quarter of its original size, in a community where the need for testing and prevention was higher as ever. With some creative thinking, and a Board of Directors which Hector affectionately describes as the most passionate (and stubborn) as he has ever come across, the organization not only endured but in just under two years, has turned around some impressive numbers. For starters, Hector believes that the Wake County Health Department performs about 2,200 annual HIV and STD tests, compared to 1,900 now done by AAS-C with a budget and resources that are unheard of by most any standards.

AAS-C's mission has always been very simple: To serve the community through compassionate non-judgmental support, education, and care for the prevention of HIV/AIDS/STI. But this being the South, it has been anything but easy trying to crack the code on just what makes an effective strategy in a largely conservative community. Hector explains, "I've worked in HIV prevention in Chicago mostly, but I have done conferences and some work in both Los Angeles and New York



The AAS-C's pantry services gave out 12 tons of food last year.

City. Working in these markets as an outreach specialist, you would go to clubs, say hi to people, give them a condom package, maybe get them to test or not, and then move on. It wasn't until I came to Raleigh that I had people saying no to condoms. There seemed to be a taboo around condoms that created a new challenge for us because usually the challenge is how do we get them to test. That's still a challenge but even just having that initial conversation and trying to de-stigmatize

someone taking condoms and the use of condoms. A lot of the conversations that we have with young men is about their own "slut shaming" and being able to say sex is okay, sex can be done correctly, and this is why we want to have conversations in a more productive way. So that's kind of the uphill struggle that we are finding here. But we are finding creative ways to make things a lot more comfortable for the people we talk to."

In fact, it's this creativity that helps AAS-C do its job in a very powerful way compared to other national and governmental agencies. Being a small community-based organization, AAS-C doesn't have to fight red tape and bureaucracy to get ideas through. Simply put, the ideas that Hector and his staff brainstorm with their clients can be implemented quickly, improved and built upon, if they seem to have a positive outcome. "HIV prevention is complex because you have big health departments that certainly service a lot of people, but they can't do some of the things we do," Hector says proudly. "One of the things we're doing is using social dating apps like Grinder and Growler, which are location based apps and we chat with people to come in for testing. We use Craigslist by communicating with folks who are having sex parties by asking if we can come to their party and hand out condoms and lubrication. We are really going in where the people are, so we can deliver this prevention message and give people not just condoms but also important safety information and testing. We're talking about going somewhere at 3am. This is kind of standard for what I used to do in Chicago and it works. It's the work we can do that government agencies aren't able to. Everyone looked at me like I was crazy when I came >>>



hand out information, condoms, and lubrication during several outdoor events. And worry not, for any guests who might approach thinking it is actual ice cream cart, they have some of the real stuff too. For Hector, it really is all about the shock value to reel people in and get them interested in seeking help and information.

Another source of pride for the AAS-C is their revamped food pantry located in the back of their offices. What used to be two large wooden shelves with mostly canned goods, in the last two years has turned into what looks like a mini grocery store. Local farmers donate their surplus meats, eggs, and milk, along with churches and others donating dry goods and personal care items. Before the pantry was almost an afterthought giving out two to three tons of food per year to about 80 families. It has now grown to distributing over 12 tons of food serving about 200 families.

"It's a huge jump. The amount and type of food has improved tremendously," Hector tells us as we walk through the full pantry aisles. "Now we have fresh milk, eggs, meats, when before it was just canned food. We have a lot of churches that bring us food because our pantry is open to people with low income and people living with HIV. About 63% of our clients that come to the pantry are HIV positive and the rest are low income. We don't ask for any kind of identification or proof of income. We feel that if folks come here and are waiting

here and said this is what we're going to do."

In addition to using social apps, AAS-C's most recent out-of-the-box method to spread the word during outdoor festivals and events is their ice cream cart named

Principessa. The idea was pitched by one of their clients during a focus group study. The damaged cart which was bought used for just \$25 and was repaired by one of Hector's staff members. They now use it as a way to

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in line, they need the food. We receive zero dollars in funding for our pantry, but we know that there is a big need for it in our community. People who are low income come in once a month and people who are HIV positive can come twice a month. Quite a few of them choose to get tested while they are waiting in line as well, so it's a good way to bring people in. We're very proud of what the food pantry has become."

AAS-C receives its funding from the State but given the modest amount, a lot depends on the annual fundraising events planned by the staff and board in partnership with other community organizations. The AIDS Walk each October is their biggest fundraiser. Other charity events include the Red Ribbon Ball, AIDS Bike Ride, and the super popular quarterly Drag Bingo nights, each with a unique theme and amazing prizes donated by local supporters. The last one was Beyonce Bingo, which attracted over 400 guests. All this information is constantly shared and updated on AAS-C's online events calendar, as well as their Facebook page. For Hector, there's nothing more satisfying than having fun events that not only help spread the word about their organization and the need for testing, as well as raising much-needed funds, but doing so with a staff of just eight others who already wear many hats in the organization. This is where volunteer help becomes crucial.

"We wouldn't be able to accomplish all work we do without our volunteers," Hector says with a proud smile. "We revamped our volunteer program so people can go online, fill out a volunteer form, and find events and tasks that suit their comfort level. We've had some church groups that only wanted to help with the pantry, and they were able to do that. Other volunteers were interested in helping at parties and clubs at night. Just like we listen to our clients, we try to listen to our volunteers. The usual ratio is two volunteers with one of our staffers."

I asked Hector if he had a wish list of what could make this organization perform even better. He stated that his "selfish dream" is to provide health insurance for his staff and to be able to afford the purchase of a real mobile testing unit. "There are so many rural counties that don't have access to HIV testing," Hector explains. "Currently, we'll go to rural trailer park communities and knock on doors to ask if people would like to be tested, and they usually do. Sometimes we drive two hours into different areas, but it's hard because of the limited amount of supplies we can carry. If we had a real mobile testing unit, it would make a huge difference and I think we could double our testing numbers."

As we conclude our interview with Hector, I realize that AAS-C is kind of like the little engine that could. In less than two years, the organization has trimmed

spending by \$136,000 and increased their community outreach beyond their wildest dreams. What once was a question of possibility has now become a conversation about what's next. For Hector, his pride is loud and clear, "When people talk about an HIV prevention agency, half the conversations we have with our folks is not about HIV, but about integrity, what is their worth, how to avoid drama, and connecting with the community. Now that other community-based agencies and even other health departments see the number of people we're reaching, they're interested in what and how we're accomplishing it. I'm very proud to slowly move the pendulum in the right direction." 📷

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